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# The Schizoid Border in the Construction of Ethno-Nationalist Body

SENADIN MUSABEGOVIĆ

## *Abstract*

*It is usually believed that nationalism uses mythical pre-modern symbols to generate collective intolerance. This is true to a large extent, but, at the same time, in former Yugoslavia, ethno-nationalism results from the process of transition from the real-communist to the liberal way of thinking. Ethno-nationalism—as an alternative to capitalist atomising individualism—accepted all the principles of transitional logic and destroyed the social system. The logic of ethno-nationalism, therefore, functions as a schizoid system that, on the one hand, advocates family and community values, while on the other destroys and atomises the family through rampant capitalism. Relying on the social analysis of Slavoj Žižek, this article focuses on the way in which the schizoid social logic of ethno-nationalism is ingrained in turbofolk songs. The problem of ethno-nationalism is that it should negate hybridism, but turbofolk relies on hybridism and mixing codes. Consequently, while ethno-nationalism negates and rejects all that represents other cultures and nations it glorifies its own collective national body, which, strives to be isolated, self-sufficient, and insular in its own identity. Paradoxically this glorification occurs in a specific manner, through hybrid cultural form, that is, through turbofolk music.*

**Keywords:** *Ethno-nationalism; Serbs; Yugoslavia; turbofolk; communism; capitalism; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Muslims*

## Introduction

The transition from the communist to the neoliberal system of values in former Yugoslavia was marked by a transition from communist universalism to ethno-national particularism. Since the drama of political transformation was not marked by a visible revolutionary and violent cut-off, the Western European liberal media described and perceived this transition as a spontaneous expression of national will and a successful reconstruction of civil society. The neoliberal transition,, out of a desire for freedom, cast off the totalitarian oppressive shackles of government that for decades had relied on the “illusion” and on Utopian violent political construction. The established perception about the break-up of the communist system is that it collapsed spontaneously, without violence and that the population returned to its true and “natural” lifestyle. This lifestyle supposed to be the familiar form before the state political terror of totalitarian leaders, who as ego-

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engineers, to borrow the phrase from a French political theorist Claude Lefort<sup>1</sup>, embodied the evolutionary-messianic Utopian idea of a new classless future. It was that natural and spontaneous process of liberation from communism that unearthed old national fantasies whose principles emanated from the disintegration of communism. For, in the former Yugoslavia, ethno-nationalism strives to patch up the emptiness created by the break-up of communism, as well as to constitute an ethnic identity from the disintegration of communism, the identity that would redefine the community.

Still, there is the question of to what extent the border crossing between one system into another included covert violence, imperceptibly inscribed into the collective fantasies of post-communist ethno-nationalism? Namely, these two political projects (communism and ethno-nationalism) bring up the issues of their mutual continuity or discontinuity, *albeit* in opposition. We can also discuss the redefinition of the collective myth of communism within the mythological matrix of ethno-nationalism. The ethno-nationalism which was striving to reach the opposite from communism, constructed itself on the gaps and margins of communist values. The myth of the communist revolution, that is to fundamentally change traditional bases for the world, was resurrected as an invisible spectre, a vampire in the transition process. In the name of "spontaneous national nature", based on the schizoid bond of rampant capitalism and ethno-nationalism, this myth contains a much more intense revolutionary cut-off from the past that communism ever managed to achieve. Namely, although ethno-nationalism strives to return to the "sacred" traditional past, in many aspects it does not regenerate or renew the past, but makes a revolutionary break with it. We can, therefore, say that the myth of awaiting the communist Utopian realisation of a classless society in the future was replaced by the Utopian myth of return to the "golden age" of national history in the past, which was presented in Serb ethno-nationalism. For instance, this period stretches back to the sixteenth century that precedes the Ottoman occupation. Ethno-nationalism advocates the belief in an organic, vital bond with the past and in ethnic collective belonging not just based on a cultural, but also on a "biological" i.e., a "natural" connection with tradition. However, this bond with the past arose out of ritual and folkloric invention, i.e. as a result of "politicising symbols" whose violent and dispersed strategy that abolishes human spontaneity much more intensively as was done during communist totalitarianism in Yugoslavia. Ethno-nationalism holds that security lies in the past, because it carries the "faith of forefathers" which is the myth of the "golden age". However, it projects a much greater utopia and illusion than the communist myth of creating a new classless society.

Also, the oppressive Communist Party hierarchical domination, usually seen as top-down: from the state to society; from the utopian totalitarian idea (whose basic power rests in unifying all paradoxes and contradictions) to reality; was dissipated in ethno-nationalism through the micro-relations of Foucault's power. In ethno-nationalism, the mythological-utopian idea goes from society to the state, and the fragmentary and chaotic reality is crystallised in the phantom power of national state unification and mythological fantasy. Power itself has lost its homogenous repressive mechanism by imposing its logic on history, and it has become a productive-war power, producing national bodies, national fantasies legitimated in ethnic self-comprehension, the organic bond between nature and culture, the individual and the collective, as well as tradition and modernity. In other words, communism uses political means to change society and it utilises rational engineering to guide history, while ethno-nationalism uses ethnic bonds whose pre-political meaning for members of ethno-nationalism is not constituted by decision or consensus. This nationalism is supposed to "emanate" from a maternal

immersion in cultural determinism and holy tradition. However, that “direct and spontaneous” collectivism is by many of its features a construction whose basic foundation and driving force is the “disintegration of communism”, i.e. a fragmented antagonistic reality that does not seek its explanation within a homogenous ideology, but it bases its ruling strategy through a mythological matrix of national unification on antagonism, contradictions, and rational chaos.

I consider all the issues above from the perspective of the invisible border between communism and post-communist ethno-nationalism. I examine the extent to which they are two different political value systems and the success or failure of the border between them. Another important question that crops up is the nature of the border between what communism believes its opposite, i.e. capitalism or the liberal free economy, and the way in which post-communist ethno-nationalism invokes the uniformed holistic theory of its own culture to exclude and include all the principles of capitalism. My answer would be that the very functioning of post-communist nationalism rests on the schizoid<sup>2</sup> border against capitalism. By politicising folklore and ethno-mythological symbols, post-communist nationalism should function as a self-isolated organic entity opposing the process of “deterioration”, globalisation, and the logic of modern technology. However, through the exclusion process, it also internalises globalisation power and accepts the principles of capitalism. It could, therefore, be said that post-communist nationalism functions precisely through the non-functioning of the border that is to circumscribe its identity.

Zygmunt Bauman is right when he says that “identity” grows from the cemetery of the community, but it does so because it promises to resurrect the dead.<sup>3</sup> Ethno-nationalist identity is not revealed through organic innate cultural values, but through dividing, limiting, excluding the other. It constitutes itself on the cemetery of the community and strives to exhume the dead who are to embody holy tradition. We can, therefore, discuss a new link between the local and the global in debating globalisation. Globalisation does not only entail unifying and erasing all borders between local and particular cultures, but also its opposite strategic action, which is to inscribe new borders and new divisions between peoples. The policy of globalisation is entwined in this dual relationship: on the one hand, the destruction of local culture for the purpose of free and universal mobility of people and capital; and on the other, as a counter-action, the self-isolation into local ethno-nationalism or fundamentalism. The relationship between these two processes is dual and rests on the principle of impossibility of drawing a line that divides them.

### **Discovering Tradition**

Ethno-nationalism<sup>4</sup> arising from the fall of communism advocates the idea of returning to tradition. Ethno-nationalism represents the idea that communism extracted man from his natural cultural determination and turned him towards abstract proletarianism and class cosmopolitanism where the meaning of “brotherhood and unity” (which was the basis of Josip Broz Tito’s policy to maintain Yugoslav unity for fifty years) is a lie directed at love towards other peoples in order to neglect one’s own. Ethno-centrism is, therefore, represented as a natural and spontaneous collective desire that is—as a universal model in which the legitimate and natural supreme law is love for its people—separated by distinct borders from all other peoples, and usually established and defined by war.

And in reality, what is self-isolation within a national border excluding all other nations as political subjects? Actually, ethno-nationalism transforms the principle of egoistic indi-

vidualism, in which self-love is the main attainment, into a model that replaces individualism with collectivism. Thus, ethno-nationalism has replaced the principle of individual self-determination with collective self-determination. Ethno-nationalism rejects Western European liberalism and sees it as materialistic, decadent, egoism where individuals, like cocooned self-isolated units, blinded by the desire for earning and profit, are constantly at war by competing in the market. In the name of ethnic purity and traditional spiritual values, the ethno-nationalism then strives to messianically renew the community. Those values, based on the elementary male heroic powers and warrior values are used to regenerate spiritual vitality and survival, that is not susceptible to the hypocritical perverse war of "everyone against everyone" as in market competition.

Ethno-nationalism internalises the logic of self-isolation, atomisation, except that instead of the individual egoistic "I", it inserts the collective "US", which, due to its policy of self-isolation within territorial borders and its myth of war, becomes equally isolated, atomised, and self-cocooned as it considers the liberal I to be. In the eyes of ethno-nationalism, Western European liberalism is the "new world order", a degenerate "underhanded" strategy based on the survival of the fittest, where the manipulative power of the mass media creates a consciousness of mechanical obedience alienating brother from brother, and whose essential intention is to destroy a "small nation chosen by God" to communicate the mission of virtue in a time of darkness and corruption. That is why ethno-nationalism promotes a different kind of war, which creates awareness about the community and tradition and fosters a primordial connection among brothers with ancestors as well as with spiritual roots in the soil "drenched in the blood of our forefathers". It should, however, be noted that every war creates a fragmented community, atomised due to war trauma, alienated from itself. Thus, the myth of a clean war is, in fact, a fantasy based on trauma and fragmentation that ultimately leads to the possibility for new trauma.

For ethno-nationalist politics, liberalism is characterised by the atomised individual subject whose main driving force is the desire to survive in the chaos of modern society. Thus, his vulgar materialism of personal interest, apart from being removed from the spiritual values of tradition and authority, is also removed from the general will of the state. As opposed to the individual desire for survival, ethno-nationalism establishes the collective desire for survival expressed in the national state at war whose main political driving force is survival within international laws. Just as the egoism and desire for survival makes the liberal individual subject distrust general state laws, because he has subordinated everything to his private and personal interest, so ethno-nationalism distrusts general international laws of civilisation and seeks to ward them off through war. Ethno-nationalism views the world order from the perspective of a conspiracy theory where its own nation falls victim to mysterious international "Masonic dark forces" whose intention is to destroy the "people chosen by God".<sup>5</sup>

For ethno-nationalism, the essence of the national being is inscribed in tradition, and one of its main criticisms by communism is that communism strives to overcome tradition. In other words, ethno-nationalists believe that the moral imperative lies in traditional culture, which leads to an overlapping between the ethnic and ethical principle. The inauguration of ethnic morality is formed through the authority of the cult of the ancestors, through the cult of the heroic patriarchal ethno-centric paradigm, and through the myth of renewing the traditional family that reflects ethno-nationalist harmony. Because ethno-nationalism is not familiar with abstract, imaginary solidarity with unknown people, as described by Benedict Anderson,<sup>6</sup> instead, it insists on familial, organic solidarity where each community member has an incontestable place and role in

society. Also, the myth of the lost golden age when the Serb people “lived in heaven” before the Ottoman occupation, i.e. before the Battle of Kosovo, plays a great role in connecting the ethnic to the ethical.

#### *Return to Tradition Through the Cult of the Ancestors*

Ethno-nationalism believes that every deviation from tradition is based on a refusal to accept and a hate towards one's own I, or the collective US (as mentioned before, ethno-nationalism sees one's I as the collective US). The cult of the ancestors is based on the principle of remembering the spirit of the deceased ancestor because Serb tradition holds that the dead will take their revenge on the living if they are forgotten, as described by the anthropologist Dušan Bandić.<sup>7</sup> In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>8</sup> says that the cult of the ancestor functions on the principle of a debt owed to the dead by the living. This debt may be paid in objects, animal sacrifice, sacrificing parts of one's own body and in decadent Christianity, it may also be paid by a “Bad Conscience”. After the fall of communism, ethno-nationalism directed its gaze towards the cult of the dead body, which guards tradition and can punish the living for their sins on a symbolic level. This is the context in which we should understand the transfer of the remains of King Lazar who was killed in the Battle of Kosovo (1389) as well as the exhumations of graves of those killed during World War II.

#### *The Cult of the Hero: Renewing the Traditional Paradigm*

When it aimed to create a new proletarian man to overcome the shackles and determinism of history, communism constructed this man symbolically in socialist-realist art through the cult of the partisan hero fighting bravely in the People's Liberation Struggle<sup>9</sup> (PLS) against German occupation during World War II. As I pointed out in *Rat—konstitucija totalitarnog tijela* (War—Constitution of the Totalitarian Body),<sup>10</sup> in Yugoslav socialist-realist partisan art, there was often an unconscious overlapping between the future of the revolutionary and the figure of the insurgent. The myth of the new man relied on the heroic folkloric patriarchal paradigm. However, the basic meaning of the communist hero is to construct a new idea of man through the future of the worker-warrior-athlete. Since the cult of the ethno-nationalist hero is to renew tradition, to regenerate society, not to revolutionise it, the cult of the hero as warrior-peasant is to symbolise the idyllic-romantic rural world whose static way of life is timeless.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Renewing Traditional Familial Authority*

Also, ethno-nationalism proclaims the family itself to be the nucleus that establishes the community, while the nation is seen as a family where everyone knows her/his place. In other words, ethno-nationalism tends to lean towards the pre-modern community in which everyone knows his position. It is often symbolised through the rural organisation of life not permeated by the anarchic logic of modernism as represented in chaotic cities which is overcome by solitude. This is an environment where people look after their own interests and the family has become alienated from itself. Ethno-nationalism, therefore, rests on mixing private and public life, combining the concrete and the abstract because it proclaims the nation itself as an intimate, familial space, not an abstract category. Ethno-nationalism eradicates the possibility for private life and destroys privacy by denominating ethno-national unity as familial unity because ethno-national familial

unity is based on obedience to fatherly authority. That is to say, traditional fatherly power is embodied in the authority of the leader for whom state and institutional abstract laws are not relevant political obstacles in making important decisions. While on the symbolic level, the citizens identify with the leader, they also revive the patriarchal phallogocentric paradigm.

*"The Golden Age"*

Ethno-nationalism rests on the idea of the "golden age", which is the Christian paraphrase of the myth about lost paradise where the people should be returned. Namely, today's world is corrupt and characterised by decadence. In addition, the thing to strive for is returning to the golden age, which also signifies divine unity. This means that the restoration of the "golden age" would also mean renewing God's state.<sup>12</sup>

Through all these elements, ethno-nationalism strives to renew tradition and find a footing in it. Ethno-nationalism started as a collective euphoria characterised by the co-called "anti-bureaucratic revolution" led by Slobodan Milošević, the then President of the League of Communists of Serbia, against the old communist administration. His famous speech from the rally at Ušće in 1988 had expressed that Serbia has many enemies in the world and in the country.<sup>13</sup> The remark changed the rhetoric of communism in Yugoslavia because it was initially based on "brotherhood and unity" as well as harmony among peoples. However, he spoke on behalf of only one people (Serbs) who were purportedly endangered by other fraternal peoples with whom it had shared the experience of constructing socialism. In other words, ethno-nationalism sees the meaning of its own unification in proclaiming fraternal peoples as the enemy. While it freed itself from communist promises about the new future and discovered tradition, ethno-nationalism had a covert dream of living within stable borders that would separate it from everything that may present a danger and a threat. Renata Salecl is, therefore, right in saying that nationalism functions as Étienne Balibar's meta-nationalism in which cultures are separate entities "desperately trying to maintain a "cultural distance",<sup>14</sup> and that they live next to one another, which corresponds to the nationalist plan of dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina and dividing the multi-ethnic life of Bosnia and Herzegovina among homogenous territories. The tendency of ethno-nationalism is to use the myth of excluding the "brother intruder" as embodied in a fraternal people, Croats, Muslims (Bosniaks), to resolve the internal ethno-national drama of antagonism and rift.

We could, therefore, say that the greatest threat to nationalism is the porosity of the border between "one's own people" and the "intruder people", which cannot be differentiated clearly. Since the "intruder is so similar" it should be placed on the other side of the border. However, the impossibility to draw a border between one's own and other fraternal peoples is what gives ethno-nationalism its power. Ethno-nationalism resists hybridism, but it is that very hybridism that gives it the power to renew its policy, which is based on constant exclusion of the other. As explained by Lacanians<sup>15</sup>, the other that steals the pleasure is the greatest threat for ethno-nationalism, and at the same time, this other embodies an internal shortcoming, a crack in the homogenous structure of ethno-nationalist politics. The pleasure made up of excluding the other is based precisely on the impossibility of being achieved. This is why we could talk about a collective hysteria constantly repeating the gesture of exclusion, which can never be completed. For ethno-nationalism, the other is not merely another people, but the transition logic of capitalism that produces trauma in post-socialist societies. Namely, ethno-nationalism did not strive to create a realistic, rational alternative to transition logic, but

turned its fear of it into a collective war hysteria through which it invented tradition and found the guilty party for its own disunity in the other: the “intruder people”.

### **Transgression as the Logic of Capitalism**

In his book *On Belief*,<sup>16</sup> Slavoj Žižek discusses the difference between authoritative totalitarian imposition of decisions on individuals, where the individual is forced to obey through repression, and the liberal method of naturalising the reason for obedience in the subject’s internal “psychological structure”. That is why according to Žižek, liberal subjects change their opinion/perception of themselves and accept what is imposed as something stemming from their own nature without being aware of their own subjugation. As an example, he takes the situation in Eastern European countries in 1990 when real-socialism fell apart and people were suddenly “thrown into a situation of freed of political choice”. He adds that a people in “transition” from real-socialism to capitalism never had the opportunity to choose *ad quem*, because it was suddenly “thrown” before a new set of choices (pure liberalism, nationalist conservatism).

Žižek is right in saying that Eastern European peoples did not have a choice in the neo-liberal logic of “freedom of choice” or the so-called “rational choice”. This “freedom of choice” is possible only if the choice is “right” and if it complies with the logic of free market society. We could, however, say that during the term of Milošević as the president, Serb ethno-nationalism did not willingly accept the logic of Western European capital as rampant privatisation and dismantling of social security because it chose the option of war against fraternal people and on the symbolic level proclaimed war against the “whole world power”. Besides, European liberal states had imposed sanctions. However, in a paradoxical way, this rejection and national self-isolation helped achieve the process. The self-isolating system of Milošević that used ethno-nationalist euphoria did not create an alternative to the “freedom of choice” of liberalism. On the contrary, it escaped it and thus entirely accepted it.

### **Explicit and Implicit Laws**

Slavoj Žižek advocates a thesis on explicit and implicit rules that establish invisible mechanisms of power and regulate certain ideological laws. For example, he claims that Wilhelm Reich was not right to claim that Hitler was accepted by the German people because he embodied the great father who has come to tame unruly children, to tame desire through authoritative power and to create discipline and order so as to pacify all social antagonisms. What is important for the acceptance of national socialist ideology is the covert obscene supplement, discussed by Theodor W. Adorno, to be found in implicit rules and the invisible promise of being able to do as one pleases, of being able to enjoy what is forbidden: killing Jews, occupying foreign territories, freely expressing murderous war drives freed from the binds of civilisation, etc. And as he says, the reason behind the functioning of fundamentalism and ethno-nationalism should not be sought in their fear of freedom and desire to constitute a society based on order, law, and traditional hierarchy, but in the possibility to enjoy what is forbidden, to punish the enemy, and to do what one pleases in the name of the law. Serb ethno-nationalism, therefore, resists liberal political correctness and seeks pleasure in free and unbound elementary male drives such as raping other’s wives, abusing one’s own wife, killing, stealing, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Elsewhere, Žižek claims that contemporary capitalism, or the age of corporate capitalism, as Frederic Jameson<sup>18</sup> calls it, in which “grand narratives” disappear, is marked by transgression. Through transgression, contemporary capitalism injects into itself its own opposite. Its power is not based on laws that prohibit pleasure, but on the contrary, encourage sexual and consumerist pleasure-taking, not on rules that discipline or stabilise, but on rules that incite changes and the creation of permanent chaos in which the capitalist system is further reinforced. He, therefore, claims that the developed capitalism, or the so-called “consumer society” is no longer an order maintained on the basis of a prohibition that invites transgression through a heroic act. The perversion of developed capitalism entices transgression and develops social forms that enable harmony with one’s own perversions and suggest new perversions.<sup>19</sup>

Along these lines, Zygmund Bauman claims that in contrast to the modern age of control, the postmodern age is based on fluid and changeable laws, the laws of speed, and transformation, etc.<sup>20</sup> Anthony Giddens notes that the dynamics of the contemporary world are contrary to the predictions of George Orwell, who believed that science and technology would make social systems more stable and orderly, that we would all become “little cogs in the social and economic machine”. In other words, the contemporary world does not rely on comprehensive projects of control and domination, but on chaos, unrest, the logic of risk that is embodied by the pluralism of entertainment and sensationalism. Thus, it becomes, as Anthony Giddens puts it, a “runaway world”.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Relationship Between Explicit and Implicit Laws in Communism and Ethno-Nationalism**

Žižek’s thesis on implicit and explicit rules is provocative, except that in the context of former Yugoslavia, their relationship is differently established in terms of Yugoslav communism and post-communist ethno-nationalism. The dominant ruling logic of Yugoslav communism, apart from all its chaotic shortcomings, is inscribed in explicit laws because Tito created order and united the peoples (who had been disoriented during the German occupation) under the motto of “brotherhood and unity” into a unique will to construct a new society based on the principles of social and class consciousness. However, socialist-realist art drew inspiration from war themes, images of fallen partisans fighting for a better and just future, and the pagan cult of death that was to form the idea of the new man. It is still difficult to claim that the logic of implicit rules was present to a pronounced degree or the logic of obscene permissivity that Adorno discerned in Hitler’s rule, and that this absolutely characterised Milošević’s ethno-nationalism.

In the implicit pleasure in what is prohibited lies a new type of control through which those experiencing the pleasure unconsciously control themselves. Experienced as one’s own freedom enjoying the prohibited, it is in that implicit supplement that the logic of the transition process is realised, covertly directed by capitalism, and it internally destroys the traditional-organic ethno-national community. Taking pleasure in the prohibited could be described as a rediscovery of something archaic, a return to the warrior ethno-national spirit of heroism, and an elementary corporal vitality, but it is also an implementation of the capitalist logic of consumerism. Through illegal privatisation, social disorganisation, the deconstruction of social solidarity, and the destruction of the public good as well as legal institutions, the obscene permissivity of the freedom of enjoyment took place concurrently with the schizoid implementation of the free market logic. Žižek says that in liberalism the idea of free choice is more dangerous because it convinces the individual or society that it is inherent to human nature.

What ethno-nationalism proclaims as its own substance, its belief, i.e. the mythological heroic matrix that regenerates the community through the role of the warrior, is actually an overture for the capitalist order of market competition, social stratification, and the disintegration of any form of community. It is precisely because of the schizoid link between capitalism and organic traditional values that ethno-nationalism, when it propagates familial-national solidarity, in effect, destroys the family. It destroys tradition when reconstructing traditional values and stratifies society when seeking organic collectivist compactness. The schizoid border between capitalism and ethno-nationalism, which should be the two contrary mechanisms of ruling, through mutual exclusion-inclusion reinforces the autistic power of ethno-nationalism. It could justly be claimed that ethno-nationalism rules chaos and the division of citizens. It also rules autism in which “freedom/pleasure” is slavery and it creates a type of control we find in liberalism. According to Žižek, this is based not on repression, but on the freedom to overstep what is permissible, in the perverse that contains the new logic of control.

And “free enjoyment of the prohibited”, or the obscene supplement is, as described by Thomas Hobbes, “natural law”, where the final consequence of the possibility to steal from another, to rape, to beat one’s own wife, is that the subject who commits these acts in the disorder and chaos of a “war of everyone against everyone” becomes himself a victim.. Thus, whoever robbed may quickly become the victim of robbery, murder, and abuse. This becomes a natural state in which “man is a wolf to man” where due to distrust, fear and uncertain chaotic relation, to the atomisation of the community occurs. Communities become self-isolated units found in rampant liberalism. The success of Slobodan Milošević’s government—although based on a policy without clear goals and without complete control over daily and institutional life, and therefore one that does not rely on a consistent and schematically ideologised worldview—is precisely in managing to create through authoritative action an illusory, symbolic (dis)balance between implicit and explicit rules, between chaotic enjoyment and collective mythological authority, between the centripetal and the centrifugal forces. His rule was based on the rational and systematic production of chaos. According to Eric D. Gordy, he strived to create an illusion of functioning pluralist institutions, but at the same time limiting their functioning. Also, he introduced inconsistent myths he himself did not believe in, which caused a rift in social and communication values that would enable an alternative.<sup>22</sup>

In his book *Akteri i modeli* (Actors and Models),<sup>23</sup> Dušan Pavlović claims that the reason why Milošević enjoyed the support of voters and the public was not that he embodied the principle of a certain ideology, but that in various periods he had three phases in his politics: the Bolshevik, the nationalist, and the peace-making phases. The citizens, according to Pavlović, did not blindly believe his ideological views, but followed and yielded to his authority that seemed extra-institutional and found an effective “anti-bureaucratic” solution that did not succumb to the slow laws of state procedures. With the power of his authority, he managed to defeat his opponents and impose his will, which for his followers was also the will of the state. And by identifying with his powerful authority, inherited from the undemocratic traditional society, obedient citizens compensate for their social and political powerlessness. But, the question remains, did he really find solutions and on what basis did he construct his authority?

### **Vacant Position of Power**

Ivan Čolović noted that due to a position of authoritative power vacated after Tito’s death, Milošević managed to present himself as the new authority and the new mythical

father to take over the helm.<sup>24</sup> The problem is that he filled the vacuum evacuated after Tito's death, but his power is not in filling an empty position in being determined and permeated by that gaping emptiness. Namely, it is true that he represents the "personification of the father" or a new embodiment of Tito's authority, but his policies were entirely in opposite direction. Tito created Yugoslavia and Milošević destroyed it. Due to the German occupation and through the defensive People's Liberation War, Tito created a new revolutionary society, while Milošević occupied foreign territories and attempted to control his own society and reinforce his rule through the logic of war. Tito won the war and created a peaceful order based on stable police and military control, while Milošević created a war he could not completely control and relied on paramilitary units and illegal secret services in order to reinforce his rule. Whereas Tito created order, Milošević created chaos. The thesis that Milošević's actions were predetermined is ambiguous because he managed to convince others that his failures were, in fact, victories. He lost the war in Slovenia, in Croatia, sanctions were imposed against Serbia, and he did not come out of the war in Bosnia as victorious, either. Yet, he managed to present himself as the victor.

By destroying everything Tito had created, Milošević imitated Tito's authority, but he could not successfully personify Tito's authority because the logic of his power lies in the impossibility of achieving authority.<sup>25</sup> In order to understand the reasons why large majority of people identified with him, we can also employ psychoanalysis. Milošević acts in two roles, one is the position of the son that inherits Tito's authority and the other is the position of father to the nation that elected him. From the former perspective, he is the son that is incapable of committing a crime and symbolically overthrowing Tito's authority. He is unable to fill the gap emerged after Tito's death to take his place. This leads him to constantly commit new crimes because crime achieves the pleasure in the inability to reach one's goal as well as the inability to reconcile one's internal antagonisms. This is correlated to the obscene permissive supplement. One of the reasons people identified with him is that he represented the spoilt son who is allowed everything, who can, as Aleksandar Tijanić said, turn the daily life of Serbs into one big holiday and enable them to feel like secondary school students on a school excursion—meaning that nothing they do is punishable. Of course, it is not punishable because the position of the father gapes empty.

From the latter perspective, he is the great father of the nation who hides his powerlessness and the reason citizens identified with him should not be sought in the fact that he represented power, but in the fact that he successfully concealed powerlessness. Thus, they recognised in him something hidden, a concealed implicit supplement that allowed pleasure in the forbidden, which meant the freedom to overthrow Tito's authority, the freedom of transgression against Tito's law, and the freedom to destroy all the principles Tito created. It is through that destruction that implements Tito's invisible power. The secret of popular consensus that kept Milošević in power is not in the authoritative face of power, but in his hidden aspect of powerlessness. With these two splits, schizoid roles—that of the spoilt son taking the people out for an excursion into the obscene permissive forbidden pleasures, and that of the father acting decisively and punishing disobedient enemies—he creates an autistic schizophrenia in the national family fantasy. The power of Tito's fatherly authority is to create order and discipline, while Milošević's power lies in creating a schizoid disintegration of cultural and social values, a chaos where everyone recognises themselves.

And the reason why the implicit supplement is not explicit is because it conceals powerlessness. Forbidden pleasures enable escape from oneself and the concrete historical situ-

ation characterised by transition. People concealed from themselves the fact that collective traditional values had disappeared, as well as loss of orientation and escape into collective crime which enabled the experience of national solidarity and the regeneration of warrior heroic values. The reason why people followed Milošević is that he personified the collective national escapism—that is, his successful authority veiled the fate of their powerlessness, deftly concealed behind the mask of national heroic and warrior power.

### **The Chaotic Strategies of Control**

Tito exerted control over citizens through police methods, unified single-mindedness, order, force and law. He did it under the banner of ideologically fixed concepts such as “brotherhood and unity”, “constructing socialism”, “self-management”, “workers’ independence”, “defending the achievements of the revolution”, etc. Despite their frequent inconsistency, they still strove to explain the social reality and give it a unique political explanation. In contrast to communist rule, Milošević’s did not have a unique ideological and political discourse because his ruling strategy rested on the lack of logic, paradox, and transgression. The basis for the political fantasy was provided by ethno-nationalism, which lacks a rationally defined ideological set of values, forming its power, instead, on the basis of a chaotic mythological matrix. And precisely because his ideological matrix was not firm, but “fluid” and incoherent, his chaotic strategies of control work more intensively than at the time of Tito’s political and state order. We could, therefore, say that ethno-nationalism reconciled two chaoses: the chaos of transition described by Žižek, and the mythological chaos aiming to revive elementary sacred warrior values. Tito’s state policy based on repressive measures of control and surveillance similar to Panopticon,<sup>26</sup> that kept reproducing the myth of the external enemy, is less efficient than the Serbian state control stratified under sanctions. Their secret service used paramilitary forces to eliminate political enemies. And here the concept of the enemy was based on a paranoid conspiracy fantasy.

Tito’s rule could be criticised precisely because it used mythological symbols to express ideologically rational principles. Namely, for the embodiment of the new man meant to construct the future based on international rational proletarian principles, it used myths from the People’s Liberation Struggle and the traditional patriarchal warrior paradigm in which the myth of the revolutionary man coincided with the myth of the insurgent fighting against the occupier. The myth of the new man meant to construct a new future was, thus, spliced with the myth of traditional heroes whose function, as pointed out by Mircea Eliade,<sup>27</sup> is to renew and regenerate the community without transforming it and radically change it or to construct a new, modern society as was the task of the revolutionary man. In contrast to communist rule, ethno-nationalist rule draws its legitimisation from powerful mythological representations, and hence, the principles of its rule do not rely on rational order but on mythological chaos and mythological contradiction, which is, in fact, the “transitional” invention of the myth.

In terms of Milošević, we could also consider Foucault’s thesis on the strategies of power without subject. Namely, for Foucault, the strategies of power are manifold, power is dispersive and transitional, and its logic is in constant transitioning. Foucault does not speak about repressive power negating and cutting off, but on power that incites, initiates, constructs. And, as noted by Gilles Deleuze,<sup>28</sup> Foucault’s power is in the knots, intersections, and speed. The paradigm of Foucault’s power may help explain Milošević’s system of rule based on systematic production of chaos whose effect is expressed through constant instability and a dispersion that is internalised into

the social tissue. In other words, the type of control that rests on discipline and oppressive order is not as strong as the type of control that relies on chaos because the strategy of chaos is imperceptible. Chaos manages to produce its own opposite as justification. The type of control that prohibits the use of oppressive mechanisms does rest on rational principles and a rational line can be drawn between ideology and its opposite while the chaotic type of control relies on an ambiguous distinction between one's own principles and the alternative. However, that unclear distinction gives chaos greater power to be better internalised within the social body, to be crystallised through micro-relationships, and to form an interactive network of control and domination. Thus, paradoxically, even though the government is powerless and weak, the control is more intensive and stronger. Therefore, Milošević was not the absolute subjects controlling and guiding society from the top of the pyramid, as could be said of Tito. Milošević's power was based on dispersive and chaotic elements, but elements that, for all their fragmentation, are more efficient because Milošević's policies outlived him. Namely, when Milošević lost power on October 5, 2000 and was turned over to the Hague Tribunal, his nationalist policies did not change with Vojislav Koštunica, his successor nor with the then Premier Boris Tadić. For, the policies of ethno-nationalism and transition capitalism continued, albeit by other means and not as drastically as in the time of Milošević.

The reason for the political vacuum left after Tito is precisely because he established order, firmness, and stability. When that system collapsed, an alternative order was sought. Milošević's politics, based on the politics of disintegration, war, and chaos survived even his own political defeat and disappearance. The politics of disintegration and chaos is effective even without a "subject" because it is deeply inscribed in the social tissue and, therefore, perceived by the collective as part of the eternal essential source. But, why does the collective perceive its own chaos and disintegration as part of its own essence? In order to answer this question, we should consider the creation of collective unity during the 1920s in Yugoslavia. Ugo Vlaisavljević observes that collectivist ethno-nationalism arose from a re-definition of communist collectivism, and that the myth of the class enemy fostered by communism was transformed into the myth of the national enemy. Also, both nationalism and communism are constituted by their own collectives through the war myth. For Marx, the ideas of class conflict meant the rational development of awareness of progress, while for Yugoslav communism, as I point out in my book *Rat—konstitucija totalitarnog tijela* (War—Constitution of the Totalitarian Body),<sup>29</sup> the symbolic representation of the People's Liberation War meant the embodiment of the new man, the new class consciousness, the new social collectivism.

Although both projects are based on the war myth, communism used the PLS war myth arising with the German occupation to create a new society, while ethno-nationalism produced war in order to return to its past. Communism brings together the myth of the warrior-worker who is to construct the new society, while ethno-nationalism does not construct society, but perceives it as an organic whole ruled by elementary drives of war in which the heroic gesture of the peasant-warrior revives the sources and the archetypes. The ideal community in the politics of communism entails reconciling class with national, rational, and mythological consciousness within the project of "brotherhood and unity" as an alternative to capitalism, while the mythological self-isolation into the ethnic that replaced class consciousness is, in fact, an internalisation of capitalism. So, the reason why people accepted ethno-nationalism is not because that during communism citizens lived private lives fostering their local culture or that they never displayed their national exclusivism in public, but because the values of communism abandoned and betrayed them. Tito died and he was now proven mortal. So were his ideas. It is

from a feeling of betrayal by the idea of progress that people returned to ethno-national ideals. Therefore, when they try to return to the mythological matrix and find security, protection, and organic unity, they are, in fact, subconsciously trying to return to the communist principles of security, protection, social equality that characterised Tito's authoritative rule. And, as mentioned before, one of the reasons for the (non)functioning of ethno-nationalism is precisely that it tears communities apart, while it also advocates their unity.

### **The Cult of the Victim**

In contrast to communism, whose mythology was characterised by victory over fascism, ethno-nationalism creates the consciousness of its unity through the cult of the narcissistic victim of endangerment. Through the cult of the victim, nationalism revives the narcissist myth of its own chosen nature, and thus, simultaneously assuages the fear of "implicit rules" of hidden pleasure. As mentioned before, "forbidden pleasures" can easily be transformed into their opposite, so that someone taking pleasures can easily, as in Hobbes' natural state, become the object, the victim of pleasure. That is to say, forbidden pleasure is ultimately self-destructive and dangerous and it causes fear and a feeling of being threatened. In Serb ethno-nationalism, there is a narcissist myth of national endangerment, of the national Golgotha, which views its own defeats with a concealed delight. And this narcissist myth strikes at the very core of nationalism! Indeed, citizens do become victims, victims of not another nation, but of their own ideology. So, although it relies on the principle of excluding other cultures and nations, ethno-nationalism also rests on the principle of excluding its own nation because the narcissist myth of endangerment ties a noose in which the self-isolated chosen people is strangled by its own devices. Ethno-nationalism functions as the weight the drowning sailor clings to during a shipwreck, and as the weight slips downward, the sailor clutches it ever more tightly, hoping for salvation.

Often in the ethno-national fantasy, the perpetrators of murder, robbery, and rape see themselves as victims. As in the infantile stage, described in psychoanalysis, the child feels it is being beaten while he/she in reality is beating someone else. Thus, ethno-nationalism in its fragmentation and disorientation falls into an autism in which its own crimes are seen as crimes committed by someone else, so that it is always someone else stealing the pleasure when the limits of the permissible are overstepped. As Olivera Milosavljević<sup>30</sup> describes, ethno-nationalist ideology often presented itself as the victim even when crimes were committed in its name. In the logic of Serbian propaganda, for instance, the soldiers holding the siege around Sarajevo are presented as victims. Also, the new interpretation of genocide at Srebrenica is that the foreign forces conspired to lure the Serb soldiers into committing the crime in order to achieve a new world order in which they could condemn the Serbs as a people. So, it is not the Serb people to blame for unwittingly committing the crime, but the foreign forces who deliberately tricked them into committing the crime. The myth of the national victim is based on autistic self-isolated worlds in which fantasy prevails over reality.

The cult of the victim is most frequently found in folklore, where the suffering of the national spirit is glorified through songs and the spirit is meant to fight for the sacred values of its tradition and nation. Ivan Čolović analysed the folklore songs instrumentalised for the purposes of war. And, as already noted by Vladimir Dvorniković,<sup>31</sup> national folklore songs are characterised by melancholy and resentment; in them, we can recognise the cult of the victim and the darkness of suffering from which issues the voice of

the forefathers and ominous fate. There is another phenomenon that arose in Serbia during Milošević's time: the Serbian popular folk and pop music "turbofolk".<sup>32</sup> It is interesting as a way to illustrate the thesis on the schizoid relationship between capitalism and nationalism. Namely, as seen in the documentary "All that Folk",<sup>33</sup> it is usually assumed that when the cannons thunder, the muses are silent. However, the opposite happened in Serbia during the war. There was constant signing, not just patriotic war propaganda songs, but a festive charging into the general spectacle of entertainment, trance, and popularism as well. There is an example when an editor at the state television showed corpses from the war as "buttons" and incorporated them into a music video. One entertainer said she was living only a few kilometres from a war where people were being killed, but she had incredibly great fun. The film claims that the politically targeted atmosphere of cultural stratification and destruction in the name of festive folklore spectacle whose ultimate aim, according to art historian Branko Dimitrijević, is to "apoliticise" culture.

Walter Benjamin's famous statement about fascism's aestheticisation of politics and communism responding by politicisation of art<sup>34</sup> should be read here in a new context. If Milošević depoliticised politics from aesthetics and culture in contrast to fascism, which "aestheticised politics", and communism, which "politicised aesthetics", it means that political control became neutral and that it was beyond aesthetics and culture. This proves that through "apoliticisation" politics was invisible and dispersed within the social body and became entertainment, transgression, spectacle, i.e. it became human nature in which, as the French Marxist theorist and philosopher, Guy Debord says, "illusion replaced reality". Through "a politicisation" politics permeated everything, including the non-political.

### **The Turbofolk**

The schizoid border between capitalism and ethno-nationalism is most evidently manifested in the musical phenomenon that originated in Serbia during the rule of Milošević: "turbofolk". This music reconciles folklore with its ethnic characteristics, i.e. its ties to the logic of land, blood, heritage, tradition, and cyclic static time. On the other hand, this music has also the "turbo" component that symbolises modern acceleration, decentralisation, sensationalism, spectacle, consumerism, and transgression. Ethno-nationalism did not only advocate the myth of cosmic harmony of the ethnic soul containing an organic mythical connection between individuals and the ethnic sources, or with their traditional roots, but injected itself into modern technology, modern speed, *albeit* in a schizoid and unconscious manner. Just as ethno-nationalism relies on the schizoid relationship between static, taming political forces creating a feeling of law and order and dynamic-transgressing forces that enable forbidden pleasures, as described by Žižek, it also contains a schizoid relationship between tradition and modernity best illuminated by "turbofolk". Namely, turbofolk does not speak so much of war or national values, but in an implicit way, it contains both war and national values. It arose from Milošević's media policy that was not consciously designed, but accepted *ad hoc* as a strategy. Turbofolk reveals that nationalism did not possess a grand narrative in which to seek a stable ideological matrix to fix history within an ethnic framework. It is an expression of a chaotic whirlwind started up by transition processes. While there was ideological control during the communist era, the seriousness of culture and aesthetics persisted, so that art was a weapon in the struggle against the enemy. It was a tool to forge the new man. Although communism often presented its power through folklore, the entertainment never reached such a

level of debauchery to become its own purpose and a political means of control as in the time of Milošević's ethno-nationalism.

As illustrated by the very title of Milan Kundera's novel *The Joke*,<sup>35</sup> humour and irony are dangerous for the communist totalitarian system of values because they shake up the mechanical bureaucratic obedience that makes up the foundations of the ideology of absolute control through which a happy society is to be built. Laughter is banished from absolute truth, which means absolute control. Irony and jokes are the epitome of spontaneity, unpredictability, contingency and everything that presents a danger to the totalitarian system of government based on "incontestably scientific" laws about the development of the new classless society. Also, for Mikhail Bakhtin,<sup>36</sup> the Rabelais carnival-grotesque presentation of the body is a danger and threat to the stone-faced mask of single party government implementing ideological values through discipline and intimidation. Milošević did the exact opposite: he used the carnival grotesque, irony, spontaneity, unpredictability, and contingency within his entertainment spectacle to create a cultural isolation in which, singing goes on non-stop while his followers close down the borders with the rest of the world.

Folklore themes were usually related to conflicts between the rural and the urban, the pre-modern community and the modern community, which were often settled by a nostalgic pull to the country. As a song by Miroslav Ilić goes: "America, it's a big country—but a meter of my village is like the whole of America". And as noted by Čolović, folklore and politics have from the very beginnings been the fulcrum of national life. Also, as Eric D. Gordy<sup>37</sup> states, folklore was used in newly composed folk music during the communist era to create many patriotic songs glorifying Tito, the Communist Party, and Yugoslavia. Namely, during communism, folklore was also a cultural matrix used to construct the idea of "brotherhood and unity". The idea of meeting and cultural permeation between different peoples was often presented through folklore songs and dances. In the book *Rat—konstitucija totalitarnog tijela* (War—Constitution of the Totalitarian Body), I stated how the figure of the ring dance had an important role in connecting fraternal nations. Folklore did not possess a melancholic, pathetic, and depressive tone, but it was more attune to the idea of communism, expressing optimism, progress, and mutual fraternal permeation. In contrast to the communist idea, ethno-national folklore incorporates more elements of victimisation, suffering, and depressive pessimism that help achieve a return to a pure tradition. In contrast to communism, which was by many counts based on the project of modernity, ethno-nationalism relies on the exotic call of the homeland. The country as a closed organic unit living in harmony with nature, has not been tainted by the "corrupt spirit of cosmopolitanism".<sup>38</sup>

As noted by Čolović, folklore is itself neutral. It is neither right nor left and has merely been politically utilised within various ideologies in former Yugoslavia. It was used by both communism and ethno-nationalism. However, since for Čolović ethno-nationalism is obsessed with ethnic purity, territories, states, cultures, languages, marriage, and folk music, it is necessary for ethno-national folklore to be related to the purity of national identity and the nation-state. As Čolović asserts:

The blood or genius that carries the identity message must remain pure. Their tainting or contamination with heterogeneous elements opens the door to assimilation, disappearance, and the death of the ethnicity. There is a direct relationship between vital purity (homogeneity) of the genetic material of a people and the dispersion of its population within an ethnic space. In political discourse, this relationship is shown in three spatial oppositions: village-city, mountain-valley, and periphery-centre.<sup>39</sup>

Čolović often says that the symbolic enclaves of purity, the purity of blood and culture maintained for the ethno-nationalist fantasy are preserved in peripheral mountain villages. It is in the villages where originates the healthy natural man, the peasant-warrior, accustomed to conflict with nature, that is able to successfully fight against the cosmopolitan, heterogeneous and elitist-urban way of life.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Conflict Between Modernity and Premodernity**

The problem with turbofolk is that it has been tainted. It is hybrid and it contains a multitude of heterogeneous cultural influences. Namely, what form of ethno-nationalist feelings are expressed in turbofolk? As for the lyrics, turbofolk, like most popular commercial musical forms, was predominantly geared at songs about relationships, romance, and love. Visually, there was a strong tendency towards the image of glamour, luxury, and the “good life” as imagined by urban peasants—it was a world populated by young women in miniskirts driving luxury vehicles, living in fantastically spacious houses, and spending their time in trendy hotel bars. In contrast to older newly composed folk songs with a recurring theme of the sorrows of migrants that have come to the city or images of the rustic idyll from the past, turbofolk, as the characteristic of today’s Serbia, showed the good life—something that in the circumstances of widespread misery and international isolation was available to only a small group considered to be the illustration of the new elite of criminals. Occasionally, these images found their way into the lyrics of turbofolk songs:

Coca-cola, Marlboro, Suzuki  
 Discotheque, guitars bouzouki  
 That’s the life, it’s not a commercial  
 We have the best time

And also:

Everything is great  
 If only it would stay that way.

Gordy also states that turbofolk achieved two ideological plans. The first was to display glamour through young women which distances people from the current situation of international sanctions and collective misery that marked the lives of most people during Milošević’s regime. Secondly, turbofolk shows the life of the new criminalised elite in a glamorous and romantic light, making them normal and acceptable to the public. Gordy states that turbofolk came out into the market as folk music and that its principle audience shares the demographic characteristics of the prior audience of older newly composed folk music. As such, turbofolk resists urban rock’n’roll music that was to the Milošević regime, according to Gordy, an urban, anti-war, cosmopolitan, and therefore, antagonistic music.

If we compare what Čolović claims about folklore music and what turbofolk is, the paradox, duality, and incompatibility are evident. Namely, pure ethno-nationalist folklore is not based on an elitist or consumerist mentality, speed, and chaotic risk, but on an organic unity. However, it is precisely this dichotomy and paradox that constitutes the basis for the chaotic rule of Milošević’s ethno-nationalist regime. The feature of duality is reflected in the fact that both the folk and the turbo were means of escaping

one's self, the real situation marked by the conflict between modernity and pre-modernity and the transition from the socialist to the neoliberal system of values. It is impossible to return to the organically clean folklore milieu, the state Čolović describes, because the very idea of return to traditional ethnic values confirms that those values had disappeared. The aggressive mass hysteria that was particularly reinforced through war euphoria speaks to the fact that tradition had disappeared. It also shows that the reason for aggression is not because pre-modern culture is marked by the phallogocentric patriarchal paradigm of the peasant-warrior, but because modern ethno-nationalism cannot regenerate those values.

Although the war aimed to renew traditional organic rural compactness, ethno-national solidarity and firmness characterised by order and harmony of pre-modern living that resists modern rationalism and corrupt cosmopolitanism, the war is obvious proof of powerlessness, the disintegration of all cultural values most evidently manifested in its subculture.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, turbo means modernity, entertainment, and Western European consumerism that ethno-nationalism strives to escape, although Gordy points out that turbofolk stars act in line with how the peasant imagine modern urban luxury. However, turbofolk shows that western consumerism, entertainment, and superficiality were used to develop awareness about ethnic belonging based on cultural rifts and chaos. Ethnic belonging does not represent class differences, while turbofolk promotes them; ethnic belonging does not entail a fascination with glamour, but rather with the village and the homestead, while turbofolk is absolutely permeated by the urban delinquent milieu; whereas "ethnic belonging is achieved by means of the plum brandy slivovitz, turbofolk is attained by means of cocaine".<sup>42</sup>

### **Ceca and Arkan—Combination of Crime and Entertainment**

A characteristic of turbofolk celebrities is their pronounced closeness with the mafia and war criminals. Almost every mobster was in a relationship with a celebrity, and the greater the mobster, the greater the diva by his side. Female turbofolk singers themselves promoted the model in which "the woman becomes a lap for the rest of warriors", so powerful trigger-happy men driving fast cars "going two hundred an hour" became the ideal. The tip of the pyramid among both celebrities and warriors was occupied by the married couple, Ceca and Arkan. Ceca, real name Svetlana Veličković, became Svetlana Ražnjatović when she married Commander Željko Ražnjatović Arkan, a famous mobster, businessman and criminal, Commander of the Serb Volunteer Guard, president of the Serb Unity Party, owner of the Obilić Football Club, and the man entrusted to do the dirty work for Milošević including murders, crimes, smuggling people and weapons.

Arkan was supposed to be the embodiment of traditional heroic values of the national warrior, and was often called Obilić. Ceca was the most successful celebrity, while Arkan was the most successful war commander. In the film "All that Folk", it is said at one point that "not every Serb is Radovan Karadžić, but every girl is Ceca". Namely, Ceca represented and continues to represent a symbol of Serbdom more potently than any politician. As Milena Dragišević-Šešić points out in the film, Ceca represents a new form of female emancipation through marriage, unknown before, in a time when emancipation was achieved through education and science. Emancipation through marriage entails a young girl getting married in a glamorous gown, in a church and to a Serb hero.

And the "marriage of the century", though it was supposed to represent the epitome of the traditional image, was a cultural scandal because Ceca was not the typical mother or obedient wife from a patriarchal culture. On the contrary, she was a celebrity. At the

wedding itself, covered by 589 TV stations, there were intersections of various cultural codes. Namely, Ceca wore a wedding gown like the one worn by Vivien Leigh as Scarlet O'Hara does in the famous Hollywood film "Gone with the Wind", while her groom wore the officers' uniform of King Peter I army from World War I. As her dowry, the bride contributed a Rolls Royce, and one of the wedding gifts was a Louis XIV furniture set. According to Marko Lopusina "The famous columnist Bogdan Tirnanić wrote of the wedding as a mythical meeting of the Kosovo maiden and the Kosovo hero. Mirjana Bobić-Mojsilović wrote about it as a real Serb wedding, where Arkan was the Commander and Ceca the national princess".<sup>43</sup> Marko Lopusina mentioned that some western media presented the wedding under the headline: "Hollywood on the Danube Greater Serbia Style".<sup>44</sup> He also stated that apart from a love for success, Ceca and Arkan were brought together by a love of money, and that the marriage between the singer and the warrior and businessman was an ideal match. However, love of money and success are not the basic traditional heroic honours, because the patriarchal traditional hero should be fighting in the name of honour, despising money and success. This was an obvious reinvention of traditional values through spectacular kitsch.

Another interesting feature of the marriage of Ceca and Arkan is the combination of crime and entertainment. They are a perfect expression of "forbidden pleasure". In a strange way, Ceca, who shaped her body with the help of silicone implants and made her image through music videos plagiarised off of MTV. All this was a symbol of Serbdom because in her symbolic media representation, she does not embody most adequately the traditional model of the woman as martyr. On a number of occasions in the above cited book, Ceca was presented as the Kosovo maiden come to the battlefield for the care of the wounded, because she too would look after Arkan when he returned from the war zone. Namely, this thesis can only be ironic because the Kosovo maiden personifies Christian modesty and patriarchal purity. In patriarchal culture, the woman is symbolically represented either as a mother-wife or a virginal maiden, never as a sex symbol. For the patriarchal mentality, a female celebrity can only be a "public woman", but Ceca embodies the woman of media success under the motto of "The brave can achieve everything".<sup>45</sup> It is interesting that with "Arkan's help, for he was the make-up artist, stylist and director, Ceca became a music idol of young people and the sex symbol of Serbia"<sup>46</sup> Although the folk ethnic melody, as mentioned before, is marked by a cult of melancholy, suffering and victimisation it must embody the national idea of suffering because as one graffiti says, Turbofolk is the sound of Serbia feeling sorry for itself. Lopusina

Lopusina describes how after, Arkan was killed on 15 January 2000, Ceca became a symbol of Serb suffering and a symbol of Serbia:

Blood and tears have been the lowest price of life in Serbia in the past decades. That price was, unfortunately, paid by both people from the margins and those from the tip of the state pyramid. Each in their own way. The price was also paid by the most famous Balkan entertainer Ceca. (...) As life would have it, the fate of the Serb people broke through the biography of this thirty-year-old pop singer. Isidora Bjelica, the biographer of great Serb figures, says that Svetlana Ražnjatović is the new Draga Mašin, because she had sacrificed herself for Serbdom (...) Quite unexpectedly, Svetlana Ražnjatović became the saddest and most beautiful widow of Serbia.<sup>47</sup>

At one time, Ceca said:—"I am one of those unhappy princesses who had such a short time with their princes".<sup>48</sup> But Lopusina also claims that "Svetlana Ražnjatović [was] the Serb Scarlet O'Hara, the heroine of *Gone with the Wind*, who believed more in

what the new day would bring than in what the past left behind”.<sup>49</sup> Of course, Ceca represented the victim, but she was also the “most beautiful widow” and “believed in what the new day would bring” and a “princess who had such a short time with her prince”. All the above attributes have no relation with Serb tradition, but rather with trendy sentimental soap operas.

### **The National Idea of Suffering**

The mythical dimension of suffering is to create the national-mystical feeling through the idea of the Golgotha, the suffering of martyrs in the name of the truth. But how does suffering function in the cultural matrix of turbofolk where young women do not ask young men for who they are, but rather for the make of car they drive? It is that illogical combination of suffering—that is to mark a deep mystical crucifixion of the ethno-national soul resisting all earthly defeats and temptations in the name of eternal sacred national values, and that is best symbolised by the Kosovo maiden—and the entertainment that create a feeling of dichotomy, chaos, collective autistic depression, thus helping ethno-nationalism to function. It was the entertainment that relativises all sacred values in the name of superficial glitter on the TV screen with its basic principle of fast and powerful cars; men with gold chains across their hairy chests; the Hollywood design of salons frequented by stars. It is no longer a matter of suffering due to sacrifice, purification, and regeneration, but a suffering due to a dichotomy, the suffering of chaos. Namely, the point of the entertainment-popular culture represented by Ceca is to escape suffering because modern media, according to Walter Benjamin, brings consumer’s “reception in a state of destruction”<sup>50</sup> and thus establishes a distance from danger and suffering. This does not mean that the media dissipation has done away with suffering and danger. On the contrary, they are even more present, but in an invisible way.

And it is from that feeling of depression, a schizoid dichotomy that the relationship of suffering and pleasure is created in committing a crime. So, we see the same dichotomy in the figure and actions of Arkan. Arkan should be the embodiment of the national law, “as a defender of Serbdom”, he should be sacrificing himself on the battlefield in order to save the Serb nation, but at the same time, he is a delinquent and a mobster. He himself admitted that he is just like his grandfather Jokelja who cut off seventy Turkish heads in one battle. According to Arkan, his grandfather was supposed to protect his people, represent sacred patriarchal values of heroism, dignity, and pride. But at the same time, he is not a normal person to identify with, as Čolović puts it, but rather a freak, a monster who is so radically different from us as to be fascinating. The hero represented by Arkan symbolises national solidarity precisely through the committed crime. And the secret of the crime is not to rule another people, but that the crime creates a self-isolating border between one’s own people and the outside world. There is pleasure in the crime, but the other side of that pleasure is self-isolation within one’s own borders that keep making internal divisions and crowding people into their own suffering. Rock musician Rambo Amadeus often ironically portrays turbofolk in his lyrics, as shown below:

Folk is the people, turbo is the system of injecting  
fuel under pressure into the cylinder of an  
internal combustion engine.

Turbofolk is the combustion of the people.<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusion

We could say of every culture that it represents a hybrid. In this sense turbofolk can possess positive values, but the problem is that turbofolk strives to escape its inherent hybridism, i.e., to escape the other within itself. Turbofolk is based on a political consciousness in which by relativising cultural values, everything becomes possible; where the boundary between a criminal and a saint is fragile; where contradictory policies can go hand in hand; where capitalism is excluded, but also imitated as a general festive spectacle: "Hollywood".

Hence in ethno-nationalism, the problem of schizoid border that is tearing the community apart is being illuminated through the turbo-folk music. Because the border is in ethno-nationalism itself and in its partitioning, collective unity is being established at the same time. Ethno-nationalism is created through the border, that is, through the non-efficient border. Besides, it is not that some kind of strong and stable identity has been recognised through the border—which needs to eliminate all influences of other cultures from the national body—as ethno-nationalism promises. It is that border goes through the core of its own community separating it constantly.

The cause of unbelievable violence and brutality—expressed in the wars on the territory of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, including the genocide on Bosniak people—should not be searched in the belief that people did not mix together and influenced each other culturally or that they lived in some kind of "bloody Balkan" marked by "mythological tribal" hatred, rage, revenge ... On the contrary, all of that was organised in a planned and systematic manner by ethno-national elite in order to create division and borders between people, and at the same time hide all nonsense of the motives, reasons, and goals in realising ethnically clean state and territory. This nonsense of the ethnically clean national culture and attempt to rid of all that represents the other and the different, is embedded in the hybrid character of turbo-folk music, which contains a multitude of cultural influences, even though when in the name of its own culture eliminates that "other"!

## NOTES

1. See Claude Lefort, *Complications: Communism and the Dilemmas of Democracy*. Translated by Julian Bourg with a Preface by Dick Howard. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
2. This term is used here and throughout this paper as reflected in Giles Deleuze's theory. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: Continuum, 2004.
3. Zygmunt Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.
4. This text uses examples from the former Yugoslavia and examples of ethno-nationalism in Serbia.
5. "In Serbia, nationalism revived the criticism of materialist, usurious, and decadent Western Europe. On the stage of the Serb national myth, this biologically and morally fallen Europe is viewed by the virtuous image of Serbia, watching the freak before it with disgust and shame. In other words, the relationship between Western Europe and Serbia is not derived from the so-called "right to be different" in the name of demands for cooperation with Western European peoples to be conditioned by maintaining national individuality. The Serb myth establishes the relationship between "us" and "others" from the "right to a mission", from the exclusive God-given right of Serbia to preserve virtue in the world for its own and the sake of other peoples" (Ivan Čolović, *Dubina* [Depth], Samizdat, B92, Belgrade, 2001, p. 134). This part explains the ethno-nationalist idea of the chosen people. Namely, God's chosen people represents the virtue and pure image, and when such a people goes to war, its mission is to embody the suffering and Godly values in the fallen world through the cult of sacrifice. For ethno-nationalists, the strategy of Western European war that strives to establish a "new world order" is perfidious because it is fought with the gloves on. Because it is concealed

- behind a mask of usury and the idea of human rights, while ethno-nationalist war is honest and evident based on the suffering and glory of hero martyrs.
6. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 2010.
  7. Dušan Bandić, *Tabu u tradicionalnoj kulturi Srba* [Taboo in the Traditional Serbian Culture], Belgrade: XX-vek, 1980.
  8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2003.
  9. People Liberation Struggle was the resistance movement during World War Two led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It was the war of liberation of the peoples of Yugoslavia against the occupiers and domestic traitors.
  10. Senadin Musabegović, *Rat—konstitucija totalitarnog tijela* [War—Constitution of the Totalitarian Body], Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2008.
  11. Ivan Čolović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia*, London: C. Hurst and Co (Publishers) Ltd, 2002.
  12. In their own mythology, the Serbs view themselves as “Jews”, as the chosen people of Yugoslavia. According to Jovan Rašković, “the Serb people have always had a tragic fate, like some sort of God’s chosen people”, who at Kosovo lost their “holy land” (Renata Salecl, *Protiv ravnodušnosti* [Against Indifference], Zagreb: Arkzin, 2002, p. 43). Nationalism views the fact of being chosen in an ambivalent way. One aspect of being chosen is the period of rule before the Ottoman Empire, i.e. the period of the “golden age”, while on the other hand, being chosen is akin to the tragic fate of the Jews who lost their “holy land”. The other ambivalence of nationalism is in how it is identified with the Jews. Namely, if ethno-nationalism sees its fate as that of the Jews, then in many of its elements, ethno-nationalism unconsciously contains anti-Semitic prejudices.
  13. “The Battle for Kosovo will be won regardless of the obstacles imposed inside the country and from abroad. We will win despite the fact that today our enemies do not unite with our enemies from within the country”. From a speech by Milošević given at the rally at Ušće. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvXgqKWwUzk> (accessed 23 June 2016).
  14. Salecl, *Protiv ravnodušnosti* [Against Indifference], *op. cit.*
  15. Lacanians are the followers of the French psychoanalyst and writer Jacques Lacan. Slavoj Žižek was one of his followers. On Lacanians see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lacanianism>.
  16. Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief*, London: Routledge, 2001.
  17. Slavoj Žižek—Maybe We Just Need a Different Chicken ... —1:42:22—09.09.2008. pdxjustice Media Productions—[www.pdxjustice.org](http://www.pdxjustice.org). In his book *Manje ljubavi—više mržnje* [Less Love—More Hatred], Slavoj Žižek cites as an example of obscene permissivity in Serb ethno-nationalism, the words of Aleksandar Tijanić who was Milošević’s minister of information and public media, and who describes the “strange symbiosis between Milošević and Serbs”: “In general, Milošević suits the Serbs. During his rule, Serbs had abolished working hours. No one does anything. He enabled the burgeoning of the black market and smuggling. You can go on state television and insult Tony Blair, Clinton, or any other ‘world statesman’ (...) Apart from that, Milošević gave us the right to solve our problems with weapons. He also gave us the right to drive stolen cars (...) Milošević turned the daily life of Serbs into one big holiday and enabled us to feel like secondary school students on our graduation excursion—meaning that nothing we do, nothing at all, is punishable”. See Slavoj Žižek, *Manje ljubavi—više mržnje* [Less Love—More Hatred], Belgrade: Cirkulus, 2001, p. 21. That is why Žižek adds that the real problem is not in identifying the economic interests that keep Milošević in power, but in the obscene permissivity that can enable ideological and social cohesion.
  18. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
  19. Žižek, *On Belief*, *op. cit.*
  20. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.
  21. Anthony Giddens, *Rumaway World*, London: Profile Book, 2002.
  22. Eric D. Gordy says that the Serb regime succeeded by systematically destroying the key elements of a normal parliamentary system—autonomous and capable alternative centres of power—while it supposedly maintained the formal aspects of a pluralist political system and sought recognition for introducing them (Eric D. Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives*, University Park: Penn State University Press, 1999). That is to say, he did not use traditional totalitarian methods, but an illusion of pluralism to destroy the alternative and introduce confusion instead of pluralism as part of his ruling strategy.
  23. Dušan Pavlović, *Akteri i modeli* [Acters and Models], Belgrade: Samizdat B92, 2001.
  24. Ivan Čolović, *Bordel ratnika* [Brothel of the Warriors], Belgrade: XX-vek, 2000.

25. In order to understand the reasons why his subjects identified with him, we can also employ psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis says that blind obedience towards the father's authority is permeated by a feeling of guilt of sons planning to kill the father in order to take his place. When the sons murder the father, they begin worshipping him and he becomes the super-ego. Citing Lacan, Renata Selecl observes the feeling of guilt towards the murdered symbolic father, or the grand Other being served to conceal the emptiness or powerlessness in the grand Other. In fact, owning up to the guilt of bringing down the power of the grand Other, or the role of the father, is used to point out the power the father never possessed, but that compensates for his imaginary murder. See Salecl, *Protiv ravnodušnosti* [Against Indifference], *op. cit.*
26. Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Random House, 1975.
27. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
28. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
29. Musabegović, *Rat—konstitucija totalitarnog tijela* [War—Constitution of the Totalitarian Body], *op. cit.*
30. Olivera Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma* [In the Tradition of Nationalism], Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2002.
31. Vladimir Dvorniković, *Karakterologija Jugoslovena*, [The Characterology of the Yugoslavs], Belgrade: Prosveta, 2000.
32. Turbofolk is a genre of Serbian popular music, a hybrid of folk music with other types such as pop, rock, even hip-hop, very popular for the masses. It has been associated with the nationalist forces behind the war and violence related to the breakup of Yugoslavia.
33. "All that Folk" produced by RTV B92, author Radovan Kupres, director: Bojan Vuletić, Belgrade, 2004.
34. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 217–253.
35. Milan Kundera, *The Joke*, New York: Coward-McCann, 1969.
36. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968.
37. Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia*, *op. cit.*
38. Čolović, *Bordel ratnika* [Brothel of the Warriors], *op. cit.*
39. Čolović, *Dubina* [Depth], *op. cit.*, p. 133.
40. "Nature" in Ivan Čolović, *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–28.
41. See: Milena Dragičević-Šešić, *Neofolk kultura* [Neofolk Culture], Novi Sad: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, Sremski Karlovci, 1994. Milena Dragičević-Šešić also observes that the "illusory eclectic nature of supply and the political contradiction essentially reflect the real face of war subculture: a chaos in values, undefined views and goals in a positivist sense (simultaneous support for the king and for Milošević), a relationship between all fighters (war volunteers, those advocating the war away from the frontlines within various political parties on the left and the right), a relationship of intolerance and hate towards the other, a feeling of endangerment of the national being (paranoia), as well as a feeling of grandness of the nation, its exceptional historical mission and, in general, its special nature in world culture" Dragičević-Šešić, *Neofolk kultura* [Neofolk Culture], *op. cit.*, p. 193.
42. Gordy says that the archetypal turbofolk music video is for the song of Ivan Gavrilović "200 an hour", an ode to the joys of fast driving, filmed in a space that seems to be the showroom of Renault cars. The song begins with a cheer: Folk! Folk! Techno-folk!, then Ivan sings the song, while behind him four members of a Funky House Band dance in mechanic's overalls of garish colours. In terms of its musical and visual aspects, Gordy says the song cannot be distinguished from any other of a multitude of instant synthesised dance hits until it reaches a turning point of a few bars of the accordion. Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia*, *op. cit.*
43. Marko Lopusina, *Ceca između ljubavi i mržnje* [Ceca between Love and Hatred], Belgrade: Evro, 2006, p. 78.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Marko Lopusina's book *Ceca između ljubavi i mržnje* (*op. cit.*) talks about Ceca's sex appeal image and her seductive talent akin to that of Sabrina Salerno, Claudia Schiffer, Madonna, Sharon Stone, Joan Collins, etc. "However", the author adds, "all those who know Svetlana Veličković Ceca know that she is a good, proper, sentimental and kind person. In her heart, she is a humanist and a warm human being and she acts like a naïve girl and tamed beauty. Ceca is a real cosmopolitan, and we get along well. She loves the whole world and she is overjoyed that she met a man like Željko (Arkan)" (Lopusina, *Ceca između ljubavi i mržnje* [Ceca Between Love and Hatred], *op. cit.*, p. 78). The author also tries to create a distinction between other celebrities and Ceca, and employs the language of the tabloids when talking about other celebrities. The fact that Ceca can be both a

symbol of Serbdom and of cosmopolitanism, that she can love all people, and yet visit Serb fighters at their stations does not much concern this author.

46. Lopusina, *Ceca između ljubavi i mržnje* [Ceca Between Love and Hatred], *op. cit.*, p. 66.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. Benjamin, "The Work of Art", *op. cit.*

51. Provide source.