What’s in a Discipline?

Special issue on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore
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Guest Editors
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What’s in a Discipline?

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On Friday, September 12, 2014 SIEF, the Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore, celebrated its 50th birthday in a festive event held in Amsterdam with a Jubilee Symposium and a General Assembly. The illustrious line-up of speakers included two of SIEF’s ex-presidents, Regina Bendix (Göttingen) and Konrad Köstlin (Vienna), SIEF’s historian and ex-vice president, Bjarne Rogan (Oslo), and two special invited guests, Jasna Čapo (Zagreb) and Orvar Löfgren (Lund). We asked them all to speak “out of the box” but gave them free rein otherwise. The result was a fine series of presentations, moving from a meditation on anniversaries to reflections on the history of the society and its disciplines, and from an analysis of disciplinary relations in the centers and margins of Europe to visions for the future of the field and, finally, to new research perspectives on everyday life. The present volume follows up SIEF’s Jubilee Symposium and presents four of the papers from Amsterdam in full article form, as well as two original discussion pieces by Kristin Kuutma (Tartu) and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero (Santiago de Compostela).

Just as this volume is published, the society meets for its biennial 2015 congress in Zagreb, Croatia. Reading through the paper abstracts submitted for this congress, still in our demi-centennial jubilee mind-set, it struck us that much of what will be said in Zagreb—the vantage points, the dialogues, not to mention the vocabulary—would have been hard to imagine for our predecessors, the scholars who took part in the society’s founding in the mid-1960s. Our successors might say something similar about us when SIEF meets for its 37th congress in 2065. If SIEF congresses from the last fifty years are any indication, if the future differs from the present as the present differs from the past, then, to be sure, much will be said that we may find it difficult to wrap our minds around today. And yet over the past half century, some key concerns have stayed with us, and it is hard to believe that they will fade away any time soon: the popular, the vernacular, the everyday, the local and the translocal, the national and the transnational, diffusion and migration, difference and sameness, inclusion and exclusion, religious and secular imaginaries, the nar-
rative and the material, tradition and creativity, class and gender, the archive and the museum, and food and the home.

These topics have cut across SIEF congresses from the outset to the present, and persist across the panels at the Zagreb congress. They define the society and its field(s) of research and practice; these are the concerns that mark the common ground of ethnologists and folklorists in all their various denominations and renominations, concerns shared with colleagues from neighboring disciplines who take part in the work and congresses of SIEF. We bring to these common concerns those questions and concepts that motivate our inquiry any given year: from the historic-geographic, the functional, structural, and post-structural at previous congresses; and to the affective, the digital, the corporeal, or the post-human at current congresses. These traveling concepts bring us into larger conversations that cut across disciplines; they are crucial, if ephemeral. The common concerns, in contrast, have proved resilient; they remain at the heart of our field(s) through all of the various “turns” it has taken and will take. They unite us, in spite of our differences.

At the Jubilee Symposium in Amsterdam, Konrad Köstlin (himself president of SIEF between 1990 and 2001) addressed head-on the problematic of celebrating anniversaries. Turning an ethnological eye on the ethnologists in their celebration of themselves, Köstlin’s analysis is spot-on. It opens the contemporary, “decimalist” preoccupation with anniversaries up to a scrutiny that is insightful, witty, and embarrassing. On behalf of SIEF, we plead guilty: Köstlin’s shots hit the bull’s-eye. SIEF’s self-chosen moment of auto-historicizing and self-glorification is indeed about affirming the society’s unity and continuity, it is about shameless self-promotion and an inflation of our collective sense of self. Its slightly pompous tone and serious setting—with a “Golden Jubilee” celebration parading professors and presidents (current, ex- and vice-) amid classical nude Greek statues in the Special Collections building of the University of Amsterdam—are very much in tune with sensibilities and structures that Köstlin’s analysis brings to light. They are characteristic, he argues, of a contemporary decimalism that propagates an endless array of anniversary celebrations that all follow a similar logic, each marking nothing more substantial than round numbers, but doing so with great solemnity and self-importance. Even SIEF’s Extraordinary General Assembly in Amsterdam—a sort of symbolic re-enactment of the assembly that founded SIEF 50 years earlier in Athens—is symptomatic of this logic. Whereas the founding assembly in Athens offered universal suffrage to individual members, with the right to vote in person at the society’s General Assemblies, the jubilee assembly in Amsterdam introduced online elections, moving SIEF into an age of digital democracy—a
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claim that Köstlin also picks apart in his article. The repetition and return perform the organic coherence and historical unity of the society.

However, as Bjarne Rogan, SIEF’s historian, shows in his article in this volume, that coherence and unity is anything but self-evident. In fact, SIEF was not born into the world at the assembly in Athens. Instead, a much older organization had its head dunked into the water, was baptized and reborn as SIEF. Whether that dunking was of its own accord is up for debate (though Rogan actually lays that debate to rest in this issue) and so is the extent to which the organization’s rebirth as SIEF marked a new beginning. Rogan dates SIEF’s roots further back in history to 1928, when its predecessor the Commission des Arts et Traditions Populaires (CIAP) came into being as a specialized body of the League of Nations (later reborn as the UN), or more precisely of its intellectual organization, the Paris-based Commission Internationale pour la Coopération Intellectuelle (CICI, later reborn as UNESCO). Of course that year is arbitrary in our opinion, too. Another history might begin instead with the society’s postwar
reorganization as a commission of the newly founded UNESCO, or alternatively stretch back to the nineteenth century when the SIEF disciplines came into being and the first national societies formed, some of which went on to become the national commissions to CIAP. Or else, SIEF’s history might indeed begin in Athens, when a politicized commission consisting of national committees (on the UN model) was dismantled to build instead a professional society consisting of individual members.

Whatever starting point we choose, it holds true at any rate that in Athens, on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 8, 1964, a committee that called itself the “gang of four” decided to put to a vote of all present at CIAP’s assembly whether to continue the organization in the same manner and under the same name or to reconstitute it instead according to the gang’s proposal. The latter won a narrow majority of votes and so founded the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF). In its name, two related disciplinary strains dating back to CIAP—European Ethnology and Folklore Studies—are explicitly foregrounded, representing the two major “blood groups” among its members. It was the result of what some in those years called the “ethnologization” of the field. Others saw it in reverse terms as the result of a schism led by an insurgency of secessionist folklorists.

As Bjarne Rogan concludes in his article in this volume, “When the Folklorists Won the Battle but Lost the War,” the unity of the discipline was really at stake in 1964. Were ethnology and folklore to be regarded as two independent disciplines or as different specialities of one common discipline, a unified “European ethnology”? Opposite stances were taken by a faction led by German folklorist Kurt Ranke (Göttingen), and the previous leadership of CIAP, spearheaded by Swedish ethnologist Sigurd Erixon (Stockholm). Bjarne Rogan describes in heartbreaking detail the series of events that culminated in the 1964 (re)constitution of SIEF in Athens, when the Ranke faction won the day, and the common field of study (the “arts populaires” of CIAP) was replaced in the society’s name with two distinct disciplinary identities. According to Rogan, the idea of a unified discipline was thus blown for decades. Of course, one might take the opposite view: that, on the contrary, instead of ethnologists and folklorists going their separate ways in two different societies, as might easily have happened, they decided to join their fortunes and make common cause in one common society with regular, common congresses at which to share inspiration and cultivate their close relationship.

There is a good reason why ethnologists and folklorists, whether they go by one, two, or many names in their individual countries, have joint meetings in Europe and share institutions and societies in many of its countries: it is be-
cause their fields and their fortunes are two sides of one coin. For that coin to have currency, it needs both sides. In a recent book, Scottish ethnologist Gary West puts it aptly when he writes: “they should be viewed as non-identical twins within a family of disciplines that study the culture of humanity” (Voicing Scotland: Folk, Culture, Nation. Edinburgh, UK: Luath Press, 2013, 36). Each needs the other, whether it is housed in the same department or an adjacent one (the latter arrangement has obvious strategic advantages). Without folklore studies, ethnology all too easily becomes a specialized, regional subfield of social and cultural anthropology. Without ethnology, the study of folklore all too easily becomes a specialized subfield of philology. Together they make sense, as the study of popular/vernacular/everyday expressions, objects, practices, and ways of life. Together they are viable and together they are interesting. That holds true regardless of whether we conceive of them as two separate but closely related fields or as one field with two (or more) specializations/subfields; on this question we are agnostic and profess no opinion. In fact, we are not sure it is a productive question. The answer must at any rate be context-sensitive: relative rather than absolute; pragmatic rather than doctrinal; empirical rather than theoretical. Sometimes (and in some places) they are one; sometimes (and in some places) they are two. Sometimes the picture is more complicated than that.

One complicating factor, and the most important one, is the relationship to social or cultural anthropology, another major issue in the disciplinary relations and history of SIEF. At various times and places, ethnology and folklore have been identified as subdivisions of a large and encompassing discipline of anthropology. Indeed, Bjarne Rogan mentions that UNESCO made several attempts in the middle of the 20th century to merge SIEF/CIAP with another one of its member organizations, the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES), but these attempts always met strong resistance in SIEF. Indeed, we find it easy to agree that ethnology and folklore belong to the extended family of anthropological sciences, dedicated to the study of culture and society; hence, in 2011, SIEF became a member of the World Council of Anthropological Associations (WCAA).

That is not tantamount, however, to regarding ethnology and folklore as subfields of a united discipline of anthropology. The division between what in Germany used to be known as Volkskunde and Völkerkunde has a long intellectual trajectory in Europe reaching back into the nineteenth century; despite considerable overlap and borrowing in theory and method, the two have different foci and each asks different questions in dialogue with their own respective history/ies (a similar distinction might be drawn, for example,
between social anthropology and sociology). While the discipline of social anthropology tends to orbit around cosmopolitan centers of gravity in imperial capitals, like Paris and London, European ethnology and folklore are more dispersed, with many of the strongest institutions in countries with no imperial history in the twentieth century (Sweden, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, etc.). The former formed its knowledge of selves and others in faraway countries as part of the logic of empire-building, while the latter formed its knowledge of selves and others at home as part of the logic of nation building and the formation of modern European societies. Further adding to the centrifugal force in the disciplinary structure of ethnology and folklore is their longstanding public engagement—as Konrad Köstlin notes in this volume, scholars in these fields have been charged “with modern society’s historical and reflexive self-consciousness.” This means, among other things, that the lion’s share of the scholarship has been written in the various vernaculars, in contrast to social anthropology, where French and English have long held sway in scholarly communication. The centrifugal force is in many ways productive; it has produced a discipline that is impressively diverse and at times “undisciplined,” with a local audience and often a wide scope of application. It needs to be counteracted, however, by centripetal structures for scholarly dialogue and collaboration, opportunities to produce convergence through divergence, consent through dissent. SIEF is such a structure, the international society that brings scholars in the field together and gives them a chance to present their work to one another and work out their differences, either at its international congresses or in its international journals, *Ethnologia Europaea* and *Cultural Analysis*.

Be that as it may, the relationship to social anthropology is one that is constantly under negotiation and develops at different tempos and even in different directions in the different parts of Europe and in different parts of the world. In many post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, there has been a convergence between these fields after the collapse of communism. Unfortunately, this convergence has not taken place on equal terms in a relation of parity. In this volume, Jasna Čapo offers an incisive, critical analysis of this convergence and of the present-day relationship between European ethnology and social anthropology. Citing numerous examples from Croatia, from other formerly Yugoslav republics, and from further afield, she deconstructs and challenges reified differences between ethnologies in Central-Eastern Europe and Western, mainly British-style anthropology. The article argues strongly and convincingly for overcoming the existing divisive discourse to work instead in academic dialogue, based in principles of mutual respect, reciprocity,
and equality, towards a trans-national European ethnology/anthropology of Europe.

One might say that this volume moves from the general to the concrete. It begins with a reflexive meditation on anniversaries (capturing in its essay style some of the characteristics that public engagement has given to ethnological scholarship), moves on to a sensational biographical account of SIEF, and from there offers a disciplinary history of the present and an incisive analysis of contemporary disciplinary relations in Europe. It concludes with an innovative study of classic topics of ethnological knowledge: the everyday, the material, and the domestic—of stuff in the home and how people deal with it as part of their daily lives.

In the last article in this volume, Orvar Löfgren analyzes the ways in which people manage clutter in their homes, how they cope with “too much” in their daily activities, their routines, relationships, and daydreaming. As he notes, the modern home is not only crowded with objects, it also overflows with feel-
ings, activities, affects: “Passion, boredom, guilt, longing, nagging irritation, explosions of home rage, moments of bliss all try to co-exist with and also charge material objects ... as well as the normal everyday activities.” Bringing to topics of longstanding ethnological concern perspectives and insights generated by new theoretical turns across the social sciences and humanities—namely, affective and non-representational theories—Löfgren’s study of domestic overflow grounds theoretical discourses on the mundane in close scrutiny of people’s everyday practices.

Scholars from various fields of the humanities and social sciences have, in recent years, turned their attention to everyday life—it is no longer the more-or-less exclusive domain of ethnologists—but Orvar Löfgren’s article illustrates the radical empiricism that is still the hallmark of the ethnological perspective. Ethnologists ground their theorization of the everyday in empirical analyses of people’s actual practices: how people go about their daily lives and how they talk about going about them.5

Finally, there was one more speaker at SIEF’s jubilee symposium whose contribution could not be developed in written form for this volume, but the gist of which we find interesting to relate here nonetheless. Picking up on our invitation to speak “out of the box,” former SIEF president Regina Bendix gave a presentation titled “We have never been in a box!” Arguing for the intellectual, creative freedom of the loose structures in ethnology and folklore, or of what we have described here as the productive powers of the centrifugal force in the field, Bendix illustrated her argument with reference to the work of a number of colleagues, including Pietro Clemente (Florence), Barbro Klein (Stockholm), Dunja Rihtman-Aguštin (Zagreb), Martine Segalen (Paris-Nanterre), and Bernhard Tschofen (Zürich). They all serve as excellent examples, she noted, of scholars who “have never been in a box;” intellectuals who have opened up new avenues of research and struck up new conversations in our “undisciplined” discipline, across the disciplines, and with the reading public, precisely because of their idiosyncratic and creative approaches and style.

Notwithstanding Konrad Köstlin’s critique of pomposity and self-celebration, as ethnologists we advocate reflexivity and we find, moreover, that certain moments provide an ideal opportunity for its exercise. Anniversaries are such occasions, be they those of individuals, couples, scholarly disciplines, or their international organizations, like SIEF. In tune with Regina Bendix’s argument for idiosyncrasy and intellectual freedom, we do not expect such reflexivity to produce rigid or essentialist definitions of the discipline and its boundaries. That has been the case too often in past decades, as Bjarne Rogan’s
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historiography reveals. The disciplinary battles fought out in SIEF’s founding and early years lend themselves rather nicely to more recent analyses of inclusion and exclusion, identity politics, techniques of othering, and the labeling of constitutive outsides. We are content now to locate ourselves, alongside adjoining fields (with borders blurred), in the broader realm of cultural and social sciences. SIEF itself—the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore—presents itself as a pluridisciplinary organization, centered in the twin fields of ethnology and folklore. Like the fields it represents, SIEF is eclectic and open-minded. It is promiscuous in its disciplinary relations, while keeping faith with its founding values and vision. On the occasion of SIEF’s anniversary, it is therefore more important to reflect on what’s in a discipline than on what a discipline actually is, on its ingredients rather than its essence. Ingredients belong to the cookbook genre, and the greatest meals will always result from the idiosyncratic take on the cookbook, from its creative use, adding or leaving out an ingredient here, changing the ratios there, or perhaps throwing in a dash of something unexpected.

Such reflection need of course not wait until the ripe age of fifty; it is best done continuously. But with the banality of everyday work, its thrown-togetherness, and many stresses (cf. Löfgren in this volume) one tends to put it off in wait for a specific date or a triggering event that offers the perfect excuse to indulge. And so in Amsterdam in September 2014, SIEF started to chew on its past and future, self-image and self-reflection, on its “hundred years war” and on the celebration of creativity and renewal and of “out of the box” thinking; SIEF stepped back in order to bring the field forward. It is less important, we found, to debate what a discipline is than to understand what is in it, but ultimately what matters most is what comes out of it.

Notes
1 SIEF’s jubilee symposium was organized in the Special Collections building of the University of Amsterdam, with the support of the same university and the Meertens Institute. The Amsterdam Center for European Ethnology (http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/acee/) sponsored the lecture of Orvar Löfgren as the first ACEE-Lecture.
2 The jubilee lectures were filmed and they are all available to view (under “Videos”) on SIEF’s website: http://www.siefhome.org/videos.shtml.
3 The “gang” consisted of Roger Lecotté (Paris), Roger Pinon (Liège), Robert Wildhaber (Basel) and Karel C. Peters (Antwerp); read more about them in Bjarne Rogan’s contribution in this volume.
4 A similar convergence took place earlier after fall of the dictatorships in Spain and Portugal.
5 While unwieldy and eccentric, the name chosen for the field in Tübingen, one of the centers of its innovation in the 1960s and 1970s (Löfgren’s department in Lund being another), seems in this sense rather appropriate: Empirische Kulturwissenschaft, or empirical cultural science.
**On Anniversaries**

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**Abstract**  
*European Ethnology is always intimately involved in its research objects, making sense of our practices and of the things with which we surround ourselves. Among other things, European Ethnology underpins the adoration of authentic places and helps to promulgate the idea of marked caesuras and cuts. Many topics that ethnologists encounter in their research are also and at the same time a part of their own lives, for example the anniversary. Such topics only become recognizable as “other” when subjected to a perspective from which they no longer seem self-evident but are instead experienced as curious and “foreign.” The article analyses anniversaries—including that of SIEF—from this ethnological perspective.*

**Beginnings and Repetitions**  
*SIEF is not alone in celebrating its anniversary. Much like the rest of us, SIEF is surrounded by anniversaries. Old and new media constantly bring us news of yet another anniversary and their constancy is more packed with every passing year. On August 3, 2014 we learned that electronic post has existed for 30 years in Germany (Radomsky 2014). Any and all founding dates or birthdays of institutions, cities and villages, as well of course as those of individuals, seem to merit commemoration. The focus is on beginnings. For the celebration of their special jubilee anniversaries, rabbitbreeders and sportclubs, much like scientific organisations, establish planning committees, create logos, hold events, and issue publications—like this one. Anniversaries, and that is what they all have in common, highlight institutions or persons or groups. Anniversaries seem inevitable and somehow necessary in modern societies. They serve as hooks for ideas, as apologies for reflection, as catalysts for creativity. Wedding anniversaries for instance accentuate and decorate the couples’ twenty-fifth anniversary with silver, the fiftieth with gold. In a testament to its heightened consumerism, the last century discovered more and more time junctures to celebrate as anniversaries (the 5th as wooden and the 10th as tin, etc.), each with its corresponding, appropriate gifts.*
Anniversaries often involve celebrations and it seems to go without saying that these are more meaningful than a mere party. Indeed, celebrations often have a touch of solemnity. A celebration then may flow into a party, but the first part, the celebration, is more solemn and self-important than the party in its focus on history and tradition. The celebration is very often attached to the idea of its repetition. The celebration can announce its temporality, like for instance the Christian last supper does. It instantiates a pattern common within European culture when its words of institution demand: “Dies tut, so oft ihr’s tut, zu meinem Gedächtnis!” (Martin Luther) (“For as often as you do this...do this in remembrance of Me”) (Corinthians 11, 17-32). The anniversary’s strict and explicit demand for repetition seems to come from a European understanding of culture as a permanent dialogue with the past, related to the European obsession with heritage (Harrison 2013). The repetition has to quote, returning to the beginning in a justification of the self and a celebration of its discrete, organic being—tending to its “roots” (an organic metaphor). Hermann Hesse, Germany’s twentieth century Steppenwolf-dreamer, once wrote: “Und jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne.” (A magic dwells in each beginning) (Hesse 1961).

Popular Culture, Our Fields, and Long Lines

Remembering its beginning in 1894, the Wiener Verein für Volkskunde (Viennese Association for Volkskunde) and its museum celebrated its centennial in 1994. Designed as a nearly perfect reenactment of the association’s beginning (European Ethnologists are the experts!), the celebration took place the same date as in 1894, on December 20, and in the same location, the old Vienna town hall. The music played in 1994 was composed by Hugo Wolf who had a special relation to Michael Haberlandt, the founding director of the Museum (Schindler 1995, 101-104). Instead of the Habsburgian archduke, who was the protector 1894, in 1994 the Austrian minister of science gave the festive speech (the empire making way for the republic), after which the current director and a Viennese academic gave lectures.

What am I insinuating? Anniversaries, like the one mentioned above, follow certain patterns. They try to simulate, to copy the beginning by performing it as a repetition. The repetition brings into relief the legitimacy of whatever is so celebrated by displaying its continuity and staging its fidelity to its founding principles and original obligations. Furthermore, the performance holds also the promise to improve the institution. Highlighting the beginning is entirely the norm; it is a common practice. Anniversaries and jubilees recall the beginning and its order of events in an act of repetition. So accepted is this
pattern that a big market in advisors, a coaching industry, has come into being (Roth 1999). Internet calendars underline the importance of anniversaries, of our awareness of them and, indeed, our celebration. And then enter the ethnologists and folklorists, to study these socio-cultural and popular events in the production of which we have, in fact, been intimately involved during the last two centuries, charged as we have been with modern society’s historical and reflexive self-consciousness (Köstlin 1997). SIEF as a scientific institution has thus gone native in celebrating its own proper jubilee.

**Topolatria, the Adoration of Places**

All the paradigms of the historicization and musealization of remembrance—that is the genre to which anniversaries belong—subscribe to the sacredness of the time and the place of the beginning (Turner 1974). One may perhaps be forgiven for wondering if the obsession with anniversaries owes anything to changing interpretations of time and place in times perceived to be “globalized.” Of course, globalization has no real face to fight and in fact, goes back much further than the coinage of the expression “global.” Regardless, today we constantly repeat and reify that chant of globalization, of acceleration and non-places (Augé 1992). The talk of the loss of “real” places in “supermodernity”—places defined as historical, relational and so offering identity as places of memory—and the absolute negation of the “non-places” (airports, clinics, hotel-chains, transit points, refugee camps, etc)—supposedly inhumane and therefore not anthropological—both rely on a notion of “genuine” places and reproduce our attraction for them.

Back to Christianity: to be affected by historic sites has a long history. The Catholic Church taught that copies of places like Golgatha should be as efficacious as the original, and thus the copies too became destinations for pilgrimage. Nils-Arvid Bringéus (my predecessor as SIEF-president) has interpreted the Bethlehemic cradle—the crèche—as an innovation brought forth within Swedish families during the nineteenth century: it is a prime example of the copy as a place for devotion (Bringéus 1968). According to a legend, St. Francis restaged the cradle for the first time already in 1223 near Assisi in Italy. The legend provides a necessary beginning, providing the practice with a first time. The “imitatio Christi,” as a contemplation of the life of Jesus Christ, can be seen with all its instruments (Bendix 2000, 268) as a basic example of the annivarsity and a model for the repetition of “the first time.”

The adoration of places, that very European form of *topolatria,* motivates a secular repetition and reveals an unspoken sacrality in its metrical mysticism. The nineteenth century with its invention of national monuments and institu-
Konrad Köstlin

tionalization of centennials and decades founded institutional memories (and even made the writing of individual biographies a popular practice), often organized on the basis of decimalism. This predominantly male technique of public celebration owes much to the fact that public history and memory were long dominated by churches, clubs, associations, academies, guilds, leagues, and universities. Their manner of staging themselves seems not far removed from today’s memorial culture, even if it is now “transgendered.” Accentuating birthdays at anything down to five-year intervals urges us to skip in linear progression along these intervals instead of following the life cycle, an alternative model of time. The circle of life has been replaced by a linear metaphor with an emphasis on the beginning. The beginning initiates time measurement, as a chronometry based on a secular, but seemingly also sacred, decimalism. Our metric culture of decimalism gains its structure from this scaling.

**Producing Attention and the Reenactment**

Reenactment tries to stage historical events as authentically as possible: Passion plays, historic plays and novels in the genre of Walter Scott did this in their way during the nineteenth century, making their localities famous. Today the celebration of anniversaries also has to produce attentiveness. A little community in the German Blackforest opened a museum for perms in 2006, in honour of the man who invented that coiffure a hundred years earlier. Permanent waves are indeed important for the straight of hair. In this case the invention serves to offer a unique selling proposition (USP) for the community. It serves as a brand, marking distinction. “Brand yourself” and tell a story about it.

Anniversaries give selfevident legitimacy to the practices and objects of reenactment. On October 23, 2006, in Budapest (Hungary) a riot took place, reenacting the revolt of 1956. But this time the new insurgents came from the right wing. Just as in 1956, they stole a Soviet T-34 tank, this time from an open-air exhibition in town, and the tank really worked (which speaks well of the conservation skills involved!). In Berlin, for more than 20 years, a violent repetition of a demonstration against the local police takes place on May 1, notwithstanding the fact that the original reason for the demonstration is long forgotten. It is an event that attracts people from many countries. The date of the violent repetition, May 1, inscribes it into a tradition of the previous night as “free night,” liberated from social norms and conventions. Indeed, women celebrate the night before May 1, Walpurgis night, in a reenacted witch-event following a long and legendary tradition.

Fitted with cultural markers, anniversaries measure time. They fulfill a crucial role in regard to repeated caesuras as scale factors—private as well
as public and official remembrances. With constant talk of acceleration, the relation between time and history, continuity and discontinuity, is shaped by new contours and accorded newfound importance. The lucidity of former epochs seems to have vanished. Jürgen Habermas, the best known and most respected German philosopher of our days, once spoke of the “Neue Unübersichtlichkeit,” the “new complexity,” which characterizes our times (Habermas 1985). This characterization may be accurate. But the talk of new complexity suggests a contrasting counterpart, a certain idea of clarity of epochs and a sense of order in premodern lives. Thus Jürgen Habermas emerges as a Volkskundler, an ethnologist of the old school.

The culture of remembrance has in recent years emerged as a major topic of research in the cultural sciences, a topic that they themselves are intimately involved in producing. They now study what they have invented in the past and cannot stop inventing in the present. These caesuras, decades, shape our lives as much as they shape our museums. Talking about the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties, and nineties of the last century, we find ourselves on exhibit in
museums and displayed on the shelves and windows of shops selling memorabilia, the retro, the antique, and the shabby-chic. We connect each decade with designs, colors, hairstyles, and musical styles, and with the idea of an impulse in its beginning. As repositories of cultural memory then, anniversaries function as a sort of encapsulated knowledge about the past, promoting the idea of the identity of a group (or a generation) and of its lifestyle. Reflexively, but routinely, we create the scales, memories and icons of our existence.

Individuals and groups accentuate their peculiarity and emphasize their differences, big or (more often) small, as though deliberately sharpening their USP, their unique selling point. Coined in the 1940s, the term comes from the idiom of the advertisement industry. In the culture of memorialization, individuals and groups try to draw attention to themselves and to others, but mainly to themselves. The reenactment explains the group and tries to define its identity and its position in society. Visualizing its potential publicly, the group in question gives itself a congratulatory slap on the shoulder. The consensus to celebrate jubilees is not only about invoking the memory of the occasion. The jubilee performance also proves the continuity and the consistency of a group; it confirms, perpetuates, and promises to improve the institution; it displays its legitimacy in a sensual manner. The anniversary thus reinforces the idea of progress (scientific in the case of sief) and refers us back to conclusions that are not new as such, but performed in a new genre. We know that we stand on the shoulders of giants and we realize the fragility and relativity of the “modern.” The cultural memory, represented in relief by the USP, concerns itself mostly with a past on which the group’s or institution’s consciousness of its unity and peculiarity rests. Thus in celebrating siefs anniversary, we perform ethnology’s continuity, we perpetuate the field, we define our identity and proclaim our legitimacy. But even when not so obviously self-occupied, European Ethnology is involved nevertheless in these multifold processes of popular decimalism and the production of overwhelming localisms. European Ethnology contributes to them, studies them, and is nourished by them, its practitioners variously sought out to help perform them or to comment on them, or both. Even so, despite our involvement, the arbitrary idea to celebrate and resume after 10, 25 or 50 years—of all the possible intervals—and to combine this celebration with the promise of a new orientation, a new beginning of sorts, remains random and of course completely unscientific.

Continuities
The impression of continuity seems pivotal to this form of representation and its mode of display in epochs, centuries, and decades. The talk of epochs, scales,
liminalities and ties, transitions and crossings sketches a plausible sense of the conjunction of time. The focus of the anniversary, however, is squarely on an impression of continuity. Such a seemingly plausible construction of continuity may even be related to the recent renaissance of ethnic consciousness among young and old nations alike: the rediscovery of the nation and national identity invokes an impression of duration. Nations and their experts (including, notably, their ethnologists) have developed various arguments to support this impression, often based on their so-called folk-culture, seen as the brick and mortar of their cultural systems. Searching for the “deep play” (Geertz 1973) of their own societies, they perform their “writing culture” (Clifford and Marcus 1986). In so doing, they sometimes flesh out smart and innovative interpretations, but even so they have lost their unchallenged authority after the epistemological crisis. Cultural representation is now not only contingent and historical, it has also become contestable and is, indeed, contested on all fronts.

Nevertheless, the importance of the jubilee, the point of it, remains undisputed. There is no public debate about the necessity of anniversaries in general. Jubilees have to be celebrated. Their importance is self-evident, that is to say that they are plausible, they make sense, and they produce an aura. As a matter of course any group and any institution that would neglect such an occasion might be blamed for missing the unique chance that an anniversary offers: to reflect, to promote, to celebrate. Not to take advantage of such an event could be assigned to ignorance, apathy or, worse, to arrogance.

As it was so tempting, I could not refrain from using SIEF’s own announcement of its jubilee meeting (from which this special issue stems) to illustrate my argument. Announcing “a golden jubilee symposium in Amsterdam” on 12 September 2014, SIEF invited us to join in a “special celebration of its 50th anniversary.” We gathered, according to the announcement, to celebrate “50 years of collaboration [can this have a double meaning?], dialogue, and critical debate in ethnology and folklore... and [to join] in a toast to the next 50 years.” Much like in every other jubilee, the occasion was used to reflect “on the shape of the field(s) and society, their past, present, and future.” In attendance, an “illustrious line-up of speakers at the jubilee symposium includes two of SIEF’s ex-presidents, SIEF’s official historian and special invited
guests.” What great company in which to repeat the origins, rehearse the history, and perform its continuity!

Yet this repetition, rehearsal, and reflection also provide an occasion for forward movement, for a promise of progress. Preceding the symposium, SIEF’s jubilee was celebrated also with an extraordinary General Assembly that, as signaled in the announcement, moved SIEF “after 50 years, into a new age of digital democracy”: the promise of a new beginning, leading scholars into an era in which digitalism is the new frame of scientific communication. Behind this lurks the strong belief that the Internet will strengthen democracy and that digitalization will mobilize, open access, and multiply the opportunity to speak.

Deconstructionists really look old today. Networkers are the new constructionists. Out of the ashes of postmodern deconstruction, the networks rise wherever one looks, bringing together hermeneutics, actor-network theory, bio-thesis, and new media studies, creating a vision for the global network society. Participation, it turns out, has been an elitarian approach, it is an old-world word; “sharing” is instead offered as a more democratic approach, sometimes with a moralistic impulse. It is also, I would add, a form of control.

**Outlook: Another Mode of Repetition?**

Some weeks ago in Vienna, Tom Cruise raised some interest while filming scenes for “Mission Impossible V” around the opera house. Number V is a repetition of previous impossible missions. Like in a Dada-collage, the immortal soldier wakes up again, having been killed before in his fight against the aliens. The permanent reboot enables Cruise to master situations better. Hollywood has remakes and rebirths and reenactments, it produces actions in ellipses; the DVD collapses, jumps back and forth and presents what we have already seen. Its heroes seem to have experienced everything already before. Its originality arises from anatomising the repeated and the known, converting it into new formats. And shortly after this year’s 9/11 (a date that denotes an event looking forward already at the time of its naming to future commemorations), the movie “A Most Wanted Man” (Director Anton Corbijn) was released in Germany. It is the story of a Chechen muslim who illegally immigrated to Hamburg and got involved in the international war of terror (according to a novel of John le Carré) which was affording a splendid opportunity to anniversarize not only 9/11 itself, but also to remember the late Philip Seymour Hoffmann.
On Anniversaries

Finale
Georg Simmel, a bright German sociologist and philosopher, noted at the beginning of the twentieth century that human beings can acquire power only from things in which they have implemented meanings and ideas before. This takes us back to anniversaries: Two young ladies recently told me that they celebrated the tenth anniversary of the day they got to know one another. Besides partaking in that obsessive cult of remembrance and the heritage regime, they were simply in the mood to commemorate and to celebrate themselves. On the other hand, in 2015 Vienna is selling history in announcing a bundle of celebrations: the 650 years’ anniversary of Vienna University, the 200 years’ anniversary of Vienna University of Technology, and the 150th anniversary of the Wiener Ringstrasse (the road around the old town of Vienna). At the end of 2014 the newspaper **Süddeutsche Zeitung** announced a list of jubilees: “Runde Sache-Jubiläen 2015” with “rounded” dates according to the decimalist model, counting down from 600 (Jan Hus) to 200 (Waterloo and the kingdom of the Netherlands) to 10 years (the first video on Youtube) (Runde 2014).

Commemorative coin celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, issued in 2015 by the Belgian government. The French president Hollande found this historical commemoration “harmful” because it memorialized a battle that France lost. In the European Council, Hollande successfully put pressure on Belgium to destroy the entire run of coins. France itself was, however, not hindered in 2014 by issuing coins commemorating D-Day, which marked a much more recent defeat of another European country.
Notes
1 Haberlandt and Wolf only came into contact in 1897, after which Haberlandt was helpful in promoting Wolf’s career. The presentation of Wolf’s music in 1994 was chosen to accentuate the spirit of the end of the nineteenth century.
2 For the whole event, see Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 1995, 84-100.
3 http://www.fastcompany.com/3023504/leadership-now/an-inside-look-into-the-wild-west-of-life-coaching (accessed March 10 2014). The website is just one of the many examples showing how marketing strategy entrepreneurs try to overflow the world with “coaching” in terms of “cultivating creativity.”
4 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_anniversaries (accessed March 10, 2014). The website encourages users: “Browse [!] important events in history by clicking on each day a featured archival New York Times front page article, as well as a list of other notable event that occurred on that day.” The calendar has a row of external links and resources such as New York Times, the Library of Congress or Today in Australian History.
5 In 2014 the cradle at the Piazza San Pietro in the Vatican held the inscription “Franziskus 1223 - Franziskus 2013,” citing the inauguration in 2013 of the new pope Franziskus.
6 The term is coined in analogy to idolatry, the adoration of images, see: Michel 1987 and http://www.zeit.de/1987/38/die-magie-des-ortes (accessed March 1, 2015).
7 The 1987 Congress in Zürich was entitled “The Life Cycle.”
8 Already in 1996, his memory was honoured with a “Nessler-Prize,” the “Karl-Ludwig-Nessler-Jubiläumsfrisieren,” which is awarded to accomplished members of the German hairdresser trade every third year. Nessler, born 1872 in Todtnau, emigrated in 1918 to the US where he died in 1951; cf en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Nessler (accessed March 10th, 2014).
9 Etymologically the word “event” has its roots in the word “aventure” as something unexpected, never seen before, conveying also the intention to out-do or top what went before.
10 With a broadened notion of these lieux see the big movement of Nora 1997, see also the many followers of this idea in likewise projects in Germany, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands etc.

Works Cited


When the Folklorists Won the Battle but Lost the War:
The Cumbersome (Re-)Birth of SIEF in 1964

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Abstract
In September 1964, la Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires (CIAP)—the international organization for folklore and ethology, was renamed SIEF (la Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore). Its bylaws were changed and a new executive Board elected. This change took place after a period of decline for CIAP and years of hard debate. Formal issues were the question of the name, the membership structure, and the affiliation to UNESCO. What was at stake however was the unity of the discipline, that is whether ethnology and folklore should be regarded as two independent disciplines or as different specialities of one common discipline—a unified “European ethnology,” as well as the relationship to anthropology. One faction was led by the German folklorist Kurt Ranke and the other by the Swedish ethnologist Sigurd Erixon. The article presents the background, that is the troubled history of CIAP and the difficult situation in the late 1950s, and it discusses the train of events that led to the putsch in Athens in September 1964, when the Ranke faction won and the idea of a unified discipline was shot down for several decades.

The Winner Writes the History
In September 2014, the Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF) celebrated its 50th anniversary. From one point of view, the age is correct and the date correctly chosen. SIEF got its name and its bylaws at a meeting in Athens on September 8-9, 1964. From another point of view, it was a rebirth or a rejuvenation that took place, rather than a birth. The adventure started in 1928, and the society was 86 years old at the time of its demicentennial.

When CIAP (la Commission des Arts et Traditions Populaires) became SIEF during two September days in 1964, the victorious parties were careful to present the passage as a legal and democratic transition. On the one hand, they claimed that a new organization was born, on the other hand, they claimed the full heritage, material and immaterial, of the old organization—archives, treasury, working-groups or commissions, even its UNESCO affiliation; that is,
everything except the name. Even its rather somnolent scholarly life, which
the new leaders had wanted to escape from, continued more or less as before.
Hence, the debated question of the age of SIEF. The society’s roots certainly
go back to a meeting in Prague in October 1928. But do a change of name and
amended bylaws make a new organization?

The transition was by no means a peaceful one. There are two scholars who
were especially central in the tug-of-war around CIAP in the early 1960s, which
ended with a putsch in Athens. One was Sigurd Erixon (1888-1968), profes-
sor of ethnology in Stockholm and research director of the Nordiska Museet.
Sweden’s most influential ethnologist through more than a generation, Sigurd
Erixon was the founder of several international scholarly journals (Folk-Liv,
Laos, Ethnologia Europaea). He was very active on the European scene from the
early 1930s to the late 1960s, and to most European scholars his name was
synonymous with “European ethnology.” For Erixon, “European (regional)
ethnology” comprised the fields of material, social and spiritual culture; to
him, folkloristics was a branch of the discipline, and not a discipline in its own
right—a position that brought him much opposition from folklorists.

The other protagonist was the German Volkskundler Kurt Ranke (1908-
1985), professor of folklore first in Kiel and from 1960 in Göttingen. Ranke had
a dubious past from the war, but he rose quickly in the post-war hierarchy of
German Volkskunde and became one of the leading folk narrative scholars of
his time. He founded the journal Fabula, an encyclopaedia on international
narrative research—Die Enzyklopädie des Märchens, as well as the world-em-

Erixon and Ranke each had their groups of adherents. Both parties claimed
democratic ideals—Erixon wanted formal representation and safe election
procedures (but accepted individual members in addition); the other wanted
an open society with membership for everyone. That was the front issue. But a
complex of other motives lurked underneath these ideals.

I call the Athens event a putsch, because in fact it was not members of CIAP
who voted on the change. The majority of the voters were members of Kurt
Ranke’s two-years old ISFNR, which hosted CIAP’s General Assembly in Sep-
tember 1964.

The Key, the Questions and the Sources
Looking at the past, it is the historian’s privilege to observe the results of an
action or a train of events. The key to what happened in Athens in 1964 is as
follows:
The concrete results of the putsch were that
- The membership structure was changed, from a commission constituted by elected national representatives to a society consisting of individual members.
- A restricted number of official national representatives were replaced by an unlimited number of individuals, with no control of scholarly qualities or affiliation.
- The name was changed from one defining the scholarly field to one saying something about disciplines.

The further consequences were that
- The independence of the separate disciplines of ethnology and folklore was asserted, and the idea of a unified discipline was effectively shot down.
- As the new structure was contrary to UNESCO’s requirements, the financial basis was strangled.
- The European scholarly world of ethnology and folklore was split, with the Erixon/Ethnologia Europaea camp (ethnologists and some folklorists) against a predominantly folkloristic SIEF.
- A new journal, independent of SIEF—Ethnologia Europaea—was founded.
- SIEF entered some somnolent decades, and the working-groups began their independent lives, some liberating themselves from SIEF.

The questions that remain to be discussed are the how’s and why’s. CIAP had been Sigurd Erixon’s long-time concern—and headache. Why did Kurt Ranke want to take control of CIAP, an organization that most German Volkskundler had neglected for decades? Why was CIAP so important for a Volkskundler who had a firm grasp of another international organization (ISFN)? And how was it possible for this folklorist to win a resounding victory over the internationally experienced ethnologist Sigurd Erixon? History is formed by individual actors as well as by structures. This discussion includes some reflections on elements of a more structural kind—like the amateur movement and membership organization.

Before we approach these questions, a presentation of the history of CIAP is in order. Without CIAP’s troubled past as a backdrop, the events in the 1960s are difficult to digest. The main source material is correspondence, notes and memorandums, minutes from meetings, etc. The archives of CIAP and SIEF are spread between many institutions, as the presidency and the secretariat of CIAP have moved around. I have had access to important collections of material in Stockholm (Nordiska museet), Paris (Le Musée des Arts et Traditions Popu-
laires/MNATP, UNESCO), Amsterdam (Meertens Instituut), Arnhem (Nederlands Openluchtmuseum), and Lisbon (Museum Nacional de Ethnologia), in addition to smaller public and private archives in Oslo, Uppsala, Dublin, Vienna, and Göttlingen. Some of these archives are now being brought together at the Meertens Instituut in Amsterdam, which is presently in charge of SIEF's secretariat (including the MNATP archives from Georges Henri Rivière, the Rotterdam archives from Karel Constant Peeters, copies of parts of the epistolary collections from Sigurd Erixon and Jorge Dias).

**CIAP Until the 1960s—The Short Version of a Troubled History**

The roots of CIAP—la Commission des Arts et Traditions Populaires—go back to October 1928, when the League of Nations after much hesitation gave the green light for a congress on folk art, to be arranged in Prague by its sub-organization for cultural affairs—l’Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle (IICI). CIAP was the earliest general organization of ethnology and folklore in Europe. The late 1920s and the 1930s were a difficult period in European politics, with nationalist movements, unemployment, and the rising of Nazi, fascist and communist regimes. The League of Nations was ambivalent; it wanted to use culture—and the 1928 congress—in the service of peace, coexistence and mutual understanding. But at the same time it feared what a discipline like folklore might offer of ammunition to belligerent parties on the European interwar scene (Rogan 2007, 2008a, 2014). This fear emerges clearly from personal notes, memos and correspondence between the IICI officials and some participants. The Belgian participant, Albert Marinus, gives a fuller explanation (Actes [...] 1956, 18):

> You have perhaps observed that the word “folklore” was used neither for the congress nor for the commission [CIAP] that came out of it. The simple reason is that to the former League of Nations, the word “folklore” was banished, just as was the word “ethnography”. Actually, they believed that the word “folklore” would give stuff to political claims, and that the populations would not resist from claims, with reference to similarities in costume, songs, etc. Such attitudes were to be feared especially for disputed regions between neighbouring countries.

The event was attended by 200-300 participants, and a battle was fought both during and after the congress on how to follow up. There was a deep cleavage between the scholars who wanted to establish a scholarly organization, and those (mostly bureaucrats and official national representatives) who wanted
an organization with more practical cultural aims. The delegates of the League of Nations preferred no organization at all, but they found an organization controlled by IICI to be the lesser evil.

Through the 1930s CIAP was under the strict control of the League’s sub-organization for cultural cooperation, for its administrative as well as its scholarly activities. In addition, the declining prestige and influence of the League itself in the interwar years were detrimental to its sub-organizations, CIAP included. CIAP’s first president was German (1928-1933, Otto Lehmann) and the second, Italian (1933-1938, Emilio Bodrero). Otto Lehmann (1865-1951) was an educationalist and museologist and director of the Altonaer Museum near Hamburg. Emilio Bodrero (1874-1949) was a central politician and specialist in Greek philosophy and political history. From 1940 he got a chair in Rome in the “storia e dottrina del fascismo”—that is, the history and the doctrines of Fascism. Neither of them made noteworthy contributions to CIAP, and both were forced to retreat—first Lehmann when Germany withdrew from the League (1933) and then Bodrero when Italy withdrew (1937). If CIAP had been a lame duck under the League in the early 1930s, it became paralyzed by the political situation in the late 1930s.

Post-war life in CIAP started in an optimistic pitch. After a preliminary meeting in Geneva in 1945 and a General Assembly in Paris in 1947, CIAP was given a new start—with new bylaws and a new structure. At the 1947 conference in Paris, the around 60 delegates boiled over with enthusiasm. There was a unanimous will to be “a strictly scientific organization,” “without the intervention of governmental authorities” and to escape all the traps that the old CIAP had fallen into. At the same time there was an unrealistic optimism about activities to be started, the creation and recreation of ethnological institutions after the war, the use of the discipline to reconstruct the rural zones of Europe, etc. The president elected in 1947, Salvador de Madriaga (1886-1988)—Spanish diplomat, politician and professor of Spanish literature—was a fervent pacifist and anti-fascist who had fled the Franco regime. With no knowledge whatsoever of ethnology or folklore, he functioned only as a symbolic head of CIAP (Rogan 2013, 98-100, 105).

In 1947 CIAP had started out on its own, with an independent status in relation to the United Nations and UNESCO, the successor to the League of Nations. But with no funding there were no activities. Two years passed when nothing happened, so a change of policy was necessary. In 1949 CIAP joined a group of international scholarly organizations to found the UNESCO organ CIPSH—le Conseil International de Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines. As a member of CIPSH, CIAP could find some funding for its scholarly projects.
The driving force in the scholarly activities of CIAP in the 1950s was Sigurd Erixon. At the outset Erixon was sceptical of CIAP, but he saw the UNESCO affiliation as a golden opportunity to gain economic support for research projects and in 1949 he made Sweden join CIAP. He never wanted to preside over CIAP himself, but he held a predominant position through the presidency of several of its commissions and through his repeated initiatives to make CIAP function better—not least as a tool for building bridges between all the heterogeneous national varieties of ethnology, ethnography and folklore.

Erixon was in charge of CIAP’s dictionary, a work that took more than 15 years to complete (Rogan 2013, 131-34). The dictionary had originally been proposed by Arnold van Gennep (Paris) and was published in two volumes; one by Åke Hultkrantz (Uppsala) on ethnological terms (1961) and one by Laurits Bødker (Copenhagen) on folkloristic concepts (1965).

The most tangible result in other fields was the Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie (IVB). The bibliography had been a Swiss-German project since 1917, with Swiss editors and German or Swiss publishers. In 1949 CIAP took over responsibility through its bibliography commission, with the Swiss Volkskundler Paul Geiger and later Robert Wildhaber as editors (Rogan 2013, 119-21).

It should be noted, however, that the scholarly commissions of CIAP were small and they differed from the later SIEF commissions. They consisted of three to ten specialists, appointed by the Board. Two of the commissions—the ones for the dictionary and the bibliography—received support from UNESCO and worked for a concrete output—the annual or biannual (and always strongly delayed) bibliographies, and the (likewise delayed) dictionaries.

Erixon also presided over CIAP’s most active commission, the one on cartography. The cartography commission worked for the coordination of national atlas projects and practices, through homogenization of techniques and methods, common questionnaires and topics, and with a European atlas of popular culture as a distant goal (Rogan 2013, 121-131). Other commissions of CIAP tended to lead their own lives, more or less independent of the organization, and their activities are difficult to trace, as they neither received support nor reported back.

It was also Erixon who edited CIAP’s journal Laos, until UNESCO stopped supporting it in 1955 (Rogan 2013, 115-18). In vol. 1 (1951) he presented his visions for the discipline. He saw regional ethnology as “a branch of general ethnology, applied to civilized peoples, their social grouping and their complex cultural conditions.” Having abandoned his pre-war behaviourist and functionalist ideas, Erixon now found his inspiration in American cultural anthropology or “culturology,” with its concepts of culture areas, folk culture...
versus mobile culture, culture centres and ways of diffusion, acculturation and assimilation. His references are first and foremost American cultural anthropologists. He proposes a historical and comparative study of a field that embraces urban and industrial societies, societies in transformation as well as traditional societies. He advocates a study of culture in its three dimensions—space, time and social strata. The theoretical apparatus is that of diffusionism, and cartography is the tool par excellence. Such was the scientific programme that he recommended for Laos, for CIAP and for European (regional) ethnology—and which he also advocated through his cartography commission.4

On the organizational side, however, CIAP was struggling. The strict IICI administrative regime before the war had been replaced in 1947 by lax management. Between 1947 and 1953, the Board and the General Assembly convened only once—when Erixon hosted a congress in Stockholm in 1951: The International Congress of European and Western Ethnology.5 Erixon encouraged the congress to discuss more efficient international cooperation, but the debate was inconclusive. When Salavador de Madriaga resigned from the presidency shortly afterwards, CIAP was thrown into a new crisis.

Several factors contributed to the crisis: a legitimacy dispute in the presidency, criticism from UNESCO of bad administrative management, missing archives, and delays in the publication programs. Disorder in the accountancy (project subventions)6 was discovered and CIAP was threatened with examination by the UNESCO audit experts.7 The general secretary was forced to resign for not following up the decisions of the Board,8 for disorder in the finances and on suspicion of embezzlement.9

Behind the crisis another set of interrelated problems may be discerned: the economic situation and the membership structure. Membership in post-war CIAP was first based on individual membership (1947-1953) and then on national committees (1954-1964). More will be said about this below, but in both cases it turned out to be impossible to collect the yearly fees. CIAP had no other resources than the limited and earmarked project subventions from UNESCO.

Two persons who managed to keep above the quarrels in the secretariat were Sigurd Erixon and Georges Henri Rivière, the leader of le Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Paris. During two conferences, in Namur in 1953 and Paris in 1954, they managed to restore order and to gain support for reorganization (Rogan 2013).

Erixon was urged to stand for the presidency in 1954, but be preferred the rank of ordinary member of the Executive Board. Instead he launched another candidate, the folklore professor Reidar Th. Christiansen from Oslo, who was elected—and who would remain CIAP’s president for the next ten years. Jorge
Bjarne Rogan

Dias, professor of ethnology in Lisbon, was elected to the office of general secretary, and as treasurer, Ernst Baumann, a folklorist from Basel. Jorge Dias (1907-1973), who held the same view as Erixon on European ethnology, was an efficient administrator as well as an excellent scholar. When Erixon proposed Christiansen for the presidency, it was probably because Christiansen was a folklorist who regarded folklore and ethnology as two faces of the same coin (Rogan 2012a). Erixon knew only too well that the great majority of European folklorists opposed his vision for a common discipline. With Christiansen to front CIAP, Erixon would have better chances to reach his goal.

At the Arnhem congress in September 1955 and the follow-up symposium in Amsterdam, optimism still reigned after the remoulding of CIAP in 1954 (Rogan 2011). The congress was hosted by Winand Roukens but organized by Dias. The scholarly focus was on cartography and a European atlas of popular culture, and there was an important debate on the profile and scope of Euro-
pean ethnology and the naming of the discipline, especially whether the term “folklore” should be used. The follow-up symposium in Amsterdam just after the congress stated in a recommendation that the term “folklore” should be used on a national level, in countries where there was a tradition for this designation, whereas the name on the international level should be “ethnology,” for a field embracing spiritual, material and social culture. If desired, the qualifying epithet “regional” or “national” might be used, to distinguish it from (social) anthropology or the study of primitive or non-literate cultures. This consensus would not last long, however. The resistance was especially hard in German-speaking Europe, where the scholars wanted to stick to the traditional concepts (and dichotomy) of *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde*.

Furthermore, problems on the administrative side would soon pile up again. The general secretary Jorge Dias (1907-1973) found the office strenuous, the membership system difficult to administer and the fees hard to collect.11 When the treasurer Baumann died in December 1955, no one was willing to take over the treasury. The economy of CIAP was a permanent headache. Dias, who had more than enough to do in Portugal as well as in the Portuguese colonies, threw in the towel after three years.

President Reidar Th. Christiansen (1886-1971) was an acknowledged folklore scholar with long experience of international relations. But he was a prudent person who shunned conflicts—and conflicts were precisely what he encountered in CIAP. He had long absences, when his research and periods as visiting professor led him to England, to Ireland and to the United States (Rogan 2012a). During the first part of his presidency he spent two years abroad (1956-58), when he probably paid little attention to CIAP. Furthermore, he turned 70 in 1958, his health was not strong, and as a retired professor he had no infrastructure to lean upon. The physical distance from Oslo to Paris, the seat of CIAP’s only benefactor UNESCO, was also a complicating factor. When Jorge Dias decided to resign in spring 1957, Christiansen lost almost all administrative support and was stuck in a trap he never got out of. As he wrote to Sigurd Erixon in 1959, when the problems piled up: “I regret sincerely that I did not resign, I too, when the secretary left. But I thought for honour’s sake that I had to try and keep things going.”13

In July 1957, Winand Roukens, director of *Het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum* in Arnhem, accepted the double function of general secretary and treasurer. But the inherent problems of the national committees and his lack of success in collecting overdue fees, made him resign after only five months.14

The bylaws of CIAP prescribed a Board meeting once a year, but between 1955 and 1964 there were only two regular Board meetings: in Paris 1957 and
in Kiel 1959. Due to lack of money to cover travel costs, Board members met only occasionally at other folklore congresses. No General Assembly was arranged after 1955 and there were no regular elections between 1954 and 1964. As UNESCO required that its member organizations hold regular elections and assemblies, the danger of exclusion from CISPH was imminent.

These problems should by no means be attributed to the president only. With the exception of Sigurd Erixon, and to some extent the Belgian Vice President Albert Marinus, CIAP Board members were passive. In a series of letters to Erixon, Christiansen repeatedly mentions the difficulties of getting response and support from the others for arranging meetings. And the more or less non-existent national committees seldom answered summons or invoices.  

CIAP’s difficult relations to CIPSH and UNESCO would become a recurrent theme in the following years. A certain percentage of the membership fees should be returned to CIPSH, in return for more substantial allocations back to CIAP for scholarly projects. From 1957 onwards, UNESCO repeatedly complained about lacking return payments. UNESCO threatened to reduce or withhold its subventions for the bibliography and the dictionary, as their publication was seriously delayed. In 1957, UNESCO had signalled that a fusion with another member organization, IUAES (The International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences), was desirable, and in 1959 CIAP had to accept a de facto joint representation with IUAES in CIPSH. If the ethnologists saw this as a minor evil—they only feared a harder competition for the allocations—many folklorists feared an anthropologization of their discipline.

By the end of the 1950s, CIAP was by most standards bankrupt and paralyzed. President Christiansen constantly sought advice from Erixon, his only confidant, but he seemed incapable of taking any initiatives, as well as of resigning, only hoping for more generous credits or asking for deferments from an unwilling and critical UNESCO administration. In this situation, Sigurd Erixon, an ordinary Board member for all practical purposes, with the consent of Christiansen, took over the leadership in CIAP, while Christiansen nominally remained president. However, this “Nordic alliance” would soon be challenged by a much younger colleague, Kurt Ranke, professor of Volkskunde in Göttingen.

Some Glimpses of the Way to Athens
In August 1959, Kurt Ranke organised a congress on folk narrative research in Kiel, where he offered a venue for a CIAP meeting. The German CIAP member Helmut Dölker (Stuttgart) was present, but it was the non-member Ranke who offered to help CIAP economically and to support CIAP’s Internationale
Volkskundliche Bibliographie—on the condition that the administration of the bibliography be transferred from Switzerland to Germany and a German publishing house take over the publishing. Certainly, the issue had been agreed on beforehand with the editor Robert Wildhaber.

Those present at the meeting in Kiel decided to convene in Oslo to discuss a reorganization of CIAP. Christiansen obtained a small allowance from UNESCO for an “expert meeting” in Oslo in September 1961. But in addition to Christiansen, only two CIAP members met there: Erixon and Roukens. Non-member Ranke, however, came up from Göttingen. Ranke was by far the most active in the discussions, and he proposed a close cooperation between CIAP and the German Zentralarchiv der Volkszählung in Marburg. A working group was established to propose new by-laws for CIAP, with Ranke as leader and Erixon, Roukens and Åke Hultkrantz as members. It is clear from his correspondence with Erixon that Christiansen disliked Ranke’s involvement and his proposal for a “German-dominated Verein,” and he disapproved of the idea of a working group.

From the Brussel meeting, 1962. Front row, from left: Sigurd Erixon (Stockholm), Paul de Keyser (Gent), Roger Lecotté (Paris), unknown person, Olav Bø (Oslo). Photographer unknown © Nordiska museet.
The working group never convened, in spite of several reminders from Erixon. In April 1962 Ranke unexpectedly came up with a *Memorandum der Kommission zur Reorganisation der CIAP*. Instead of a proposal for amended by-laws—the task given to the working group in Oslo—it contained a full program for a new society. The text argues for a *Regionalethnologie* covering all fields of ethnology and folklore. It is surprising that Ranke argued so forcefully for what he called a *Verein für moderne kritisch-empirischer Social- und Kulturwissenschaft*. The text proposed an expansive and ambitious program. Erixon was content with the scholarly profile of the *Verein* in Ranke’s *Memorandum*, but more uncertain about the proposed new membership structure.

During spring and summer of 1962, Erixon was squeezed between the entrepreneurial Ranke and the passive Christiansen. Erixon tried to organize a dialogue within the working group to revise the text, but Ranke made himself inaccessible. He neither answered letters nor gave the group a chance to discuss the text. On Ranke’s proposal—or rather order—CIAP’s Board was summoned to meet in September 1962, at the founding congress of his *International Society for Folk Narrative Research* (ISFNIR). The congress was hosted by Karel Peeters, professor of folklore in Antwerp, and it was combined with the 25 years jubilee for the Royal Belgian Folklore Commission (in Brussels).

Only four CIAP members met in Brussels, Christiansen being absent. According to Erixon it was a farce and a first putsch. Ranke and the Belgian hosts had not provided the necessary secretarial assistance to the CIAP assembly; the venue and the day of the meeting were suddenly changed, a new agenda was presented and distributed together with Ranke’s *Memorandum*. The folklorists at the ISFNIR congress were invited to join the CIAP meeting and to vote! The most active persons—according to Erixon—were an arrogant Ranke and a very aggressive Robert Wildhaber:

[… During the deliberations, Stith] Thompson demanded that a new committee be appointed, to formulate new paragraphs, and he offered to go to Paris himself and talk with [Jean] d’Ormesson [UNESCO] and later to present the case for you [Christiansen]. [Robert] Wildhaber reacted with frenzy to this proposal. He was suddenly lit by a flame to new deeds. So energetic and excited as he was in Brussels have I never seen him before. The Belgians supported him. Lecotté [see below] mentioned that he, as a Parisian, knew what UNESCO would think and that he had so strong an influence himself that there was no need for the services of Thompson.
Erixon, who was the only ethnologist among approximately thirty folklorists, tried to argue for more formal procedures, but as he reported in his letter afterwards to Christiansen:20

But to no avail. It was decided, by members and non-members alike, that Ranke’s proposal be adopted and that a committee should be appointed and given the mission to formulate new bylaws. On Ranke’s instructions, the following members were elected: ... [Robert Wildhaber (Basel), Karel Peters (Antwerp/Leuven), Roger Lecotté (Paris), Roger Pinon (Liège) and Ranke himself]. ... Now the masters in Belgium and France have taken the lead, in connivance with Wildhaber and Ranke. And he adds, not without irony: “Let us hope this will lead to a new vitality for CIAP.” The new CIAP committee thus consisted of five folklorists, none of whom were even members of CIAP. Soon after, Ranke must have decided to withdraw to a more inconspicuous position. Of the remaining four, Wildhaber and Peters were professional folklorists with national positions (museum director and university professor), whereas the two latter, who worked in a library and a school, were closer to the amateur folklorist movement. Some time later Pinon reconstructed “Minutes” from the meeting, which according to Erixon were full of errors and omissions and never sent out for approval.21 This private document however became the official platform for the new committee.

The “Gang of Four,” as they nicknamed themselves, worked for two years. Three thick reports were distributed to four hundred scholars worldwide, and one thousand pre-printed formulas of adherence to the new organization were distributed—long before it existed! They launched a series of attacks against

Christiansen and Erixon—or the “technologist,” as this “Gang” used to call ethnologists (because they studied material culture). The documents and incidents are enough to fill a whole book. The Gang soon declared themselves the legal Board of CIAP and started deliberations with UNESCO. They dreamed of a world-embracing organization with splendid headquarters in Brussels—in the fashionable Palais de Congrès or the no less famous Parc du Cinquantenaire. They even appointed close colleagues to the main offices—which did not exist yet! Reading these documents is like entering a novel—in the genre of magic realism. Gabriel Marcia Márquez or Jorge Luis Borges could not have done better!

The three reports produced and distributed by the Gang created turmoil. With the tacit consent of Ranke, the Gang soon dismissed the idea of the broad anthropological scope, which Ranke had originally proposed in his Memorandum, an idea that was dear to Erixon and his camp. Concerning the concept of “folklore,” the reports triggered two parallel debates, one on the future designation of the organization, another on the contents of the discipline.

With their Germanic background, Wildhaber and Peters were relaxed about a broad conception of folklore, in the sense of Volkskunde (including material and social culture). However, the French-speaking Lecotté and Pinon, who seem to have been the main authors of the reports, argued for the “true” or “pure” folklore as a distinct scholarly discipline with material and social culture left out. The latter two wanted only “folklore” in the name of the organization, and they produced strange strategies for replacing “arts et traditions populaires” in the name of CIAP with “folklore.”

This position was untenable for the scholarly community at large, for whom the field and the organization should cover both material and spiritual culture, regardless of whether they conceived of it as one common discipline (as did Erixon, Rivière, Dias, de Rohan-Csermak, Bratanić, Steinitz, Meertens and their supporters) or two independent disciplines. Where Erixon wanted only “European ethnology” in the name, a majority found a compromise in keeping the old name for the future organization—of “arts et traditions populaires.” This was actually the conclusion of the voting at a meeting in Bonn in April 1964, presided over by Roukens, which Ranke organized in preparation for the CIAP general Assembly in Athens in September. As stated in the minutes from the meeting, this was “a compromise to end all the quarrels on the name of the discipline.”22 In Athens however, Ranke found no problem in circumventing this decision.

Peters reported regularly and in detail to Ranke about the work in the committee and sent him copies of the most important letters. In turn, Ranke kept him informed about important developments and offered advice on matters of
policy. On occasion, the commander in Göttingen reproached his foot soldiers in Belgium and France when they committed blunders or went too far.

To prepare for the final attack, Ranke organized the abovementioned meeting in Bonn in April 1964, with forty handpicked scholars. The situation before Athens was that two groups claimed the right to convene CIAP and to set the agenda. The reason Ranke chose to convene in Athens was that he would arrange his ISFNR congress there in September. The presence of so many folklorists would give him a safe majority.

What happened then in Athens on September 8 and 9, 1964? There are two sorts of sources, the official minutes and the eyewitness reports. The first give the winners’ version, with short, formal notices of the results obtained. The second are the losers’ versions, revealing strategic election procedures, violation of procedural rules, and blunt attacks in the closed sessions. The official minutes exclude all that happened behind the scenes, but the eyewitness reports render in detail what they experienced as an unfair battle and a putsch.

Only three CIAP Board members were present. Non-members Ranke and Wildhaber were most active in the debate, and once again all the ISFNR folklorists were allowed to vote. The result was that folklorists took all the seats of the new Board: Karel Peters as president; Mihai Pop, Carl-Herman Tillhagen and Richard Dorson as vice presidents; Roger Pinon as general secretary and Roger Lecotté as treasurer. And Ranke, Roukens and Wildhaber were among the members of the new Administrative Council. The commission was reconstituted as a society and its name was changed from CIAP to SIEF. Thus, the Gang of Four finally managed to secure all the important positions, Ranke obtained his society, and Pinon and Lecotté got folklore into the name. The winner takes all!
All were not happy, though. A dissident German voice, Matthias Zender, disliked both the procedure and the result. Having been elected to the new SIEF Council, he offered to step down to give his seat to one of the opponents—Branimir Bratanić. Geza Csermak-Rohan, CIAP’s interim secretary appointed by Christiansen, wrote furiously about electoral campaigns and the ambush by these “Sturmabteilungsmänner.” I wonder if the expression was used deliberately. Bratanić wrote about “the voting machine,” “the usurpation of power,” “die Alleinherrschaft” of “the folklorists in a narrow sense.”

Personally, I feel uncomfortable with the 1964 event. But it is important to discuss how it could happen. The membership question is an issue that needs further discussion. Also, there are some aspects of the study of folklore that may contribute to a better understanding. One is the low degree of professional institutionalization combined with a broad and established amateur movement.

Membership: a Structural Problem
Pre-war CIAP had been based on national committees, as required by the League of Nations. The CIAP of 1947 was re-established on an independent basis, with individual membership. But without economic support for CIAP nothing could be done. Consequently, in 1949 CIAP became a founding member of the UNESCO sub-organization CIPSH—le Conseil International de Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines. From then onwards CIPSH gave regular, earmarked support to the journal Laos, the dictionary and the bibliography, and occasionally allowances for meetings. It looks, however, as if UNESCO did not enforce any membership rules the first years.

But these allocations were not sufficient and the collecting of fees did not function. UNESCO expressed its discontent with the administration of CIAP, first in 1953, when the general secretary E. Foundoukidis was forced to resign, and then recurrently through the latter half of the 1950s for the missing return payments to UNESCO. When remoulding CIAP a second time after the war (1953/54), Erixon and Rivière reintroduced the system with a membership based on national committees, as required by UNESCO. Both Erixon and Rivière had experience as delegates to UNESCO commissions, and they had better knowledge of the international bureaucracy than most of their colleagues. From 1954 CIAP was again based on national committees, which should each appoint up to three members to its General Assembly, which in turn elected the Executive Council.

However, there were not only economic arguments for this structure. To carry through ambitious projects like the European atlas—Erixon’s cherished
idea—would require international coordination of research teams on the national level, that is teams (or national committees) invested with the necessary authority and national funding—and not individual researchers.

To this must be added Erixon’s strong conviction that European ethnology, his lifelong vision—as presented and developed in article after article from the 1930s to the 1960s—would be much more difficult to develop as a theoretically based, comparative discipline, without an international forum which transcended the various sub-disciplines. And in Erixon’s eyes a firmly controlled organization, with an elected and selected membership, would be a safer alternative for reaching that goal, than a loosely organised society (like CIAP in the late 1940s and early 1950s) where scholars and amateurs alike could become members, and where—in his own words—“the dilettantes” reigned.29

But the system of national committees did not function. In many countries the level of institutionalization of folklore and ethnology—in the form of universities, centres and archives—was low; members disappeared and the committees vanished, if they had been appointed at all. As general secretary Dias did not manage to collect the fees and UNESCO therefore did not receive its symbolic contribution, UNESCO threatened to withdraw all support from CIAP, or else to fuse CIAP with its anthropological commission (IUAES). The system of national committees and fees seemed to function for other UNESCO commissions, like for instance the OIM (later ICOM), but not with ethnologists and folklorists.

After three years and more than three hundred letters and reminders, Dias had had enough of non-existing or vanishing national committees. In June 1957 he resigned from his office in CIAP. Winand Roukens took over—only to discover that no more than 10 out of 60 (nominal) national committees had paid.30 After he too threw in the sponge, CIAP was mostly without a secretariat from 1958 and 1961.31

On the other hand, Ranke and the Gang of Four wanted a society based on individual membership. The argument presented in their widely distributed reports seems to have been simply that it was more “democratic.” Opposition to leaving the system of national committees came not only from Erixon and Christiansen, but also from central scholars like Rivière and Bratanić. Ingeborg Weber-Kellerman and Gerhard Heilfurth (Marburg), the latter the president of one of the few functioning national committees of CIAP—the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde—also reacted negatively to a system based only on individual membership.32 The argument for maintaining the national committee system was not only UNESCO’s formal requirement. It was repeatedly argued in the debate that national committees were indispensable for planning
and organizing big international projects. And there was the “democracy argument” turned around: designated national delegates would secure a more equal and even representation and prevent special groups from dominating the organization. The latter argument was repeatedly stressed by Rivière, who would never serve on the Board but had obtained the lifelong title of “Advisor to CIAP.”

To all those who would never have a chance of being designated through national channels, however, individual membership felt more “democratic.” By addressing the proposal to a very large number of scholars and amateurs, the Four would logically get support for individual membership. As demonstrated by the voting in Athens, the majority wanted individual membership. Erixon had proposed (in Bonn, April 1963) a combination of the two systems, but to no avail—his proposal was not even rendered in the minutes from the meeting.

History is full of irony and paradoxes. CIAP/SIEF has alternated between national delegations and individual membership from the 1920s to the 1980s. In 1964, the new SIEF leadership wanted both a new membership system and to keep the contact with UNESCO. But with the change in the membership, the subventions stopped, as predicted by Erixon and Rivière. Only four years later, in 1968, the folklorist-dominated SIEF once more knit contacts with UNESCO and CIPSH, through re-incorporation in the IUAES (The International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences)—an organization they had argued against before 1964. The pretext was economic support for the forthcoming congress in Paris (1970, adjourned to 1971) as well as later allocations. A consequence of this renewed affiliation to UNESCO was that SIEF had to renounce its global ambitions and accept being a scholarly society for research on European culture(s)—as a division of labour with the other anthropological associations. At the same time, SIEF expanded its Board to make room for more national representatives. Some years later, SIEF reverted to a system of national delegates. To SIEF’s 3rd congress, in Zürich in 1987, were invited its 35 national delegates plus specially invited guests, or as stated in the invitation: “SIEF has 35 delegates representing almost all European countries.” From the 1990s, however, membership has been open once again to all scholars.

A Low Degree of Institutionalization and the Amateur Movement
When Dias resigned as general secretary in 1957, his grievance concerned not only the problems associated with national committees and formal membership. He was also very disappointed with the lack of interest in a general organization, especially among folklorists, many of whom he experienced as an obstacle to CIAP and to the scientific development of the discipline. He sig-
nalled time and again his scepticism towards the amateurs in the field and his annoyance with the folklorists who claimed to be a separate discipline and often refused to cooperate with ethnologists. In a retrospective published in 1964, just before the split in Athens, he stated:

> It is difficult to create an organism to co-ordinate the ethnological study of Europe. During the three years I was general secretary of the CIAP I came to know the enormous difficulties, which were always arising, either from lack of internal understanding within some countries, or from lack of the spirit of international collaboration in others. This lack of the spirit of collaboration is due partly to ethnocentric prejudices, which keep ethnologists from admitting that European peoples might be studied by ethnological methods as well as any other peoples. Therefore there are ethnological societies of Africanists, Americanists, Orientalists etc., but an ethnological society of Europeanists is not yet possible. […] The barrier is certainly due to the different attitudes of folklorists and ethnologists: many folklorists do not want to consider themselves ethnologists, although actually a folklorist is an ethnologist who specializes in oral literature […] (Dias 28.10.1963, in Jacobeit 1964, 182-83).

In other texts Dias invoked the low degree of institutionalization of the discipline, the amateurs and their “excessive love of what is regional and particular”:  

> This state of affairs is even worsened by the fact that in many countries there is no university tradition in the field of regional ethnology. All the research is in the hands of small groups of interested amateurs, who […] are normally opposed to a superior organization, where they fear they may lose the state of personal prestige, which they have conquered in their home setting. (Dias s.a. [1957]).

A longstanding weak foothold at universities in several countries had marked the discipline profoundly. Much collecting and dissemination was performed by dedicated persons with little academic training in folklore studies, their main bases being the local folklore society, the local museum and the local journal. This can be observed through most the 20th century, not least in the former colonial powers, where anthropology was prioritized in the universities. The collecting and the study of the national popular culture were relegated to places outside of the universities, to local folklore societies and museums. Many cases could be cited, but as SIEF now has its legal seat in Amsterdam, let
me quote what Pieter Meertens—founder of the Meertens Institute and a partisan of Erixon’s policy—wrote about the problem in 1951. He deplored that

In the Netherlands the study of folklore is greatly hampered by its unfavourable position in the curricula of the universities. The place it occupies there is indeed a poor one [... The] study of folklore has for the greater part been left to amateurs. (Meertens s.a./1951).40

Half a century later, his compatriots Peter Jan Margry and Herman Roodenburg give a similar verdict, describing the history of the discipline until the 1990s as “one of a few scholars and numerous amateurs, of a limited interest in research and heavy emphasis on documentation and popularisation” (Margry and Roodenburg 2007, 261).

Let me mention just one case that corresponds to what Dias called the lack of internal understanding and opposition to comparative research among amateur folklorists. In Norway, where folklore was institutionalized very early, the greatest controversy ever concerning disciplinary issues was when the so-called “War of decentralization” broke out around 1920. Hundreds of local folklorists, mostly schoolteachers, had received small public stipends for collecting work. When Professor Knut Liestøl claimed the custodial right to this material, on behalf of the newly established central national archive for folklore at the University, a fierce war broke out. The local collectors created their own organization and claimed property rights to the material collected. To them, the material belonged to the locality where it had been collected; it should be kept there and distributed back to the local population. In Norway this was a forceful ideological and democratic movement, with a sting against an elite institution like the university, as well as against scholarly, comparative research and university professors.41

I mention this Norwegian counter-movement because it comprised a large number of local folklorists who would certainly have been utterly hostile to an international organization, had it been proposed to them. Similar conditions were found in other countries, as for example in Ireland where local collectors tried to fight the centralized Irish Folklore Commission.42

My point is not that folkloristics in general can be reduced to amateurism. In many ways, it was more theoretically inspired than the early material culture studies. But much of the support that The Gang of Four got was from these amateurs, as when they distributed membership formulas to one thousand persons—when there were hardly more than fifty university scholars of folklore and ethnology in Europe.
A Poetic Incident
Among the many repositories of CIAP’s/SIEF’s history, there is in the collection of SIEF’s first president Karel C. Peeters a very strange document—a poem, which I admit I do not quite grasp the full meaning of. In September 1964, the Dutch folklorist and philologist Winand Roukens (1896-1974)—the host of the 1955 CIAP congress in Arnhem, and short-term secretary of CIAP (autumn 1957)—was on his way home from Athens. Roukens was in an exuberant mood after the meeting. He made a stop-over in Strasbourg, where he composed a euphoric poem.

The poem is entitled Europa-Gedanken (nach Athènes)—“Thoughts about Europe (after Athens)”—and bears the dedication “In Freundschaft für Prof. Dr. Kurt Ranke.” It is dated September 17, 1964, eight days after the event in Athens, and is signed Winand Roukens, “Athen-Delegierter der Universität Nijmegen.”

It is a pompous poem, with references to Goethe; it is about building bridges between peoples and constructing “the European house”—in the name of humanism, and with clear allusions to the war. But there are also some disturbing elements from legends and folklore.

Europa-Gedanken (Nach Athènes…)
Zur ‘Cathédrale’ von der ‘Hoch-Schule’ her schau‘ich
still träumend in Hoffnung
mit ... Goethe;
an der Brück’ zwischen Völkern hier bau‘ich
in Sehnsucht still hoffend
mit Goethe ...
Von Deutschland nach Frankreich hin schau‘ich,
wie einst Er, Kurt, nun träumend mit Dir;
am neuen Europahaus bau‘ich
in schweigender Stille
mit Sagenhelden Willen
in hoffnungsschwerem Lenken
und ehrfürchtvollem Gedenken
wie Goethe einst, mit Dir ...
Mit unseren Brüdern schauen wir,
mit unseren Brüdern bauen wir
mit stillem Sagenkämpfermut,
as Opfer für Europablut,
schweigend am Europatempel
mit Goldstrahlendem Widmungsstempel:
HUMANITÄT

TRANSLATION: *Thoughts about Europe (after Athens)*

I am staring from the ‘high school’ towards the ‘cathedral’
silently dreaming, filled with hope
with ... Goethe;
I work here on the building of the bridge between peoples
longing and silently hoping
with Goethe ...
I am staring from Germany towards France
as He, Kurt, once did, now dreaming with you;
I work at the construction of the new European house
in a hushed silence
with the will of legendary heroes
guiding heavy with hope
and awe-filled remembrance
as Goethe once did, with you ...
With our brothers we look,
with our brothers we build
with the silent courage of the warriors of the sagas,
as sacrifice for European blood,
silently at the temple of Europe
with the golden shining stamp of dedication:
HUMANITY

Indeed, a very strange praise to bestow on a scholar like Ranke, with a dubious
past as a prominent member of the Nazi party (*NSDAP*) and even its *Sturmabteilung*, and with close ties to Alfred Rosenberg’s organization *Ahnenerbe* and
*NSDAP*’s *Hohe Schule*, where Rosenberg had intended a leading position for
him.46 It should be added, however, that Roukens was known for his anti-Nazi
attitudes during the war, and he was removed from office during the war for
his refusal to collaborate with the Germans.47

Or, perhaps not so strange after all? Was SIEF planned as a bridge between
a German *Volkskunde*—that was slowly recovering after its compromises with
the *Third Reich*—and the rest of European ethnology and folklore? “...The
bridge between peoples, a new European house,” in Roukens’s words, including
France, the traditional enemy? Was it meant as a kind of exoneration for
Ranke for his past in the service of a totalitarian state?
But then there are the dissonances, the folkloristic elements making allusions to a Germanic past: “...with the will of legendary heroes; ...with the silent courage of the warriors of the sagas; ...as sacrifice for European blood”? Is it just clumsy praise couched in romantic vocabulary? This strange text leaves some questions unanswered. It was not a private greeting to Ranke only, but a document that ended in the archives of the new SIEF. Whatever its deeper meaning, the poem confirms what other documents also reveal, that Kurt Ranke was the prime mover behind the new SIEF and that the victorious camp in Athens was effusively happy with the result.

Roukens was a minor figure in European folklore, but he was an efficient lieutenant for the mastermind behind the new SIEF, Kurt Ranke. Ranke was, during most of the process, a withdrawn commander-in-chief. The dirty work was done by his handpicked “Gang of Four,” with the assistance of Roukens and a few others. And dirty work it was at times, to judge from the contents of many of the letters and notes that circulated among the Four, not seldom marked “Confidential.”

By Way of Conclusion
In the late 1950s CIAP was in a deep crisis—economically, scholarly, morally. Everyone saw the need for a rejuvenation, but there was no unanimity as to the solutions.

Elements that made CIAP a difficult venture was the closed membership system (as required by UNESCO, and desired by several of the protagonists), the low level of institutionalization of the discipline(s), the high number of amateurs with a limited interest in comparative research and scholarly cooperation, and also the philological/literary roots of folklore and hence a certain fear of an anthropologization—as advocated by the Erixon camp.

The campaign towards SIEF (by Ranke and The Gang of Four) was partly based on ideology—that is on the defence or promotion of folklore as an independent discipline. Furthermore, the campaign was conducted strategically; decisions and voting took place only when there was a majority of folklorists present. Ranke’s goal of establishing an open society may be viewed as a democratic solution; on the other hand, it opened the doors for that majority of folklorists who would support him against the ethnologists.

This strategy appears clearly from meeting to meeting. CIAP had no resources to organize meetings, and all President Christiansen could do was to convene, at other conferences, those CIAP members who happened to be present. A strange coincidence, or perhaps not: it was always Kurt Ranke who offered to host CIAP at his folklorist conferences; once in Kiel, once in Brussels,
twice in Bonn and once in Athens. As Branimir Bratanić (Zagreb) put it, if CIAP had chosen the Moscow conference in August 1964 instead of Athens in September, all the ethnologists and ethnographers present in Moscow would have secured a different result.48

The unsolved problem is Kurt Ranke’s motives for wanting to control “all there was” of European folklore and ethnology. He already controlled the journal Fabula, the Enzyklopädie des Märchens, and the ISFNR. Why this appetite for CIAP also? Erixon had a clear idea of what he wanted to do with CIAP, but it is hard to see what scholarly results Ranke wanted to obtain.

Was it to promote the progress of European ethnology and international collaboration, as expressed in his Memorandum? As I see it, that was a strategy in an early phase, but not a goal for his campaign. Was it the idea of peace and reconciliation, cf. Roukens’ euphoric poem? Hardly, as no such argument was presented during the four years of warfare.

Two plausible explanations remain. Was it a defence of folklore against a rising ethnology, based on a fear of an anthropologization of the field? Or was it simply a quest for personal power? My opinion is that Ranke’s campaign was motivated by a combination of these two elements. A strong CIAP might turn out a rival to his ISFNR, but a weak CIAP would do no harm. And an anthropologization of the field might entail other inconveniences for the more traditional, “literary” folklorists. By controlling and reorganizing CIAP the way he wanted, the scholarly landscape would become more clear-cut and folklore would remain an independent discipline.

Ranke’s campaign was successful. ISFNR became an important, specialized organization, whereas CIAP/SIEF remained a general but weak umbrella organization. Ranke won the battle, there and then. But by cementing the division of the disciplines and forcing SIEF into several sleepy decades, one may ask whether his interference did not do more harm to European ethnology than actually served the best interests of folklore in a restricted sense.

Notes
1 For a detailed presentation of the genesis and development of CIAP in its early phase, see Rogan 2007.
3 See Laos vol. III (1955) for a series of presentations of the cartography commission and cartography work.
4 Erixon 1951. In the first half of the 1950s Erixon published several articles of this type, in Folk-Liv and elsewhere.
5 Erixon (ed.) 1956; Rogan 2013, 96-102.
When the Folklorists Won the Battle but Lost the War

6 Letter of September 4, 1950, from J. Thomas, director of the Department for cultural activities, UNESCO. MNATP.

7 Note de Monsieur Marinus relative au Secréttaire-Général Monsieur Foundoukidis (undated / August-September 1953). MNATP.

8 See stenographed minutes from the Board sessions, Namur. MNATP.

9 See correspondence. UNESCO, ICAF Reg. 39 A01.

10 Recommendation from the Amsterdam meeting, September 1955. MEERTENS 35:1131. See also Erixon 1955-56.

11 As for the archives, Dias seems to have kept them in good order, with the one curious exception that they suddenly disappeared in 1957, probably stolen. See letter of 7.1.1957 from Vieiga d’Oliveira to Dias. LISBON Box 4. Dias 4.

12 Interview with his daughter Elin Christiansen Smit, September 2007.

13 Letter of 3.2.1959 from Christiansen to Erixon. SE 8:28.

14 On the subject of collecting the fees, see letter of 16.10.1957 from Léopold Schmidt to Roukens. VIENNA, CIAP box 02. Roukens’ letter of resignation of 8.1.1959 to Christiansen, ibid.; also in SE 8:28. It should be added that Roukens encountered some serious problems at his museum and was forced to resign from his post as museum director the same autumn.

15 See for instance the comprehensive correspondence between Christiansen and Erixon on the problems of arranging a Board meeting in 1958-59. SE 8:28.

16 See correspondence between Christiansen and Erixon. SE 8:28, 8:30, 8:31.

17 Letter of 29.4.1962 from Christiansen to Erixon, SE 8:27. Other correspondence between the two during spring 1962 (SE 8:27, 8:30, 8:31) confirms Christiansen’s unwillingness to follow up Ranke’s initiatives. The secretary of the Oslo meeting, Elin Christiansen Smit (Christiansen’s daughter), whom I interviewed in 2012-13, has confirmed that the relationship between Christiansen and Ranke was far from hearty.

18 Letter of 12.10.1962 from Erixon to Christiansen, SE 8:31.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.


22 Compte rendu de la Réunion tenue à Bonn les 26 et 27 avril 1964 en vue d’examiner les dernières propositions de la Commission de Réforme de la CIAP. SE 8:27. Also MNATP.

23 For a more general discussion of the name question (CIAP, SIEF), see Rogan 2008b.


26 Letter of 25.09.1964 from Bratanić to a series of colleagues. SE 8:27.

27 For a more detailed treatment of the Athens meeting, see Rogan 2008c.

28 This may also be due to a lack of archive sources. The archives after General Secretary E. Foundoukidis, who was fired in 1953 for irregularities and alleged embezzlement, were more or less inexistent. It was E. F. who had been the contact person with UNESCO.

29 Manuscript to Erixon’s speech, 14.12.1948, on the occasion of the establishment of the Swedish national committee and a discussion whether to join CIAP or not. SE archives, Stockholm.

30 Minutes from the Board meeting in Kiel, 18.8.1959. MNATP, Org. App. CIAP.

31 In 1958 Sigurd Erixon persuaded the Swedish doctor Anna-Maja Nylén to function as secretary for CIAP, but she too resigned after a short time. See letter of resignation from Nylén to Erixon of 18.8.1959. SE 8:28.


34 Minutes. General meeting of SIEF, held in Paris on 27th August 1971. NF, box 84.
36 Letter of resignation from Dias to Christiansen, 16.4.1957; Dias’ Rapport moral sur les activités du secrétariat de la CIAP, 30.5.1957. SE 8:38.
37 Letter of 4.5.1955 from Dias to Rivièrre. MNATP.
38 Dias’ Rapport moral sur les activités du secrétariat de la CIAP, 30.5.1957. SE 8:28. Translation B.R.
39 See for instance Rogan 2012b for a discussion and further references.
40 The State of Folklore in the Netherlands. SE 8:77.
41 This battle between amateurs and professionals is treated in several publications in Norwegian, i. a. Kristoffersen 2013, the title of which may be translated as follows: The institutionalization of folk narratives. Norsk Folkeminnesamling [the university archive] and the Battle of decentralization.
42 See f. ex. Briody 2011 on the internal fights in the 1920s and 1930s, even within the folklore organizations, where many were indifferent or even hostile to folklore as an international research discipline and opposed a university affiliation.
44 The use of “Delegierter/delegated” in the signature clearly indicates that the backdrop for the poem is CIAP/SIEF, and not ISFNR. Roukens was since 1955 one of 8 members of the CIAP Board, which formally consisted of representatives of the national committees. ISFNR had no such structure.
45 Translated by BjR. Thanks to Regina Bendix for assistance with the translation.
47 Information from Peter Jan Margry, November 2014.
48 Letter of 25.09.1964 from Bratanic to a series of colleagues. SE 8:27.

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When the Folklorists Won the Battle but Lost the War


**Archives (Abbreviations used in the endnotes)**

LISBON: The Jorge Dias collection, Museu Nacional de Etnologia, Lisbon.

MEERTENS: Meertens Instituut, Amsterdam.

MNATP: Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Paris.

NB: I use the MNATP references, although the greater part of this collection was transferred to the Meertens Institute, Amsterdam, in May 2012. The rest is now being transferred to MuCEM in Marseille.

NF: Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo.
VIENNA: Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde, Vienna.

All translations to English from Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, French and German by Bjarne Rogan.
Ethnology and Anthropology in Europe
Towards a Trans-National Discipline

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Abstract
Twenty-five years after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, the European East-West divide has not been relegated to the annals of history. Among other areas, it persists tenaciously within the ethnological/anthropological sciences practised in Europe. This article deconstructs and challenges reified differences between ethnologies in Central-Eastern Europe and Western, mainly British-style anthropology. It proposes to go beyond the prevalent divisive discourse towards a trans-national European ethnology/anthropology of Europe. It argues that fairness and equality in academic dialogue is a necessary prerequisite of such an endeavour.

Though twenty-five years have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, entrenched Cold War divisions remain in place on the European continent. One encounters still the notion of a European “East” that is different from the “West.” It refers not to the geographic but the symbolic European “East,” a former space of communist ideology and socialist societies. In geographic terms, it includes Central and Eastern Europe (from now on referred to as CEE, both in the adjectival and substantival form). Most of the former socialist countries in that area have joined the European Union, but this does not preclude the outdated notion of the “East” being widely used. The polarity “West”-”East” stands for many opposites: centre/core vs. periphery/margin, capitalism vs. former socialism (today post-socialist/post-communist space), democratic vs. undemocratic, developed vs. backward, modern vs. traditional. Its implications have persisted a quarter of a century after the ideological-political boundary nominally disappeared and in spite of recent regional realignments and developments, which underscore (old/new) divides along the North-South and EU-non-EU axis (with the non-EU space becoming smaller with each new country’s entry into the EU). However, it seems that “for the core members of the EU, the traditional West, new members will remain part of East-Central Europe, or
Eastern Europe, for obvious economic, political and cultural reasons” (Kürti and Skalník 2009a, 1). The “East”-“West” divide in Europe seems to exist in academic circles as well.

The former political and ideological borderline between the West and the East had an impact on different academic fields, two of which are more familiar to me—anthropology/ethnology and demography. Historical demographers proposed spatial distributions and cultural divisions of the European territory, demonstrating a preoccupation with establishing historical, cultural, and disciplinary borders in Europe, which were essentially based on the exemplary ideological border prevalent until the 1990s. That borderline distinguished between diverse demographic and family systems in historical and contemporary Europe (see Szoltysek 2012 for a critical review). The “Eastern European” demographic and family space were perceived as homogeneous and were characterised by marriage at an early age, large proportions of married people and large and complex family systems. Proponents of such an image of the family system in the “East” sometimes referred to it as a “non-European” system. On the other side of the borderline, running between St. Petersburg and Trieste, they found, not unexpectedly, a system that they named “European.”

Anglo-American anthropologists sometimes do the same as historical demographers and “flippantly utilize Europe simply to mean Western Europe or the European Union” (Kürti 2008, 30). They differentiate “Western” anthropological (social/cultural, depending on the viewpoint) from the CEE ethnological and folkloristic scopes of enquiry, which they relegate to second-class anthropology and bracket out as relevant knowledge. Aligned with this discourse is a range of contrastive qualities attributed to one or the other side: the small, national(istic), positivist, atheoretical and outdated ethnologies of the East are contrasted to the metropolitan, theoretical, cosmopolitan and modern anthropologies of the West (Hann 2003, 2005; Stocking Jr in Baskar 2008; Buchowski 2004; Kürti 2008; Poblocki 2009). In addition, the first are thought of as not being “proper anthropology” because they have purportedly never dealt with other cultures, confining themselves rather within the limits of their own national cultures (Hahn 2005). Defending the study of the Other as a hallmark of anthropology, even at a time when social anthropology has come “home” (to study domestic terrains), British anthropologists indeed show a curious fascination with CEE and its allegedly nationalistic, navel-gazing, atheoretical ethnologies. The idea that “Westerners cannot really learn anything from those backward Easterners since their paradigm is outdated (both nationalistic and positivist at the same time)” is not unique (Buchowski 2004, 10). At an earlier period, it was also used with regard to Southern Europe, e.g. John Davies stat-
ed: “… a contemporary ethnographer from France and England or America, carrying the very latest lightweight intellectual machine gun in his pack, may be suddenly confronted by a Tyloorean or Frazerian professor appearing like a Japanese corporal from the jungle to wage a battle only he knows is still on” (Buchowski 2004, 10).

In the article, I comment on that debate between Western, mainly British anthropologists and their colleagues in CEE. Revolving mainly around post-socialist studies, it has revealed voices from CEE critical of the hierarchies that reflect political and economic power differentials in the academic arena. Those voices (Buchowski 2004, 2012a; Prica 1995, 2006, 2007), at first isolated, have now become not only more concerted (Kürti and Skalník 2009a; Kürti 2008; Baskar 2008; Pobłocki 2009), but have also been backed by those coming from the “centres” of anthropological production in Europe (Dressler 2000; Ruegg 2014). The latter compare the imposition of Western anthropological models on CEE ethnologies to a kind of post-colonial practice.

By and large, the debate has been led between ethnologists in CEE countries and their counterparts in the British-style tradition of social anthropology. A notable figure in that tradition is Chris Hann around whom much of the debate sparked. Throughout the paper I use “anthropology” to mean social (cultural) anthropology in the sense of the discipline conventionally studying other societies and cultures. Anthropology will also be used as a metonym for the British (sometimes also the American) strand of the discipline, to which I will sometimes also refer to as the Western strand. Ethnology, on the other hand, will be used in reference to CEE countries and to disciplinary traditions dealing with national cultures. Reference to Western and Eastern disciplines will be utilized as a convenient and economical means of expression, with implications of symbolic intra-European boundaries but without any implications of homogeneity of either one or the other. As I develop my argument, I use ethnology and anthropology more and more interchangeably, as well as connecting them in the phrase “ethno-anthropology” to indicate a convergence of the two in terms of theories, epistemology, and methodology.

The European debate over Eastern ethnological and Western anthropological traditions has not involved the French tradition of national ethnology or European ethnology (Europäische Ethnologie, formerly Volkskunde, in some countries folklore studies) with its different yet converging national disciplines practiced in German-speaking, Scandinavian and Low countries. This omission can be understood in terms of the academic and cultural prestige of Anglo-American social and cultural anthropology and the sheer numbers of anthropologists writing in the hegemonic English language, of CEE colleagues
studying in the UK or US rather than in Germany, France or Sweden, and, last but not the least, in terms of the Anglo-American space viewed as a primary paragon to be imitated by CEE (comp. Giordano 2014, 239). It is also to be found in the ambivalent position of European ethnology as “not quite” cultural anthropology though evolving in conversations with it (Frykman 2012). Maybe this lack of reference to ethnology in other European countries on both the Western and the Eastern side of the debate about proper ethno-anthropological practice is due to European ethnology’s own past as a nationally oriented discipline without a colonial agenda and the endogenous critique that it underwent some decades ago, which brought it, as judged by Ullrich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith and Jonas Frykman, thematically, theoretically and methodologically in alignment with cultural anthropology (Kockel et al 2012a, 3). Finally, perhaps this omission occurred because CEE ethnologies consider themselves a branch of European ethnology—and are considered by British social anthropologists as such. Indeed, that might have been so when Chris Hann discovered that Germany had two historically well-established strands of anthropological sciences (Volkskunde/Europäische Ethnologie and Völkerkunde/social anthropology), which occupy parallel niches in the academic arena and resist unification until this day, he was fascinated and bewildered (Hann 2002, 2003). I wonder if his perception of the fields in Germany had an impact on his perception of ethnological sciences in CEE, and led him to stress their differences with regard to British social anthropology and, more recently, to propose cross-fertilization of the two disciplinary strands (Hann 2012, 2013, 2014).

The presentation of debates between ethnology and anthropology or Eastern European and Western European styles of anthropology will not be exhaustive, since a rich production on these topics is becoming more and more insuperable. There is also a language barrier limiting what I can read; unfortunately, my language competences do not include most national languages spoken in CEE, so that I have consulted almost exclusively what my colleagues from those countries have published in English. I refer especially to more recent volumes and articles without attempting to give a diachronic overview of the long-lasting, complex and somewhat sterile debate that has been going on since the beginning of the 1990s. I argue that by reiterating the old division between the “East” and the “West,” either by discussing it, by presenting anthropologists/ethnologists from only one side of the imagined intra-European borderline, by giving advice as to how anthropology should be practised in the “East” or even if only by using a catchy title referring to “East” and “West” (when the “West” is actually only implying British anthropology), these articles and volumes contribute to reinforcing the existing discourse of discipli-
nary division along the geographic-symbolic intra-European boundary at the time when the boundaries between the two disciplines are more and more blurred.

In the way in which it is sometimes presented, as a strict, firm borderline between a homogeneous, unified tradition of ethnology in the “East” and a similarly homogenous anthropology in the “West,” the division has never existed. Neither one nor the other tradition has ever formed a homogeneous ethnological/anthropological science. Our sciences have always been “polycentric” (Kiliánová 2012, 117) and quite different in terms of intra-national relations between social/cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, ethnology, and folklore studies. What is in this article discussed as a European divide between ethnology (in CEE) and social anthropology (British), exists also as an internal national divide in several European countries: e.g. France, Germany, and Scandinavian countries have had both a nation-building ethnology and social anthropology. United Kingdom is actually the only Western European country which developed national ethnology only recently, and named it “anthropology at home.” These intra-national divisions have given rise to separate professional associations in Europe—SIEF (Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore/International Society for Ethnology and Folklore) and EASA (European Association of Social Anthropologists/Association Européenne des Anthropologues Sociaux). The two associations collaborate but still maintain their differences, one offering a forum to “scholars working within European Ethnology, Folklore Studies, Cultural Anthropology and adjoining fields,” the other to “social anthropologists either qualified in, or else working in, Europe.”

I argue that the dichotomy between ethnology and anthropology is unacceptable in epistemic terms because the concept of anthropology is “amputated” if one’s own society is outside of the domain of the “science of man” (Barrera-González 2005), whose vocation is listening to the voices of others (Kürti 2008, 30), championing cross-cultural comparison and siding with the underdog (Kürti and Skalník 2009a, 16). I wish to go beyond the prevalent divisive discourse toward a trans-national ethnology /anthropology of Europe. A trans-national science should go beyond stereotypes and ethnocentric biases, acknowledge national ways of practicing ethnology and anthropology as equal and worth entering into debate with on the basis of fairness and equality (Ruegg 2014). This might be a way out of the present state of affairs, which relegates and locks up each national tradition in a certain box (social anthropology, ethnology, folkloristics) and this at a time calling for interdisciplinarity and academic dialogue.
The Phantom of Eastern European-Style Ethnology

The demise of communist party domination and “peoples democracies” in the Eastern part of the European continent has opened up access to what had not always been readily available possibilities for contact with the Western democratic world. This opening bred different expectations: the Easterners expected that they would soon and unconditionally be embraced by their peers in the West; the collapse of communism was thought of as a “return to Europe” (Skalník 2014) to which they belonged. The Western idea of this “coming back” was quite different; it was seen as absorption into the Western model of society of the “stagnant and backward” societies (Giordano 2009).

The East was expected to catch up with the West—politically, economically, socially, and academically. The fall of former socialist systems and communist ideology was believed to usher in modern Western-like democratic societies dominated by capitalism, with all the inevitability of historical determinism. A certain period of transition was theoretically envisaged within the Western linear scheme of modernisation (Kürti and Skalník 2009a; Giordano 2009, 2014; Buchowski 2012b; Skalník 2014). The same transformation was expected to occur in ethnological sciences practiced in CEE as well.

Though research in CEE was not completely inaccessible to Western anthropologists, the 1990s brought what was certainly an unprecedented wave of exchange between academia on the two sides of the former Iron Curtain. Here I am especially interested in the encounter of social anthropology with the sister sciences practiced in CEE. What kind of ethnological/anthropological practice did the social anthropologists from the West “discover” in the East as a consequence of its opening? They have allegedly “discovered” a more or less unified discipline dealing with own folk (peasant) culture, a positivist and atheoretical discipline, influenced by nation-building and communist ideology. In sum, it was an outdated discipline that had not much to offer to social anthropology. Characterisations of CEE ethnologies presented in the following paragraphs have been mainly derived from two sources: on the one hand, the writings of the social anthropologist Chris Hann (2002, 2003, 2005, 2012, 2013, 2014), and, on the other, of those CEE ethnologists/anthropologists who have responded with criticism to Western, mainly British and American, portrayals and dismissals of national ethnology in their own country or in CEE (Buchowski 2004, 2005; Baskar 2008; Kürti 2008; Kürti and Skalník 2009a; Pobłocki 2009). Some of them offer a generic critique in which quotations on CEE ethnologies by Western authors are difficult to trace. For this reason it may seem as if they have themselves contributed to the fabrication of the phantom of CEE ethnology. Or, according to a felicitous phrase by Kacper Pobłocki (2009,
227), on both sides there appeared the “practice of manufacturing straw men that are utilized in waging academic battles.”

Across the former communist-bloc border there were different strands of the science with similar designation. Néprajz, ludoznanstvo, etnologija, etnografija, folkloristika, narodopis(je)... were the terms denoting a particular national (local) brand of the “description or study of people” (known elsewhere by the German term Volkskunde). Western social anthropologists saw in those disciplines a field very different from their own discipline and portrayed them without discriminating between different national contexts. Their subject matter was perceived to be exclusively their own folk culture, the culture of the peasantry, which was identified as the repository of national culture. This finding led to the assumption—that has become a myth (Buchowski 2012b)—that they were harnessed in the service of nation-building in each of the countries in which they developed. Unlike social anthropology, then, whose context was empire-building overseas and its subject matter other peoples and cultures, the CEE ethnologies supposedly dealt with their own culture and people in the context of national projects. A standard Western opinion on the practice of

Ethnologist Aleksandra Muraj doing fieldwork in the Kordun region, central Croatia, 1962. Photograph from the collection of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, photo no. 40082.
anthropology is succintly exemplified by Adam Kuper’s description: “scholars in CEE countries tended to share a traditional, nationalist preoccupation with peasant traditions, and their work had little theoretical content or comparative range” (in Buchowski, 2004, 10). In the rendering of similar opinions by CEE scholars, their ethnologies allegedly exhibited a lack of theoretical thinking, positivism and empiricism (Buchowski 2004). In addition, they connoted smallness and marginality (Baskar 2008). These notions were contrasted to the theoretical sophistication and importance of the “core” of anthropological science practiced in Anglophone countries.

Further opposites developed: national vs. cosmopolitan anthropology (Hann 2003), native ethnographers vs. universalist/comparativist anthropologists (Hann 2002, 2013). Some voices from CEE confirm, even today, the relevance of those fundamentally opposing dichotomies in their countries. For example, Saša Nedeljković (2014) presents the relationship between ethnology and anthropology in contemporary Serbia in terms of a set of opposites between national-global, Eastern-Western, traditional-modern, rural-urban, and empirical-theoretical science.

The above description of Eastern-style ethnology by Western anthropology more or less follows the famous article by the Hungarian ethnologist Tamás Hofer, in which the author dwells mainly on the difference in the subject matter (own or other culture) and methodological differences between anthropologist’s long-term fieldwork and ethnologist’s short-term visits to field sites (Hofer 1968). In the South-Eastern European area, a similar statement, which described ethnology in Yugoslavia as traditionalistic, atheoretical, and of little interest to American-style cultural anthropology, was written by American anthropologists Joel Halpern and Eugene Hammel (1969). It seems that these two earlier articles, one by a CEE ethnologist, another by American anthropologists, have sealed up until the present day the perception of the difference between a Western-style anthropology and an Eastern-style national ethnology. The differences discussed by Hofer were thus evoked almost 40 years after in Chris Hann’s articles. He firmly adhered to the conventional colonialist habitus of the British social anthropology as the study of a distant, far away Other (Hann 2003, 2007). Obviously, CEE ethnologies could not fit that paradigm. Therefore, both the “Ethnowissenschaftler” and their terrains in CEE seemed exotic to Hann (2002). In a reply to Buchowski’s article (2004), he openly admitted that he did not find much CEE anthropology useful and advised the “native” practitioners to do “proper” fieldwork. In his words, if locals “wish to be as widely read as some of the outsiders who write about CEE, then they need to put in the field time and write monographs of equivalent depth and sophistication” (Hann
“Proper fieldwork,” of course, meant staying in a foreign country for a year. Stressing distant fieldwork as the hallmark of anthropology and a necessary epistemic tool for “in-depth work,” he further advised his counterparts in CEE to step out of the national framework of doing fieldwork.

As late as 2013, Hann modelled the differences between two anthropological practices schematically, distinguishing positivist “native ethnographers” dealing with their own and “comparativists” dealing with other cultures, in a volume which, if read carefully, disclaims such a mechanistic and panoramic portrayal of “native ethnographers” (Hann 2013). In that not entirely clear-cut article, Hann (2013) tries to rephrase the dichotomous view of “native ethnography” vs. “comparative anthropology,” which underlies many of his earlier contributions. He recognises “convergences” in topics, theories used, methodological changes in both ethnological and anthropological traditions, and advocates for a necessity to overcome the dichotomy (Hann 2012, 2014). How-
ever, the following and similar statements transpire with the condescending attitude of the author toward “natives” qua scientists and undermine his statements elsewhere: “Many natives have shown that they are just as capable as the foreigners of carrying out insightful studies of a range of modern topics…” (Hann 2013, 24). The statement points out that the debate between Eastern ethnologists and British anthropologists is not just a figment of Easterners’ imagination but that there indeed is a problem in the “core” anthropologist’s perceptions of what can be achieved by ethnologists in CEE.

**Realities of CEE Ethnologies**

The image of a homogeneous and outdated ethnology in the post-socialist world has never been accurate, not more so at the time of its “discovery” in the 1990s than today. The fragmentation of the discipline in that part of the world was no less significant than in other parts of the world, including in the “cosmopolitan” (Anglo-American, French) anthropologies. CEE has developed nationally specific ways of practicing the discipline and of relating to sister sciences. Even a cursory glance at varied histories of the discipline(s) in the pre- and post-1989 era, and at studies of contemporary ethnologies in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia would suffice to recognise the oversight committed in the uniform depictions of ethnology in these countries (see e. g. papers in *Ethnologia Balkanica* 2014; Giordano et al 2014a; Bošković and Hann 2013; Kürti and Skalník 2009b).

Significant deviations from the canon peasant-authentic-national occurred in some former socialist countries as early as in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia; see Rihtman-Auguštin 2004; Slavec Gradišnik 2012; Muršič 2002; Potkonjak 2013; Buchowski 2012b; Kiliánová 2012; Čapo and Gulin Zrnić 2014), and *not* in the post-1989 era. The influences were diverse even in the pre-1989 period. The impact of the German critical ethnology of Herman Bausinger, anthropological theories coming from Western Europe and the United States, as well as anthropological new terrains on the European Southern and Northern peripheries (studies in the Mediterranean, Ireland) and later in urban milieus—all had an effect on ethnologies in CEE countries, with the result that earlier research paradigms were at least paralleled, if not surpassed by the incorporation of ethnological and anthropologised streams coming from various sources into local contexts. For example, in Croatia and Slovenia, everyday life and contemporary issues were studied already in the 1970s and 1980s. These two countries (at the time in Yugoslavia) followed general trends in global science, both the transformations that led from *Volkskunde* to European ethnology, and those coming from Anglophone and Francophone
traditions. That is why the Croatian ethnologist Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (2004) used the term “ethno-anthropology”: it denotes anthropologised ethno-
logical sciences—in the sense that they apply anthropological theories derived
from various sources, including social and cultural anthropology and European
ethnology, while still doing research on home terrains. That term has entered
standard use (Johler 2012; Buchowski 2012b) and is widely applied to denote
transformations that ethnologies in CEE have undergone since the 1970s.

This process of “anthropologisation” led to a notion in certain CEE coun-
tries (e.g. Croatia, Slovenia) that there was no difference between ethnology
and anthropology (social/cultural). Though their co-existence was not always
smooth (especially in the 1990s), the co-presence of anthropological discourses
finally led to a “velvet revolution” in which departments and institutes of eth-
nology doubled up their names to become departments and institutes of eth-
nology and cultural anthropology (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia). This develop-
ment resembles the one bringing closer European ethnology in other parts of
Europe to cultural anthropology (Kockel et al. 2012a, 3). That transformation
was not only cosmetic, it reflected real disciplinary changes from historical
to contemporary and rural to urban topics of ethno-anthropological research,
still mostly done at home. British social anthropology’s discovering “home”
as a fieldwork site certainly contributed to the argument that there was not
an intrinsic difference between ethnology and anthropology. Indeed, one can
reverse the perspective by saying that European ethnologies have been “at
home” for longer than the British social anthropology; social anthropologists
only recently “came home” to where ethnologists have always been (comp. Godina 2002). The epistemic changes that anthropology underwent in the 1980s, when it abandoned comparison and generalisation, also contributed to the perception in certain CEE countries that there was no clear boundary distinguishing ethnology from social/cultural anthropology (ibid.).

Judging by the “struggles” engaged in by P. Skalník (2002), this has not been the case in the Czech Republic, and social anthropology, which had disappeared due to political pressure under communism, only slowly established itself as a discipline—distinct from ethnology—in the post-communist period. The re-established discipline entered into a competitive relationship with ethnology. But here, as in other countries, this competition might have been less a matter of epistemological, theoretical and methodological discrepancies between ethnology and social/cultural anthropology and more a matter of a “struggle for position in the academic world and access to financial resources” (Kiliánová 2012, 116). In some countries, that “struggle” pitted ethnology against social anthropology (the Czech Republic, Slovenia), in others, it was more a struggle between ethnology and biological anthropology (Croatia).

It appears that what in the German-speaking world has been called die Wende—i.e. a decisive change in political, economic and social development that started with the collapse of communist systems after 1989—did not provoke such a decisive academic Wende. Various contributors discussing post-communist changes in the academic world in a volume edited by Konrad Köstlin, Peter Niedermüller and Herbert Nikitsch (Köstlin et al. 2002) could not establish that 1989 was a clear dividing line for the changing identities of ethnological disciplines in CEE. Clearly, transformations started earlier, and even without institutionalised forms of social or cultural anthropology in CEE, there was access to anthropological and contemporary ethnological knowledge (to a varying degree), which had been transforming the disciplines before 1989.

Another issue is to what extent CEE ethnologies were under the sway of communist ideology. Here, too, we do not find a uniform ideological influence across all (post-)communist countries. The inflection the communist system had on ethnology was different from country to country (just as much as the systems varied among themselves), ranging from complete isolation and ideologisation of the society and its sciences, as in Albania (Hysa Kodra 2014), to a semi-open system that allowed contacts with the international scholarly world, as in Yugoslavia, which culminated in only indirect pressure and self-imposed censorship (Rihtman-Augustin 2004). It ranged from the “blind intervention of the socialist official ideology” in Romania (Şerban and Dorondel 2014) and rigorous adaptation of Soviet theories in East Germany to escaping
ideologization in Hungary and Poland (Hann 2012, 2013). Paradoxically, one South-Eastern European country, otherwise omitted from these discussions—Turkey—which was not a space of long-term communist rule, was the champion in political controls over social sciences. Throughout the 20th century, the Turkish state exercised constant ideologisation and control across the board of changing military regimes and governments, causing discontinuities in the development of social sciences (Kartari 2014).

There are a few other aspects of the debate between “Eastern” and “Western” styles of anthropology upon which I wish to comment. Though the idea that CEE ethnologies were exclusively nation-building disciplines—both in the sense of studying the own (peasant society) and imbuing it with nation-building capacity—has been challenged by local scholars (Čapo 1991; Baskar 2008; Kiliánová 2012; Buchowski 2012b; see also works quoted in Pobłocki 2009), that idea still has currency among some in the “West” who reiterate the myth of national(istic) ethnology in CEE (Buchowski 2012b), without subjecting it to analysis, scrutiny and cross-national comparison. We are still awaiting a study—that could come from any strand of ethnology/anthropology—that would deal with and explain the paradox that the communist ideology, which promulgated the “working class” into the subjects of history, tolerated ethnology (the “reactionary bourgeois science”) that was researching “peasants as bearers of national values.” How was this paradox resolved in different communist countries? How did local ethnological paradigms deal with these issues? Were there any differences between countries with a clear national majority and those with mixed multi-ethnic populations as in former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union? In an article dealing with this issue, I showed that Croatian ethnology, in spite of its alleged national(istic) bias, or maybe because it feared being accused of it, managed to navigate relatively freely in the multi-national Yugoslav workers’ state by examining individual items of peasant cultures within a diffusionist paradigm, irrespective of their “ethnic bearers.” I argued that Croatian ethnology, at the time, promoted a culturalist and trans-national rather than a national(ist) agenda (Čapo 1991; for a summary Čapo and Gulin Zrnić 2014). Quite a different scenario was deployed in a country with a clear-cut national majority, Albania, where ethnography was in the service of the nation during communism (Hysa Kodra 2014).

Due to these pre-1989 differences, the 1990s saw an old and a new wave of nationalization of ethnologies in CEE. Some would interpret it as a typical post-colonial development, a “nativist stand” understandable in the broader political context of the re/construction and emancipation of the nation (Ruegg 2014, 91-92; see also Muršič 2002, 160). In Slovenia, the nationalization of eth-
nology provoked sharp criticism from the colleagues interested in a comparative anthropological enterprise and in other cultures. In the wake of the creation of the nation-state and in the context of a long repressed public interest in national culture, national issues came to the forefront of ethnology in Croatia in the 1990s. However, since Croatian ethnology had by that time become a critical science of culture and had been internationalised, ethnologists/anthropologists engaged with critical identity studies rather than national(istic) agendas (comp. the interpretation in Čapo Žmegač 2002). Thus, there is another complex issue regarding CEE ethnologies: at the same time as they were internationalising in outlook, the topics of their research were increasingly national (comp. Löfgren in Johler 2012). Therefore, it is clear that the marriage of ethnology with a national agenda in CEE countries played out differently in different countries: in some countries the communist period coincided with national agendas while post-communism abandoned this perspective; in others it was precisely the post-communist era that brought about a more national science (but not necessarily a more nationalistic one).

In sum, in spite of heterogeneous particular contexts and transformations that have characterised ethnologies dealing with the own, in the pre-1989 era and later, some British anthropologists adhere to the ideal-typical and simplistic opposition between national, historicising and diachronic ethnology and cosmopolitan and synchronic anthropology to this day (Hann 2013). As already mentioned, neither ethnology nor anthropology ever corresponded to these ideal types. In addition, both were challenged and changing in the 1970s and 1980s, both discussed the loss of their subject matter and basic episteme, both had undergone a deep transformative process since the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, these changes prompted some German ethnologists to express concern over a loss of the “distinctive image” of Volkskunde in Germany (Brückner in Johler 2012). The encounter with ethnologies in CEE coincided with important changes in the established identity of social/cultural anthropology, notably with the disappearance of colonial terrains and search for novel territories for studying the Other. When the colonial Others disappeared or became less accessible for research due to decolonization, the Northern, Southern, and Eastern European fringes became new terrains in which anthropologists looked for Otherness. The development of urban anthropology, for example in France, was part and parcel of that shift toward terrains nouveaux in the post-colonial era (see Ruegg 2014; Frykman 2012). At the same time, anthropology underwent intra-disciplinary transformations toward a self-reflexive discipline questioning the blind spot of anthropological involvement in the colonial project (the post-modernists of the 1980s).
In the midst of the decolonisation of the discipline, reflexive turn, questioning representation and reframing of fieldwork as dialogical, it is indeed curious that some British anthropologists would try to impose an obsolete notion of social anthropology as the study of the Other on ethnologies in the former socialist countries and that, instead of engaging in a dialogue with their colleagues in CEE they would choose to bypass them completely and condescend “native ethnography” (Buchowski 2004). In the words of François Ruegg (2014), it looks as if they had never been hit by post-colonial and reflexive turns.

Reactions by CEE Scholars
The generic negative portrayal of ethnologies in CEE as well as their second-class status in relation to “proper” anthropology spurred criticism among CEE ethnologists. Stereotyping, patronising, Orientalising/exoticising, neglecting, nativising, and colonising are some of the terms with which they qualified Western images of themselves. CEE ethnologists/anthropologists found that their studies were received as “native/indigenous” ethnographies, as data rather than as scientific analyses, and they themselves as informants rather than as colleagues, or else they were completely dismissed and their work passed over in silence by anthropologists from the “West” doing research in their countries (Buchowski 2004; Kürti and Skalník 2009a; Skalník 2014). An example is the Croatian ethnography of the war of the 1990s: Croatian ethnologists who studied the effects of the war on everyday life were too easily defined as mere “natives,” claimed a local scholar (Povrzanović 1995) and their war ethnography as disguised nationalism (e.g. by Greverus 1996). They were identified with the culture they came from, and with the powerless, marginal, and dubious position of their country, through which, as claimed by Ines Prica (1995), the ethnologist becomes equally powerless, marginal, and ambiguous. Prica (1995) argued that there was unidirectional communication between cultural anthropology and Croatian ethnology, and CEE ethnologies as a whole, and even contempt and prejudice on the part of anthropology towards ethnologies in CEE. Michał Buchowski (2004, 2005, 2012a) has denounced similar treatment of Polish and other CEE ethnologies/anthropologies while László Kürti and Peter Skalník (2009a) identified a persistent Orientalising discourse within the EU. In spite of this, Kürti and Skalník seem to be themselves bogged down by conventional British social anthropology—and its Orientalising discourse which they criticise—when they speak of “native anthropologists” and praise a “special position of a returnee anthropologist,” trained abroad and returning home to work (Kürti and Skalník 2009a, 11). I argue that that position might have its specificities, but this is a judgement from the viewpoint of British so-
cial anthropology and it neglects a more common position, that of the anthropologist at home who was trained at home as well. Even more worrying is that Kürti and Skalník address themselves primarily to colleagues in the West and they fail to inspire themselves by what colleagues in the similar position of anthropologists at home, located in CEE, have to say (e.g. in Croatia, Gulin Zrnić 2005 on fieldwork at home). If it is true that “Westerners” do not quote us, we, the “Easterners,” do not read and quote us among ourselves even when we publish in English.

The contestation of the hegemonic discourse of social anthropology by CEE ethnologists is sharp and straightforward: there is reference to “hierarchies of knowledge” (Buchowski 2004), “power inequalities” (Prica, various articles), “a poisoned antagonistic relationship” (Buchowski in Kürti and Skalník 2009a, 10), and “the perplexing vast academic hiatus” (Kürti 2008) between CEE anthropologists/ethnologists and their Western colleagues. The CEE ethnologists denounce their treatment as second-class anthropologists by their colleagues (Kürti 2008), etc. Kürti (ibid.) is particularly vehement in his criticism and I am left wondering what could have been the motives for his, at times, passionate personal statements.13

Having said that, the “soft power intrusion” (Kürti 2008) into CEE academic life by Anglo-American anthropology is undeniable. It induced and dictated research topics and social science models in CEE, not only because of its symbolic power, but even more so because of its financial power: ethnicity, nationalism, minorities, multiculturalism, property relations, civil society, gender issues, inequality, etc. are “academically correct” and “Euro-compatible” research topics in CEE rather than wedding rituals, legends, story-telling, etc. (Kürti and Skalník 2009a; Șerban and Dorondel 2014; Giordano et al 2014b; Ruegg 2014). François Ruegg even went as far as to state that “Eastern European social anthropology is still a colony of western academies: local anthropologists serve essentially as a working force for foreign institutions and moneys” (2014: 85). This indeed is a forceful statement by a social anthropologist from a “centre” of anthropological production, backing less powerful voices from CEE. Speaking from Austria, Gert Dressler (2000) also shows that Austrian “academic development aid” to Bulgaria was patronising. That there are grounds for speaking of a post-colonial condition in all aspects of life in CEE is confirmed by other influential voices from the West, such as Christian Giordano’s (2014). To the contrary, Kacper Poblocki (2009) has recently argued that current hierarchies of anthropological knowledge production are a result of global political economy rather than of post-colonial context of the sciences in CEE.
Towards a Trans-National Ethnology/Anthropology of Europe

To a crude generic portrait of CEE ethnologies by Western anthropologists, this article has opposed a picture of fragmented and heterogenous ethnologies in CEE. It has shown that there has never existed a unified Eastern European ethnology. There is so much diversity and variation in the historical paths of transformation of ethnologies in CEE that it is impossible to come up with any generalization about ethnological traditions in the former socialist bloc. Their “astonishing fragmentation” (Barrera-González 2005) is not any greater or lesser (or more astonishing) than the one found between them and the anthropologies in the West. A similar insight led Chris Hann (2012) to conclude that insisting on a dichotomous model is a pointless exercise. I also consider it pointless because anthropologies in the Western European countries and across the Atlantic are as diversified as the ones in CEE.

I am tempted to account for the heterogeneity of ethno-anthropological sciences by quoting André Burguière, the famous historian of the Annales school. He found the essence of this diversity in national histories. Explaining his experience with the publication of special issues of the journal Ethnologie française devoted to less known European ethnologies/anthropologies, Burguière observed that each issue on a particular national tradition of ethnology/anthropology (Norwegian, Swedish, Polish, Slovenian, etc.) was an experience of “dépaysement,” because the “intellectual orientation” of ethnologists from each ethnology did not only treat general problems of the discipline but showed “clear relation to the history of the country”; “it reflected an assemblage of ... particularities, that one can call national character, which is the result of the path travelled in the construction of the nation” (Burguière and Heintz 2012, 371, translation mine). This opinion echoes Tamás Hofer (1996) who spoke of “intellectual style,” “concepts of reality,” and the input of different “historical pasts,” calling this tendency in ethnological sciences “latent ethnicity,” one that reflects the national societies in which they are practised. I argue that such a “national” bias pervades ethno-anthropological sciences as a whole. In those that are identified as cosmopolitan and comparative Western anthropologies, it found expression in their imperialism and exoticisation of other cultures and the refusal of parity to local scholars whom the visiting anthropologists condescended as “natives” and not academic interlocutors with whom to engage in scientific dialogue.

When the CEE scholars retorted to the lack of parity in academic dialogue, or in the phrase of François Ruegg (2014, 87) to a lack of a “deontology of fairness and equality,” their criticism was addressed to a generic “Western” anthropology. Though they were mainly debating certain American and Brit-
ish authors, they utilized a general notion of “Western anthropology” and opposed it to ethnological practices in CEE. It could be said that they committed the same error as their British and American counterparts who failed to recognize that there might be noticeable differences across ethnological disciplines in CEE. That is how a sterile exchange, pervaded by misrepresentations on both sides, went on for more than two decades.

The close encounter between Western traditions of anthropology of the Other with CEE ethnologies of own national cultures happened at the time when European anthropology/anthropology of Europe was well established, but remained marginal to the mainstream, and was still denied the status of “real anthropology” because it did not deal with remote Third World peoples (Goddard et al. 1994). Upholding dogmas (Barrera-González 2005) such as doing research in remote terrains went hand-in-hand with the “insidious scientific imperialism” (Hann 2012) of conventional anthropology and the neglect of other strands of anthropology, especially those practised beyond the former

![Carnival, with ethnologist Tea Škokić interviewing a girl in costume, Pelješac peninsula, southern Croatia, 1997. Photograph from the collection of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, photo no. 37605, photo taken by S. Puljar.](image)
Iron Curtain in the former communist CEE countries and known as ethnology, ethnography, folklore, etc. These national traditions of science, largely directed at researching one’s own rural cultures, were doubly suspicious to the champions of Western anthropology: on the one hand, because they dealt with their own culture, it was questionable whether these scholars could produce scientific knowledge or merely “native” accounts/ethnographies and, on the other hand, they were suspected of putting ethnology into the service of local national projects, and they themselves of being outright nationalists. It is no wonder that colleagues in CEE responded to such assumptions with equally challenging allegations of a neo-colonial stance on the part of the Westerners.

Whether (European) ethnology and (social/cultural) anthropology are distinct fields of study is still open for debate; no consensus has emerged and their relation (or distinction) is still played out differently in different countries and, as already mentioned, in two European professional associations which separate social anthropologists from ethnologists/cultural anthropologists. Is it possible to bridge this “tale of two disciplines” (comp. Frykman 2012), ethnology and anthropology, and go beyond the “canonical disciplinary purity” that anthropologists were more eager to maintain than their peers from (European) ethnology (Kockel et al 2012a, 7)? In this respect I want to mention an exemplary volume, the *Companion to the Anthropology of Europe* (Kockel et al 2012b) as an important step in the direction of the creation of an ethno-anthropology of Europe. The volume is a fully cross-European endeavour and it includes anthropologists and ethnologists from all around Europe and successfully brings together different traditions and contemporary approaches, in such a way that discerning the original disciplinary affiliation of the authors—in (European) ethnology or in the social/cultural anthropology of Europe—is a “futile task” (Frykman 2012, 587). The long-standing efforts of Andrés Barrera-González and some other colleagues at founding a unified European research and teaching area in anthropology (Barrera-González 2008; Barrera-González et al s.a.) are another step in this direction.

The trans-nationalisation of European ethnologies/anthropologies has started and needs to continue. I do not think that it is desirable that the ethnology/anthropology of Europe remains just “a network of perspectives” in the future “in which every national, regional group can make conscious use of its cultural specificity” (Hofer 1996, 95). I would hope that an even greater degree of trans-nationalisation of particular national traditions continues to develop, i.e. that by analysing cultural issues of European reach and relevance, ethno-anthropologies would rise above their “cultural” and/or “national” specificity and interest and formulate trans-nationally relevant topics and analyses. This
is taking shape when European ethnologists/anthropologists join to analyse the issues of contemporary heritage and the tourism industry (Bendix et al 2012), regional co-operation (GrenzRaumSee 2008), post-socialism (Roth 2005; Giordano et al 2014a) or whatever other topic of pan- or regional European relevance. A trans-national ethnology/anthropology of Europe is thus on its way to cease being just a rhetorical figure, an empty vessel or a misnomer. The success of this enterprise depends on acknowledging local ethno-anthropological knowledge production in CEE, being open to outside influences without abandoning one’s own interests in research (this should function in all directions) and on fairness and equality in academic exchange among ethno-anthropologists across Europe.16

Notes
1 See http://www.siefhome.org and http://www.easaonline.org respectively.
2 On a personal note, I recall very well that expectation in Croatia in 1990 and 1991, soon to be followed by disappointment because it seemed to Croatians that “Europe” took a long time to recognise Croatia’s quest for independence and a much longer time to agree to its membership in the Council of Europe (1996), and to allow it to join the EU (2013).
3 The authors quoted are critical of such views. In particular, Kürti and Skalník (2009a) argue that many current analyses of economic and political processes in CEE are based on Western notions of how transformations ought to occur instead of on what actually occurred at the local level. That volume (Kürti and Skalník 2009b) rejects the concepts of transition and transformation and points out “the blatant epistemological flaws” of the paradigms of linear development that were firmly upheld by Western social sciences (Giordano 2009, 299). See also insightful analyses of the neo-colonial characteristics of EU hegemony (the EU as an instrument of colonisation) over the post-communist countries, which reproduces the gap between Western and Eastern Europe (Skalník 2014; Giordano 2014).
4 A notable exception, that is curiously omitted from the accounts presented here, are Russian structuralists, who have been used by Western structural anthropologists.
5 This methodological difference was linked to different epistemologies but probably also to the costs of long-term fieldwork.
6 Rihtman-Auguštin was in close contact with Italian ethnologists among whom the term “ethno-anthropology” is common.
7 I can testify to this for Croatia; see Muršič, who writes of “denomination struggles” and heated discussions in Slovenia since the 1980s (Muršič 2002).
8 Unlike social or cultural anthropology, biological anthropology was professionally established in CEE countries during socialism and it became equated with anthropology (Skalník 2002; Muršič 2002; Martinović Klarić 2013). In Croatia, biological anthropologists promoted an American four-field approach, which might explain why a parallel institutionalization of ethnology/cultural anthropology occurred: currently there are two MA programmes at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, one pursuing formation under the aegis of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, the other under the aegis of the Interdepartmental Chair of Anthropology, which offers a four-field approach and teaches cultural anthropology outside the department that carries its name.
9 In an interesting twist to a generally accepted idea, Bojan Baskar (2008) argues that the “Western” and “Eastern” ethnologies/anthropologies have been playing both the nation-building and the empire-building roles.
10 With it comes the myth of nationalistic societies: during the IUAES Congress in Zagreb in 1988, Chris Hann saw “large and noisy parades on the streets of central Zagreb, in which folk costumes mingled with the national colours in celebration of a uniquely Croatian identity” (Hann 2013, 8). An uninformed reader might think that people indeed dressed in folk costumes on the streets of Zagreb in 1988, but an informed one would know that the Congress that Hann attended coincided with the International Folk Festival. Moreover, the programme of the festival in that year, as in any other year during communism, was a showcase of Yugoslav “brotherhood and unity” ideology, staging folklore groups from all over the former state and not just Croatia.

11 The nationalistic spectre haunting ethnologists/anthropologists in CEE also found its way into my exchange with an Austrian historian, Karl Kaser, over the seemingly innocuous topic of the “Balkan family pattern” (Čapo Žmegač 2001; Kaser 1998). While I claimed Kaser was exoticising family patterns in the Balkans, Kaser asserted my nationalistic position.

12 In a somewhat different argument, Kacper Pobłocki (2009, 227) asserts that we cannot speak of “asymmetric ignorance” but rather of “reciprocal lack of interest.”

13 He is sometimes so passionate as to overlook the fact that ethnologists from CEE do publish in “mainstream” ethnological/anthropological journals, collected volumes and with American and English publishers. It is precisely some of these colleagues who venture into criticism, like Kürti and Skalník, who end up publishing with Ashgate or Berghahn Books, neither of which is a little-known press.

14 These are significant efforts of the Ethnologie française journal’s editors to present in French not only CEE but also other European national ethnologies. They have led to special issues on the ethnologies in Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Ireland, Turkey, Croatia, etc. This has been done not from an outsider but rather from an insider viewpoint by inviting editors from these countries to prepare representative collections of ethnological/anthropological production in their country.

15 Those CEE ethnologies that did not do research in the colonies but in their own peasant culture, were correspondingly exoticizing their peasants so that exoticism is not an exclusive trademark of Western anthropologies. I thank Bojan Baskar for this observation.

16 I thank Bojan Baskar, Valdimar Hafstein, Peter Jan Margry and the anonymous reviewer for their useful comments on the article.

Works Cited


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Jasna Čapo


The Black Box of Everyday Life
Entanglements of Stuff, Affects, and Activities

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Abstract
Ethnologists like to think of themselves as masters of the study of the everyday, but we still know surprising little how this mundane machinery works. Everyday life remains something of a black box, our understanding is still piecemeal and fragmented. This paper explores cohabitation and circulation of objects, affects and activities in the home—seen as a workshop where raw materials, raw feelings, previously untried movements and new routines are welded into everyday patterns. The concepts of throwntogetherness, assemblage and entanglement are used to explore such transformations and co-dependencies, often naturalised into invisibility.

The home is also discussed a moral economy with strong ideas about good and bad, duties and rights as well as a space colonized by ideals and consumer dreams, which often can produce guilty feelings of “not good enough.”

Taking Turns
One of the most striking characteristics of contemporary cultural analysis is the incessant production of “new turns,” but the SIEF anniversary may be a good time for a quick retrospective look. The turn phenomenon has a history. It all began with the textual turn in the early 1970s (Chouliaraki 2008), which advocated that cultures, bodies, and people should be read as texts. One of the results of this was the strong impact that discourse analysis had over several decades. But turns create counter-turns and the hegemony of discourse analysis was challenged by new turns, such as the spatial, the material, and the affective turn. Many of these argue for greater attention to non-discursive or pre-discursive dimensions of everyday life, but also for a focus not on what people say but what they do.

So that is where we are now: twisted by a number of turns. How does this affect the ethnologic and folkloristic study of everyday life? And what could our contributions be to these discussions? In a sense, the focus on the material,
the place-bound, and the emotional aspects sits well with us—they have long formed part of our approach. Nevertheless I find the new theoretical turns refreshing and challenging in many ways. They create cross-disciplinary dialogues, but also beg the question of how they could be combined or entangled in productive ways. This paper deals with some approaches to such entanglements, drawing on empirical examples from a classic research arena: the home.

Looking back on the making and remaking of turns over the last decades it is striking how different theoretical approaches have evolved. The interest in materialities, for example, has been developed by Actor Network Theory with its focus on the co-dependence of human and non-human actors. ANT is a tradition that has been increasingly influential in contemporary ethnology (Ren and Petersen 2013). Another strand is found in attempts to revitalize phenomenological traditions, as in, for example, the more down-to-earth perspectives of post-phenomenology that attempt to bring a classic philosophical tradition closer to the study of everyday activities by developing ethnographies—by doing a concrete phenomenology of specific life-worlds, rather than interpreting texts (Ingold 2011 and Verbeek 2009). A number of ethnologists have contributed to this phenomenological turn by studying experiences as situated everyday practices (see, for example, the recent studies in Frykman and Frykman, forthcoming).

Affective theory is also helpful here, viewing affects as forces and energies which shape the interaction between bodies. It explores the in-betweenness not only between human actors but also between humans and objects. Affect is about reactions and communications, which often are unconscious, driving us toward movement or thought, overwhelming or exciting us—a passing mood, a sudden sensibility, a creeping irritation or anxiety (Gregg and Seigworth 2010).

For the ethnological tradition of the cultural analysis of everyday life, I find the development of what has been called non-representational theory especially interesting. A somewhat clumsy term, it was first developed as an umbrella term among British cultural geographers (Thrift 2008; Anderson and Harrison 2010). It combines several theoretical and ethnographic perspectives and might more accurately be termed “more-than-representational theory.” It focuses less on codes, representations, and discourses and more on everyday practices and skills, as well as sensibilities and feelings (drawing as it does on theories of materiality, performance and affect). In many ways it is grounded in the phenomenological imperative to start the analysis with “the how” rather than “the why” of social action. It means focusing on the constant making and remaking of everyday life. This interest does not, of course, exclude the
symbolic and semiotic aspects of material objects; the boundaries between the non- or pre-representational and the representational are constantly blurred.

In a sense, the most interesting part of non-representational studies is the methodological focus: an interest in a constant experimentation with methods to capture dimensions of actions that are hard to verbalize. As Philip Vannini (2015, 14) puts it, researchers “should try to dance a little more.” This is often done through bricolage, combining different materials and approaches, inviting dialogues with art, popular culture, and fiction. The result is a strong interweaving of theory and methodological approaches in an attempt to find new ways of doing ethnography and often learning from approaches outside academia, such as artists experimenting with destabilising or provoking everyday life, for example (Thrift 2008).

Maybe I am interested in non-representational studies because they strike a familiar chord. We find similar attempts at opening up new research strategies among European ethnologists, but in a less organized form.

If methodology can be said to be the strength of non-representational studies, the same cannot be said about most affective theories. Although they have developed new perspectives on the study of feelings they usually do so within

One of the artists working to destabilize notions of the orderly home is Meta Isaeus-Berlin from Sweden. Here is her installation, *The Awakening*, with cascading water overflowing the bathroom. This is one of her many art works turning the home into something uncanny. See www.metaisaeusberlin.se. Photo: P är-Anders Allsten. Courtesy Galleri Andersson/Sandström.
a framework of cultural studies or philosophy, which means that there is a lack of contextual ethnographic analysis, but also of historical perspectives. I would like to see more of affects at work in concrete situations, shaped by history, gender, class, etc. This is where I think ethnologists could make a contribution.

Thinking Outside the Box?

Behind the theoretical trends I have mentioned is also a heightened interest in the study of everyday life in a number of disciplines. It is no longer a terrain where we are alone; “everybody” seems to research everyday life today. In this general interest, however, there is a great deal of discourse, even in the handbooks, on the mundane, but much less close scrutiny of actual practices or thick descriptions of the everyday in action.

The interest in everyday life is not only intense in academia, but also in the job market. Corporations, government agencies, and NGOs look for good ethnographies of everyday life; ethnologists are brought in as consultants and are expected to unravel the secrets of everyday life and make the mundane exotic and surprising. In the fast growing world of applied ethnology, it is for this skill of doing ethnographies of the quotidian that ethnologists are most often hired (see Ehn, Löfgren, and Wilk 2015).

An example of this interest is discussed in a paper by Tine Damsholt and Astrid Jespersen (2015), two Danish ethnologists who were involved in a multidisciplinary project to study present and future consumer behaviour, together with a future studies consultancy, which was eager to create innovative scenarios of new consumer behaviour. When the ethnologists presented their in-depth observations and interviews about everyday life that they had carried out in a number of households, one of the consultants said, “Thanks! This is a fine material to have, but now it is time ‘think out of the box.’” He meant stepping outside of the constraints of everyday life that supposedly restrict our creative and innovative process.

For those consultants, and for many others, everyday life represents a box characterized by boring routines, predictable preferences, conservative or slow-changing traditions—a grey life of “more of the same,” a stale status quo. For them, everyday life does not stand for the buzzwords of “creativity” and “innovation.” The two ethnologists ask why their insights into everyday life were considered a box and a burden: what kind of box, and why a burden?

I have encountered the same attitude in an interdisciplinary attempt to create a research platform on “the mediatization of everyday life.” It struck me that in talks on the impact of new media and other technologies, the everyday
is often relegated to the role of a passive backdrop or scene-setter, but not an active actor. There is constant talk of how new technology—from digital media to 3D printing—will revolutionize everyday life. As ethnologists, we should turn the question around for a change. How does the quotidian revolutionize new technologies? Everyday life can be seen as a machinery that drastically changes the forms, functions and futures of, for example, new media. It chews and devours new technologies and some of them are spit out rapidly because they cannot be integrated into everyday practices and needs. Others are digested, tested, adapted, and changed. Many of these processes are hard to notice, difficult to verbalize and operate like slow accumulations of change.

As ethnologists we like to see ourselves as masters of the study of the everyday, but we still know surprisingly little about how this machinery works. One could argue that everyday life remains the black box of ethnology. Our understanding is still piecemeal and fragmented—a thought I find comforting—and there is still much to be discovered (to stay with a favourite ethnological metaphor). Without getting trapped in hunting for turns, the search for overlooked dimensions in the study of everyday life could help us to focus more on not only “new dimensions” but also on what Doreen Massey (2005) has called *throwntogetherness*. How do objects, people, feelings, sensibilities or activities co-exist? Her concept explores the ways in which diverse elements come to cohabit in a setting or a situation, often as unexpected neighbours. But in order to understand how these confrontations work, a few other theoretical tools are helpful. In her book *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett analyses the agency and affective power of things, from a small collection of rubbish to a nationwide electricity grid, using Deleuze and Gattari’s term *assemblage* as an example of a “confederate agency” (Bennett 2010). Maurizia Boscagli (2014) also tackles similar issues of affect and materiality. Another helpful approach can be found in the concept of *entanglement* (Ingold 2010 and Hodder 2012)—the ways in which humans and things, as well as sets of things, become co-dependent. Approaches like these explore affects as potentially energising or intensifying in the everyday life of things, but by linking feelings and materiality there is also a far better chance of contextualising affect and not seeing it as a free-floating and ahistorical phenomenon.

Doreen Massey’s examples come mainly from public spaces. I would like to take the concept into a very different arena of everyday life: that of the home. What kind of *throwntogetherness* can a home encompass? The privacy and intimacy of this place creates very different conditions of coexistence: there are close encounters and enduring relationships, which call for ongoing processes of confrontation, negotiation, and accommodation. We need new hands-on ap-
approaches and ethnographic experiments in order to understand how material, sensual, and emotional dimensions work together—or don’t. Cohabitation may hide ways of non-communication, disintegration and the out-of-synch. And there is the constant battle between order and disorder.

In the following, I will focus on the material and affective dimensions in domestic life. I draw on two ongoing research projects: the first, in which I collaborate with Billy Ehn, concerns *The Invisible Home* and looks at mundane domestic activities, from routines to daydreaming, that flow like hidden undercurrents through the home. These are often invisible because they are taken for granted or elusive because they are hard to put into words. The second is an interdisciplinary project on *Managing Overflow*, a study of the ways in which people and organizations cope with “too much,” with too much stuff or information, too many choices and activities (Czarniawska and Löfgren 2012). In this project my focus is on the crowded home, overflowing with objects, feelings, and activities.

My material is a bricolage based on ongoing fieldwork, interviews, observations, and a wide range of other sources, from academic research to popular culture and fiction, as well as several surveys of contemporary homemaking.

**Stuff on the Move**

In 2007, the Swedish artist Klara Lidén organized an exhibition at Moderna Museet in Stockholm by emptying her flat of its contents. She exhibited all her belongings piled together in a gigantic stack, as if ready for storage or destruction. Domestic objects found themselves squeezed together with new neighbours; the bike was entangled with a mattress, a skateboard leaned on the wash-basin. Dirty clothes, CDs, cables, bills, pillowcases, hospital records—all pressed together in bundles. An antique chair rested uneasily on the electric stove. The artist called the installation *Unheimlich Manöver*, playing with domestic alienation and feelings of the uncanny, as Freud once did. (There is also a word play on “heimlich manoeuver,” the technique for getting rid of unwanted objects obstructing the airway.) Her presentation turned into a very provocative *thrown-togetherness*, in which domestic objects were transformed into a mass of overflowing stuff.

The growth of domestic overflow has been noted in consumer studies, often inspired by the material turn, but it seems to me that there is still too little blood, sweat, and tears in ethnographies of domestic lives. Starting with Jean Baudrillard’s work in the early 1970s there has been a strong analytical focus on homes as overflowing with semiotic signs, symbolic messages, and representations, as well as dreams and longings, but in much of this research
there is little attention to the fact that that homes, above all, are full of material objects, which constantly need to be handled (Baudrillard 1998).

Intense debates on problems of excess and overflow are found in different historical situations and they are often linked to dreams of a future rational and simple everyday world (Czarniawska and Löfgren 2014). Domestic life in the twenty-first century was supposed to be cyber-light and friction-free, thanks to all the new technologies that would simplify people’s lives. Most Western homes are, however, still veritable jungles of clumsy objects and gadgets, utensils and tools crammed into every available space. Cupboards and wardrobes may be bursting, cellars and attics cluttered. Little gadgets let out green or angry red blips in the kitchen, electric cords create jungles under the tables. People devote a large amount of energy and resources to handling this abundance; things are shuffled back and forth, rearranged, recycled. Every day, new objects enter and old ones are lost, forgotten or wasted, leaving by the back door.
As Maurizia Boscagli has pointed out, this abundance means that contemporary Western homes are crowded not so much with objects but with *stuff*: non-descript heaps, bundles, piles, assemblages. She defines *stuff* as materiality out of bounds (2014, 3). In the constant battle with “too much stuff,” domestic objects are continuously changing places, but they are also redefined and charged with different affects. Taking Boscagli’s perspective into different domestic contexts, it is possible to explore some of the forms that the production of stuff takes.

Let me begin with the white ceramic bowl that someone puts on the coffee table as a pleasing design accent. There it is, simple, beautiful, and, above all, seductively empty. Suddenly there is an empty matchbox in it, next to a couple of coins. The ice has been broken, and with a magic force, new objects are attracted: a cellphone charger, an old lottery ticket, an unpaid electricity bill and some used batteries. Step by step a mountain is appearing on the table, until one day someone gives the living room a searching look: “We can’t have all this mess!”

Over time, the contents of the white bowl have turned into a diffuse assemblage of stuff. Things are joined into a “confederate agency,” or a “vibrant assemblage” as June Bennett puts it. She points out that an assemblage owes its capacity for agency to the “shi” effect: a Chinese term which describes something that is hard to verbalise:

... the kind of potential that originates not in human initiative but instead results from the very disposition of things. *Shi* is the style, energy, propensity, trajectory or élan inherent to a specific arrangement of things. (Bennett 2011, 35)

Stuff is a special category of *shi*, often vague, liminal and overwhelming. It is things on the move (Boscagli 2014, 5ff).

The stuff in the white bowl is a temporary arrangement, soon exposed to attempts to declutter and recategorize. As the bowl is emptied the home stands out as a complex system of order, where archival rules for kitchen drawers, wardrobes and bookcases are developed, transformed or challenged by the members of the household. “Anybody know where this thing should go?”

When objects pile up, and gadgets go into hiding under sofas, coping practices of ordering, storing, and retrieving are put into action. The production of disorder is, of course, a cultural practice, mirroring changing ideas about order, value, and taxonomies. Differences of class, gender and generation are at work here. French anthropologist Jean Paul Filiod (2003) has discussed what
he calls different modalities of domestic disorder (see also Dion et al. 2014). Some collections of stuff survive by becoming invisible—domestic driftwood in plain sight on the top of the shelf or in the garage corner but no longer noticed. This state of affairs may survive for a long time. Other kinds of messes turn into a constant eyesore or provoke feelings of guilt.

The author Karl Ove Knausgård takes a look around his overflowing kitchen and stops at the two shelves on the wall next to the window, where he notices

[S]welling coral reef-like over all the small things the kids had collected over the last years, from sweet dispensers formed like princesses or different Disney-characters, boxes with pearls, pearl boards, glue pens, toy cars, and water colours, to jigsaw pieces, Playmobil parts, letters and bills, dolls and some glass bubbles with dolphins inside which Vanja wanted to have when we were in Venice last summer. (Knausgård 2012, 260)

He reflects on the constant battle between chaos and order that goes on in Western homes and the ways that the material world is always about to take over. What he describes is not a collection of discrete elements, but, rather, a coral reef of stuff. One attempt to explore such micro-universes of stuff is an anthropological study of thirty-two Californian homes, *Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century*, in which a team of researchers made detailed ethnographies of domestic life and domestic stuff (Arnold et al. 2012). The first household assemblage they analysed had 2,260 visible possessions in the first three rooms that were documented (two bedrooms and the living room), not counting all the stuff that was out of sight in lockers, closets, or drawers. After that, they gave up counting. The people interviewed often complained about their homes “being a mess.” There were stations in which stuff piled up, or “dumping grounds” as someone called them. Storage spaces developed everywhere, often quite unplanned, like the garage, where there was no longer room for a car, or bedroom corners and other such unused in-between spaces.

In homes like these things are always on the move, both in physical and mental terms. Labels may change: precious heirlooms, fun memorabilia, cherished possessions, strange gadgets, forgotten stuff, non-descript paraphernalia, trash, rubbish, garbage. According to their position they may be handled with loving care or brusque movements, evoking affects of strange haunting, cold indifference, warming nostalgia, or acute irritation—thrown into a cardboard box or put on show on a living room shelf. One and the same object may live through many such transformations.
Feelings on the Move
The home is not only crammed with stuff, it is also overflowing with affects and emotions. Passion, boredom, guilt, longing, nagging irritation, explosions of home rage, moments of bliss—all try to coexist with and also charge material objects (like that ugly sideboard we inherited from your father) as well as normal everyday activities: Who turned down the thermostat again? Where is my cell phone charger? And what are these towels doing on the bathroom floor?!

In the eighteenth century, artists fantasized about emotional landscapes; they imagined fictional worlds such as the sea of boredom, the island of happiness, the dark woods of despair, the road of hope (Bruno 2002, 205 ff). Such maps can be drawn of contemporary homes instead of simply furnishing plans. Where, why, and how do we find the flows of affect and changing moods in an apartment or a house—and how do they change with the rhythms of day and night, workdays, and weekends? Feelings are usually on the move, changing shapes and directions, and finding new moorings or hiding places.

Check the atmosphere or mood of the living room at night, or in the kitchen in the morning. Where do irritations gather? What are the spaces for daydreaming or blissful relaxation, moments of happy togetherness or a creeping feeling of boredom and frustration? Feelings may be stored in kitchen cupboards or in a piece of furniture, harbouring old resentments or happy memories. Different moods change the interior and the furniture. Melancholia wraps the whole home into a grey mist instead of the rosy light of blissful moments.

In a novel by Jenny Offill, the wife finds out that her husband has another woman. She feels queasy and retreats into the bathroom:

The longer she sits there, the more she notices how dingy and dirty the bathroom is. There is a tangle of hair on the side of the sink, some kind of creeping mildew on the shower curtain. The towels are no longer white and are fraying at the edges. Her underwear too is dingy, nearly gray. The elastic is coming out a little. Who would wear such a thing? What kind of repulsive creature? (Offill 2014, 115)

The bathroom is ready to amplify her mood of decay and depression. Her body, her mind, and the material surroundings turn into a powerful assemblage. In such a manner, the home can change rapidly from being inviting and warm to drab and unfriendly. Stress may make the kitchen seem hostile. In her 2003 novel Tā itu (“Take apart”), for example, Kristina Sandberg describes a young mother’s nervous breakdown. The main character finds herself unable to cope with all the demands and expectations that both she and those around her are
posing. Sometimes it seems as though she is being aggressively scrutinized by everything around her. Even the dust and fluff whirl accusations into the air:

Pack, clean, make the dinner, take care of the plants, wash those dirty windows highlighted by spring’s merciless sunshine. Anders will be late. Let’s hope the children will behave themselves. I must clean out the fridge, then there’s dinner, fish fingers and mashed potatoes. (Sandberg 2003, 30)

Everything gangs up on her. As soon as she lights a cigarette to calm her nerves, her son accusingly waves a brochure about quitting smoking. Her mother-in-law calls with unwanted advice about cleaning. The homemade marmalade cake decides to sink in the middle and the icing turns into a puddle; the fridge door is all sticky, crumbs spread themselves all over the place, and the kitchen smells of burning fat.

In his study of this struggle people have with things, Jojada Verrips (1994) argues for the emergence of modern forms of animism: “The damn thing didn’t do what I wanted it to do!” Objects bought to make lives easier also make life more complicated. They put people to the test when they decide to give trouble and stop working or go into hiding somewhere. People are driven to the verge of fury or tears at one time or another when they fail to reprogram the DVD recorder, when the computer screen freezes, or when the washing machine turns whites into coloureds. Gadgets are handled roughly, furniture kicked, or kitchen utensils thrown on the floor or at other household members.

Things and affects come together in many ways. Why is it that some things attract certain feelings and become a focus of irritation, happiness or sadness? Or, alternatively, how do affects cling to certain objects? In a discussion of “happy objects,” Sara Ahmed (2010) looks at such processes of “stickiness.” Why do some objects acquire an aura of happiness?

In this case affect is what sticks or sustains the connection between ideas, values, and objects. In another take, Sianne Ngai (2005) explores how irritation is materialized, as a vague mood searching for objects to anchor itself in—an irritating gadget, an ugly piece of furniture, a mess in the kitchen. Ben Highmore looks at durations of affects, operating in different timeframes—from a rapidly passing reaction to an enduring mood. Resentment may colonize both the past and the present, while moments of euphoria can connect people to “an oceanic sense of time.” The entire world becomes rosy (Highmore 2011, 96).

Sometimes a mood can freeze a setting, immobilize it. A Swedish author describes the kitchen of his childhood. The father has left and the mother is
 haunted by her demons. She is out of work and struggles to keep her family of five children together, not very successfully. The family is always moving to new and worse apartments. Disorder and chaos reign:

The reality for the children is the room. This kitchen. They live as encapsulated in a periodical system. There is no one that wants to look into their part of the world. There is nobody that wants to look outside. Everything circles around the death star in the kitchen. There is an unpleasant feeling of poverty in the kitchen; mainly because it is so aimless (or planless?). Odd cups. Odd plates. Chipped. A sink full of dirty crockery. Overflowing trash bags on the floor next to the sink. Resignation. How she moves through the kitchen, touches objects, trying to create order in a growing chaos. Nothing works... She moves objects, lifts them up, puts them away, puts them back. (Lundberg 2013, 96)

Despair and resignation is the reigning mood in this setting, where half-hearted attempts at decluttering, broken china, smells and sounds, and unassorted and discarded objects are welded together.

Never Good Enough
An important domestic feeling and mood setter is guilt: guilt about not having a good enough home or family life perhaps, with a lack of control and order. In the interviews with Californian families mentioned above, the theme of messiness occurs frequently, mainly among the wives:

This is the office. It’s a total mess. We probably should, you know, organize it better ... And here we have the garage, with everything. It is usually a total mess and it’s a total mess today again. This is where we have bikes and all the old furniture, sofas and things we don’t use. It is, how can I say it, it’s a mess. It’s not fun, it should be cleaned up and we should probably get rid of a whole bunch of stuff. (Arnold 2012, 26)

Karl Ove Knausgård talks about the stuff piling up in the apartment that could give his wife panic-like attacks:

[I]t was the feeling of chaos it gave her, which she couldn’t handle. Often she came home with storage utensils, which should sort of organize everything; different boxes for different things, a tray for my post, one for hers, marked with our names, as she had seen at other people’s
places who seemed to be orderly, but the systems collapsed after a few days, and everything flowed out again as before.

Knausgård embarks on decluttering projects himself, but has to give up. It was as if the things “were alive, as if they lay there and pulled stuff towards them in order to grow and be powerful.” He keeps reassuring himself that this was not a moral issue:

We were not bad people, even if we were messy. It was not a sign of bad morals. This I tried to say to myself, but it didn’t help, the feelings were too strong; when I walked around in the mess, it was as if it accused me, accused us, we were bad parents and bad people. (2012, 262)
A theme running through many of the battles with overflowing stuff is a nagging feeling of being stuck with too much of it. There is the constant dream of a simpler or even a minimalist home, and there are many (often half-hearted) attempts at reform, at consuming less and getting rid of more and becoming a better organized household. There is the constant barrage of images of good or beautiful living in homestyle magazines and IKEA catalogues, or fantasies about the perfect homes of neighbours. Questions of guilt and the gap between ideals and reality are closely tied to the constant visits of invisible guests, those imaginary judges or censors that tell people what a perfect or good home should look like. In an increasingly complex world of cohabitation arrangements, the ideal of the nuclear family still stands strong. In her study of a lesbian family, Karina Luzia (2011) shows how this ideal constantly hovers in the background and has to be challenged.

Guilt is thus a good example of the agency of feelings that is often on an unconscious level. Guilt may transform the home, present it in a special light, demanding certain activities or blocking others. The power of guilt also becomes visible in attempts to fight it. In 2009, the Swedish artist Lotta Sjöberg started the Facebook project *Family living—the true story* by posting pictures of her untidy home. The aim: to create a contrast to “the ideal of the perfect home that is swamping us in newspapers, TV-shows and real estate advertisements” (Sjöberg 2014, 3). In 2014 the project had 23,000 followers who contributed photos of their untidy and at times chaotic homes as well as supportive comments. One called the site “a refuge from perfection,” others sent in specimens of their hand-embroidered wall hangings with texts like “life is too short to be dustfree,” “not coping is a human right,” and “a clean kitchen is a sign of a wasted life” (to stay true to the ambition of non-perfection, some of the embroideries were only half-finished). The many comments on the Facebook page describe different strategies for fighting guilt or bad consciences. “It has helped me to see that I am not lazy or a bad, but good and capable, making active choices doing what I want and not what I should, no longer living in different ‘shoulds and musts,’” one contributor states. Another put it like this: “I feel part of a humorous but serious rebellion against over-consumption.” Others called it “a safety valve,” “pure therapy,” or a relieving insight that “there is always someone who has a more chaotic home,” or “now I feel normal.” There is a battle of feelings going on in the comments.

**The Entanglements of Multi-Tasking**
The worries about clutter and overconsumption illustrate a general trend. Over recent decades, homes have become more open and boundaries between
activities and rooms more fluid. This is not only the result of open-space planning and doing away with doors and walls or opening up the kitchen to other areas. In older homes, activities and people also mingle in new patterns (which also results in a new longing for privacy and a yearning to close the door behind you).

“What is a living room?” asked the participants in Lotta Sjöberg’s Facebook project. Here are some suggestions from the long list:

A playroom, a drying-the-washing-room, a storage space, a bedroom, a work-out space, a disco room, a picnic place, a chill-out room, a catwalk, a party place, an office space, a quarrel room, a “let’s make love here as the kids have fallen asleep in our bedroom”, a docking station, a waiting room, an observation post, a children’s restaurant, a recycling space, a black hole into which everything disappears … (Sjöberg 2014, 197)

What characterizes the home is its fantastic potential for multi-tasking, combining spaces, objects, affects and activities, which are all put to work in very flexible and sometimes surprising ways. Going through the Facebook material, as well as an extensive survey of life at home in seven nations, I am struck by the way the home works not only as a web of routines and habits, but also as a site of constant improvisation and experimenting. A tube of face cream is turned into a doorstop, the bidet becomes a storage space for shampoos, an ironing board is used as a mobile laptop work space. Such entanglements transform both objects, activities, and affects.

Multitasking constitutes a special form of entanglement, in which different activities are combined and sometimes merge into a single activity. A simple example is the ways many domestic activities are combined with listening to music: vacuuming with headphones on or a playing a favourite CD transforms kitchen tasks. We can follow how new media, from the radio in the 1920s to smartphones in the early 2000s, work as mood setters or add new dimensions to traditional tasks, as people learned to listen to the radio while having morning coffee and reading the newspaper, ironing in front of the TV set, or texting on the sofa while talking to the rest of the family. In this entanglement, both the media and the work routines at home change (see, for example, Church et al. 2010).

In order to understand the entanglements of activities or routines, the development of practice theory over the last years is helpful, as has been shown, for example, in the book The Dynamics of Social Practices: Everyday Life and How it Changes. Here, the authors discuss some of the mechanisms of multitasking.
and entanglement as a co-dependence between people, activities, and objects. How are certain activities turned into bundles and turn from coexistence into co-dependence, complexes which no longer can be reduced to the individual practices of which they are composed? Different integrating processes such as sequencing, synchronization, and proximity are explored (Shove et al. 2012, 86).

But multitasking is not simply a technology of merging, it is also a strikingly cultural and moral field (Ehn and Löfgren 2010, 196 ff). What kinds of activities may be combined in a given context and at a given time? A good example of such tensions is found in the new forms of the *thrown togetherness* of work and leisure. In laptop families all over the world, office work has invaded the home, and work, leisure, and parenting are being mixed in new ways. On one and the same family sofa, dad can be surfing the Internet and mother answering emails from work on her smartphone while the older kids are online gaming and the toddler is trying out the iPad. All kinds of improvised workspaces emerge as the job invades the home: laptop work goes on in the bedroom or on the kitchen table, business calls are taken in the privacy of the bathroom.

In her study *Work’s Intimacy*, Melissa Gregg (2011) explores the conflicts and discussions that the constantly moving boundaries of working at home can produce. When, where and how is it OK to work and for whom? “Smartphone at dinner, that’s where I draw the line.” or “Why is it that I will organize my 100 latest emails on the sofa at home, but never at work?” “The kids say we are hardly there, just hooked on to the screen.” This is a battlefield with forceful emotional charges, a reminder of the strong moral dimensions in domestic life. What should a home be—or what should it not be?

**Home as a Moral Economy**

It might be helpful to borrow the historian E.P.Thompson’s (1963) classic concept of “a moral economy.” By looking at the home as a moral economy one important dimension of the affective and emotional processes I have discussed is highlighted. The anthropologist Mary Douglas (1991) once asked “What defines a home?” Her answer is not just a building with four walls, but an internal order with rules, rhythms, and morals. The home is a web of routines, silent agreements, and ingrained reflexes about “the way we do things here.” She discusses the home as an entanglement of conventions and totally incommensurable rights and duties. What she describes is very much a moral economy, constantly tackling questions of solidarity, sharing and assistance, as well as the important issues of fairness. The home has to synchronize not only tasks and activities but also needs and longings. (This goes not only for family
homes but single households as well; it is about all that makes a home different from a lodging or a hotel).

It is a moral economy that produces many tensions, for example between individual aspirations and activities and “the family or household good.” Often there is a diffuse “we” hovering in the background. “Do ‘we’ really need a new TV, a bigger house, dessert for dinner?” The home is a site of negotiation, with constant wheeling and dealing, trying to make different priorities and interests cohabit. The author Jenny Diski describes breaking up a relationship and reclaiming her home:

It is almost as a dance, a floating self that breathes its way around the place while you only seem to brush your teeth and make cups of tea. It is a celebration of solitude—but also of control, no need to synchronize. (Diski 1999, 213)

The moral economy of the home also reflects different positions, and thus engages questions of class, gender, and generation. In some ways, the role of the home as a moral economy is becoming an increasingly important issue. There are more negotiations of what is expected of household members, of “what is fair or not,” which is linked to the processes of increasing individualization in modern homes, with a greater emphasis on “my room, my taste, my priorities, and my privacy” among both children and adults. The moral economy of a given home is rarely visible in grand declarations about rules, rights and duties; it is hidden in mundane situations, which explains why seemingly trivial objects, routines, or actions can suddenly result in a flare of affect, and power structures and hierarchies can be reinforced or challenged.

An illuminating study of such a strongly charged situation is Rick Wilk’s analysis of family meals. In the throwntogetherness at the dinner table we find not only the materiality of food and eating utensils but also different tastes, family habits and traditions, and ideas of good or bad manners. He shows how the table setting turns into a moral battleground where hierarchies are established or challenged and questions of class, gender, and generation hide under the cover of meal routines and are seldom made conscious (Wilk 2010).

For children in divorced families who move between Dad’s and Mum’s new homes, such hidden agendas may become more visible as they learn about the small but important shifts in moral economies, manifested not only in the table manners but also in, for example, the sleeping arrangements and cleaning chores (Winther 2015).
Conclusion

The cost of bringing the Absolute into the kitchen is to soil it. The pretensions of Good Design require us to bring the noblest concepts of the humanistic tradition into direct confrontation with scrambled egg and soiled nappies... The big white abstractions must be devalued, ultimately, by these associations with dirt and muck and domestic grottitude. (Banham 1970, 100)

There are different ways of attacking the question of throwntogetherness. Banham’s perspective of “domestic grottitude,” the persistent grottiness or mess of life at home, is one of them and reminds us that a basic domestic activity is to transform a steady stream of beautiful objects, well-designed clothes and furniture, new tools and fresh food items into something else: clutter, disorder, stuff, waste. The home is a workshop where raw materials, raw feelings, previously untried movements, and new reflexes are welded into everyday patterns. The concepts of throwntogetherness, assemblage, and entanglement are helpful in understanding such transformations and co-dependencies.

I started out talking about everyday life as a machinery. It is not a metaphor that should be carried too far, but I was struck by a classic definition from 1876: “a machine is a combination of resistant bodies so arranged that by their means the mechanical forces of nature can be compelled to do work accompanied by certain determinant motions” (quoted in Mumford 1934, 9). Such a statement reminds us that domestic throwntogetherness is not only about integration and confederacy, but also about resistance, uneasy cohabitation, and conflicting aims and interests.

My examples also illustrate different forms of throwntogetherness. One concerns the ways in which people simultaneously live in both the past, the present, and the future. The future is always present in the everyday dreaming, scheming, and planning for a better home. There is often the feeling of being on the road: “Just wait until we have redecorated the living room or fixed the bathroom ...” The home is crowded with half-finished projects, half-hearted attempts at reform, passing whims, and fancies. There are recipes saved that will never be tried out, new household gadgets collecting dust on the top shelf, exciting exotic ingredients never opened, boxes of puzzles with missing pieces. All such plans, half-finished projects, or nostalgic longings shuttle the home back and forth between the past and the future. Feelings also move in time; a past history may be suddenly evoked, transporting an old conflict or a happy memory right into the present, while worries colonize the future.
There is also the *throwntogetherness* of the stable and the fleeting, the mix of steady routines and stable traditions with constant improvisations and experimenting; routines that appear as given reflexes—“same procedure as yesterday”—but often hiding small and gradual dislocations.

In a similar manner, the tension of private and public is not a simple polarity but an interdependent field. The home is definitely not a life “boxed in” between four walls, protected by heavy doors and drawn curtains. The home is a site in which the outside world is always present and dealt with.

But what about the black box? The problem with the domestic everyday is that it seems so well-known that it is turned into something that is taken for granted and thus rendered invisible. There are, however, moments of alienation when the home is seen, maybe only briefly, in a new and destabilizing light. What kind of strange machinery or setting is this? A home interior can be charged with very different affects, triggering reactions of bliss, disgust, longing or boredom. A feeling of reassuring security may be transformed into claustrophobia. The one and same space is recharged. The living room or the kitchen can be changed into a junk space (Koolhaas 2003). Suddenly, like its inhabitants, it just looks tired and worn, out of fashion, out of place or out of control:

Clarissa is filled, suddenly, with a sense of dislocation. This is not her kitchen at all. This is the kitchen of an acquaintance, pretty enough but not her taste, full of foreign smells. She lives elsewhere.

Clarissa, one of the characters in Michael Cunningham’s novel *The Hours*, stands in her kitchen observing all her stuff like a tourist in a museum:

She and Sally bought all these things, she can remember every transaction, but she feels now that they are arbitrary, the spigot and the counter and the pots, the white dishes. They are only choices, one thing and then another, yes or no, and she sees how easily she could slip out of this life—these empty and arbitrary comforts. (Cunningham 2003, 91-92)

In a flash the project of home is reduced to something alien, arbitrary, hollow. A well-known kitchen turns into a mysterious black box. How did this random collection of stuff, memories, feelings, and actions actually come about?
Orvar Löfgren

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RESPONSES

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The Everyday Life of a Non-Discipline, or How to Celebrate Daily Routines of a Society

Cristina Sánchez-Carretero
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Usually, the response section of a journal is dedicated to one article. It allows the author of the response to compare and contrast the research presented with the latest investigations in that field; to find problematic aspects that need to be pointed out; or to suggest alternatives and possible extensions. The narrative genre of a “response” often tries to turn the text upside down while ending in a lament and a critique. The task asked of me in this case is quite different because my response has to cover four different articles with one common focal point: they are all lectures delivered at the 2014 SIEF 50th jubilee hosted by the University of Amsterdam. Reviewing these four articles is not a simple task, as they provide neither a comparable analytical perspective nor a unifying thematic relation to each other. Does it mean that these “outside-the-box,” creative contributions lack coherence? On the contrary, this collection makes sense, and I felt very much “at home” while reading them. As ethnographers know, the moments of feeling that “this really makes sense” are crucial in order to understand the structuring logics of our societies. In this particular case, the four articles make sense because of the feeling of belonging that they provide: the emotional and narrative consolidation of a dislocated place called SIEF.

My response presents an emotional approach to the assemblage and entanglement of the ethnological, folkloristic, and anthropological perspectives presented in these articles. I completely agree with the introduction of the volume that the problem is no longer about defining ethnology and folklore—and I would add that neither is it about defining anthropological studies of the vernacular expressive culture, cultural studies, heritage studies, ethnomusicology, cultural history, or ethnographic approaches to cultural geography, among many others. There is room for all of us, regardless of whether we consider folklore and ethnology one or two disciplines, whether we consider them disciplines at all, or whether we consider them “non-disciplines.” As explained
by Valdimar Hafstein and Peter Jan Margry in the introduction, there are key concerns which have stayed with SIEF over the years and which prove to be resilient. I will take this idea further: SIEF has maintained these concerns because it is the academic-professional home that many of us have chosen.

I will expand on the concept of “home” presented by Orvar Löfgren in response to the articles while developing the idea of SIEF as an academic home. According to Löfgren “home is a site of negotiation, with constant wheeling and dealing, trying to make different priorities and interests co-habit” (Löfgren, this issue, p. 93). I am writing my response as I navigate through the repertoire of emotions that the articles triggered in my affective self. I read all the articles with great pleasure, relating to them and immersing myself in them—an “ethnological sensation” that, I admit, is getting more and more difficult to obtain from a collection of articles. Probably, they had this effect on me because the articles do not try to follow the rules of academic writing, or maybe because of the “outside the box thinking” that they convey. In a sense, if they came out of the box, I have come out of the closet, emotionally speaking.

Sometimes the texts brought a smile to my face, because I related personally to them, for instance when Orvar Löfgren focuses on how people cope with “too much” in their daily lives; an excellent illustration of the type of research ethnologists do. My smile turned into a giggle when he describes the decorative empty white ceramic bowl on a coffee table, “there it is, simple, beautiful, and above all seductively empty. All of a sudden there is an empty matchbox in it, next to a couple of coins. The ice has been broken, and through a magic force, new objects are attracted: a cellphone charger, an old lottery ticket, an unpaid electricity bill, and some used batteries. Step by step a mountain is growing on the table, until one day someone gives the living room a searching look: ‘We can’t have all this mess!’” (Löfgren, this issue, p. 84). Löfgren offers the reader a fresh prose that establishes emotional links with research about daily-life practices. This article provides one of the most important arguments to prove the homelike quality of SIEF: the type of articles produced by SIEFians. Reading Löfgren I can recognize a sense of belonging in this type of empirical detailed research on daily-life.

A different type of smile is provoked by Konrad Köstlin and his insightful and ironic analysis of anniversaries. Köstlin questions the self-evident nature of anniversaries and criticizes the obsessive cult of remembrance linked to consumerism. As he explains, “the circle of life has been replaced by a linear metaphor” (Köstlin, this issue, p. 14) producing a decimalism in the conception of time. A problematic mythical beginning was established in 1964 for SIEF, and it initiates time measurement, “as a chronometry based on a secular, but seeming-
ly also sacred, decimalism” (Köstlin, this issue, p. 14). The jubilee performance that took place in Amsterdam in September 2014 was, of course, an occasion to celebrate and guarantee the continuity and the consistency of SIEF. A good ending for Köstlin’s article would be a narrative piece in which the Mad Hatter from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland sings “Happy un-anniversary” to SIEF to celebrate every year that is not an anniversary. Köstlin’s article shows another angle of SIEF: its members’ reflective tone and open-minded ability to accept criticism.

In addition to the smiles triggered by the above-mentioned articles, I reacted with empathy to the ideas presented by Jasna Čapo. I read the straightforward meta-narrative style of Čapo with a feeling of relief. Her subjects of study are scholars and she deals with one of the most difficult questions SIEF needs to handle: its relationship with anthropology and the discipline(s) power structure. Jasna Čapo focuses on the tensions between Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) ethnologists/anthropologists and Western, mainly British-style anthropology to critically analyse the patronizing attitudes towards CEE scholarship. Words such as “stereotyping,” “patronising,” “orientalising/exoticising,” “neglecting,” “nativising,” and “colonizing” are some of the terms which CEE scholars use to describe Western perceptions towards them. CEE ethnologists/anthropologists found that their studies were thought of as “native/indigenous” ethnographies, as data rather than as scientific analyses, and themselves as informants rather than as colleagues. Jasna Čapo’s article shows that the rationale behind the division of disciplines is linked to reasons outside the disciplines themselves. In addition, it shows that SIEF provides a home for many scholars regardless of the discussions about disciplinary limits. I feel at home with Čapo’s uneasy reading of the state of the disciplines and her attempt to counteract the hegemonic academic power. I also feel at home with the need to think transnationally.

Finally, the emotions triggered by Bjarne Rogan’s article are different in terms of their quality and intensity. I relate very deeply to the issue of how to handle the term “folklore”: on the one hand I was trained in a department dedicated to the study of folklore in the USA and I fully understand the need of folklore studies; on the other hand, I am from a country where the term folklore has been largely abandoned and is often perceived as a term that describes an old-fashioned, non-academic and amateurish approach. The first time I encountered a discussion about the “F-word” was at the 1996 AFS annual meeting in Pittsburg. Regina Bendix and Dan Ben-Amos were part of a heated debate—I might say a battle—in a plenary called “What’s in a name?” Both came to be my professors, and back then I really did not fully grasp the emotions
that the term folklore was capable of raising. Years later, in 2001, I witnessed a similar discussion in Budapest related to a proposal for a SIEF name change.

Former SIEF president Regina Bendix, various SIEF board members and individual members, have requested for over a decade that the society change its name. SIEF itself has a long history of name changes. In 1928-29 it included “arts populaires” or “folk art” in its name: “la Commission des Arts Populaires” (CIAP). In 1936 the term “traditions” was added, resulting in “la Commission des Arts et Traditions Populaires,” and in the late 1930s the name “European Ethnology” was proposed for the whole field of study. In the 1950s the name “European Ethnology” was proposed once again. In 1964, as analyzed in detail by Bjarne Rogan, there was a heated debate concerning the issue and the name “Societé Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore” (SIEF) was adopted. Since then, the name issue has been brought to the foreground on several occasions by presidents and in general assemblies, such as in 2001 in Budapest. At the 2011 SIEF conference in Lisbon, Bjarne Rogan gave a plenary lecture in which he touched on the need to decide on the name as a commitment for the future of the association. That suggestion was also included in Ullrich Kockel’s presidential address. Some of us wanted to raise the question in Lisbon at the General Assembly from the ground and the president responded by commissioning the board to prepare a proposal for an on-line ballot on this issue. According to SIEF president Ullrich Kockel, “ever since I joined SIEF, I have been aware of the tension this issue has created on occasion, and therefore, realizing the importance of bringing the matter to a conclusion that can be ‘owned’ by our members, whatever their preferred approach and traditional context, I suggested that an appropriate set of proposals, based on wide-ranging consultation with the membership” (Kockel, SIEF Newsletter 10/2012 (1), 5). As a member of the SIEF board, I coordinated the working group to prepare the ballot (see SIEF Newsletter 10/2012 (1), 2012, which includes the working group documents).

In the end, the ballot did not take place and the issue is still open. If the ballot does take place, I don’t know if I would vote for a name change as there are many good reasons to keep the name SIEF, but I think that having an on-line ballot on the topic is a good way to deal with this open discussion that has gone on for too long. Bjarne Rogan’s dichotomous analysis presented in his article is a sign of the ongoing debate. I do not agree with the metaphor of losing and winning battles that Rogan presents in his piece because it fossilizes the relationship between those folklorists that participated in the 1964 General Assembly and Sigurd Erixon’s position regarding European Ethnology. The differences between them cannot be so neatly established and the stress...
on “losing a war” only reinforces these differences, while SIEF now faces new concerns. The “F-Word” in the society’s name used to be a cause of heated debate, but now it doesn’t seem to provoke strong emotional responses. Precisely because of the serenity of the debate, it is time to ask membership for their opinion.

However, I feel uncomfortable promoting a name change for SIEF because I think that trying to reach a consensus about the various definitions of ethnology, folklore and other disciplines is not a productive issue. I prefer to ask why it is that many researchers, academics and professionals feel at home in SIEF. SIEF represents the arena where creative approaches and experimental styles can be brought together and combined—why not?—with old-fashioned approaches in an integrative manner; a place where innovative and traditional scholars observe the vernacular, daily-life, heritage, tourism, expressive culture, and many other interests. In a sense, paraphrasing Orvar Löfgren, SIEF develops strategies to cope with “too much” in relation to daily life.

SIEF is facing—has faced—and is creating—has already created—the conditions to enter an exciting moment: a place called home for many of us who are not interested in boxing up and constructing fences around how to define a discipline. SIEF is not an association that embraces practitioners of “a” discipline or “various” disciplines, but a place called home. And a home is built around those who live in it and their emotional links: its members, their affective selves, what members do, and what SIEF—as a society—does. All four articles provoked a lot of smiles, empathy, uncomfortable questions... all very good reasons to be part of SIEF.
Agonistic Disciplines and Existential Anxieties
A Reflective Response

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This volume gathers a set of articles that is at once heterogeneous and unified, even if those similarities do not cut across all four perspectives. Consequently, the emergent similarities speak volumes about the present state of the scholarly domain covered by folkloristics, ethnology, and anthropology. Due to my interdisciplinary background and position (professor of cultural research), I do not tote a single disciplinary allegiance, which may grant me some neutrality in the matters discussed here in Cultural Analysis.

This special issue celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of a scholarly organization: SIEF (Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore). Considering the time span, we observe a venerable age encompassing experience from two centuries, and numerically bridging two millennia. It is an age that, by human standards, typically connotes prominence, position, successors and legacy. Nevertheless, we are called upon now to think “outside the box,” and to reflect upon the metaphor of “box” suggested by the anniversary symposium title. The phrase can refer to a certain dynamic (imagine a Jack-in-the-box!) or a forward look (exiting the confined space to enjoy a limitless cosmos), and either is indicative of how diversely contributing authors understand, or reflect upon, the notion of “box.” What is the substance of a box? How does one appear to be boxed? What does such boxing mean? To what extent is this metaphor related to signification, or to location and positioning? What kind of experiential or existential reference does it entail? And what does it mean to be outside the box?

All in all, regardless of the celebratory occasion, these writings are draped in anxiety, which appears to be existential and representational. This tone does not reflect simply personal predicaments or misgivings, but testifies to a wider concern. Disquiet in regard to signification and concurrent representation has a historical aura and mark by itself that was expressed decades ago in the programmatic alert to “folklore’s crisis” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998), or the notoriously inspirational inquisition into “writing culture” (Clifford and Marcus 1986). The prevailing anguish emanates from the past and naming, from placing and positioning. Even if the anxiety is not new, an exploration into organizational or disciplinary history appears poignant, presenting a recurrent and ceaseless existential apprehension. An existential situation denotes...
a challenge that derives from the etymology of “existence”: standing or being positioned out(side). It creates a vacuum in the meaning of being; it is a search for and interrogation of being, while previously established truths crumble. We find ourselves standing at a crossroad, beckoned to undertake a quest for a new meaning and a new truth …

Ironically, Konrad Köstlin’s piece addressing the practice of celebration is not too reassuring when registering irritation with the current culture of commemoration. The modernist memory boom testifies to an obsession with the past which simultaneously appears to be triggered by recognizable insecurity and anxiety towards continuity. A celebration of an anniversary is indicative of the modernist culture of remembrance, which thrives on, as well as generates, moments of meaning. Such celebratory meaning-making around the experience of temporality corresponds with the cult of heritage and imposes power: it claims diachronic dimension through experienced past, as well as synchronic extension by recognition and signification. Köstlin detects a particular void in the scholarly endeavor of European ethnology today: can we recognize the problems of the contemporary, or are we too engaged in reminiscing? The predicament that all these contributions fundamentally face is being caught in a relation to the past that is juxtaposed with a relation to the present.

An anniversary brackets through a process of naming in a powerful way: it refers to past experience, of a physical place habited and a mental space with which it is associated. Nevertheless, naming and status are instrumentally reciprocal. Just the other day, I came across a thought-provoking name-change: a regular cultural event in Estonia called folklorifestival, which had been occurring for thirty years, has been newly dubbed pärimuspidu, meaning “traditional fete.” This change demonstrates a visible preference of a vernacular word in opposition to international loanwords. It appears symptomatic of claiming turf and expressing sensibilities that (re)order ideological space. This act of naming entails a semantic function when carrying information, revealing identity, and giving meaning. This act is descriptive and multidirectional, charged by extension and intention: it extends a connotation while it intends a denotation. It refers to and expresses, with intentional and representational meaning. According to Kantian epistemology, human inquiry makes the truth and then structures the world by representing it. Naming fixes reference, and by studying the activity of representation, we may reveal formal, conceptual, or structural truths about the world experienced.

In his contribution, Bjarne Rogan expresses anxiety related to naming, which at the same time indexes disciplinary histories that morph into organizational politics. The naming debate was appended with propositions and acts
of renaming that were permeated by the agon between disciplines, a long-lasting struggle between adversaries. An agonistic perspective illustrates well a basically democratic situation where, according to Chantal Mouffe, one shares with the “adversary” a common allegiance to principles, while disagreeing about their interpretation (Mouffe 2013, 7). The strife between or engagement with the designations folklore-ethnology-anthropology (give or take the sequence or pairing preferred: ethnology-folklore, folklore-anthropology, ethnology-anthropology) indicates disciplinary transitions, or overlap, in a diverse manner that becomes about institutional politics. The scholarly organization celebrated in SIEF represents historical acts of institutionalization: ones that refer to particular knowledge formats and disciplinary knowledge production within institutionalized genealogies.

However, the descriptive aspect inherent to the process of naming appears to be relative, if only in the linguistic sense, calling us to contemplate whether language structures or copies the world. An answer to the question of whether a name should be considered constructive or referential is actually indicative of politics. It comprises the act of knowledge production that relates to the tension between ontology and epistemology, the basis of any scholarly inquiry. The representational nature of language has an important function here, alongside location and place of origin. It depends on where a particular institution is situated, on the academic conventions and contingencies in that country or region, and on disciplinary histories. In addition, one notices an equivocal use of scholarly terms in English by non-native speakers who utilize a lingua franca with vernacular conceptions tacitly guiding their expression. Based on the historiographical scuffle he renders, Rogan needs to draw a clear distinction between “ethnology” and “folklore” in the English version of his text. This case stands in contrast to the discussion of the discipline of folklore (folkloristics, folklore studies) in the comprehensive recent publication, which smoothly traverses that space as a basically unified field of scholarly inquiry, corresponding to the academic tradition in the United States (see Bendix and Hasan-Rokem 2012). There remains the question of whether (folk) narrative and verbal art are treated inclusively with material culture and social practice, or independently, and what their relationships have been with philological investigations in particular academic territories. A vernacular term that has been usually historically expedient in the nation-building process may be indicative here. If the Swedish folklivsforskning refers to “folklife research” with a general connotation of materiality, practice and repertoire, then the Finnish kansanrunouden tutkimus denotes the study of folk poetry as a separate field from folklife studies in Finland (covered by kansatiede). Understandably, institution-
al camps have once mattered greatly when politically motivated taxonomies defined the fields and textual relationships were opposed to social interaction. Today, however, broader research perspective “ceases to warrant distinct epistemology” according to Michael Herzfeld, who points out that once prominent philological studies have been tempered with social and performative contextualization (Herzfeld 2002, 237).

Even if there are “institutionalized forms” of transmitting particular concepts and establishing methodology or terminology, Regina Bendix brings forth “porous disciplinarity” that is historically built on an interdisciplinary foundation (Bendix 2012, 364). Engagement in a discipline’s present has significantly changed particularly due to reflexive awareness of the fields past. If *Völkerkunde* in the German-speaking academia dealt with the cultural history of external others, and *Volkskunde* with the historical others within the national cultural tradition, they both derived from a historicist and museum-oriented tradition, which were widely criticized for being politically instrumentalized in the enterprises of nation- or empire-building.

In the present, academic folklore studies are situated among a number of other fields and share large portions of discourse with them, where Bendix and Hasan-Rokem suggest an inconclusive situation between the humanities and the social sciences (2012, 2). But exactly the same has been stated about anthropology, whilst institutionalized genealogies may overlap in many countries. Clifford Geertz, for example, has claimed that anthropology “was born omiform” (1983, 21). What may matter, though not in a contentious or definitive way, is the research location with certain concomitant idiosyncrasies of research practice. There appears a particular spatial difference when research at home is juxtaposed with explorations carried out overseas or to investigations conducted in an archive. However, even this does not define disciplinary allegiance in these days of global access, mobility, and IT environments. Also, presentist practice should retain reflexivity: knowledge about the historical dimension should be balanced with a critical reassessment of organizational or disciplinary legacy.

In the academic context, we deal with the meaning and reference between identifying a field and the question of subject matter, which simultaneously means claiming presence and establishing ontology. The naming process has not happened due to the “metaphysical necessity” of confronting things—and then baptizing them—but by adjusting to the “epistemic necessity” of an institutionalized field, an established rigidity of designation, and of formal and structural truths. Richard Rorty has argued such necessity when pointing out the pragmatist claim in naming something with an intention of attaining a particular goal, of having an agenda (Rorty 1980).
In her contribution, Jasna Čapo expresses anxiety about established disciplinary hierarchies, and about positioning in these imaginary scales (with rather material consequences). She observes particular historical constraints of institutionalization that at the same time illuminate particular practices of research, defined by disciplinary borders, which are foremost seen to be ideological. Such problematization is paralleled with the question of “othering”: othering of folklorists or othering of “native” research in post-socialist condition, even though the application of othering implies a constraining homogenization of the counterpart. It seems that fixation on locational East-West (European) dichotomy may be paralyzing, and presenting perhaps an agenda of “the Other” who “writes back.” Nevertheless, it still points, again, to the location of school and to disciplinary idiosyncrasies. These factors depend on distinctive research practices in Britain that may not correspond to those in the United States, as they derive from certain academic history, politics of methodology, and politics of practice. The American Anthropological Association, for example, claims to advance the study of humankind through ethnological research, which is listed as one of the four fields besides archaeological, biological and linguistic ones. In many cases the use of ethnology and anthropology appears to be interchangeable, even prominent encyclopedias see them to be broadly the same (e.g., Byron 2002, 208; Bendix 2012).

However, the crucial factor lurking in the background is obviously a struggle for a position vis-à-vis an academic institution and its inherent hierarchies, which defines access to financial resources. The aggravating debates in (and about) Central Eastern Europe suggest that the authority of knowledge is essentially about issues of indoctrination. Yet it should be pointed out that disciplinary compartmentalization no longer assumes serious validity outside the institutional politics. Čapo (in reference to Chris Hann) does not dispute so much disciplinary fields but particular disciplinary histories—about scholarly practices that have established certain hierarchies of knowledge (in and for CEE). However, what sticks out is a separate existential problem, whether CEE is treated as an object or a subject in the research process. Such tension reflects the circumstance of knowledge production that has, alternately or concurrently, been imbued by imperial colonial, national communist, and post-socialist post-colonial context and ideology.

For the sake of fairness, these grievances should be balanced also with the existential anxieties and misrepresentation concerning anthropology. The latter has never been homogeneous or substantially grounded, since it is similarly diverse and torn by struggles or a sense of demise (even subordination) when anthropology compares itself to sociology or cultural studies. Claims for “the
end of anthropology” have appeared (see Jebens and Kohl 2011), although one should admit that narratives of “the end” may be a popular literary device. Anthropology, prominently conceptualized and criticized in the past as aiming at an immediate understanding, subduing, and taming of the Other (Kohl 2011, 5), has likewise attempted to free its scholarly production from the naïve empiricism of predecessors when facing modern societal and cultural change alongside with the challenges of global transformations. To boot, in addition to the general reconceptualization of alterity and distance, the overarching restructuring of university systems has apparently compelled anthropologists to cede their field of study to political scientists, economists, and sociologists, or to feel threatened supposedly by post-colonial studies, cultural studies, literary criticism, etc. (Jebens and Kohl 2011).

Orvar Löfgren, instead, places his anxiety outside of disciplinary positioning when discussing a research topic in another locus: the domestic space of “home.” He deals with the subject matter, and thus reflects on the knowledge production. He considers a contemporary problem that recognizes transdisciplinary “turns” in theory and practice, as well as focus. In his treatment of ethnology and cultural analysis, the spotlight falls on the everyday and foregrounds a research problem, appearing negligent of disciplinary allegiance. It could be either ethnology or anthropology of the quotidian, where “home” is seen as a moral economy. On the one hand, he has been inspired by the leading anniversary metaphor when discussing “the black box” of everyday life, clutter, and memories (cf. Stocking 2010). On the other hand, one may discern a certain type of positioning in this argumentation, as the existential anxiety of material affluence is clearly a Western (or European?) concern, making a geopolitical allegiance transparent.

In conclusion, my elaboration on the topics raised by the current journal issue of Cultural Analysis and the occasion of celebrating the SIEF anniversary dealt with the agonistic concerns that are simultaneously inspired by the suggestion to “think the world politically” (Mouffe 2013). From my perspective, the bottom line is that these existential reflections are all about politics, when one feels the need to (re)consider positions of institutions, positions of disciplines, their allegiance and histories. All the while, the underlying question emerges: how do we relate to the modern world?

Existential problems—an agonistic stance and the search for renewal—strike me as ubiquitous. Perhaps we may hope together with Marilyn Strathern that a renewed cogent discipline emerges from its own history, “from its fortunes and misfortunes” as a “fresh instrument” of education, which appears to be paramount (Rabinow et al 2008). The moral necessity for our field
of research urges us to learn more about the human condition and disseminate this knowledge. Therefore, even though it is good to know your history (to practice a culture of remembrance), an academic venture should stress forward-looking, alongside retrospect wisdom, as well as the search for prospective experimental practices.

What comes “after” should be important, both in our research and in our organization. I do not think that these disciplines participate in a movement with a particular end in themselves. Under revised circumstances, we face new themes and new topical arenas, with shifting attention on contemporary events and problems, because the research objects have changed for everybody. We are obliged to be far-reaching in our reflection on the human condition outside of parochial confinement, while being charged by interdisciplinary theoretical thought. In this contemporary flux of transition, mobility, and also insecurity, we all undergo restructuring of university systems and academic institutions. Disciplinary allegiance appears to be necessary when protecting institutional camps, but the current dynamics and trends call for openness and motion in research. It seems essential to retain reflexivity towards (your disciplinary) concepts. Both our research environments and objects of study have fundamentally changed. Thus our inquiries, our research questions, need to be critical and generative, and not so reconstructive.

When we design and contemplate these new research questions, we come to realize the vital importance of scholarly networking and collegial support. There is no better opportunity for reaching that goal than a scholarly society: such association secures exchange of knowledge and networking, it creates a collegial family where disciplinary divisions no longer matter. While I have been writing this commentary over the course of a few weeks, several people with different backgrounds and from many different countries have asked me if I shall go to Zagreb! This is quite a telling sign that testifies to the importance and scope of such a get-together. We are assembling in one location as a scholarly network to hold the twelfth SIEF Congress, to debate, to share knowledge, and to extend our minds among people with similar goals and interests.

Notes

1 This work is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory) and by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (institutional research grant IUT34-32).

2 Wiley-Blackwell’s 2012 edition A Companion to Folklore, edited by Regina Bendix & Galit Hasan-Rokem. Notably, this may be paralleled with A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe, edited by Ullrich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith and Jonas Frykman in 2013 that significantly encompasses the perspective of European ethnology.
Kristin Kuutma

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Notes on the Contributors

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