Foreword

This new volume of the *Lithuanian Ethnology: Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology*, given the current political situation in Europe, should remind our readers of the journal's credo: "recognize yourself in *the other* and *the other* in yourself".

In the fall of 2002 news about Lithuania's joining the EU in 2004 was received without much surprise. Institutional accommodation to EU standards is gaining speed and requires Lithuanian society to have more and more to do – at least in public sphere – with "westerners", still assumed as "they". Although it is obvious that Lithuanians belong to the European cultural tradition and share the same values, symbols and discourses, it appears that this commonality it is not a sufficient grounds for identity. People still maintain their own lifestyles, strategies, attitudes which they use to construct and express themselves in their own ways.

We see here an urgent need for the ethnology and sociocultural anthropology to be particularly engaged in studies of human similarities as well as differences in behavior and mentality. It should strive to tackle both, the universal phenomena, like secularization or acculturation as well as particular imaginations, constructions and expressions evident in separate, often very different communities. The similarities derived from a shared European civilization and a common cultural tradition and heritage nevertheless take a particular shape among separate ethnic, local, marginal or subculture groups. Scrutiny should go beyond the balance between "typical" and "specific". What cultural heritage is assumed to be "one's own"? How are traditions retained, "re-discovered" as well as newly constructed? How are stereotypes on "others" used? In what ways is cultural heritage, cultural tradition, even institutionalized and official culture, challenged?

"Euroland" (to use Reinhard Johler's term) expansion into Lithuania poses a public concern, of which ethnologists and anthropologists are aware and have focused on it for a number of years. What is the basis of social and/or cultural identity? Why and how people gain and loose certain identities? How these are regained and recreated?

In the contemporary fragmented society the debate on a shared common tradition is difficult. Even more problematic is it to speak on behalf of "all" and in "unison", especially in terms of a "common heritage of forefathers". While Lithuania is joining "Euroland", therefore its ethnology has to challenge the grounds for identity shaping/ configurations which end up in 'given' or 'inherited' tradition. The vigorous creation of *sameness* and *otherness* produced by the people themselves comes into focus instead. Eventually the major question stands: what is recognized as *our own* in the *others* and how much and what kind of difference is tolerated among *us*?

One of the possible answers is given in Reinhard Johler's article " Europe, Identity Politics and the Production of Cultural Heritage". The European ethnologist from Tübingen University gives us a profound analysis of how re-conceptualization and manipulation of local cultural heritages and traditions is going on *vis a vis*

Europeanization. One can also notice a zeal for "deconstruction" in Petras Kalnius' article. The Lithuanian Institute of History expert in ethnic relations discusses the stereotypes shared by those who belong to the Lithuanian regional groups. The thorough analysis he presents proves the significance of Lithuanian regionalism, as the marker for local culture identity politics.

Sachiko Hatanaka, from the University of Chubu, Japan – who, during the last decade, was so helpful to Lithuanian ethnologists familiarising them with Western methodologies – this time presents important overview on the "manufacturing" of tradition. In her article on local handicraft tradition she also focuses on increasing popularity of the regions in modern Japan. She stresses that 'the time of the provinces' ends up both in revival of local communities and the reinvention of traditional craftsmanship.

Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė, an ethnologist from the Lithuanian Institute of History also draws upon the same issue of local tradition with a case of family circle, birthgiving customs in Dzūkija region, Lithuania. In her article, based on field work, she argues for the rejection of the concept of a "tradition resistant to change", by pointing out its inutility both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective.

Lithuanian youth culture is the main field of research of Egidija Ramanauskaitė at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. In her article, "Construction of Neopagan Identity in Lithuanian Youth Culture" among other youth groups, she tackles the 'pagan metal' group subcultures. They attract many young people who are seeking an unconventional life-style, and the ancient-pagan folklore, mythology and traditions are reinvented and successfully used for metaphorization of their identities.

The hippie movement in Soviet Lithuania is discussed by Živilė Tamkutonytė, a postgraduate student at Vilnius University. She provides a very clear perspective on how hippies were marginalized by the regime and became a counter-culture to the dominant Communist Youth organization. The hippie movement was suppressed and politicized by the regime so that it eventually transformed into resistance.

The social historian Vladas Sirutavičius at the Lithuanian Institute of History, writes on "Offences "by Reason of Disgrace": Murder of Newborns in the 19th Century Lithuanian Society". Basing his research on an extensive analysis of the historical sources he establishes the importance of the historical context of the local patterns of social control. To show of how *disgrace* and *punishment* functioned in the 19th Century, he provides examples from elite as well as folk culture.

There is a new *Fieldwork* chapter in our journal. The importance of ethnographic material is obvious and we begin with Dalia Bernotaitė-Beliauskienė, who deals with the results of her field research done on traditional textiles in the Meteliai area of Lithuania.

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