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FOLK MUSIC AS VIEWED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ITS SOCIAL CONDITIONINGS AND FUNCTIONS

It might seem that nothing has changed in our understanding of folklore and that we will stick to the classic view of Bartok's who defines folk music as a stock of traditions capable of adjusting to patterns relatively susceptible to adoption by folk recipients.¹ This, however, is not the case. That our understanding of folklore is different today has come as a result of heightening the degree of universalization of modern culture and some changes which can be found in the consciousness of modern people. Subsequently it has led to seeking and employing more general and objective criteria of definition. Ultimately, structural criteria tend to be selected by scholars and then contrasted with complementary cultural criteria; the former position genetic-functional criteria has thus been replaced by the opposition cultural-structural generative criteria. This fairly substantial change is indicative of our changed understanding of the phenomenon under discussion, more with regard to its depth and transformational possibility than its extensiveness. Probing into the deepest layers, controlled solely by basic laws of human perception, means probing into general laws shared by the phenomena of universally understood culture. If compared with structural criteria: formerly employed functional criteria (e.g. adaptiveness) seem to pertain to superficial aspects of these phenomena, as such being easy to perceive and study. Thus, summing up, folk music is understood today as a stock of traditions together with creative transformational and adaptive patterns shaped according to laws so basic that they become almost universal. On the surface, this generality manifests itself through functional features, such as adaptiveness and distribution. What is common is structural, and what is specific is cultural.

On the world scale, the turn towards the »deep« understanding of the phenomenon under discussion took place within the last twenty years and was directly linked with geopolitical changes in the world, particularly with those after 1955, i.e. the liberation of Africa and the intensification of the racial conflicts in the United States; methodological turning-points in many disciplines of learning played a substan-

¹ B. Bartok: *Das Ungarische Volkslied*, Berlin 1925.

tial role as well. In Poland, however, a similar re-orientation of the social consciousness began much later and only with regard to some circles and generations (youth).

Main Functions of Folklore in Modern Society

As I have already indicated elsewhere, our times are characterized by an ever-increasing social demand for folklore and folk music, especially in the case of communities relatively distant from so-called authentic rural communities. Intelligentsia and academic youth, as well as leftist and progressive circles are fascinated by folklore — particularly in highly industrialized and urbanized societies. At the same time, this interest in folklore is especially authentic in those communities where historical traditionalism and rural and peasant culture were very strong, e.g. in Norway, Sweden and among immigrants, for example in Canada. The character of the process in question, full of discrepancies and contradictory tendencies, suggests that it is conditioned by many different factors; hence careful and probing interpretation is required. Generally speaking, the functions of folklore in modern society are diversified and often contradict each other.

The most basic functions seem to include recreation and relaxation often connected with reflection and mental stabilization. These qualities of folklore are especially valued today by passive consumers who perceive it individually in most cases with occasional collective perception, e.g. in university clubs. This type of perception is particularly characteristic of non-authentic communities and the amounts of music scores and records that are sold are indicative of its great popularity.

The functions of the second type are of a different character in that they are primarily related with performance and organized perception (clubs, organizations) and dynamizing, or at times even revolutionizing, effects of folklore. This functional dualism of folklore (stabilizing and revolutionizing functions) is not so much of a conflicting character but of a complementary character; it is also deeply rooted in tradition which, for instance, can readily be proved by studies of reflexive and mobilizing soldier songs. The distinctive features of the two basic functions of folklore under discussion include the dynamism of effects and the degree of relation with current reality. Their integrative features become visible when the functions are considered in terms of a relationship between ordinary and unusual events. Both functions are much typical of folklore as follows from historical research; the first type (recreative and reflexive functions) is marked by its regular occurrence during periods of stability while the second type gains significance occasionally as a reflection of abnormal and eventful periods whose impact is long-ranged and substantial. The identity of this latter type is testified to by its long durability and historical persistence.

Quite different and less contrastive relations can be observed in the case of the cognitive-inspiring and identifying functions of folklore. The contrast between these functions is not exactly a matter of

perception (individual, collective, active, passive) but more a matter of the degree of participation in the group, with the resultant division into outside recipients (the cognitive-inspiring function) and inside recipients (the identifying function). These former act as passive observers perceiving folklore with no inclination to fully participate and identify themselves with it. Folklore opens new horizons for them, is a means of getting to know other cultures and continents, of enriching their inner lives and artistic experiences, but is never fully assimilated. Inquiries show that there is an ever-increasing demand for this kind of perception, as managers and administrators of mass media know best. As a rule, consumers of folklore perceived in this way do not come from authentic folk communities.

The identifying function of folklore is gaining more and more significance today but its analysis proves to be very difficult! Generally speaking, the growing significance of this type of function is directly related with the growing social prestige of different social groups (representatives of the Third World, peasant and labour communities), formerly playing a minor role in the process of creation and perception, i.e. in an officially supported culture. As a result of this (alongside with the growth of the activeness and affluence of such groups) there has been an increasing trend towards identification with folk culture and this trend is particularly strong in communities deeply rooted in tradition. Evidence in this connection can be gathered among rural immigrants to urban communities as well as among emigrants to other countries or even continents.

The function under discussion, whose impact seems to be the strongest of the two in that it is popular and not selective, can hardly be said to be in opposition to the cognitive function in the case of passive consumers of folklore. More properly, it is a link between this latter function and authentic functions (social communication), for international or even intra-national (country-to-city) emigrants lose their authenticity to a large extent.

It must be stated at the same time that ethno- and sociological research reveals a more and more intensive disintegration of traditional functions of folklore. This is particularly true of ritual functions which have lost their former social and religious meaning and have been re-defined into solely entertaining and recreative functions. Vanishing, too, are functions of a limited range while popular functions tend to be more resistant which is a clear proof of substantial changes in social structures. Namely on account of these changes former functions of folklore and their hierarchy are impossible to be reconstructed. Needless to say, the pace and intensity of changes are different in different regions and cultures.

It would be improper not to mention in this connection the defectiveness and detrimental effects of many educational programmes particularly questionnaire and inquiry campaigns that in many cases distort the actual state of things; even the consciousness of the informant, himself, can be distorted when he is subjected to modern techniques of information as well as gathering documentation and statistical

data. This is largely due to the frequent use of questionnaires that are plotted on the basis of a presupposed (though not always incorrect) hierarchy of the functions of folklore and thus suggest certain answers to the informant, with the resultant distortion of the reality.

It should be stated in conclusion that the functions of folklore today and in our part of Europe have undergone substantial changes as a result of the prevailing demand for individual, and largely passive, perception as well as recreation and relaxation. Moreover, folklore serves nowadays primarily as a means of getting to know other culture, regions and continents and also as a source of inspiration. It is frequently stylized, with varying degrees of authenticity, but those versions seem to be valued most which resemble the genuine patterns as closely as possible, with their expressive qualities being stressed and their size adjusted, depending on the form of presentation.

Quite a different change that has occurred in social consciousness is the growing tendency towards identification with folk culture. In the latter case, the object of identification is largely traditional rural culture (by emigrants), whereas in the cases discussed before (acceptance by youth circles) the object of identification is folklore understood in a wide sense, i.e. in the sense as defined at the beginning of the present paper.

The most urgent tasks that face researchers in this respect, with regard to both Polish and non-Polish material, include first gathering authentic information about folk culture and only then formulating on this basis their own theory which would, at the same time, take into account fundamental and general laws. An Outline of a Research Programme. Selected Questions, Methods and Research Perspectives — on the Background of Polish Material.

Two groups of questions are brought to the fore in the present paper: 1) the changeability of temporal intervals in the chronologization of Polish folklore, alongside with transformations of the spatial structure, 2) an examination of intercontextual transformations. The selection of these two entirely distinct groups of questions is due to the existence of distinct methodological orientations: the ethnological orientation in the case of the first group, and the sociological and structural orientations in the case of the second group.

As regards the Polish musical ethnography the basis for studying the changeability of temporal intervals and the spatial structure is constituted by a comparison of three main collections: 1) Oskar Kolberg's collection, today known in full thanks to the recent editions; 2) the collection completed as a result of the campaign, particularly intensive in 1949—1953, of gathering musical folklore conducted by the Institute of Art; 3) the collection completed as a result of current research.

The problem of the chronologization of the material contained in the three collections is fairly complicated but there seems to be a general regularity of the gradually diminishing distance between the time of the origin of the material and the time of its recording. Thus,

while Kolberg's collection, completed over the sixties and seventies of the last century is generally thought to be representative of the pre-partition Poland before 1772 (the material contained therein is thus estimated to be older by at least a hundred years with, however, numerous exceptions) the collection completed in the fifties of this century seems to contain material much closer to our times (covering the period of from 1914 through the thirties). Finally, the third of the above mentioned collections seems to cover the last twenty, or even ten years. Needless to say, a fairly high degree of simplification must be assumed in such a general chronologization for, as we often realize, it is only in recent collections that particularly archaic material can be found which formerly was not detected even by Kolberg. The diminishing of the temporal interval remains, however, to be an unquestionable fact, especially if average, and not exceptionally traditional, regions are considered. All this seems to be indicative of a strong dynamism of recent transformations, particularly those of the last two decades. Moreover, the material representative of this period reveals the complex character of the transformations in question, their multiple determinations, heterogeneity, and often conflicting directions. In an attempt at a generalization it can only be stated that while the first half of the 20th century was the time of substantial changes in the range of the influence of big urban and industrial centres, and a decline of main institutional determinants in the traditional sense due to the gradual introduction of mass media and universal education with the resultant growth of literacy, the second half of this century is marked by changes in social consciousness and substantial transformations of the spatial structure of folk culture in the sense of its inter-regional levelling. Clearly, social consciousness appears to be more resistant to change than social institutions and forms which lost their timeliness earlier. Changes in social consciousness, which manifest themselves in the shape of the new social functions of folk music that were discussed above, have made it necessary to formulate a new definition of folklore.

Changes in Spatial Structure

The study of the Kolberg collection and the 1949—1953 collection, which still constitute the main basis of research, reveals that the spatial structure of Polish folk music is relatively static and roughly consists of three zones:

1) the extremely eastern zone situated to the east of the Vistula river in its middle part, including the Wisłoka and San rivers in the south and the Narew, Biebrza and Rospuda rivers in the north;

2) the central zone consisting of the regions of Małopolska (Little Poland) proper, Masovia (its eastern peripheries excluded), Wielkopolska (Great Poland) and a part of Kujavia and Silesia;

3) the north-west zone consisting of Pomerania and parts of Kujavia, Warmia and Silesia.

The musical material differentiated in this way, historical as it is now, can be chronologized according to a certain convention. First

of all, attention should be drawn to the exceptionally archaic material of the eastern peripheries; a part of this material can well serve as a basis for studying the ethnogenesis of the Slavs i. e. it can facilitate shaping hypotheses about so distant a time as that beyond the 10th century. Temporal qualifications would be done in this case on the basis of morphological-comparative studies.

Unlike the material of the eastern peripheries, i. e. the territories constituting so-called ethnographic borders whose interpretation has been so much discussed by various authors², the material of the central zone seems to be considerably later and, rather roughly, can be dated back to the 16th-18th century. Also in this case the material is chronologized on the basis of morphological-comparative studies with some help, however, to come from direct, or even indirect, source data. The material of the north-west zone seems, with some exceptions, to be relatively latest, i.e. of the 17th, 18th and the 19th centuries. It is worth stressing that the character of this material is unquestionably Polish, which is proved by comparative studies in relation to other Polish territories and German territories.

The existence of the spatial differentiation discussed here has been confirmed by studies on repertoire selection and genre occurrence. For instance, an examination of the Kolberg collection reveals a characteristic correlation of the richness and diversity of ritual songs with the material of eastern borderland; a similar correlation is found between social-dancing songs and the material of the central territories, while in the north-west territories, so-called common songs most typically occur, especially ballads and professional songs, which are fairly circulatory and all-Polish in character. The correlation between the genre conditionings and the spatial differentiation, as well as that between the morphological qualities, possible to be located in time, and the spatial structure are known to have held in the first half of the present century, as confirmed by all comparative studies done so far. The recent years, however, have witnessed substantial changes in these correlations and, indirectly, in the spatial structure and distribution of folk music. This is most clearly demonstrated on the example of the dancing song which, unlike before, has now gained an inter-regional character due to the flourishing of amateur movement and the resultant popularization of some dances to the highest possible degree. Thus, the dancing song, which was once virtually region-confined, has now crossed its former boundaries and, in many cases, spread all over Poland. This is a very substantial shift considering the fact that the genre in question is functionally the most important today on account of a deepening decline of the ritual song and many common songs (e.g. ballads). The phenomena particularly worth studying include changes in the range of influence of various branches of folk music either towards differentiation or unification. Any conclusions in this respect will be, however, premature since they have to be preceded by detailed and multi-aspectual analyses of representative material.

² K. Moszyński, J. Czekanowski

*Transformations of Folk Songs in the Light of Statistically
Controlled Studies on Their Functional Context and
Morphologic-Stylistic Qualities*

The study of the latest material reveals, first of all, a global drop in repertoire resources and substantial changes in repertoire selection. As indicated above, in regions rooted in tradition social-dancing songs prevail while in regions where tradition is now scarce semi-folk circulatory songs are most popular. Also, instrumental music, with clear-regional specifications, is still in some demand. On the other hand, a general drop can be observed in ritual songs alongside with their typical functions and social sanctions. Still, there are cases of artificial enlivening and reconstructing this material but this is, of course, a separate question. Particularly worth studying is the loosening of contextual-ritual bonds, making it possible for the episodes of a rite to be mutually replaceable and for material to circulate from one type of context to another (a replacement of ritually-determined tunes by those that are not thus determined). The problem, however, requires careful and probing studies since there have been quite a number of dangerous and false generalizations.

Another general phenomenon to be observed is a decline of narrative songs (lyrical moralizing ballads); this kind of songs is associated with the vanishing generation of women-singers specialized in so-called »longer songs« that contained specific types of reflection and were performed, although not necessarily so, at social gatherings, such as peasant weddings or rejoicings.

Morphologic and stylistic studies reveal the easily observable phenomenon of an expansion of form size, on the one hand, and a concurrent inner atomization of form, on the other (breaking up of former phrases-expressions into minor motifs or, at times, even into single, often repeated, sounds). It would be worth studying to what extent these transformations are due to the development of musical means (e.g. tonal-formal changes), and to what extent they are directly caused, or perhaps merely accelerated, by external factors (different contexts), or are interactions of both. There can often be observed, too, so-called reduction phenomena, usually underscored by the narrowing of the ambitus and the simplifying and contracting of phrases, frequently as a result of memory defects or technical awkwardness in the case of instrumental music.

An Attempt at Interpretation; Research Perspectives

Current changes in folk music are to a large extent due to a number of socio-historical factors (universal education, amateur movement, growing social communication and mobility) as well as, and this is particularly interesting here, to new forms of dissemination of folklore and thereby its adaptation to these forms and its influencing culture through these forms. The problem of an impact of folklor, circulating as a social value, undergoing transformations while fulfilling its service functions and itself inducing transformations of culture, is a

question especially worth studying. It seems to be legitimate to assume that such studies, mutually confronted and supplemented by intersubjective comparisons, will be of great importance and also will help to better account for social structure which is what sociologists expect us to do.

The research done hitherto has been conducted along the following three lines: 1) studies on the functions of folklore in amateur movement and its changes; 2) studies on the role of folklore in school curricula and their modifications; 3) studies on folklore in mass media and their influence.

So far, studies on the above-mentioned contextual conditionings have resulted in a number of particular conclusions, especially with regard to the functions and changes of folklore in amateur movement; however, only a cross-sectional examination of the results of different studies on differently conditioned material will make it possible to detect basic regularities in accord with the definition given at the beginning of the present paper. A permutable treatment of relations between folklore and social structure, and social structure and folklore, i.e. a permutable qualification of a given component as either constant or variable, should indeed make it possible to detect structural regularities of folklore and mechanisms of social structure. It seems to be very important to detect basic functions and regularities as well as constant elements of creative and adaptive possibilities incorporated in tradition; it is equally important to detect variable processes, especially in the case of ranks and hierarchies of values in modern culture, and also the variability of the ranges of various functions and their interchangeability.

KRATAK SADRŽAJ

NARODNA MUZIKA POSMATRANA IZ PERSPEKTIVE NJENIH DRUŠTVENIH USLOVA I ULOGA

U radu se razmatra Bartokovo i savremeno shvatanje folklor. Folklorna muzika se posmatra kao skup tradicija zajedno sa promjenljivim obrascima oblikovanim prema zakonima koji su postali gotovo univerzalni. Uloge folkloru u savremenom društvu su različite i često međusobno oprečne. Većina osnovnih uloga uključuje rekreaciju i relaksaciju, često povezanu sa refleksijom i mentalnom stabilizacijom. Druge vrste su primarno vezane za izvođenje i organizovanu percepciju — za dinamične ili povremeno revolucionarne efekte. Prepoznavanje uloga folkloru postaje sve značajnije, ali analize dokazuju da je to vrlo teško postići. Etnosociološka istraživanja otkrivaju sve intenzivniju dezintegraciju tradicionalnih uloga folkloru. U radu je, dalje, riječ o štetnim efektima edukacionih programa i anketnih kampanja i upitnika, koji u mnogim slučajevima iskrivljuju stvarno stanje; osnovama programa istraživanja; odabranim pitanjima, metodama i vidovima istraživanja (na bazi poljske građe); o promjenama u prostornoj strukturi; transformaciji narodnih pjesama u svjetlu statistički kontrolisanih studija i njihovog funkcionalnog konteksta i morfološko-stilističke kvalitete. Na kraju je dat pokušaj interpretacije, a naznačene su i perspektive istraživanja.