

to, with utmost transparency, follow how the author came up with the analytical comments about varied attention given to changing the place of celebration, different strategies of substitution and renaming the folk elements into church ones (such as the change in the number, appearance and symbolism of the church Yule logs), giving importance to religious procession, and other. Inclusion of non-government organizations along with church and local authorities in the organization of the Christmas celebration was recognized as another particularity of Herceg Novi.

In the seventh chapter, Vesna Vučinić-Nešković discusses the ritual changes in all four Christmas celebrations by bringing them into direct connection with social tensions in the period from 1991 to 2008, which influenced the formal changes as well as the changes in structure and symbolism of the ritual.

And finally, along with the already pointed out contributions in the empirical and methodological sense, I would like to highlight the modern approach to ethnographic research and narrative strategies of presenting the ethnographic material. Also, the beginning of the study itself leaves a strong impression, i.e. the author's prologue which implicitly tells us that what we must always have in mind is that we owe gratitude for our final product to a great number of people, that each stage of research and writing emerges to a great extent in the interaction with the respondents, students, colleagues, family and friends. Vesna Vučinić-Nešković started her research as an "anthropologist at home" and finished it as an "anthropologist in the neighborhood", in the newly founded state of Montenegro. As we find out in this rich ethnography, the presence of "lady ethnologist from Belgrade" in the

Bay of Kotor has left a mark not just on Christmas celebrations, but has also changed the perception the respondents had about ethnology as a discipline, dealing with only the "past lives and customs". The author also tells us about "how this book could be read" (p. 46), and what I am left to say in the end is that I recommend any of the mentioned ways of reading.

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Fashion, Difference and Identity in Serbian Socialism

On the occasion of publishing **Danijela Velimirović, Aleksandar Joksimović. *Moda i identitet***. Utopija. Beograd 2008.

Recently published book under the title "Aleksandar Joksimović – Fashion and Identity", written by Danijela Velimirović, was a long waited for study of the complex relations between fashion and social identity in socialist Yugoslavia and Serbia. The additional importance of this research lies in the fact that it has bridged the gap that has been existing, in the systematic investigation of the social and cultural dimensions of clothing, from the mid eighties, when the last study of the kind, dealing with the invention of national female costume during the 19th century national awakening process in Serbia, was conducted by Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić. Focusing on different historical, social and cultural contexts of the 20th century socialist modernist project, Danijela Velimirović puts in the centre of her research interest the phenomenon of the fashion design and the role of the fashion designer in the production and representation of national difference and uniqueness. While she shares the basic theoretical

(structuro-functional) assumption of Prošić-Dvornić, that the (fashion) costume represents the stylistic, aesthetic and symbolic manifestation of the "complex whole", made up of historical, social and cultural relations, Danijela Velimirović in her study goes further in showing how the Yugoslav version of the "haute couture" was inseparable from the development of the specific Yugoslav branch of socialism, and how it participated in the project of producing and nurturing the idea of political and cultural exceptionalism.

The book consists of five chapters. In the first, the authoress sheds light on the phenomenon of the fashion designers, and sorts out the most decisive facts for their appearance on the world scene, including the fresh Yugoslav socialist fashion. There she also introduces the biography of Aleksandar Joksimović, whose fashion production is the main object of her research, and who at the same time happens to be her key informant. In the second chapter, Velimirović subjects to critical reading the influential analysis of socialist fashion by Đurđa Bartlet, particularly her concept of "grandiose pseudoclassicism", which Bartlet finds critical for understanding the operation and identity of fashion in socialism. Velimirović shows, relying on the attentive analysis of the Joksimović's fashion oeuvre, that Yugoslav socialist fashion was rather built on the concept of "grandiose exoticism", that was recognized as a domestic interpretation, and by the same token also the domestication, of high fashion. Spelling out the different signifying feature of the Yugoslav socialist fashion, Velimirović continues by analysing the particular context of the production and functioning of "grandiose exoticism" during the second half of the sixties. The third chapter explores the relation between the high

fashion and the ruling elite, and there the authoress describes the attitude of the Yugoslav first lady, Jovanka Broz, toward the domestic haute couture and toward the "fashion king" himself, who was her official designer. In the fourth chapter the new period in the development of Yugoslav high fashion is described. It is marked by the fall of the great authorized collections of haute couture and the approach of era of the ready made fashion. The leading figure of Yugoslav fashion managed to keep pace with this change, switching to the design of aestheticized ready-wear collections. These collections, under labels that associated both to modernity and to specific cultural traditions ("Vele Nigrinova", "Emina", "Ptice", "Visoko 73", "Ana Karenjina", "Formula 1", "Ramona", "Marija Tanase", "Teorema", "Milena Barili" i "Isidora"), were being produced in close cooperation with domestic textile ("Centrotexstil") and leather ("Visoko") industries. It could be said that they have represented the adaptation of the Joksimović's basic aesthetic technique – creative appropriation of historical and folk tradition – to the new operational context objectified in the development of new national industries and at the same time in the world trend of democratization of fashion.

In detailed presentation of Joksimović's collections, Danijela Velimirović traces the most important shifts in social and economic trajectory of Yugoslav socialism, interpreting them in the light of parting from the Soviet political and economic model. Therefore, this book could be read as an introduction into cultural and social history of the late sixties and seventies and as an exemplification of the model of socialist consumerism, Yugoslavia was reknown for in the rest of the Eastern block. In that respect, the "Aleksandar Joksimović –

Fashion and Identity" surely represents a significant contribution to material culture and consumption studies, particularly in its parts where the autonomous consumer movements and boycotts, as ways of everyday resistance to the homogenizing tendencies of the ready-made fashion, are revealed and presented to the readers.

On the other hand, the decision to present Joksimović's fashion collections as a system of representation has its in-built bias – it creates an impression that the fashion system, Serbian society and former Yugoslavia has been functioning as a closed and autonomous system of meaning, where changes were brought about only due to the creative genius of the fashion creator, namely Aleksandar Joksimović (although it was indeed showed that fashion changes were internally supported by the regime's claims for legitimacy). It would be intriguing to find out how Joksimović's fashion production managed to keep pace with European fashions and to hold hand with the actual lines, shapes, fabrics and styles that were showed out and promoted primarily at Paris fashion rooms and catwalks. Which means to identify the "outside" influences that have shaped his production and, combined with the local resources of traditional symbols and ornaments, provided for the creation of "specific difference". Another line of investigation could trace the way Joksimović acquired information about fashion currents, about the dominating rules of the season. It is evident from the material presented that he has skillfully managed to connect and adjust the "langue" (in the meaning de Sosir attributed to it) of the leading fashion designers in leading fashion centres (primarily in Paris), with the local content (historical, ethnographic), creating in that way characteristic fashion "parole", or

individual stylistic handwritting, that has been realized first as "grandiose egzoticism" and then as an aestheticized fashion industry. Still, it was not shed enough light to the processes and practices that provided for this evident flow of information, influences and inspiration, which would have probably revealed in more detail the close connection between the leading fashion designer and political and state structures. Contemporary research into culture of socialism more than before insists on communications and exchanges between former "socialist block", which opens a possibility to conceptualize domestic fashion production as an open field, that could be seen as related to multiple cultural, political and economic geographies: from the neighbouring countries of what used to be former Yugoslavia, to the comparative frame of Eastern Europe, to European (world) fashion. This perspective would help Velimirović to escape, or at least redress, the trap of representing cultural identity of Yugoslav fashion in exceptionalist manner, particularly after this manner had been critically scrutinized when she has been describing other socialist fashion systems. Seen in that light, for example, the shift towards ready-made fashion in socialism could be (and, as for me, should be) explained not just in terms of changing economic and political circumstances within socialist societies and their proclaimed ideological quest for social equality, but also as an influence of the social revolutions from the sixties that have questioned established authorities and requested democratization of society, fashion included.

Considering that Danijela Velimirovic has chosen biographical method as her principal methodological tool, it is clear that this decision has influenced the kind of data gathered and its analysis. Relying on key informant and to information and

experiences he decided to share with the researcher, necessarily left out of the picture the existence and functioning of the "fashion system" and the ways all the interested actors (professional audience, critics – creators – producers – magazines – readers) has been supporting each other in order to find out and provide the local fashion scene with the information on the latest fashion. Apart from seemingly unavoidable heroisation of the key figure of the research, who at the same time is a key informant, there seems to be another problem. In picturing the Yugoslav fashion scene, Velimirovic presents Joksimovic as a "lonely rider", since there is no mention of other creators in Serbia, nor in the rest of Yugoslavia. Were there other creators at all? What about Joksimovic's relation with them? This enables us to pose yet another question: was this seemingly rivalless environment that provided for the rise of the king of Yugoslav fashion, the "dictator of style", at the same time the main cause of his fall, so

eloquently phrased by the authoress of the study as "exodus of the creator from the magical world of representative fashion"? In contrast with his European colleagues who invested their creativity into real exchanges with consumers, thus building lasting fashion reputation, Joksimovic shared the destiny of the political project that has made him a fashion star. After the political role of the distinct national high fashion style has been accomplished, there were no more need for authentic fashion designers.

In short, "Aleksandar Joksimović – Fashion and Identity" represents historically informed and systematic research of an important, though in Serbian ethnology and anthropology rather unexplored topic. It will be useful for all those interested in material culture studies, consumption and socialism.

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