

# Fifteen Days of Glory

## *Conferencing Four Times in Two Weeks in Three Countries, or Croatian Jahrian/Integrative Bioethics at One of Its Highs*

Amir Muzur  
Iva Rinčić

### INTRODUCTION

The authors of the present paper have recently offered an overview of major developmental steps in Croatian bioethics, demonstrating the astonishing variety of directions and perspectives. The then advanced hypothesis of the author was that such development may be resulting from the enthusiasm of two pioneers – Ivan Šegota (1938–2011) and Ante Čović<sup>a</sup>. The most original contribution to world bioethics development has certainly been the methodologically innovative concept of integrative bioethics, allowing non-scientific perspectives to be integrated with the scientific ones into a platform of “orientational knowledge”<sup>b</sup>. The other major substantial contribution of Croatian bioethicists to modern bioethics considerations has been their study and promotion of Fritz Jahr’s work. Fritz Jahr (1895–1953), namely, has proven only recently (after 1997) to be the real “father” of the word *bioethics* and of a much broader concept than “new medical ethics” (usually identified with bioethics in the post-Hellegerian North-American tradition)<sup>c</sup>.

### THE “BIOETHICAL”

Since the beginning of the new millennium, Croatian bioethicists have been helping to establish groups studying bioethics at various universities in the Southeast European region. Scholars from Slo-

venia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria have been invited to participate in bioethical conferences traditionally held in Croatia (Rijeka and Mali Lošinj) and the *Southeast Europe Bioethics Fora*, as well as to join the international German-Croatian project aiming at the establishment of a master programme in integrative bioethics, but also to establish their own research groups, centres, and symposia. So, beside in Croatia, the *Bioethics Fora* have already been held in Sarajevo (2009) and Belgrade (2010), and meetings of project participants devoted to the development of the joint M.A. programme, in Eichstätt (2010) and Sofia (2011).

In Macedonia, mostly thanks to the efforts of Dejan Donev (with participation of Kiril Temkov and Marija Todorovska), a Centre for Integrative Bioethics was formed in Kumanovo, an issue of the *Filozofija* journal (with nine papers) was devoted to bioethics in June 2011 (number 10, published in Skopje), the *1st International Interdisciplinary Conference “Bioethics – the Sign of a New Era: Bioethics, Media, Law, and Medicine”* was organised in Ohrid (October 21-23, 2011; with proceedings published in 2012).

In Serbia, thematic blocks devoted to bioethics have been published within the journals *Arhe* (Vol. 6, No. 12, 2009, Novi Sad; 14 papers) and *Treći program* (No. 148, Autumn 2010, Belgrade; 7 papers), while the first books explicitly devoted to bioethics appeared in 2006 (*Bioethics in Our Country and in the World*, proceedings of a scientific symposium held on October 2006 at Serbian

≠ Esse trabalho foi originalmente publicado em Muzur A, Rinčić I. Fifteen Days of Glory. *Synthesis Philosophica*. 2012;53(1):18-6.

a. Iva Rinčić, Amir Muzur, “Variety of Bioethics in Croatia: a Historical Sketch and a Critical Touch”, *Synthesis Philosophica* 26, no. 2 (2011): 403–428.

b. For a more precise definition, see: Ante Čović, “Integrativna bioetika i pluriperspektivizam”, *Integrativna bioetika i izazovi suvremene civilizacije: zbornik radova Prvog međunarodnog bioetičkog simpozija u Bosni i Hercegovini (Sarajevo, 31. III.-1. IV. 2006)* [Integrative bioethics and the challenges of contemporary civilisation: proceedings of the 1st international bioethical symposium in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, March 31-April 1, 2006)], edited by Velimir Valjan (Sarajevo: Bioetičko društvo u BiH, 2007), 65–76.

c. Cf. Amir Muzur, Iva Rinčić, “Fritz Jahr (1895–1953): the Man Who Invented Bioethics”, *Synthesis Philosophica* 26, no. 1 (2011): 133–139; Iva Rinčić, Amir Muzur, “Fritz Jahr: the Invention of Bioethics and Beyond”, *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 54, no. 4 (2011): 550–556; Amir Muzur, Iva Rinčić, “Fritz Jahr (1895–1953): a Life Story of the ‘Inventor’ of Bioethics and a Tentative Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Discovery of His Work”, *Jahr* 2, no. 2 (2011): 385–394; Amir Muzur, Hans-Martin Sass, editors, *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: the Future of Integrative Bioethics* (Münster: Lit, 2012).

Academy of Sciences and Arts<sup>d</sup>) and 2012, respectively (*Bioethics and Medicine*, by Sandra Radenović<sup>e</sup>). Beside the already mentioned *SE European Bioethics Forum* of 2010, also the conference (*New Perspectives in Bioethics*) was held in Belgrade in 2011 (October 13–15), organised by the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of University of Belgrade.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, mostly logistically buttressed by Velimir Valjan and Dževad Hodžić, international symposia on integrative bioethics have been organised in Sarajevo in 2006, 2008, and 2012 (with proceedings following always the year after). A textbook of bioethics was published by Velimir Valjan<sup>f</sup> and a thematic block devoted to bioethics, in the *Znakovi vremena* journal (Vo. 14, No. 52/53, 2011, Sarajevo; 4 papers).

The two regular bioethics conferences in Croatia have been organised since 2000 in Rijeka, and since 2001 in Mali Lošinj, respectively<sup>g</sup>. While, in Rijeka, each year another topic has been proposed to focus the presentations, in Mali Lošinj, the sections have been organised, including a panel and a student section. Both conferences are international and held in May: the *Rijeka Days of Bioethics* vary from 15 to 120 participants, while the *Lošinj Days of Bioethics* usually host up to 150 scholars.

In May 2012, four conferences were organised within the span of two weeks – *14<sup>th</sup> Rijeka Days of Bioethics* (May 10-11), *11<sup>th</sup> Lošinj Days of Bioethics* (May 13-16), *8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultations* in São Paulo (May 16-19), and *3<sup>rd</sup> International Bioethical Symposium in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (May 25-26). It is the intention of the following lines to provide an analytical overview of the position Croatian bioethics has reached by organising or participating in those conferences.

As it is well known, the French Revolutionary Calendar introduced new names for the months – *Germinal*, *Floréal*, *Prairial*, etc. Had the French known about bioethics, they would have certainly renamed the month of May into “*Bioéthical*”.

## **14<sup>th</sup> Rijeka Days of Bioethics (Rijeka, Croatia, May 10-11, 2012)**

As it has been the custom for the past few years, the members of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities of University of Rijeka Faculty of Medicine, each propose a topic and coordinate the organization of the conference when their (alphabetical) turn comes. The central topics of the past conferences were, thus, Ethics and Sports, Bioethical Education, etc. This year, chosen was the title “Language of Medicine: From its Genesis to the Culture and Ethics of Communication”. Some 120 referees from 18 countries (Spain, Croatia, Slovakia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, Denmark, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Cyprus, USA, Mexico, and New Zealand) announced their participation, arriving from various professional backgrounds – linguistics, philosophy, philology, medicine, etc.

By the end of the first day of conference, presented were publications by the Department members, among them two issues of the *Jahr* journal (4 and 5), and the books *European Bioethics: Ideas and Institutions* by Iva Rinčić (Zagreb: Pergamena, 2011) and Amir Muzur and Hans-Martin Sass, editors, *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: the Future of Integrative Bioethics* (Münster: Lit, 2012).

At the Rijeka conference, the authors of the present paper referred about the “Prefix *Bio* and the (Non) Justification of Bioethics”. Departing from an overview of the use of the prefix ‘bio’ in forming the names of (new) scientific disciplines, the paper presented primarily dealt with the analysis of linguistic associations important for forging the name of ‘bioethics’ by Fritz Jahr in 1926 and by Van Rensselaer Potter in 1970. The basic thesis of the paper was that, already from different patterns the two authors had been following at forming the same word, anticipated can be also the major differences of their concepts and expectations. After considering various definitions of bioethics and

d. Dragoslav Marinković, Zvonko Magić, and Kosana Konstantinov, editors, *Bioetika kod nas i u svetu* [Bioethics in our country and in the world] (Beograd: Unija bioloških naučnih društava Jugoslavije – Društvo genetičara Srbije/ SANU, 2006).

e. Sandra Radenović, *Bioetika i medicina* [Bioethics and medicine] (Novi Sad: Akademski knjiga, 2012).

f. Velimir Valjan, *Bioetika* [Bioethics] (Sarajevo: Svjetlo riječi, 2004).

g. A third regular conference, named “Bioethics Spring Symposia of Croatian Physicians’ Association”, has been organised since 2001, always at the beginning of June. This series of symposia, however, addresses topics typical for medical ethics and thus is not considered in this paper, dealing with integrative (“Jahrian”) bioethics.

comparing the modern (mis)use of the prefixes ‘bio’ and ‘neuro’, it was concluded that it is advisable to avoid forming the names of “new” disciplines by using old prefixes, since such practice might result in far-reaching terminological and definition confusions.

Beside the remark that the conference was not guided by any particular focus, the impression has remained that the entwining of linguistics, medicine, and (bio)ethics may turn out innovative and provocative.

### **11<sup>th</sup> Lošinj Days of Bioethics (Mali Lošinj, Croatia, May 13–16, 2012)**

With some 120 participants presenting more than 90 papers (including a student section on “Bioethics and Psyche” and a round table on “Bioethics and Chemistry”), this May the *Lošinj Days of Bioethics* concentrated plenary sessions on the history of bioethics in SE European region and the 50th anniversary of the Seattle (bio)ethics committee. Besides the usual presentation of recent bioethical publications (among them: Ante Čović, editor, *Integrative Bioethik und Pluriperspektivismus / Integrative Bioethics and Pluriperspectivism*, Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 2010; Amir Muzur and Hans-Martin Sass, editors, *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: the Future of Integrative Bioethics*, Münster, Lit, 2012), also the annual meeting of Croatian Bioethical Society was held in Mali Lošinj (including the election of new leadership).

One might say that, from their beginning eleven years ago, the *Lošinj Days of Bioethics* have been presenting all aspects and perspectives of bioethics, including subjects typical for medical ethics, philosophical ethics, environmental ethics, etc. Unlike some other conferences of bioethicists, the *Lošinj Days* have never focused upon polemising or provoking public (at least not primarily), but rather upon presenting the complexity and variety of perspectives that form integrative bioethics. Discussions, so characteristic for the so-called analytical philosophy,

are not so often and dynamic at the *Lošinj Days*: the participants, on the contrary, cherish special mutual relations resembling more a “bioethical family” than a competitive forum.

### **8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultations (São Paulo, Brazil, May 16–19, 2012)**

Although the import of bioethics to Latin America has usually been ascribed to José Alberto Mainetti as early as in the 1970s<sup>h</sup>, that considered only the Potterian bioethics and, for the first period, primarily Argentina<sup>i</sup>. (This, early phase of Latin-American bioethics, was wittily called “transplantational” by Alfonso Llano Escobar<sup>j</sup>). In 1991, Latin-American Federation of Bioethics Institutions was founded, with the first *Latin-American Congress of Bioethics* held in 1995 in São Paulo, Brazil. By that time, namely, bioethics had found its stronghold in Brazil, especially among the Camillians, religious order known for its involvement in healthcare, with their base in São Paulo. In the period between June 1993 and August 1997, four “congresses of bioethics and health” were organised in São Paulo<sup>k</sup>. In 1995, Brazilian Bioethics Society was founded, and held 9 national congresses as yet (mostly biannually). The influence of Brazilian bioethicists was proven also by their hosting of the 7<sup>th</sup> *World Bioethics Congress* (Brasília, 2002) and the 8<sup>th</sup> *International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultations* (São Paulo, 2012).

Since 1993, *Revista Bioética* has been published (by Federal Council of Medicine; Editor-in-Chief: Gerson Zafalon Martins), since 2005, *Revista Brasileira de Bioética* (by Brazilian Bioethics Society; Editor-in-Chief: Volnei Garrafa), and, since 2007, the *Bioethikos* journal (by São Camilo University Centre; Editors-in-Chief: Leo Pessini and William Saad Hossne). Especially but not exclusively by the *Loyola Editions* house, a long series of bioethical publication has been provided (including the translation into Portuguese of

h. Cf. James F. Drane, “Bioethical Perspectives from Ibero-America”, *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 21, no. 6 (1996): 557–569.

i. Cf. José Alberto Mainetti, “The Discourses of Bioethics in Latin America”, in *Ibero-American Bioethics: History and Perspectives*, edited by Leo Pessini, Christian de Paul de Barchifontaine, and Fernando Lolas Stepke (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 21–27.

j. Alfonso Llano Escobar, “Bioethics in Latin America and Colombia”, in *Ibero-American Bioethics: History and Perspectives*, edited by Leo Pessini, Christian de Paul de Barchifontaine, and Fernando Lolas Stepke (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 45 (43–53).

k. Leo Pessini and Christian de Paul de Barchifontaine, “An X-ray of Bioethics in Brazil: Pioneering Voices, Institutional and Educational Programs and Perspectives”, in *Ibero-American Bioethics: History and Perspectives*, edited by Leo Pessini, Christian de Paul de Barchifontaine, and Fernando Lolas Stepke (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 90 (89–106).

some works by Agich, Engelhardt, Beauchamp and Childress, etc., all together almost 50 titles<sup>l</sup>). Brazilian State- and Federal authorities occasionally also publish books on bioethical subjects, with mostly free of charge distribution<sup>m</sup>.

It might be that bioethics has experienced such a dynamic development in Brazil primarily because, like in many other countries (including Croatia), it had been recognised by the Catholic Church as an opportunity to enter debates on vital questions (avoiding that those questions be regulated only by physicians). At any rate, one of the pioneers of bioethics in Brazil, Leo Pessini, Professor at São Camilo University in São Paulo and the Provincial of Brazilian Camillians, was also among the first to recognise the importance of Fritz Jahr's work.

Fritz Jahr, namely, was discovered to Latin America in 2002 by another Brazilian, José Roberto Goldim, physician and professor at Porto Alegre, who himself had first heard about Jahr from Eve-Marie Engels (the first after Rolf Löther to mention Fritz Jahr at all). Goldim, who himself had been schooled in Hellegerian bioethics at the Georgetown Kennedy Institute, started to promote the new ideas of Jahrian bioethics in Brazil in 2004-2006, in the Internet and in journals<sup>n</sup> and conferences. Since 2006, also Pessini and other Brazilian bioethicists have started to include the news about Jahr into their considerations and publications<sup>o</sup>.

In 2002, Leo Pessini met Ivan Šegota at the *World Congress* in Brasília. Šegota interviewed Pessini (using a malfunctioning registrator, as it will turn out lately) and they established a lifelong friendship. In May 2004, Pessini visited Rijeka and attended the *6<sup>th</sup> Rijeka Days of Bioethics*, where Croatian translation of his book on dysthanasia was presented<sup>p</sup>. In March 2011, Pessini was supposed to visit again Rijeka and the conference on *Fritz Jahr and Euro-*

*pean Roots of Bioethics: Establishing International Scholars' Network*, but he eventually had to cancel the trip due to health reasons. He invited, however, the two organisers of the 2011 Rijeka conference – Iva Rinčić and Amir Muzur – to participate in the *8th International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultation* in May 2012 in São Paulo. And indeed, on May 18, Rinčić and Muzur co-organised a round table as a satellite symposium within that Conference, devoted to Fritz Jahr (“Legacy of Fritz Jahr in Latin America and the Future of Bioethics”). The session was very well attended (simultaneous translation was provided from English to Portuguese and vice versa). The speakers were Amir Muzur (“Fritz Jahr: a Biographic and Bibliographic Synthesis”), Iva Rinčić (“The Results of the Project ‘Fritz Jahr and European bioethics’”), Hans-Martin Sass (“Bioethical Imperative in the Work of Fritz Jahr”), José Roberto Goldim, and Fernando Lolas Stepke. Introduction and moderation was provided by Leo Pessini, and H. T. Engelhardt, Henk ten Have, and others contributed to a very vivid discussion.

On the first day of the São Paulo conference, the book *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: the Future of Integrative Bioethics* (edited by Amir Muzur and Hans-Martin Sass; Münster: Lit, 2012) was presented. By the end of the conference, also the book with translations of all then known 17 Jahr's papers into Portuguese arrived to the desk of the Organiser<sup>q</sup>, as well as the latest issue of the *Bioethikos* journal (Vol. 5, no. 3, 2011), containing 16 out of 17 Jahr's papers in Portuguese version. That has made Brazil the second country (after Germany) (re)publishing Jahr's work, and the Portuguese third language (after German and English) in which Jahr's *opera omnia* was published.

l. Cf. Marcelo Perine, editor, *Catálogo Bioética e Saúde* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, n.d.).

m. Cf. Gabriel Oselka, editor, *Bioética Clínica: Reflexões e Discussões sobre Casos Selecionados*, 3rd. edition (São Paulo: Conselho Regional de Medicina do Estado de São Paulo, 2011); Rachel Duarte Moritz, *Conflitos Bioéticos do Viver e do Morir* (Brasília: Conselho Federal de Medicina, 2011).

n. José Roberto Goldim, “Bioética: origens e complexidade”, *Revista do Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre* 26, no. 2 (2006): 86–92.

o. Fernanda Maria Ferreira Carvalho, Léo Pessini, and Oswaldo Campos Junior, “Reflexões sobre bioética ambiental”, *O Mundo da Saúde* (São Paulo) 30, no. 4 (2006): 614–618.

p. Leo Pessini, *Distanzija: do kada produžavati život?* [Dysthanasia: how far should life be prolonged?], translated from Portuguese by Radoslav Runko (Rijeka: Adamić/Hrvatsko bioetičko društvo/Teologija u Rijeci, 2004).

q. Leo Pessini, Christian de Paul de Barchifontaine, William Saad Hossne, and Márcio Fabri dos Anjos, editors, *Ética e Bioética Clínica no Pluralismo e Diversidade: Teorias, Experiências e Perspectivas* (São Paulo: Centro Universitário São Camilo/Editora Idéias & Letras, 2012).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> International Bioethical Symposium in Bosnia and Hercegovina (May 25–26, 2012)**

The bioethical symposia organised in Sarajevo have a few singularities. First, they have been organised in an interculturally and interreligiously tolerant atmosphere, and chaired by professors at Bosnian Franciscan Theology (Velimir Valjan) and the Sarajevo Faculty of Muslim Studies (Dževad Hodžić). This may sometimes seem “forced”, but, knowing the (recent) history of Bosnia and Hercegovina, certainly also a necessary avant-garde. Second, those symposia look like a collective search for all answers at the same time, without a particular focus and without any trace of advancement from one symposium to the next. Thus, several referees presented papers which only vaguely and very benevolently might be related to bioethics in its broadest sense.

However, the Sarajevo symposia (and major Bosnian bioethicists) estimate Croatian bioethics very highly, taking it as a model. This year’s framework

topic was biotechnology. Out of 29 papers, 10 were presented by 11 participants from Croatia. If one knows that only four more papers were presented by non-Bosnian scholars (3 by Serbian and 1 by Macedonian), it becomes clear that Croatian bioethics must have influenced Bosnian bioethics trends abundantly.

### **CONCLUSION**

The short overview offered in this paper has had the only intention to present the current dynamic phase of development of Croatian bioethics. Here we primarily think of integrative bioethics, including the two major schools from Zagreb and Rijeka, but also individuals from Split and Osijek. The integrative pluriperspective methodological and substantial approach, namely, has obviously proved interesting not only for the SE European region as it was the case in the last decade, but for other continents as well.