

Ondřej Daniel: *Bigbít nebo turbofolk. Představy migrantů z bývalé Jugoslávie* [Big beat or Turbofolk. Imaginations of Migrants from the Former Yugoslavia]

AntropoEdice, sv. 3.

Praha: AnthroWeb 2013, 155 pp.

Ondřej Daniel's book "Big beat or Turbofolk" seeks to explore the topic of imagination among migrant communities from the former Yugoslavia across several countries, namely, Austria, the Czech Republic and France. In order to capture these imaginations along with a complicated "web" of connections among several spaces of different nation-states, the author fittingly chose a strategy of multiple-site research (see pp. 15–23). This places Daniel's work in the area of transnational migration studies and (postmodern) social theory, which is also reflected in the chosen theoretical framework and bibliography (e.g., Anderson, Appadurai, Bhaba, Said and others). The author also seeks inspiration in cultural studies, namely, the Birmingham school as well as authors influenced by Marxism, including Gramsci, Harvey, Wallerstein and Žižek (p. 153). Moreover, not only does such research ask for specific theoretical and methodological anchoring but, as Daniel claims, also a specific style of writing – the author himself strives for an "experiment." He suggests that the best way of representing research that puts an emphasis on human imagination, memories and dreams can be found in Deleuze's and Guattari's rhizomatic style of writing (see p. 11). In this manner,

Daniel's book opens up the truly fascinating topic of migrants' imagination, which certainly deserves the attention of the social sciences.

The question of what impels so many persons to be on the move is indeed a relevant question to the increasing world's population – in an era that has been referred to as the "age of migration" (e.g., Brettel and Hollifield 2001). "Big beat and Turbofolk" is a contribution to the growing area of migration studies that reflect on these trends. Understanding migration indeed matters. People have migrated for thousands of years, but the "modern" form of migration is of a different character and it is the one Daniel elaborates on. In his book he locates and focuses on various economic, political and demographic aspects enabling and determining migration. However, despite the title and the overall goal to follow migrants' imagination, what the book misses is that the moving force behind many of the journeys can be traced precisely to the realm of imagination. Daniel's book sets out on an ambitious path, but, unfortunately, not all the goals that the author sets are successfully tackled. So what are the "benefits and drawbacks" of "Big beat or Turbofolk"?

Formally, "Big beat or Turbofolk" fulfils all of the standards of an academic text – when it comes to the methodological premises, the interpretation line and the textual representation of the data. Daniel's research entails both synchronic and diachronic dimensions. Thus, he explains the phenomenon in its historical context while including other social forces present. The major drawback of Daniel's book is that it does not exhaust

the full potential of the topic. Despite the author's call for anthropological research – the “bottom to top approach” which he himself seems to implement – the final textual representation as well as the interpretation line fail to bring a deeper understanding of the world of the insider. Unfortunately, the reader rarely gets a better picture of the *emic* view and migrants' understanding of both their old and their new homes. This is more than surprising as the author applies the research methods of social anthropology – participant observation in particular (p. 153). This restricts reader's understanding to one of an outsider's eye – informed indeed, yet blind to certain movements of the “soul” and “heart.”

Certainly, an *etic* account is as relevant as an *emic* one; different research suits various strategies. Yet when it comes to the endeavor of comprehending migrants' imagination, it becomes limiting if not counter-productive. The insider's view generally appears in the form of interview and blog quotes that rarely offer the reader deeper insight into the individual perceptions of complicated Balkan identities. Daniel follows an approach similar to Appadurai's, in which macrostructural focus – an *etic* perspective – prevails, which inevitably leads to shifts in meaning and generalizations, while the *emic* dimension is, so to say, “lost in translation.” For instance, in the chapter devoted to Turbofolk, Narodna muzika (national music) and Novo komponovana narodna muzika (newly composed folk music) genres Daniel quotes an interview with “one informant from Paris” from January 2007: “...I don't like folklore very much. I like traditional music but the real one. The

new one [folk music] is kitsch, it's terrible, I fear it! It's for the villagers. It's the game of money...” (p. 109).

Even though Daniel puts this quote into the context of a so-to-say fitting analysis of the Turbofolk genre, it does not become explicitly clear in the text why this informant would dislike it. We can only wonder whether she is a Serb from Bosnia, Croatia or Serbia or some other nationality, what her socio-political views are, her social status, etc. Thus, the reader, especially one who is not familiar with the *ehntoscapes* of the former Yugoslavia, cannot understand the meaning. Moreover, the author does not attempt to explain why she would fear the music genre and fails to highlight the tight relation between Turbofolk, extreme nationalism and direct linkages to people like Željko and Ceca Ražnatović and some of the worst atrocities that took place in the latest war (see Slavkova 2011). Overall, the author tends to treat the former Yugoslavian diaspora as a relatively unproblematic unit of social cohesion as if the identities drawn on national and religious bases didn't matter.

Further problems develop around the structure of the text and the final style of writing. As previously mentioned the author attempts to provide the reader with more of an experimental form of “rhizomatic writing” (p. 11). He claims that: “*the reader can start reading this work at any point and continue to another arbitrary point*” (ibid.). Clearly, this goal is daring and unfortunately it doesn't quite meet the practice. The book is overall structured as a classical academic manuscript conforming to general conventions and is, thus, far from an organic, tree-like structure of rhizome. It starts with an

introduction, has a clearly defined body of the text and ends, “instead of a conclusion,” with a closing chapter titled “Big beat or Turbofolk” (for the rhizome has neither a beginning nor an end). However, it is true that in order to read individual chapters one doesn’t need to follow their order. Each of them represents a separate chapter reflecting on a related yet independent topic. The result is a cross between a classic academic text and an encyclopedia – partly an examination of social theory relevant to the studied problematids, partly a handbook of emigration from the Balkans to chosen destinations and partly an overview of studies of lifestyle and popular culture.

The synopsis of “Big beat or Turbofolk” on the back cover begins: “*Tell me what music you listen to and I will tell you what kind of a person you are. And also the films you like, how you describe your journey from work and which interpretation of history you believe...*” Alas, Daniel’s book manages only partly to answer these questions. On the other hand, Daniel’s work needs to be appreciated as a valuable contribution to larger research endeavors concerning Balkan and migration studies. “Big beat or Turbofolk” explores the intriguing topic of migration, identity, lifestyle and nationalism and serves as a valuable overview and source of information of the phenomena. Furthermore, it can be recommended as an interesting read to every expert on the former Yugoslavia.

Markéta Slavková

Zuzana Jurková (ed.): *Pražské hudební světy / Prague Soundscapes*¹

Praha: Karolinum, 2014, 304 pp.

The book *Prague Soundscapes* is the successful result of at least two years’ work of a team of music anthropology seminar students at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague under the leadership of Zuzana Jurková. The title of the publication reveals its authors’ aim to introduce our capital as perceived by *ethnomusicological ears*. Ethnomusicology (music anthropology) conceives music in a complex way: not only as a sound phenomenon, but also as a social one. Music is, first of all, the people who play it and those who listen to it – it’s the world around sound, the *music world, the soundscape* (p. 8)! And that was exactly one of the authors’ goals: to introduce ethnomusicology as a discipline that seeks to understand people through music and music through people (p. 293) – to further link anthropological theoretical concepts with a particular musical world, or *soundscape*.

The 304 pages of the book contain a symbiotic combination of two genres: impressive “snapshots” on one hand and a theoretical part on the other. A total of twenty-four snapshots – original inside views of music events – very well portray the authors’ experience of musical events, including a detailed description of the music, place, musicians, listeners, and

¹ The book was published in two language versions, Czech – *Pražské hudební světy* – and English – *Prague Soundscapes*. The page numbers refer to the Czech version.

context, and illustrative photos. At the same time, the authors present information that is potentially relevant to the specific soundscape. All snapshots are interpreted by Zuzana Jurková through appropriately chosen theoretical concepts professed by ethnomusicologists and anthropologists such as Timothy Rice, Arjun Appadurai, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, Alan Lomax and Alan Merriam. Individual parts of the book are also distinguished graphically: beige pages indicate the theoretical part, while the snapshots are represented by white pages. In addition, the text is supplemented by information on the artists or musical genres. This information is also graphically differentiated. The purpose of this differentiation is explained in the introduction, where the authors instruct “how to read the book.” This book can be read from different points of view. Those who “do not want to waste time with theory” can just follow interesting snapshots which show what is happening in Prague or skip arbitrarily to the parts that interest them. The book also satisfies even the most demanding reader (“who does not fear theory” p. 9) who does not ask just “how?” but also “why?” in terms of understanding ethnomusicology.

“*Soundscapes*” are an important concept in this publication: a term coined by the American ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufmann Shelemay (first used by the acousticologist R. Murray Schafer as acoustic characteristics of a given environment – a sound parallel to “landscape”). Shelemay’s (2001) concept of the term combines theoretical inspiration of socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) and the ethnomusicologist Alan P. Merriam (2000). The term *soundscape*

refers to the world of music (-scape is a morpheme we can find in the word “landscape,” for instance) in its dynamic variability (characteristic for seascape). Being inspired by Appadurai’s theories of global cultural flows (ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes), she adopts the terms and so do the authors of *Prague Soundscapes* when they refer to specific examples of these -scapes. And so, for example the chapter Music and Identity reflects ethnoscapes when talking about migration; technoscapes appear in the chapter Electronic Music, etc. The content is inspired by Merriam’s model of exploring music from an anthropological point of view, in which music is regarded as a product of human activity (*music is the result of human behavior, whose roots are in human values and ideas* [p. 10]). The reviewed book certainly shows Merriam’s model too, for instance in the categorization of soundscapes, in which the values and significance of individual *music worlds/communities* stand out clearly. *Prague Soundscapes* fall in urban ethnomusicology. In this research discipline, similar studies in other world capitals were carried out (the above-mentioned Shelemay 2001 – research in the USA, or Philip Bohlman, Sebastian Klotz, Lars-Christian Koch 2007).

The book is divided into seven chapters. Except for the initial one, each of the following addresses one soundscape. Although it would be possible to find in Prague more soundscapes (soundscapes such as music therapy, music and children, music and politics might come to mind), the publication still covers a very wide range of topics: Music and Identity, Music and Social Stratification, Music

and Rebellion, Music as a Commodity, Electronic Dance Music, Music and Spirituality. The authors state that it is not the only possible and certainly not an exhaustive division. They have set these criteria for selecting the topics: (a) the music event had to take place in Prague and (b) musical language and the events had to be well explained through the values of the community in the perspective of anthropology. The authors were looking for a variety of genres in relation to the multidimensionality of the capital.

Each chapter would deserve its own publication, as the majority of the authors spent a large part of their studies on their given topics (the themes were pivotal to their bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses) and hence show extensive understanding of their domains. Especially admirable is the work of Zuzana Jurková, who led the student team and who managed to skilfully organize all the information into a compact image. Compactness is also evident in the sequence of the individual themes and sub-sections (snapshots, theoretical concepts), in which, despite their seeming contradiction (stratification, commodification, rebellion or electronic music, spirituality), they are connected. For example, the chapter Rebel Music ends with a snapshot of Tom Stoppard's performance Rock'n'Roll (a play about, apart from other things, the Czech band The Plastic People of the Universe) at the New Scene of the National Theater (a *very non-rebel place*) and this apt question: "How rebellious is music if it keeps features of a rebellious musical style, but fills stadiums with listeners – members of that very system against which the music protests (p. 294)?" Similarly, the interpretation of

Judith Beckett's unconventional text which deals with the relationship of music, emotion and trance and which is placed here within the context of electronic dance music directly precedes the chapter Music and Spirituality.

The introductory soundscape explores the relationship of music and identity. It focuses on "the others" through the studies of Romani/Gypsy music and music of today's migrants. The chapter outlines the term "identity" – the question whether music can express who we are.

In the next chapter, the authors Zuzana Jurková and Pavla Jónssonová deal with music in relation to social stratification. The authors illustrate stratified music with the example of Dvořák's *Rusalka*, applying Lomax's cantometrics and, when analyzing the performance *The Makropulos Affair*, they look at music through the lens of semiotics. They use Thomas Turino's adaptation of Charles S. Peirce's theory in an attempt to answer the question of how music actually affects people (p. 110).

In the 1970s, the British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner comes along with the concept of *communitas* – a mode of social existence complementary to normal stratified society (p. 21). The authors used this theoretical concept in the chapter Music and Rebellion when they applied it to modern punk concerts in the *Modrá Vopice* club and to the original Czech soundscape around the band *The Plastic People of the Universe* (Czech underground).

The previous two chapters are thematically linked with the soundscape of commodified music described in the chapter Music as a Commodity. Commodification is a process by which (in this case) music

becomes a commodity with the clear intention of making money. How money influences the form of music is illustrated with the movie *Mňaga: Happy End*, as well as in the KLF group's manual "How to Win the Hit Parade."

Electronic dance music directly refers to one of the mentioned –scapes: technoscapes. The authors focus on the relationship between music and technology that changes the very nature of music in many ways. When analyzing the two forms of electronic dance music, freetekno and psytrance, there appear values in a completely opposite pole from that in the chapter on commodification; the participants of this soundscape long to escape from that commercial and anonymous sector into the world created through the nearest symbiosis with technology (p. 34).

It is possible to view the relationship between music and spirituality from many angles. The author Veronika Seidlová chose to illustrate it in a demonstration of faith in the form of *harinam* – the procession of Hare Krishna movement members through the city, which catches the eyes and ears of urban dwellers. Another example, in fact an opposite one, was the Saint Wenceslas Christian Celebrations, which nicely showed the dichotomy between specialization and secularism. The snapshot of the gospel workshop then shows

another dichotomous model which distinguishes between the participants' level and the presentational level associated with the performance of music (Thomas Turino).

The book is definitely an interesting contribution to the field of (dare I say not only Czech) urban anthropology and ethnomusicology. Cultural Prague is viewed here from an entirely new perspective; not only from a historical point of view, as it used to be until now, but also from the perspective of its variable soundscapes. Although the authors did not want to embark upon a search for a systematic theoretical model with which they would analyze the musical worlds of Prague, they managed to find a few basic features that characterize *Prague soundscapes*. For urban space, it is the typical ambiguity and overlapping borders of musical genres and musical sound. In all the field studies we clearly see what the authors anticipate in the introduction, i.e., that music is not just sound itself. In each case, aesthetics and modus of behavior correspond with the musical language. Another feature is the desire to become different from others, which continually gives rise to constantly new worlds (as we read in the chapters on rebellion, electronic music and spirituality).

Alena Libánská

A Reflection on Summer School on the Topic “Women in Europe: an Unfinished Revolution?”

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This short essay is a reflection on one particular student summer school focused on gender topics. The target is not to evaluate summer schools on gender topics in general or to give an objective perspective to this specific summer school but to describe and reconsider the way of presenting the gender phenomenon at this specific school from an anthropology student’s point of view.

The summer school titled “Women in Europe: an Unfinished Revolution?” took place at Universidad Complutense in Madrid from June 29 to July 4, 2014. The participants were mostly M.A. and Ph.D. students in the role of discussants and experts from law and justice, think tanks, politics, NGOs and universities presenting various gender issues. The panels and working groups were supposed to debate questions of gender policies, prostitution, gender and religion, gender equality, gender violence, same-sex marriages, schools and gender and many more. The main program was drafted as lectures of professionals followed by questions and discussions of students. M.A. and Ph.D. students also had an opportunity to present their projects, research or thesis and therefore to get feedback from scholars, NGO representatives, prosecutors and other students. The topics were not viewed primarily from the anthropological

perspective but were interdisciplinary. Besides the scientific approach the topics were discussed from the points of view of media, politics, religion, an activist approach and mainly from the perspective of feminism.

From to the title “*Gender* summer school” I expected an equal gender approach to the latest gender issues. The key words in the title “Unfinished Revolution” naturally bring up many expectations and biases, so my question was whether to expect a scientific analysis of gender relations transformation or activist perception of women gaining power at the beginning of the century. One of the first discussion topics was called “All Women, Not all Men?” which tends to anticipate equal inclusion of both genders to the debate on the divisions of social roles. Most of the lecturers were women who focused their attention primarily on women’s issues describing the topics exclusively as the problems which bring inequality between genders to the detriment of women. Every topic was presented with the prejudice of oppressed woman in most of the presented fields. Women’s rights in the perspective of public policy were described as primarily uneven through the evaluation of the number of mentions of the word “woman” in law books. The panel about women’s identity and heritage was composed of topics that did not fit into other panels like women and mass media, poetry, lesbians and women migrant house workers. The panel on women in education and society presented statistics of female professors in schools and some examples of female literature authors focused on lesbian poetry and prose. Summarizing the content of

the panels question “All Women, Not all Men?” seems unanswered to me.

First, I miss the issue of men in discussing gender roles and relationships. Furthermore I also miss objectivity in presenting “oppressed” women, which is the fact that only strengthened the invisible role of man in the debate topics. To support the conclusions of the roles of women in Western society the lecturers often used statistics. Those were mainly figures of women working in various sectors, their participation in politics, numbers of women scholars, numbers of women artists presented in art galleries, etc. But the statistics were carefully selected concerning mainly the sectors where the women seemed to be disadvantaged from some point of view. Very often I missed the interpretation of the whole context that would contain other related factors of described social reality. For instance the women presenting their pieces of art in galleries were analyzed as “unrepresented” and later even “ignored” based on the statistics of a few museums obviously not well known. The historical context of the cultural era in which the various artists were active was omitted.

Another interesting issue concerned the LGBT community and their rights. Surprisingly, almost exclusively, only lesbians were discussed in terms of adoption, same-sex marriage, lesbian poetry and lesbian literature authors. Again, where are the men in this gender topic? The next topic was naturally the earnings of women and men. These were compared in a table, but without regard to the type of occupation. Maternity leaves were also presented as disadvantageous for working women but nothing was said about men’s paternity

leave and its practices in European countries. One of the most interesting and important topics for me was domestic workers. A movie about Philippine women migrants working in Chinese households in Hong Kong was screened. But because of the lack of time only parts of the movie were presented, so the most serious issues of this phenomenon were skipped. Not much time was assigned for the topic of remittances, care chains, transgenerational and gender relationships and roles that are being transformed after women’s migration.

The summer school was not drafted as exclusively anthropological; the topics were presented from the perspective of more scientific disciplines and there were not only scientific points of view presented but also other non-scientific fields. Therefore I am not in a position to evaluate the program only from the anthropological perspective. But still it is interesting to consider what attitude anthropology as a scientific discipline would hold in those issues compared with the feministic and activist position of this summer school. The lack of social context in the statistics and gender relations including men has already been mentioned. There were more obvious issues where anthropology would emphasize cultural relativism rather than activism. One example is the question of female circumcision in some regions of Africa. There was a movie screened on the topic of female genital mutilation in a few tribes in Kenya, Ethiopia, Congo and Egypt. Afterwards a discussion was held which led to the consent of almost all the participants that this is an unforgivable act that should be stopped immediately. Their main argument was that most of

the male actors in the documentary were also against the act of genital mutilation. The fact that the perspective of the camera can be very selective and the informants who performed the mutilation in the movie were mainly from the educated social class did not play any role for the discussants of the summer school. The perspective of cultural relativism was completely left out and the gender roles and the gender system of Western society (there is the question if there is any common system) was applied to the system of different cultures in an effort to stop female mutilation. The argument that female mutilation is only one pattern in a whole complex of social and cultural practices so to stop only the act of mutilation would strongly disrupt the social system was unacceptable. Other phenomena concerning equal rights, gender roles or gender identity also

lacked the emic perspective and immersion in the social problem. The solution was always the activist attitude held by Western female academics.

On the other hand this summer school was a great opportunity for M.A. and Ph.D. students to present their projects concerning gender topics. There was a ground for discussions and feedback on their research or final thesis. About thirty students attended but only two presentations were anthropological. One of them was on the topic of transgenerational relationships between two generations of Vietnamese women in the Czech Republic and the second one was on female songs about relationships in the northern part of Afghanistan. Neither of the presentations held any activist perspective; both tended to the “objective,” non-judgmental interpretation of social reality.

Tereza Vrbková