DRUŽBOSLOVNE RAZPRAVE

KAZALO
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RECENZIJE KNJIG
BOOK REVIEWS

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GUEST EDITORS' INTRODUCTION
Symbols and symbolic meanings in constructions of nations and national identity

The idea for this special issue evolved in the framework of the project Discourses of the Nation and the National, conducted at the University of Oslo (ILOS), which held the symposium National Symbols across Time and Space in September 2015.[1]

Starting from a general assumption that some crucial aspects of the "nation" and the "national" are constructed and deconstructed in discourse, and that national social formations and nationalisms are persistent phenomena although they experience transformations and reappear under the guise of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, the project comparatively studied various aspects of the national across various discourses. Assuming that the modes of realization, visibility, and importance of the reproductions of the national vary from country to country, the project's activities (symposia, core project members' research, guest researchers' projects, doctoral projects, and guest lectures) concentrated on a range of regions and countries, with an emphasis on North American, Romance, and Slavic studies. The topics examined within the project include borders, space and identity, metaphors in identity construction, discursive construction of patriotism, urban landscapes, diaspora communities and their identity, food and national identity, and television and national identity. The realms of discourse examined include mass media, scholarly discourse, discourse by intellectual and political elites, discourse of urban planning, semi-official computer-mediated discourse, graffiti, and literature.

The symposium National Symbols across Time and Space was devoted to the widely recognized crucial role of symbols in national identity construction: this is reflected in one of the definitions of national identity as "a form of imaginative identification with the symbols and discourses of the nation-state" (Barker and Galasinski 2001: 124). We provided a platform for discussing official and unofficial national symbols, as well as symbols of cultural identity, be they concrete (material) or abstract, in the light of the assumption that nations and national phenomena have lost their significance at a time of cultural globalization. We

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examined how cultural globalization affects symbols and symbolic meanings. Furthermore, we discussed whether national symbols reflect universal patterns in symbolic systems, or whether they depend on the particular features of different national discourses. The topics discussed at the workshop included national day celebrations, political symbolism, the symbolic function of language, and fictional characters as symbols.

Before addressing how the four articles in this special issue relate to previous research on symbols, we provide a short overview of recent studies. Due to limited space and the fact that symbols and symbolic meanings is an extremely broad field of research (studied, e.g., within social representation theory, social psychology, peace psychology, anthropology, political science, nationalism studies, and the arts), the overview focuses on research in the twenty-first century, particularly on volumes that discuss more than one national symbol,[2] more than one region, and topics of general importance.[3]

The volume by Hałas (2002) is a collection of sociological analyses examining selected European countries, Australia, and the US. The emphasis is on symbolism as a social phenomenon, and the subtopics included are political discourse and symbolic action, religious symbolism, and power. Symbolism of discourses, symbolic objects, and symbolic actions are conceived of as intrinsically related. Geisler's volume (2005) concentrates on the role that national symbols play in creating and maintaining individual and collective identity in nine countries on four continents. Among the topics discussed is the interface of the religious and the secular in national narratives in Israel, the Balkans, and Northern Ireland, fluid counter-traditions in the American South, and the multivalent figure of the Argentinean gaucho. Also addressed is the instability of certain national symbols. The contributions demonstrate that over time symbols are subject to continual challenges, changes in signification, and, in extreme cases, loss of valuation or replacement. In her volume, Elgenius (2011) discusses national flags, anthems, and national ceremonial days in a sociological framework, arguing that these are an integral part of nation building, maintenance, and change. The book has a broad European focus, particularly concentrating on Norway, France, and the UK.

Many symbols discussed in these volumes (e.g., national days) relate to nations' victories and what is perceived as a glorious past. The nationalism to which such symbolism of victory relates is the assertion of legitimacy for a nation and its effectiveness as a political entity (Mock 2012). However, there are also entirely different symbols: Mock (2012) looks at symbols of defeat in Serbia, France, Greece, and Ghana. These symbols often assume a foundational role in national mythology. Emphasizing images of their own defeat in

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2. Minahan (2010) provides a *Complete Guide to National Symbols and Emblems* in two volumes, including all of the UN member states and some of the most prominent stateless nations.

3. This does not mean that research discussing individual countries and regions does not provide valuable insights into some general phenomena and tendencies. Examples include Fraim (2003), who discusses the response of the American symbolism industry to the events of 9/11; Fuller (2014), who examines nation and state building in Ghana; Moreno-Luzón and Nũnez Seixas (2017), whose volume examines Spanish nationalism through its diverse and complementary cultural artefacts, from "formal" representations such as the flag to music, bullfighting, and other more diffuse examples; and Inglis (2014), whose volume examines Irish cultural identity.

understanding their history, the author argues, exposes the ambivalence that lurks behind the passions that nationalism evokes. Symbols of defeat also glorify a nation's ancient past, whereby re-enacting the destruction of that past is a necessary step in constructing a functioning modern society.

Moeschberger and Phillips DeZalia's (2014) volume takes a broad perspective on what constitutes a symbol, to include objects such as flags, signs, language, and monuments. It explores yet another crucial aspect of symbols: their both divisive and uniting function in various conflict settings around the world. Importantly, the contributions also discuss commemorations and other dynamic events. Particularly emphasized issues are how symbols are used to perpetuate conflict and how they can be used or modified to promote unification. The volume's scope includes Bosnia, Cyprus, Rwanda, and South Africa.

Some studies concentrate on more specific topics, and on individual official national symbols (e.g., flags and national days). Such an example is the multidisciplinary collection edited by Hylland Eriksen and Jenkins (2007), which deals with flags and their significance for national identities. The case studies from Denmark, England, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and the US explore ways in which flags (mostly in contemporary contexts) are contested, stir up powerful emotions, are commercialized, serve as quasi-religious symbols, and act as physical boundary markers; they show how the same flag can be solemn and formal in certain settings, but stands for informal cultural intimacy in another. In his book covering the US, the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Marshall (2016) also studies flags as symbols that represent nation states and non-state actors (including ISIS, Hezbollah, and Hamas), and how they figure in diplomatic relations and events today.

McCrone and McPherson's (2009) volume discusses national days in the context of debates about national identity. Its main idea is that national days are contested and manipulated, as well as subject to political, cultural, and social pressure. The discursive construction of national holidays in central Europe and the Balkans is discussed by Šarić et al. (2012).

Members of a national society are engaged daily in one or another type of "naive consumption of national symbols" (Rosenbaum 2013: 219). In such consumption, symbols are subconsciously accepted and go unnoticed. As DeSoucey (2016: 36) indicates, it is not only state-created symbols (e.g., flags, anthems, and monuments) that imbue national cultural identities with political coherence; everyday symbols also work to link citizens emotively to each other and to their national states. In addition to state-created symbols, some other phenomena and artefacts can likewise be the cornerstones of national identity, and (can) function as national symbols, or be part of what constitutes nations in everyday life. Edensor (2002) demonstrates that national identity is revealed to be inherent in things often taken for granted – from landscapes and eating habits to tourism, cinema, and music. Among symbols consumed on an everyday basis, a prominent place belongs to architecture and design. This is elaborated in Vale (2008), who concentrates on the relationship between the design of national capitals across the world and the formation of national identity in modernity and the role that architecture and planning play in the forceful as-

sertion of state power. The book looks at capital cities in the US, India, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Bangladesh, and Papua New Guinea. Gimeno-Martínez (2016) examines national design, offering a comprehensive account of how national identity and cultural policy have shaped design, and suggests that traditional formations of the "national" are increasingly unsustainable in an age of globalization, migration, and cultural diversity. Case studies include stamps in nineteenth-century Russian Finland, and Coca-Cola as an "American" drink in modern Trinidad and Tobago.

Nations identify with different forms of popular culture that also acquire symbolic functions: for instance, music (even controversial forms) and dance. Following this idea, Vianna (1999) examines samba and national identity in Brazil, whereas Čvoro (2014) discusses turbo-folk, a "genuinely Balkan" form of resistance to the threat of neo-liberalism and its effects on a broader cultural sphere: art, film, sculpture, and architecture.

Food has also deserved some attention as a symbol of nations: Wilson (2006) provided a first multidisciplinary look at the contributions that food and drink make to contemporary European identities, including the part they play in processes of European integration and Europeanization. Food is also the topic studied by DeSoucey (2016) and Ichijo and Ranta (2006). Sports and national identity in a number of countries are discussed by Smith and Dilwyn Porter (2004). Several studies discuss the importance of sports in particular countries: for instance, Ward (2010) analyses Australia, whereas Watson (2016) discusses hockey in Canada, and Kotnik (2007) skiing in Slovenia.

Given the assumption that nationalism is a form of public culture and political religion that draws on much older cultural and symbolic forms (see, e.g., Smith 2013), volumes dealing with nations and nationalism are concerned with symbols and their functions (e.g., Smith 2013; Young et al. 2007), as are studies dealing with rituals and performances in the forging of nations (e.g., Tsang and Taylor Woods 2014), and studies examining national identities and ideologies (e.g., Lampe and Mazower 2004).

This special issue illuminates approaches to symbolization in cultural discourses by looking at the identification crises of post-communist societies. In tackling a concrete social and political problem, the articles reveal the importance of affective and symbolic meanings to the political process. The crisis of the political is effectively a crisis of identity set forth by institutional changes necessitated by the transition from state planning to a market system and from politically motivated conceptions of citizenship to legalistic ones defined in conventions convened by international bodies. While these institutional changes are in themselves self-evident and unavoidable, i.e. they are expressions of the condition of membership the current international order, the crisis of identity that has resulted cannot be understood in institutional terms. These articles reveal the disquiet and anxiety in the public mood created as a result of transition, reflecting and contributing to the transition from modern states to postmodern ones and from ideological to identity politics. These articles also take varying approaches to the symbolization of those (national) identities. The articles may be read as complementary approaches, or as alternatives, in response to three issues.

Perhaps the most significant underlying issue that divides the articles concerns the importance, or lack thereof, of myth and memory to symbolization and to the forging of

new identities. Is symbolization a process that draws, consciously or unconsciously, on a deep past of the national imaginary or is it voluntaristic – a project of contested meaning arising out of the discourse of the present? A second question is the extent to which symbolization necessarily follows the logic of binary exclusion (which clearly it often does), or, whether it can embody inclusive motifs? In short does symbolization require an "other" and if not what other discursive elements may be substituted for binary opposition? Finally, the question of symbolization of identity necessarily involves the state, both the role of official discourse in national self-definition, but also the state as an object of symbolization. Here the operative questions concern the role of official discourse in guiding and defining the discourse of symbolization and how the potential divergence between official and public perceptions of national symbols is handled.

Reflecting a ethno-cultural theory of the national, Bajt argues that while national identities remained latent under the rubric of Yugoslavian unity and its official state sanctioned identity, these identities emerged again by the 1970s and were partly sanctioned by the reforms of 1974, which granted greater autonomy to the national republics that had comprised Yugoslavia. Identity-making is a process of symbolization that arises from the territorial extension of an ethnic group and is operationalized through memory. As symbols became contested, the importance of memory increases. However, memory itself is subject to fragmentation and manipulation. Common memory may be interpreted subjectively through private memories, though such potential for fragmentation, is often countered through state-created symbols, whose meanings are formalized through "repetition and ritualization" (p. 22). On the other hand the attainment of a public memory through the ritualization while having a stabilizing effect is subject to ideological manipulation. For the most part, the constitution of new state symbols for Slovenia took place as a national debate that drew on "pre-existing regional, cultural, religious, or other affiliations" (p. 30). Thus while the national memory is real – a pre-existing habitus of the nation – the symbolization of this memory is often manipulated for ideological purposes – a rather dangerous prospect. Consequently an alternative, a symbolization of identity that focuses on everyday life, is presented to support the process of the normalization of the new nation.

Čvoro takes a critical and ironic view of the process of national symbolization - a process which he sees as purely constructed and largely arbitrary, but also rooted in a false and slanted reading of the past through myth. The result is the reconstruction of culture through tradition and the incorporation of both neoliberal policies and a nationalist ethos. Indeed for Čvoro neoliberalism and nationalism are two sides of the same coin: an expression of "phallocentric heteronormativity" necessary to the reassertion of the male heroic and a means of combatting global univeralisms. Using works by Abramović and Miljanović, Čvoro presents works of visual art (video and drawing) that parody traditionalism by representing ancient rituals of sex and death. In this imaginative rendering, eroticism and mortality define a necropolis that has become the fate of the former Yugoslavia; the eroticization of death is both the publically unacknowledged symbol of the Balkans' economic and political marginalization, and ironically the only means of its survival. In short traditionalism leads to the erasure of history and appropriation of the past, which has condemned the Balkans to selling its body, its only means of its survival. Identity has not

been chosen through symbolization, but rather symbols are the by-product of a political language that is "in-between" time and cannot be located in space. The peoples of the Balkans have no defence in confronting the forces of economic neo-liberalization and pending social dissolution.

Šarić and Felberg present a discursive analysis of the political disputes around the continued presence of Cyrillic in Croatia where Latin letters predominate. The authors argue that writing systems (like language in general) can function as a symbol of national identity. The Balkans are part of an area that lies in a border zone between Latin writing to the west and Cyrillic that lies to the east. Within this zone, writing systems often reflect choices by societies determined to reinforce or alternately realign national identities. These can reflect instances of popular nationalisms or more deliberate nation-building strategies undertaken by state actors. In either case national memory, myth and tradition is "rearranged" to suit political purposes. Thus memory is not essential or given in meaning; it is arranged and interpreted. Since discourse is socially constructed and collective memory is defined as a form of discourse, it follows that the different discursive interpretations of Cyrillic script reflect different social positions and psycho-social motifs. In one Cyrillic is reflective a threat to Crotian society, while to the other it reflects the importance of cultural exchange/commonality and erudition generally. The former motive is very important to veterans – the antagonists of the narrative – for whom Cyrillic script awakens memories of the intense suffering of war against Serbia. Using an empirical method based on discourse analysis of a linguistic corpus drawn from heterogeneous sources, the authors investigate the debate around the inclusion of Cyrillic scripts in the public spaces in Vukovar, finding that the symbolic importance of Cyrillic script helps discursive communities frame their conflicting takes on Croatian identity. Symbolization then is a process of discourse that arises in the context of the current debate and contestation over the central values of Croatian society.

Kesylytė-Alliks's article investigates the contested meaning of state-created symbols – in this case, the two flags of post-Soviet Lithuania. The contestation centres on official and unofficial perspectives. Central to the article is Kesylytė-Alliks's contention that the political field is markedly distinct from the civil society. The state has the advantage of "official discourse" that can ascribe symbolic meaning to state-created objects (such as flags), while sectors of the civil society struggle to accumulate power through the discursive appropriation of symbols. Nonetheless in this case the officially defined meaning of the flags faces competition from segments of the public. Gathering official materials including records of parliamentary debates as well "semi-public social discourse", and applying linguistic analysis to her corpus, Kesylytė-Alliks considers the representation and symbolic signification of the two flags – the official tricolor and the semi-official "national historical flag". The former gained its legitimacy from its association with the overthrow of the Soviet regime; the popular uprising against Soviet rule both legitimized the flag and made it the symbol of the Lithuanian nation itself. On the other hand, the restoration of the premodern "national historical flag" was closely associated with the integrity and independence of the Lithuanian state considered apart from the nation. However, Kesylytė-Alliks finds that the discursive function of the two flags is less a matter of their inherent historical references

than the discursive contexts in which they are vetted. In the Lithuanian parliament and among the political class, the independence of the state from the nation is emphasized and both flags are seen as symbols of that institutional integrity: here the "civic" triumphs over the "ethnocentric". Within the informal segments of the public sphere, however, the Lithuanian nation is seen as essential and both flags symbolize its ownership.

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ČLANKI
ARTICLES

Veronika Bajt

THE POST-COMMUNIST RENEGOTIATION OF SLOVENIAN NATIONAL SYMBOLS

ABSTRACT

This article explores how Slovenian collective memory and national identity have been renegotiated by post-communist political elites through the adoption of new state symbols in the light of changes connected to the collapse of communist ideology, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the establishment of an independent Slovenian state. Concentrating on the ways state imagery is legitimated as representing the nation, the analysis discusses the post-1991 reorganization of Slovenian national symbols. I argue that, by analysing the adoption of a new state flag, coat of arms, and national anthem, the official national identity re-conceptualization shows how Slovenian national memory became redefined as the new state memory, which resulted in nationalizing state practices and policies.

KEYWORDS: Collective memory, flag, national symbols, Slovenia, Yugoslavia

Postsocialistična redefinicija slovenskih nacionalnih simbolov

IZVLEČEK

Članek raziskuje, kako so slovenske postsocialistične elite s sprejetjem novih nacionalnih simbolov redefinirale slovenski kolektivni spomin in nacionalno identiteto v luči sprememb, povezanih z razpadom socialistične ideologije, Jugoslavije in z ustanovitvijo samostojne države Slovenije. Z osredotočanjem na legitimiziranje državnih simbolov kot reprezentacij nacije analiziram redefinicijo slovenskih nacionalnih simbolov po letu 1991. Predlogi za spremembo zastave, grba in državne himne kažejo, da je slovenski »nacionalni« spomin redefiniran kot dominantni »državni« spomin, kar ima za posledico nacionalizirajoče prakse in politike.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Jugoslavija, kolektivni spomin, nacionalni simboli, Slovenija, zastava

1 Introduction[1]

"The revolutions of 1989 have forced open the east European past" and all the different memories came out into the open (Judt 2002: 179). Influential political actors in post-communist countries have aimed to reconstruct collective memories as old public representations lost their legitimacy. The newly emergent "East Central European flags, coats of arms, currencies, and postal stamps in the early 1990s visually declared that times, ideas, and values had changed" (Zei 1997: 65–66). Because the past is "stored and interpreted by social institutions" (Halbwachs 1992: 24), once these institutions are discredited the past itself is questioned. History needs to be rewritten. State actors are the dominant force in supplying categories "to articulate and legitimise nationhood" and collective memory is shaped in "specific institutional contexts" and is "contingent on political developments" (Levy and Dierkes 2002: 244–245).

The communist authorities designed post-1945 federal Yugoslavia as a country of free and equal nations comprising six republics: Serbia (including the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina), Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia. In 1947 each republic adopted its own constitution, legalizing the particular features of all of the nations and national minorities. Yugoslav identity was primarily a supranational phenomenon, including layers of ethnic/national/religious, supranational/Yugoslav, class, and political identifications, interlaced in complex ways. The 1974 constitutional changes allowed the republics to exercise full independence in their legislation about education, culture, science, and the environment, and thus brought about a decade of decentralization. On June 25th, 1991, Slovenia (and Croatia) declared independence. With political sovereignty, Slovenia therefore had to be reimagined. Having become an independent state, Slovenia's political actors wasted no time attempting to differentiate the new state from Yugoslavia, its predecessor.[2]

With the construction of a new nation-state came the need to change public symbols and establish Slovenia as a sovereign state. The post-1991 authorities' rewriting of history textbooks, changing of state symbols, and renaming of streets illustrate the change in national memory. After Yugoslav state memory was dismantled with the collapse of Yugoslavia, Slovenian national memory faced reconstruction, whereas Slovenian national identity was redefined as the dominant state-promoted identity.[3] Although the post-1991 reorganization of Slovenian state symbols was far from smooth, as argued in this article, the firm embeddedness of Slovenian national identity prior to independence meant that

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1. The author would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers and guest editors for their valuable comments and suggestions for improving the quality of this article.
2. These processes took place even before independence because the dominant Yugoslav memory had been contested well before 1991.
3. Reflecting the most recent theoretical discussions within nationalism studies (e.g., Guibernau 1996; Smith 1991, 1999), national identity and cultural identity are not conceptually separated here, signifying the civic/political and ethnic/cultural interlacing in the process of national (self)categorization. Furthermore, whereas the term *state* signifies a territorially bounded political community, the term *nation* is predominantly used here in the sense of an ethno-cultural community (i.e., Smith's *ethnie*, or *Kulturnation*), although it also entails civic and political bonds (i.e., *Staatsnation*).

Slovenia did not require a drastic reinvention of national memory. Moreover, there was no need to invest in a separate language construction, as was the case with some of the other post-communist states (e.g., the former Serbo-Croatian has been redefined and re-codified as different languages in Yugoslavia's successor states; cf. Greenberg 2004).

Symbols and rituals are decisive factors in the creation of national identity (Guibernau 1996). National in-group solidarity needs to be established, implying that similarity exists among the nation's actually heterogeneous members. At the same time, national homogeneity and unity – or rather the illusion of it – is achieved through the belief in the difference from outsiders. Symbols are crucial to the survival of national identity because they act as "border guards" (cf. Barth 1969). National identity is defined both from within (as in-group similarities) and from without (as out-group distance and differences), and it becomes meaningful only through contrast with others (Triandafyllidou 1998). Memories, myths, and symbols are the building blocks of every national identity, and the importance of historical memory in the formation of nations has been well documented (cf. Hutchinson 1987). Memory connects people with the past, and nations become defined through ideas of ancestral territory, specific ethno-history, and myths of origin (Smith 1999). Collective memory serves as a transmitter of collective identity because it explains the nation as a community with a specific territory perceived as a homeland; it constructs the notion of a shared past, and thus history "must be turned into ethnic myths and shared memories must become the basis of an ethno-heritage" (Smith 1999: 265). This is especially important for nations that lack a collective memory of a golden age (e.g., due to a lack of historic statehood) and hence often replace it with the elevation of a separate language and culture, as was the case with the Slovenians.[4] Lacking their own state, nobility, powerful military, and economic and political elites, it was the formation of a distinctive standard language that helped institutionalize Slovenian national identity.[5] The Slovenian nation and national identity existed before the sovereign nation-state was created in 1991, and they therefore predated the nationalist movement and political nationalism backing an independent state. Slovenian national identity hence relies on ethno-cultural characteristics such as presumed ties of descent and a shared distinct language, and in nationalist terms being a proper Slovenian means not only speaking Slovenian and living in Slovenia, but also being Slovenian "by birth" (Hafner-Fink 1997: 265).

This article explores how the post-communist political elites have renegotiated Slovenian national identity by adopting new symbols in the light of changes connected to the

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4. This is not to suggest that the Slovenian case does not exhibit its own creations of a golden age in the ancient state of Carantania (Bajt 2011); however, such evocations have not been fully adopted as representing a glorious Slovenian past as can be observed, for example, in nationalisms with a historical legacy of empires (e.g., the United Kingdom, Spain, and Portugal).

5. Most recent historical research confirms that the idea of a Slovenian nation formed only at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and its formation was not due to the prior existence of a Slovenian ethnic or linguistic community, but was a result of the considerations of nationalist intellectuals, who applied the national concept from the European to the local context (Kosi and Stergar 2016). Moreover, because the Slovenian nation had developed in opposition to foreign rule, national distinctiveness was promulgated through emphasizing a separate Slovenian language.

collapse of communist ideology, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the establishment of an independent state. Post-1991 Slovenia is a "nationalizing" state (Brubaker 1996) – putting the nation above all other criteria – yet Slovenian nation-building and state-building processes, although inextricably related, should be analysed with their separate historical trajectories in mind.[6] Using the Slovenian case study, this article focuses on state-building by developing two themes: a) the ways the political elite rewrites the official version of national memory in changing socio-historical circumstances and the role the state plays in organizing collective memory and through this the idea of a shared national identity, and b) how certain symbols become recognized as national through a complex intertwining of semi-state-sponsored actions on the one hand and grass-roots-level activism of nationalist actors on the other. Put differently, the prevalent conflation of *nation* and *state* in English literature (i.e., the very term *nation-state*) is here critically re-evaluated by pointing out the nuances that define the difference between "state" (i.e., civic) and "national" (i.e., ethnic) symbols in the Slovenian case. This article hence discusses a) the change in *state* symbols, most notably the flag, coat of arms, and national anthem, but also b) the shifting symbolism associated with what defines "Slovenianness"; that is, adopting certain ancient signs as *national* (i.e., ethnic, cultural) symbols, especially as emphasized in recent years by right-wing racist groups.

To build an argument about the importance of the new Slovenian state memory for the redefinition of national identity, the article continues with a theoretical discussion of the concept of memory (Section 2). Section 3 explains the pre-1991 situation in Yugoslavia, and Section 4 provides a theoretical basis for the Slovenian case study. The existing literature usually analyses nationalism in official history teaching practice by examining school textbooks (e.g., Jelavich 1990), whereas "mapping the nation" (Azaryahu and Kook 2002) is often reflected in examining the process of new local and state authorities' renaming of streets, schools, parks, and other public places. Following this, in order to examine whether Slovenian collective memory changed and in what ways the new state imagery is legitimated by the political elite as representing the nation, the reorganization of Slovenian state symbols is addressed in Section 5. The change of state symbols, particularly the national flag, is analysed as an illustration of the official national identity re-conceptualization. Moreover, apart from the official changes in state symbols analysed in Section 5, nationalist re-appropriations of what constitutes "Slovenianness" that have occurred at the grass-roots level are also noted. Empirically, the article is based on participant observation, policy analysis, and analysis of relevant state laws.[7]

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6. Rogers Brubaker highlights the neglected "nationalizing nationalism" of existing states. His conceptualization of a "nationalizing state" describes "the tendency to see the state as an 'unrealized' nation-state, as a state destined to be a nation-state, the state of and for a particular nation" (1996: 63).

7. By participant observation I refer to, among other things, my personal participation in public parliamentary discussions, specifically the one on October 28th, 2002 about changing the state symbols. I also conducted three interviews with public officials between February and May 2002.

2 The territorialization of national memory

Territorialization of memory is a term adopted from Anthony D. Smith. He used it in connection to "ethnoscapes" as those culturally, historically, and nationally charged territories that are felt "to influence events and contribute to the experiences and memories" that mould a community and its shared myths (1999: 150). Because Slovenian national identity is strongly attached to landscape, "ethnoscapes" are understood here not only as territorial borderlines, but as indispensable for the symbolic "feeling" of a national community. The narratives of memory can help one understand the relationship between memory and history, and in this way influence national identity. The past, or rather one's sense of the past, is reproduced in public representations on the one hand, and in private memory on the other, hence the study of collective memory is inevitably concerned with both. Ideas of history are formed in the course of everyday life as well as through public rituals and ceremonies. Everyone participates in this "social production of memory", although the participation is unequal (Popular Memory Group 1998). The social production of memory is a set of different ways in which "a sense of the past is constructed" (Popular Memory Group 1998: 76). Only some historical representations gain access to the public field and can, consequently, become dominant. Nonetheless, public memory, even in authoritarian regimes, is always open to contestation from other, differently constructed, visions of the past because people hold on to their private memories and they remember a non-official version of the past.

National memory is inextricably connected to national identity because national elites create an idea of the nation as a real entity by emphasizing its unity and shared history. With the nationalists' propagation of national memory and symbolic markers of nationhood, the nation is imagined as having a specific place not only in the present, but also in the past and future. This continuity is often achieved by nationalist elites through selection; that is, the idea of homogeneity pushes non-conformities to the margins because private memories might often clash with public, "official" versions of history. Dominant memories therefore attempt to shape private memories; to remember "otherwise" can be perceived as dissidence, and only those private memories that are important for national identity are emphasized. Individual memories remain private and secluded from the public domain, especially in totalitarian regimes. The purpose of state-organized memories is to create homogeneity, remove difference, and build a national/state identity shared by all. National identity, in effect, is created through the appropriation of national symbols by national elites and consolidated through national memory. "Wherever 'national identity' seems to be in question, memory comes to be a key to national recovery through reconfiguring the past" (Müller 2002: 18). However, state historical memory is also subject to change, either naturally or because of deliberate manipulation by state actors.

As two separate processes that are important for each other, the connection between national identity and memory has been recognized in explorations of nationalism, especially within the ethno-symbolic approach. Here (e.g., Hutchinson 1994; Smith 1999), the aim is to uncover how modern nations and nationalisms reinterpret "the symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions of their ethno-histories" and how myths, memories, and

symbols generate national attachments (Smith 1998: 224). Memories, together with myths and symbols, unite a nation and demarcate it from the outsiders, who do not share the same kind of alleged collective repositories. The idea of the nation is influenced by the way collective memories are shaped through selective remembering and forgetting.

3 Yugoslavia and Slovenian national identity

Concentrating on the post-1991 renegotiation of Slovenian national memory and state symbols, on the re-definition of Slovenian national identity that occurred as Slovenia established itself a state *of* and *for* the Slovenian nation (cf. Brubaker 1996), one can observe how Slovenian "national" memory became "state" memory. Prior to independence, Slovenian national memory existed alongside Yugoslav state memory. Although the underlying communist ideology was the same, here I distinguish between the *state* memory promoted by the federal Yugoslav government and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on the one hand, and Slovenian *national* memory as a part of the institutionalized transmission of common Slovenian symbols, values, and general ideas about the past within the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (1945–1991). Conceptually, even Slovenian national memory prior to 1991 was a "state" memory because it was public, it was the dominant memory within the republic, and it promoted only officially accepted representations of the past.

Yugoslav state memory was organized by the federal authorities in order to create a unifying Yugoslav identity. Simultaneously, the Slovenian cultural elites (e.g., intellectuals, artists, and poets) and political elites (i.e., the republic-level communist authorities) forged national identity through national symbols, consolidating it through Slovenian national memory. In Slovenia, people's already-existing attachment to their specific "ethnoscape" was hence used, incorporating the particular Slovenian cultural identity into its relatively autonomous socioeconomic reality. Despite the competing existence of two simultaneous homelands (i.e., the republic of Slovenia and the federation of Yugoslavia), Slovenia was the homeland that Slovenians primarily identified with (Hodson et al. 1994). A wider Yugoslav identity was connected to being one of the South Slavic nations and could thus coexist with the Slovenian identity. However, once the Yugoslav framework began to threaten Slovenian identity, this coexistence started to break.[8]

Had there not been a separate Slovenian national memory, the state memory of Yugoslavia would probably have succeeded in superseding the distinctiveness of Slovenian national identity. However, Yugoslavia promoted the cultural (national) distinctiveness of its constituent nations (Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Slovenian), and so a complex set of collective memories as well as state and sub-state national symbols coexisted. Even though the overarching state ideology was communism and all the republics

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8. In the mid-1980s, political polarization within Yugoslavia was growing. A prominent example was a proposed educational reform that envisaged the unification of the entire Yugoslav schooling system. The Slovenians as a cultural and linguistic minority perceived this centralizing measure as "Yugoslavization", and the cultural and political elites were opposed to changing their independent jurisdiction in education.

adhered to that model, separate national (i.e., ethnic) identities existed alongside the official state-promoted "brotherhood and unity" mantra.[9] Communist ideology, the "invented tradition" of Slavic unity, the mythology of the anti-fascist "national liberation struggle", and the construction of the enemy were all incorporated in Yugoslav state memory, but were also present in Slovenian national memory.[10] Yugoslavia as a state did not claim to represent one nation and several national identities simultaneously existed, whereas the task of the Yugoslav authorities was to promote a unifying all-inclusive Yugoslav identity. Despite the fact that the spirit of the South Slavic union had a historical base and was not a total invention (cf. Hodson et al. 1994), and although many people were in favour of such a supranational identity, the idea of Yugoslav cohesion had to be actively promoted through state symbols and public rituals.[11]

However, even though state propaganda, public affirmations, monuments, and schoolbooks can be very compelling, people can and do resist the official version of history. Although pre-1991 Slovenian national memory may have followed the official Yugoslav version of history, the private memories of some individuals (e.g., older generations that remembered the Second World War) continuously resisted Yugoslav propaganda. Once Yugoslav state memory was dismantled with the collapse of Yugoslavia, Slovenian national memory faced reconstruction, whereas the new political elites redefined Slovenian national identity as the dominant state-promoted identity. This was also an opportunity to re-evaluate the idea of what constitutes Slovenianness, which resulted in substantial intra-national tensions that continue to affect the contemporary political and ideological divide in Slovenia.[12]

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9. Resistance to top-down implementation of Yugoslavism already started in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians. Tito and the Communist Party thus awarded relative political and cultural autonomy to the constituent republics of post-1945 Yugoslavia. There were several attempts of to revive Yugoslavism in federal Yugoslavia, but they were met with resistance. It is not possible here to discuss the complexity of national relations and critical evaluation of Yugoslavism in greater detail.

10. The enemy was an especially ubiquitous concept; present always and everywhere. The external enemy was tied to the so-called threat from the East (Sekulic 1997) stemming from the Eastern bloc, but also connected to the "capitalist" and "imperial" West, as well as the wartime adversaries (fascists and Nazis). Even more ominous was the "internal enemy", an idea that served the communist elites in their attempts to channel the emotions of the masses against various scapegoats.

11. Analysis of pre-1914 textbooks used by the South Slavs in their various educational systems revealed that each nation strove for its own interests; the main Slovenian goal was to unite the nation scattered across the Austrian provinces. "Yugoslavism appealed to idealists, but not to those who had to deal with the realities of the South Slav world" (Jelavich 1990: 272). Only a small segment of the people that were to become "Yugoslavs" after 1918 were actually enthusiastic about Yugoslavism and the idea of the South Slav unity (e.g., intellectuals, university students, and a few politicians; Jelavich 1990: 272). Tito's post-1945 Yugoslavia thus faced the difficult task of uniting nations that had not been "melted together" in its royal predecessor.

12. Here I refer to the ideological chasm between the so-called left and right, which clash beyond political partisanship. The political parties and elites on the right have been constructing revisionist views of history, especially the Second World War, attempting to exonerate wartime Slovenian collaboration with the Nazis, where avid anti-communism is problematically portrayed in terms of being the only stance safeguarding Slovenian national interests.

4 Constructing symbolic historic continuity

Symbols assist in "creating, coding, and decoding" systems of meaning because individuals "perceive and understand" their environment through symbols that attach meaning to their experiences (Schirch 2005: 81). Symbols only have value for those that recognize them and understand their meaning; they enable the national community to differentiate between "us" and "them". National symbols hence "heighten people's awareness of, and sensitivity to, their community" (Guibernau 1996: 81).

State ceremonies and national symbols are so much part of the world that people frequently take them for granted (Smith 1991). They all share an emotional component and have a Durkheimian collective quality, which makes them "the most potent and durable aspects of nationalism" (Smith 1991: 77). Some kind of special and symbolic meaning is always also present in rituals; as Kertzer argues: "symbols provide the content of ritual" (1988: 11). Due to their ability to be understood in different ways by different people, symbols are the ultimate basis for uniting people even in situations of absence of consensus. National rituals therefore make the official symbolic meaning explicit by referring to national symbols. National flags, emblems, heroes, recollections of national glory, and historical common suffering are just some of the elements that states never forget to include in their ceremonies. Thus symbolic forms act in three ways: 1) symbols condense information about the world into one single unified form; 2) they are multi-vocal; that is, they have the ability to communicate different meanings to different people; and 3) they are ambiguous "precisely because they allow for multiple interpretations" (Schirch 2005: 81). This is important because it allows for one symbol to resonate with a myriad of people whose differing positions are brought together in the idea of being members of one nation.

Hobsbawm understands nations precisely through special "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition" (1993: 2). Thus, it was not only the entire new set of symbols that emerged with the rise of the nation-state; the most important thing was that the state's historic continuity also needed to be invented. For Hobsbawm, the invention of signs, which bear symbolic and emotional value, is of crucial importance for group membership. National anthems, flags, emblems, symbols, and images became a necessary part of every national movement and state. Primary education, public ceremonies, and monuments play a pivotal role with regard to the invention of tradition. References to the past are established and strengthened especially through processes of formalization, repetition, and ritualization: "Existing customary traditional practices . . . were modified, ritualized and institutionalized for the new national purposes" (Hobsbawm 1993: 6). It is the "undefined universality" of ritualization that matters the most; the obligation to follow a specific symbolic practice, rather than particular content, is crucial for emotionally charged signs, symbols, and ceremonies to work (Hobsbawm 1993: 11). It is also necessary that some sort of genuine "popular resonance" be present in order to mobilize public support. Whereas the modern conceptualization of the nation treats it as founded in the cultural unity and social solidarity of its citizens, national attachment and identification with particular historical events, heroes, symbols, and even flags is often much older (Elgenius 2011).

At the same time, it is always possible to acquire a glorious history through retrospective nationalism.

The establishment of the independent state of Slovenia reiterated the necessity to accentuate the use of an older, even ancient symbolic dimension of national identity for popular mobilization. The theory of nationalism has argued at great length about the importance of historical continuity for the idea of the nation. Although historians have called on the need to surpass myths in Slovenian historiography (Pleterski 1997; Štih 1997, 2006), conceptions of Slovenian history as commencing in the Early Middle Ages with the state of Carantania remain the hallmark of amateur "historians" with a nationalist agenda and they resonate in popular ideas of the "Slovenian" past. The revival of Slovenian public interest in the ancient political entity called Carantania, which started in the 1980s, has been analysed in a handful of studies (e.g., Štih 1997; Skrbiš 2002; Bajt 2015).[13] Claiming that Carantania was the first Slovenian state is a way of building an entire new set of national myths and symbols. It is a territorial myth of an ancient homeland, a myth of ethnogenesis and antiquity that separates the Slovenians from the other Slavs by claiming they are direct ancestors of an ancient indigenous population that survived all subsequent population mixing. This also makes Carantania a myth of kinship and shared descent. Finally, it is the supposed democratic nature of Carantania's politics that is perceived by certain Slovenians as evidence of the historic chosen nature of the Slovenian people (Schöpflin 1997).[14]

Recent changes in Slovenian national memory have provided new impetus for claiming a historical bond with this ancient state. The importance of historical continuity for the idea of a nation is invaluable, and recent attempts to adopt Carantania and its symbols

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13. Such "autochthonous" theories (i.e., hypotheses placing the beginnings of the Slovenian nation far back in the prehistoric period) have older historic roots. In these primordial accounts, Slovenians are seen as already inhabiting their present-day homeland in prehistoric times and the Slovenian language as having formed a long time ago, remaining almost unchanged until the present. Specific historical socio-political circumstances should be taken into consideration when trying to understand why such beliefs emerge and when they become particularly powerful. In accordance with the general historical "roots-searching" of the nineteenth century Europe, so too did Slovenians attempt to re-invent their ancestry and made it appear to be perennial and "forever there". Theories propagating "Slovenian European indigeneity" (Skrbiš 2008: 142) included ideas of Scandinavian and Etruscan origins of Slovenians, and were particularly useful as a tool of national emancipation for the nineteenth-century Romantic nationalists (Štih 1997). The "forever there" part was particularly important due to its connection of the people with the land, their homeland. Mapping Slovenians as the people that have been occupying the same historical place through time helped them believe that they possessed a historical right to it. The twentieth century witnessed the continuation of these endeavours, culminating in the 1970s and 1980s, when broader economic and political circumstances provided the framework for a new theory of an indigenous Slovenian presence (i.e., the Venetic theory with its strong emphasis on Carantania). This striving for continuity reflects one of the most important elements of every successful nationalism: its primary belief in the distinctiveness of "its" nation.
14. Some (e.g., Felicijan 1976; Požun 2000) even believe that Thomas Jefferson used the ancient custom of Carantania's ritualized investiture ceremony of enthroning the duke, which was rich in the symbolism of social contract, as his inspiration for the American Declaration of Independence.

as "Slovenian" reflect the nationalist need for historical permanence. As a nation that did not form an independent state until the late twentieth century, allegedly having its own customs and institutions embedded deep in history strengthens the idea of its uniqueness, its territorial claims, and its inner solidarity. Carantania is a powerful and effective symbol that provides a source of Slovenian cultural closeness to assumed ancestors and aids revisionists' desire to supersede the historical association of Slovenians with passivity and serfdom. Most significantly, it implies a sharp break with the Yugoslav past.

Radical right groups in Slovenia have appropriated Carantania's symbols in order to mask their racist exclusion with supposedly benign patriotism. Since independence, but especially again since the recent "refugee crisis", Slovenia has seen a notable rise in self-proclaimed "patriotic" organizations and movements that promote exclusionary and discriminatory rhetoric (Bajt 2015). They have all appropriated Carantania's symbols as expressions of *Slovenianness* in its purest form. Although they resonate with the radical right and nationalist youth, this would have remained an obscure trend were it not for its adoption by some political figures as well. Especially politicians from the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), but also the Slovenian People's Party (SLS), who – together with New Slovenia (NSi) – are members of European People's Party (EPP), Christian Democratic, and centre-right, began to use the black Carantanian panther as a way to contradict the official state symbols and to accentuate their standing for "true patriotic" values.[15] Historians have pointed out the historical incorrectness of appropriating the Carantanian panther as a "Slovenian" symbol (e.g., Štih 1997; Pleterski 1997). However, the inclusion of Carantania among the state symbols has not only been the prerogative of populist politicians and nationalists that claim to stand for patriotic national interests while promulgating racist exclusionary views and policies. There are also visible institutional claims to Carantania, a prominent example being a statement on the governmental official website that Carantania was "the first Slovenian state" (Vlada RS 2017).

5 Reorganization of Slovenian state symbols

National days and flags are physical manifestations that aide citizens in imagining their community more powerfully. Flags and anthems were deliberately created in the nineteenth century as symbols designed to promote national identity, which was especially important given the fact that most modern states are multi-ethnic and culturally pluralistic in their composition (Bechhofer and McCrone 2012). Other national symbols, such as music and art, sports (in terms of peacetime competition between nations), landscape, language, and of course the special place dedicated to "national values", are also important. Although the flag and other state symbols are the means by which a nation can be imagined, it does not necessarily mean that such impulses will always be evoked, much

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15. The Carantanian black panther has become popular as a pin worn on clothing by right-wing nationalist politicians. It is also a regular feature of alternative flags used by racist groups. For more on the normalization of racism in the case of a prominent political party, see Frank and Šori (2015).

less that they will always follow the same logic. Empirical data on this subject are clearly deficient and flags especially have been poorly theorized (Eriksen 2007). Symbols, often treated somewhat self-evidently, help personalize the nation because they allow a link be made between institutional aspects and everyday life. Flags are not only symbols of belonging to a nation, but help centre the national identity of the people (Elgenius 2011; Eriksen 2007). "The flag, for all its rich symbolic and political connotations, its long history harking back to medieval heraldry, its ubiquity and emotional power, has been relatively neglected in research on nationalism" (Eriksen 2007: 1–2). Most theorists of nationalism make only a passing reference to flags as symbols of the nation, but rarely treat the flag systematically. As Michael Billig (1995), one notable exception in this regard, pointed out when describing "banal nationalism" in the West, states use their national imagery in everyday life in order to reproduce themselves. Flags become a part of people's daily routines when their use is popularized. In particular, popular sporting events such as the Olympics or World Cup make national symbols highly visible.International sports are the paradigmatic example of highly visible public display of national flags. Although these are examples of what Billig calls "waved" flags, "unwaved" flags (e.g., on state buildings, or depicted on stamps) are just as important (Zei 1997). Through the everyday presence of state symbols, nations are reproduced.

The three main Slovenian state symbols – the coat of arms, flag, and national anthem – have existed since 1991.[16] Slovenia's authorities seem to have entirely changed the state's public symbols in order to differentiate it from Yugoslavia. A closer look, however, reveals that the new state symbols drew on the previously existing ones. White, blue, and red have been national colours for a much longer time; that is, the Slovenian national flag was brought forward in 1848, the year of the "Spring of Nations" revolutions in Europe (see Figure 1).[17]

Figure 1: The Slovenian national flag since 1848
Source: Wikipedia 2017a

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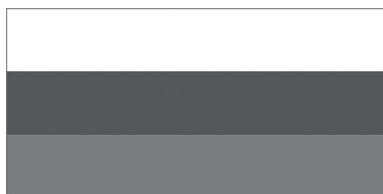
16. The flag, coat of arms, and national anthem were defined in the Slovenian constitution adopted in December 1991. Their use is further stipulated in a law of November 1994.
17. In 1848 feudalism was abolished in the Habsburg Empire and the proclamation of the Slovenian national programme took place. For the first time in history, a clear demand was expressed for the unification of all Slovenians into one administrative unit with its own parliament and Slovenian as its official language.

In 1941 the Partisans added the antifascist five-pointed red star to the Slovenian tri-colour. It was preserved in this form as Slovenia's official flag for five decades within the Yugoslav context (see Figure 2). The post-1945 Slovenian communist coat of arms was developed from the Liberation Front's symbol: the three main elements were the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia's highest mountain, Triglav, and linden leaves, and the anti-fascist five-pointed star was a ubiquitously prominent symbol (see Figure 3).[18] The symbolic value of a holy mountain is a common nationalist ethnoscape, and Mount Triglav has long held this role for Slovenians.

Figure 2: The flag of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (1945–1991)
Source: Wikipedia 2017b

Figure 3: The emblem of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (1945–1991)
Source: Wikipedia 2017c

Yugoslavia's state symbolism was intertwined with communist ideology. Various national symbols were used at the level of the republics, and the supra-national Yugoslav symbolism combined all the parts. The Yugoslav flag, for instance, was a blue-white-red tricolour with a red star in the middle. The differences between the republics were expressed only through different ordering of the colours in the flag.[19] The state emblem depicted Yugoslavia's multi-nationality by showing six torches burning into one (i.e., Yugoslav) flame of brotherhood and unity.

The original Slovenian national tricolour "as the only common historical symbol of all the Slovenians" was adopted as the state flag in 1990 (Vidic 1999: 46). The new state

18. An important Slovenian national symbol is also the linden leaf. For more, see Bajt (2014: 1355).
19. Except for Macedonia, whose flag was red with a star in its upper left corner.

emblem was later added in the upper left corner, marking the official Slovenian flag as it is described in the 1991 constitution (see Figure 4). The emblem has a shape of a shield, in the middle of which is a representation of Mount Triglav, three golden stars of Celje, and two undulating blue lines symbolizing the Adriatic Sea and Slovenia's rivers. The golden stars of Celje are drawn from the allegedly Slovenian medieval Counts of Celje. These counts are not only disputable on the grounds of their supposed "Slovenian ethnicity", but they also do not represent a wider all-embracing Slovenian identification due to their localized resonance. Nevertheless, the three stars were obviously selected because the new state felt the need to anchor its identity in a way that enables a relation to an allegedly "Slovenian" medieval nobility. When compared to the communist republic emblem (cf. Figure 3), the continuation of the symbolic value of Triglav, the Adriatic, and rivers, however, points to the durability of the Slovenian ethnoscape.

Figure 4: The flag of the Republic of Slovenia since 1991
Source: Wikipedia 2017d

The change in the state anthem was clearly evident; Yugoslavia's hymn to the Slavs was replaced by a nineteenth-century poem written by the Slovenian "national poet" France Prešeren. Prešeren's *Zdravljica* (A Toast) as a symbol of Slovenian national identity replaced the old state hymn *Hej Slovani* (Hey Slavs), which praised the Slavic spirit of brotherhood and unity. Prešeren wrote his poem in the nineteenth century, when what is now Slovenia was part of the Austrian empire. In 1844 the Austrian authorities banned it due to its call for the unification of the Slovenians, which contradicted the principles of the monarchy. Prešeren can be seen as a "myth-making" intellectual, who combined a "romantic search for meaning" with promotion of the national idea (Hutchinson 1994: 44–45). He is seen as the "father" of the nation because he chose to write in Slovenian rather than German and because he put the Slovenian language and culture on a pedestal, thus making his literary opus a notable part of Slovenian national identity.

My analysis of numerous newspaper articles and letters to the editor that have appeared since Slovenia's independence shows that articles discussing Slovenian symbols became more prominent especially after the 2001 parliamentary proposal to change the state symbols. Nonetheless, the discussion has been present since the early 1990s, and the topic of Slovenian symbols has also been discussed sporadically on television and radio. On the one hand, several experts claim that certain irregularities exist in the coat of arms.[20]

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20. In 2009, another public competition was held by the Slovenian heraldry web portal and a local TV station. The selected emblem depicted the Carantanian panther (see Slovenska heraldika 2009).

On the other hand, a portion of citizens are not happy with the "Slavic" selection of the flag's colours. Some proponents of change would prefer it if the flag were to draw from a more "ancient" Slovenian history; for example, from the times of the Habsburg lands or even from ancient Carantania (see Figure 5). Phrases such as "the facts that scream to the sky about Slovenian statehood and are written in stone" directly link Slovenia to Carantania through "ancient national symbols" (Lenarčič 2001).

Figure 5: One of many suggestions for a new flag, depicting the black panther of Carantania
Source: author's personal archive

The greatest bone of public contention seems to have been the issue of Slovenia having too low a profile as a distinct state. There have been problems with its name, which many find difficult to differentiate from Slovakia or Slavonia. Further, the flag appears to be very similar to several other Slavic countries' flags; for example, Slovakia or Russia. A prominent Slovenian ethnologist and art historian, however, asserts that the white-blue--red tricolour (without the coat of arms; see Figure 1) is a real and authentic Slovenian symbol and supports his argument with explanations of different origins for the similar Russian, Slovak, Croatian, and Serbian flags (Ovsec 1993). He does not support claims for the "historical" symbols (see Figure 5) to replace the current flag. His most important argument is that the Slovenian tricolour is actually older, and thus has a more valid claim for originality, than the Russian or Slovak flags.

Figure 6: Officially awarded selection for a new state flag, 2003
Source: Mladina 2003

Nevertheless, an initiative to change the state symbols was put forward in the Slovenian parliament in the spring of 2001, and there was a public announcement welcoming suggestions for a new flag in June 2003. The supporters of the change believed that the politicians were in too much of a hurry after independence and hastily accepted "politically constructed" state symbols (Bavčer 2001). In 2003 the evaluation committee published the results of a public anonymous competition for the design of possible elements for the

new state symbols. The National Assembly commissioned the call, and the selection was based on the decision of the Constitutional Commission, which sought the best mutually compatible design elements for state identity (Kajzer 2013). The winner was announced and given a substantial financial award, but the new flag was never adopted (see Figure 6). Two years earlier, a similar campaign was launched by the magazine *Mladina*, which announced a similar selection for a new flag in 2002 (see Figure 7). In the last decade, however, there has been no more serious discussion about changing the state symbols.[21] This follows from opposition to change, partly due to the high costs of the 2003 public competition. However, the opposition was predominantly because of a significant lack of agreement among political representatives and especially because the experts could not agree whether the flag should have a "designer" basis (e.g., like Canada and South Africa) or a "historical" basis (Kajzer 2013).

Figure 7: Selected suggestion for a new state flag by the magazine Mladina, 2002
Source: Mladina 2002

National symbols need to be carefully selected in order to be as all-embracing and homogenizing as possible if they are to bring together a collectivity as diverse as a nation. The new Slovenian authorities were in a rush when the independent state required the swift adoption of new public symbols in 1991. In subsequent years, state officials therefore continued to change some of the state's most prominent public representations. In fact, the process – although much more consolidated after twenty-six years of statehood – is not complete. Moreover, even though the public has gradually internalized and accepted the existing state symbols after twenty-six years, most prominently in the form of Billig's waved flags at various sporting events, state-building processes can never be seen as fully complete. Ongoing discussions surrounding the proposals for changing the state flag of Australia or a recent referendum on a new flag in New Zealand testify to this.

6 Conclusion: Ongoing renegotiation of national symbols

This article explored how Slovenian collective memory and national identity have been renegotiated by the post-communist political elites through the adoption of new state symbols in the light of changes connected to the collapse of communist ideology,

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21. Nonetheless, digital platforms allow for continuation of the discussion, and a special Facebook public group devoted to the issue of a new Slovenian flag has over 10,000 likes and followers. See https://www.facebook.com/Nova-slovenska-zastava-276989185784543/.

the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the establishment of an independent Slovenian state. It discussed the post-1991 reorganization of Slovenian national symbols, arguing that, by analysing suggestions to adopt a new state flag and national anthem, the official national identity re-conceptualization shows how Slovenian national memory became the dominant "state" memory. Although the process of the post-1991 reorganization of Slovenian state symbols was far from smooth, the firm embeddedness of Slovenian national identity prior to independence meant that the Slovenian authorities did not need to resort to a drastic reinvention of national memory.

The role of invention and construction in every nation is both clearly evident and, indeed, necessary. Nevertheless, states would face a much harder task in inculcating national identities were they not to draw on some sort of pre-existing regional, cultural, religious, or other affiliations. Moreover, traditions are not "simply inherited, they have to be reproduced" (Calhoun 1997: 50). This is why state authorities invest in educational systems, public symbols, and the organized perpetuation of nationhood, and this is why nationalism is something more than just a political principle that supposedly ceases to exist once nation-states are created. With changes in history textbooks, renaming of public spaces, new stamps, and a shift in political rituals, the new Slovenian political elites also invested in altering the state symbols. This process cannot be understood as finished; in fact, a certain level of public dissatisfaction is still present, and so further investigations of this topic would be welcome. Studies of the flag in analyses of nationalism, especially comparative studies, have also been rare, and this gap should be filled.

This article argued that national memory as a form of collective memory is an essential element of every national identity. In post-1991 Slovenia, national memory is reproduced through the state's public symbols and spaces; it permeates its official teaching of history and consequently demarcates a distinct Slovenian national identity. I argued that memory is continuously reshaped because ultimately no single truth exists and multiple historical representations are simultaneously present at different levels of public visibility. The dominant memory is shaped by a few that hold political power and is then reproduced by social actors through national symbols devised to signal national unity and cohesion. Whereas in Yugoslavia Slovenian national memory was not a state memory, with independence it became the dominant state memory. In 1991, Slovenian national identity was redefined and a new political value system was established. Once Slovenian national memory was redefined as the new state's dominant memory, the danger of conflating the nation and the state occurred. The state thus tends to "forget" that not all of its citizens share Slovenian ethno-national affiliation, and so its state-building practices are often nationalizing; that is, since 1991 Slovenia has promoted the centrality of the Slovenian nation in ethno-cultural terms.

Flags are evidently multi-vocal and have excluding and boundary-marking qualities, which allows them to encompass various cultural meanings (Eriksen 2007). At the same time, different flags may and do coexist. The example of contemporary Slovenia shows how the idea of Carantania as the ancient homeland has been transformed to an almost alternative national Slovenian symbol for certain political actors and social groups (i.e., the Carantanian black panther). Shifting symbolism associated with what defines "Slo-

venianness" was highlighted; that is, the recent appropriations of certain ancient signs as *national* symbols, especially by nationalist right-wing politicians and racist groups. Once radical right groups as well as certain political actors have seized certain ancient symbols as "Slovenian", proclaiming their endeavours as patriotic in order to mask their racism, it becomes a task of every student of nationalism to be alert to the construction of difference and consequent inequality. The wider European context shows that it is not only obscure nationalist groups but also prominent politicians that adopt the apparently patriotic calls for purity of the nation in order to oppose migrant integration. Situated within the current global context of the "refugee crisis" that has reopened discussions about European identity, migrant integration, and questions of belonging, it is thus imperative to analyse and recognize nationalizing states beyond post-communist central and eastern Europe alone. Exclusionary and nationalist state practices and policies are quite universal.

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Uroš Čvoro

»HALFWAY TRADITION«: TRANSITION, NATION, SEX, AND DEATH IN THE WORK OF MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ AND MLADEN MILJANOVIĆ

ABSTRACT

This article examines how the artists Marina Abramović and Mladen Miljanović apprehend the terms Balkan and Europe as frameworks for understanding the post-communist transition in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Abramović's representations of pagan sex rituals in Balkan Erotic Epic (2005) and tombstone engravings in Miljanović's The Garden of Earthly Delights (2013) capture what I describe as "halfway traditions": cultural practices that simultaneously problematize the normative teleology of the Balkans moving away from primitivism and toward the civilization of Europe, and act as parodies of the nationalist reinvention of tradition. By highlighting "halfway tradition" as the symbol of the post-communist transitional state and a disruptive by-product of transition, Abramović and Miljanović critique ethnonationalist politics of death and sex, and articulate an "in--between" temporality that disrupts the teleology of transition.

KEYWORDS: Abramović, Miljanović, art, tradition, transition, nationalism

»Polovična tradicija«: Tranzicija, narod, spol in smrt v delu Marine Abramović in Mladena Miljanovića

IZVLEČEK

Članek raziskuje, kako umetnika Marina Abramović in Mladen Miljanović dojemata in uporabljata termina Balkan in Evropa kot okvira za razumevanje postkomunistične tranzicije v državah nekdanje Jugoslavije. Reprezentacije poganskih spolnih obredov Marine Abramović v delu v Balkanska erotična epika (2005) in nagrobne gravure v Miljanovićevem Vrtu zemeljskih radosti (2013) zajemajo tisto, kar sem opisal kot »polovične tradicije«: kulturne prakse, ki problematizirajo normativno teleologijo Balkana. »Polovične tradicije« se od primitivizma premikajo proti civilizaciji Evrope in hkrati delujejo kot parodija nacionalistične ponovne iznajdbe tradicije. S poudarkom na »polovičnih tradicijah« kot

simbolu postkomunistične tranzicijske države in motečemu stranskemu produktu tranzicije Abramovićeva in Miljanović kritizirata etnonacionalistične politike smrti in spolnosti ter izražata neko »vmesno« časovnost, ki moti teleologijo tranzicije.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Abramović, Miljanović, umetnost, tradicija, tranzicija, nacionalizem

1 Introduction

One way of telling the story of post-communist transition in the former Yugoslavia would be to trace the relation between the terms used to describe its geo-political space since 1989 – Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia, southeastern Europe, the western Balkans – and the terms used to describe the art from the region in the same period: late communist, post-communist, post-Yugoslav, Balkan art, and east art. This story would position artistic practices from the former Yugoslavia in relation to predominant ideological models of late bureaucratic communism (1980s), nationalism (1990s), and global neoliberalism (after 2000; Ramet 2006), and highlight how artists attempted to establish an opposition to the ambiguous ideological mix of post-communism, nationalism, and pseudo-neoliberal-democracy in the 1990s, only to be incorporated into the global art market under the moniker of "Balkan art" as a non-conflictual way to play out the cultural differences between the local and the global (Dedić 2009; Erjavec 2014). A key moment in this narrative would be the series of "Balkan themed" exhibitions that opened in the early 2000s – including *In Search of Balkania* (2002), *Blood and Honey: The Future's in the Balkans* (2003), and *In the Gorges of the Balkans: A Report* (2003) – which articulated transition as an encounter between "Europe" and the "Balkans". In their totalizing adoption of the moniker *Balkan* (Ćirić 2005), these high-profile international exhibitions established a temporal relation between the region and Europe, and continue to narrate the terms of their encounter.[1]

This article examines how the artists Marina Abramović and Mladen Miljanović engage the continuing presence of the terms *Balkan* and *Europe* as the predominant frameworks for understanding art in post-communist transition in the former Yugoslavia. Abramović's representations of pagan sex rituals in *Balkan Erotic Epic* (2005) and tombstone engravings in Miljanović's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2013) capture what I describe as "halfway traditions" (Serbo-Croatian: *polutanske tradicije*): cultural practices that simultaneously problematize the normative teleology of the Balkans moving away from primitivism and toward the civilization of Europe, and act as parodies of the nationalist reinvention of tradition. Abramović and Miljanović use sex and death as symbols of tradition to position their practice between local informants and "expert" global artist ethnographers, questioning how politics of identity are inscribed into the contemporary art system. Since 1989, the international art circuit has incorporated art as cultural difference – designated with the prefix "artist from" – within the neoliberal model of pluralism. In this context, the role of the artists is to represent a "true Balkan

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1. In November 2016, Istanbul's Pera Museum opened the exhibition *Cold Front From the Balkans*, which articulates the Balkan region as a natural phenomenon (wind) blowing into Europe.

experience" and facilitate exchange between the periphery and the centre. Halfway traditions problematize this exchange by making visible the ideological, physical, and symbolic production of cultural difference in a local context as well as the reinvention of traditions for global art audiences.

2   Between the EU and the Balkans as symbolic spaces

Halfway tradition is the short circuit in the teleology of transition: the return of an ambivalent historical difference ("our" tradition, but not our tradition). Halfway traditions create images of temporal clashes that uncover the ideology of transition and create the possibility for a different experience of history. Whereas the former constitutes a critique of the normalization of neoliberal and nationalist ideologies in transition, the latter concerns galvanizing the lived experience of history.

The key to my understanding of halfway tradition as a critical agent emerges from Walter Benjamin's formulation of the relation between images and historical time in the "dialectical image". Elsewhere I discussed the potential of the dialectical image to serve as a critical framework for understanding the present (Čvoro 2008), and here I want to emphasize the way it produces temporal clashes and uncovers difference within history.

Benjamin's historical time operates through the visual logic of montage. His central temporal image – the dialectical image – emerges out of a suspension between two temporalities: one that sees history as the teleology of empty homogenous time, and another that is the revolutionary freezing of history. Normative accounts of transition have framed political, social, and cultural reality in teleological terms: as "moving away from" communism and "toward" democracy; as "immature political subjects "stuck in history". In contrast, Benjamin's approach to understanding history juxtaposes fragments of historical experience into a constellation that reveals the underlying tensions. This constellation was intended to define the present both as the result of historical tensions *and* as the time in which these tensions can be understood. For Benjamin, historical images could be read in relation to the present, and the revolutionary potential of this moment was in understanding and seeing the historical condition.

The picture of history that emerges in these montages is realized in Benjamin's understanding of the revolutionary power of the image. Benjamin's historical images were the leftovers of capitalism, which became lodged in the collective consciousness as "dream images". Dream images turned history into a commodity used for marketing capitalism. However, dream images also had the ability to produce a different picture of history by suggesting that the future is made of traces of past struggles in the present.

Benjamin's articulation of objects as dream images suggests the potential of difference in the fabric of history to dislocate the working of capitalism by working within its structure. Dream images operate within a dual relationship to capitalism, where objects as commodities are a constituent part of capitalism, yet set apart from the narrative of its progress. According to this logic, a commodity becomes a site of capitalism, where historical difference is allowed to enter into the universal history of capital, while remaining deeply imbricated in its structure. Just as historical objects turned into commodities can never

escape the logic of capitalism – because they are a constituent part of it – so capitalism cannot escape politics of historical difference. The difference in history emerges through repetition of temporalities through objects that carried their traces.

When Benjamin conceptualizes difference within history, he envisages the practice through which the components that make up historical narratives are reordered. The point of this practice is less to reveal the existence of difference within history *per se* than to put its traces together in ways that generate different actualizations of history.

For the purposes of this argument, I take terms such as *Balkan*, *Europe*, *tradition*, and *nation* not as reflective of reality, but as symbolic operators that express the temporality of transition. Since its announcement in 1999 as one of the explicit aims for the former Yugoslavia's post--communist and post-conflict European integration process (Cohen and Lampe 2011: 81), transition has created a sense of historical inevitability about the accession from centralized economies, conflict, and nationalism toward deregulated markets, stability, and trans-national democracy, and positioned the entire region through the prism of belated modernization.

In her analysis of political discourses concerning the accession of the former Yugoslav countries to the EU, Tanja Petrović shows how the narrative of EU integration in the Balkans is presented as the only way for former Yugoslav societies to unburden themselves from historical baggage, nationalism, and other twentieth-century anchors and join the future of the international community (Petrović 2012: 10). However, rather than providing an alternative, transition and EU integration have produced new forms of nationalism: from the reconfiguration of historical timelines to provide historical continuity between the present and "authentic" national history through reburials of dead bodies (Verdery 1999), through exhibiting cultural idiosyncrasies on the international art circuit, to "traditionalization" of societies (such as post-1990 Serbia), through giving traditional names to children and the rediscovery of traditional food, music, arts, and crafts (Malešević 2005: 224).

Halfway tradition is the unwanted consequence of the production of the national past. Sociologist Ildiko Erdei articulates the formation of the halfway position in her account of subjectivities in post-communism, arguing that the transition from communism to capitalism is underpinned by an assumption that it will also involve a change from communist subjects to capitalist subjects. However, once they were decoupled from the communist way of life – such as dependence on the state for social support, belief in a better tomorrow, a cynical distance toward the system, and opposition to western values – the subjects of post-communism never successfully transitioned into becoming neo-liberal subjects and remained caught in between, seemingly taking the "worst" parts from both systems: corruption from old communist networks and cynical opportunism and exploitation from neo-liberalism (Erdei 2011: 276).

This halfway position operating between the "worst" of old and new appears in the work of Abramović and Miljanović as a parody of the ethnonationalist cult of tradition.[2] Abramović provides an alternative narrative of "returning to tradition" by showing forms of sexuality repressed by the Christianization of the region, and Miljanović captures the

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2. As I argued elsewhere, turbo-folk music also functions as a symbol of transitional degeneration away from the "ideal" of folklore and tradition (Čvoro 2014).

self-representation of desire in commemorative practices that disturb notions of propriety about the afterlife. In different ways, Abramović and Miljanović approach sex and death as parts of the reproductive cycle of the nation at the moment of emergence of national identity and tradition as a local and global brand. However, rather than articulating this brand within an ethnically based platform, they juxtapose the production of tradition against earlier historical events.[3] Through historical montage, Abramović and Miljanović reassemble the context for understanding the emergence of tradition in post-communism not as a moment of national awakening, but as an empty space filled with ideological (national) content by different groups: nationalists, neoliberals, and curators. Halfway tradition exposes the ideological struggle over this content and the consequences for the understanding of representing collective agency and historical responsibility.

3 *Balkan Erotic Epic*

Even though she created works earlier in her career about Yugoslav history and ideology (e.g., *Rhythm 5* and *Tomas Lips*), Marina Abramović's "Balkan turn" (1997–2005) coincided with the post-1990 war years, when international attention turned to the region. Abramović produced two major works, *Balkan Baroque* (1997) for the Venice Biennale that year, and *Balkan Erotic Epic* (2005) after an invitation to contribute to a collection of short films titled *Destricted*, based around the theme of pornography. Whereas *Balkan Baroque* used confrontation to deal with the war – involving a performance of the artist scrubbing animal bones – *Balkan Erotic Epic* turned to a more light-hearted approach by producing a multi-channel projection of short videos about the use of sex in Balkan pagan rituals. This move led some authors to argue that Abramović "marketized Balkan ambiguity" (Avgita 2012: 8) as a cultural product based in a stereotypical view of the Balkans as a powder keg of sex, violence, and eccentricities. Abramović seemingly fused this perception of the Balkans with her own personal experience, thus constructing a highly problematic apolitical and ahistorical picture of the region. It can be argued that Abramović's universalization of the Balkan experience monopolized stereotypes of the region at an opportune moment when the Balkans came to the foreground of international interest. However, in many ways, this claim against the most easily identifiable – and by far internationally most established – "Balkan artist" overlooks the complexities and nuances in her engagement with tradition. Although *Balkan Baroque* presented a more overt critical response to nationalism within the context of the Venice Biennale,[4] I argue

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3. Their use of Christian and Serbian iconography could be read as a critique of the rise of Serb nationalism in different contexts: Abramović in Serbia and Miljanović in Republika Srpska.

4. It is important to note that this line of argumentation overlaps with nationalist objections to Abramović's representations of the Balkans. Abramović's high international profile and living outside the Balkans (she has not lived there since 1976) were used as justification by the Yugoslav Minister of Culture at the time for her removal as the artist representing Yugoslavia in the 1997 Venice Biennale. In reality, the minister disapproved of Abramović's provocative piece *Balkan Baroque*, and she was replaced by the traditionalist landscape painter Vojo Stanić. In the end, the curator of the Venice Biennale, Germano Celant, invited Abramović to exhibit at the Italian Pavilion. A detailed account of the circumstances is available in Pejić (2002).

that *Balkan Erotic Epic* was aimed at the invention and production of tradition in "Balkan art" at the moment when this kind of work came into the global spotlight. Abramović created stereotypical narratives about Balkan epic patriarchal traditionalism and repressed pagan sexuality to problematize the geopolitics of international art that determine the Balkans as exotic cultural difference.

Balkan Erotic Epic consists of a series of short videos featuring Abramović as "the Professor": a parody of an impartial narrator-observer of Balkan otherness, informing viewers about the role of sexuality in Balkan pagan rituals, such as the practice of the husband making the sign of the cross on his wife's chest with his phallus to ensure easier child delivery. The Professor introduces footage featuring "re-enactments" of pagan fertility rituals in which bodies were used to regulate weather: Abramović dressed in folk costume massaging her breasts; a video of a group of women massaging their breasts in the field to a soundtrack of a woman singing ancient songs; a man standing in the field masturbating in the rain; a group of men lying naked face down in a field, thrusting into the soil; and women dressed in traditional folk costumes running around a field in the rain lifting their skirts and exposing their vaginas to the sky to stop the rain. In the last scene, the group of women showing their genitals to the heavens was believed to have the ability to frighten higher powers and make the rain stop. This emphasis on the mythical power of sexuality to ensure romance, fertility, healing, and agricultural fecundity is reinforced in the work through a series of short animated drawings that illustrate rituals designed to control the world through sex: one features a woman inserting a small fish into her vagina, keeping it there overnight, and then grinding it into powder and mixing into her lover's coffee to ensure his everlasting devotion to her; and another a woman touching her vagina and then touching her child's face to ward off the evil eye.

In an immediate sense, *Balkan Erotic Epic* features much that can be described as sensationalist exoticization of "Balkan otherness" by portraying its inhabitants as sex-obsessed and superstitious primitives studied by a famous artist-ethnographer. However, Abramović self-consciously undermines her authority over the narrative by switching between the positon of an impartial expert and local informant that is actively participating in the production of traditions she is documenting. Furthermore, the formal composition of the work and the chosen examples of custom position the production of tradition within a specific set of historical circumstances.

The high production values and aestheticization of the work self-consciously put the subject matter through the filter of Hollywood stylization, removing it from any semblance of a genuine ethnographic record, and preventing any attempt to interpret it through a realist or documentary convention. Abramović is upfront about her research for the project and not finding any illustrations of these rituals during her archival research, and taking artistic license in visualizing (i.e., staging) them. However, if there is any ethnographic accuracy in these representations, this is because they are intentionally created against searching for any supposed authenticity. This is reinforced by the use of costumes in the work. Whereas Abramović set out to recreate pagan (pre-Christian) rituals, the garments worn by the performers are nineteenth-century Serbian folk costumes. Abramović's interest in pagan rituals and their focus on genitals is at odds with contemporary sensibilities about

tradition: symbols of sex and sexuality were steadily eradicated with the Christianization of the Balkans from the ninth century onward. In this respect, Abramović's work is a representation of the Balkans that originates in tradition and folklore, but is not located in any specific time, location, or events (Madoff 2006: 21).

However, it is precisely this temporal and historical malleability of tradition in *Balkan Erotic Epic* that connects it to the re-invention of foundational national myths in post-communism. The use of sex – and in particular heterosexual male sex – as symbolic of tradition in the work references the heteronormative phallocentrism at the core of post-communist traditionalism. As Katherine Verdery argues, a central part of post-communist nationalist gender politics is an attempt to reshape the nation against the debilitating "mothering" of communism, and to restore men to their "natural" place of symbolic authority (Verdery 1996: 80).

This is evident in the central scene of *Balkan Erotic Epic* featuring men in Serbian folk costumes standing motionless on a stage covered with a red embroidered cloth with folk patterns, with their erect penises protruding out of their trousers. The soundtrack to this scene features Olivera Katarina, a Yugoslav film icon, singing a song titled "My People Sleep a Deep and Lifeless Sleep" in Russian. The title and lyrics of the song are derived from Montenegrin Petar Petrović Njegoš's epic verse *The Mountain Wreath* (1847). The use of Njegoš' work is crucial. On the one hand, it gives the work its epic element. The Njegoš epic is widely known and studied in schools throughout the region. On the other hand, it connects the work to political history and nationalism – the poem uses the conflict between the Serbs and the Ottoman Empire as cipher to reflect on religious and national identity. Abramović talks about this scene as a reflection of phallocentric masculinity and national pride: "I was overwhelmed by this image because you're touching national pride, you're touching this idea of muscular energy, touching the idea of sexual energy as a cause of war, as a cause of disasters, as a cause also of love" (Carlstrom and Abramović 2006: 66). However, she also adds: "The one thing I was very surprised at, that at least I was not expecting: the image was not erotic at all . . . usually when you have male genital organs, there's always something happening: either they're making love, or they are making strip-tease or some kind of action. Here just by making them static and absolutely not moving them, you completely go somewhere else in this image. It became somehow an image of new Balkan heroes" (Carlstrom and Abramović 2006: 67).

This suggestion by Abramović that she turns the men into phallic monuments and into "new heroes" is crucial in addressing what tradition is represented in this segment. The answer speaks to the gendered terms of the production of tradition in post-communism.

The scene functions as a symbolization of the phallocentrism of nationalism in the cult of tradition. In this sense, this scene can be interpreted as an act of usurping patriarchal laws. As much as Abramović's representations have a folk tradition as their starting point, they renounce submitting to that tradition. Her works are provocative and playful interpretations of tradition through sexual functionality articulated in temporal terms, yet located outside of history. As the scene progresses, the work becomes a comical test of maintaining the erection, of holding still: a form of temporal-phallic competition between the men. In

this sense, Abramović captures the phallocentric bonding and heteronormative binaries that underpin the production of nation and tradition. The scene suggests a historical and temporal lineage reproduced through sexual excitement without recourse to women: the singing voice of Katarina operates more as a mournful spectral presence than object of desire. The continuity of the nation is ensured through male production of culture and heroic deeds (maintaining erections).

This scene captures how *Balkan Erotic Epic* articulates halfway tradition in two main ways: as a visualization of obscenities as a social glue, and as a montage of the monstrosity of post-communist tradition.

As a visualization of the obscenities, this scene – as indeed the entire work – is a reversal of the common-sense perception of tradition: archaic social customs and exchanges are politely performed in public, whereas the sexual (obscene) symbolic nexus that underpins them only emerges in private. *Balkan Erotic Epic* reverses this relationship by staging the sexual (obscene) structure of everyday interactions, and structuring the performance of tradition around it. However, more than simply reversing the symbolic structure of tradition, in manifesting the sexual core around which tradition is structured, it also reminds one of the important role of dirty jokes (i.e., obscene humour) as a social glue. As Slavoj *Žižek* notes, exchanges of obscene jokes in the former Yugoslavia established a "symbolic pact" between different ethnic groups (*Žižek* 2002: 203). Sharing embarrassing obscene idiosyncrasies establishes a sense of solidarity. In this sense, the obscene solidarity in the work is primarily directed at the other "primitives" in the Balkans at the expense of the third party: the global art audience, which is left with the spectacle of sex-crazed exotica. This gesture reveals the underlying power relations of a "Balkan artist" performing halfway tradition on a global stage: it is idiosyncratic and confronting for entirely different geo--political reasons

This question of halfway tradition functioning as a shared resistance to global geo-politics also relates to the way it captures the context for the production of tradition in post-communism. This context is the temporality of the post-communist transitional state, described by Miško *Šuvaković* as a hybrid "monster" (2012: 206), made up of clashing temporalities. In this sense *Balkan Erotic Epic* shows three versions of tradition: as a realization of the tribal-blood-relations into a nineteenth-century romanticist nation-state (the power of phallus returning), as a post-communist accumulation of cultural capital through privatization of the social sphere (privatization of communal sexual practices), and as a neo-liberal branding attempting to fit cultural difference into the contemporary networks of capital (institutionalization and circulation of cultural difference). These versions of tradition move at different speeds and produce different experiences of time: fantasies about social and class structures of nineteenth-century Europe national-bourgeoisie collectivism come up against aspirations of the twenty-first century diffused structures of global neo--liberal capital. Abramović does not seek to resolve the different temporalities, but rather to mobilize historical symbols in order to question the cult of a "purer" past returning. The work shows traces of difference in history to show forms of community formation beyond the nationalist nexus.

4 *The Garden of Earthly Delights*

In contrast to Abramović's performances, which are loosely connected to historical events and geographical spaces, Mladen Miljanović takes historical, cultural, and geographical specificity as his departure point, which is then abstracted into a universal symbol of the historical condition in the region. Miljanović's work *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2013; see Figure 1), created for the Bosnia and Herzegovina national pavilion in the 2013 Venice Biennale, carried a heavy symbolic burden because it was the first work in a decade to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina at the international event.[5] This was compounded by the ever-present tension within Bosnia and Herzegovina between the Muslim-majority Federation with its capital Sarajevo and the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska with its capital Banja Luka. The fact that Miljanović is based in Banja Luka presented a potentially volatile scenario, one that he engaged directly through both the title and theme of the work. The "delight" in the title counterintuitively played against expectations of a work from a country heavily burdened with nationalist tensions. It raised the question of what it means to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina through the prism of delight, two decades after the end of a bloody war and in the face of ongoing economic hardship, political corruption, and ethnic tensions. Miljanović's answer was to capture a tradition that departed from and parodied all national frames and emerged from the underside of post-communist transition.

Figure 1: *The Garden of Delights*, engraved drawings on granite, metal construction, (photo by Drago Vejnović, 2013, image courtesy of the artist).

The work features three granite panels with engraved tombstone drawings found in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The source material was drawn from Miljanović's work as professional tombstone engraver, and he employs the method used in commercial

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5. The representation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina pavilion at the Venice Biennale alternates between the Federation and Republika Srpska. Because the Federation-sponsored organization for the 2015 pavilion did not appear, 2017 will mark the second Biennale in which Bosnia and Herzegovina will be represented by Republika Srpska.

tombstone manufacture of transferring an enlarged photograph onto the stone and engraving. With this approach, Miljanović operates as an artist-ethnographer that collects and assembles an idiosyncratic local cultural form and exhibits it to an international audience. According to Miljanović, his intention was to capture the personal pleasures desires and hopes of everyday people manifested through posthumous representation (Miljanović 2012: 106).

The work's title, composition, and background are taken from Hieronymus Bosch's famous Renaissance triptych and are presented through a strikingly idiosyncratic cultural form. Instead of depicting sinners from a divine all-seeing perspective, Miljanović populates his work with images of deceased people accompanied by precious objects (cars, music instruments, and hunting gear), objects that represent their profession (shepherd, policeman, chef, pilot, and housewife), or passion in life (dancing, singing, and horse riding). The figures are also accompanied by universal symbols of love, passion, and mourning, such as birds and flowers. The figures are arranged across the three panels of Bosch's otherworldly landscape. Miljanović keeps Bosch's triptych composition of the left panel representing the Garden of Eden, the right depicting Hell, and the middle (main) panel representing humanity. The left panel shows Bosch's idyllic Garden of Eden with a fountain in the centre; however, instead of Adam and Eve Miljanović inserts an elderly couple. The right panel reproduces Bosch's scene of Hell with ominous lights and haunting building outlines, but instead of people he inserts tanks, fighter jets, and homemade brandy stills. The central and the largest panel shows figures, buildings, and vehicles carefully arranged in a *mise-en-scène*.

How can these images be understood as symbols of tradition? In an important sense, they represent a continuation of aspects of tradition (the Balkan culture of commemorating the deceased) and an important departure from it. They show evidence of what Serbian cultural anthropologist Ivan Čolović identifies as forms of populist social communication that retain aspects of tradition (and canon) but are distinctly different from that tradition (1985: 9). Čolović studied epitaphs that started appearing on graveyards in parts of Serbia in the early 1980s and argued that they played an important role in dealing with death. The epigraphs provided a form of social communication that enabled a public display of emotions; portraying and confirming belonging to a social group, place, and time, providing a meta-commentary on life and death. Miljanović's work continues this approach to tombstone art in treating death not as a solemn event, but instead commemorated through what can be described as romantic and futile attempts at symbolic immortality and control of death (Curseu and Pop-Curseu 2011: 374).

In this sense, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* represents a counterpoint to the use of dead bodies in post-communist societies for revisions of history that Katherine Verdery describes as "dead-body politics" (1999: 41). Here the intention is not to use death as a symbol of nationalist politics or revision of history, but the production of micronarratives that speak to a sense of transnational and trans-historical collectivity. The figures in Miljanović's work are not marked by national identity, but by their manifest enjoyment of everyday pleasures in life. As a medium of history, his tombstone images recall Walter Benjamin's claim that everyday objects always carry traces of a utopian dream (Čvoro 2008). The utopia in

question, rather than being represented by an imagined story about national origin or traditional forms of living, is the utopia of the everyday social sphere.[6] Miljanović's use of collage establishes a communal scene in which individual figures – each captured in the singularity of his or her death – look like a group of friends at a social event posing for a photograph.

However, it is precisely the connection of the work to the social sphere of Yugoslavia – everyday customs and traditions – that also connects the work to the emergence of nationalism. According to Miljanović, the work is about the appearance of kitsch in the 1980s social sphere of Yugoslavia as a sign of violence that followed shortly afterwards.[7] Miljanović sees the emergence of these engravings as a perversion of tradition and symbolic of the broader transformation of tradition into kitsch for the purposes of nationalism. This is most clearly evident in the central positioning of the Šešlije Motel on the central panel. The large building sits in the background as the focal point and pseudo-temple out of which all these figures emerge. This is the only built structure in the work, and its garish mixing of high-modernist minimalism with Chinese temple ornamentation is striking.

The specific historical context signalled by Miljanović's central positioning of the motel in Šešlije is the anarchy of uncontrolled and illegal construction in the early 1990s, which Srđan Jovanović-Weiss describes as "turbo-architecture" (2006: 39). Even though Jovanović-Weiss primarily associates turbo-architecture with the lawlessness and corruption enabled and tolerated by the Slobodan Milošević regime in Serbia – close to one million houses, hotels, banks, gas stations, and shopping centres were erected in Serbia during Milošević's rule between 1989 and 2000, most of which were built without permits – Miljanović's work suggests there is wider and earlier evidence of this phenomenon across the region. In this sense, the engravings are part of the same para-legal cultural milieu from the 1980s as turbo-folk and turbo-architecture: the hybridity and pastiche of symbolism and design in buildings like the Šešlije Motel are not the product of architecture as a discipline, or of architectural theory, but as an amalgam of systemic lawlessness and lack of regulation. Here, I highlight two aspects of turbo-architecture that relate to the production of halfway tradition.

First, both sides of the political spectrum in Serbia outright rejected the intersection of accidental postmodernism and criminality in turbo-architecture. The conservative nationalists perceived it as sign of degeneration of taste and tradition, whereas the cultural and intellectual elites identified turbo-architecture as symbol of everything that was wrong with Serbia under Milošević. Nonetheless, following Milošević's arrest and transfer to the ICTY in The Hague, turbo-architecture was paradoxically promoted as a new national style at the Venice Architecture Biennial in 2002, as proof of endurance against the 1999 Nato bombing of Serbia. In this sense, Miljanović's work marks a second appearance of this aesthetic in an international context – as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina's first

6. In this respect it is instructive to juxtapose the gathering of the deceased in *Garden* with the final scene from Miroslav Lekić's film *Nož* (The Knife, 1999). Based on the novel by Serb nationalist writer and politician Vuk Drašković, the film uses a scene of the deceased standing still in a landscape to symbolize the ongoing presence of nationalist tensions.

7. Interview with the artist, July 11th, 2016.

appearance in Venice in a decade – and in many ways its establishment as a regional aesthetic. The halfway tradition of Miljanović's transitional aesthetic in *Garden* functions as both diagnostic and symbolic of social reality.

Second, thinking about halfway tradition in *Garden* also helps position the tombstone illustrations as examples of what Boris Groys calls a post-communist paradise of symbols. Writing about the predicament of art that came in the wake of the historical collapse of communism, Groys argued that post-communist art: "appropriates from the enormous store of images, symbols, and texts that no longer belong to anyone, and that no longer circulate but merely lie quietly on the garbage heap of history as a shared legacy from the days of Communism. Post-Communist art has passed through its own end of history: not the free-market and capitalist end of history but the Socialist and Stalinist end of history" (2008: 168).

The conception of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* as a post-communism positioned between two ideological systems and populated by images that belong to both (and neither) is reinforced by the triptych structure of the work. In Miljanović's *Garden*, post--communist transition is the permanent condition between heaven and hell: the stability of communism corresponds to the idyllic left panel (with two pensioners representing that generation), whereas the perpetual violence of global capital is symbolized by tanks and alcohol production. The middle panel seems permanently captured between them, frozen in a time of transition. Yet it is precisely in this middle space that discarded historical symbols have the ability to produce a different picture of history. Groys's diagnosis of the historical condition of images recalls Walter Benjamin's conception of historical images as the leftovers of capitalism, which became lodged in the collective consciousness as "dream images" (Čvoro 2008). Dream images turned history into a commodity used for marketing capitalism. Yet, dream images also had the ability to produce a different picture of history by suggesting that the future is made of traces of past struggles in the present. Dream images operate within a dual relationship to capitalism, where objects as commodities are a constituent part of capitalism, yet set apart from the narrative of its progress. According to this logic, the commodity becomes a site of capitalism where historical difference is allowed to enter into the universal history of capital, while remaining deeply imbricated in its structure. Just as historical objects turned into commodities can never escape the logic of capitalism – because they are a constituent part of it – so capitalism cannot escape the politics of historical difference. The difference in history will emerge through repetition of temporalities through objects that carried their traces.

According to Miljanović, his reference to Bosch establishes a dialogue between arti-sts across five hundred years of history. The linking of two historical realities at one level establishes a sense of continuity. Bosch's sinners are transformed into ordinary people with their desires.[8] However, at another level, connecting two periods separated by five hundred years suggests a particular social structure of the past and the position of tra-dition within this structure. *Garden* positions the tombstones as an archaic cultural form

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8. This is also evident in the exhibit that accompanied the work: a series of text messages from members of the public stating what they would like to see in the work.

symbolizing the historically frozen Balkans. Miljanović treats the cultural specificity of his work not just as a way of making explicit the complex relationship between art history and constructions of identity, but also as a form of cultural remembering. *Garden* suggests repetition of history through ritual (commemorating death), but it also symbolizes a sense of history through tombstone engravings: deceased people and their commodities act as mediums for articulating a culturally specific feeling of time. In this sense, *Garden* operates as a parody not only of the role of the international art circuit in the production of the mythologized Balkan identities and conflicts, but also of nationalist populism reinforced through the invention of tradition (through the exploitation of invented tradition). The quirky and humorous mismatch of the tradition illustrates how the international positioning of the artist dictated by the politics of national identity is already inscribed into the contemporary art system. Miljanović intentionally selects a highly idiosyncratic and archaic form of communicating with the dead to parody the vocabulary of national identity performed through the dead body. In this sense, the humorous performance of tradition problematizes national association in both local and international contexts: it looks equally curious to both audiences for different reasons. The clash between the intentionally exaggerated cultural distinctions underlying *Garden* creates a rupture in the process of identifying the work in line with any one specific national identity. These cultural distinctions offer an alternative form of knowledge about commodification of the individual in post-communist transition – one that is based on strategic updating of tradition.

5 Conclusion

In an important sense, transition is an attempt to address the promise of the future while attempting to deal with the past. The works of Abramović and Miljanović may be regarded as engendering a language of "in-between" time, by making visible fragments of the past that problematize this act of leaving the past behind. By making visible the temporality (and historicity) of traditions, they capture some of the political reality that surrounds them and the ways in which this political reality manifests itself in social relations. In establishing a dialogue between historical realities separated by centuries, Abramović and Miljanović show repetition in the production of tradition: parallels between erasure of pagan sexuality by Christianity and the erasure of communist sexuality by nationalists, and Renaissance and post-communist views of the afterlife. They capture the role of tradition in a period of political change, the role of experts in the production of tradition, and the post-communist collective body through practices of commemoration and sex: the body politic at a moment when the destruction of the social sphere and economy in post-communist countries has rendered the sexed body as the only remaining commodity.

Abramović's pagan sex rituals and Miljanović's tombstones recall Maria Todorova's critique of how the Balkans are captured through a series of descriptions – semi-developed, semi-colonial, semi-civilized, semi-oriental – that describe the Balkans as an "in-between" incomplete self (Todorova 1997: 17). They take as their starting point this notion of in-betweenness and, in many ways, this position has been the fodder for the kinds of essentializing accounts that Todorova refers to. These accounts reduce the Balkans to a state of childlike

dependency and arrested development always in need of supervision and guidance. The teleology of transition in itself suggests a form of reductivism of a subject that is always striving toward something (teleology of transition) or destroying something precious (teleology of the nation). Miljanović and Abramović strategically repurpose ethnonationalist conservatism through their practices, showing how art can imagine alternative and critical counterpoints to normative historical teleologies.

The in-between position articulated by Miljanović and Abramović provides an important counterpoint to transition and nationalism as the two narratives that have dominated life in the region for over two decades. On the one hand, they parody and exaggerate the cult of tradition in ethnonationalist discourses after 1989. The rebirth of tradition is here either dislocated by providing alternative (and overlooked) traditions in Abramović's work or by insisting on halfway tradition as the only true depiction of the present state of the region. On the other hand, they equally parody the essentializing discourses around "Balkan art" that has appeared in the series of "Balkan-themed" exhibitions. These artists knowingly perform Balkan exotica and stage encounters between it and a global (and Eurocentric) notion of universalism. However, most importantly, they also parody the discourse about being caught permanently in-between. They exaggerate the Balkanist discourse in being "too Balkan" (performing the exotic identity) and "not Balkan enough" (engaging with discourses that exceed the local frame of reference) at the same time. In doing so, Miljanović and Abramović insist that halfway is a condition *not* of Balkan incompleteness, but rather a reflection of the world today.

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»CYRILLIC DOES NOT KILL«: SYMBOLS, IDENTITY, AND MEMORY IN CROATIAN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

ABSTRACT

This article addresses identity construction through social symbolic meanings conveyed in discussions about scripts, primarily Cyrillic, in Croatian public discourse. We focus on discussions in various Croatian online sources from 2013 to 2015 centred on the topic of "Cyrillic as a symbol" and serving as an umbrella for discursive negotiations of (a) identity and belonging, (b) collective memory of the recent past, and (c) minority rights. The symbolic meanings of Cyrillic have been developed and utilized by politicians, professionals, various organizations, and ordinary people in various contexts and with various aims: from delegitimizing political actors and propagating hostility and reconciliation, to creating a "useful" past and consolidating collective identity.

KEYWORDS: Cyrillic, Latin, symbol, memory, Croatia

»Cirilica ne ubija«: simboli, identiteta in spomin v hrvaškem javnem diskurzu

IZVLEČEK

Članek raziskuje konstrukcijo identitete skozi družbenosimbolne pomene razprav o cirilici, ki so se odvijale v hrvaškem javnem diskurzu. Osredotoča se na razprave, zapisane na različnih hrvaških internetnih portalih, ki so se osredotočale na temo »cirilice kot simbola«. V analizo so bila zajeta besedila, nastala med letoma 2013 in 2015, v katerih so se na simbolni ravni odvijale razprave o (a) identiteti in pripadnosti, (b) kolektivnem spominu nedavne preteklosti in (c) pravicah manjšin. Simbolni pomen cirilice so konstruirali in uporabljali politiki, profesionalci, različne organizacije, navadni ljudje v različnih kontekstih in z različnimi cilji: od delegitimiziranja političnih akterjev in propagiranja sovražnosti oziroma sprave do oblikovanja »uporabnih« preteklosti in utrjevanja kolektivne identitete.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: cirilica, latinica, simboli, spomin, Hrvaška

1 Introduction

This article addresses identity construction through social symbolic meanings conveyed in discussions about scripts,[1] primarily Cyrillic, in Croatian public discourse. Žagar (2012) indicated that, over the last several decades, Cyrillic has been strongly identified in Croatia with Serbian literacy and has been perceived as a Serbian national script, as it was in the times when Cyrillic was taught in Croatian schools. Žagar also noted that the awareness of a specific version of Cyrillic used in Croatian history has been low or non-existent. Although both Latin and Cyrillic have been in use in Croatia at different times (see, e.g., Žagar 2012; Gabelica 2014), in the 1990s Cyrillic became almost exclusively connected with Serbian language and nationalism.

Language and scripts play an important role in the construction of national belonging (see, e.g., Edwards 2009; Greenberg 2004). The Croatian case is specific because standard Croatian is based on the same dialect as standard Serbian. Moreover, both Serbian and Croatian[2] are part of the South Slavic dialect continuum.

The (symbolic) importance of Cyrillic is a recurrent topic in Croatian public discourse. It has been widely discussed by academics such as linguists, politicians, and laypeople alike. For example, at the beginning of 2016, the chancellor of the University of Zagreb, Damir Boras, proposed reintroducing Cyrillic in primary schools, which sparked extensive media discussions.[3] Similar discussions about the use of scripts have occasionally turned into heated debates, usually triggered by certain social actions. The absurd nature of these discussions has occasionally been the topic of satirical comments and fake news portals.[4] One such action that triggered disputes in 2013 was an attempt to display plaques in Cyrillic on public buildings in the Croatian town of Vukovar. That attempt was followed by intense protests in Vukovar and elsewhere in Croatia. The script-related discussions that followed have not only been a platform for achieving temporary political goals, but also a means for achieving long-term ones, such as identity consolidation through fostering collective memory.

This article uses a discourse-analytical framework to focus on script-related discussions in Croatian public discourse published online between February 2013 and April 2015. The material analysed (see Section 3) mainly relates to discussions about Cyrillic plaques in Vukovar. These discussions serve as an umbrella for discursive negotiations of (a) identity and belonging (Sebba 2006) because the use of Cyrillic is perceived as a provocation and threat to Croatian identity, (b) collective memory of the recent past, and (c) minority rights.

In analysing our multimodal material (texts and images), we concentrate on the content (topics and motifs) and discursive strategies used by discourse participants (Wodak et al.

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1. We use "scripts" and "alphabets" as synonyms for writing systems.
2. Standard Croatian also shares its dialect base with Bosnian and Montenegrin.
3. For example, HRT (19/01/2016). The format of the dates in the article is day/month/year.
4. See, for example, an article on the Croatian News-Bar portal entitled "Headquarters for Defence of Croatian Vukovar Mistakenly Breaks Baška Tablet" (News-Bar 2016), which connects the recent breaking of Cyrillic plaques to an imaginary event of accidentally breaking a well-known Glagolitic monument of early Croatian literacy.

2009: 30–42). While analysing content, we focus on narrations of the collective memory of recent history in times of crisis, argumentation lines, and symbolic constructions of language and script in relation to identity. Strategies used when discussing identity issues in public discourse include the instrumentalization of individual memory with the aim of forging and sustaining a specific version of collective memory, and the delegitimization of the Other by demonizing the Other's symbols. Furthermore, we analyse what scripts symbolize to whom in different contexts and how scripts as symbols fit into competing ways of discursively constructing collective memory.

Our material suggests that the disputes about scripts as symbols contribute to discursive construction of collective identities, be they national (Croatian) or transnational (EU), religious (Orthodox/Catholic), or moral (oriented towards minority rights and/or victims' rights).

Section 2 briefly discusses the importance of Vukovar for Croatian contemporary identity and explains the role of languages and scripts. Section 3 continues with theoretical remarks important for our analysis. Section 4 is devoted to the discussion of our findings. Finally, in Section 5 we draw some conclusions from the overall analysis.

2 Historical background: Vukovar, languages, scripts as symbols, and rights of national minorities

The tragic events that led to and followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia resulted in great human suffering for all warring parties. Many books have been written about the causes and effects of the wars of the 1990s (for an overview, see e.g., Vrkić-Tromp 2002). However, the historical background presented here is limited to some comments about the city of Vukovar because the discourse we analyse concerns the use of Cyrillic in Vukovar. Located in eastern Croatia near the Serbian border, Vukovar was almost totally destroyed between August and November 1991. During an eighty-seven–day siege, also known as the Battle of Vukovar, around two thousand self-organized fighters resisted attacks by a significantly larger force of Yugoslav Army troops before eventually capitulating. Thousands of people from both sides were killed.[5] Serbs remained in Vukovar under the self-proclaimed Republic of Serbian Krajina, and Croats were displaced to other areas in Croatia. In late 1995, an agreement was reached on the reintegration of the region into Croatia. The peaceful reintegration lasted for two years. A significant number of Croats returned only in 1999 (see Kardov 2007). Vukovar has become one of the ultimate symbols of Croatian victimhood and it occupies a central place in the foundation myth of the Croatian state (Banjeglav 2012: 15).

Warfare is still present in both individual memories (e.g., those of direct witnesses to the war) and in official rituals, such as yearly commemorations aimed at fostering collective memory (for further information on Vukovar's commemorations and memory-making

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5. Some authors have pointed towards the Western media's unequal treatment of atrocities committed by Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims, and the media's demonization of Serbs (e.g., Parenti 2002; Herman 2009).

around Vukovar, see, e.g., Pavlaković 2009; Banjeglav 2012). People living in Vukovar today face a difficult economic situation and are, in a way, still victims of the war.

Vukovar has a special place in official Croatian memory as a crucial "realm of memory" (Nora 1989) and as a site whose role is to remind people of selected events that are vital for national memory. As Kardov (2002) emphasized, Vukovar is "the final argument" with which one can silence all other arguments. According to Dežulović (2013), the town is a "monument to itself", reduced to a "place of special reverence", devoid of every form of life and serving as a depository of candles and wreaths. The town's symbolic function has been widely used by various social actors.

The city is split into two "parallel realities", socially separated between the two ethnic communities (see, e.g., Kosic and Tauber 2010 on polarization in schools, local radio stations, sports clubs, and cultural associations). Clark (2013) argued that Vukovar's numerous war memorials are obstructing reconciliation between the town's Croats and Serbs because they encourage selective memory through the erasure of Serb victims and contribute to the phenomenon of a "surplus of memory" that prevents society from moving forward. As noted by Baillie (2012), the highly selective and ethnically exclusive memorials provide little room for finding common ground. The symbolic meaning of the city for the two communities, Croats and Serbs, is different. This is reflected in the language used in relation to the events of the 1990s. Prior to 1998, the local Serb citizens celebrated 18 November as the town's "day of liberation". After 1998, with peaceful reintegration, the date was marked as "the day when the conflict ended" (Žanić 2007: 84 in Banjeglav 2012: 18; see also Ljubojević 2012).

Almost the only time that Vukovar attracts the attention of the wider population is during the annual commemorative "Memory Walk" to pay respects to its sacrifice (on Vukovar commemorations, see Banjeglav 2012: 14). On several occasions, this march has served as a venue for political conflicts. One of these occurred in November 2013, when Croatian war veterans – members of an organization known as the Headquarters for the Defence of Croatian Vukovar[6] – protested against the government's announcement that plaques in Cyrillic would be placed on public buildings along with the Latin ones. The application of bilingualism[7] in accordance with the law on minority rights – the Serbian minority now accounts for more than one-third of the population in Vukovar, triggering their right to use Serbian and Cyrillic in the public sphere – became a subject of intense agitation. Croatian war veterans argued that, due to wartime events, Vukovar has a special status and should

6. The organization was founded in January 2013 and led a campaign against the erection of parallel Latin and Cyrillic signs in Vukovar. That campaign was part of broader anti-government protests. The organization, led by Tomislav Josić, was also engaged in planning a referendum in 2013 that would have tightened restrictions on the use of Cyrillic signs in areas of Croatia populated by the Serbian minority, but they lost their bid to hold the referendum (Reuters 2014). See also Balkan Insight (2014).

7. The status of Croatian and Serbian as separate languages is a disputed topic that we cannot discuss here (but see, e.g., Greenberg 2004; Kordić 2010). If Croatian and Serbian are conceived of as a single language, one cannot speak of "implementing bilingualism" if something written in Latin is simply transliterated into Cyrillic and vice versa.

have been excluded from application of the law. A number of Cyrillic plaques were torn down and smashed with hammers in Vukovar and elsewhere (this incident motivated the use of the label čekićari 'hammerers' in public discussions).[8] A photograph that has been widely distributed on the internet (Večernji list 2014; the second photo in the gallery) shows one man smashing a plaque while several other men hold him up to help him.

Cyrillic and Latin were in use in both Croatia and Serbia at different times. In communist Yugoslavia, official policies encouraged the teaching of both scripts in schools.[9] However, the situation varied in different republics: Owen-Jackson (2015: 85) states that the official policies were not strictly adhered to in all republics: the script that dominated in Croatian schools was Latin. The official status of scripts changed in the 1990s. Nowadays, the constitution of Croatia states that the Croatian language and Latin script are to be used in Croatia. The Serbian constitution, on the other hand, states that Serbian and Cyrillic script are in official use in Serbia.[10]

The Croatian Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities mandates use of language and script, including bilingual signs,[11] in areas with more than one-third of the population belonging to an ethnic minority.[12] However, in August 2015, a narrow majority in the city council of Vukovar passed a new statute that abolished the official use of Cyrillic. Nonetheless, the statute does not rule out the possibility of bilingualism. Each year it can be discussed whether the conditions for bilingualism in the town have been fulfilled or not.[13]

The symbolic function of languages and scripts is well known to laypersons, linguists, and political elites. Whereas connections between language in general and identity have been studied in numerous works (e.g., Edwards 2009; Greenberg 2004), connections between choices of writing systems (scripts) and identity have been neglected until recently (Jaffe et al. 2012; Sebba 2006). Many historical examples clearly illustrate the role of scripts in nation-building strategies: changes in the political course of a country may be followed by the abolition of an old script and introduction of a new one. For example, Stalin's establishment of the border between Romania and the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was followed by the Moldovans' creation of a new nation that spoke their own language. Moldovan was originally written in Cyrillic to further differentiate it from Romanian, which was written in Latin (Sebba 2006: 81). Significantly, Moldovans switched from Cyrillic to Latin after their country gained independence in 1989. How ideology

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8. See, e.g., Pollitika (2013).
9. See conclusion 3 from the Novi Sad Agreement: "both scripts, Latin and Cyrillic, have equal status; therefore it should be ensured that both Serbs and Croats learn both scripts equally well, which can be done primarily through schools" (authors' translation); see Hrvatski
10. See Ustav Republike Srbije (2006) and Ustav Republike Hrvatske (2010). However, a recent Serbian normative guide states that both Latin and Cyrillic are in use, but gives priority to Cyrillic, arguing for its symbolic function (Pešikan et al. 2010: 15).
11. See footnote 7 on bilingualism.
12. Croatian Parliament (2016).
13. See Vukovar (2015). The decision has been widely discussed in the media; see, for example, Jutranji list (2015).

can be tightly connected to scripts is also shown in the example of a Russian law passed in 2002 requiring all official languages in Russia to use the Cyrillic script (Sebba 2006: 99).

Religion as an identity parameter and a powerful symbol is also connected to the use of scripts, as the case of Urdu and Hindi shows (Ahmad 2011). Religion also plays a salient role in the Croatian and Serbian context because Catholicism is assumed to be a Croatian identity marker, whereas Orthodoxy is assumed to be a Serbian identity marker (Stensvold 2009).

It is sometimes possible for a country to choose *digraphia*; that is, to allow two writing systems for the same language, as was the case in communist Yugoslavia with its policy of official digraphia for the unified Serbo-Croatian language, and is also the case in today's Serbia, despite the constitutional advantages given to Cyrillic.

Another example that shows how an orthographic solution can also serve as an identity marker comes from the broader area that we focus on here and concerns the new Montenegrin orthography. In the Montenegrin normative guide (Perović et al. 2010), two new letters, Ś and Ź, have been introduced, and they have the important symbolic function of differentiating Montenegrin from Serbian (Greenberg 2004: 97–104, 177).

These and many other examples show that the abolition or introduction of writing systems, as well as changes in orthography, can be part of nation-building strategies and even nationalism,[14] as well as a sign of changes in political, ideological, religious, and cultural orientation. Changes in scripts as a rule relate to identity construction and occur in the realms of symbolic nation building.

3 Data sampling and theoretical preliminaries

3.1 Data

Our data consist of official and unofficial Croatian discourse found on the internet. The sources include various online newspapers (eight), portals publishing general and specialized news (twenty), portals concentrating on politics (four), portals of towns and communities (seven), Facebook groups and discussions (seven), forum discussions (four), portals of political parties, religious groups, and schools (three), portals of other groups and organizations (three), and blogs (two). The material sometimes contains only texts and images, and in some cases comments on the "main" texts (thirty-seven sites include comments, and thirteen sites have more than thirty comments, four of which are forum discussions). The material is heterogeneous in terms of genre and register (i.e., the samples found are formal and informal). Formal discourse is represented by online newspapers, for example, and informal discourse by blogs and forums. Media texts often interact with different texts that represent grassroots discourse on the internet and provide a multifaceted image of the phenomenon analysed.

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14. However, nationalism as such is not addressed in this article.

The data were collected using the Google search engine (Google.hr)[15] and keywords in Latin script corresponding to 'Cyrillic' and 'symbol' or 'symbolic' in the same contexts. We focused on the 150 highest-ranking hits. The search was performed in Croatia on 29 April, 2015. The search results also contained texts from Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin sources: these are included in a separate corpus and were excluded from this analysis. In addition to the domain .hr, other criteria for selecting "Croatian" sources were geolocation and language. Duplicative results were disregarded, as were examples in which symbols and Cyrillic were discussed in non-relevant contexts, such as keyboards and typesetting. The collected corpus includes texts published between 1 February 2013 and 26 April 2015, comprising approximately 145,000 words from fifty-eight internet sites, mainly from the domain .hr. The data were obtained from a variety of sources, but the material is related to the specific context of discussing the introduction of Cyrillic plaques in Vukovar, and is restricted to a limited timeframe.

3.2 Discourse, identity, collective memory, symbols and discursive strategies

We adhere to the definition of discourse as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" linked to a macro-topic and argumentation about validity claims (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 89). In our case, semiotic practices include multimodal texts found in online sources. These sources (such as online newspapers and social media) influence political and social actions and at the same time are shaped by their contexts. Therefore, they are excellent for analysing identity negotiations. We understand identity and collective memory as constructed and negotiated in discourse, and changeable and dynamic (Wodak et al. 2009). However, this does not mean that people do not strive to hold on to what they experience as stable elements in life, such as their perception of history based on selective collective memory. In that construction, stable elements of the life world serve as the content of collective memory, but the ascription of meaning to that content changes in relation to time, place, and who "remembers".

Misztal (2003: 7) defined collective memory as "the representations of the past, both that shared by the group and that which is collectively commemorated, that enacts and gives substance to the group's identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future". Giving substance to a group's identity implies a decisive role of memory in collective identity. In modern times, both collective memory and identity have been characterized by the influence of mass media and "electronification" (digital technology, interactive media, etc.; see Thompson 1996; Urry 1996); memory and identity construction have become pluralistic and detached from traditional sources of power. Collective memory

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15. Google results are always personalized. Google's dynamic adjustment of search results depends on a range of algorithms that take into account the search term, one's geographical location, and the search history (see, e.g., Devine and Egger-Sider 2014). Therefore, the search results are not "objective" or "universal". The search was performed by a person that had not performed any similar keyword searches before.

enhances national identities and is crucial to the emergence of nation-states (Misztal 2003: 25).

National identities as a type of collective identities combine ethnic, cultural, economic, legal, and political elements and the attachment to a territory. Among their essential components are common historical memories, myths, and traditions (Smith 1991: 9–14). In the process of national identity construction, influential social actors, such as political elites, attempt to rearrange memories, myths, and traditions in an order that suits their own objectives and forge national identities that ensure social cohesion. This is illustrated below by the actions carried out by a Croatian veterans' organization called Headquarters for the Defence of Croatian Vukovar. "Dissemination of collective memory" relies on "realms of memory" (*lieux de mémoire*), historical or pseudohistorical sites that are reminiscent of selected events in national memory (Nora 1989). Vukovar is such a realm.

Collective memory, like identity, is not given and stable. It is discursively constructed by different social actors. In the construction of collective memory, different active agents use diverse means and employ different discursive strategies. These "memory agents" make use of "cultural tools" (or memory tools); that is, instruments that mediate remembering (Boyer and Wertsch 2009: 119) and include places, textbooks, and monuments.

Here, we understand symbols in their broadest meaning as "something that represents something else" (Mach 1993: 22). For example, in the context of national identity construction, a nation's symbols can be its flags, commemorations, national anthems, and, as we claim, scripts. The common trait of all symbols is that they "serve as a way for members of a society to both communicate heritage and socially connect with other members of a group – both past and present" (Moeschberger and Phillips DeZalia 2014: 1). Symbols preserve the past within a culture and, in doing so, become part of collective memories (Moeschberger and Phillips DeZalia 2014: 3). In addition to establishing a connection to past generations, symbols have the potential to cause strong emotions; they "express and maintain cultural narratives as they contribute to social representations and they are a perceptual filter to understand the self in relation to society" (Moeschberger and Phillips DeZalia 2014: 2). Steinbock (2013: 31) pointed to the "heavy emotional weight" that symbols derived from social (collective) memory carry because memory creates feelings of identity and group solidarity. The meanings of such symbols and the collective memories from which they derive can never be fixed: they can be reinterpreted by influential agents struggling for dominance in the realm of symbolic capital at any time. This implies that symbols are highly context-dependent: the decisive factors for their meaning are the time and place of their usage and the actors that use them. Cyrillic text on a plaque in front of the Russian embassy in Zagreb would not have the same potential to provoke strong reactions and emotions as a plaque in Cyrillic in Vukovar at a particular moment in time. Identity, collective memory, and discourse are complex interrelated concepts: symbols and discourses (along with sites and artefacts) are assumed to serve to forge collective memories, whether they are reconciliatory or divisive (Staiger 2006).[16] Conway (2010:

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16. However, sites and artefacts are also symbols; Staiger (2006) presumably considered flags, coats of arms, and similar as (prototypical) symbols.

11–12) pointed to symbols and discourse as important realms in which and through which "the past is carried". Interestingly, collective memory itself is defined as a "genre of political discourse . . . through which communities construct a shared identity" (Bruyneel 2014: 589).

The discursive formation of identity and collective memory comes into being through the use of different types of discursive macro-strategies, including constructive strategies and strategies of demontage (or dismantling) or destruction (Wodak et al. 2009: 33–35). Through the use of constructive strategies, national identity is constructed by "promoting unification, identification and solidarity, as well as differentiation". On the other hand, strategies of demontage are aimed at the destruction of existing constructions of national identity (Wodak et al. 2009: 33). These macro-strategies are supported by various strategies, such as justification (to preserve a threatened national identity), strategies emphasizing difference (e.g., between Croats and Serbs) – strategies of dissimilation – and strategies stressing national positive uniqueness (Wodak et al. 2009: 30). These are further discussed in the following section.

4 Discursive negotiations of collective memory and cultural/collective identity through discussions about Cyrillic

Script-related disputes are sites for the discursive construction of collective memory and the establishment of "memory regimes" (i.e., ways in which groups of people frame their understanding of the past; see Winter 2015: 221). In the discursive construction of memory and identity, different social actors use different strategies in their argumentations. We start by providing an overview of macro-strategies found in our material and then exemplify them by focusing on competing symbolic meanings ascribed to Cyrillic and their relation to collective memory.

4.1 Discursive strategies

The dominant macro-strategies found in our material are constructive strategies that promote identification within one's own ethnic group and differentiation from another ethnic group. In differentiation, or emphasizing the difference between "us" and "them", the topos/fallacy of external threat is frequently utilized. To some discourse participants, Cyrillic symbolizes past aggression and the Serbian Other, and thus directly relates to a past (and possibly present) threat. Therefore, suppressing Cyrillic in the public space in Croatia is their superordinate aim. To some other discourse participants (e.g., Serbs' representatives), removing Cyrillic symbolizes removing the presence of the Serbs on Croatian territory. Therefore, insisting on Cyrillic in public spaces is their superordinate aim. The strategy of emphasizing difference is closely linked to the strategy of dissimilation/exclusion and defence (a strategy that is itself often linked to the disaster topos; Wodak et al. 2009: 40). In this strategy, an action is rejected because its consequences for a community's future fate are depicted as negative (the topos of threat). The most frequent motif this strategy utilizes is collective suffering, which can be linked to the topos of history lessons.

In one version of remembering collective suffering, the "history lesson" concerns warfare from the 1990s and the suffering of Croats, whereas in the other version it concerns the Second World War and the suffering of the Serbs (i.e., the Ustaša persecution of Serbs in the Nazi-backed Independent State of Croatia, or NDH). In both versions, the feelings evoked include strong identification and solidarity with the victims and negative feelings towards the perpetrators.

The macro-strategy of demontage (dismantling) or destruction is realized as a specific subtype aimed at the "destruction" of a symbol: Cyrillic. The strategy of dissimilation or "emphasis or presupposition of difference" (Wodak et al. 2009: 33) is frequently linked to the topos of comparison, and language means of its realization are dissimilative/pejorative labels, such as the nouns *enemy, crime, occupation, atrocities*, and *cruelty*.

Our material includes instances of strategies of assimilation (presupposing sameness) as well, in which collective memory is constructed so that it promotes peace and reconciliation. However, assimilation strategies that promote a culture of peace were found less frequently than strategies of dissimilation. The strategies of assimilation could be tied to a more inclusive identity construction that seeks detachment from the traumatic memory of the 1990s, as in shown in the examples in the following section.

4.2 Competing symbolic connotations/meanings ascribed to Cyrillic and their relation to collective memory

We have identified two main competing lines of argumentation discussing symbolic meanings of Cyrillic. Generally, the first characterizes Cyrillic as a symbol of aggression, evil, and Serbian nationalism. The second characterizes Cyrillic as a symbol of culture in general, and also Croatian culture. These are further connected to two larger narratives: 1) the narrative about aggressors/victims in the recent armed conflicts and beyond, and 2) the narrative about a need to preserve cultural heritage. Whereas the former is a cornerstone in collective memory, in our material the latter is connected to human rights. These lines of argumentation are further exemplified below.

Many examples in our material explicitly state or support the view that scripts are symbols of nations: specifically, they suggest that scripts are symbols and demarcation lines between the Self and the Other; that Other is clearly marked as Serbs (e.g., Hrvatski fokus 2013b, 21/10/2013; Portal HKV, 30/07/2014; Index.hr, 27/02/2015). Scripts as symbols can also create binary oppositions with the following inferences: the Self is good, the Other is evil; the Other causes death and suffering. In these discourse samples, therefore, Cyrillic is devoid of various other possible symbolic references. Its main reference is metonymic: Cyrillic is reduced to its assumed connection to the events of the 1990s: warfare in Vukovar and destruction of the city (e.g., Politika plus, 24/10/2013); see (1) below:

(1) Installing bilingual plaques in Vukovar is troubling because the Croatian homeland fighters were killed and tortured under that script.

[Postavljanje dvojezičnih ploča u Vukovaru smeta jer su pod tim pismom ubijani i maltretirani hrvatski branitelji.]

The power of this symbolic link, as exemplified by (1), connects the current generation to the war generation (both dead and alive). The discussions in the public space foreground recent traumatic individual memories by "homeland fighters" and real and imagined witnesses of atrocities (e.g., *Dnevno*, 06/04/2015; *Sbplus*, 15/09/2013).

(2) During the aggression against the city and after breaking the defence, the Serbian soldiers and paramilitary committed atrocities and even today [some people] encounter their rapists and torturers in Vukovar. There are still a large number of families looking for their lost family members. For all of them Cyrillic is a symbol of suffering that they went through, and its introduction would come as a bitter blow and would show total disrespect for their sacrifice and feelings.

[. . . tijekom agresije na grad i nakon sloma obrane istog počinjeno [je] nasilje od strane pripadnika srpskih vojnih i paravojnih postrojbi i danas susreću svoje silovatelje i mučitelje u Vukovaru. Još uvijek veliki broj obitelji traži svoje nestale članove. Za sve njih ćirilica je simbol patnje koju su proživjeli te bi im njezino uvođenje značilo težak udarac i okrutno nepoštivanje njihove žrtve i osjećaja]

References to traumatic individual memories, as in (2), contribute to common collective memory building through the narration of a common traumatic political past. The main motif used in such discourse samples is that of victim. The strategy of positive self-presentation of the violent resistance to Cyrillic signs – which, in a broader context, indicates an opposition to the implementation of minority rights laws – is justified by references to traumatic memories or self-victimization. The symbolic link of Cyrillic and war relies partly on metonymy; that is, a contiguity relation that is explicitly established in our material by using memory tools such as wartime photographs showing Serbian fighters carrying flags with Cyrillic letters (see, e.g., the fourth photograph from the top in Portal HKV, 30/07/2014). The crimes ascribed to Serbs carrying the flags are ascribed, via them, to Cyrillic. This metonymic base of Cyrillic as a symbol enables the metaphor "Cyrillic kills", utilized by some social actors in our multimodal material. The language expressions related to that metaphor found in statements and counter-statements either ascribe evil agency to Cyrillic or deny it by claiming that "Cyrillic kills" and "Cyrillic does not kill"; see (3) and (4).

(3) During several hard and bloody years, Cyrillic erased Latin by killing the city, people, cultural monuments, and cultural heritage or, in other words, the identity of the City as a whole

[Ćirilica] je na nekoliko teških i krvavih godina, ubijajući grad, ljude, kulturne spomenike i kulturnu baštinu, odnosno identitet Grada u cjelini, izbrisala latinicu (Sbplus, 15/09/2013)

(4) Cyrillic never killed or expelled anybody, nor did it burn anybody's house down. *[Ćirilica nikada nikog nije ubila, prognala, niti nečiju kuću zapalila]* (Croportal, 10/02/2013).[17]

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17. See also examples with *Ćirilica je ubila* (Cyrillic killed) and *Ćirilica ne ubija* (Cyrillic does not kill) in Dnevno (2014) and Croportal (2013).

The symbolic connotations of Cyrillic related to individual memories are generalized; concrete or imagined fighters have become a symbol of all Serbs and Serbia, and Serbs and Serbia are linked to the Greater Serbian expansionism that was successfully defeated by Croats. This link nourishes the Croatian narrative of the "homeland war" as a cornerstone of independence. The following quotes illustrate such a meaning of Cyrillic, which is most frequently found in sources representing views of Croatian veterans, and conservative and right-wing political factions; namely, Cyrillic as a symbol of aggression:

(5) Cyrillic is a symbol of aggression, territorial claims, rule of Chetniks, slaughtering, evil in this territory of the Croatian state

[ćirilica je kao simbol agresije, teritorijalne pretenzije, četnikovanja, klanja, zla na ovom prostoru hrvatske države] (Facebook page of Ruža Tomašić, 14/07/2014)

(6) . . . in Vukovar, Cyrillic (a Croatian script, too) is a symbol of (an old and new) aggression against Croatia, the Town, Nation, Identity, Freedom, Sacrifice, Women, Mothers, the Dead, Graves, Defenders ... !!!

[... ćirilica (koja je i hrvatsko pismo!) u Vukovaru – SIMBOL. Simbol (stare i nove!) agresije na Hrvatsku, na Grad, na Naciju, na Identitet, na Slobodu, na Žrtvu, na Žene, na Majke, na Mrtve, na Grobove, na Branitelje . . . !!!] (Blog Večernji, 06/09/2013)[18]

(7) Cyrillic is a symbol of an act of appropriating a foreign country.

[Ćirilica je simbol svojatanja tuđe zemlje.] (Hrvatski fokus 2013a, headline, 16/10/2013)

Some other sources refer to Cyrillic as a continuation of the aggression (*nastavak agresije*; Ipress, 07/04/2013), while the attempt to install Cyrillic plaques has been described as Cyrillic aggression (ćirilična *agresija*; Dragovoljac, 14/10/2013; Facebook page of Ruža Tomašić, 14/07/2014). All of these examples are a part of the strategy of demontage or dismantling of a symbol, in this case Cyrillic.

Our material contains many photographs that primarily emphasize the symbolic nature of scripts. For example, the slogan "Vukovar will never be Вуковар", combining the Cyrillic and Latin[19] names, is used on a T-shirt (Glas Slavonije 2013). In the slogan, the name of the city written in Latin symbolizes its Croatian identity, whereas the same name in Cyrillic symbolizes its Serbian identity. The slogan is in an intertextual relation with a 1991 poster that is well known in Croatian public space: OSIJEK NIKADA NEĆE BITI ОСЕК[20] ("OSIJEK WILL NEVER BE ОСЕК"), which is one of the best-known examples of an "engaged figurative use of Cyrillic in modern Croatian history" (Košćak 2015). That symbolic combination of Cyrillic and Latin has initiated many similar realizations. Košćak (2015) termed similar inscriptions as "awe-inspiring figurative hybrid digraphic inscrip-

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18. See also "simbol agresije" (Narod, 03/07/2014)
19. Note the "confusion" of Cyrillic used in handwriting with Cyrillic block letters used in printed materials in the word *Вуковар*. If Cyrillic letters are intended, the third and fifth letters should be **к** and **в**, not **k** and **b**.
20. Designed by Predrag Došen in 1991. See: Stilistika (2016).

tions". The original poster inscription combines two elements related to language as an identity symbol: the "Serbianized" name of the Slavonian town of *Osijek* is not simply transliterated (as is the case with Vukovar), but it is also "ekavized". In the context of the poster, the Ekavian pronunciation of the old Slavic phoneme *jat* provides an additional symbolic reference to Serbian identity.[21]. However, the Ekavian variant of the town's name is very rare in standard Serbian: it usually uses the Ijekavian form (the same as in standard Croatian). Thus, the Cyrillic form Осек is not expected.

Some other photographs in the corpus also juxtapose Cyrillic and Latin by showing, for example, signs for Vukovar written in Cyrillic and Latin, where the Latin sign relates to other visual elements symbolizing peace and Cyrillic pertains to visual elements symbolizing war and death (e.g., Ipress.hr, 07/04/2013).

Some photos (see Ipress.hr 2013, the second small photo below the first, large one) illustrate discourse participants' multimodal elaboration of the connection between Cyrillic and Serbian "aggression against Croatia".[22] In addition to the text, one discourse sample (Portal HKV, 30/07/2014) also contains six wartime photographs showing soldiers, paramilitary troops, and dead bodies. The author explicitly stated: "I include several historical photographs so that we could more easily understand the sentiments of Croats in Croatia and Vukovar towards Cyrillic as ideology" [*Prilažem nekoliko povijesnih fotografija, kako bismo lakše shvatili raspoloženje Hrvata u Vukovaru prema ćirilici kao ideologiji*]. The fourth photograph from the top is an image from a television program showing members of Serbian paramilitary troops carrying a flag with Cyrillic in Vukovar in November 1991. By including these photographs, the author creates an explicit metonymic link between Cyrillic and war atrocities and utilizes the ability of symbols to arouse emotions.

The organization Headquarters for the Defence of Croatian Vukovar and its leader Tomislav Josić had the most prominent role in constructing Cyrillic as a symbol of aggression in the Croatian public sphere. Their insistence on the narrative of Serbian aggression and Croatian suffering in Vukovar and elsewhere was related to their broader political objectives, one of which was discrediting the government at the time.[23] By disseminating that narrative in the mass media, holding protests, and organizing other activities, the organization initiated a broad, heated public discussion in which numerous public actors supported Headquarters. The organization proved to be an influential social actor engaged in constructing a collective memory functional for its political goals (Lebow 2006: 26).

As we have seen, the essentialist understanding of a "pure national identity" and its symbols – in this case, scripts – operates with clear opposition. It is based on a specific version of collective memory of the warfare of the 1990s. This model employs individual memories of warfare to foster collective memory, and its two clearly demarcated motifs are aggressors and victims.

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21. More details about the status of Ekavian in Serbian are provided by Greenberg (2004: 63).
22. Another text we found on the internet (but have not included in our corpus because it did not appear in the topmost search results) shows ammunition with Cyrillic on it (Braniteljski portal 2014). The text above the image reads "Bullets with Cyrillic Killed 16,018 Croats in the Homeland War".
23. See, for example, an interview with Josić in Slobodna Dalmacija (2014).

As Zerubavel (1996) observed, individual memories are socio-biographical because they are constructed with the interpretative framework provided by the dominant, official memory, and because people are socially constituted and seek affirmation of their group membership.

4.3 Cyrillic as a shared symbol of culture and minority rights

A competing line of argumentation about the symbolic meaning of Cyrillic is the one constructed by social actors (e.g., professionals such as linguists, Serb representatives, the Croatian government, and anonymous forum discussants) that, in their discourse, connect Cyrillic with the necessity to respect minority rights, trying to break the symbolic link between the script, warfare, and the Battle of Vukovar. These social actors try to demetaphorize the metaphor "Cyrillic kills" by explicitly stating that human agency cannot be attributed to scripts; see example (8) below. This symbolic reference was advocated by state officials; for example, former President Ivo Josipović made a widely quoted statement that "Cyrillic is not a symbol of crime".[24] Example (9) shows such argumentation that aims to deconstruct the metaphor "Cyrillic kills" and connects the script to human rights. Some examples question the negative contextual/situational meaning of Cyrillic in which it is constructed as a symbol of war, destruction of Vukovar, suffering, and Greater Serbianism (see 10 and 11).

(8) Cyrillic does not kill, destroy, burn down. People with names and surnames do this.

[Ćirilica ne ubija, ne ruši i ne pali. To čine ljudi, koji imaju svoja imena i prezimena] (Croportal, 10/02/2013).

(9) Cyrillic is here only a symbol of recognition of minority rights.

[Ćirilica je tu zapravo samo simbol priznavanja manjinskih prava.] (Novi list, 05/05/2013).

(10) Cyrillic is not a symbol of Greater Serbianism . . . the normal letter *u* is not a symbol of Ustashas, but a letter of an alphabet. Cyrillic is an alphabet used in Russia, Ukraine, Macedonia, Serbia . . . Cyrillic was, if you like, a Croatian alphabet. It is an alphabet in which numerous literary works were created (including some of the greatest works ever); it is the alphabet used for writing the histories of people who use it . . . To claim that Cyrillic is a symbol of Greater Serbianism is a terrible offence to all who have used it or still use it.

[Ćirilica uopće nije simbol velikosrpstva . . . normalno "u" nije simbol nikakvog ustaštva, već slovo abecede. Ćirilica je pismo Rusije, Ukrajne, Makedonije, Srbije... Ćirilica je, ako baš hoćeš, bilo i hrvatsko pismo To je pismo na kojem su stvarana brojna književna dijela (među kojima su i neka od najvećih djela književnosti uopće), pismo kojime je pisana povijest naroda koji ju koriste . . . Reći kako je je

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24. For example, Novi list (22/11/2013). Josipović saw the protests against Cyrillic as an action by the HDZ party (the Croatian Democratic Union) that aimed to destabilize the Social Democratic-led government. His statement was frequently found in the search results originating from Serbian and Bosnian media (not included in this analysis).

ćirilica *simbol velikosprpstva grozno je uvredljivo za sve koji su njome pisali ili pišu]* (Forum.hr, 18/11/2013)

(11) CYRILLIC IS NOT A WAR SCRIPT, NOR A SYMBOL OF SUFFERING OF THE CROATS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF VUKOVAR.

[ĆIRILICA NIJE RATNO PISMO, NITI SIMBOL STRADANJA HRVATA I RAZARANJA VUKOVARA] (Jutarnji list, 11/02/2013)

In this construction of a competing symbolic meaning, a script is an identity marker of different (national) groups that use it in a synchronic or diachronic perspective, and cannot be "imposed upon" one group only as its negative identity marker. These instances make up the strategy of assimilation, which helps construct the collective memory that promotes peace and reconciliation.

4.4 Comparisons of symbols and "metadiscussions" on symbols' connotations

Some discourse participants attempt to "rationalize the situation" by comparing Cyrillic with other symbols and suggesting a "middle solution": that Cyrillic is a problem in a specific context and time (see example 12). Rationalization of the situation is also visible in reasoning that Cyrillic should not be discursively constructed as a symbol of the Serbian nation; however, the timing for reintroducing it in Vukovar is evaluated as unfavourable (examples 12 and 13).

(12) Even though Mile Budak was a minister in Pavelić's government, his literature does not have anything to do with that fact. Even if Vukovar was killed under the Serbian cross with Cyrillic letters on Serbian flags, Cyrillic is not only Serbian, but also Croatian inheritance. However, in Vukovar, the time has not come for Cyrillic – there is too much Milošević, and Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Miroslav,[25] Vukovar Cyrillic.

[Ako Mile Budak i jest bio ministar u Pavelićevoj vladi, njegova književnost s tom činjenicom nema veze. Ako Vukovar i jest ubijan pod ćiriličnim ocilima na srpskim zastavama, ćirilica nije samo srpsko nasljeđe, već i hrvatska baština. Ipak, u Vukovaru za ćirilicu nije vrijeme, jer – puno je Miloševića, puno je Memoranduma SANU u Miroslavljevoj, 'vukovarskoj' ćirilici. Treba vremena da to 'izvjetri'] (Sbplus, 15/09/2013).

(13) Cyrillic should not be a synonym for aggression displayed by one nation during the Homeland War, and, when it comes to plaques in Cyrillic, we agree that it is too early, but also that Croats should not negate a part of their own culture because history is what makes us what we are today.

[ćirilica ne bi trebala biti sinonim za agresiju počinjenu od strane jednog naroda za vrijeme Domovinskog rata, a u pitanju ćiriličnih ploča slažemo se da je još prerano,

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25   This could be an allusion to *Miroslavljevo jevanđelje* (the Miroslav Gospel), one of the oldest documents written in the Serbian recension of Church Slavic.

ali isto tako Hrvati ne bi trebali negirati dio svoje kulture, jer povijest je ono što nas čini onime što danas jesmo]. (OŠ Vukovac-Kašina, 21/01/2015)

Similar lines of argumentation can be found in some other discourse samples (e.g., the Facebook page of the group Occupy Croatia, 02/10/2013). Other examples explicitly discuss the connotations of symbols that may arise in various situations (e.g., Blog Dnevnik, 01/12/2013). Such "metadiscussions" are expected, considering the keywords explicitly searched for (the equivalents of 'symbol' and 'symbolic'). Discourse participants try to rationalize the discussions by comparing Cyrillic with other powerful well-known negatively connoted symbols (such as the swastika, in Blog Dnevnik, 01/12/2013) in their metadiscussions of symbolic connotations.

5 Concluding remarks: collective memory, identity, and symbols in discourse

Our material provides a number of examples that support the hypothesis that scripts as symbols can acquire and change meaning in discourse; that is, it illustrates the contextual nature of symbols. Thus, Cyrillic is a symbol of aggression in one context – a symbol of different nations and their culture and literacy – and a symbol of respecting minority rights in another. Alternatively, as we have shown, there are competing constructions of symbolic meaning of Cyrillic coexisting. Moreover, the symbolism of scripts is explicitly acknowledged and elaborated in the narratives by discourse. This finding is supported by research that focuses on various contexts in which symbols change and acquire meaning in discourse (see, e.g., Mach 1993), and in which scripts and languages function as symbols (Sebba 2006).

Scripts are often used to index group membership and express elements of identity. In the context of Vukovar and its own symbolism, Cyrillic acquires new symbolic meanings. Its generally established meanings (e.g., as a symbol of certain Slavic cultures) are altered and narrowed down when connected to a single Slavic nation.

Our samples contain a lot of evidence of emotional language and references to human suffering: they refer to and narrate fragments of individual memories that are aimed at collective memory construction. Emotional discourse is "closed" because discussing the feelings of victims excludes all other discourses. In our data, various discourse participants link Cyrillic to traumatic individual memories and to a city that itself is a symbol of suffering and a marker of the key Croatian narrative of independence. By perpetuating details of traumatic individual memories in discourse, as shown in some of our examples, social actors deliberately link Cyrillic to some specific groups of perpetrators, which then become symbols of an entire nation; in this case, Serbs.

The symbolic potential of Cyrillic has been used in discourse by politicians, professionals, journalists, various organizations, and ordinary people. The functions of this use range from the delegitimization of political actors (e.g., delegitimizing the Croatian government by veterans' organizations and their leaders, and by their political opponents) and propagating hostility towards an ethnic group, to creating a "useful" past and consolidating

collective identity. At the same time, in a competing discourse, Cyrillic is also aligned with propagating human rights issues in Croatia, and a considerable amount of discursive work has been done to demetaphorize Cyrillic as a killing agent.

Our findings support Mach (1993), who emphasized that symbols have highly contextual meanings. This assumption can be complemented by the assumption that these are shaped in specific discourse by specific social actors. These actors often act as memory agents. Discourse participants with some kind of power or influence greatly utilize symbols' ability to inspire. They do so by (un)consciously using macro-strategies (constructive and demontage) and various supporting strategies of justification (to preserve a threatened national identity), strategies emphasizing the difference between Croats and Serbs (strategies of dissimilation), and strategies emphasizing national positive uniqueness (Wodak et al. 2009: 30). Instances of strategies of assimilation are also present in the material analysed, but they are infrequent.

When social actors discursively negotiate a specific meaning of symbols, that meaning is always situationally constrained. Although the discourse analysed here has its constraints because it is limited to a specific time period, it shows that a symbol can become partially or entirely detached from its "universal" symbolism (i.e., its link to various cultures and peoples), and it can be shaped in such a way that it only mirrors an ongoing political agenda or a specific group's ideology. The stability of new meanings of any symbols, including Cyrillic, is uncertain, and an analysis of a more recent discourse could reveal a different image.

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»LOCKED UP« IN NATION STATES: PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND NATIONAL COMMUNITY WITHIN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE IN LITHUANIA

ABSTRACT

This article examines how the idea of the nation-state is articulated in political and social discourse. In particular, it explores how the national community and the state are positioned vis-à-vis each other in discourse surrounding national flags. I locate my analysis in Lithuania after the dissolution of the USSR. I explore how the interaction between the state and the nation is discursively represented among politicians and ordinary citizens when they discuss Lithuanian national flag(s). Intriguingly, whereas semi-public discourse could generally be described as "locked up" in thinking in terms of the nation and state as interdependent entities, for political actors the intertwining of the nation and state was a less doxastic state of affairs.

KEYWORDS: national symbols, nationhood, statehood, Lithuania, discourse analysis

»Zaklenjeni« v nacionalnih državah: percepcije odnosa med državnimi in nacionalnimi skupnostmi v političnih in družbenih diskurzih v Litvi

IZVLEČEK

Članek preučuje, kako je ideja nacionalne države artikulirana v političnih in družbenih diskurzih. Raziskuje, kako so nacionalne skupnosti in država medsebojno pozicionirane v diskurzih, ki zadevajo nacionalne zastave. Analiza se osredotoča na primer Litve po razpadu Sovjetske zveze. Avtorica ugotavlja, kako je interakcija med državo in nacijo diskurzivno reprezentirana v političnih razpravah in razpravah navadnih državljanov o nacionalnih zastavah. Medtem ko – zanimivo – poljavne diskurze splošno lahko opišemo kot »zaklenjene«, in sicer v smislu, da se nacijo in državo misli kot povezani entiteti, je za politične akterje preplet nacije in države manj samoumeven.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: nacionalni simboli, nacionalnost, državnost, Litva, analiza diskurza

1 Introduction[1]

Countless obituaries for the nation-state have already been penned, and we are just waiting, it seems, for the body to topple conveniently into the grave.
David Miller (2003: 119–120)

Before we witness the final and irreversible "fall" of the nation-states, it is important to understand how this particular form of political organization permeates thinking about the relationship between political authority and its subordinates. This article explores how thinking in terms of nation-states informs the way one understands the relationship between its two summands: the national community and the state. What is, might be, or should be the relationship between these two entities?

I search for some possible answers to this question by exploring political and semi-public social discourse about the national flag in post-1990 Lithuania. I consider discourse surrounding national flags to be one of the key loci where the production, maintenance, and transformation of ideas pertaining to statehood and nationhood can be observed. This view is based on several theoretical premises. The focus at the discursive level is justified by the assumption that national communities are "*discursively*, by means of language and other semiotic systems, *produced, reproduced, transformed* and *destructed*" (De Cillia et al. 1999: 153; emphasis in the original).

However, I agree with Pierre Bourdieu that the constitutive power of a given discourse depends on the amount of symbolic capital acquired by the producer of that discourse. He defines symbolic capital as a resource, or the power of being acknowledged as a legitimate authority in a given field (Bourdieu 1999: 337). In politics, this means being recognized as an authority in matters relating to the production of social categorizations and nominations (Bourdieu 1989: 20).

Simon Harrison convincingly argues that political symbols are among the principal resources for symbolic capital within the political field. He claims that "competition for power, wealth, prestige, legitimacy or other political resources seems always to be accompanied by conflict over important symbols, by struggles to control or manipulate such symbols in some vital way" (Harrison 1995: 255). This is because symbols, in his view, are "status markers" and objects of "emotional attachment" that, when appropriated by a group or an individual, become a "source of legitimacy and may confer specific rights and prerogatives such as the ownership of a territory or the entitlement to a political office" (Harrison 1995: 270). Thus, "political symbols are to symbolic capital what money is to economic capital" (Harrison 1995: 269).

National symbols are particular types of political symbols that "give concrete meaning and visibility to the abstractions of nationalism" (Smith 2000: 73) and enable the state to legitimize "itself vis-à-vis the concept of the nation that undergirds it" (Geisler 2005:

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xix–xx) through their use. Therefore, I expect discourse related to national symbols to reflect the representations of nationhood and statehood attached to them.

According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, national flags stand out among other national symbols:

> In the modern era of the nation-state . . . , flags signify, at an abstract large scale, some of the same things that totems and heraldic symbols have done in the past, but – in the case of national flags – they signify the metaphoric kin group of the nation rather than other groups. . . . disputes over flag design, which flag to use and how to use it, reveal conflicts which are ultimately concerned with the nature of "we-hood". (Eriksen 2007: 3)

This suggests examining discourse on national flags in order to understand the content that the concepts of the state and national community are imbued with in the particular case at hand.

The question is which discourse on the national flag to scrutinize. This article proposes the state (understood as a constellation of bureaucratic institutions; Bourdieu and Champagne 2014: 20; Swartz 2013: 36; Bourdieu 1998: 23–24) and its people ("imagined" as the nation within the context of the modern nation-states; Canovan 2005: 43) as crucial actors within the discursive (re)production of statehood and nationhood.

The state becomes one of the main producers of such social categories as a "nation" or "state" by inculcating the very "cognitive structures by which it [the state] is thought" (Bourdieu and Champagne 2014: 164). It takes part in creating "common, everyday assumptions . . . that individuals and groups make about the nature of the social order" (Swartz 2013: 80). Bourdieu calls such assumptions *doxa* – a popular opinion that provides the perception of the existing social order as natural and self-evident (Bourdieu 1977: 164) or the "pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world" (Bourdieu 1990: 68). The power of doxa is at its strongest when individuals internalize the categories on which its power structure is based – such as the "nation" or "state" – to such a degree as to appear as natural, unquestionable, and taken for granted.

Although the state is a central agent in the production of social groups and doxa, it "never establishes an absolute monopoly . . . . In fact, *there are always, in any society, conflicts between symbolic powers that aim at imposing the vision of legitimate divisions*, that is, at constructing groups" (Bourdieu 1989: 22; emphasis in the original). Even though social groups are constructed by political actors, there are limits to how such a construction can be carried out.

Building on this idea, I suggest that the role of the national community comes into the picture when one wants to study whether official (political) discursive representations of nationhood and statehood also emerge in the semi-public (social) discourse on the national flag; and, even more, how much those representations come across as doxastic – that is, unquestionable, self-evident, and taken for granted. Such a juxtaposition of official and semi-public perceptions of the "nation" and "state" offers an intriguing perspective for analysing the process of thinking in terms of "nation-states".

2 Post-1990 Lithuania: Discourse or Discourses of the National?

The choice of Lithuania is grounded in it being a particularly interesting case in nationalism studies. First, Lithuania is one of the fifteen post-Soviet republics. Arguably, nationalism was one of the main driving forces behind the collapse of the Soviet Union (see, e.g., Barrington 2006; Beissinger 2009). Second, Rogers Brubaker argues that, after establishing independent statehoods in Soviet successor states, nationalism not only did not evaporate but became characterized by a:

. . . deeply institutionalized ethnocultural understanding of nationhood; an understanding of the state as the state of and for the ethnoculturally defined "core" or "titular" nation; the claim that the core nation is in a weak or unhealthy condition, and that its very survival is at stake; the argument that state action is needed to strengthen the demographic, cultural, economic or political position of the core nation; and the justification of such action as remedial or compensatory. (Brubaker 2011: 1807)

Yet, Lithuania may not fit neatly within Brubaker's statements pertaining to the relationship between the state and the nation. Lithuania's relatively liberal laws on citizenship and minority rights (Budryte 2005: 143; Kasekamp 2010: 184–188) as well as small ethnic minority groups[2] may be considered the main factors for the absence of open, large-scale ethnic clashes (Kasatkina 2003; Steen 2006). However, these circumstances have not guaranteed tension-free integration of ethnic minorities. Scholarly attention has focused on the shortcomings of the existing legal framework and its practical implementation regarding equal opportunities and non-discrimination against ethnic minorities (Budryte and Pilinkaite-Sotirovic 2009), disaffection with politics and low political participation among ethnic minorities (Agarin 2013; Kasatkina 2003), mistrust in the political loyalties of ethnic minorities at the level of political elites and within everyday society (Agarin 2013; Clark 2006; Janeliūnas et al. 2011; Kasatkina 2003), and tendencies to social the isolation of Lithuania's ethnic minorities (Kasatkina 2003; Janušauskienė 2016; Savukynas 2000).

The relationship between the Lithuanian state and the titular ethnic group is at least as complex as that between the state and its ethnic minorities. I have not found academic studies that focus on possible tensions solely between the state and ethnic Lithuanians. However, the findings of studies on Lithuanian society as a whole inevitably also relate to ethnic Lithuanians. Scholars have noted significant and continuing levels of political alienation – exemplified by low trust in state institutions (in particular, the Lithuanian parliament,

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2. According to the 2011 census, Lithuanians made up 84.2% of the total population, followed by Poles (6.6%) and Russians (5.8%) (Statistics 2013). From 1989 to 2011, the proportion of the ethnic Lithuanian population increased from 79.6% to 84.2%, whereas Russian dropped from 9.4% to 5.8% and Polish decreased from 7% to 6.6% (Statistics 2013).

or Seimas),[3] low political participation, and disenchantment with democracy – as major challenges for Lithuanian society (Donskis 2011: 105–116; Ramonaitė 2007). There is no consensus on the causes for this state/society alienation: explanations vary from attributing it to "fast and drastic sociocultural change" (Donskis 2011: 107) to explaining it as an outcome of the way an individual relates to the Soviet regime (Ramonaitė 2007: 147).

Finally, the question of the state and nation relationship came to the fore in symbolic policies relating to the national flag of Lithuania. The legalization of the historical national flag[4] (the white knight of the Lithuanian coat of arms, known as Vytis – which was also an emblem of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania[5] and of Lithuania during the interwar period – on a red background) by the Lithuanian Parliament on July 8th, 2004 gave rise to considerable debate, not least of all as to whether it might replace the tricolour[6] (yellow--green-red) as the national flag in the future. Should the tricolour remain as the "national" flag representing the national community of the country, whereas the historical national flag would represent the state? This idea had supporters and opponents among politicians, scholars, journalists, and social activists. The historical national flag was a compromise outcome. Although it did not replace the Lithuanian national tricolour as the official flag of the state, it did challenge the exclusivity of the national tricolour as a sign of the state and the nation. Be that as it may, this reveals not only the relevance of the analysis of the national symbols within the study of nationalism but also potentially indicates that the

3. In a representative opinion survey in 1993, 12% of ethnic Lithuanian, 5% of ethnic Russian, and 7% of ethnic Polish respondents stated that they did not trust parliament (Rose and Maley 1994). In 2001, the figures were dramatically higher: 70% of ethnic Lithuanian and 68% of ethnic Russian respondents declared that they did not trust members of parliament (Rose 2002). Since then, the trust in this institution has remained very low. According to the representative survey on trust in state institutions among residents of Lithuania carried out from June 30th to July 9th, 2017, only 9.1% of respondents claimed to trust the parliament (Vilmorus 2017).

4. This flag is defined in the Law on the National Flag as a "historical symbol of the State of Lithuania, a piece of cloth featuring a red field with a silver armoured knight on a white horse holding a silver sword in his right hand above his head". In the official English translation of the law it is called a "historical national flag". However, in the Lithuanian-language version of the title of this flag, it is called the "historical flag of the state of Lithuania" (*Lietuvos valstybės istorinė vėliava*).

5. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a feudal multi-ethnic polity that existed from the thirteenth century until 1795.

6. The Lithuanian national flag has three equal horizontal bands: yellow on top, green in the middle, and red on the bottom (in a ratio of 3:5). Discussions on a national flag began as early as 1905 at the Lithuanian Congress in Vilnius. However, it was not until April 25th, 1918 that the Lithuanian tricolour, based on the colours of ethnic Lithuanian folk costumes and weaving, was finally established as the national flag. It remained as such throughout the interwar period until the Soviet occupation, and was replaced with the red flag on July 30th, 1940. That flag was replaced with a red, white, and green flag with a hammer and sickle in the upper left corner on July 15th, 1953. The tricolour re-emerged in public life in the summer of 1988 at the rallies and gatherings held by the Lithuanian Reform Movement (Sąjūdis). Due to social pressure, the tricolour was legally established as the national flag of the Lithuanian SSR on November 18th, 1988. With the declaration of independence from the Soviet Union on March 11th, 1990, the tricolour remained the national flag of Lithuania. Its legal status and use are regulated by the Law on the National Flag (adopted on June 26th, 1991) and the constitution (adopted on November 6th, 1992).

relation of the state and nation within the singular unit that is a "nation-state" is just as pertinent an issue for post-Soviet Lithuania as it is for scholarly discussions.

The relatively mild yet latent ethnic tensions, persistent high-level political alienation, and discussions about the historical national flag in Lithuania do not seem to offer a straightforward confirmation or negation of Brubaker's views that the state is perceived "as the state of and for the ethnoculturally defined 'core' or 'titular' nation; the claim that the core nation is in a weak or unhealthy condition, and that its very survival is at stake; the argument that state action is needed to strengthen the demographic, cultural, economic or political position of the core nation" in the post-Soviet countries. However, these issues certainly raise the question of whether this particular perception of the state and nation has acquired an overwhelmingly dominant position within the plurality of discourse on statehood and nationhood in post-1990 Lithuania.

This article examines official and semi-public discourse surrounding the national tricolour and the historical national flag in order to determine how much representations of state and nation within the particular context of national flags resemble or differ from those present in Brubaker's argument. Certainly, discourse on the national flag(s) selected for this study forms a very specific and narrow framework, which cannot and does not aim to comprise all possible variations of the way statehood and nationhood are perceived in Lithuania. Therefore, my goal is not to refute Brubaker's claims, but to reconstruct the diversity of discourses of the national that must be considered in order to better understand the complexities of statehood and nationhood in post-Soviet space.

3 Empirical Material: Data Collection and Analysis

My empirical materials are, first, the texts of the Law on the National Flag (LNF)[7] and its amendments, the texts of the Provisional Basic Law of the Republic of Lithuania (PBL)[8] and the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania[9] and transcripts of parliamentary sessions.

The focal empirical material for my analysis stems from the LNF because "state control and legitimation of authority is exercised through flag laws and notions of 'desecration,' which shed light on the political as well as the sacred nature of the national flag (and the nation)" (Elgenius 2011: 63). The LNF is the main legal document that regulates

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7. The Law on the Lithuanian State Flag, as it was called in the English translation of the original version (June 26th, 1991) has changed its title several times: in the Lithuanian version of the law this was done even more times than in the English translations. From 2004 until the most recent English translation in 2013, the English translation is the Law on the National Flag and Other Flags. In order to determine the suitable English term for use in this article – one that could be used when referring to the versions before and after the 2004 English one – I decided to call it the Law on the National Flag, hence, the abbreviation LNF. Further nuances regarding the title of the LNF are presented in the analysis of this law.

8. The Provisional Basic Law of the Republic of Lithuania was in force from March 11th, 1991 until November 2nd, 1992, when a new constitution came into force.

9. It was adopted in the referendum of October 25th, 1992 and came into force on November 2nd, 1992.

the status of the national flag in Lithuania. I examine the transformation of the LNF text from its introduction on June 26th, 1991 through its various amendments until January 17th, 2013, when the sixteenth and most recent amendment was adopted. I chose to supplement analysis of the LNF with an analysis of the texts of the PBL and the constitution because the LNF was a subordinate law to the PBL (while it was still in force) and the constitution.

Both the legislative discourse on the Lithuanian national flag and the speeches of members of the Seimas (MPs) were examined when discussing this legislation during sessions of the Seimas. Although the LNF and its amendments provide official and legally binding nominations (thus imposing certain representations of the national flag and its meaning, as well as setting guidelines for behaviour regarding the flag), they do not provide an explanation of the need and the reasons why they were adopted. In contrast, the statements made by the MPs in discussing certain decisions concerning the national flag provide supplementary material that can help overcome this shortcoming of the analysis of the legal texts. They also offer insights into the specific socio-political contexts at the time of the deliberation and adoption of the LNF and its amendments.

Empirical material for the discourse of the MPs consists of the transcripts of forty-two plenary sessions altogether. Transcripts of all plenary sessions are available via the search engine on the Seimas website. My search timeframe was from March 11th, 1990 (the date of Lithuania's declaration of independence) to March 5th, 2015 (the date of the discussion of the final focus group).[10]

The sample of semi-public discourse was gathered in the form of three focus group discussions (FGDs) on the status, private use, and public use of the national flags conducted in Lithuania in March 2015. Targeted participants for the focus groups were adult citizens of Lithuania that started their schooling from 1990 onwards (making them between eighteen and thirty-two years old at the time of the FGDs) and with self-ascribed ethnic affiliation to the three largest ethnic groups in Lithuania since independence from the Soviet Union: Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. My goal is not a representative study of all adult Lithuanian citizens that started school from 1990 onwards. I position this analysis within an interpretivist framework. Therefore, I did not consider all possible demographic variables, such as religion, profession, marital status, and so on in connection with the sampling, although I did take care to be aware of these when analysing the data: they might be mentioned by the FGD participants in their discourse on nationhood and statehood.

Certainly, there are enormous differences between the setting in a plenary session of the Seimas and the one in a focus group, ranging from the size of the group and the degree of acquaintance (MPs are normally at least partly acquainted with each other, whereas in FGDs the participants do not know each other beforehand) to the social roles, motivations, and possible wider impact of the statements of MPs and FGD participants. However, with both a plenary parliamentary session and a FGD one can "observe the

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10. Although the LNF was last amended in January 2013, I wanted to check whether any discussions regarding the LNF were taking place in the Seimas at the time when I was conducting my focus group discussions.

processes through which important concepts like 'nation' are being 'co-constructed' during an ongoing discussion" (Wodak et al. 2009: 3).

For analysis of the data I applied selected methods of the discourse-historical approach (DHA) within critical discourse analysis (see, e.g., De Cillia et al. 1999; Krzyżanowski 2010; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak et al. 2009). I explore one particular element within the DHA analysis model for analysing empirical data – three discursive strategies: referential/nomination, predicational, and argumentation. Whereas referential and predicational strategies make it possible to investigate how one "constructs" and "qualifies" "social actors, objects/phenomena/events and processes/actions" (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 95; see also Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 45); argumentation strategies provide insight into how those nominations and predications made by the speaker are justified (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 45).

With regard to nomination strategies, important forms of realization are "deictics, anthroponyms, metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches, verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions, etc."; further, predicational strategies may employ "explicit predicates or predicative nouns/adjectives/pronouns, collocations, explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors and other rhetorical figures, etc." (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 95). Within argumentation strategies, "topos" is my central device of analysis. The term *topos* has manifold interpretations within argumentation theory (Walton et al. 2008: 275). As explained above, I follow Reisigl and Wodak's definition of "topoi" as belonging to "the obligatory, either explicit or inferable, premises. They are the content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' that connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim" (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 74–75). The definition of *topos* in both formal or content-abstract terms (e.g., topos of analogy) and content-related terms (e.g., topos of economic efficiency) is justified, according to Reisigl, because of "the observation that argumentation is always topic-related and field-dependent (i.e., depending on the configuration of social domains, disciplines, theories, etc.)" (Reisigl 2014: 77).

To sum up, in this article I investigate how the Lithuanian national flag(s), nationhood, and statehood are referred to and labelled; and, further, how these references and labels are justified in the texts of the laws, statements of MPs, and statements in FGDs by selected participants. Due to the limitations of an article format and the richness of the data, the examples from empirical material are only meant to be illustrative of the main summarized findings.

4 The Lithuanian Tricolour: Flag of the Nation and/or the State?

4.1 Official Discourse

The status of the tricolour as Lithuania's national flag shows how the complexities of understanding and defining the nation-state generate difficulties in establishing a single dominant perception of its symbols. Various interpretations of what the state and the nation are, explicitly or tacitly, characterize how the tricolour is perceived and defined, not

only the original LNF and its amendments, but also in parliamentary discussions as well as by FGD participants. The official discourse tended to interpret the tricolour either as the symbol of the state or the symbol of the nation, whereas for discussants in the focus groups the nation/state dichotomy was more blurred.

The wording of the LNF, from its inception on June 26th, 1991 throughout its sixteen amendments, consistently defined the tricolour as the national (*tautinė*) flag and the flag of the state (*valstybinė,* adjective; *valstybės,* noun). At the time of the adoption of the LNF, these two terms defining the tricolour – national and state – were both used as adjectives. Article 1 of the LNF declares that the "Lithuanian State Flag shall be the national[11] [*tautinė*] cloth, consisting of three equal horizontal coloured stripes, arranged with yellow above, green in the middle, and red below". The words *national* and *state* here are used not as nouns but as adjectives: not as objects to be defined, but as qualifiers that already have certain meanings. This indicates that thinking in terms of nations and states appears to be understood as self-explanatory and perhaps self-evident. Thus, categories of nation and state may belong to doxa in the newly re-established Lithuanian state.

The transition of the *state* from a qualifier to a subject was reflected in the February 17th, 1994 amendment to the LNF. The name of the LNF was changed from the Law on the State Flag to the Law on the Flag of the State. This modified the definition of the tricolour from a *state* flag (Lithuanian: *valstybinė vėliava*) to a flag o*f the state* (Lithuanian: *valstybės vėliava).* Thus, in 1994, the word *state* used as a noun positioned the state as the owner of the national flag, and so it has remained throughout further amendments.

The introduction of the historical national flag in the early 2000s triggered an earnest discussion regarding the state and nation relationship within official discourse for the first time. Because the tricolour is also defined as the flag of the state in the LNF, the interrelation between these two flags became an object of discussion. The questions of what the nation is and what the state is could no longer be left in a doxastic slumber and had to be addressed. Interestingly, the MPs that expressed their opinion on this matter chose to resolve the puzzle by arguing that the tricolour ought to be perceived as the flag of the nation rather than the state.

MP Vytenis Andriukaitis – when introducing the amendment to the parliament on May 25th, 2004 – began by noting that "unsuccessful discussions on whether Lithuania may have the state and the national flags took place in Lithuania". He followed up by saying that the possibility of introducing a flag based on Vytis together with the Lithuanian tricolour had been considered by Lithuanian political elites ever since 1918. This was never implemented "in the course of history, although many nations have two flags, they have a national flag and a state flag". Such statements legitimize the introduction of the historical national flag in a twofold manner. First, they rely on the topos of the historical precedent of

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11. The English noun *nation* can be translated by two Lithuanian words, *tauta* and *nacija*, and the adjective national can be translated by both *tautinis(-ė)* and *nacionalinis(-ė)*. Whereas nacija and nacionalinis(-ė) have a somewhat stronger political connotation, the terms tauta and *tautinis(-ė)* can refer to both political and ethno-cultural perceptions of nationhood. In my analysis, I examine how these words are used in the empirical material, noting the different Lithuanian words used if necessary for interpreting the empirical data.

interwar Lithuania, thereby emphasizing that the issue of the historical national flag is not a new idea, but has been reflected on for a long time. Moreover, the historical precedent of the interwar period is highly significant because it marks the creation of the Lithuanian nation-state upon which the statehood of present-day Lithuania is largely based. This topos can be summarized as follows: because serious consideration was given to the flag based on Vytis already at the inception of modern Lithuanian statehood, this unfinished task should be completed. Second, the topos of good examples is employed to show that similar practices are common among other nations and are not as experimental or novel as they might seem. MP Andriukaitis went on to state:

> Unfortunately, the national tricolour flag at the same time became the flag of the state in Lithuania; this is established in the constitution. Heraldry specialists note that the historical flag of the state of Lithuania also ought to be regulated and flown in connection with certain celebrations – our most important celebrations of the state – such as the day of the coronation of Mindaugas[12] or other occasions . . . although now that historical flag is flown next to the President's Office and the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania,[13] and outside the Ministry of National Defence, and outside the War Museum in Kaunas[14] according to tradition, but this was not regulated by laws. Therefore, the chapter on the historical flag appeared.

By using the adverb *unfortunately*, MP Andriukaitis depicts the designation of the tricolour as the flag of the state as a regrettable mistake. This manner of reasoning expresses one more nuance of the topos of the particularity of the state: the state and the nation ought not to be considered as synonymous concepts, and should be represented by separate symbols. The need to disentangle these two components of the nation-state – at least at the symbolic level by means of two different symbols – is justified by two rather different means. On the one hand, MP Andriukaitis refers to the recommendations of heraldry specialists, using the topos of expert knowledge as one of the premises for his argument: because experts are better informed in matters of political symbols, their advice ought to be followed. On the other hand, he supports his claims by appealing to the topos of tradition: because the historical national flag is already used *de facto* by many public institutions, *de jure* regulation should follow. This corresponds to MP Andriukaitis' earlier statements on the historicity of the use of the historical national flag.

The change of the LNF on April 1st, 2008 slightly modified the description of the historical flag by adding in brackets the adjective *armorial*, thus explicitly indicating that

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12. Mindaugas (c. 1200–1263) was a grand duke of Lithuania and the only king of Lithuania.
13. The national museum in the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania *(Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės valdovų rūmai)* is a reconstruction of the palace constructed in the fifteenth century for the rulers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and demolished in 1801. For an extensive analysis of the process of reconstructing this palace and the uses of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's heritage in both the Soviet and post-Soviet regimes in Lithuania, see Rindzevičiūtė 2010.
14. Initiated in 1919 and officially opened in 1921, Vytautas the Great Military Museum in Kaunas (the provisional capital of Lithuania during the interwar period) "was specially designed to house an exhibition that narrated the heroic story of the Lithuanian nation, especially its fight to establish an independent state" (Rindzevičiūtė 2011: 542).

the Vytis coat of arms served as the basis for this flag. The problematics of boundary de-marcation between the state and the nation in the context of discussing this amendment in the Seimas on April 1st, 2008 re-emerged. The topos of particularity of the state became even more prominent in the arguments of MP Egidijus Klumbys:

> Honourable colleagues, I think the flag of our state – Vytis against a red backgro-und – is the real flag of the state. If we remember the flags of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Vytis was there all the time, but never the tricolour. The tricolour appe-ared around 1920 and is not the flag of the state, but a national flag, the flag of Lithuanians, but not the flag of the state of Lithuania. Out of fear of the red colour, it [the tricolour] was made a state flag. This, I would say, injustice exists until now. I know that to restore it [the historical flag as the official flag of the state] is very difficult. Vytis with its red background is essentially not our historical flag but the flag of our state, which connects us with the fountainhead of our state. The tricolour essentially connects us with the interwar flag. . . . I hope that sooner or later this will be understood and the flag of our state will be Vytis with the red background.

Here the Lithuanian tricolour is distinctly referred to as the national flag, with strong connotations as a symbol of a national community and not of the state. Its connection to statehood is represented as being merely the result of historical circumstances (the reference to red alludes to the Soviet Union and "fears" of it) and causing an enduring "injustice". The perception of the statehood of Lithuania as having its roots in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania epoch and not in the interwar period is more than a simple underscoring of the importance of the historicity for the state. "Statehood" in the statement of MP Klumbys cannot be reduced solely to the national community – hence, the need for both the flag of the state and the flag of the nation is justified.

Through all its amendments and statements made by MPs when debating it, the LNF refers to the "nation" more in political terms or in relatively ethnically or culturally neutral terms. This is particularly noticeable in the LNF in the 1990s, where people living in Lithu-ania were generally referred as "citizens of Lithuania", "citizens of the Republic of Lithua-nia", and "other persons in Lithuania" or "citizens of foreign states residing in Lithuania". Since 2000, the LNF lexical choice has been terms such as "private individuals", "natural persons", and "legal persons", rather than "citizens". The preferred lexical choices among MPs, both in the 1990s and since, have been "citizens" *(piliečiai)*, "people" *(žmonės)*, and "person" *(asmuo)*, and only once "Lithuanians" in the statement of MP Klumbys above.

However, perceptions of the tricolour as the flag of the nation (even referred to in terms of political membership (citizenship) or relatively neutral words such as *people* or *persons*) were used not in attempts to accommodate the state and the nation together, but to se-parate them. In line with the advice of heraldry experts, some MPs held that there should be a symbolic division between the symbols of the state and the symbols of the nation. Therefore, although not replacing the tricolour, the historical national flag was adopted to exclusively represent the *state* of Lithuania, understood in institutional terms as well as in terms of a perennial political entity dating from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania period and to be used in connection with specific public occasions and venues.

4.2 Semi-Public Discourse

In contrast to the official discourse, participants in the FGDs found it difficult to establish a clear-cut separation between the nation and the state when talking about the tricolour. This was exemplified by the circumstance that the same participant could define the tricolour as the flag of the state, and then as a flag of the nation – in the same sentence. That is not to say that the discussants used those terms completely interchangeably, but the line between the two was often rather blurry.

This can also be seen in other lexical choices of focus group participants. The most common terms used in defining the tricolour were the flag of the "country" (šalis) and the flag of Lithuania – implying territorial, political/institutional, and social elements. In referring to those living in Lithuania, discussants most commonly (although not exclusively) employed the term "people" (žmonės) not in the political sense of the word but in the sense of "persons". Unlike the case with the text of the LNF or in parliamentary discussions, the ethnic identity of "people" or "persons" was important for focus group participants when discussing how different ethnic groups should live together. For instance, a participant in the Lithuanian focus group expressed the following:

> Because not everything depends on the flag, in truth, it depends on the person and the reaction to it [the flag]. For example, if I were a Russian and would put on [myself] the Lithuanian flag, and would say this is it – I'm Lithuanian . . . . I think it's not . . . They could if they were true Lithuanians who believed in what they are doing, in truth, if they really consider themselves Lithuanians. However, we see that most Russians in Lithuania have already been here for a relatively long time but don't speak Lithuanian. I think that a person who lives in a nation and believes in that nation – well, that country – would normally learn to speak normally [sic] the Lithuanian language in that time. Then, I think, it would not be a problem for that person to display the Lithuanian or, for example, Poland's flag.

Whereas a participant in the Russian group claimed:

> If a [Russian ethnic] person on a certain day, if he with all respect on February 16th, will fly the flag of Lithuanians, he has lived here from birth, he flies the flag with respect, and on, for example, on the day of independence of Russia, he will also fly the flag of Russia, with respect. And he will be responsible for this. And if a Lithuanian should raise the flag on February 16th with clenched teeth, as if he didn't want to, he could not care less, but it's normal. Though inside, exactly, there are no feelings. He doesn't feel anything, but this is orderly. And if the person [Russian] does, I don't know, with pure heart, this doesn't count.

The main symbolic asset of the tricolour was seen as being its connection with Lithuanian independence from the Soviet Union (the topos of independence). However, this historical event was represented not only as something that politicians or state institutions achieved on their own but as the achievement of the entire nation, thus involving both the public and the personal level. For example, one of the participants in the Lithuanian group argued:

Yes, regarding this issue [preference of tricolour or Vytis], I also think that there should be both. Not that one is the main one and the other would be like . . . . All those colours are also arranged: red – blood, then green – grass, then – the sun. So I think that it's also like we were struggling for our independence, where [people] were standing unarmed [the January events of 1991 in Vilnius], so I think, for them it [the tricolour] is also an important sign.

Moreover, the tricolour gains its symbolic capital within this particular age group as a symbol that is familiar, that one has "grown up" with, providing a sense of stability and continuity (the topos of habit). All of this indicates that, for these discussants, thinking about the nation and the state as interdependent entities is part of the habitual or doxastic way of viewing and categorizing the social world, at least to some extent.

This might also be why, for some participants, the introduction of a second flag, the historical national flag, next to the tricolour seemed not only unacceptable but even incomprehensible. For instance, one participant in the Lithuanian focus group said:

I think that it's something unnecessary . . . Well, unnecessary talks, unnecessary discussions [about replacing the tricolour with the historical national flag as the national flag], well, after all, that yellow, green, red is, well, like inherent. So you can see right away that it represents Lithuania precisely. And here that Vy . . . well, the coat of arms of Vytis is like . . . you also know it very well, you recognize it, but, on the other hand, you can apply it to every country because every country has been at war, every country has its own knight . . . Somehow . . .

Two participants in the Russian focus group also were against a possible change of the tricolour:

R_06: I think that flag can be changed only when . . .
R_05: . . . something . . .
R_06: . . . for the country . . .
R_05: Yes . . .
R_06: . . . a revolution, in such a case, or . . .
R_05: . . . some fundamental turning point in history, but here . . .
R_06: To be able to change out of the blue . . .
R_05: Let's change [the flag], then what do we do next? Change the coat of arms?

Moreover, those that were positively inclined towards this flag did not see the historical national flag as exclusively the sign of the state, to be flown only by state institutions in connection with public venues (as is done in political discourse). They talked about it as either already accepted or potentially acceptable for use in the private sphere. Explanations for the appeal of this flag also differed from those of the MPs. Although there were some references to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania period, the main attraction of this flag was seen to be its distinctive, charismatic, memorable design that would either appeal to the emotional and aesthetic senses of the individual or as a way to distinguish and provide greater visibility to the Lithuanian state among the symbols of other countries (the topos of distinction). Thus, in the justifications provided by the focus group discussants, the relevance of the historical national flag stems more from its appeal at a personal level rather than

its political and historical connotations. To cite an example, one of the participants in the Polish group explained:

P_04: Vytis is closer.
Moderator: Why?
P_04: Well, maybe it would emphasize . . . not nationalism [*nacionalizmą*] . . . but like, for example, Poland has the eagle.
Moderator: So, more character [meaning 'charisma']?
P_04: Perhaps.

Or the participants in the Russian group claimed:

R_06: Canada's [design of its maple-leaf flag] . . . it has some kind of distinction. . . . All right, we know yellow, green, red, but others . . . For others, what's the difference whether the colours are set in reverse order? . . . Well, of course, Vytis would be better, but now it's too late, the sign [the tricolour] is already given and this is it.

This can help explain why this rather statist designation of the historical national flag as the flag of the state to be used by public institutions, according to the LNF and the discourse of the MPs, does not prevent private individuals and groups of individuals in Lithuania from "appropriating" and using it during national celebrations and sport events, or as decorations for their cars and personal attire.

5   Conclusions

Why is this relatively "statist" approach towards the tricolour as well as historical national flag and relatively ethnically neutral reference to the inhabitants of Lithuania present in the LNF and the parliamentary debates, whereas the "national" and "ethnic" factors coexist with statist interpretations of the meaning of this symbol in the group discussions?

I would argue that a variety of ethnocentric and civic strands coexist in the official discourse, employed selectively depending on the strategic goals of the producers of the discourse. Within the framework of symbolic policies regarding national flags, in contrast to Brubaker's expectations that the states in post-Soviet countries would be concerned about the "health" and "survival" of the "nation", the dominant preoccupation of the LNF and the MPs appears to be state, and not national, issues of Lithuania. The insecurity felt by MPs about the sustainability of Lithuanian statehood (exemplified by attempts to "prove" its historical roots and continuity, to mark flags as exceptional symbols of public institutions and state holidays, etc.) together with the absence of perceived divisive or problematic issues within the nation (for instance, ethnic tensions) in their discourse can help explain why references to the "nation" in the LNF and in the statements made by MPs are kept in more political or ethnically neutral terms: operating with a more inclusive category serves to make the law or MPs' statements applicable to larger numbers of individuals. Moreover, concerns with the perceived fragility of the state may help in understanding why the intertwining of the state and the national community was seen as problematic and requiring alternatives.

It is within the semi-public realm that the nation-state as an entity and not two separate elements comes to the fore as compared to the political discourse. For the discussants, thinking about the nation and the state as interdependent entities is part of the habitual or doxastic way of viewing and categorizing the social world.

Perhaps this interconnectedness of the state and nation within social discourse is one of the reasons why national cohesion and interethnic coexistence emerge as key preoccupations within group discussions conducted for this study. Ethnic-based tensions were seen as existing not only between different ethnic groups in Lithuania but also between the state and its ethnic minorities. Thus, the perception that the Lithuanian state is of and for the titular ethnic group emerges as having more at stake in semi-public and not official discourse.

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Postaviti v dialog deli, kot sta *Restavracija kapitalizma: repatriarhalizacija družbe* avtorice Lilijane Burcar in Ženske ali *Molčanja zgodovine* Michelle Perrot, se na prvi pogled zdi nemogoče. Lilijana Burcar, profesorica ameriške in angleške književnosti na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani, piše o sodobnih problemih, ki so jim podvržene ženske v sodobni kapitalistični družbi, hkrati pa se naslanja na izkušnjo socializma bivše Jugoslavije, medtem ko Michelle Perrot, francoska teoretičarka in zgodovinarka ter Foucaultova učenka, piše zgodovino ženske v svetovnem merilu. A žal se, kot pravijo, zgodovina ponavlja, zato sta deli, ki sta vezani na popolnoma različen čas in prostor, srečujeta na ključnih točkah in križiščih: pri vprašanju žensk in njene usode v družbi, ki jo je po francoski revoluciji izoblikovala nevidna roka kapitala. Preden pa se lotim kritične obravnave, naj še opozorim, da mora bralec za smiselno presojo obeh del seveda najprej imeti za samoumevno predpostavko, da je pogoj za celostni razvoj človeške osebnosti nujna participacija v javnem prostoru. Samo skozi družbeno delovanje je človek zmožen pozunanjiti svoje želje, prepričanja, interese in se zgraditi v subjekt. Predvsem pa je to glavni pogoj za emancipacijo žensk in hkrati tudi stališče, ki ga zastopata obe feministki.

Kapitalizem in feminizem včasih še preveč dobro sodelujeta ter nas prepričujeta o svobodni izbiri in enakih možnostih vseh bitij na planetu. Kapitalizem nam želi dokazati svojo »brezspolnost« ravno s tem, ko zaposluje čim več ljudi (ne glede na spol), da ustvarja rezervno armado delovne sile. S takšno prakso pravzaprav »osvobaja« žensko, ki je bila v začetku devetnajstega stoletja zaradi revščine prisiljena stopiti v javni prostor dela. Ali kot se na neki točki vpraša tudi Michelle Perrot: bi brez industrijske revolucije ženske sploh uspele zapustiti svoje domove? Kljub temu pa ne smemo pozabiti, da »delo samo zase (žensk) ne more osvoboditi, čeprav lahko k temu prispeva« (str. 240). Kapitalizem nam hkrati predstavlja tudi največjo nevarnost, saj je v svoji osnovi – zaradi same težnje po ustvarjanju presežne vrednosti in akumulacije kapitala – popolnoma izkoriščevalski, kar pade predvsem na pleča žensk, ki zaradi nosečnosti in materinstva potrebujejo več socialne varnosti. Spogleduje se s feminizmom, ko gre za ženske višjega sloja, revni populaciji pa kratko malo obrne hrbet. Zaradi težnje po večjem dobičku polaga skrb za otroke in reproduktivno funkcijo v zasebno sfero, s tem pa nenehno in vedno znova proizvaja ter obnavlja patriarhalne strukture in zapisuje skrb za otroke v žensko telo. Kapitalizem je navsezadnje uspešno integriral patriarhat v svojo strukturo in ga obrnil sebi v prid oziroma je kapitalistični sistem v svoji strukturi navsezadnje patriarhalen. In ta njegov zlovešči obraz nam razkriva Lilijana Burcar, ki z bogato podatkovno razlago uspe empirično dokazati, kakšni triki se skrivajo za njegovim delovanjem, predvsem ko je govor o socialnih reformah, ki se tičejo emancipacije žensk. Naj naštejem nekaj pomembnih točk, ki jih avtorica opazi pri pregledovanju statistik o zaposlovanju.

Vsi smo kdaj že slišali za medijsko idealiziranje skandinavskega socialnokapitalističnega sistema. Čeprav nas mediji mnogokrat prepričujejo, da bi se morale evropske države približevati Norveški, Švedski, Danski in Finski, podrobnejša preučitev statistike kaže, da so ženske tudi tam močno podvržene patriarhalnemu modelu družbe. Kljub temu da je zaposlenost žensk v skandinavskih deželah izjemno visoka, se ob prikazu statističnih podatkov hitro izkaže, da je kar polovica žensk zaposlenih za polovični delovni čas, preostanek dneva pa preživljajo zaprte za štirimi stenami

svojih domov. Država pa s socialnimi reformami, kot so dolgi porodniški dopusti, ter dodeljevanjem finančne podpore in dodatkov večjim družinam pravzaprav podpira in povečuje moč družinske celice, kar ima za posledico močan odmik žensk in otrok v sfero zasebnega. Za lepo zvenečimi socialnimi reformami, kot so otroški dodatki, finančna podpora družin ipd., neopazno deluje logika kapitala, ki dvigne roke nad vse tisto, kar ne prinaša presežne vrednosti, torej nad reproduktivnim delom in vzgojo otrok. Burcar uspe opozoriti tudi na sisteme obdavčitev, ki so bile na primer za zaposlene ženske ugodnejše pod pogojem, da so ženske zaslužile manj kot njihovi možje. Takšni tihi, pritajeni ukrepi, ki jih najdemo pri mnogih zahodnoevropskih in skandinavskih državah od osemdesetih let naprej, tako spodbujajo, da ženske delajo le za polovični delovni čas, drugi del dneva pa porabijo za vzgojo in oskrbo otrok ter gospodinjstva, za kar bi morala poskrbeti država. Ti ukrepi pa redko koga motijo, saj so sprejeti ravno zaradi uveljavljenega prepričanja, da je skrb za otroke in družino tako ali tako primarna ženska funkcija.

Lilijana Burcar ostaja skeptična tudi pri uvajanju liberalnim feministkam všečnega zakona, kot je na primer očetovski dopust. Čeprav naj bi ta spodbujal večje vključevanje moškega v vzgojo otrok, se to v praksi ne dogaja pogosto, za sprejetjem teh reform pa se skorajda vedno skriva še sprejetje zakona o podaljšanju starševskega dopusta, ki omogoča, da ženska ostaja doma še dlje, kot je zares potrebno. Tudi delo doma, ki se oglašuje kot prijazen obraz kapitalizma, ki ženski pomaga, da lahko dela in nekaj malega zasluži, medtem ko pazi na otroke, ni prav nič osvobajajoč primer. Preko dela v samoti, za štirimi stenami, se ženske ne morejo povezovati med seboj, kaj šele ustvarjati sindikate, poleg tega pa je njihovo delo razpotegnjeno na ves dan, plača pa izjemno nizka. A z vzporednim branjem Michelle Perrot ugotovimo, da je bilo delo na domu zelo pogosta praksa tudi v 19. stoletju, njeno ohranjanje pa je spodbujal diskurz o tem, da naj bi ženska bila preveč mila, krhka in ljubka, zaradi česar se ne more zaposliti v umazani in robustni tovarni. Tako so izumili šivalni stroj, ki se na primer na domovih italijanskih šivilj, zaposlene kot podizvajalke tekstilne korporacije Benetton, ohranja še danes.

Lilijana Burcar nam predstavlja zakonodajno vejo oblasti zahodnoevropskih držav in se problema patriarhata ne loteva na podlagi diskurzivne analize ali vprašanja ideologij, ki potiskajo ženske v manjvredni položaj, kot to počne Michelle Perrot. Slednja namreč ne pozablja, da se kapitalizem ne ohranja zgolj kot ekonomska struktura, temveč se vedno znova utrjuje prav skozi reprodukcijo ustaljenih stereotipov in vzorcev delitve dela po spolu, ki segajo vse tja do začetka 19. stoletja. Vseeno pa je delo *Rehabilitacija kapitalizma*: *repatriarhalizacija družbe* nujno domače branje za vse feministke, ki svoj boj bijejo znotraj kapitalizma, saj avtorica razkriva vse ovinke in pasti prijazno zvenečih reform, s katerimi se na ravni državnih zakonov spodbuja marginalizacijo žensk in patriarhalizacijo sodobne družbe.

V nasprotju z zgoraj naštetimi praksami sodobnih kapitalističnih socialnih prijemov pa se Lilijana Burcar radikalno postavi proti vsem socialnim olepšavam kapitalističnega sistema in na piedestal postavi socializem bivše Jugoslavije, ki je ženske uspel razbremeniti na strukturno-organizacijski ravni. Avtorica na primer opozarja na sistem jaslic, vrtcev, šolske prehrane in menz, kar se nam morda dandanes zdi samoumevno, za zahodnoevropske države pa to vsekakor ne velja. Prav z ustanavljanjem vzgojnih in varstvenih dejavnosti se je ženska v bivši Jugoslaviji uspela osvoboditi verig štedilnika. »Osnova vsake emancipacijske politike je polna ekonomska samostojnost [...]« (str. 109), opozarja Lilijana Burcar, ki zagovarja, da je emancipacijo ženske resnično vzpostavil šele socializem, predvsem zaradi svojega prepričanja, da je izkoriščevalsko razmerje med spoloma mogoče izkoreniniti zgolj s spremembo ekonomskega sistema. Avtorica zagovarja socializem bivše Jugoslavije in ga obravnava kot primer, kjer je to uspelo. Vendar pa se njena teorija kljub navajanju vseh pozitivnih sprememb, ki jih je socializem uspel vzpostaviti, navsezadnje ne sklada s samo prakso in izkušnjo ženske v tem prostoru. Ta namreč kaže, da je kljub večji zaposlenosti žensk ter ustanavljanju vzgojnih in varstvenih dejavnosti ženska še vedno opravljala večino gospodinjskih opravil, ki jih zaradi službe ni uspela narediti v dopoldanskem času. Navsezadnje je mati, žena

po prihodu iz službe morala skuhati še večerjo, oprati perilo, počistiti kuhinjo, kopalnico ipd. S tem ko se je spremenila ekonomska baza, se hkrati z njo ni pretvorila tudi ideološka nadstavba. Nujno je namreč, da vzporedno z njo poteka še prestrukturiranje ponotranjenih patriarhalnih vzorcev.

Pozicija Lilijane Burcar izhaja iz prepričanja, da patriarhat nima izvora nekje v nezgodovinski podlagi, kakor to zagovarja Engels v *Izvoru družine in privatne lastnine*, temveč v samem kapitalističnem sistemu, s tem pa se naslanja na Aleksandro Kolontaj in Lenina, ki zatiranje žensk razumeta kot zgodovinski, in ne večni, nezgodovinski pojav. Razmisleki o zgodovinskosti patriarhata so veliko bližje tudi Michelle Perrot, ki se vsekakor ne strinja z determiniranostjo spolnih razlik in zapisanostjo manjvrednosti žensk v njeno telo. Vendar pa so pozicije Lilijane Burcar za razliko od francoske avtorice predvsem prosocialistične, njeno osnovno misel pa lahko najdemo že v delih Rose Luxemburg, ki se je, kot navaja Michelle Perrot, liberalnim feministkam posmehovala že celo stoletje poprej. Slednje naj ne bi razumele, da je emancipacija ženske možna zgolj in samo s pretvorbo izkoriščevalske kapitalistične družbe v socializem oziroma komunizem. Tako kot Rosa Luxemburg tudi Lilijana Burcar liberalnemu feminizmu očita, da svoja delovanja gradi na identitetni politiki, kot da bi bilo žensko vprašanje popolnoma ločeno od ekonomskih struktur.

Lilijana Burcar seveda pravilno ugotavlja, da kapitalizem poraja patriarhat in je z njim neločljivo zvezan. Vendar pa z odpravo slednjega ni nujno, da bomo odpravili tudi sam patriarhat, na kar avtorica pozabi, saj nostalgično poveličuje pretekli socializem in ni naklonjena liberalnemu feminizmu ter organizacijam ženskih gibanj. Vsekakor v kapitalizmu najbolj trpi nižji sloj žensk, feminizem pa je mnogokrat rezerviran za tiste iz višjega sloja. A patriarhat sega veliko globlje in je bolj kompleksen, zato se ga ne da in se ga tudi ni dalo popolnoma odstraniti zgolj s spremembo ekonomske baze, čemur prikimava tudi delo *Nevarna razmerja* Cinzie Arruzze, ki je bilo izdano leto po *Restavraciji*. »Prekriti spol z razredom in verjeti, da bo osvoboditev od izkoriščanja samodejno prinesla osvoboditev žensk in konec spolnih vlog, je napačno stališče. Prav tako je narobe misliti, da lahko razredno vprašanje odpravimo z oblikovanjem ideoloških diskurzov, katerih glavni sovražnik je spol. Potrebujemo premislek o kompleksnosti kapitalistične družbe« (Arruzza 2016: 3). Lilijana Burcar se sicer zaveda kompleksnosti kapitalistične družbe, žal pa rešitev vseh zagat prehitro najde v socializmu.

Problematika ideologije patriarhata in njene prepojenosti s kapitalističnimi odnosi je navsezadnje tudi glavna tema Michelle Perrot, ki z delom *Ženske ali Molčanja zgodovine* stopa v naš prostor s prvim slovenskim prevodom. Če Lilijana Burcar ne odstopa od svoje zaverovanosti v socialistični sistem, pa francoska zgodovinarka preizprašuje patriarhat v navezavi z levico kakor tudi z liberalnimi pozicijami nasploh. Vse to pa opisuje na popolnoma drugačen način, kot to počne L. Burcar. Če se slovenska raziskovalka naslanja predvsem na analizo podatkov *Eurostata* in na znanstvene empirične raziskave, kar se za laičnega bralca včasih izkaže za dokaj monoton pristop, pa Michelle Perrot v svojem zgodovinarskem slogu brska po arhivih ter v njih išče zgodbe, pisma in dnevnike, da bi obudila misli žensk, na katera so zgodovinarji ob pisanju učbenikov popolnoma pozabili. Osredotoča se predvsem na 19. stoletje, na čas, ko se je ločnica med javnim in zasebnim močno poglobila, vzporedno s tem pa so se začela oblikovati feministična gibanja. Francoska zgodovinarka pred bralca razprostre ideološki diskurz, ki se je razvijal vse od francoske revolucije dalje in ustvarjal idejno podlago patriarhalni strukturi kapitalistične delitve dela.

Michelle Perrot nevede odgovarja Lilijani Burcar z opisovanjem mačističnih tendenc med samimi marksističnimi misleci. Če Lilijana Burcar ostaja v okviru idealizacije našega prejšnjega sistema, pa francoska zgodovinarka demistificira lik Marxa s tem, ko nanj pogleda v vlogi očeta in moža. Prav na ta način privre na dan njegov avtoritarni odnos do lastnih hčera. Avtorica opozarja, da so Elenore, Jenny in Laura Marx mnogokrat prevzemale vloge tajnic in gospodinj, po poroki pa za vedno ostale v sencah svojih mož. Prav to, da so mnoge marksistke ženski osvobodilni boj razumele kot muho razvajenih deklet višjih razredov, hkrati pa poudarjale skupno osvoboditev vseh ljudi izpod primeža kapitalističnega zobovja, je v državah, kjer so bila takšna gibanja zelo

razvita, imelo za posledico kasnejšo dodelitev ženskih pravic kot tam, kjer so se ženske oprle na identitetno politiko. To je dejstvo, ki ga pred nas postavi Michelle Perrot, ko obravnava zgodbi Flore Tristan in George Sand, in ki ga Lilijana Burcar v svoji zaverovanosti v socializem spregleda. Navsezadnje je bilo v Angliji in Ameriki ženskam dopuščeno voliti prav zaradi njihovega spola: »/K/ot ženske bodo zastopale ženske« (str. 421). Vse težnje po univerzalizmu človeka, kot jih je na primer zagovarjala G. Sand in kot so jih zagovarjale marksistke, so se v zgodovini izkazale za ovire pri bojevanju ženskih državljanskih pravic.

Še en element, ki se ga Lilijana Burcar pri analizi ženskega dela ne dotakne, je feminizacija poklicev, ki ga uspe polemizirati Michelle Perrot. Čeprav je socializem žensko uspel osvoboditi izpod klešč domačega ognjišča in vlogi matere pridodati še mnoge druge vloge v družbi, ki so izgradile in razširile njihovo osebnost, pa se je ženska tudi zunaj zasebne sfere zaposlovala »svojemu spolu primerno«. Za ženske so bili rezervirani poklici kot na primer medicinska sestra, šivilja, telefonistka, tajnica, kuharica in vzgojiteljica. Ta delitev dela je prisotna še danes, odpravil pa je ni niti socializem. Velik vpliv na to delitev dela ima, kot navaja Michelle Perrot, prav diskurz o ženskem telesu in stroju v 19. stoletju. Čeprav so ženske vse pogosteje ugotavljale, da je delo v tovarni manj naporno kot delo doma, pa jih je preglasilo moško razglabljanje o škodljivih posledicah strojev za žensko telo. Ta naj bi povzročal histerične delirije, zdravniki so polemizirali slabe vplive tovarniškega zraka na maternico, moške je vznemirjala misel, da bi ženske ob tem, ko stroj premikajo z nogami, lahko doživljale orgazem, kar je bilo za moške naravnost nedopustno. Francoska teoretičarka opozarja še na diskurze o ženskih mehkih rokah, lepoti in milini, ki so podvrženi nevarnosti takoj, ko ženska stopi v prostor delavnice, tovarne ali prostorov, kjer se giblje moški. Prav na podlagi te raziskave francoska zgodovinarka opozarja, kako so ženske, čeprav so dobile pravico do dela in lastnega zaslužka, vseeno ostajale na manjvrednih položajih, v »ženstvenih« poklicih, ki se jih je razumelo le kot podaljšek njihovega biološkega spola. Takšno delitev dela pa lahko najdemo tudi v socializmu, kjer so v vrtcih, jaslih, šolah in menzah po večini delale ženske. Tako se je njihova družinska vloga matere le prestavila v prostor javnega, kar seveda je, kot pravi Lilijana Burcar, v vseh vidikih zelo dobra rešitev, ni pa razrešitev ideologije o ženski podrejenosti. Perrot zaznava, da [se] »z mešanostjo zaposlitve in množičnim zaposlovanjem žensk /.../ tako ni odpravila razlika med spoloma, temveč se je vzpostavila le nova hierarhija« (str. 254). To je lahko le še en argument za to, da feministična gibanja nikakor niso odvečna, vprašanje je le, s kakšno vsebino so prežeta.

Michelle Perrot ne podaja enoznačne rešitve; še več, kot zgodovinarka ves čas preizprašuje svojo pozicijo in metodo raziskovanja, tako da velikokrat podvomi, ali je pisati zgodovino ženske sploh mogoče. Čeprav se zdi rehabilitacija zgodovine žensk vsekakor nujna tudi za izobraževanje naslednjih generacij (sama sem v gimnaziji pri pouku zgodovine le redkokdaj naletela na kakšno žensko ime), pa je ta pozicija hkrati tudi nevarna, saj lahko hitro zapade v esencializacijo in determinacijo, kjer ločitev po biološkem spolu za seboj povleče tudi vse družbene stereotipe, ki se vežejo nanj. Mar ni redukcija raziskovalnega polja zgolj na žensko telo avtomatično podvržena definiciji ženske zgolj in samo glede na njen biološki spol? Mar avtorica spolne razlike ne poglablja še bolj prav s tem, ko skuša zgodovino poenotiti zgolj na ženski spol, njen razvojni proces pa naj bi se dogajal vzporedno z moškim? Francoska zgodovinarka sama priznava, da »zgodovina žensk najde svoj pomen zgolj v analizi, dekonstrukciji razlike med spoloma, v razmerju do drugega spola« (str. 505). Za avtorico je nujno, da vzporedno s pisanjem zgodovine ženske išče še diskurz moškega, saj je ločiti eno od drugega popolnoma nemogoče. Zgornjim očitkom se Michelle Perrot uspe izogniti ravno z naslonitvijo na dediščino Foucaultove zgodovinske analize, ki s kritiko esencializma ustvari koncepte in instrumente za preučevanje ženske zgodovine. Avtorica se zato ukvarja s produkcijo diskurzov, raziskuje tehniko sebstva, ki se kaže skozi dnevnike in korespondence deklet, razkriva napetosti med moškimi in ženskami ter igro oblastnih razmerij. »Ne ukvarja se zgolj z represijo obnašanj, ampak tudi z njihovo produkcijo. Ko opazujemo, kako so ženske producirane v

spremenljivi opredelitvi njihove ženskosti, se s tem prenavlja pogled, uprt v vzgojne sisteme, njihova načela in njihove prakse« (str. 506). Kljub vsemu bi lahko Michelle Perrot očitali dejstvo, da se s pisanjem ženske zgodovine nikakor ne uspe znebiti kategorije »Ženska« kot nekaj esencialnega in univerzalnega, čeprav to vztrajno zanika. Po drugi strani pa je nujno, da obstaja delo, kot je *Ženske ali Molčanja zgodovine*, kakor tudi njena obsežnejša raziskava *A History of Women in the West*, ki jo je urejala skupaj z Georgesom Dubyjem, saj prenavlja preteklost človeštva, da le ta ni več reducirana zgolj na velika dejanja moške polovice prebivalstva.

Lilijana Burcar v nasprotju z Michelle Perrot svojega pristopa ne preizprаša, ne prepušča se dvomu, temveč na problem ženskega vprašanja samozavestno odgovarja s socialističnim feminizmom. S tem razmislekom seveda sega globlje v probleme družbe kot sodobni liberalni feminizem, ki svoje privrženke išče med pop zvezdnicami ali bogatimi političarkami in poslovnimi ženskami, katerih vloga v družbi je pravzaprav nenehna reprodukcija že ustaljenih patriarhalnih vzorcev. A čeprav se je prepad med moškim javnim udejstvovanjem in žensko zapiranje v sfero zasebnega poglobil prav po francoski revoluciji in z vstopom kapitalizma v buržoazno družbo, se njegove korenine razraščajo veliko globlje v preteklost. Socializem je s svojimi ekonomskimi predpostavkami vsekakor prava pot do emancipacije, a če že bijemo boj proti kapitalizmu, ne smemo pozabiti še na hkratni boj proti patriarhatu. Kako spodmakniti tla kapitalizmu, ki se je s svojimi triki tako globoko usidral v naš vsakdan, in kako hkrati spodmakniti tla patriarhatu, ki vrsto let manjvrednost žensk postavlja na status resnice? Michelle Perrot s svojim poglobljenim pregledom ženske zgodovine in Lilijana Burcar z natančno analizo patriarhalnih značilnosti kapitalistične družbe predstavljata v našem prostoru pomemben prispevek k feministični teoriji. A vzporedno s tem je treba nujno pod vprašaj postaviti še kompleksnost kapitalističnega sistema samega in njegove integracije patriarhalnih vzorcev, saj teh dveh struktur prav zaradi njunega nenehnega prepletanja nikakor ne moremo in ne smemo ločiti, zato pa lahko na preproste in enoznačne odgovore kar pozabimo.

Literatura

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Renata Šribar

Stanislava Chrobáková Repar: Agonija smisla: premišljevanja o civilizaciji bogatih barbarov, propadu (med)kulturnih izbir, feminističnem oplajanju – in vztrajanju. Ljubljana: KUD Apokalipsa, 2015.
191 strani (ISBN 978-961-6894-72-2), 15 EUR.

Uvodna refleksija, v kateri se deloma poistovetim z avtorico. Imeti v obravnavi knjižico, ki že s sivomodrimi toni ovitka, naslovom in dimenzijo neznačilne pisemske ovojnice ter imenom založbe kaže na vsebino, »zagatno« za domačijsko prebivalstvo, po poklicih razumljeno kot intelektualno. Pametna tujka in tujec, katerima je Slovenija druga domovina, si drzneta izreči več, kot veleva vladajoča norma izrekljivega: Stanislava Chrobáková Repar in Carlos Pascual[1] govorno posegata v strukturiranje kulturniških in razumniških krogov na način osebnih zgodb, nastajajočih v t. i. zdrsih,

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1. Oba, avtorica in avtor, brezkompromisno in skorajda onkraj primerjave z domačijskimi teksti secirata situacijsko, strukturno in sistemsko razumniško-kulturniško sfero na Slovenskem. Druži ju še za naše kraje manj običajno prepletanje osebno-intimnega z družbeno-kulturnim in političnim. Avtoričin pristop podrobneje navajamo tu, s primerom Pascualovega kritičnega tekstovnega univerzuma sem se sama v odobravanju seznanila l. 2015; gl. Carlos Pascual (2015).

(so)odgovornih za medosebne odnose v kulturi in upravljanje z javnimi zadevami. Tvorno je, da ju imamo, četudi se znata naveličati utrujajočih kulturniških in družbeno-kulturnih konstrukcij slovenstva kot pripadnosti nacionalni državi; med njimi morda še najbolj tiste, ki veleva posekati po svoje rastoče drevo. Stanislava Chrobáková Repar se je že odločila za daljši delovni in samorefleksivni oddih na Finskem. Kot urednica literarnega mesečnika Romboid, ki ga izdaja Združenje organizacij pisateljev Slovaške (AOSS), je ponovno delovno kar temeljno zavezana Slovaški. Njeno predhodno, literarizirano, *faction* avtobiografsko delo *Slovenka na kvadrat* uvede manj znani slovenski pregovor: »To, kar tujec obeloddani, ga tudi pokoplje.« Navidezna demokracija neoliberalizma in duhamorni hiperkapitalizem temeljita na prikritih obsodbah in eksekucijah. »Prostovoljni umik« prikriva manko ustreznejšega izraza za onemogočanje, podobnega, kot je v sferi politike »odstopiti koga/katero«. Da postajamo tudi domačini in domačinke tuji lastni deželi in s tem objekt izgonov z delovnih področij, je skromna tolažba; peza nima enake mere; nas tolažita materni jezik in vrojenost v socialne mreže. Delo v fokusu, *Agonija smisla*, govori o pezah; to, kar sta na strani oblasti produkcija ter obnavljanje zagatnosti sistemov in struktur, je za ljudi težko breme; na plečih avtorice je zgoščeno do absurda. Kot recenzentka sem lahko v določenih delih individualnega prepredanja izkušnje in vednosti *emična*, pogosto umeščena na tisto družbeno-kulturno lokacijo, kjer postanejo delovna razmerja neznosna – »drseče pobočje« diskriminiranja, s katerega se kotali vse večja »snežena kepa« stigem, izrazov, ki nekonformistični osebi pripisujejo »konfliktnost«, »negativizem«, »nesodelovanje«, celo »histerijo«. Uporabljeni metafori potemtakem nista primerni le v tematiziranju položaja in možnosti žensk v sferi dela, temveč prav tako ilustrirata druge diskriminacijske vozle; ti vključujejo hierarhično nižje poklicne položaje in/ali pripadnost manjši instituciji, »previsoko« starost ali »preveliko« mladost, navsezadnje tudi tisto »osebno okoliščino«, ki jo pojmujem kot nujo po izgovarjanju določenih dejstev – torej tistih dokazljivih zadev, ki kažejo na sistemske in strukturne nepravilnosti. Te je možno najbolje videti brez neoliberalnih olepševanj kot golo resnico zgolj z določene perspektive oziroma, s feministično epistemologijo, v okviru »umeščene vednosti«.[2]

Hannah Arendt v analizi stalinizma v svojih *Izvorih totalitarizma* najdeva poglavitni mehanizem totalitarističnega onesposabljanja celostnosti (tj. integritete) ljudi, ki je deklarirana človekova pravica: zanemarjanje, zanikanje dejstev, ki učinkuje na materialne možnosti ter psihično kapaciteto posameznice in posameznika. Tudi s tega refleksivnega mesta lahko izpeljemo strateško zapoved o opisovanju in analizi konkretnih situacij, skupaj z vpletenimi osebami in lastnim doživljanjem. Četudi zaznamovana s subjektiviteto, ki jo »umeščena vednost« vključuje transparentno, ne da bi jo maskirala s fantazmatsko »objektivnostjo« interpretacije, je vsaka hierarhična medčloveška situacija pomenljiva za široko občestvo. Politična strategija upora privzame umetniški, avtoetnografski ali feministični avtobiografski pristop, skozi katerega je konkretnost razumljena v posplošitvi kot ena izmed možnih matric bivanja. Tekst skozi doživljanje prejemnice in prejemnika postane točka identificiranja – četudi skozi delna poistovetenja in momente zanikanja z zakasnelim prepoznavanjem. Kjer ni možnosti racionalnega dialoga z oblastjo, se upornost množi z empatijo in emičnostjo, stopanjem v čevlje drugega, druge. Prislovičnih 99 odstotkov prebivalstva Slovenije je v stanju latentne ali izražene jeze, ki jo pred aktivacijo v množični odpor aktivno zadržujejo vzbujanje strahu pred »begunskim valom«, vladine lažne obljube in nerealne ocene stanja pa *ad hoc*, kratkoročne rešitve za brezposelne. Stanislava Chrobáková Repar opisuje aktualni »nevidni totalitarizem«, za katerega velja enako kot za transparentni totalitalitarizem Hannah Arendt: soobstoj z njim je nemogoč (str. 54). Raztresene naokoli nas onkraj podobnega razumevanja stanja stvari in trenutkov poistovetenja nič ne druži niti nas ne bo združil nikakršen strankarski program; s tem praznim upanjem že imamo izkušnje. Ne obeta se niti spontana prenova odnosov

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2. Feministična epistemologija v sodobni, referenčni obliki v nasprotju z doktrino univerzalne objektivnosti konceptualizira delno objektivnost, ki je rezultat neizogibnega pozicioniranja v spoznavnem procesu (tudi če je to prikrito ali nezavedno).

v smeri podpore, solidarnosti in sodelovanja. Družbeno predpisovanje tekmovalnosti in borbenosti zgolj za lastno dobrobit in hitrost ponotranjenja na individualnih ravneh sta empirični dokaz, da sociološka trditev o počasnosti spreminjanja navad in naravnanosti ne drži. Naravnanosti in prakse posameznikov in posameznic so odvisne od interesov vladajoče družbene skupine, ki narekuje predpise in norme ter jih uteleša (ali v praksi včasih tudi zavrača, če je bilo predpisovanje in normiranje vsiljeno od zunanjih dejavnikov, denimo EU, in zanjo nesprejemljivo). Ko gre za spreminjanje položaja in možnosti žensk, so spremembe počasne, ko gre za večanje osebnih koristi privilegiranih in njim priličenih »navadnih« ljudi, so hitre. Odgovornost za vrednote okolja je v prvi vrsti politična.

> Vsako prenovo sistemskega ustroja bi namreč morali izpeljati ravno tisti, ki jih vse skupaj najbolj zadeva in pesti, torej državni uradniki in politični voditelji. Res je, da glava glave ne vidi, a je kljub temu mogoče, da se uzre v zrcalu lastnega ravnanja – v območju, ki ga upravlja (str. 154).

Zahteva po »dobri« oblasti vključuje pogoj, voljo oblastnikov in oblastnic, da se uzrejo v zrcalu lastnih delovanj. Eva Bahovec v razmisleku o značilnem, androcentričnem teoretskem hlepenju po spoznanju »začetka« zapiše – podobno kot avtorica obravnavanega besedila , da »stopiti samemu sebi za hrbet« ni možno – toda nujno je reflektirati lastne predpostavke (Bahovec 2007: 11). Združeno branje misli obeh pove, da je »dobra« oblast tista, ki ima zmožnost samorefleksije glede idejnega zaledja, prepoznavnega po parcialnih, »anekdotičnih« in širših družbenih učinkih svojih ravnanj.[3] In vendar se prav kmalu ta stava še ne bo izšla. V *Agoniji smisla* receptu za dobro oblast (ki naj z vrednotnim sistemom in dobro prakso prežame družbo) sledi analitični zaključek, ki govori o občem povampirjenju in nuji umika v osamo. Beg od skupnosti (»nas«, str. 188) zna biti tudi pobeg od samih sebe v delu, neminljivo zaznamovanem s posamično skupnostjo, četudi zgolj skozi zanikanje. V tem oziru je konstruktivna strategija odmor in kontemplacija skupnostnih razmerij, vključujočih »mene«, »mojo« prisotnost, odsotnost, delovanje, naravnanost. Pa nasvidenje spet v naslednji vojni, ki v aktualnosti z zadnjim filmom v nizu Vojne zvezd napoveduje iskanje ravnotežja med »dobrim« in »zlim«, torej spravljanje sveta nazaj med oba tečaja s »silo, ki se prebuja« (če naj uporabim naslov filma).

O intimi in aktualnosti. Zahteva po izhodišču v situacijskosti in aktualnosti, ki je poleg medijev zajela teorijo, se je s perečim dogajanjem, izvirajočim v spolnem nadlegovanju na kulturniški sceni julija 2016, primer Radaljac-Flisar, vtihotapila tudi v tole pisanje. Zadeva vključuje vlogo in položaj obravnavane avtorice Stanislave Chrobákove Repar na raznotere načine, od konkretnih do refleksivnih. Objava dogodka spolnega nadlegovanja urednika Sodobnosti Evalda Flisarja, ki se je nelegitimno in nelegalno lotil seksualizirati poslovni odnos z Anjo Radaljac, honorarno sodelavko v pogajanjih za nove delovne naloge, je sprožila vrsto odzivov, med drugim tudi odstop Flisarja z mesta predsednika SC PEN. Prav tu v dvojni vlogi zelo konkretno vstopi Stanislava Chrobáková Repar – kot soustanoviteljica MIRE, odbora žensk SC PEN in kot zasebna dopisnica tega kroga, ki z navedenega položaja nastopi s »politično nekorektno« izjavo glede delovanja Sodobnosti in Evalda Flisarja. To pismo, skupaj z zahtevo MIRE po Flisarjevem sprejemanju odgovornosti, je bilo po njegovi trditvi razlog, da se je dejansko odločil za odstop s SC PEN-ovega predsedniškega

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3. Percepcijo in učinke »nemodre« oblasti je značilno utelesil kolega, ko je v vidnem stanju zadovoljstva izjavil, da bo poskrbel za študentko, ki naj bi določeni znanstveni dogodek snemala brezplačno. Kontekst, tj. trud za enake možnosti žensk pri znanstvenem delu, je naredil zadevo še bolj absurdno, o čemer je pričal tudi smeh iz zadrege prisotnih. Kar razumemo kot izkoriščanje osebe v podrejenem položaju, je oseba v funkciji direktorja in profesorja očitno razumela kot ugodnost svojega položaja, s katerega lahko »pomaga« na račun študentke klestiti stroške, verjeli ali ne, pristojnemu ministrstvu. Primer je paradigmatski z več prepletenimi perspektivami, spolno, starostno, perspektivo oblasti-moči, dela in vrednotnega sistema.

položaja, četudi ga je k njemu neposredno in najprej pozval apel, prihajajoč skupaj s sopodpisanimi z Airbeletrine.

Problematika kliče k vpogledu s pomočjo misli iz obravnavanega dela. Te se kar scela vežejo na navedeni primer; razpirajo se v kontrapunktu s konstruktom univerzalne resnice in v ritmu »parcialnih resnic«: osebna intima in javno, spol in kultura, kulturna produkcija, delo in oblast. Najprej: osebnoizpovedno oziroma intimno je element neformalnega, žanrsko komentatorskega elektronskega pisma, ki ga je avtorica poslala kolegicam iz MIRE. Sem sodi tudi sporna izjava, ki jo navaja Flisar kot višek nekorektnosti in v dokaz, da osebe, ki so od njega zahtevale odgovornost in integriteto, same ne delujejo konsistentno. Stanislava Chrobáková Repar v svojem internem pismu zapiše, da bi bilo zaradi načina delovanja Evalda Flisarja najbolje pobruhati njegova vrata v prostorih PEN-a. Naknadno, v odzivu na izstopno »deklaracijo« Evalda Flisarja, še pove, da se je njena politično nekorektna izjava implicitno nanašala na frazem »jokati na vratih«. Res, bila bi tudi žaljiva, če bi bila izrečena neposredno osebi in morebiti celo sodno označena kot kazniva, če bi bila javna. Toda izjava v internem krogu in brez dejanskega pozivanja k škodljivemu dejanju nad stvarjo (ne nad osebo neposredno) je bila več kot očitno izraz nemoči in jeze obenem ter faktično neškodljiva za kogarkoli, razen za izrekajočo se, in sicer zaradi nenadnega porasta adrenalina, ki se ni mogel sprostiti na ustreznem mestu. Če analiziram zadevo z vidika performativnosti govora, gre za politično nekorektno frazo v osebni komentatorski korespondenci (ki jo lahko razume drugače le um kakšne avtoritarne osebe, ki bi si želela biti utelešeni panoptikum). Primerjati jo z verbalnim spolnim nadlegovanjem, ki je samo po sebi kaznivo dejanje, je potemtakem nelegitimno, še posebej ker gre za javno zavajanje z interpretacijo. Pogled s perspektive moči tudi pokaže na neprimerljivo naravo dejanj: v obeh situacijah (vis-à-vis Radaljac in C. Repar) je Evald Flisar hierarhično višje pozicioniran: je urednik, ki se s honorarno sodelavko dogovarja o sodelovanju in jo spolno nadleguje – in v primeru MIRE tako urednik, ki s svojimi politikami lahko vpliva na pozicioniranja drugih, sorodnih publikacij[4] kot predsednik SC PEN, ki ima pomembno vlogo v slovenskem kulturniškem publiciranju. V obeh primerih, a še posebej v drugem gre za situacijo, ki jo z *Agonijo smisla* umestimo v razmerja nacionalnih kulturnih politik in njihovih nosilcev, nosilk ter delitve na osi nacionalne, tj. »državne« kulture na enem in njenega alternativnega roba na drugem koncu osi. Vplivno doumevanje kakovosti je povezano z vladajočim kanonom, ki je, se razume, integralni del konstruiranja navedenega hierarhičnega razmerja. Avtorica ob svojih kritičnih trditvah ne posega le po slovenskih primerih (četudi je trn v njeni peti slovenski, torej tisti, ki »njeni« založbi ob redukciji finančne podpore z oblastniškega mesta očita »nihanje kakovosti«). Eleganten uvod v kritiko Slovaške na tem področju je pismo njene matere, ki komentira slovaško državno proslavo; nadaljuje se skozi branje slovaškega kolega Zajaca, ki dekonstruira ločevanje državne in alternativne kulture ter ugotavlja, da ne gre za krizo kulture, ampak za krizo institucij na tem področju (str. 101). Kriza, na drugem mestu zapiše avtorica, je najprej kriza tistih, ki odločajo. Zaradi neoliberalizma se zgodi, da je ne glede na področje povsod enako: smisel za mnogoterost se izgublja hkrati z naraščajočim zmagoslavjem in vplivnostjo (str. 40). Najbolj deprimirajoče je, kadar so odločevalci in odločevalke na strani »navidezno družbenih angažmajev«, ki jih izvajajo z »monopolistično držo« (str. 55). Pravzaprav je sodobna državna kultura pod domnevno levo oblastjo ravno to, je trend, ki se konstituira kot tisto najbolj napredno in obenem izključujoče vse,

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4. Presojanje, ali je imela avtorica v zvezi s Flisarjevimi pristojnostmi glede komisijsko izbranega in objavljenega eseja, ki je kritiziral poslovanje *Apokalipse*, delovnega domicila Stanislave C. Repar, prav ali ne, zaradi pomanjkanja vpogleda ni v moji pristojnosti. Je pa gotovo, da so gola razmerja taka, kot jih avtorica generalizira v svojem pismu članicam MIRE. Veliki, državno dobro podprti založniški projekti vs robna založništva, ki izdajajo velikim sorodne revije. Razmerje je videti nepomirljivo, saj je pripravljenost delati brezobzirno očitno večja na mestih manjše ranljivosti in možnosti biti sankcioniran.

kar se ne nosi »trendovsko«. Kriza odločujočih, ki skozi matrico védenja postaja kriza ljudi, poraja žurnalistična in teoretska preizpraševanja o zlomu humanizma ter željo po vrnitvi razsvetljenskega duha. Avtorica tu zavzema feministično-epistemološko držo, kritično izpostavlja samoumeščanje razsvetljenca izven lastnega okolja (str. 162) in opozarja, da je sodobni humanizem paravan za brezskrupulozno uresničevanje individualnih interesov (str. 169).

V obravnavi primera Flisar-Radaljac-Repar se meja med javnim in zasebnim dekonstruira sama po sebi, kaže se kot izumljena tvorba (dejansko se je zgradila z napredkom industrializacije, ko so se vrata tovarn zaprla najprej za otroško delovno silo in nato za ženske). Seksistično nadlegovanje v tradicionalnem spolnem razmerju moški–ženska se tako mnogim še vedno prikazuje kot »naraven«, »normalen« element delovne sfere in zato v primerjavi z izražanjem gneva, ki prihaja s strani ženske, zanemarljiv. Ta razcepljena percepcija, izhajajoča iz diskriminacije na osnovi spola in hierarhije poklicnih položajev, se ne konča pri kolegih. Ideja, da naj bi »spol Ž« po svojem utelešenju že nosil s sabo tudi občutek za diskriminacijo na osnovi spola in večjo družbeno občutljivost za nepravično, družbeno nekonstruktivno delitev moči, nima racionalne osnove. V primeru Flisar-Radaljac je upravni odbor Društva slovenskih pisateljev (DSP) s svojimi prvopodpisanimi članicami (*sic*) v konkretni medijski situaciji nastopil proti apelom za odstop Evalda Flisarja s položaja predsednika SC PEN. Tako je skušal ščititi svojega predsednika Iva Svetino, ki je javno nekajkrat izjavil, da lahko o delovanju svojega predsednika razpravlja edino SC PEN sam. Kako pomenljivo, da so bile na prvi frontni liniji UO DSP za spremembo ženske, moški so se podpisali za njimi skupaj s predsednikom. Postavitev ni izvirala iz nekakšne etikete izven hierarhije. Izpostavile so se kot ženske, implicirano v vlogi potencialne ciljne skupine za klasično spolno nadlegovanje in hkrati očitno »nedotaknjene« ... pa v konfrontaciji z vsemi tistimi ženskami, ki smo Flisarjevo spolno nadlegovanje razumele kot to, kar faktično po zakonu je. To pozicioniranje takoj pade v oči in izzove zgroženost, recimo ji feministična zgroženost. Druga neznosna stran tega dopisa je ponavljanje Svetinovih trditev, da je razsojanje o vedenju Flisarja lahko samo interno (*sic*). Kot da civilna družba in njene funkcije ne obstajajo, kajti pobuda z Airbeletrine je dobila najmočnejše zaledje prav tu. Je pa res, da obstaja manko te zavesti tudi na sami Beletrini, apel bi bil v očeh javnosti diskurzivno boljši, če bi njegova koordinatorka in (so)avtorica za svojo platformo vzpostavila priložnostno civilnodružbeno skupino, ne pa svoj delovni domicil, ki je v rivalskem odnosu s *Sodobnostjo*. Kakorkoli že, v vsakem primeru je javna razprava o kaznivem seksističnem vedenju zaželena, enako legitimen je apel, navsezadnje gre za vodilno osebo kulturniške ustanove, podprte z javnimi sredstvi ter pomembne doma in v tujini, za urednika vplivne literarne revije in znanega pisca. Stanislava Chrobáková Repar, ki ima v zadevi Flisar-Radaljac pomembno vlogo, bi pravzaprav lahko obrazložila »normalnost« poteze predstavnic UO DSP, ki so zavzele »moško« pozicijo. Jo postavila v okvir lastne vednosti o (interesnih) skupnostih žensk in njihovemu razpadanju ter o nacionalnem kulturniškem bratstvu. V sferi beletristike vladajo »moško-moške« izbire, in ta »enospolni vzorec« se »najbolj ,zanesljivo' pojavlja pri kolegih (velikokrat tudi nastavljenih kolegicah, omreženih s ,prednostjo') in institucijah, ki (še vedno) predstavljajo vrh ledene gore, ki štrli iz vode – namreč kulturo v njeni nacionalni reprezentativnosti« (str. 179). Priča še z lastno izkušnjo, nekoliko manj konkretizirano, zastrto: »nesposobnost povezovanja« (str. 183), ki jo vidi kot slovensko značilnost, velja tudi v družbenih in poklicnih skupinah marginaliziranih žensk, ki se trudijo v smeri transformiranja odnosov.

> Še med ženskami, ki se trudijo iz vsakdanjega urnika pregnati absurdno tekmovalnost, je včasih stanje pripravljenosti k vzajemnemu sodelovanju ne le vprašljivo, temveč tudi zastrto, nerazčiščeno, čudno pogojeno s takšnim ali drugačnim (a vedno »senčnim«) statusom v družbi, s sumničavostjo do drugih, tudi s samopoveličevanjem, z ugovori zoper pobude, ki niso rasle na njihovem zelniku (str. 183).

Vprašanje je, koliko šans ima feministični projekt, ki ga povzema Judith Squires: izvajanje treh strategij žensk. Te ustrezajo dojemanju sfere političnega kot institucionalističnega (strategija vključitve), etičnega (strategija obrata) in kritičnega (strategija premestitve):

1. Večja vključenost žensk v javno, institucionalno dojemanje političnega;

2. obračanje fokusa instrumentalističnega in institucionalističnega dojemanja političnega – razširiti ga je treba z zornim kotom, ki so ga ženske razvile v zasebni sferi;

3. premeščanje meje med javnim in zasebnim, med konfliktom in sposobnostjo, da bi ustvarili bolj heterogeno in kritično dojemanje političnega (Squires 2009: 68).

Proti toku, a vendar k izteku. Lucidnost avtoričinega vpogleda v družbeno-politično okolje s poudarkom na sferi kulture in posebej založništva se tke skozi točno in duhovito izrazje, načitano in pogosto zaradi priučenosti slovenščine tudi samoniklo. Stanka Chrobáková Repar vrednotno preobrne pustolovske romaneskne junake za potrebe novejše interpretacije načina delovanja sodobne oblasti, tj. »vladnosti«. Junak, ki izziva vladajoči red, postane »junak« oziroma antijunak, ki ta red utrjuje. Na področju knjige, založništva in avtorstva je predmet njene analize tudi upravljanje s Svetovnim dnevom knjige v Ljubljani (31. 3. 2011–1. 4. 2011). Opisuje druženje odgovornega s »pustolovskimi naturami«, ki jih nič ne moti »razkorak med besedami in dejanji /.../, med prikazovano in resnično realnostjo« (str. 154). Po položajih tako rekoč praviloma posegajo storilci nelegitimnih, tudi nelegalnih dejanj, ki uničujejo ustvarjalna življenja in načenjajo njihovo eksistenčno bit. In jih ni, ki bi jim za ta dejanja sodili, niti z javno besedo ne. Zato velja hotena nevednost glede delovanja oblasti; tiste, ki si drznejo/-mo vedeti, obvladuje nemoč glede možnosti javnega priziva. Javni interes ni postavka v igri, če nekoliko parafraziram zastavljeno trditev, da se oblast »samoservisira« (str. 158–159). In kaj natančno to pomeni z oblastniške perspektive: »/S/tvar si zamisliš, jo odobriš, podpreš (iz t. i. skupnih virov ...), jo izpelješ, oceniš, pohvališ in še na(d)gradiš z nadaljevanjem.« Tako deluje oligarhija s svojim zaledjem. K pričujoči kritiki je smotrno pristaviti dva poudarka, enega, ki je v skladu s feministično epistemologijo, in drugega, ki je prispevek tega teksta. Idejni izvori delovanja samopašne in samozadostne oblasti so v promoviranem razsvetljenstvu. Toda »razsvetljenec« se spoznavno ne more ugledati v lastnem okolju; če je to, denimo, multikulturno, mu raznolikost spajanja in razklapljanja etničnih kultur ni prezentna oz. mu zaradi zornega kota, kjer tiči njegova absolutna resnica,[5] noče in ne sme biti prezentna navkljub zagovarjanju multikulturnosti (str. 162). Obenem se pod krinko »občečloveškega humanizma« odvijajo zainteresirane dejavnosti elit (str. 169).

Drugi fokus, ki se stika s predhodnim, je tematizacija spola. Je prav tako precizno analitična – vendar včasih opotekajoča se po zdrsljivem terenu feministično teoretskih struj. Mestoma je tako zaznamovana s časom nastanka, ki kaže na avtoričino osvajanje študijev spolov. Vsa jedrna poglavja so sestavljena iz že objavljenih tekstov, ki datirajo od leta 2003 naprej. Dovolj je, denimo, misliti samo o »spolih« in opustiti pridevnike »biološki« in »družbeni« ali »kulturni«. Naj ta klasifikacija ostane področnim evropskim strategijam, namerno in nenamerno capljajočim za teorijo. Pravzaprav avtorica tudi sama večkrat opozarja na spornost mišljenja znotraj kategoričnih nasprotij (»vladavina logocentrizma, ujetega v nasprotja«, »neproduktivna in množeča se razpetost med nasprotji«, str. 94), med ostalim v navezovanju na »pisavo žensk« in jezikovno izražanje. Ta naj razvija »svoj ne-dualni zunaj-opozicijski koncept osvobojenega ustvarjanja znotraj jezika/govorice, ki prehiteva vsako miselno strukturo ter je del nekakšne proto-semantike, povezane z vidnim, pa tudi nevidnim okoljem jezikovnega dejanja« (str. 82). Tudi širše jo zanima »kultura mehkih interakcij« (str. 173), zato se v preučevanju možnosti žensk v kulturi znajde v identiteti znanstvenice, zastavljajoče se za transparentno angažiranost in transformativno raziskovanje (str. 83). Pobeg pred falogocentrizmom, ki trga svet skozi dihotomije, je v vrnitvi k telesu, v »soustvarjanju pomena s telesom« (str. 94 in 96).

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5. Kritika falogokratskega univerzalizma »resnice« na primeru mulikulturalizma je razvidna tudi iz sledeče izjave: »Kampanje, tudi tista o medkulturnem dialogu, izhajajo iz lažnih predpostavk, češ da vsi vemo, o čem je govor, saj so pojmi vzpostavljeni in splošno sprejeti« (str. 109). Multikulturalizem je eno izmed fokusnih področij avtoričinega razpravljanja, čeprav ne prepreda njenega dela tako kot neoliberalno delovanje oblasti v kulturi in problematika spolov.

Telesnost, ki jo avtorica razširi na materialnost znaka, le ima neke omejitve, spočete v sami zaznavi (nikdar zares odrešeni diskurzivnega značaja): »V vsakem trenutku, v ljubezni, političnem življenju, v tihem življenju zaznavanja se z neko stvarjo sprimemo, jo naredimo za svojo, pa se ji obenem vendarle odmikamo in jo držimo na distanci, brez katere o tej stvari ne bi vedeli ničesar.«[6] Telo, tista (s)tvar, in diskurz o njem, ki ga odmika, ne da bi bilo kdaj zaradi posredovanosti skozi jezik sploh zares zaobjeto, o tem razmerju ter njegovih političnih in kulturno-družbenih kontekstih velja razmišljati vedno znova.

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6. Gre za paradoks zavestnega bitja, kot ga izraža Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2008, 210) skozi branje Montaigna.