

# **Serbian music and cultural national identity: The role of medieval myths**

**Tatjana Marković**

Assistant Professor of University of Arts, Faculty of Music, Belgrade

## **Abstract**

The myth about Kosovo and Metohija, as the centre of the great Serbian medieval Empire is in the core of the Serbian national identity. Besides, the mythical place of southern Serbia was also the place of the most tragical loss of Serbian people: after the Kosovo Battle (1389), Serbian Empire was defeated and for almost five hundred years invaded by Ottomans. From that point, Serbian people became Heaven people, according to the construction of the myth in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, the myth has been re/mis/used in all important moments of Serbian political and cultural history. Music has a significant role in the construction as well as reconstructions of the myth.

**Keywords: Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia, Serbian Music, Serbian National Identity, Hybrid Identity**

---

\* 本文 2007.05.07.收稿，06.07.審查通過。

The concept of national identity was constructed at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, marked as “a revolutionary project” with the aim of establishing *Volk* from *Bevölkerung*, and thus an autonomous collective subject of history.<sup>1</sup> The rich contemporary theoretical thought about national identity often assumes differences between so-called Western and Eastern understanding of national identity, based on different ways of profiling national memory, that is, to the theory of nation. Thus Anthony Smith pointed out that the Western model of national identity explains nation by a specific territory, a political community of equal members, and a common bourgeois culture and ideology. Conversely, the Eastern or ethnic model of national identity is based on a community that is signified by native, vernacular culture, language and customs.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, early nationalisms in Eastern Europe were based on ethnographic research, or, on the image of folk culture, which was done, for example, by the ethnographer and language reformer Vuk Karadžić (1787-1864), the linguist Đuro Daničić (1825-1882), or the author of the first Serbian collection of drawings and sketches with ethnographic motives of Orthodox churches and monasteries, Stevan Todorović (1832-1925), the member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences who was awarded for the collection at the First Pan-Slavic Exhibition in Moscow (1867). Similarly to this, it is stressed that national identity in the Western sense is implying “a ‘political nation’ and referring exclusively to the population living within an area defined by borders”, while in the Eastern a common language and culture have the main role.<sup>3</sup> Although these theoretical explications might find their theoretical application in some respects, they are not fully acceptable because of the East-West division, since, for instance, German national identity could be closer to the “Eastern” identity. As a matter of fact, Serbian national identity – the way of its

---

\* A version of this paper, under the title *Idiosyncrasies of the grand narratives on Serbian national identity*, was presented at the conference *Emergenzen 4: Selbstdarstellung/ Self-Representation*, organized by the Kakanien revisited, 11-13 January 2007, Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> Aleida Assmann, *Arbeit am nationalen Gedächtnis. Eine kurze Geschichte der deutschen Bildungsidee*, Frankfurt am Main, Pandora, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Reno, University of Nevada Press, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> “Introduction”, *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity*, ed. by Günter Bischof & Anton Pelinka. Contemporary Austrian Studies, Vol. 5. New Brunswick, London, Transaction Publishers, 1997, 26.

establishing, building, and profiling is very close to the German. The theory about Western nation-building would be more convincing if it would surmount the mentioned geographical division,<sup>4</sup> as it has been concluded that the 19<sup>th</sup> century was “a golden age of vernacularizing, lexicographers, grammarians, philologists, and litterateurs” – in entire Europe and its immediate peripheres.<sup>5</sup>

Besides, regarding the questions of culture diversity, some theorists make distinction between hybrid and stable (Homi Bhabha), or hybrid and multiple identities (Timothy Baycroft). Cultures are “not pure, authentic and locally bounded. They are the syncretic and hybridized products of interactions across space”.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the hybridity, assuming both diversity at one, unique geographical space, as well as the lack of a unique geographical space because of the influential diaspora, is characteristic for the Serbian identity concept. Both kinds of identity, however are constructed through “shared meanings of nationhood”, narratives of the nation, including stories, images, symbols and rituals (Bhabha). These narratives are expressed through print media, that is, through historiography as a crucial signifier of collective identity. In that way, narratives in history are established, being arbitrary, self-replicating, and often tendentious,<sup>7</sup> resulting in mythicizing national history. These mythic stories, along with the chosen symbols, are resulting in establishing the national identity, in the first place through self-representation and autocommunication,<sup>8</sup> which functions “not to add

<sup>4</sup> Moreover, certain theoreticians themselves stress that they have no deeper insight in the situation in Eastern European countries. Thus, Benedict Anderson pointed out that he is “not pretending to any expert knowledge of Central and Eastern Europe”, so that, he had to rely on the conclusion of other authors, in the first place Seton-Watson. Cf.: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition, London, New York, Verso, 2006, 73 (footnote 15).

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1977, 11. Cf.: Benedict Anderson, *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Baker, *Cultural Studies. Theory and Practice*, London, New Delhi, SAGE Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2003, 41. Cf.: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London, New York, Routledge, 1994; Christoph Hamann and Cornelia Sieber, Hrsg., *Räume der Hybridität. Postkoloniale Konzepte in Theorie und Literature*, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, Georg Olms Verlag, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> James Webster, “Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: ‘First Viennese Modernism’ and the Delayed Nineteenth Century”, *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* XXV/2-3 (autumn 2001–spring 2002), 109.

<sup>8</sup> Jurij Lotman defined two kinds of communications, one directed to the other/s, and the other directed to oneself. The latter one he called autocommunication. He pointed out that autocommunication “appears in an enhanced and marked form in any culture or subculture when that subculture begins to produce myths and symbols of itself... This autoportrait of the culture, once it is stated, reflects the texture of the culture, and begins to acquire a certain kind of universality”. Jurij Lotman, *Semiotics of Culture. Proceedings of the 25th Symposium of the Tartu-Moscow School of Semiotics, Imatra, Finland, 27th-29th July, 1987*, ed. by Henri

information in the quantitative sense, but to enhance the ego”, since the stories are repeated like mantras.<sup>9</sup> The narratives of Serbian identity are, according to the so-called Eastern ethnic model, based on epics, myths and even the prophecies of “folk” origin, or, on the political ethno-myth.

The core of those autocommunicational stories for the Serbs is the myth about Kosovo and Metohija, connected with the mythical belief that the Serbian people are the oldest people on earth, speaking the oldest language. Serbs gained this status via great suffering through the many battles for liberation from different invaders passing through the crossroads between East and West, North and South, where Serbia has been embedded. This special status of Serbian people gave them the attribute of the Heaven people. The most significant of the numerous battles is said to have been the (first) Kosovo Battle, which took place on Vidovdan (the day of St. Vid, June 28) 1389. Although there were no winners in the battle, since both Serbian Prince Lazar and Ottoman sultan Murad I were killed together with most of their soldiers, and the Serbian prince even lost his kingdom, so that the Ottomans invaded their territory, Serbs chose to continue their existence in God’s Heaven instead on earth. Moreover, by their own blood they saved Europe from Ottoman invasion, being the guardians of the entrance to the Western world.<sup>10</sup> It is believed that the enormous loss and defeat of Serbs in Kosovo was not caused by a stronger Ottoman army, but by the lack of unification of Serbian troops. For the same reason, Serbia could not protect its large medieval territory governed by Tzar Dušan (ca. 1308-1355), one of the respected rulers of Byzantine commonwealth too.<sup>11</sup> The Kosovo Polje (also called Gazimestan) was chosen to be the place of the

---

Broms and Rebecca Kaufmann, Helsinki, Arator Inc., 1988, 131.

<sup>9</sup> Henri Broms and Henrik Gahmberg, “Communication to Self in Organizations and Cultures”, *Administrative Science Quarterly. Organizational Culture*, September 1983, 482.

<sup>10</sup> “Europe is not against us because we are not and do not wish to be Europe, but because..., by the gift of God, we are the bearers and guardians of the genuine Jerusalem-Mediterranean Europeanness, which does not accept the loss of the balance of human existence in cross-bred centres, the loss of the horizontal and vertical of the Holy Cross. The West is turned too much to the material and to enriching its own works, to the expansionist impulse, to totalitarianism of the most perfidious crime” – wrote Metropolitan of Serbian Orthodox church in Montenegro, Amfilohije Radović. Cf.: Ivan Čolović, *Politics of Identity in Serbia. Essays in political Anthropology*, transl. by Celia Hawkesworth, New York, New York University Press, 2002, 40.

<sup>11</sup> Stefan Uroš IV Dušan Nemanjić was the Serbian emperor 1331–1345, leaving the Serbian Empire from the Danube at north to the Corinth at south, and from Adriatic to the Aegean Sea. He is also famous as an

1389 battle as a center of the medieval Serbian empire, and the Patriarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church established in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Prince Rastko Nemanjić, who later become a monk, and the first Serbian archbishop St. Sava.

The core of this grand narrative<sup>12</sup> about Serbian national identity is still a source of powerful present political and cultural national/istic *topoi*, a collective mythical self-portrait. The *topoi* include specific symbols, images, group habits, “stored in typical words, pictures, and actions. Images can be transmitted from generation to generation in initiating courses, in schools, street corner societies...”<sup>13</sup> In this very case the leitmotifs are: liberation wars and uprisings, national heroes, struggle for unification of dispersed Serbian people, readiness to sacrifice for freedom and national pride, Orthodox religion, *metoh*’s<sup>14</sup> land, medieval golden age in the national history, Kosovo as the topic of highly praised epics.

Thus the building of modern Serbian (musical) culture was determined by transcribing folk epics about the Kosovo heroes, among other literary forms, by the first folk songs harmonized according to the rules of the Western harmony (Vuk Stefanović-Karadžić: *Narodna srpska pjesmarica*/Serbian Folk Songbook 2, 1815), by reform of the language based on the language of the epics (Vuk Stefanović-Karadžić: *Srpski rječnik*/Serbian Lexicon, 1818; a Serbian-German-Latin Dictionary containing 26.270 words),<sup>15</sup> showing prevailing Austrian political influences comparing with the Russian ones (except the official language of the Serbian Orthodox Church), afterwards by printing the first journals and books in Serbian language in Vienna, and also by establishing cultural institutions, among which choral societies had the most significant role. It is worth saying that the

---

author of Dušanov zakonik (Dušan’s Law) from 1349.

<sup>12</sup> The concept of grand narrative is outlined in *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* (The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge) by Jean-François Lyotard in 1979.

<sup>13</sup> Henri Broms and Henrik Gahmberg, “Communication to Self in Organizations and Cultures”, *Administrative Science Quarterly. Organizational Culture*, September 1983, 483.

<sup>14</sup> This is a Byzantine term for the church ruler. Since the Western part of Kosovo has belonged to the *metoh*, i.e., to the Orthodox church, it was named *Metohija*

<sup>15</sup> Whereas European national poetry is characterized by metric norms established by classicists, in Serbia, the language reform by Vuk Karadžić “wiped out, in a certain sense, the classicistic experience, demanding new foundations rooted in folk heritage”. Cf.: Novica Petković, *Ogledi iz srpske poetike*, Beograd, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1990, 184.

modern Serbian printing, revived in 1741 after more than a century, by the publication of Hristifor Žefarović's *Stematografija*, a collection of coat of arms accompanied by heraldic poems and 29 portraits of South Slav, mainly Serbian rulers-saints. This confirms Benedict Anderson's idea that the "print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation".<sup>16</sup> This was especially important in the context of Serbian culture, since Serbian people were disseminated over a large part of Europe, speaking Latin, Church Slavonic, and German languages and therefore being unable to communicate with people speaking vernacular language in Serbia proper.<sup>17</sup> Thus lectures at the first Serbian gymnasium in Sremski Karlovci, were delivered in German and Latin until 1848.

Dominant choral compositions on the repertoire of the nineteenth-century Serbian choral societies were patriotic songs, and a significant number of them were dedicated to the Kosovo heroes, then to Tzar Dušan, the significance of Vidovdan, or the need for liberation from the Ottoman invaders. One of the most popular song was *Ustaj, ustaj Srbine* (Arise, arise, Serb) by Nikola Đurković and Josif Šlezinger, often considered as "Serbian *Marseillaise*". The meeting of several choral societies was accordingly organized in order to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kosovo Battle, in 1889 in Kruševac, the town where the last Serbian Tzar Lazar assembled his army for the battle against the Ottomans on the Kosovo Battle where which he lost his empire. This celebration was visited by many guests from abroad, among them Czech Youth who brought as a gift a collection of folk songs about Kosovo to the students of the Gymnasium in Kruševac. At the end of this celebration all choral societies sang the *Kosovska himna* (Kosovo Anthem) by the Czech composer and conductor of a Serbian choral society Quido Havlasa. At the place where the anthem mentions heroes who died for their nation he borrowed a quote from the then Russian national anthem. At the

---

<sup>16</sup> Benedict Anderson, *op.cit.*, 44.

<sup>17</sup> Serbian citizens lived in "new two-story buildings, were travelling in couches, leaded discussions... in Latin, spoke Russian redaction of church Slavonic language, and on their way to Vienna, Pest, Leipzig and Krakow communicated in German language". Miodrag Popović, *Istorija srpske književnosti 2: Romantizam* (History of Serbian literature: Romanticism), Beograd, Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika i nastavna sredstva, 1985, 8.

same time, the anniversary was celebrated at the Srpska kraljevska akademija (Serbian Royal Academy, later Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts) in Belgrade, including a performance of the orchestral overture *Kosovo* by Davorin Jenko.

A hundred years later, in 1989, then Serbian president Slobodan Milošević organized at Gazimestan a celebration of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kosovo battle which was the starting point of a spectacular re-establishing of the Kosovo myth. With the revival of this grand narrative began the era of nationalistic Serbia, and therefore all its *topoi* became recognizable: the reviving of Orthodox religion suppressed for decades, pronounced heroism and militarism for national purposes. According to probably exaggerated official reports, about two millions people came to Gazimestan, along the roads girls in national costumes stood by tables with food (arranged by the painter Milić od Mačve), Serbian national flags, Orthodox icons, processions were everywhere around. In the monastery Gračanica, after a liturgy in the presence of all the highest church officials, relics of saint Prince Lazar were brought to his legacy, the monastery of Ravanica. Six hundred willows were planted. At this anniversary celebration of the battle was performed the *Pasija svetom knezu Lazaru* (The Passion of Saint Prince Lazar) for a narrator, four soloists, two choirs and orchestra (commissioned by Radio Belgrade 3) composed by the Belgrade composer Rajko Maksimović. The composer received for this work The 7<sup>th</sup> of July award. The central part of the spectacle was the arrival of Slobodan Milošević: his appearance from the sky by helicopter was accompanied by a performance of Beethoven's *Funeral march*, followed by a performance of the Serbian national anthem performed by the choir of one hundred of priests. Concluding his speech, Milošević stated that now, six centuries after the Kosovo battle "we are again involved in the battles. They are not armed ones, although such a possibility is not yet excluded", obviously announcing the next war.<sup>18</sup>

The political change of 1989 also affected an explosion of Orthodox religious belief, after several decades of its suppression, at the same time with Catholic

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf.: Slobodanka Ast, "Deset godina Slobodana Miloševića u deset slika" (Ten years of Slobodan Milošević in ten pictures), *Vreme*, no. 454, 18 September 1999.

music as part of the school curriculum and the concert repertoire in Serbia. The consequences were evident not only for composing and performance of religious music, but on all social and cultural levels as well. Golden cross has become an unavoidable piece of jewelry among *nouveaux riches*, and especially among turbo-folk singers. Their status thus, in this way too, confirms itself as a new construction of the Serbian self-image. Moreover, the turbo-folk singers, along with “famous warriors/soldats” (mainly criminals who were involved into the wars in Bosnia and Croatia) represent so-called Serbian social elite established during the 1990s.

In this case the grand narrative was rudely (mis)used for political aims of Milošević as well as some other presidents of pre-1990s Yugoslav republics, embodied in the war and disintegration of Yugoslavia. Media played the main role in this process, promoting an aggressive nationalistic propaganda. Some broadcasting stations, such as the TV *Pink* promoting so-called turbo-folk music, had a task to provide “opium for the masses”. The reimbursing of turbo-folk music and populist culture followed a magnificent example of imposing cultural identity directly from the most powerful political circles, namely the campaign of the Serbian Ministry of Culture called *Lepše je sa kulturom* (It is nicer with culture) initiated in 1994/1995. The campaign banned broadcasts of neotraditional music on all TV channels and major radio stations. Instead, one could have seen commercial spots containing sheep’s bleating, or cow’s mooing, or the grunting of a pig, accompanied with the message: *Promeni svoj ugao posmatranja* (Change your point of view). Besides, Belgrade was filled with posters showing the same animals, with the caption: *Nemoj samo da zuriš u mene, bavi se kulturom* (Don’t just stare at me, engage in culture”). This project had some positive results (numerous exhibitions, concerts throughout Serbia; the publishing of new books on Serbian history and culture), showing how experiments like this can be manipulative. However, when a new political crisis started, the mentioned opium was needed again and suddenly the media were folded with the ear-splitting outcries of turbo-folk voices. The next ministry of culture was even a reviewer of a new CD



of one of the neo-folk music star.<sup>19</sup>

One more instance of political manipulation and (mis)using of national culture and art was a new production of the first Serbian opera *Na uranku* (At Dawn, 1903) at the Narodno pozorište (National Theatre) in Belgrade in 1999. Due to a certain intervention in the original libretto, in the opera's *verismo finale*, a young Serb Rade does not kill his mother in astonishment and passion after a Turk Redžep discovers that Rade is an illegitimate child, which was the greatest disgrace in patriarchal Serbian context at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but he kills Redžep who revealed this secret. Subsequently, his mother Anda brings guns and peasants initiate an uprising against the Turks, clearly associating the then crisis in Kosovo.

By the redefinition of the Serbian grand narrative, the myths about wild, primitive, exotic, even heroic Balkans was not only revived,<sup>20</sup> but also redefined in the most negative context. Consequently, the term Balkanization became a synonym for fragmentation in the rudest way, primitiveness through different Western European media. Serbian people had to face for the first time a deeply negative side of embodiment of the grand narrative, and, the accusations for a collective national guilty, that have dominated the world media had to endure bombing in an action hypocritically called *The Angel of Mercy*, so that people who did not support Milošević became double hostages. Compared to the period of

---

<sup>19</sup> So-called neo-folk, or neo-traditional music had occurred imitating folk music, and lately set apart and started "to live its own life through various appearances" (Dimitrije Golemović, "Da li je novokomponovana narodna muzika zaista narodna?" /Is the neofolk music really folk music?/, *Etnomuzikološki ogledi*, Beograd, Čigoja štampa, 1997, 176). Thus, it has become more and more distant from traditional Serbian music. The massive migrations of rural population to urban environments during the decades after The Second World War, affected the modernization of the rural life itself and have brought about various aberrations in the performance of folk music via the use of rock or jazz ensembles instead of traditional instruments, for instance. This is also true of songs composed in the folk music manner, including Mexican, Turkish, Iranian folk or pop music. The change in the image of singers of neo/traditional, or turbo/folk music, suggests that visual aspect highly prevails over the auditive. This fosters mass (music) culture, intended for a wide audience escaping from existing problems. Cf.: Tatjana Marković, "Music and society in Serbia and Montenegro in the 1990s", *Muzika/Music*, januar/juni 2001, 56–57.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, the *komad s pevanjem* (theater play including music, mainly singing numbers) *Cserny György* (1812, Pest) by Hungarian drama writer István Balogh, with music by Gábor Mátray, about the Balkan and Serbian hero Karadorde, the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, was so popular that it was performed successfully during the next decades throughout Hungary. Moreover, Balogh chose exactly this play for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of work celebration, in 1857, but with music by Kornelije Stanković and Györg Novak. Besides, Balkan characters were "lustige Personen", sometimes wild and dark, but not negative in the contemporary sense in Viennese operettas. Cf. Christian Glanz, *Das Bild Südosteuropas in der Wiener Operette*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Graz, 1988.

Principality of Srbija, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the image of Serbia has completely changed. The result was amnesia, or unwillingness of media representing the official attitude and inability of the people to face the crimes of its military groups and segments of the army during the war of year 1991 to 1995. False military heroism echoed in music of this time too, mainly in new epics with *gusle*, dedicated to the heroism of Serbian soldiers, the General Ratko Mladić, and glorifying the President Slobodan Milošević.<sup>21</sup>

Extremely powerful media propaganda was also supported by a well-developed plan in other areas. Apparently the most devastating among them was the reform of the curricula of Serbian schools, as the history textbooks of grammar schools, or the new legislature about the university education can prove. Thus the process of ruining the highly respected Serbian intellectual tradition began obviously in order to undermine the education and to humiliate educated people who formed the main opposition to the regime.<sup>22</sup> Never before Milošević education in Serbia was endangered in the same way. On the one hand, Serbia was during the 1990s affected by the international sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia and, on the other, by rude interventions introduced in 1993 by the State Council of Education into textbooks. For example, the illustrations in the textbooks for the third and fourth grades of elementary schools were included photos mainly representing monarchs and military leaders, together with some brutal war scenes. The only two personalities from the field of cultural history were Saint Sava and Dositej Obradović. “Isolated from other historical contents, taken out of its international

---

<sup>21</sup> *Gusle* is a single-stringed, rarely two-stringed instrument, played with a bow, traditionally used as accompaniment for a kind of rhythmical reciting epics in the Balkans. Understandably, epics have been dedicated to the national heroes, in Serbia in the first place ones from the Kosovo Battle. Cherishing the oral transmitting of the epics for centuries, *guslars* (performers) were very respected as “keepers of tradition”. In that way, *gusle* is regarded as a symbol of heroism that has been stressed during the 1990s too. For instance, in his speech for the fifth anniversary of the *Guslars’* association *Student*, prominent Serbian poet from Montenegro, Matija Bećković, talked about *gusle* as the substance of Serbian identity, pointing out that until Serbian language exists, *gusle* will be its inseparable counterpart.

<sup>22</sup> This trend is still present in Serbia, especially related to the artists or scientists, who express disagreement with Vojislav Koštunica’s government. For instance, the fact that the young Serbian playwright Biljana Srbljanović was awarded the most significant international theatre prize is hardly mentioned in the mainstream press, except on the B92 radio station and media of anti-nationalist orientation.

context, Serbian history is presented as an assembly of traumas that in the crucial currents of history led people to seek liberation. Consciously or not this presentation of history supports the propaganda, which dominated political rhetoric during the last decade in Serbia: 'There is no resurrection without death'. That message wrapped in Christian discourse, carries in itself an essential epic concept of values and a cyclical pagan consciousness whose deepest sense is that suffering, poverty, war, death and forced migration will pave the path to 'final' liberation, and should be taken as a historical necessity and a guarantee for a happier future. It is all about the absorption of nationalism in the language of religion, about making political speech sacred, about the replacement of Christianity with the religion of the nation.'<sup>23</sup>

The same message is a conclusion of the popular movie *Boj na Kosovu* (The Kosovo Battle, 1989), broadcast on TV during Milošević's time, and also recently during the referendum on the new constitution, or, indirectly, the status of Kosovo.

While Serbian people were waiting for the Serbian Prince Lazar's body to be brought from the battle field, the Lazar's widow, Princess Milica talked with Vuk Branković and two priests, stressing the main message of the movie:

Vuk Branković: *Don't you realize, Milica, that Turks definitely ruined the Serbian Empire at Kosovo?*

Princess Milica: *Serbia at Kosovo was not defeated by Turks, but by vojvodinas, despotovinas, knezevinas* (different kinds of principalities, meaning the lack of unity of Serbian people)

Priest 1: *If Serbia wants to be redeemed, it should forget Kosovo as soon as possible.*

Princess Milica: *If Serbia forgets Kosovo, what will it remember?*

Priest 2: *Kosovo is the place, where the door to the Hell is directly opening for*

---

<sup>23</sup> "Nation becomes the parameter of all values, its cycles a universal law which must be obeyed and for and for which sacrifices are expected". Dubravka Stojanović, "Construction of Historical Consciousness. The Case of Serbian History Textbooks", *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*, ed. by Maria Todorova, London, Hurst, 2004, 334-335.

*Serbia.*

Princess Milica: *Kosovo is the place from which Serbia is ascending to Heaven.*

The same *topoi* in political vocabulary and similar actions by the Ministry of Education have been common used until very recently. Under the influence of dominant conservative orthodox religious ideology, the minister of education Ljiljana Čolić personally intervened to exclude first foreign languages from the program of the first grade of grammar schools, and then evolutionist Darwin's theory from the biology textbook for the students of the eighth grade of grammar school. After furious reaction of numerous scientists, researchers, and a significant segment of the public, after only six month she had to resign, giving the statement that she would not be able to deny her faith.<sup>24</sup>

The lack of education provided politicians the opportunity to manipulate with the voters. Thus the gap between two Serbias, as it is often said, between urban educated and uneducated rural *palanka* (meaning, the provincial mentality) people became even deeper.<sup>25</sup> This division was especially obvious before Milošević's funeral, while his body was exposed in Belgrade. While at The Square of Nikola Pašić, in front of the former Yugoslav parliament in Belgrade a spectacle was performed, there was another meeting at The Square of Republic in front of the National Theatre, on a distance of just a few hundred meters,: people with balloons in different colours, were celebrating Serbia without Milošević. In other words, the double identity was stressed again.

---

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Ljiljana Čolić is a university professor of linguistics and a prominent member of the Democratic Party of Serbia led by Vojislav Koštunica. It is worth mentioning that both prime minister Koštunica and Mrs. Čolić said that her act was her "personal stamp" to the reform of education in Serbia (!). Ironically enough, Darwin's book was translated and published in Serbia in 1878; four years after the translators, the brothers Radovanovic, had received the agreement and deep gratitude from Darwin himself.

<sup>25</sup> Originating from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century division between only a few cities and mainly rural society, *palanka* became a kind of a label of conservative mentality in Serbian society in the recent history too, meaning the fear from any change, novelty, tending to isolation, xenophobia, prevailing fear of the Other. The clash with European, or urban citizen culture, is still one of the main characteristics of Serbian identity. More detailed insight in this topic is explicated in the excellent study of Radomir Konstantinović, *Filosofija palanke*, published in seven editions from 1969 to 2006, actual especially during Milošević's regime, for he used it in order to humiliate intellectuals, mainly disagreeing with his politics.

The powerful and re-used influence of the grand narrative on Serbian identity, assuming entire collection of national myths, is still important direction in the state politics, producing the doubleness of identity. It seems also the best strategy would be improvement of education, providing better conditions for younger scientists and artists, recognizing education as the core of national identity instead of issues of secondary importance,<sup>26</sup> and by preventing brain drain, it could be possible to educate and reconcile two Serbias, or at least to make the gap between them lesser. In this context, musical aspect of self-representation would be redefined, stressing more the (national) representational concept of educated pro-European oriented elite by classical and urban rock music, instead of nationalistic populism presented by neotraditional, turbo-folk music.

---

<sup>26</sup> In the summer 2006, the premier Vojislav Koštunica opened the *Sabor trubača* u Guči, claiming that it is “the best Serbia can offer to the world”. In spite of the fact the festival of brass bands is an interesting manifestation, it is certainly not the main Serbian cultural and artistic, or national value.

## 塞爾維亞的音樂與其文化國家認同： 中世紀神話的角色

Tatjana Marković \*

貝爾格勒\*藝術大學音樂研究所助理教授

### 摘要

關於科索夫與美托希雅的神話，作為中世紀大賽爾維亞王國的中心，是塞爾維亞國家認同的核心精髓。此外，位於南塞爾維亞的神話位址，更是塞爾維亞民族史上最大兵敗悲劇的發生地：在科索夫之役(1389)之後，塞爾維亞王國因戰敗，致使奧圖曼(Ottomans)土耳其帝國入侵將近五百年之久。從此以後，神話已然被不斷濫用於塞爾維亞政治文化歷史的所有重要時刻。音樂，在神話的建構與再建構裡，有其非常重要的角色，

**關鍵字：** Kosovo and Metohija \*、塞爾維亞、塞爾維亞音樂、塞爾維亞之國家認同、Hybrid Identity \*

---

\* 因作者姓名未曾有過中文譯名版，在此為慎重起見，亦不翻譯其為中文譯名。

\*\* “Belgrade”，中譯有「貝爾格勒」和「貝爾格萊德」等。

\*\*\* 科索夫省及美托希雅（位於科索夫西方）。「科索夫」又有中譯為「科索沃」和「科索伏」。在此未慎重起見，關鍵字處鮮少被中譯的地名，仍保留其英文名稱。

\*\*\*\* “Hybrid Identity”之中譯名詞有「混血認同」、「混雜性認同」、「混種認同」等。