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Constructing the Self and the Other- The Case of Elite Discourse in Bosnia and
Herzegovina

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I hereby declare that I have followed all rules of academic honor. This paper is exclusively the product of my own labor, is based on my own research and on the literature presented in the References chapter.

In Belgrade.....

Signature:

.....

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Introduction

Between 431-405 BC a war had been waged, one of the most influential wars in the Classical era, at least in the West. The Peloponnesian war had been fought between Athens and Sparta, along with a myriad of other city-states. The conflict itself was described in great detail by the Athenian general Thucydides in his seminal work *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Within the *History of the Peloponnesian War* on but a few pages lies the tale of Amphipolis, rarely explored and quoted by scholars, in comparison to the more famous Melian dialogue. At Amphipolis, Brasidas the Spartan general, soundly defeated the Athenian host, however he died of his wounds shortly thereafter. Thucydides describes the actions taken by the citizens of Amphipolis after the general was buried in their town:

“And then the Amphipolitans erected a monument to him, they would offer sacrifices to the hero, they honored him by founding athletic games in his name and annual sacrificial rites. They also declared him a founder of their city, tearing down the buildings of Hagnon and erasing all the memory of him as the founder of the city. They considered Brasidas as their savior and since they were in alliance with the Spartans, they reckoned that due to their hostility with the Athenians, honoring Hagnon would be neither useful nor prudent (since he was of Athenian decent).”¹

The tale of Brasidas and Amphipolis is one of the first cases of conscious and very deliberate identity (re)construction. This tale like countless others throughout history testifies that identities are forged, re-forged and tempered in the flames of war. During the 1990s all three ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth BIH) were engaged in a civil war that cost the lives of thousands. According to the research conducted by Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo, 96 895 people died during the war, with Bosniaks comprising 66% of the victims, while Serbs and Croats comprised 25.6 and 7.8 respectively.² The Dayton accords ended the war by unifying and yet separating these communities. The three communities live in one single country and physical boundaries do not exist. However psychological barriers are well and truly

¹ Тукидид, *Пелопонески рат*, Београд, Admiral books, 2010, pp 272-273

² Patrick Ball, Ewa Tabeau and Philip Verwimp, “The Bosnian Book of Dead: Assessment of the Database (Full Report)”, Households in Conflict Network, The institute of Development Studies-University of Sussex, 17 June 2007, p. 29 Table 19

alive. Whether these psychological barriers existed before and precipitated the conflict or were in fact created by it is a matter of some debate. Be that as it may, the war left BIH a country of split sovereignty with two semi-sovereign political entities the Federation of BIH (FBIH) and Republika Srpska (RS). The dominant axis of conflict (or cooperation) in BIH is the relationship between the Bosniaks and the Serbs who dominate (demographically and politically) their respective entities. Emerging from the embers of war the two entities seek to prove their legitimacy, or to be more specific, the ruling elites seek to strengthen the legitimacy of said entities. The aim of this work is to explore how the elites are strengthening the legitimacy of their entities, how are they (re)forging communal identities, after emerging from a conflict and how are they presenting the Other. Much like with the tale of Amphipolis this entails exploring how the elite discourse views the community's past, present and future as well as their recent adversaries from the war.

Bosniaks and Serbs are more than communities, they are nations. There are multiple definitions of the nation and nationalism, which is to be expected since the two are highly contentious and dubious concepts. Perhaps the most complete definitions were given by Anthony Smith. He defines nationalism as “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the *autonomy, unity and identity* of a nation,”³ whereas the nation is “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”.⁴ For the purpose of this work Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation will be used: “(The nation) it is an imagined community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”⁵ The reasoning behind this choice is in line with the limitations of this work. Namely, this thesis does not seek to delve deeper into the problem of nation and nationalism, i.e. the two crucial questions: what is the nation and when did it begin? This thesis merely deals with the **narratives on the nation** expressed by national elites, without going deeper into the conceptual issues. In other words, this is the study of how elites imagine their nations not what the nation “objectively” is or is not.

As the nations and their elites imagine what they are, they imagine the limits of their nation, that is to say what they are not. This process is simply unavoidable for: “Without the Other, as

³ Anthony Smith, *National Identity*, Penguin Politics and Current Affairs, London, 1991, p. 74.

⁴ Ibid p. 14.

⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London:Verso,2016, p. 6

Bachtin would claim, the subject cannot come to know oneself or the world around him, because meaning is created through discourse, where different consciousness meet... the Other is both an epistemological as well as ontological necessity.”⁶ Due to the fact that Serbs and Bosniaks in BIH fought a war with each other two decades ago and that their respective entities are direct products of said war, that they dominate their respective entities, that there have been huge population displacements during and after the war, ethnically homogenizing said entities; they are uniquely suited to be each other’s constituent Other. There is no other group better suited for such a role, which has already been fermented in the popular nationalisms of both sides, over the decades following the bloody wars of the 1990s.

I should stress that the aim of this work is to explain and explore, the two national narratives. The reader may take his/her conclusions as to what should be done to bring the two nations together. Some may feel that it is justified to externally reimagine these identities and to superimpose new narratives from outside the communities (and the elites that govern them), in order to achieve a desirable goal. This work does not advocate such measures, as will be further explained in the chapters that follow. However, the reader is free to draw his/her own conclusions.

This work itself has a specific structure. The first chapters will introduce the methodological and ontological toolkit, used to explain and explore the discursive dynamics within and between the elites. What follows is an analysis of the two national narratives based on a narrow collection of works. First question which needs to be addressed is the choice of literature itself. The overarching theme of the thesis is the “mirror image”, that is to say the claim that the two discourses are inverted images of the Other.

- Firstly, the works are selected because they deal with the same topics.

Historija Bošnjaka vs Dugo kretanje od klanja do oranja-Istorija Srba u Novom veku, deal with their respective national histories and are well read and critically acclaimed. *Bošnjačka ideja vs Srpsko pitanje u 20-om veku* deal with the “national question” of their respective communities leading up to the Yugoslav civil war. *Alija Izetbegovic- Govori intervjui I pisma 1997 vs Mermerne istine o Bosni* deal with the Bosnian civil war: who started it, who was the aggressor, what was the nature of the war etc. *Ko smo mi Bošnjaci, Identitet Bošnjaka nakon*

⁶ Iver B Nojman, *Upotreba drugog: Istok u formiranju evrpskog identiteta*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011 , p. 33

socijalizma vs Nemoguća država iiH, Istorija Republike Srpske deal with: the national question of their respective communities, the future of BIH, the future of relations between the two communities, with reflections on their past relations and national histories. This is not an exhaustive list of literature, some authors were more prolific than others when writing on the issue of national identity, so more of their works are included here, which can be seen in the following chapters and the References. However, for this thesis the literature selection process was not merely guided by what is written, but by whom.

- Secondly, the works are selected based on the fact that the authors write from similar positions of power.

The writers of the two national histories mentioned above, Mustafa Imamović and Milorad Ekmečić are such an example. Both of them worked in the University of Sarajevo, both at one point taught in the United States and both were members of their respective national-cultural institutions. Imamović was a member of the Bosniak institute⁷, while Ekmečić was a member of SANU (Serbian academy of Sciences and Arts). Both were respected intellectuals within their communities, particularly by the political elite. The second pair of authors Adil Zulfikarpašić and Dobrica Ćosić mirror one another as well. Both were members of the Partisans and the Communist party of Yugoslavia (CPY), both were nationalist intellectuals and dissidents (Zulfikarpašić operated from the political diaspora community, while Ćosić remained in SFRY and the CPY), both were one of the first people to tackle the “national question” within their communities after the Second world war. They would go on to influence successive generations of nationalist leaders, through direct contact and/or through their writing.⁸ Both Ćosić and Zulfikarpašić were politically and intellectually most active before the 1990s. For this reason, they are dubbed “grandfathers” of the nation. With the first democratic election they would become overshadowed by the new generations of

⁷ The issue of the Bosniak institute is an interesting one. Bosniaks do have their secular national scientific and cultural academy BANU. However, Bosniak institute is a Muslim religious endowment (*vakif*) which plays a similar role to BANU, making the two rivals to a degree. From my conversation with Jusuf Trbić, he stressed that Bosniak institute is much more effective in its duties than BANU.

⁸ Zulfikarpašić was one of the founders of SDA, while Ćosić aided the formation of the SDS financially. They were also personally and politically involved with their wartime leaders. Zulfikarpašić was tasked by Izetbegovic to negotiate with the SDS to avoid war, while Ćosić was the president of Yugoslavia under Milosevic and participated in the peace talks with (and against) the Bosnian Serb leaders.

nationalist leaders and both men would slowly retreat from political life. Izetbegovic and Karadzic are fathers of the two nations, having been democratically elected to lead them and achieving quasi-statehood for their nations by 1995. For this reason, it is crucially important to analyze their views on their nation and the Other, the War and the future of BIH. Filandra and Kecmanović were deans of Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, respectively. Filandra is a member of the Bosniak institute, while Kecmanović is a member of the Senate of Republika Srpska (RS). The Senate of Republika Srpska is an advisory body of public figures, intellectuals and religious leaders who serve the RS institutions. Bosniak institute, as stated before, is not a state institution, but a religious endowment. However, both organizations are peopled by the members of two national elites. Within the Senate of the Bosniak institute Filandra is joined by: Bakir Izetbegovic- current leader of the SDA (Stranka demokratske akcije), Bosniak member of the collective presidency of BIH, son of Alija Izetbegovic; Nijaz Duraković- former leader of the Bosnian communist party and later Social democratic party SDP, Mustafa Cerić- former grand mufti of the Islamic community of BIH, Atif Dudaković-wartime general of the Bosnian army, Zlatko Lagumdžija- former leader of SDP and former minister of foreign affairs of BIH, to name a few⁹. Kecmanović is joined by: Milorad Dodik-president of RS, archbishop Grigorije from Mostar, Rajko Kuzmanović- former president of RS, Aleksandar Džombić- former PM of Republika Srpska, Emir Kusturica-famous Serbian movie director, Jelena Guskova, Smilja Avramor, Rajko Pertov Nogo, and others.¹⁰ Thus, both men are embedded into their respective national elites and they are actively engaged in current social and political issues. They are academically active and their works which are analyzed here have been published after 2010. For this reason, they are presented as the contemporary writers on the national question. Same holds true for Muhamed Filipović, who has more in common with Ćosić and Zulfikarpašić. He is the president of BANU, was a member of the Partisans and the CPY, was appointed by Alija as an ambassador to the UK. However, although he was the contemporary of the “grandfathers”, before the 1990s Filipović was best known as a Marxist philosopher, writing extensively on Marxism. His most famous and influential book pertaining to the

⁹ Bošnjački institute, Senat, <http://www.bosnjackiinstitut.ba/home/sadrzaj/79>, accessed 26 July 2018,

¹⁰ Predsjednik Republike Srpske, Članovi Senata Republike Srpske, <http://www.predsjebnikrs.net/senat/clanovi-senata/?lang=sr>, accessed 26 July 2018

national question *Ko smo mi Bošnjaci?* was published in 2007. For these reasons and because he is still politically active, he is placed within the third generation of writers.

I must note that the authors and their works are mirror images, not exact copies. Some differences do exist, but it was my intention to control other factors as much as possible when selecting the objects of analysis. Since the authors wield similar positions and write on the same issues, the task is to explore are the discourses within these works similar. To be more precise, the main aim of this thesis is to prove that discourse used by authors from both sides is the mirror image of the other and that these discourses are deeply conflictual. Given the fact that the works differ in size and scope, some deal with particular topics more extensively than others and some deal with topics not mentioned by other authors (as in the case of the Imam movement, which is only addressed by Filandra). In order to comparatively and critically examine their discourse the analysis was narrowed to contentious topics present in all of the works analyzed. **These contentious topics are:** the origin of the in and outgroup, medieval Bosnian state, church and people, the nature of the Ottoman era, Serbian and Bosnian uprisings of the 19th century, the Agrarian issue, the nature of the Austrian era and its national policies (particularly the work of Benjamin Kallay), the nature and creation of the two Yugoslavias, the two World wars, the Yugoslav and more specifically Bosnian civil war, the relationship of the two groups to the West, role of religion in national identities, nationality of key disputed historical figures, similarities between the Holocaust and antisemitism to ingroup suffering and historical biases against it (in effect claiming co-victimhood with the Jewish people).

What follows are chapters which deal with: the groups historical narrative, the works on identity by first generation of national leaders (dubbed grandfathers of the nations), second generation leaders (fathers of the nations) and contemporary narratives; as stipulated in the contents. The thesis can be read linearly or it can be read comparatively. The narratives were written separately; however, each chapter will reference the “mirror image” in the other’s narrative, which will be elaborated in the following chapters. The two books on national history *Historija Bošnjaka* and *Dugo kretanje od klanja do oranja*, are so to speak, foundational texts for this analysis. They deal with all the contentious topics mentioned, are exhaustive in their scope, a fruit of years of rigorous research of both authors, widely read and present an in-depth overview of the two nations national histories. Accordingly, they take up more space than other chapters. My original intention was to leave the original text in the footnotes, so as to attest to the validity

of my translations and ensure that nothing is “missed in translation”, however the limited space allowed for this writing made such endeavor impossible.

1. Social constructivism and critical discourse analysis- a brief overview

As stated above, the first matter at hand is to set out the methodology used in this work. The objects of my research are primarily books, written by members of the two respective national elites. These books vary from autobiographies, political biographies, personal journals to history books. As such, in a broader sense, the language used in the works, is itself the object of analysis. The importance of language cannot be overstated, as language itself is the primary tool of identification and differentiation. As Lene Hansen puts it: “Language is a social and political, and inherently unstable system of signs that generate meaning through simultaneous construction of identity and difference.”¹¹ Hansen also points out that policy and language are ontologically linked. “Policies require identities, but identities do not exist as objective accounts of what people and places really are, but as continuously restated, negotiated and reshaped subjects and objects.”¹² Identities in other words are in a constant state of flux and are being reshaped continuously by language. It is the goal of this work to explore how language used in these works constructs identity and difference, or in other words the aim of this work is to analyze discourse. Discourse, for the purpose of this work, will be regarded as: “a form of social practice. It assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: the situational, institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourse and in turn, discourses influence social and political reality.”¹³ Due to the nature of the works analyzed the method employed will be qualitative discourse analysis, rather than quantitative. The works chosen also provide a unique opportunity for discourse analysis. Hansen provides three approaches to discourse analysis: single-Self study, comparative-Selves study and discursive encounters.

Discursive encounters compare discourses of the Self and Other with the Other’s counter-construction of Self and Other.¹⁴ Studying discursive encounters can be an arduous task, since the researcher may be barred from accessing relevant documents of one side researched or he may lack language competencies. Additionally, power discrepancies between the encountered

¹¹ Lene Hansen *Security as Practice: Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*, New York US: Routledge, 2006, p. 15

¹² *Ibid*, Preface- p. 1

¹³ Ruth Woda, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Leibhart *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh UK: Edinburgh University Press 2009, p. 8

¹⁴ Lena Hansen *Security as Practice: Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*, New York US: Routledge, 2006, p. 68

could be so vast that the volume of work from one side may be dwarfed by the other. Said's study of Orientalism is one such example, where Western literature on the oriental and Muslim Other dwarfed the Muslim world's literature on the Occidental Other. The Bosniak-Serb relationship however, fits the discursive encounter approach perfectly. The languages are mutually intelligible, volumes of work are comparable and crucially for this work, most of the authors analyzed here, from both sides, worked together at one point, knew each other, lived in the same city (Sarajevo) and reference each other's works in their writings. Even more crucially, their works exist in a shared textual space. To further elaborate on the complex relationships within textual space Julia Kristeva coined the term **intertextuality** which "highlight that texts are situated within and against other texts, that they draw upon them in constructing their identities and policies, that they appropriate as well as revise the past, and that they build authority by reading and citing others."¹⁵ Between these two nations a discursive relationship and discursive parity exist, where in the case of Balfour or Chateaubriand and their Oriental subjects, this was not the case. In the Serb-Bosniak case, the Other discursively fights back, while in the Occident-Orient it doesn't (until Said). The Serb and Bosniak "discourses engage and contest each other by challenging policy, identity and the logic through which they are linked and in doing so they often provide different readings of facts and events-in particular as discourses develop through time."¹⁶ The issue then is to explore these different Bosniak/Serbian readings of key facts and events.

The first task was to select the works to be analyzed. In this regard I followed Hansen's advice that the works selected should follow three criteria: "they are characterized by clear articulation of identities and policies; they are widely read and attended; and they have the formal authority to define a political position."¹⁷ The works were selected because they are "mirror images" of one another both in terms of content and political power of their authors, as state in the introduction. This thesis will also draw from Hansen's poststructuralist understanding of discourse which implies: "first that there is no place outside of language, there is no analytical place that does not make a political incision and second that there is no place outside of language, there is no analysis that can completely dispense with the vocabulary already in

¹⁵ Ibid p. 49

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 28

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 76

place.”¹⁸ That being said, this thesis is not a form of political activism. The post-structuralist and critical approach serve as a safeguard against claims of research bias. I as a researcher and as a member of a specific group, do not exist outside of the language and outside of the political context of my ingroup and intergroup relations.

The nature of the works analyzed and methodology employed necessitate a certain degree of improvisation. Nevertheless, even an ostensibly qualitative approach as critical discourse analysis requires a toolkit of sorts. The works analyzed deal with national identities. For the purpose of this work **national identity**: “is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture. National identity thus is the product of discourse.”¹⁹ In order to critically analyze these identities, one must analyze discourses from which they stem. In this thesis this will entail identifying certain strategies, narrative tropes regarding the Self and Other, obfuscations of certain facts by the authors etc.; comparing and contrasting them with each other. Stuart Hall identifies five fundamental discursive strategies employed when constructing a national identity²⁰. The first one is what he dubs *the narrative of the nation*, where a connection is created between stories, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals; which in turn provides meaning and security, tying individual lives to a national destiny. The second strategy is *an emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness*. This strategy is especially salient in the Bosniak/Serbian discourse as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. Third strategy is *invention of tradition* to make historical confusion and defeats understandable. The tradition of multiculturalism on the Bosniak side is an example of such a strategy, which tries to make sense of Bosnian victimhood over the ages. The fourth strategy is *foundational myth*, which is usually placed as far back in time as possible.²¹ Last but not least, is the strategy of a *pure and original people*. Depending on the context the Self is: the true Slav, true European, the oldest people in “insert region”, while the Other is a new arrival, “mixed” and therefore impure, tainted. The last strategy is present in most of the works analyzed, from both sides.

¹⁸ Lena Hansen *Security as Practice: Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*, New York US: Routledge, 2006, p. 188

¹⁹ Ruth Woda, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Leibhart *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh UK: Edinburgh University Press 2009, p. 22

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 24

²¹ This indispensable prerequisite of national identity, for as Lezek Kolakowski puts it: “The further into the past the real or imaginary memories reach, the more securely national identity is supported.” For this reason the figures of Kulin Ban and Stefan Nemanja (or even older ones as Jovan Vladimir) are indispensable in national narratives.

Woda, de Cillia, Reisigl and Leibhart go on to identify certain macro strategies of discursive formation of national identity.²² These macro strategies can be roughly divided into: *constructive strategies*- which are the most comprehensive, aiming to construct an identity by promoting unification and differentiation; *strategies of perpetuation*- seek to reproduce an existing national identity, which is supposedly threatened; *strategies of justification*- which aim to justify controversial actions of the Self in the past, they seek to preserve the Self's tainted legitimacy; *strategies of transformation*- seek to transform an existing identity into a new one; *destructive strategies*- aim to deconstruct an already constructed national identity. It is not easy to delineate between these strategies, as usually a combination of multiple strategies is employed. For the Serbian/Bosniak case *perpetuation*, *justification* and *destruction* are dominant. Destruction is usually used against the Other's national identity, not the Self's. For that same case it is hard to gauge whether construction, transformation or perpetuation is the strategy employed in discursive identity construction. Are Bosniakdom and Serbdom (or Serbdom in Republika Srpska) new or old constructs? It is a hard question to answer. The discursive practices of the authors claim that the collective Self as old and even ageless, but we will cover this more in the following chapters. There are other strategies frequently used, most notably *strategies of assimilation* and *strategies of dissimilation*. The first seek to linguistically produce temporal, spatial and interpersonal similarity, while the second strategy seeks to produce difference and heterogeneity.²³ The authors provide an exhaustive list of linguistic methods or tropes used to further the strategies mentioned above (see tables on pages 37-42²⁴).

As mentioned before, the nature of the works analyzed requires a degree of improvisation. Woda, de Cillia, Reisigl and Leibhart mention some of them: victim thesis, perpetrator thesis, *locus amoenus* and *locus terribilis*, among others. The unique relationship between these two communities, especially the legacies of the twentieth century, provide a unique twist on these well-established tropes. The most common ones that I have identified in both discourses are the **discursive pairs** of: Victim We vs Genocidal Other, Western We vs Oriental (barbaric, uncivilized) Other, Tolerant We vs Nationalist Other, Democratic We vs Autocratic Other, Antifascist We vs Fascist Other. Communities reproduce themselves by reproducing the

²² Ruth Woda, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Leibhart *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh UK: Edinburgh University Press 2009, p. 33

²³ Ibid, p. 33

²⁴ Ibid, pp 37-42

boundaries between them, which are supposed to separate them from groups that have different characteristics (for example: Serbs are Western, Bosniaks are not, they are Oriental). Boundaries are reproduced with “borderline identity markers, which he (Bart) had called **diacritics**.”²⁵ Iver B. Neumann uses an example of the relationship between Bashkirs and Tatars. He identifies six diacritics, or borderline identity markers between the two groups: religion, language, territory, demographics and historical figures.²⁶ Regarding religion, the Other is described as being extremist, while the Self is depicted as secular and tolerant. Language is critically important and there is an urge to spread the usage of the mother tongue to all the members of the collective Self. In the Serb/Bosniak case the issue is mainly how the mutually intelligible languages should be called and which one of them is the offshoot of the other. On the question of territory, the two communities are territorialized into two different states and there is a constant discursive conflict over who has the right to the land. This ties in with the issue of demographics, where the Self is usually depicted as the original settler of the land, while the Other is the imposter. Lastly, historical figures are a constant point of contention, as both communities seek to claim them for themselves. The farther back in time a historical figure is, the more intensive the debate on whether the person was one of Us or Them. As Neumann puts it: “The border between ethnic groups is maintained through claiming the deceased, the living and the unborn as their own.”²⁷ The Bashkir/Tatar example is rather tame, when compared to Bosniak/Serbian diacritics, which can be explained by a recent and violent separation of the later as opposed to the former pair. Nevertheless, the diacritics hold true for both pairs and in this work, I will present how these diacritics are reproduced within the Serbian/Bosniak discourse.

Neumann further explains the complexity and instability of the Self-Other pair, by drawing from Anne Norton’s concept of liminary (borderline) groups. This concept in its most basic sense entails that the liminary group is simultaneously a part and apart of the Self. He illustrates this with an example given by Yuri Lotman of Russian pagans (*nashi pagany*), who were a part of the Russian self, yet apart from it, by not being Orthodox Christians.²⁸ Serbs and Bosniaks are each other’s liminary group. The dissonance between a clear drive and goal to construct the Other as a part of the Self, versus the goal to keep it radically separate from the Self, is the

²⁵ Iver B. Neumann, *Upotreba drugog: Istok u formiranju evropskog identiteta*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 25

²⁶ *Ibid* p. 211

²⁷ *Ibid* p. 217

²⁸ *Ibid* p. 29

defining characteristic of Serbian-Bosniak discursive relationship. For this purpose, I have set up an improvised definition, of a very specific kind of Other, the **Dissonant Other**. This is an ontologically and epistemologically unstable discursive Other, which is simultaneously integral to and a part of the Self, on the other hand it is radically different, antagonistic and apart from the Self. The Bosniak in the Serb discourse is simultaneously a Muslim Serb who should be “brought back to the fold” to make the Self whole again; while on the Other hand the Bosniak is also a turncoat who embraced a foreign power, imbued with hatred to his brethren, who held true to their old ways despite mounting pressures. Likewise, the Serb is an Orthodox Bosniak, who should be “brought back to the fold” and on the other hand he is also a traitor to his nation and the Bosnian homeland, having embraced nationalistic propaganda from Belgrade in the 19th century, turning on his Muslim brethren. This is an ever-present trope, which we will analyze in greater detail in the ensuing chapters.

2. Forging identities

2.1 Imaging a nation and a path to nationhood

With the epistemological and methodical issues out of the way, now we must turn to the ontological questions of this work. This work at its most basic deals with the subjects of nations and nationalisms. More specifically, how nations are constructed, forged and deconstructed. It goes without saying that this work has a constructivist and not a materialist approach to the subject at hand. First and foremost, before any analysis is to be done, we must first define the key concepts used in this work. The two crucial ones are the concepts of the nation and nationalism. These two concepts are highly dubious and contentious; thus, a myriad of different definitions exist. This was stated in the introduction, but the issue cannot be overemphasized. In regards to nationalism, a definition by Eric Hobsbawm, which expands on Gellner's original definition will be used. **Nationalism** in this sense means: "primarily a principle which holds that the political and the national should be congruent.", to which Hobsbawm adds, "this principle also implies that the political duty of the Ruritians to the polity which encompasses and represents the Ruritanian nation, overrides all other public obligations, and in extreme cases (such as in wars) all other obligations of whatever kind."²⁹ Crucially, as a modernist Hobsbawm argues that nationalisms and states produce nations, not the other way around. The fact that states produce nations is particularly stressed in the work of Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities*, a critically important book for this work.

Benedict Anderson shares Hobsbawm's modernist approach to nation building, yet he makes a critical distinction between **official** and **popular nationalism**. For Anderson, popular nationalism is bottom up, stemming from the mass of the population, from which a growing number of *litterati* have been rising over the centuries, due to the spread of print vernaculars. These popular nationalisms exert pressure on the dynastic state, which in turns adopts its own official nationalism to placate the brewing nationalist masses. Official nationalism isn't merely limited to the 19th century European monarchy. For Anderson, official nationalism is "something

²⁹ Eric Hobsbawm *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*- second edition, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016 (23d print), p. 9

emanating from the state, and serving the interests of the state first and foremost. Thus, the model of official nationalism assumes its relevance above all at the moment when revolutionaries successfully take control of the state and are for the first time in a position to use the power of the state in pursuit of their visions.”³⁰ In the Serb/Bosniak case the state(s) come into being after revolutionary rupture, a bloody civil war and a subsequent peace accord. Popular nationalisms produced the three national(ist) parties, they rode the wave of nationalism to power and eventually seized the resources of the state from their communist predecessors. What ensues, according to Anderson, is the production of official nationalism as a legitimizing force for the new elites. This work will deal with **official nationalism** of the Bosniak and Serb nations. From a research standpoint this can mean many different things. One can explore government policies, political speeches of important national leaders, textbooks and mandatory readings for Serbian/Bosniak language classes (called *lektire* in both languages); among other possibilities. The route I chose circumvents the more established pathways.

The objects analyzed, or more precisely, the books analyzed in this master thesis, are chosen precisely because they are a form of official nationalism. The discourse they produce emanates from the state and serves its interest, in some shape or form. To illustrate this point, *Istorija Republike Srpske*, written by Čedomir Antić and Nenad Kecmanović, states that “for a state’s identity, apart from the coat of arms, the flag and national anthem, it is necessary to have a written history. We have prepared this book for the twentieth jubilee of Republika Srpska, as a contribution to its founding and it would have remained an unpublished project, were it not for the political and material support of the cabinet of the president of Republika Srpska.”³¹ The authors explicitly claim that their endeavor was supported, both politically and materially by the highest seat of power of the state, the cabinet of president Milorad Dodik. Other works analyzed have similar ties to political or intellectual seats of power and the authors themselves hold positions with high political and intellectual clout.

Regarding the concept of the nation for these purposes I will also utilize Anderson’s definition, from the beginning of this thesis. Anderson also expands this definition later on, by adding a

³⁰ Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London UK: Verso 2016

³¹ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, рр 23-24

dimension of time to the concept. He states that “the nation is a solid community moving up(down) history.”³² Anderson claims, drawing upon the conclusions of Walter Benjamin, that the nation doesn’t exist in linear time. Rather, the nation exists in **horizontal** or **Messianic time**.³³ The past, future and present exist simultaneously, one big chain of events constantly turning and reinforcing each other. Đerzelez Alija and Kraljević Marko are always present, reinforcing the national narrative, ever remaining relevant for the community despite having existed centuries before modern times. Thus, when a state is formed, as an expression of nationalism and the nation, it must “move down time” to find its ancient self. Kecmanović and Antić state this explicitly in the very first pages of their book. “Historical experience teaches that a people (*narod*) in the modern age cannot establish itself politically (*državnički se ostvariti*) without first becoming a nation. The state, even if it has all the attributes of stateness, is not complete without a written history, with which it would, on one hand, express its self-realization of its historical verticality and on the other, place itself in relation to parallel and overlapping verticals of other peoples, with whom the ancestors of the bearers of its modern sovereignty have for centuries made, suffered and shared history.”³⁴ The authors, with this opening statement, almost perfectly echo Anderson’s vision of the nation. In other words, nationalism creates the state and nation. The State is reinforced by the nation and its nationalism. Lastly the state produces the history of the nation (and other forms of official nationalism), which is the culmination of the path to nationhood. This sentiment is also echoed by Imamović in his book *Historija Bošnjaka*, also in the first pages. He states that “this history, given the nature of the time in which it is written, would like to be, as the English philosopher Edmund Burke once put it, “an alliance between the dead, the leaving and the yet unborn.””³⁵ Imamović thus confirms both Anderson’s and Neumann’s views on national history and ethnic boundary maintenance.

2.2 Self and Other- Why every group needs an outgroup?

³² Ibid p. 26

³³ Ibid p. 24

³⁴ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 9

³⁵ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo ВИ: Preporod, Вошњаџка заједница културе, 2006, р. 8

“There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully discovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven.”³⁶ Samuel P Huntington puts these words written by Michael Dibdin in the opening pages of his book *A Clash of Civilizations*. These words are a brunt version of Bachtin’s claim that the Other is an ontological necessity. This link between the collective Self and the family, which Huntington identifies, is of great importance. Anderson also identifies this link with a particularly poignant insight. He stresses that “the family has traditionally been conceived as the domain of disinterested love and solidarity... for most ordinary people of whatever class the whole point of the nation is that it is interestless. Just for that reason, it can call for sacrifices.”³⁷ The family (the nation) needs to be protected from those who would do it harm, even if the sacrifice is one’s own life. The two nations analyzed have emerged from the embers of war. The threat of war and even more profoundly, the threat of extinction of the Self (physically and culturally) looms over their heads like the sword of Damocles. For nations that are (or are perceived to be) brittle from outside and fragile from within, it is crucial to close ranks and form up against the perceived threat of the Other, who carries the proverbial sword. The national family must be protected, come what may. “We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often when we know whom we are against.”³⁸

This threat of death of the Nation is viewed as something unnatural, unlike the death of an individual. “Nations however have no identifiable births and their deaths, if they ever happen, are never natural... For such apocalypses the neologism genocide was recently coined.”³⁹ Anderson provides a unique insight as to why a death of a nation necessitates an entirely new concept and a new crime (the worst of all crimes) in international law. The word genocide is needed to explain the death of a collective Self as a profoundly unnatural, inconceivable and apocalyptic act. If a nation has been close to extinction and if there is a clearly identifiable Other

³⁶ Samuel P. Huntington *Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, New York US: Free Press, 2002, p. 20

³⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London:Verso,2016, p. 144

³⁸ Samuel P. Huntington *Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, New York US: Free Press, 2002, p. 21

³⁹ Ibid p. 205

wielding the proverbial sword, then forging the Self in opposition to the Other becomes that more important. Since both nations perceive that they were close to extinction at the hands of the Other (usually in some form of coalition with the Other for both sides, the Croats), national narratives are rife with a highly antagonistic view of the Other. Both sides use the term genocide to describe a number of atrocities committed against by the Other through the ages. The term **genocide** and **genocidal** is widely used by all authors, particularly on the Bosniak side. The aim is to show the aggressive nature of the Other and that the Other aimed to destroy the Self, almost succeeding on multiple occasions. Filandra claims that Bosniaks survived 10 genocides throughout their history, with the tenth one during the 90s in Srebrenica and broadly in BIH as a whole being the only one where Bosniaks fought back.⁴⁰ Imamović puts forward the same claim of ten genocides. He adds that the tenth “in its brutality and monstrosity surpasses all that the Bosniaks as a people have lived through and survived. Europe in a span of barely a century, watches a new Holocaust unfold with indifference.”⁴¹

Srebrenica is the crux around which the Bosniak victim of genocide discourse develops. It was recent, well documented, internationally acknowledged and fermented in popular consciousness. Srebrenica is a politically salient fact above all others in Bosniak discourse. As Hansen states “facts do not carry with them automatic political responses; they need to be located inside a discourse and read to have a particular effect on policy and the representation of identity.”⁴² Srebrenica will feature prominently as a discursive tool in the following chapters. For the Serbs the equivalent is the Second World War, particularly the plight of Serbs in Jasenovac. The Serb/Bosniak wields the sword of Damocles and he is poised to strike at the neck of the collective Self. Hence, the Self must establish safeguards against the Other, by keeping the fear alive within the national narrative, lest the people forget.

As stated before, the two are uniquely stated to be each other’s constituent Other. The words quoted above clearly show that the image of the Bosniak/Serb Other has a unique place in the national narrative. Neumann stipulated that the Other needs to satisfy certain criteria if it is to be chosen as the Self’s discursive pair. He states that the Turk was chosen as the European Other for

⁴⁰ Šaćir Filandra *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma: o bošnjačkom identitetu u postjugoslovenskom prostoru*, Zagreb HR: Synopsis, 2012, p. 368

⁴¹ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 571

⁴² Lena Hansen *Security as Practice: Discours analysis and the Bosnian war*, New York US: Routledge, 2006, p. 28

his: military power, physical proximity and strong (and different) religious traditions.⁴³ Serbs/Bosniaks fit these criteria perfectly. It could be argued that military power and religious traditions have declined, however the memory of the last war is fresh everyone's minds. The history that we are taught in schools is a history of wars. The fact that wars feature prominently in our collective memories is nothing unusual. As Said claims "human history is made by human beings. Since the struggle for territory is part of that history, so too is the struggle over historical and social meaning. The task for the critical scholar is not to separate one struggle from the other, but to connect them... My way of doing this has been to show that the development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another different and competing alter ego."⁴⁴ The struggle between these two nations over territory has ceased, for the most part. Now the conflict is being waged to make sense of the past struggles, with each seeking to legitimize one's own position as the victim, with the Other being the aggressor.

What makes the Serbian/Bosniak case particularly troubling is that they are not each other's Other, in a classical sense. They are, as I have stated before, **Dissonant Others**, simultaneously radically different and integral to the Self. This entails that recognition from and by this kind of Other is crucial for the Self. Neumann addresses this issue in, drawing inspiration from the works of Erik Ringmar. He claims that: "The Others about whom the Self tells its tales and who in turn tells tales about the Self, in this way become constituent parts of the storytelling... A situation which necessitates special theoretical attention here is, of course, that in which the Other refuses to acknowledge the constituent stories of the Self. In that case the Self from those stories has three options: to accept the stories told about it by Others, to relinquish the unrecognized stories in favor of the Other, or to stick to the original story and try to persuade the audience that the story still holds true."⁴⁵ The Self usually opts for a third option, which is the case with Bosniaks/Serbs. They cannot acknowledge the Other's narrative because it deeply conflicts with their own national narrative. Any compromise in this regard is tantamount to an attack on one's own identity. As Neumann states: "If the reality of the nation in space is attested by its territory, its reality in time is corroborated if it managed to attain its history."⁴⁶ Compromising on national narrative puts into question the temporal reality of the nation. For this

⁴³ Iver B Nojman, *Upotreba drugog: Istok u formiranju evrpskog identiteta*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 61

⁴⁴ Edward W. Said *Orientalism*, London UK: Penguin books, 2003, pp 331-332

⁴⁵ Iver B Nojman, *Upotreba drugog: Istok u formiranju evrpskog identiteta*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 245

⁴⁶ *Ibid* p. 136

very reason, superimposing another narrative from an outside power can produce a backlash from both nations. In short Bosniaks/Serbs need one another as constituent Others in order to forge the self, for the same reasons Europe needed the Ottoman Empire or Russia. However, Bosniaks/Serbs need the Other to be the villain in their stories and to recognize the validity of our stories in which it is vilified. Only then can the Other reach redemption and be accepted back into the Self. We cannot love what we are if we don't hate what we are not. For these two nations this "old truth" needs to be expanded with: we cannot be whole unless those who we hate become a part of Us again.

2.3 Clash of civilizations between torn nations in a cleft country

Samuel P Huntington claimed that civilizational affiliations have a profound impact on conflict, particularly in complex, multicultural and multicivilizational societies. He quotes Bernard Henry Levy, who claimed that Bosnia is "our Spain", presumably speaking for the Western Left. Huntington expands upon this stating that: "The comparison is apt. In the age of civilizations Bosnia is everyone's Spain."⁴⁷ In other words Bosnia was the place where three civilizations clashed. Bosnia calls for civilizational kin to act in defense of their brethren, just like Spain was a rallying call for two competing ideologies. One can criticize his theory for a number of reasons and this works doesn't seek to disprove or prove Huntington's theory. Florian Bieber for example criticizes Huntington for disregarding the importance of nationalism in the Bosnian war. Bieber clearly states: "The difference between the three groups is the sense of belonging to three different nations."⁴⁸ The key point of Bieber's criticism is that Huntington fails to differentiate between perception and reality. For Bieber the war of civilizations is merely a rhetorical tool, while in reality the Bosnian war was a war of nations and nationalisms. It is here that I want to point out again that this thesis doesn't deal with reality *per se*, it deals precisely with perceptions woven into elite discourse. The war may or may not be a war of civilizations but proving or

⁴⁷ Samuel P. Huntington *Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, New York US: Free Press, 2002, p. 290

⁴⁸ Florian Bieber, « The Conflict in former Yugoslavia as a « Fault Line War » ? », *Balkanologie* [En ligne], Vol. III, n° 1 | juillet 1999, mis en ligne le 03 juin 2008, consulté le 02 juin 2018. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/balkanologie/283>, accessed June 2 2018

disproving that is beyond the scope of this work. Whatever reality may be, a discourse of civilizational kinship and conflict does truly exist. Thus, Huntington's insights are invaluable for discourse analysis of the Serbian/Bosniak conflict.

The two historians: Imamović and Ekmečić perfectly illustrate these civilizational kinship narrative tropes. Imamović states that: "All those who considered themselves Muslims, members of a superior civilization, consciously and politically felt that they were Ottomans. Bosniaks were exceptional in this regard."⁴⁹ He then goes on to quote Benedict Kuripešić, a Slovenian/Austrian author from the 16th century, who claimed that all the best Ottoman janissaries, bureaucrats and captains were Bosniaks. Ekmečić is equally clear when it comes to Serbian civilizational kinship. He states that: "With the Early modern period (*Novi vek*-1453-1789) belonging to Orthodox Christianity becomes a permanent characteristic of the Serbian people."⁵⁰ In other words, both authors claim that their nations belong to different civilizations, which are based on two different religions.

Since civilizational conflict discourse features prominently in all the works analyzed, it is critical to define key concepts pertaining to this discourse. For this purpose, I will draw heavily from Huntington's work. The key concept, which he presents is **civilization**. He defines it, across multiple pages as follows. "Civilization and culture both refer to the overall way of life of people, and a civilization is a culture writ large. A civilization is the broadest cultural entity... It is defined by both common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions and by the subjective self-identification of people."⁵¹ It is this subjective self-identification aspect of civilization that is crucial for this thesis, since it deals with perceptions not objective reality. Unsurprisingly, Huntington writes from a Western perspective and *Clash of Civilizations*, primarily wrestles with the problems which arise from the conflict of "West vs the rest". Huntington also wrestles with the issue of westernization, which he sees as one of the primary causes of the volatile nature of cleft countries. He equates westernization in nonwestern countries with a virus as he states that "the Western virus, once it is lodged in another society is difficult to expunge. The virus persists, but it is not fatal; the patient survives, but is never whole.

⁴⁹ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BiH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 169

⁵⁰ Милорад Екмечић *Дуго кретање од клања до орања: Историја Срба у новом веку*, Београд СР: Evro-Giunti, 2010, p. 14

⁵¹ Samuel P. Huntington *Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, New York US: Free Press, 2002, pp 41-43

Political leaders can make history but they cannot escape history. They produce torn countries, they do not create Western societies. They infect their country with a cultural schizophrenia which becomes its continuing and defining characteristic.”⁵²

This cultural schizophrenia is a staple of both national narratives. As stated before, this work focuses on narrow elite discourse. In order to fully understand the cultural schizophrenia which stems from the Western virus, first we need to elaborate more on what cleft and torn countries are. In brief, a **cleft country** is a country which consists of multiple groups belonging to different civilizations, while a **torn country** consists of one major group belonging to one civilization, whose leaders want to shift it to another.⁵³ Ironically, BiH, or Bosniaks and Serbs as national groups, fit the profile of both cleft and torn countries. More precisely, BiH as a country is a cleft country, while its two nations Bosniaks and Serbs (possibly even Croats) are torn nations. As we have stated with Imamović and Ekmečić, there exists a perception of belonging to different civilizations, which are not Western. Conversely there is also a perception of being, or at least trying to become and be accepted as a part of the West. The metaphor of the nation/country as a bridge between (or a bulwark against) East and West is a highly utilized narrative trope, which will be explored in the following chapters. Huntington aptly explains the problem with being a bridge nation. He claims: “A bridge is an artificial creation connecting two solid entities but is a part of neither.”⁵⁴ Both Imamović and Ekmečić express this Western or European We, while simultaneously decrying Europe’s transgressions against their nations. This trope is present across all works analyzed and expressed by practically all authors. To illustrate the point, Dobrića Ćosić, (in)famously known in Serbia as a nationalist dissident and a spiritual father of modern Serbian nationalism, addressed the European Parliament in 1993 with the following words. “I am here to give my part in furthering an understanding between the European community and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That is a country whose people is true to its freedom loving and democratic traditions, its Christian culture, its historical choice (*istorijsko opredeljenje*) to be a part of Europe in every sense of the word (*da u svemu bude deo Evrope*).”⁵⁵ Likewise, Bosniak authors express the same sentiment, of being (or wanting to be) European and Western. For example, Filandra claims that for the Bosniaks the European idea “has been for the

⁵² Ibid p. 154

⁵³ Ibid p. 138

⁵⁴ Ibid p. 149

⁵⁵ Добрица Ћосић *Српско питање у XX веку*, Београд СР: ЈП Службени гласник, 2009, pp 208-209

past two centuries their permanent cultural orientation (*trajna kulturna orijentacija*).⁵⁶ The Western We trope necessitates a working definition, through my reading of selected works from both sides I found that this concept can best be defined as follows. **Western We** is a discursive strategy of identifying the Self with the democratic West, findings instances of espousing Western values, lifting them up as manifestations of the True Self, while simultaneously diminishing anti-western values and acts as marginal, as aberrations of the True Self, decrying that they (nationalists, religious radicals, extremists, the ingroup Others) do not speak for and do not represent the collective Self.

The language used almost perfectly mirrors the Other side's. Both do seek kinship with the West, yet both simultaneously view the West as an enemy. This is the schizophrenia of which Huntington speaks. It would be poignant to use Ćosić and Filandra again, to illustrate this schizophrenia of torn nations and a cleft country. Filandra claims that the relativizing and indifferent European attitude to the Bosniak plight during the 1990s stems in large part from "old European prejudices towards Muslims."⁵⁷ In the same way that Filandra paints his ingroup as victims of European islamophobia, Ćosić paints his nation as a victim of Serbophobia. In an interview given to an Italian magazine *Avanti* in 1992 Ćosić claims the following. "We Serbs feel like Jews in Hitler's era. We are the guilty nation (people)...Thus, Serbophobia in Europe today has the same ideological motivation and ferocity as antisemitism had during the Nazi period."⁵⁸ In much the same way as Bosniak authors legitimize the West's negative attitude towards them, with the claim they are a part of the Islamic civilization; Serb authors view it as a product of their kinship to the core state of the Orthodox civilization, Russia (or Byzantium in earlier centuries). Ekmečić unambiguously presents this claim. "Serbophobia in the western world is an offshoot of Russophobia. It has flourished in times of conflicts of interest between Western states and Russia."⁵⁹

In addition to nations being torn between Islam/Orthodoxy and the West, the country itself is in the midst of a fault line conflict, as Huntington claims. For him fault line conflicts occur between

⁵⁶ Šaćir Filandra *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma: o bošnjačkom identitetu u postjugoslovenskom prostoru*, Zagreb HR: Synopsis, 2012, p. 372

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 373

⁵⁸ Добрица Ћосић *Српско питање у XX веку*, Београд СР: ЈП Службени гласник, 2009, p. 181

⁵⁹ Милорад Екмечић *Дуго кретање од клања до орања: Историја Срба у новом веку*, Београд СР: Evro-Giunti, 2010, p. 303

groups or states belonging to different civilizations and when these conflicts become violent a fault line war ensues.⁶⁰ The Bosnian war was infinitely complex and determining the character of said war here is far too audacious. Additionally, this thesis merely deals with discourse not reality. It is in the elite discourse analyzed that lingering vestiges of a fault line war are evident. Huntington claims that in a fault line war “each side has incentives not only to emphasize its own civilizational identity, but also that of the other side.”⁶¹ All authors constantly stress that the Other belongs to a different civilization or that the other is not sufficiently civilized, even though the war had stopped over two decades ago. Some of the works analyzed have been published as recently as a couple of years before this writing, yet the process of “civilizational othering” of the Other is present in all of them. For this reason, however flawed his theory may be, Huntington provides valuable insight and indispensable tools of analyzing discourses of these two groups in conflict.

⁶⁰ Samuel P. Huntington *Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, New York US: Free Press, 2002, p. 252

⁶¹ *Ibid* p. 270

3. Forging Bosniakdom

3.1 Our glorious history

“Rooting a nation in past, the farther back it is rooted the older and more “authentic” it becomes, in the Bosniak case becomes first and foremost a national-political task and secondly an academic necessity.”⁶² Filandra himself presents to his readers the importance of **Primordialism**; pressing the claim that one’s own nation is ancient, the first and/or progenitor of neighboring rival nations. He states on the same page the memory of medieval Bosnia never died among the Bosniaks, a claim widely asserted by Bosniak scholars and disputed by their Serbian counterparts. Pressing this claim is paramount for very practical and political reasons. As Filandra himself posits when writing on the importance of national history. “It speaks about a common ancestry and common destiny of a particular group of people and that is a basis for claims of national policy to ancient ties and a basis for legitimizing modern territorial claims.”⁶³ Filandra goes on to specifically describe the logic of Bosniak primordialism. He states that Bosniak interpretation of Medieval history seeks to tie contemporary Bosniaks to the Medieval Bosnian state. Additionally, Bosniak authors seek to prove that Islam grafted itself onto Bosnian Bogomilist traditions, due to supposed spiritual kinship between the two religions. Filandra asserts that: “These two claims are corner stones of a new Bosniak identity strategy. This is done systematically in order to move away from the erstwhile tying of Bosniaks to the Ottoman era of Bosnian history, as a formative period of their unique culture.”⁶⁴ Bosniaks need to prove that they belong to the land and that the land is theirs by right of history. Serbs need to prove the same. The task of proving this falls on the backs of national historians and for the purposes of this work, Imamović was chosen for the Bosniak side and Ekmečić for the Serbian side.

All authors analyzed espouse this discourse of primordialism, national greatness and national victimhood; particularly the two historians Imamović and Ekmečić. This chapter will deal primarily with Mustafa Imamović’s book *Historija Bošnjaka*, with occasional

⁶² Šaćir Filandra *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma: o bošnjačkom identitetu u postjugoslovenskom prostoru*, Zagreb HR: Synopsis, 2012, p. 293

⁶³ Ibid p. 290

⁶⁴ Ibid p. 292

references to other works from both sides.⁶⁵ Imamović wrote extensively on Bosniak national history, however *Historija Bošnjaka* is his most popular and impactful book having sold 20 000 copies by 2001.⁶⁶

Practically on the first page of the book a typical national pathos and the blessed land trope (*locus amoenus*) face the reader's attention. The author states that: "I began writing this book in the most tragic moments for the Bosniak people, feeling that in those moments it was my duty towards my people and towards the magical land of Bosnia (*čarobnoj zemlji Bosni*)."⁶⁷ In the following pages of the book the author presents a clear narrative of victimhood, setting the tone for the rest of the book. This pattern repeats itself across all other works analyzed. The author blames Western islamophobia and Balkan nationalisms for the negative image of Bosniaks. From the very beginning, with the introductory pages the two narratives sharply diverge and become conflictual. One such example is a different reading of demographic facts, namely the high Bosniak birthrate and population boom during the second half of the 20th century. Imamović claims that high birthrate and low mortality show that Bosniaks are "a young and vital nation"⁶⁸. Conversely, Ekmečić claims that these demographic trends were Asiatic and are a cause of impeded growth of the country, stating that "in 1947. GDP of the state was 49% of Yugoslav average, while in 1962. it was 33%."⁶⁹ One author sees one set of facts as indicators of vitality, the other is indicators of backwardness, while presenting alternative facts. This is yet another pattern, **obfuscation**, where authors of the two sides would present certain facts and omit others, all with the goal of present the Self in a positive and the Other in a negative light. Even when they agree on certain facts, like Bosniak demographic growth, they are read them in polarly opposite ways. When authors acknowledge commonality between the groups, they would stress their own "exceptionalism", usually as being exceptionally heroic, freedom loving and oppressed. Imamović states that the history of all South Slavs is a history of migration caused by war and economic strife. However, he points out that with the Bosniaks "the chief cause of their

⁶⁵ Mustafa Imamović was a professor in Sarajevo, member of the Bosniak institute, a respected member of Bosniak intelligentsia and scholar of Bosniak national history. In this regard he is "the mirror image" of Ekmečić on the Serbian side

⁶⁶ Nerzuk Ćurak, *Šta hoće SDA: ummu muslimana ili modernu državu?!*, Dani, issue 195, March 2 2001., <https://www.bhdani.ba/portal/arhiva-67-281/195/intervju.shtml>, accessed June 6 2018

⁶⁷ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p.

⁶⁸ Ibid p. 9

⁶⁹ Милорад Екмечић *Дуго кретање од клања до орања: Историја Срба у новом веку*, Београд СР: Евро-Гиунти, 2010, p. 536

migrations is an almost never-ending genocide.”⁷⁰ In other words, his ingroup is the most oppressed among the oppressed South Slavs. This is also plainly evident with Ekmečić with the title of his book *Дуго кретање од клања до орања-историја Срба у Новом веку*, which can be translated as *A long journey from slaughter to ploughing- a history of Serbs in the New age*. The two discourses are each other’s mirror image.

Imamović moves on to claim that the Ottoman empire was a relatively benign imperial power, which Serbian discourse vehemently disputes. In his introductory pages he also charts an ethnic map of sorts, trying to claim certain disputed communities as part of the Bosniak Self. Here we see one of the diacritics, **demographics**, where both sides jostle to claim minor ethnic groups as part of the Self. The author claims that Gorani (Slavic speaking Kosovo Muslims), Torbeši (Macedonian Muslims), Sandžak (Serbian) Muslims and Montenegrin Muslims are all Bosniaks.⁷¹ This view is held by all Bosniak authors analyzed, which will be explored in the following chapters. These groups claim to be separate ethnic groups (apart from Serbian Muslims and to a lesser degree Montenegrin Muslims, who largely identify as Bosniaks) and are also claimed by other larger nations. Serbian academy of Sciences and Arts conducted a *Šarplaninske župe Gora, Opolje I Sredska (GOS)* between 1991-1994 seeking to tie Gorani to the Serbs, which will be explored further in later chapters. Likewise, Bulgaria uses its EU membership as a tool for coopting these minorities into their own national identity, enticing them with EU passports, while lobbying (or coercing) local governments to recognize these groups as Bulgarian minorities.⁷² Turkey is using economy leverage via its development agency TIKa to assimilate or turkify said groups. On the issue of the national name and **language** (another diacritic) Imamović claims that the name Bosniak (or “good Bosnianin”/*Dobri Bošnjanim*) was in use continuously from the Medieval era to the late 19th century for the Slavic Muslims of Bosnia. The practice changed when the Turks left and the Bosniaks lost their Turkish Other. Imamović claims that: “The people felt from their everyday practice and experience that in new circumstances in relation to Orthodox and Catholic Christians, or Serbs and Croats, with whom they shared the same space, they (Bosniaks) could only be defined politically and culturally on

⁷⁰ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BiH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 9

⁷¹ Ibid pp 10-11

⁷² Mariya Creshneva, *Sofia Claims Kosovo’s Gorani as ‘Bulgarian Minority’*, Balkan insight, 27 November 2017, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/sofia-claims-kosovo-s-gorani-as-bulgarian-minority--11-26-2017>, accessed July 24 2018

equal footing with the name Muslim.”⁷³ In other words, the change of the national name is precipitated by a change of constituent Other. He also claims that the Bosnian language existed at least from the 17th century and that Serbian and Croatian propaganda seeks to cast it as a dialect of their languages. All three languages are mutually intelligible and have been for at least two centuries, but the issue of how it should be named is highly contentious. The author claims that the national name Bosniak and the language were reclaimed during and after “unseen genocide against Bosniaks... and heroic resistance against the aggressors”⁷⁴, largely spontaneously by the people themselves. Again, the author clearly sets the stage with the Victim We vs Genocidal Other trope. There can be no doubt who is the **heroic victim** and who is the brutal aggressor.

The author then proceeds to chart the history of his nation, from the earliest recorded history up until modern times. It is interesting to point out that both Ekmečić and Imamović agree that for ethnogenesis of South Slav nations “religion has been and still is **ethnic watershed** and the foundational element of ethnic identification and national cohesion.”⁷⁵ This specific term of religion as “watershed/ridgeline of nations” (*vododelnica nacija*) was coined by Ekmečić in his *Istorija Jugoslavije*, which he coauthored with Vladimir Dedijer, Ivan Božić and Sima Ćirković.⁷⁶ The fact that Imamović uses this exact term suggests that these two works exist within a shared textual space and that an intertextual relationship exists, as was suggested in the first pages of this thesis. When speaking about the ethnic origins of his people Imamović utilizes the familiar trope of a “pure people” stating that the Bosniaks “rarely mixed with other peoples, which is not the case with other South Slavs, in whose ethnogenesis the share of nonSlavic elements is pretty high.”⁷⁷ He goes on to claim that Bosnia formed as a feudal state, prior to other South Slav feudal states (Serbia and Croatia), drawing upon the work of Constantine Porphyrogenite *De Administrado Imperio*⁷⁸ and that Tvrtko I was the greatest statesmen of all the South Slav leaders in history. Naturally these claims are highly disputed by Serbian scholars. Both sides provide different readings of the same sources, plucking from ancient sources claims

⁷³ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 14

⁷⁴ Ibid p. 17

⁷⁵ Ibid p. 21

⁷⁶ Milorad Vučelić, *MILORAD EKMEČIĆ Jedino protiv Srba su svi složni*, Pečat, May 12 2011, <http://www.pecat.co.rs/2011/05/milorad-ekmecic-jedino-protiv-srba-su-svi-slozni/> accessed June 6 2018

⁷⁷ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 23

⁷⁸ Ibid p. 25

which suit their narrative. Antić and Kecmanović in *Istorija Republike Srpske* claim that Porphyrogenite wrote that medieval Serbia consisted of Bosnia and Raška, while directly attacking Noel Malcolm (who wrote a history of Bosnia held in high esteem by Bosniak authors) for omitting this fact.⁷⁹ It goes without saying that Antić, Kecmanović and Ekmečić consider medieval Bosnia as a Serbian state and its leaders as ethnic Serbs. Thus, the two historical narratives come into conflict from the beginning of their history.

Imamović moves on to write about social and economic structure of early Slavic settlements in the Balkans, before moving onto the formation of the Bosnian state. He posits that Bosnia first came into being as a political entity during the early 12th century, naming ban (a title which corresponds to a duke, roughly speaking) Borić as its first recorded ruler. As all Slavic rulers in the Balkans during the High Middle Ages (1000-1250 AD) Borić would shift between being a vassal of and going to war with Byzantium. With this very first recorded ruler of Bosnia, Imamović stresses that Borić and his state were independent from Serbia, using the Byzantine writer Cinnamus as proof. He quotes Cinnamus who supposedly claims that Bosnia is “not subservient to the grand duke (Slavic term is “*veliki župan*”) of Serbia. Its people has a separate way of life and governance.”⁸⁰ The separation between the Self and Other must be maintained throughout messianic/horizontal time and a claim to the land must be maintained, as a nation moves down through history. Truth be told, Imamović does claim that the Hungarian-Croatian state, formed in 1102., was the fiercest opponent of Bosnia’s independence.⁸¹ Croatia and Croats are also prominent Others in both discourses, although for Bosnia this animosity is set much earlier. For Serbian historians Croats are not represented as an enemy when writing about Medieval history.

After Borić, Kulin Ban comes to power, whose reign is viewed by Bosniaks as a golden age of their history. This was the time of Crusades and the Catholic church was already involved in the Crusades for the Holy land, The Baltic and the Albigensian Crusade. Bosnia drew the ire of the Vatican and Hungarian king Emeric was dispatched with a crusading force to root out the heretics in Bosnia and expand his domain. What is interesting here, Imamović states that Vukan, the eldest son of Stefan Nemanja, sent a letter to the Pope, convincing him that he should attack

⁷⁹ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 42

⁸⁰ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BiH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, р. 31

⁸¹ Ibid p.30

Bosnia. This is omitted from the Serbian works which I analyzed, nor is this fact known to me from my prior education. Imamović's reading of this supposed joint Serb/Orthodox and Croatian-Hungarian/Catholic crusade is predictable. He presents a narrative of an embattled nation, under constant threat of eradication at the hands of its two Others, Serbs and Croats. "That was the beginning of cooperation between the sword and the crosses (as the author says "*krsta ili križa*", Serbian and Croatian for cross), which would never cease across Bosnian history. It was directed against Bosnian heretics, whether they were *patarens* or *babuns*, or Muslims."⁸² Current Bosniak status as a victim of Serbian and Croatian aggression is pushed back 800 years. This is a clear-cut example of Messianic/horizontal time, where past and present exist simultaneously, reinforcing one another. In this way victimization of the Self is pushed through horizontal time, where the Other of today is always present as the eternal enemy. This coalition of the two crosses trope reemerges within his book on multiple occasions

Imamović moves on to write the history of the Kotromanić dynasty and Bosnia under their rule. According to Imamović, Bosnia reaches its current borders (roughly speaking) during the reign of ban Stjepan II in the 1320s. It is during his reign that Bosnia acquires Hum, which as a consequence increased the presence of Orthodox Christians. Hum encompassed what today is eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the eastern part of Republika Srpska. According to the Author, Bosnia reaches its height during the reign of Trvtko I (1353-1391) Kotromanić.⁸³ Imamović casually dismisses claims that Trvtko I was a Serb, asserting that he "was far from wanting to restore the old Serbian state... Trvtko I was politically and religiously far removed from the semi-holy characters and monastery darkness of the Serbian Orthodox rulers."⁸⁴ After Trvtko's death Bosnia would enter a period of decline. The last two kings, Stjepan Tomaš and Stjepan Tomašević would conduct a campaign of religious persecution against the Bogomils, while increasing taxation and levying more and more troops. The situation was so severe that the common folk were fleeing to the Ottoman side en masse, as the last king himself admitted to the

⁸² Ibid p. 33

⁸³ Trvtko I is one of the many disputed historical figures, whom both nations seek to claim. The issue with Trvtko is that he was crowned in a Serbian orthodox monastery Mileševa, where the holy remains of Saint Sava dwelled. He was crowned as the king of Serbia, Bosnia and the Coast (*Primorje*) likely in 1377-1378. He added the name Stefan to his name, emulating the well-established practice of Serbian kings. All of this is used by Serbs to legitimize their claim to Trvtko.

⁸⁴ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 62

Pope.⁸⁵ The country fell with little resistance to Mehmed II Fatih in 1463 and the king, along with the majority of the aristocracy, were executed.

What makes Bosnia unique amongst other medieval states is its church, a point of pride of all Bosniak authors analyzed. The Bosnian church is viewed as the very foundation of Bosniak identity. The Bosnian church was dualistic and anti-materialistic, claiming that this world is the domain of the Devil, while the world beyond is the abode of God. Thus, it didn't build any temples of worship, it left no written records of its theological practice and it had a very loose church hierarchy. Because of this the character of the Bosnian church is a subject of speculation, discussion and discursive conflict. Roughly there are three main theories on the character of the Bosnian church. Firstly, by Catholic and Croat sources it is presented as a Catholic heresy and conversely by Serbian authors it is presented as an Orthodox heresy.⁸⁶ Kecmanović and Antić for example, claim that the Bosnian church used Serbian liturgical books and held sermons according to the Eastern rite.⁸⁷ There is a third theory, to which Bosniak authors adhere to. This theory asserts that the Bosnian church is a separate (vaguely Christian) religion altogether, inspired by Manicheism and early Christian sects. This has a clear function of separating the Self from the Others across horizontal time. Bosniaks may have been Christians at one point, but if they were they were definitely not Catholic or Orthodox Christians, i.e. Croats or Serbs. The Manichean theory of the Bosnian church is espoused by Imamović⁸⁸, Zulfikarpašić⁸⁹ and Filipović.⁹⁰

This theory is also used to explain how Islam spread so quickly among the Bosniaks. Islam, particularly its more mystic and tolerant forms like Sufism, are seen as natural extensions and spiritual successors of Bosniak medieval Manichean roots. There is some dispute regarding these claims between Bosniak authors however. Imamović explicitly states that there is no scientific proof of any theological link between the two and criticizes Bosniak authors who assert this claim.⁹¹ He claims that the last two Bosnian kings were so thorough in their persecution of

⁸⁵ Ibid p. 81

⁸⁶ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, pp 87-89

⁸⁷ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 48

⁸⁸ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, pp 84-85

⁸⁹ Šaćir Filandra i Enes Karić *Bošnjačka ideja*, Zagreb HR: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2002, p. 201

⁹⁰ Muhamed Filipović *Ko smo mi Bošnjaci?*, Sarajevo BIH: Prosperitet, 2007, pp 148-149

⁹¹ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 150

Bogomils that there were hardly any left when the country fell to the Ottomans. Thus, he states that members of all three religions in Bosnia converted to Islam, not just Bogomils. He sees this as a product of “the dynamic nature of the new faith (Islam) and not some supposed propensity to conversion due to belonging to some heretical beliefs, as is often written and thought.”⁹²

However, all three authors do agree on the positive nature of Islam and Ottoman rule. Naturally, Serbian authors have completely opposite views. Imamović views Ottoman rule as highly positive and tries to dispel any negative perceptions of even the most controversial aspects of Islam and Ottoman rule. For example, the *jizya* is viewed as a protection tax drafted from religious minorities, relatively benign measure for the time when compared to Western Europe. He stresses that the peasants were better off under the Ottomans than with the previous Christian lords. On the issue of *devshirma*, the practice of taking Christian boys as slaves to later be trained as elite Janissary troops and bureaucrats, Imamović offers a positive viewpoint. He acknowledges that the practice is maligned in Christian epic traditions, but he states that Bosniaks were also subjected to *devshirma*, which they considered as a “great privilege”.⁹³ He views this as a meritocratic system, where young men of humble origins can move up in the world. Serbs see it as one of the most horrific aspects of Ottoman rule, robbing parents of their male heirs. According to him, this practice was not universally acknowledged as just and lawful in the eyes of sharia. He presents a debate from the 16th century between Idris Bittlisi and Saddedin, where the former argued for *devshirma*, while the later was against it.⁹⁴ This Ottoman debate is not present in Serbian works. Be that as it may, Imamović claims that the last *devshirma* drafted in Serbia occurred in 1638 and the practice would fizzle out in the 1660s across the Empire.⁹⁵ He of course claims that the number of boys taken by *devshirma* is highly exaggerated and a fruit of Balkan nationalist propaganda. The downplaying the number of the Other’s victims is present in both discourses. This numbers game is critically important for both side, what Alija Izetbegovic himself noted. The high the number of one’s own victims the more

⁹² Ibid p. 92

⁹³ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 131

⁹⁴ Ibid p. 164

⁹⁵ Ibid p. 165

likely that they would be red as systematic violence from the other side and vice versa. In his own words: “That number deciphers whether it was a policy or incidental cases.”⁹⁶

Imamović’s stance on *jihad* is particularly interesting. He does acknowledge that the doctrine *jihad* was a major driving force of Ottoman expansion. However, he claims that the goal of Jihad was not to destroy but to “subjugate and protect the *kitabīc* (*Ahl al-Kitāb*-people of the Book) minority- Jews, Christians and other peoples who possess the Book of God’s revelations, i.e. the non-Islamic world.”⁹⁷ He states that the Ottomans protected religious minorities and were comparatively much more tolerant than Western Europe. Imamović claims that the Orthodox church in particular was the beneficiary of Ottoman expansion. His claim that the Ottoman expansion was a vehicle of Serbian expansion, as Serbs moved with them as auxiliaries and herdsmen, settling regions where they never lived before, including large parts of BIH, is particularly interesting.⁹⁸ This is an incredibly important point, as it implies that Serbs were not so fiercely independent, freedom loving and anti-Oriental. They were in fact, according to Imamović, servants and beneficiaries of an Oriental empire and recent arrivals to Bosnia.

It goes without saying that the first centuries of Ottoman rule are painted in a positive light. Bosniaks are not described as a subject people, rather they are viewed as an integral part of the Ottoman power structure and as the ruling elite of Bosnia. According to Imamović, Bosniak aristocracy is reestablished from 1516., when a *Kanun-nama* for Bosnia stated that only locals could be awarded with *timars*.⁹⁹ According to Bosniak authors the locals who were awarded with these lands were descendants of Bosnian medieval aristocracy, a claim which Serbs dispute. Nonetheless, a permanent landed Muslim aristocracy is created and a permanently landless Christian peasantry, the root of the future conflict over the Agrarian issue (*agrarno pitanje*).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Alija Izetbegović *Rat i mir u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo BIH: Vijeće Kongresa bošnjačkih intelektualaca, 1998, p. 199

⁹⁷ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 97

⁹⁸ *Ibid* p. 98

⁹⁹ *Ibid* p. 118

¹⁰⁰ *Timars* were feudal possessions that would revert to the sultan after the *sipahi*’s death. This ensured a quasi-meritocratic system, where the sultan could allocate land to the best warriors and bureaucrats at his pleasure. This law in Bosnia limited the potential pool of *sipahis* to Bosnian Muslims, which in the long term created as specifically Bosnian structure the *odžakluk-timar*, which were in effect inheritable feudal possessions, with the Christian Serfs being tied to the land. In effect this meant that the Ottoman quasi-feudal system was reverting to feudalism in Bosnia.

His view on religious issues sharply diverges from Serbian authors. One of the most tragic events of Serbian history, the second abolishment of the Patriarchate of Peć in 1765 is treated as purely financial issue. According to Imamović the Serbian Patriarchate owed a large sum of money to George Spataris, a rich Greek merchant. After he was executed for treason the church's debts were inherited by the Ottoman government. The Serbian church couldn't pay the money back so their assets were transferred to patriarch Samuel Hagaris of Constantinople.¹⁰¹ Ekmečić conversely glosses over these details. He states that the reputation of Peć gradually fell, under pressure from the Ottomans and that it was eventually leased to the Patriarch of Constantinople.¹⁰² Spataris and the debt to him are never mentioned. In Imamović's writing Turkish religious intolerance is not mentioned. Rather, the Ottoman empire is viewed as a pinnacle of tolerance of its time. He states that: "The Ottoman empire, as (*upravo kao*) a Muslim state, was religiously tolerant far above the spiritual parochialism and exclusiveness of Byzantium and Serbia, as well as of western European Catholicism and Protestantism. As opposed to Ottoman cosmopolitanism, Christendom held to its principle of forced equation of state and religion."¹⁰³ Edward Said offers various definitions of orientalism in his book of the same name. In one of them he states that Orientalism "is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness"¹⁰⁴. Such a disparity of power between Bosniaks and the West does not exist and the Occident isn't presented as weaker. However, it is presented as lesser than the Islamic world. All Bosniak authors presented the Occident as less: tolerant, progressive, multicultural, diverse, vital, just etc.; than the Islamic world, the Ottoman empire and by extension, the Bosniaks. The discursive strategy can be dubbed as anti-Orientalism or even **Occidentalism**, which Imamović particularly uses to great effect.

Imamović as we can see isn't solely focused on discursive defense of his ingroup, rather he is keen to go on an offensive. He claims that the Serbian narrative of Bogomilist conversion to Islam was a product of prejudice towards Muslims, reproduced across centuries in the works of

¹⁰¹ Ibid p. 145

¹⁰² Милорад Екмечић *Дуго кретање од клања до орања: Историја Срба у новом веку*, Београд СР: Евро-Гијнти, 2010, р. 93

¹⁰³ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 145

¹⁰⁴ Edward W. Said *Orientalism*, London UK: Penguin books, 2003, p. 204

Serbian intellectuals, explicitly criticizing Njegoš, Andrić and Cvijić,¹⁰⁵ whom Serbian authors hold in high regard. Regarding islamization, he deconstructs the Serbian narrative of resilience to islamization and staunch adherence to the Orthodox faith. He states that the Rascia, historical heartland of Serbia, where the sacred remains of Saint Sava were buried in Mileševa and where The Gospel of Miroslav (*Miroslavljevo jevanđelje*) was written; was one of the first regions to convert to Islam.¹⁰⁶ He then goes on to claim Mehmed Paša Sokolović, a famous Ottoman grand vizier as a Bosniak. He dismisses Serbian claims to Sokolović, by disputing that he was a brother or close cousin to Makarije Sokolović, the Serbian Patriarch appointed during Mehmed's tenure. He rejects Serbian claims that Mehmed Paša worked on reconstructing the Serbian church out of sympathy and allegiance towards his former kin as national-romanticism. According to Imamović Mehmed Paša his work on repairing government relations with the terms was motivated by *raison d'état* and the he was "a true (*pravovjerni*) Muslim and a true Ottoman".¹⁰⁷ True to Neumann's analysis, the embattled communities vie for ownership over famous historical figures vigorously.

Imamović does write himself into some discursive inconsistencies however. On the issue of islamization he claims that it was gradual and that all three Christian denominations had roughly the same propensity towards islamization. He also states that there was no force involved when people converted to Islam. Yet he himself presents a number of Ottoman population censuses which clearly contradict this claim. He states that in Bosnian *sandžak* by 1468 there were only 322 Muslim houses, which would go up to 16 935 compared to 19 619 Christian homes by 1535, finally reaching 45 941 out of 64 721 in 1604 comprising 71% of the population.¹⁰⁸ He isn't explicit about the first two, but in the last census Bogomils do not exist, only Orthodox and Catholic Christians. Within half a century half of the population converted to Islam and within a century and a half Bogomilist religion disappeared, while Catholicism and Orthodoxy didn't. Large swaths of Slavic population from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Lika, Dalmacija, Serbia, Kosovo and even Hungary converted to Islam in the early centuries of Ottoman dominance. Imamović claims that that mass of Slavic Muslims was "linguistically, ethnically and politically generally perceived to be members Bosniaks, or members of the Bosniak people, in the Ottoman

¹⁰⁵ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 152-153

¹⁰⁶ Ibid p. 148

¹⁰⁷ Ibid 161-162

¹⁰⁸ Ibid p. 178-179

empire.”¹⁰⁹ This is view held by all Bosniak authors. On one hand, Bosniak are and have been a separate ethnic group since the High Middle Ages, intimately tied to the land of Bosnia. On the other hand, all Slavic Muslims even if their origin is not from Bosnia, are presented as Bosniaks. In the same vein all the lands that were settled by these new Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds are appropriated in the name of the collective Self. It is therefore unsurprising that Imamović laments the loss of Budim (what is today a part of Budapest) as the most important Bosniak center north of the Danube.¹¹⁰

Prior to their defeat at the hands of Ian Sobieski at Vienna in 1683, the Ottomans controlled large parts of Hungary. Muslim traders, artisans, bureaucrats and soldiers would flock to the cities, while Muslim *sipahis* would be awarded with timars. Imamović claims that Ottomans were so successful because of Bosniak battle prowess. One such example is the battle of Krbava field in 1493 where Bosniak troops under Jakub Paša triumphed over Croatian Ban Derenčin. He compares this victory to the Ottoman victory in Kosovo, stating that: “On Kosovo in 1389 sultans Murad I and Bayezid I with the Ottomans opened one flank of the gate to Danube region (*Podunavlje*). Jakub Paša with Bosniaks opened the other flank on Krbava, through which Ottoman armies would later pass unimpeded into Central Europe”¹¹¹. Imamović calls various Ottoman armies as Bosniak armies, by stating that the soldiers were mostly conscripted from Bosniak lands and Slavic Muslims. What is particularly interesting that he draws a parallel between the defeat of one Other and the second Other, while equating the strength of the Self with the civilizational core state. It is this civilizational affiliation that would ultimately lead to the downfall of Bosniaks, as Imamović himself claims. “Given the fact that their fate was tied to the Ottoman empire, Bosniaks were direct participants of that historic process.”¹¹²

I stated earlier that there can be no question in both discourses of who the **heroic victim** is and who is the brutal aggressor. While this neologism may seem as a contradiction in terms, within both discourses it is a highly utilized. As I’ve stated before, Imamović does see his ingroup as the ultimate victim. However, as in the case of Krbava field he does see the collective Self as heroic, which can take on extreme forms and leave the author blindsided to logical

¹⁰⁹ Ibid p. 180

¹¹⁰ Ibid p. 279

¹¹¹ Ibid p. 232

¹¹² Ibid p. 275

inconsistencies. Imamović claims that Gazi Husrev Beg, was a Bosniak by blood and by spiritual preferences; that he “symbolized the history of Bosnia and Bosniaks of the 16th century.”¹¹³ He would later describe the military accomplishments of this embodiment of Bosniakdom, including his “enslavement and razing”¹¹⁴ (*robeći i paleći*) of Venetian Dalmatia and would find the main cause of Ottoman decline in the “loss of warrior spirit”¹¹⁵ by the end of the 16th century. One’s own conquests are never met with righteous indignation towards one’s own atrocities. That is only expressed when the Self is the victim, as in Imamović’s description of the fall of Sarajevo to Eugen of Savoy in grim detail¹¹⁶.

The Serbian and Croatian Others do not feature prominently in Imamović’s accounts on the first two centuries of Ottoman rule. It is only with the 18th century, when Croats and Serbs start to become more influential factors in Venetian/Hapsburg/Russian-Ottoman rivalry, that the two Others start to be perceived as major threats to Bosniaks. Imamović states that genocides against Bosniaks start precisely at this point. He claims that there are two ideological sources of this and future genocides: the idea of Croatia as a bulwark of Christendom and Serbian and Montenegrin elite’s goals of creating ethnically pure states.¹¹⁷ For the Serbian side he puts the blame on one of the most read and respected works of Serbian literature *Gorski vijenac*. This book according to him “raises an act which is in its essence an atrocity to the level of honor and chivalric morality. Since it was first published in Vienna in 1847 this dramatic-epic saga has become a cult book of genocidal persecution of Bosniaks, simply because they are Muslims.”¹¹⁸ The controversial issue is the event known as The Investigation of the Turkified (*Istraga poturica*), where local Serbs lead a rebellion against Ottoman forces in Montenegro (which was at that time much smaller than today) to aid Russian war efforts, in effect ethnically cleansing the region of Muslims. The “investigation” was led by bishop Danilo Šćepčević Petrović, whose house would from that point onward become the hereditary theocratic rulers of Montenegro. Ottomans would later on lead a reprisal invasion of Montenegro, taking Cetinje in October 1714. While Petrović commits a form of genocide against Muslims by expelling 800-100 Muslims from Montenegro, as Imamović

¹¹³ Ibid p. 235

¹¹⁴ Ibid p. 244

¹¹⁵ Ibid p. 254

¹¹⁶ Ibid p. 286-289

¹¹⁷ Ibid p. 290-291

¹¹⁸ Ibid p. 293

claims, Numan Paša Čuprić bey of Bosnia and Bećir Beg Čengiđ bey of Herzeĝovina merely “take” (*poveo*) close to 2000 Montenegrins and resettle them around Sarajevo.¹¹⁹ Thus, a stage of conflict between the Self and Other is set, with clearly defined heroic victims and brutal aggressors.

With the beginning of the 19th century the Ottoman empire would be rocked by several rebellions: Ali Paša in Janina, Muhammad Ali of Egypt and the First Serbian Uprising. This would raise the question of the existence of the Ottoman Empire and who would fill the vacuum left behind, dubbed the Eastern question. Imamović says that the Eastern Question was viewed differently and much more personally by the Bosniaks. “For Bosniaks it was always the issue of surviving on one’s own soil, while maintaining one’s own Muslim identity, irrespective of the potential fate of the Ottoman empire.”¹²⁰ According to Imamović, all of these uprisings were possible precisely because the Ottomans were not as oppressive as is claimed by Christian discourse. They were led by a proto-bourgeoisie, traders, smugglers and rich land owners. The mere fact that a Christian bourgeoisie formed is a testament to Ottoman tolerance. The First Serbian Uprising, viewed by Serbs as a form of resistance of an oppressed people against a colonial and reactionary empire, is something completely different to Imamović. He states that the Christian uprisings were not only a threat to Ottoman rule but “a threat to physical existence of the Muslim populace, including Bosniaks. That is how the First Serbian Uprising was perceived and accepted in Bosnia.”¹²¹ The entire process of Serbian emancipation from Ottoman rule, which ends in 1878 is presented by Imamović as a campaign of genocide, forced conversion and ethnic cleansing of Muslim Slavs, i.e. Bosniaks from Serbia. He states that around 1830 around 4000 Bosniaks lived in Belgrade¹²², while in 1867 there were only 36 of them left¹²³. After successful Serbian and Greek rebellions, Bosniaks would attempt their own rebellion seeking greater autonomy and retention of old feudal privileges. The rebellion received no aid from Austria, Russia nor neighboring Serbia. It was quashed by Ottoman general Omer Paša Latas.

¹¹⁹ Ibid p. 294

¹²⁰ Ibid p. 314

¹²¹ Ibid p. 328

¹²² Ibid p. 329

¹²³ Ibid p. 331

During these tumultuous times a steady stream of Muslim refugees starts flowing to Turkey. This would turn into a massive flood by the end of the century and beginning of the 20th century. Social tensions were compounded by the **Agrarian issue**, which was relatively complex, but it will be presented here in brief. The emigration of free Muslim peasants led to a labor shortage, which was eased by settling the land with Orthodox Christian herdsmen. The problem was that the *sipahis* had already bought the land of the Muslim freemen who migrated to Turkey. The Christian workforce which was brought to Bosnia would then be tied to the land becoming essentially serfs. This was all happening in mid-19th century. As Europe was defeudalizing, Bosnia was refeudalizing. The entire process is called in Serbian/Bosnian *čitlučenje* or *čiflučenje*, named after the inheritable feudal land *čitluk* and their lords *čitluk-sahibije*. Up to this point both Bosniaks and Serbs agree and acknowledge the Agrarian issue. Where the two sides differ is on how to resolve the problem, more specifically on property issues stemming from it. For Imamović the issue of who is the owner of the land, the *sipahi* or the serf, was resolved in 1859 with the Saferic order (*Saferska naredba*), which was legalized by Austria-Hungary in 1878.¹²⁴ The order states that the *sipahi* is the owner of the property and the serf is a tenant. The serf does have a right of first sale (*pravo preče kupovine*) if the *sipahi* decides to sell portions of his land, but the land is not his. Ekmečić on the other hand is highly critical of the Serbian elite at that time, which sought to ally itself with the Bosniak feudal lords by guaranteeing their feudal property rights. He sees that as the root cause of a split between Bosnian and Serbian Serbs, and the eventual high support for the Communist party among Bosnian Serbs due to the large disparity in land ownership in interwar BiH. This is a common theme in all communist revolutions from Russia to Cuba. Ekmečić explicitly states that “the basis of every European movement for national liberation was the Agrarian issue.”¹²⁵ This social and economic conflict would fuel the national conflict and vice versa, in the late 19th and first half of 20th century.

The Eastern question would ignite in 1875-1878, with intermittent warfare waged by Serbia, Russia, Montenegro, various Christian irredentist groups on one side against the Ottomans on the other. Both narratives agree that Austria and Russia carved up the Ottoman lands according to their own imperial interest, which included the Austro-Hungarian occupation of BiH. Naturally,

¹²⁴ Ibid p. 340

¹²⁵ Милорад Екмечић *Дуго кретање од клања до орања: Историја Срба у новом веку*, Београд СР: Евро-Гиунти, 2010, p. 260

Bosniaks think that they were wronged by this action, as do the Serbs. Russia and its allies won the war. The Ottomans were forced to sign the Treaty of San Stefan. Imamović stresses that article 14 of this treaty provided a form of autonomy to BIH.¹²⁶ Other Great Powers felt threatened by the sudden expansion of Russia and its vassal Bulgaria, which was a stone's throw away from the Bosphorus. Thus, a second treaty was signed in the Congress of Berlin, curtailing Russian influence, expanding Serbia and Montenegro, splitting Bulgaria in two states and giving BIH and Sandzak to Austria-Hungary. Interestingly, Imamović points out that the Great Powers would recognize Serbia under few conditions. Namely, due to a formal complaint against Serbia issued by the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* on grounds of discrimination against Jews, the Great powers introduced article 35 of the Berlin treaty which compelled Serbia to treat all faiths equally under its law.¹²⁷ Serbia introduced this article as its domestic law in Article 77 of The Law of organizing liberated regions (*Zakon o uređenju oslobođenih predela*). This trope is present in all works, implied anti-Semitism of the Other, while simultaneously equating one's own oppression with the Jewish plight. Article 35 and Article 77 are not mentioned in the Serbian works.

Austro-Hungarian occupation was a major civilizational shift for the Bosniaks, a point which Imamović himself acknowledges. Bosniaks were pushed into a new Western and capitalist political-economic system. It couldn't have been easy for a practically feudal culture to acculturate itself to this new system. The problem of acculturation was compounded by existing ethnic and class fissures. According to Imamović, Serbian and Croatian propaganda were widespread in BIH, which forced the new imperial powers to forge an alliance with the Muslim aristocracy.¹²⁸ This did not occur immediately however, since the occupation would face fierce resistance from Bosniaks in the first decade after 1878. Bosniak lower classes had an especially hard time of adjusting to the new system of government, which led to waves of them fleeing to Turkey. The Austro-Hungarian authorities would then resettle the vacant lands by Croatian, Serb, Hungarian, German and other colonists. The ajan/sipahi or aristocratic class was not immune to these trends either.. The depopulation of BIH was so severe that, as Imamović claims: "According to official Austro-Hungarian data from 1878 to 1914 61.114 Bosniaks left the

¹²⁶ Mustafa Imamović *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo BIH: Preporod, Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, 2006, p. 347

¹²⁷ Ibid p. 349

¹²⁸ Ibid p. 363

country, which roughly corresponds with the number of colonists (63 376).¹²⁹ Bosniak emigration and subsequent colonization of other groups, chiefly Serbs and Croats, shifted the demographic of the country substantially. Bosniaks made up about 38.73% of the population in 1879, which would drop to 32.25% by 1910.¹³⁰ Eventually according to Imamović, the authorities would try to stop these trends, as they presented a danger of potential Serb demographic dominance in the future.

His stance on the Austro-Hungarian occupation is largely ambivalent. He does see Vienna as another imperial ally against Balkan nationalisms, but he also sees it as susceptible to their pressures as in the case of abolishment of the Bosnian language in 1907. On the other hand, he acknowledges that Austro-Hungarian rule was preferable since it guaranteed physical existence of Bosniaks at the very least, as opposed to Serbian, Croatian and Montenegrin rule.¹³¹ He supports Benjamin Kallay's efforts of creating a synthetic Bosnian nation and criticizes Serbian claims of supposed "fictive nature" of Bosnian identity. He states that Kallay was facing a real historical force, the Serbian national movement, against which he could only use another real historical force, "Bosnian political traditions".¹³² These traditions entail a common Bosniak/Bosnian identity, despite religious tension, which had existed since the High Middle Ages. This claim that all Bosnians are or were Bosniaks is universal among Bosniak authors. Conversely, the claim that all or large majority of South Slavs (excluding Bulgarians and a part of Croats) were Serbs, is universal among Serb authors. Bosniak authors regret that Serbian and Croatian propaganda were effective in assimilating Christian Bosniaks, supplanting their Bosniak roots with new national ideas, so all efforts aimed at (re)creating an integral Bosniak/Bosnian nation were for naught. As Imamović unambiguously claims: "Orthodox and Catholic population in Bosnia by in large settled here in the 18th and 19th century, so their consciousness, tradition and ideology had no connections to the medieval Bosnian state."¹³³ This is precisely the key trope used by all authors, **Dissonant Other**. Some Serbs and Croats are a part of the Self, since they were at one-point Bosniaks. However, they were assimilated by

¹²⁹ Ibid p. 371

¹³⁰ Ibid p. 371

¹³¹ Ibid p. 384

¹³² Ibid p. 375

¹³³ Ibid p. 377

“foreign” Serb and Croat colonizers and thus they could not have been brought to the fold. The Other is simultaneously apart and a part of the Self.

The two nations were not beyond cooperation, when their interests aligned. Both national movements, led by mufti Džabić and Gligorije Jeftanović, sought at first church autonomy and then political autonomy and representation from the Hapsburg government. Both sides felt threatened by Catholic dominance and proselytism, as well as with Viennese attempts to control their religious life. Both nations sought a Constitution for BIH, a Parliament and representatives in the new Parliament in Istanbul and they would eventually get political representation within Austrian BIH by 1910. The most important parties were MNO (*Muslimanska narodna organizacija*), SNO (Srpska narodna organizacija) and HNZ (Hrvatska narodna zajednica); for Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats respectively. The new parliament would immediately enter into a gridlock, since debates on any issue would cause a national(ist) debate between the MPs. Imamović puts the blame for this on “Serb and Croatian nationalist aspirations”.¹³⁴

The Agrarian question yet again became a huge point of contention between the national groups, now represented by MNO, SNO, HNZ and other smaller parties in the Parliament. Serb parties were pressured by the Serbian peasant class to push for a resolution of the issue. The gridlock on the Agrarian issue radicalized the Serb populace, which led to a series of strikes led by Serb MP and famous writer, Petar Kočić. This Peasant movement acted as grass roots, bottom up pressure group, directed at Serb MPs and the government to resolve the issue. This movement wanted to make the selling of land by the aristocrats to their peasants mandatory. According to Imamović the Bosniak press of the day thought that the actions of the Serb Peasant movement were “the beginning of terror, through which Orthodox Serbs want to force Bosniaks from their land.”¹³⁵ A coalition formed between Bosniak and Croat MPs, bent on resolving this issue, with a help of a few Serb MPs, pressured to cooperate by Vienna and Belgrade. The aristocrats could not be forced to sell their land and they could do so only if they made a contract with their serfs. If a contract had been made, the government would issue loans to the peasants, with low interests, so that they could buy the land. In effect, Vienna subsidized the land transfer from aristocrats to serfs, although it did not outright force the transfer. Serbs were not satisfied with the way this

¹³⁴ Ibid p. 445

¹³⁵ Ibid p. 449

issue was resolved. This issue would resurface both in Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Socialist Yugoslavia.

Imamović's take on the Balkan wars and the First world war is quite different from the Serbian perspective. He states that the reason why the Christian Balkan countries attacked Turkey was to "prevent the creation of autonomous Albania in its "ethnic boundaries"". ¹³⁶ This autonomous Albania was supposed to encompass Kosovo, Bitolj, Skadar and Janina as per agreement between the Young Turks government and Albanian representatives. The two wars were, according to him detrimental to Balkan Muslims, Bosniaks and Albanians. The shock of Turkish defeat was hard on the Bosniaks. According to Imamović, it was if they had lost a part of themselves and now they were forced to embrace European civilization, if they wanted to survive. ¹³⁷ He does state that Serbian occupation forces in Sandžak were for the most part benign, while the Montenegrin ones actively persecuted and forcefully converted Bosniaks. Many Bosniaks fought for the Serbian army in the First World War. According to Imamović, Serbia or Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, repaid them after 1918 with "various forms of genocide, plundering and persecution." ¹³⁸

Regarding the issue of the Great war, Imamović is blunt and clear from the start. The assassination of Arch Duke Ferdinand is viewed as a "terrorist act" perpetrated by members of "Serb nationalist youth" group. ¹³⁹ This is rarely stated by Serb authors. Imamović does acknowledge that the Great war would have started at some point anyway, due to Great power rivalry and that Princip's terrorist act merely accelerated the process. He also states that Serbs were persecuted after the assassination, as a form of reprisal, which was encouraged by local officials. Then his discourse diverges from the Serb one. He sees the Serbian counteroffensive against Astro-Hungarian troops in 1914 as an invasion, during which numerous war crimes against Bosniaks were committed by Serbian and Montenegrin troops. The formation of Bosnian *Shutzkorps*-irregular Bosniak and Croat militias, maligned by the Serbs, is viewed as a necessary safeguard against potential future Serbian invasion. ¹⁴⁰ Imamović also speaks with pride about Bosniak battle prowess in the war against Serbia and other Entente powers. He states that

¹³⁶ Ibid p. 457

¹³⁷ Ibid p. 454

¹³⁸ Ibid p. 459

¹³⁹ Ibid p. 463

¹⁴⁰ Ibid p. 466

Bosniak regiments were counted as “elite Austro-Hungarian troops, whose arrival would install fear in the enemy’s hearts” and embolden their German and Hungarian comrades.¹⁴¹ The Self is ever the heroic victim.

His take on the creation of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslavian idea is mostly similar to way Serbs see it, albeit with indignation that Bosniaks were left out of the talks in Niš and Corfu. But the well-known tropes are there. Serbs wanted a unitary state, Croats wanted a federation and these two visions of the new state would clash in the new country. He does of course agree with Croatian discourse that the unitary state was a greater Serbian concept and favors a federative/confederative model. His stance on the new state is negative and he criticizes it for its treatment of Bosniaks. For him, in the first years after the war, “the genocidal policies towards Bosniaks as Muslims were continued and intensified”¹⁴², claiming the lives of some 3000 Bosniaks. Granted this was largely a factor of government inaction against bandit/*hajduk* raids against Muslims than an official policy, but nonetheless the Bosniaks are clearly set up discursively as victims of the new Serb dominated state. If the government was not to blame for endangering Bosniak lives it was to blame for endangering their economic wellbeing. Aristocratic and *vakif* land was confiscated and redistributed to the peasants, without reimbursement to previous owners in the first years of the new state. Mosques were being torn down or turned into sports halls and ammunition depots. This was, according to Imamović done systemically, following the example of Serbia from the early 19th century (another case of horizontal time). There is no mention of this in the Serb discourse. King Alexander had to placate the Serb peasant’s masses who still sought to have the Agrarian issue resolved and these were just the first steps. From 1929-1931 with a series of laws the government started taking the land from the aristocrats and giving it to the peasants. It would reimburse the landowners with cash money and government bonds, which were supposed to be payed in installments until 1975. The price per hectare set by the state in BIH was 7-10 times less than the price set in other regions in the state. These measures are seen by Imamović as ways of destroying Bosniaks economically and nationally, by destroying their elite.¹⁴³ Political reforms were also viewed as furthering Serb interest at the expense of others. He accuses the government of a form of ethnic

¹⁴¹ Ibid p. 467

¹⁴² Ibid p. 489

¹⁴³ Ibid p. 510

gerrymandering, due to the fact that 6/9 *Banovinas* (states/provinces) were majority Serb.¹⁴⁴ None was majority Bosniak.

His view on the Second World War differ from Serb ones, unsurprisingly. He sees NDH and German occupation as negative but sets up Bosniaks as clear victims of this government. He states that the Croatian appropriation of Bosniaks as Croats was a form of genocide.¹⁴⁵ He does acknowledge that Serbs were widely persecuted by the new authorities, however he does criticize the Ustaše of “trying and in part succeeding of pinning the blame on Bosniaks, so that they could be exposed to četnik retaliations.”¹⁴⁶ For him, Bosniak participation in crimes against Serbs was miniscule or a Croatian ruse, while Serb crimes were very real and very deliberate. Number of Serbian victims is never stated, however the number of Bosniak ones is. He claims that 103 000 Bosniaks were killed during the Second World War,¹⁴⁷ which comprised about 8.1% of the population making Bosniaks the greatest victims and the “most tragic people of the Second World War in the soil of BIH and the whole of Yugoslavia.”¹⁴⁸ The Self is always, in every conflict, the greatest victim.

As we have already stated with Ekmečić, the authors tend to place personal examples of atrocities to make them more relatable to the reader. He gives an example of doctor Asim Ćemerlić in Srebrenica, who was a good Samaritan, instrumental in saving local Serbs from being deported to concentration camps. When četniks of Jezdimir Dangić took Srebrenica, he narrowly escaped execution. Other Bosniaks were not so lucky. According to Imamović, Serbian Christmas in January 1942 “in accordance with the traditions of the “investigation of the Turcified” and *Gorski vijenac*, was a signal to start massive slaughter and killing of Bosniaks.”¹⁴⁹ All of this follows Ćemerlić’s pleas for mercy and Bosniak petitions to Zagreb to end the persecution of Serbs. His choice of words and narrative structure is very deliberate. The Other’s genocidal nature has deep ideological roots (*Gorski vijenac*) and it even stems from their religion (crimes are perpetrated on holidays). Četniks did what they did in 1942 and in 1995 according to their national and religious traditions. Imamović is explicit in this regard, devoting an entire

¹⁴⁴ Ibid p. 506

¹⁴⁵ Ibid p. 531

¹⁴⁶ Ibid p. 534

¹⁴⁷ Ibid p. 537

¹⁴⁸ Ibid p. 549

¹⁴⁹ Ibid p. 535

chapter to četnik genocide against Bosniaks. He starts the chapter with the following “Serbo-četnik genocide over Bosniaks has deep roots. On one hand it is rooted in deep religious hatred, on the other in the wishes of Serb ideologists and politicians to create an ethnically pure state.”¹⁵⁰ The Other’s genocidal nature stretches across horizontal time, never changing as centuries pass. Ekmečić writes exactly like this about the Bosniaks, which the reader can see in the corresponding chapter.

Imamović sees his own group as antifascist, stating that they have given much to the struggle against fascism, helping to create modern Europe. Bosniaks did this as members of the Partisan movement and the Communist party of course. His view on SFRY is more ambivalent than his views on the Kingdom. He does see the autonomy of BIH, acknowledging Bosniak nationality, albeit under the name Muslim and Bosniak representation as positive improvements, when compared to earlier regimes. He also sees the Constitution of 1974 as “the greatest obstacle to reestablishment of greater-Serb hegemony in Yugoslavia.”¹⁵¹ When Serbs could not retain their dominance in Yugoslavia, they turned against it. They would emerge from the greater-Serb core in the Communist party, which would later morph into “the terrorist Serb democratic party.”¹⁵² Bosniaks sought finally to create an independent BIH. The Other reacted according to Imamović “with a greater-Serb aggression against Bosnia by April 1992 and with a massive genocide against Bosniaks.”¹⁵³ Bosniaks finally took back their name in 1993 during the Bosniak congress. The author does not go on to describe the war itself, the events in Srebrenica nor the postwar history since the book was written during the war itself. To summarize, Imamović clearly presents a narrative of the victimized Self, suffering for centuries at the hands of genocidal Others, at the hands of the West and even being betrayed and sold out by its civilizational kin. The primary Other is the Serb and he is everything what the Bosniak is not: genocidal, fascist, nationalistic, undemocratic, non-western, religiously fundamentalist and expansionist.

3.2 Words of the grandfather(s)

¹⁵⁰ Ibid p. 537

¹⁵¹ Ibid p. 568

¹⁵² Ibid p. 567

¹⁵³ Ibid p. 569

This chapter will primarily deal with *Bošnjačka ideja* written by Šaćir Filandra and Enes Karić. It is a political biography of Adil Zulfikarpašić, one of the most influential Bosniak intellectuals if not the most influential one. The downside of this work is that it is not written by, rather it is written about Zulfikarpašić. The up side is that *Bošnjačka ideja* is a product of a series of interviews the two had with Zulfikarpašić, as well as from the great volume of written work by Zulfikarpašić himself. The corresponding chapter on the Serb side deals with Ćosić, however the works analyzed are written by him personally. Nevertheless, Zulfikarpašić and Ćosić are roughly comparable to each other and that is why they were chosen.¹⁵⁴

The authors state that Zulfikarpašić firmly believed in two things throughout his life, Bosniakdom and liberal democracy. His Bosniakdom was “the primordial (*iskonsko*) and permanent national name and commitment (*opredeljenje*) of Bosniak Muslims, and historically speaking of Bosnian Catholics and Orthodox.”¹⁵⁵ As other Bosniak authors, he expresses the Dissonant Other trope, where the Other was once a part of the Self and potentially could be again. Imamović, as we have stated, believes that integral Bosniakdom was not feasible at least from the late 19th century. Zulfikarpašić on the other hand thought it possible up until the 1990s. The two authors almost immediately follow up by contrasting this point with stressing the genocidal nature of the Other. They state that Zulfikarpašić’s work within the political Yugoslav/Bosniak emigration in the West greatly influenced Bosniak political parties. Additionally, they state that he worked to uncover the anti-Bosnian and anti-Bosniak genocidal plan, which was being drawn up by četnik-Serb and ustaša-Croat emigration.¹⁵⁶ As stated above, it is challenge to analyze Zulfikarpašić’s discourse and distinguishing it from those of his biographers. In this case it is evident that these views belong to the latter.

¹⁵⁴ Adil Zulfikarpašić comes from a long line of Bosniak aristocrats. He was a well-educated man, participated in World War 2 on the communist side, but he would leave the country for Switzerland, a couple of years after the war. He was a staunch supporter of the Bosniak national name, integral Bosniakdom, liberal democracy and secularism. He was one of the founders of SDA, at first a close ally of Izetbegović, before they came into conflict. He would go on to found the Bosniak institute and Imamović and Filandra would eventually become members of the Senate of the Bosniak institute. In this regard he wielded comparable cultural and political influence among the Bosniaks as Ćosić wielded among the Serbs and he was also tied to other Bosniak authors analyzed in this thesis. For these reasons this work is chosen as an object of analysis.

¹⁵⁵ Šaćir Filandra i Enes Karić *Bošnjačka ideja*, Zagreb HR: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2002, p. 9

¹⁵⁶ Ibid p. 14

After the introduction the two authors explore the complexity of Bosniak political emigration. Some identified as Croats, some as Serbs, some were Muslim theologians, some secular Bosniak nationalists. The thing that united them all was anticommunism. Zulfikarpašić ran into conflicts with the communist government immediately after the war due to the issue of food distribution. As the authors state, he left the country disappointed in what his struggle had given his people and country. His people were marginalized while “Serb cadres took over complete power in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁵⁷ Thus communist Yugoslavia is set up as just another Serb dominated state, where Bosniaks are marginalized. A universal trope among Bosniak authors.

In his early years as an emigrant he was mostly aligned with the Croatian political emigration, even identifying as a Croat. His biographers do state that he only cooperated with democratic Croats, mostly members of the old Croatian peasants’ party (HSS). His biographers also state that his Croat identity was not ethnic but rather “political, in the sense that it was anti-četnik, anti-greater Serbian, anticommunist”.¹⁵⁸ Thus, in the same way as the Self is washed clean of any corruption, held pure, so are its great members. The authors stress that Zulfikarpašić was always democratic and always a Bosniak, dismissing any deviations as speculations or necessary political opportunism in a hostile environment. Whether this is true or not is not the issue, what is important that they perceive it as true. Zulfikarpašić’s first political activity was a protest against conversions of Muslims to Catholicism in the emigrant communities. The scale of conversions was so massive that Bosniak authors suspected a degree of force was involved. Croatian authors replied with accusing Zulfikarpašić of being a communist agent. Many Bosniak intellectuals rallied to his cause and with this protest a nucleus of proto-Bosniak emigrant intelligentsia formed out of erstwhile Muslim “Croats”.

Zulfikarpašić and his long-term ally in the emigrant community, Smail Balić, very early on clearly identified Serbs as the Other in their writings. Filandra and Karić paraphrase Balić’s book *Etničko naličje bosankso-hercegovačkih muslimana* and Zulfikarpašić’s review of said book, with a very interesting choice of words. The authors state that Zulfikarpašić’s text is valuable for: “it brings a kind of characterology of Serbian nationalism, which has elements of permanent scientific value. Zulfikarpašić sees the root of Serbian national consciousness in building

¹⁵⁷ Ibid p. 48

¹⁵⁸ Ibid p. 71

national and political morality on accumulated dark energy during centuries, where only in servitude to the Turks and banditry (*hajdučiji*) against them their entire activity was demonstrated. That servile and simultaneously anti-Turkish bandit urge, which is the root of Serbian national consciousness, Serbdom (the authors proceed to quote Zulfikarpašić directly) “came as a plight (*mora*), as a negation of the existence of Macedonians, Muslims, Arnauts (Albanians) and as a threat and true danger to national survival of millions of others who live in their vicinity and environment.”¹⁵⁹

This passage is incredibly important since it shows that not only Zulfikarpašić himself, but his biographers also, see Serbs as the Great Other, which is clearly evident from their commentary that Zulfikarpašić’s and Balić’s analyses have “elements of permanent scientific value”. Their analysis of “criminal Serbian spirit, a spirit which showed the full genocidal breath and width in the Second world war”¹⁶⁰ is according to Karić and Filandra, scientific. Again, as with the previous work, the stage is set and roles are clearly defined through discourse, from the first pages. Zulfikarpašić found it necessary for Serbs to change this spirit of theirs. However, he found that, in his own words Serbs “only have respect for force. Only if behind our rights stand our strength, our unity, we will be able to attain our rights. They will not try to slaughter us if they know that they can’t; if they knew that they would get the short end of the stick (*izvući deblji kraj*).”¹⁶¹

Balić and Zulfikarpašić, along with Muhamed Pilav, would go on to found *Bosanski pogledi* in 1955, a magazine which dealt with Bosnian and Bosniak issues. It was late on the stage in regards to Serbian and Croatian emigrant publications. The magazine had 3000 subscribers according to Zulfikarpašić within a few years.¹⁶² The two biographers, Filandra and Karić see this magazine as instrumental in creating Bosniak national consciousness, albeit only within the emigrant community. Within Yugoslavia Bosniak intellectuals within the communist system took a different route in forging Bosniak/Muslim consciousness and identity. *Bosanski pogledi* ostensibly published texts which presented Bosniaks in a positive light and criticized negative views about Muslims expressed by other intellectuals. Zulfikarpašić and Balić were editors of this magazine and also contributors. Among other topics the magazine would harshly criticize

¹⁵⁹ Ibid p. 77

¹⁶⁰ Ibid p. 77

¹⁶¹ Ibid p. 78

¹⁶² Ibid p. 123

Andrić for his anti-Muslim bigotry¹⁶³, a common trope amongst Bosniak authors. The magazine itself, according to Filandra and Karić “defines democracy, humanism and tolerance as Bosniak ideals.”¹⁶⁴ Positions expressed in this magazine attested to the existence of “a consciousness that Bosniaks are the most enduring guardians of Bosnian existence/survival (*održanja*).”¹⁶⁵ The collective Self is set up as democratic and orientalist claims of the Other against the Self are dismissed as bigotry. This strategy is commonly used by all Bosniak authors.

Bosanski pogledi widely covered the topic of Yugoslavia and its future. Balić, Zulfikarpašić and other Bosniak authors would present their views and the magazine allowed for replies and criticisms to be published. It was quite open and polemical in nature. Regarding Yugoslavia, Zulfikarpašić was adamant in his beliefs. “I am certain that, if democratic freedoms are guaranteed, the best solution can be achieved in a common country, in a federalist Yugoslavia where Bosnia would be fully equal to Serbia and Croatia. However, in spite of my Yugoslav sentiments I would not accept a centralist and undemocratic Yugoslavia.”¹⁶⁶ Radmilo Grbić, a Canadian Serb emigrant would respond to these claims with his own claims. He stated that: “Bosnia could only exist and even be imagined as a separate unit within Yugoslavia... The more Muslims earnestly support Yugoslavia, the more Serbs would stand by the idea of a separate Bosnian unit.”¹⁶⁷ This debate is interesting because it shows that the fissures between the national leaders in the emigrant community, reflected the ones in Yugoslavia proper. The views of the two wartime leaders of Bosniaks and Serbs reflect the stances from the Zulfikarpašić-Grbić debate almost perfectly. Alija Izetbegović stated in 1997, when he was addressing a gathering of Bosniak intellectuals in the Home of the Army (Dom Armije) Sarajevo: “I want to say here, to remind you that we did not work on the destruction of Yugoslavia... It was evident that Yugoslavia could not solve two main problems. Firstly, it could not solve the problem of freedom, it could not relinquish its communist heritage and secondly, it could not relinquish its hegemony, Serb hegemony.”¹⁶⁸ Karadžić on the other and sees the issue of Yugoslavia completely differently. He states that: “They tell us that Serbs do not want to live with Muslims. We do everything we can so that the Muslims would stay with us in Yugoslavia. Serbs want to

¹⁶³ Ibid p, 87

¹⁶⁴ Ibid p. 88

¹⁶⁵ Ibid p. 88

¹⁶⁶ Ibid p. 146

¹⁶⁷ Ibid p. 147

¹⁶⁸ Emira Tananović *Alija Izetbegović: Govori, intervju i pisma 1997*, Sarajevo BIH: “DES” djl, 1998, pp 184-185

live with Muslims; Serbs do not want to live under Muslims.”¹⁶⁹ Both Bosniak authors and both Serbian authors, writing half a century apart (Zulfikarpašić-Grbić debate started in 1960) in two very different political environments came to the same conclusions and express stable national preferences in their discourse. Bosnia cannot be a part of a Serb-dominated autocratic Yugoslavia and conversely Serb parts of Bosnia cannot be a part of a Muslim dominated (usually also described as islamist) Bosnia.

Regarding the issue of national identity, Zulfikarpašić shares the views of all other authors that religion defined national identity in Bosnia. He also shares the Bosniak view that Orthodox Bosniaks chose to be Serbs in 19th century, while Catholic Bosniaks became Croats.¹⁷⁰ Bosniaks of course stood true to their old ways. As his biographers state: “from a Bosnian statehood (*državotvornog*) point of view Zulfikarpašić in Bosnian Bogomilism sees a political and ideological ancestor of Bosniakdom, and in the same manner he sees Bosniakdom as the truest (*najtemeljitijeg*) ideological descendant and follower of Bogomilism.”¹⁷¹ He views Bogomilism itself as a separate neo-Manichean, quasi-Christian religion, as we have already stated in the previous chapter. He does differ with Imamović on this, as he views Bogomilism as a spiritual forebearer of Islam in Bosnia, onto which Islam grafted itself relatively easily.¹⁷² Both Islam and Bogomilism, as ideological roots of Bosniakdom are themselves testaments to the eternal democratic nature of the Bosniak Self. As Zulfikarpašić states: “An exceptional democracy ruled in the state (Medieval Bosnia); everyone was equal, their rulers could not take any decisions without consulting other members of the aristocracy. It shows that Bogomilism had many similarities with Islam.”¹⁷³ Since Bogomils is in its essence a democratic ideology and the state religion of Medieval Bosnia, with the two being vivid in the memory of the Self and being its spiritual essence, that entails that the Self is in its essence democratic. The perceived or envisioned values of the Self of today are pushed back through Messianic time a thousand years. From this ideological perception another ideological conception emerges “open Bosniakdom”, whereby by “Bosniaks of all three faiths” can once again come together under one Bosniak identity. This can be achieved because, as Zulfikarpašić states: “Bosniakdom is not nationalism,

¹⁶⁹ Радован Караџић *Мермерне истине о Босни*, Београд СР: Игам, 2016, р. 44

¹⁷⁰ Šaćir Filandra i Enes Karić *Vošnjačka ideja*, Zagreb HR: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2002, p. 172

¹⁷¹ Ibid p, 200

¹⁷² Ibid p. 201 and p. 207

¹⁷³ Ibid p. 210

for it lacks exclusivity and aggression.”¹⁷⁴ A similar point is made by Filipović, which will be presented in the following chapters. The Democratic and Tolerant We trope is clearly evident in Zulfikarpašić’s concepts, as opposed to implied aggression and intolerance of the Other two nationalisms. Even though Bosniakdom is a democratic and tolerant concept, it is clear who should play the dominant role. As his biographers present his views: “Bosniaks are the majority people of Bosnia. They are the state building (*državotvorni*) people who are according to its size, importance and consciousness, chosen by history to safeguard Bosnia and preserve it as egalitarian, independent and indivisible.”¹⁷⁵ All Bosnians may be Bosniaks, but Muslim Bosniaks are the Chosen People to lead the state and nation. The image of the chosen people is very powerful and present in both discourses. On the next page the chosen people are juxtaposed with “vampiric Serbian and Croatian nationalism” of the other two peoples “who are on the road to sell out and betray this country”.¹⁷⁶ The Other(s) are Dissonant, simultaneously a necessary part of the Self and a threat to it.

When Zulfikarpašić came back to Yugoslavia, as it was being democratized and entering into its first elections in over half a century. Zulfikarpašić was one of the founding members of the SDA party, along with Alija Izetbegovic. The two entered into a conflict shortly after the party was founded. Nevertheless, his biographers show admiration to both men stating that Adil and Alija “was a slogan that rang in the hearts of Bosniaks and with equal strength took hold of their attention and fostered confidence.”¹⁷⁷ This is nothing unusual, as national authors of both sides hold their national heroes and founding fathers in high regard. Regardless, Zulfikarpašić was quickly sidelined by the more clerical elements in the SDA, which led him to form MBO (Muslim Bosniak Organization) along with Muhamed Filipović. This party was also nationalist, yet it was secular and more willing to cooperate with Serb parties. An agreement was reached with SDS leaders Karadžić, Koljević and Krajišnik in July 1991, whereby MBO and SDS would support a unified and undivided Bosnia within Yugoslavia. Milosevic accepted this agreement and even suggested that the first president of Yugoslavia be a Bosniak.¹⁷⁸ As both Filipović and Zulfikarpašić would claim, Serbs would only accept a unitary BIH if it remained within

¹⁷⁴ Ibid p. 221

¹⁷⁵ Ibid p. 237

¹⁷⁶ Ibid p. 238

¹⁷⁷ Ibid p. 345

¹⁷⁸ Ibid p. 354

Yugoslavia, a fact also stated by Serb leaders and authors. Sadly, this agreement was not accepted by the SDA, which would go on to win the great majority of Bosniak votes, making the agreement between MBO and SDS moot.

To sum up, even though there are some ideological differences between Zulfikarpašić and other Bosniak authors, there is still a consensus between them on all key points. His discourse, as well as the discourse of his biographers, espouses all tropes which I have presented in the introductory chapters. Lastly, I will finish with one of the most important tropes of both groups, the Western We. As his biographers state: “He saw that the traditional social values of his country of Bosnia and the Bosniak people are fully compatible with the world of freedom and human rights, which are espoused and embraced into the social being by the Western World.”¹⁷⁹ This notion of belonging to the West is expressed by all authors from both groups, which the reader can see in the upcoming chapters.

3.3 Words of the father

This chapter will deal with the works of Alija Izetbegovic. He was the Bosniak wartime leader, (co)founder of the first independent Bosnian state since the time of Stefan Tomašević and a separate Bosniak (demographically) dominated entity, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As such he is held in high regard amongst the Bosniak public. It is therefore of paramount importance to analyze his discourse on his own political life, legacy, Bosniak identity, future of Bosnia and the Bosnian war. His views will of course be contrasted with those of his Serbian counterpart Radovan Karadzic in the corresponding chapter. For the purposes of this thesis the following works by Izetbegovic will be analyzed: *Islamska deklaracija, Alija Izetbegović: Govori, intervju i pisma 1997* and *Alija Izetbegović: Govori, intervju i pisma 2001*. The first is his (in)famous Islamic declaration, universally maligned amongst Serbs, in which he presents a platform of reislamizing Bosnian Muslims. This work is viewed by Serbian authors in the same

¹⁷⁹ Ibid p. 370

way the *Memorandum SANU* is by Bosniak authors, as an ideological platform of the future genocide against the collective Self. The other two works are compendiums of his speeches, letters and interviews from 1997 and 2001 respectively.

Islamska deklaracija, for which he was tried and convicted along with other members of his “Young Muslim” group by the Yugoslav authorities, on the very first pages explicitly states its goal. “Affirmation (*ostvaranje*) of Islam in all fields of private life of the individual, in family and in society, through the renovation of Islamic religious thought and creation of a united Islamic community from Morocco to Indonesia.”¹⁸⁰ It is not clearly stated that this community or *ummah* should be territorial, nonetheless this statement is viewed by Serbian authors as proof of Islamist leanings of the future Bosniak leader. The work itself largely deals with the challenges of modernization in the Islamic world, which threaten Islamic societies Islamic natures. As someone who was sympathetic to the Muslim brotherhood, Izetbegovic tries to present Islamic modernism as an alternative and middle ground between conservatism (as in the Gulf states) and secular modernism (Baath controlled countries and Turkey).

He criticizes Arab nationalist regimes for imposing an ideology of laicism and nationalism, foreign to Muslims. As a remedy for this he presents an “Islamic order” which according to him has two key components: Islamic society and Islamic government. He states that: “Islamic society without an Islamic government is unfinished and powerless; Islamic government without an Islamic society is either a utopia or violence.”¹⁸¹ Thus both need to be Islamic and all Muslims must adhere to Islam as best they can for, according to him: “Muslims mostly do not exist as individuals” and “Islam is a religion, but at the same time a philosophy, morality, system of things, a style, an atmosphere- in a word, an integral system of life.”¹⁸² This presents Islam as a total(itarian) system of life, which is natural and necessary for Muslims, a point which is unsettling not only for Serbian but also for Bosniak authors. Since Islam is not just a religion, but a total system of life, Izetbegovic concludes that: “The first and most important conclusion is the conclusion that there can be no peace between Islam and nonislamic systems. There is no peace nor coexistence between the “Islamic faith” and nonislamic social and political institutions.”¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Alija Izetbegović *Islamska deklaracija*, Tuzla BIH: Grafičar, 1990, p. 3

¹⁸¹ *Ibid* p. 12

¹⁸² *Ibid* p. 12

¹⁸³ *Ibid* p. 13

For the purpose of this thesis it is not relevant whether Islam itself is or is not as Izetbegovic presents it. It matters how he perceives Islam and Muslims in his discourse and how others read it. Within a particular context, he is probably critiquing Arab socialist regimes from an Islamic standpoint. Taken out of context this can be construed as a declaration of war to Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavia; which is precisely how Serbian authors see it.

Islamska deklaracija was seen in the same light by the communist authorities, as sedition and calls for counterrevolution. His message is ambivalent and it is not clear that this political Islamist revolution should be violent. He states that all means are allowed, except criminal (*zločin*) means. “No one has the right to sully the beautiful name of Islam and this struggle with uncontrolled and excessive violence.”¹⁸⁴ He does also state that an Islamic system can only be achieved, violently or not, in majority Muslim countries, which Yugoslavia or even Bosnia as its part, were not at the time of his writing (1970). He does not exclude the use of force when the time is right however. He states that force can be used to achieve power when the Islamic movement becomes: “morally and politically so powerful that it cannot only topple the existing nonislamic, but also build a new Islamic government.”¹⁸⁵ These are just one of the many controversial statements that can be read as aggressive, seditious and fundamentalist by Serb authors, making *Islamska deklaracija* a prominent discursive tool utilized by Serbs and Croats for constructing the Muslim Other as fundamentalist, violent, aggressive and autocratic.

Alija Izetbegovic was a prolific author, much more so than his counterpart Radovan Karadzic. The two compendiums of his interviews, letters and speeches quite directly deal with Bosnia and Bosniak-Serb conflict. More importantly, these compendiums are mirror images content wise of *Мермерне истине о Босни*, opening and closing statements of Karadzic’s trial in the Hague. In both 1997 and 2001 compendiums, he espouses all the familiar tropes established in prior chapters of this thesis. In an interview given to *Večernje novine* in 1997 he singles out one, in his mind, most negative trend, equalizing of the warring parties. As he states: “The syntagma “parties in conflict” is part of a sly tendency, where usage of the word aggression is avoided, thereby erasing the difference between victim and aggressor.”¹⁸⁶ The Self is not merely a victim, while the Other is the aggressor. The self is morally superior, tolerant, as opposed to the Other.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid p. 21

¹⁸⁵ Ibid p. 24

¹⁸⁶ Emira Tananović *Alija Izetbegović: Govori, intervju i pisma 1997*, Sarajevo BIH: “DES” djl, 1998, p. 6

This point is expressed by Izetbegovic by asserting that Christian churches were not destroyed by the Bosniaks (at least not deliberately), while mosques were destroyed systematically by the Other(s). He states claims, in an interview given to NIN in June 1997: “Tolerance is the basic measure of being civilized, you can take your own conclusions from this.”¹⁸⁷ This notion that crimes of the Self are aberrations, while crimes of the Other are systematic and intrinsic to its uncivilized nature, is a heavily utilized trope in his works. In order to additionally delegitimize the Others, he does not present them as mere aggressors, but as fascist aggressors. He stated at a meeting of Central committee of the SDA in March 1997: “Our greatest problem, now in peace time, is that we are supposed to build a state with četniks and ustašas. BIH can and must be built with Serbs and Croats, that is not an issue. However, the ruling elites are neither Serbs nor Croats, they are četniks and ustašas.”¹⁸⁸ He continues on to describe them as fascisms, which are by their very nature temporary. He does make an important distinction here between the Others and their leaders, which Serbian authors make also. If the Other ceases to be misguided and stops electing fascists/islamists/communists, autocrats of all shapes and sizes, then the Other can be reasoned with and maybe even be brought back to the fold. The mere fact the political elites were chosen by the ballot box, blurs the lines between them and the reader can never truly be certain when “they” encompasses the ruling elite or the Other as a whole, unless it is explicitly stated.

It is possible to live with Serbs and Croats if they become more tolerant, democratic, more civilized. This is again the Dissonant Other discourse of needing the Other to make the Self whole, while simultaneously fearing it and decrying it as aggressive. This can best be seen where in one interview he claims that “criminals have a nation, crimes do not” stating unequivocally that “guilt is and can only ever be individual.”¹⁸⁹ In the same interview, given to *Tjednik* he states that “the aim of the war was genocide... What kind of Republika Srpska would it be in which half a million Bosniaks and Croats returned? They know that and that is why they resist it.”¹⁹⁰ In this case “they” may refer to the elite or to the Other as a whole. Even if it does refer to the elite, that elite is chosen after the war again and presumably represents the preferences of the Other. Even if “they” refers solely to Serb leadership, it is still presented as radically different from tolerant and democratic Bosniak leadership, Izetbegovic himself included. He states this

¹⁸⁷ Ibid p. 84

¹⁸⁸ Ibid p. 33

¹⁸⁹ Ibid p. 91

¹⁹⁰ Ibid p. 95

much in a party report from September 1997. In it he claims that: “It is supposed to be undoubtedly clear that SDS (Serb democratic party) was destroying and SDA (Party of democratic action) was defending Bosnia. Isn’t it also clear that these two parties had completely different views on man and democracy... I must remind the gentlemen from the opposition that there was no conflict between national parties in Bosnia. It was a conflict between democracy and fascism. In Bosnia freedom was defended against aggression. Who equates SDA and SDS.. he in the end equates our fighters with četnik executioners.”¹⁹¹

When reading these compendiums, a noticeable trend is inescapable. His discourse adjust to the interviewer. He would stress democracy, tolerance and humanism of his nation, his party and himself as a leader, when addressing regional or Western audiences. He stresses his Islamic credentials when speaking to audiences in the Islamic world. While addressing an ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) meeting in December 1997 he expressed a number of views stressing Islamic civilizational kinship. He was praising the West for its development of free speech and critical thought, while at the same time criticizing its individualism and materialism. He did also state that due to “an indestructible shadow of the Crusade- a hatred towards Islam fires up”.¹⁹² Regarding the war he paints it in a different light. Whereas previously “they” were attacking tolerant and democratic Bosniaks and a multicultural Bosnia, in this occasion the goal of “them” is different. He states the following, after comparing the recent war to the Mongol sacking of Bagdad in the 13th century: “both attackers wanted to destroy traces of our Islamic culture and our historical memory. That was their goal. The result was the opposite: *el-wahwa*, returning to one’s roots.”¹⁹³ In much the same way, his message to OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) fosters the discourse of an Islamic civilization, of one ummah, more than a democratic nation. Regarding Bosnia, he urged the meeting with the following words. “Tell everyone that Bosnia is for you a sacred land for it is drenched in the blood of innocents, your brothers in faith.”¹⁹⁴

In the second compendium all of the tropes expressed in the first are present. Crusades, duplicitous west, Tolerant We, Aggressive and Genocidal Other; all are present in his works from 2001. He also expresses the same trope as seen with other Bosniak, the continuity of heroic

¹⁹¹ Ibid p. 144

¹⁹² Ibid p. 218

¹⁹³ Ibid p. 219

¹⁹⁴ Ibid p. 226

defense of a tolerant land across messianic time, from the Bogomils to Bosnian Muslims.¹⁹⁵ What does stand out in this compendium, which can be a factor of an evolution of discourse or selective publishing, is that the idea of the Bosnian nation becomes more prevalent. On multiple occasions he suggests, what can be described in regards to previous works analyzed, integral Bosniakdom. According to Izetbegovic the Bosnian nation ought to be a civic nation, which subsumes three ethnic nations under it, without erasing these identities.¹⁹⁶ This point is particularly important since it mirrors almost perfectly the Serbian vision of Yugoslavian identity. It attests to Huntington's claim that a weak nation is particularistic, while a strong one is universalistic. In this 2001 compendium Srebrenica appears as a politically salient fact and is on multiple times called a serious crime and a genocide¹⁹⁷, something that was not mentioned in the previous compendium. One other trope that he expresses almost perfectly mirrors Serb self-perception within the national discourse. He states in to a local Sarajevo magazine that Bosniaks are quick to forget transgressions made against them, that četniks would switch uniforms and become partisans in the previous war and that there is no Bosniak family who did not have at least one member killed by četnik hand, in either (četnik or Partisan) uniform¹⁹⁸.

Alija Izetbegovic presents the Serbian Other in much the same way as other Bosniak authors. The Other is aggressive, genocidal, undemocratic, intolerant and even fascistic. He can be redeemed however, by dismissing his elite and nationalist ideology in favor of a more tolerant, benevolent and democratic rule by the Self. This Serbian nationalist elite is identified as Karadzic's Serbs (Filandra), nationalist Serbian core of the Communist party (Imamović), the fascistic SDS (Izetbegovic) etc. It is also suggested that the other two groups should strive to adopt a Bosnian civic identity and patriotism, even though they may have their own ethnic identities. His discourse does not deviate from the key points of other Bosniak authors, as can be seen in other Bosniak chapters.

3.4 Who are we now and who are our enemies?

¹⁹⁵ Nermina Šaćić i Behrija Čehović *Alija Izetbegović: Govori, intervjui i pisma 2001*, Sarajevo BIH: Stranka demokratske akcije; centar za analitiku, dokumentaciju i odnose s javnošću, 2002, p. 115 and p. 37

¹⁹⁶ Ibid p. 123

¹⁹⁷ Ibid p. 77 and p. 133

¹⁹⁸ Ibid p. 103

Finally, we deal with the issue of how the Self and Other are seen today. The works analyzed in this chapter have been published relatively recently and seek to provide answers to the all-important question: Who are the Bosniaks? First of these books is *Ko smo mi Bošnjaci?* (Who are we Bosniaks), which gives a brief overview of what Bosniaks were, are and can become. It is written by Muhamed Filipović.¹⁹⁹ The second book analyzed in this chapter is *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma: o bošnjačkom identitetu u postjugoslovenskom prostoru*, which deals with Bosniak identity after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, written by Šaćir Filandra.

Filipović, as the authors mentioned previously, expresses all the familiar national tropes. He presents a narrative of a tolerant nation, always willing to live with others, unlike its neighbors. In other words, he starts his writing with the Tolerant We trope, contrasting it with the Other(s) aggression. He presents his own group as the most important one in Bosnia²⁰⁰, a highly utilized trope. The Self is either the creator of the state (*državotvorni narod*), has the most love for it, is the key nation on whom depends the survival of the state and its tolerant nature. This tolerant nature of the Bosniaks is pushed back through Messianic time a thousand years. This tolerance is seen as the main reason for the nations embattled state. As Filipović states: “The practice of religious tolerance was especially a common motive of aggression against it(Bosnia) for those who espoused the views that religious unitarization in Europe and the Balkans was necessary.”²⁰¹ The two Other(s) are presented as Dissonant, as with all other Bosniak authors. For Muslim Bosniaks, their identity was tied to the land and its history, while Orthodox and Catholic Bosniaks embraced religion as the cornerstone of their identity, turning away from Bosniakdom. Serbs and Croats were Bosniaks, that is “an undisputable historic and ethnic fact.”²⁰²

The Other is also a turncoat from its original identity, a trope we are familiar with by now. Just a few pages later Bosnia and Bosniaks are presented as victims of genocide at the hands of the Turncoat Others who used to be a part of the Self. Filipović stresses that Bosniak identity is not a national one, at least not “that late nationalism which came about in the Balkans during the 19th and 20th century and which expressed itself in the formation of nation states with significant

¹⁹⁹ Filipović is a distinguished Bosniak intellectual, erstwhile Marxist philosopher, cofounder of MBO, wartime ambassador to London and advisor to various politicians, most notably Fahrudin Radonjčić from SBB. He is the president of Bosniak Academy of Sciences and Arts (BANU).

²⁰⁰ Muhamed Filipović *Ko smo mi Bošnjaci?*, Sarajevo BIH: Prosperitet, 2007, p. 11

²⁰¹ Ibid p. 17

²⁰² Ibid p. 32

aggressive and genocidal charge (*naboj*).”²⁰³ Unlike its neighbors, Bosnia is formed from tolerance and coexistence embedded in its traditions. In that sense, Bosniak identity is more a historical-culture than national identity, which Filipović sees as thoroughly modern phenomenon. He sees this fact that Bosniaks never became a “typical nation” as an asset, since now they are more prepared for a multilateral and post national world, unlike Serbs and Croats. Filipović criticizes Izetbegovic for being the only Bosniak in history who sought to create an Islamic state and to diminish complex multilateral Bosniak identity into its Islamic element.²⁰⁴ Izetbegovic, according to him, is an aberration of the tolerant and multicultural Bosniak Self. He sees this as especially dangerous, since it may legitimize Serb and Croat separation from Bosnia and Bosniaks.

This Bosniak intimate link with the land of Bosnia is stretched as far back as possible. Filipović identifies his own ingroup as ancestors of the Vučedol culture, which existed in Bosnia circa 4000 BCE. He also expresses the view, as Imamović does, that Indo-European blood or genes are “the purest amongst the Muslim populace”.²⁰⁵ This is a clear example of primordialism, which also serves to construct another image of the Self, the European/Western one. Since Bosniaks are an ancient European people they have “an equal right to Europe as any other of her people”.²⁰⁶ However because they were different from other European peoples, in being Bogomils and later Muslims, they were cast away by Europe and abandoned to Ottoman conquerors. Five centuries later, Europe would also cast them aside and abandon them ultimately to genocide at the hands of Serbian war criminals.²⁰⁷ In this way, his discourse is similar to other Bosniak authors, although a bit more audacious. Other authors usually present Bosniaks as South Slavs, while Filipović is the only author, who forges a link between a Neolithic/Bronze age culture and his ingroup (albeit casually). Filipović also uses the trope of victim kinship across horizontal time between his group and the Jews. Muslims and Jews were constantly being persecuted in Europe, according to him. He poses a question: “Did the final and fatal persecution

²⁰³ Ibid p. 24

²⁰⁴ Ibid p. 28

²⁰⁵ Ibid p. 116

²⁰⁶ Ibid p. 36

²⁰⁷ Ibid p. 42

of the Jews come about by the mid of the 20th century, and the persecution of the Muslims by the end of the century?”²⁰⁸

The leaders of the Other are criminals and aggressors, instigators of genocide. It is here again that the line between the Other’s elite and the collective as a whole is blurred. He for example states that Milosevic was the primary culprit of the Bosniak plight during the 1990s. However, his take on the overthrow of Milosevic is different from the Serbian discourse. For Filipović, the forces which overthrew him and sent him to the Hague did so because of fear for their interests and out of political expediency. “He (Milosevic) became a burden as a man who did not manage to achieve the common goals of all political forces in Serbia.”²⁰⁹ If all political forces, in some shape or form, supported his actions and these forces were democratically elected, then the Other as a whole may well be genocidal, aggressive, nationalistic, fascist etc. This image of the Other is of course contrasted with the tolerant and multicultural image of the Self, whom the author compares to Moorish Spain and Ottomans, other two tolerant and multicultural Muslim societies. He vehemently denies that Bosniaks ever took part in any persecutions of the Others and he sees Islam as an entirely benevolent force. He states explicitly that Muslim Bosniakdom since its inception “has never had any elements of violence in relation to other neighboring nations and states.”²¹⁰ All of this is heavily disputed by Serbian authors.

There is a high degree of consistency between Bosniak authors on all major issues. Filipović also has a negative view of the Serbian uprisings, criticizes European orientalism, sees Yugoslavia as Serb dominated, etc. Particularly interesting is the identarian duality of the Self which is simultaneously tied to the land of Bosnia, yet all Muslim South Slavs are simultaneously all Bosniaks. This view is also expressed by Imamović and Filandra. Filipović even states that these groups, from Macedonia to Croatia, kept to Bosnian state traditions and viewed it as a home state.²¹¹ Regarding the issue of Serbs and Croats he also expresses the view that they are made up of assimilated Bosniaks and Vlach/Morlach colonists. This occurred because the Serbs and Croats had (semi)independent states, national institutions and churches; who all worked in unison to spread their respective national ideas. He also denounces all Serb tropes: forced and quick islamization, tyrannical Ottoman rule, *devshirma*, are all dismissed as mythologized

²⁰⁸ Ibid p. 40

²⁰⁹ Ibid p. 45

²¹⁰ Ibid p. 60

²¹¹ Ibid p. 68

forgeries or exaggerations. He of course, criticizes both local and Great power Others as being Islamophobic, across the length of his book. In fact, according to him islamophobia and anti-Bosnian sentiments were and are the very essence of both national movements in BIH.²¹² Interestingly enough, he claims that only a generation of new historians, educated after World War II are able to shake these mythical representations and study history objectively. One of these “good” historians according to him is Milorad Ekmečić²¹³, who as can be seen in Serbian chapters, disputes every single claim that Filipović, Imamović and other Bosniak authors present. It truly does seem that adhering to national narratives is inevitable. On the issue of Agrarian reforms, he shares the views of other Bosniak authors. According to Filipović the main goal of these reforms was to “conduct a radical redistribution of land in favor of one people, the Serbs.”²¹⁴

On the issue of language, he is also adamant that the language spoken by all three people of Bosnia is Bosnian, same as other Bosniak authors. He even asserts that the Bosnian language was roughly the same as it was in the time of Kulin Ban, until it was faced Serbo-Croatian linguistic aggression in the 19th century.²¹⁵ There is one major difference with other authors, which he expresses in his interviews. That is his view on Gavrilo Princip and Mlada Bosnia, who are, as we have seen with Imamović, viewed as Serbian nationalists and terrorists. Filipović sees them as heroes and liberators, not as nationalists. He claims that: “Mlada Bosna was a Bosnian, not a Serbian movement. It was normal for Serbs to consider BIH as their homeland, for they lived in it for centuries and the issue of their separation from it was never raised.”²¹⁶

Filipović also expresses the Heroic Victim trope, as do other Bosniak authors. He states that tolerance and living together (*suživot*) became “the basis of our national identity and philosophy of governance”²¹⁷, that the Bosniaks only ever led defensive wars against foreign aggression²¹⁸, while latter on lauding the fact that Bosniaks were members of elite troops that were

²¹² Ibid pp 105-106

²¹³ Ibid p. 83

²¹⁴ Ibid p. 79

²¹⁵ Ibid pp 144-145

²¹⁶ Tanjug, *Filipović: Princip je bio borac za slobodu*, Blic, December 29 2013, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/filipovic-princip-je-bio-borac-za-slobodu/x4xr4dj>, accessed June 13 2018

²¹⁷ Muhamed Filipović *Ko smo mi Bošnjaci?*, Sarajevo BIH: Prosperitet, 2007, p. 149

²¹⁸ Ibid p. 62

instrumental to Ottoman expansion.²¹⁹ Another inconsistency is his claim, shared with other authors, that a separate Bosniak consciousness starts forming at the Battle of Banja Luka, forming into a nationhood by the time of the Bosnian uprising 1832-1833. This contradicts his notion that Bosniak identity is ancient and not national in the modernist sense. Regardless of the fact whether they are or not ancient, the fact remains that Bosnia was always multilateral, since the ancient age and only one people truly embodies the values of the land, the Bosniak Muslims. Hence, it is only natural that they have always been and still are “custodians of Bosnia without exception.”²²⁰

Šaćir Filandra, espouses the same narrative tropes already present in his national discourse. His book *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma*, deals with modern Bosniak identity after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, with an overview of its historical roots. He traces various factions within Bosniak national intelligentsia from the 1920s and describes their influence on Bosniak identity. The first task would be to identify commonalities between his views and other Bosniak authors on key issues, or key salient facts. Conversely, the second task would be to uncover divergent views on key questions, as in the case of Filipović in regards to Mlada Bosna and Gavrilo Princip.

One of the key issues Filandra deals with is the Imam movement. To oversimplify it, the movement aimed to create a separate Bosnian Islamic institution, instead of the existing Yugoslav one, which was responsible for all Yugoslav Muslims. To be completely frank, the movement had many factions and not all imams wanted this separation, nor did all the faithful. Regardless, the sudden “political activation” of the Muslim religious community in Bosnia was met with fear amongst the Serb and Serbian publics. This was according to Filandra totally unwarranted, even though the Islamic community officially supported Bosnian and Kosovar independence, as well as political autonomy for Sandžak and Western Macedonia in 1991²²¹. Filandra blames Serbian intellectual for creating this lynch atmosphere. Some of the key culprits according to him are Ćosić and Ekmečić, among others like Vuk Drašković, Darko Tanasković, Matija Bećković and Gojko Đogo. They created a body of textual work, which was disparaging of Muslims. As Filandra himself claims that: “in the public space of Serbia the future victim was being targeted, Bosnia and Islam were defined as war targets and future attacks on the target

²¹⁹ Ibid p. 182

²²⁰ Ibid p. 195

²²¹ Šaćir Filandra *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma: o bošnjačkom identitetu u postjugoslovenskom prostoru*, Zagreb HR: Synopsis, 2012, p. 84

were being legitimized.”²²² He then goes on to list a series of texts that served to prepare the Serbian public for “war and genocide against Muslims”. In his view, Serbian intellectuals worked to homogenize the Serbian public, drenching it in nationalism and orientalism towards Bosniaks.

Filandra criticizes the Communist party for tacitly supporting this growing hatred towards Muslims. He is particularly critical of Bosniak communists, who were overzealous in attacking Bosniak nationalism, which was comparatively weaker to the other two (according to Filandra). The Communist party is thus seen as a vehicle of the Other’s aggressive and policies of expansionism, due to inaction or outright support for them. This trope is common with both sides and we have already covered it in the case of Imamović. Filandra sets up Serbs and Serbia as the Other, or more specifically blames them for initiating the process of Othering of the Bosniaks. Furthermore, he sees this Serbian perception of Bosniaks as the enemy as a constant for the past twenty years, remaining even after the fall of Milosevic. He does quote Sonja Biserko, a Serbian human rights activist, but he himself states that she “is right to think so”²²³. On the issue of religion, he views Islam as better than the Other’s religion, more humane and universalistic, a thread common among all Bosniak authors. As such Islam is immune to nationalization, despite the fact that the Islamic community itself relinquished a more universal Yugoslavian organizational frame, to separate into Bosnian and Kosovar/Albanian (and later on Serbian) de facto national churches. Filandra himself describes the Islamic community a Bosniak national institution²²⁴, (along with the SDA) in the beginning of the 1990s, which contradicts his stance universalistic view of Islam. Granted, he does criticize the Islamic community for being too close and subservient to politics, whether it be the Yugoslav communists or the SDA. The Islamic community supported Muslim groups claims to sovereignty, as sated above, yet it is still viewed as immune to nationalism, or being nationalized. Serbian Orthodoxy on the other hand was very much susceptible to these trends, as “the Orthodox Serbs drastically demonstrated by carrying the remains of Tzar Lazar.”²²⁵ Filandra is referencing the procession of the remains of saint Tzar Lazar through Sarajevo in 1989. The remains were carried across all “Serb lands” (Sarajevo

²²² Ibid p. 59

²²³ Ibid p. 93

²²⁴ Ibid p. 75 and p. 90

²²⁵ Ibid p. 95

included) to commemorate the 600th anniversaries of the Battle of Kosovo. Filandra clearly sees this act as nationalist provocation.

Serbian nationalism is seen as negative, as is to be expected. It, along with Croatian nationalism, is viewed as more primordial, focusing on the discourse of common blood and ancestry unlike Bosniak nationalism. It is tolerant and tied to Bosnia as a multiethnic state²²⁶, a trope expressed by all other Bosniak authors. Filandra himself espouses a modernist view of the nation and nationalism, albeit he does state that it has roots in Medieval times. Nonetheless, his nation and nationalism are not religiously exclusionary, unlike Serb and Croat ones. This is especially interesting, since Filandra states that: “In the reality of nationalism lies a fact that no one acknowledges his own nationalism nor crimes done in its name.”²²⁷ Even though he does realize, astutely, that nationalism and national identity blind men and women with preferences to their ingroup, he still is susceptible to his own ingroup bias. Case in point, he examines the Bosniak nationalism drawing across the length of his book, concluding that “their nationalism was good or it was nonexistent”²²⁸ and that “violent forms never dominated it, neither in politics nor in science”²²⁹. This is one of the critical points of this thesis. Nationalism is inevitable. All authors analyzed are or were intellectuals, yet that does not make them immune to clear national biases, nor do they question key points of the national narrative. This holds true for both sides of the conflict, Serbs and Bosniaks.

Filandra himself analyzes other Bosniak authors and their views on the Bosniak national question: Imamović, Zulfikarpašić and Filipović among others. Filandra does see merit in both Muslim and Integral Bosniakdom and it is not clear which version he supports. He does see integral Bosniakdom as impossible to spread or enforce for the time being, a view held by all Bosniak authors. He does not however dismiss its legitimacy. For example, Serbian authors view integral Bosniakdom as version of integral Yugoslavianism, thus equally untenable. Serbian authors claim, without exception, that Bosnian existence (at least as a unitary state) is conditioned on it being a part of Yugoslavia. Filandra criticizes this stance, in particular his counterpart Nenad Kecmanović. Filandra argues that Bosnia was a part of Yugoslavia for barely a century yet existed as a multicultural unified state for centuries before Yugoslavia was formed,

²²⁶ Ibid p. 134

²²⁷ Ibid p. 139

²²⁸ Ibid p. 140

²²⁹ Ibid p. 144

thus making integral Bosniakdom far more tenable and rooted in history than Yugoslav identity.²³⁰ Even though this integral concept of Bosniakdom may be legitimate, Filandra himself acknowledges that it lost to the narrower Muslim Bosniakdom. An expression of this ideological triumph of Muslim Bosniakdom can be seen with the sidelining of Zulfikarpašić in the SDA and his subsequent debacle in the election against his former ally Alija Izetbegovic. Filandra himself acknowledges that Filipović and Zulfikarpašić went their own way because they saw Izetbegovic as shifting away from secularism towards religious fundamentalism.²³¹ As we have stated before, their new party MBO lost to SDA. The war then terminated any possibility of Bosniakdom as a supranational identity.

Regarding other South Slav Muslims Filandra holds the same views as other Bosniak authors. These communities were and/or are Bosniaks, according to him. Serbian claims that these attempts at appropriating/assimilating other ethnic groups are a part of greater-Bosniak nationalist program are casually dismissed as malicious by Filandra. He turns these accusations against the Other, blaming Serb intellectuals for splitting Bosniaks into separate groups. For example, in the Gorani case, he blames SANU and their local Gorani collaborator Harun Hasani for debosniakicizing the Gorani people. This was done between 1991-1994 under the SANU project *Šarplaninske župe Gora, Opolje I Sredska* (GOS). Filandra states that the aim of this project was to “denationalize Bosniaks of Kosovo extracting the Gorani from their ethnic corpus, by giving them a status of an ethnic group.”²³² This project is not mentioned by the Serb authors, nor do Gorani feature prominently in their discourse. Filandra is the only Bosniak author who deals with “Bosniak” communities outside of Bosnia extensively and the only one who mentions this project of SANU.

Regarding the issue of the Bosnian war, Filandra does not veer from the established national narrative. The blame is placed on the Other(s), while the Self is presented as the side whose cause is just. The way he constructs the outbreak of the war is illustrative. He sees the fact that Nikola Koljević and Biljana Plavšić left the Bosnian presidency, as setting of a chain of events that made conflict inevitable. The reason as to why they left is never stated. In response the SDA and the opposition passed a new Platform for the Presidency. This platform defined Bosnia as a

²³⁰ Ibid p. 174

²³¹ Ibid p. 185

²³² Ibid p. 233

multiethnic state and society, thereby “affirming the decisions of ZAVNOBIH from 1943.”²³³ By extension, the rebelling parts of the state are classified as aggressors by the Platform, harkening back to 1943 and Bosnian/k antifascist legacy. This is again a clear instance of pushing the Self back through horizontal time in order to attain ideological succor, to legitimize the Self’s current position. Filandra supports these claims stating that it was clear to everyone that BIH “was a victim of fascism at the hands of certain Serb and Croat national and state (*državnih*) powers during the war.”²³⁴ He then moves on to criticize Serbian discourse for overblowing the influence of *Zelene beretke* and *Patriotska liga* on Bosniak politics and the outbreak of the war. These groups are viewed by Serbs as paramilitary groups and as instigators of the conflict. Filandra describes them as nongovernmental organizations without going into too much detail on the nature of these organizations. He is explicitly critical of Izetbegovic’s wartime policy of negotiating with Serb and Croat leaders, Karadzic and Boban. He sees this as the key decision of the war with which: “Izetbegovic simultaneously dethroned himself from a position of the head of state to a national leader and turning the destroyers of the state into partners at the negotiating table.”²³⁵ According to Filandra this decision made the future division of BIH along national lines inevitable. This is a claim unique to him and rather unsettling. The implication here is that if they are rebels and fascist aggressors, there can be no negotiation with them. In that case the alternative is war until one side capitulates or is completely destroyed. However, he never directly states this, nor does he present any alternative to negotiations.

The idea of splitting the country along ethnic lines is presented as a crime against its tolerant and multicultural essence. This idea, according to Filandra, is pushed by foreign powers both local and Great Powers. The Serbs are presented as pushing for a separate entity for themselves and as being antimuslim. He uses the term “Karadzic’s Serbs”²³⁶, presumably to distinguish them from the “good Serbs”. Filandra is generally favorable towards Izetbegovic, apart from the critical mistake he made by legitimizing Boban and Karadzic. He sees him as a statesman who was preserving the state, skillfully, as best he could, given the circumstances. He particularly lauds the fact that he “skillfully used” Serbs from the opposition SDP and in the NGOs to “justify the

²³³ Ibid p. 244

²³⁴ Ibid p. 245

²³⁵ Ibid p. 247-248

²³⁶ Ibid p. 260, p. 269

claim that there exists a multinational will for a common state.”²³⁷ Even though Izetbegovic acquiesced to pressures and accepted the formation of BIH divided along ethnic lines, he had a long-term goal to make the country whole again.

Regarding the issue of the Agrarian reform Filandra is critical of the Bosniak elite of the time for being far too conservative. Their insistence on retaining landownership while offering nothing in return to Serb and Croat serfs. The rigidity of the Bosniak elite eventually led to their marginalization. According to Filandra, descendants of Bosniak aristocrats would only emerge as a national elite under communism²³⁸, however counterintuitive that may be. Filandra also criticizes the aristocracy for being too servile to the imperial rulers of BIH, unlike the Other two nations. He is by far the most critical of the Bosniak aristocracy among all other Bosniak authors. Filandra also critically examines the Bosniak victimhood discourse. He does acknowledge that what Bosniaks suffered under Serb (neo)fascists, particularly in Srebrenica, is indeed a very real reason to be afraid. Yet this fear can be paralyzing for the collective Self. Filandra unequivocally states that Serbian actions amount to a genocide, yet he does see a multitude of problems emanating from the Bosniak victimhood narrative surrounding their collective experience. He states that: “Bosniaks, in various ways cluster in FBiH, turning it into their safe space. In that way they separate themselves from the entity RS, which they all consider a creation of genocide (*genocidna tvorevina*), due to their own painful experience. Thus, their political space is being narrowed both physically and symbolically, which in the future may produce: claustrophobia, frustrations, radicalization and a host of other problems (*nezadovoljstva*).”²³⁹ However, he himself is enmeshed into this victimhood narrative, however critical of it he may be. He states that the key issue on which Bosniak existence as a group hinges is the issue of how to “stop or preempt any future slaughter (*klanje*)”²⁴⁰ and that Bosniaks must “develop a reflex to spot a četnik in time.”²⁴¹ In other words, fear and caution are justified as safeguards against the Other. Thus, he espouses the very same narrative he criticizes, the narrative of crippling fear of extinction. He moves on to list the ten genocides committed against Bosniaks, stating that this discourse of victimhood isn’t a moral attack or reprisal against the Others. Rather it is a product

²³⁷ Ibid p. 270

²³⁸ Ibid p. 309

²³⁹ Ibid p. 318

²⁴⁰ Ibid p. 364

²⁴¹ Ibid p. 366

of fear for the future. However, he states that if the Other nations had any semblance of morality, so many genocides against Bosniaks on such massive scales would have never occurred.²⁴² The greatest one of these genocides was Srebrenica and is used as a salient fact to drive the point forward, that the Other is bent on destroying the Self. Just to illustrate the point how salient Srebrenica is within the Bosniak discourse I will quote Filandra's who doesn't mince words when it comes to this issue. "Genocide in Srebrenica shows us what Serbian neofascists want to do with the Bosniaks and that fact is a very real basis for fear."²⁴³

To summarize, Filandra, despite being more critical of Bosniak discourse, does not deviate from it in most of the key points. The figure of the Serb as the Great Other is ever-present as with all other authors. In short, Bosniak discourse shows a great deal of consistency, reproducing all the tropes listed in the introductory chapters, clearly separating victims and aggressors across horizontal time, obfuscating any "facts" which put this clear division of historical roles into question. Filandra, Zulfikarpašić, Imamović, Izetbegovic and Filipović are five very different men, writing about the issue of national identity across 60 years, in very different environments. Yet, they hold similar if not identical views on key national issues, attesting to the fact that there is a high degree of discursive national consensus within the Bosniak elite. The same is also true for the Other.

4. Forging Serbdom

4.1 Our glorious history

This chapter will primarily deal with the book *Дуго кретање од клања до орања*, by Milroad Ekmečić. He was a renowned historian teaching at Faculties of Philosophy in Sarajevo and Belgrade, member of the Senate of Republika Srpska, distinguished member of SANU and ANURS (Academy of Sciences and Arts of Republika Srpska). He worked at Sarajevo until 1992 when he was arrested by Zelene beretke. He would eventually escape to Republika Srpska and then Serbia. In brief, with his academic and political credentials as well as with the content of his work he is a comparable to Mustafa Imamović.

²⁴² Ibid p. 369

²⁴³ Ibid p. 317

Дуго кретање од клања до орања is a comprehensive book, dealing with Serbian history from its fall under Ottoman rule to modern times. In this chapter I will mainly single out the key discursive points where Ekmečić fundamentally disagrees with Imamović and other Bosniak authors. This chapter will also serve as a basis for Serbian views on these discursive points, where all Serbian authors share similar positions, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. Right from the start Ekmečić sets his own group as primordial and Others as stemming from it. He claims that the Slavic linguistic and cultural mass would first split into Serbs, Russians and Poles; then it would fragment further into other ethnic groups.²⁴⁴ He starts using all the established tropes to present the Self as good or superior to Others. He sets *Dušan's code* and *Nomonkanon* of saint Sava as the ideological basis of Serbian harmony and tolerance,²⁴⁵ thus pushing the perceived image of the tolerant Self to the 13th century. This strategy precisely mirrors Imamović. This time of wealth, prosperity and tolerance ends with Ottoman occupation. What follows is the division of subject peoples along religious lines and a regression of Serbian culture to premedieval tribalism. Turks begin colonizing newly acquired land mixing with recent converts and creating a new class which would eventually start to identify with the regions they governed. He calls this mixed elite *hanafyy*. The Ottomans conversely practiced *surgun* or forceful expulsion of Christians.²⁴⁶ The implications are clear, the Other is mix blooded and a product of Ottoman colonization, while the Self is pure and constantly being ethnically cleansed by the Ottomans. His discursive resemblance to Imamović is uncanny.

Interestingly enough he also views Serbs in southern Hungary (modern Vojvodina) as natives, just as Imamović views Bosniaks. In his words “Serbs in Southern Hungary were never, since the Great migration in Early Middle Ages, new arrivals. Modern Hungarian people emerged out of symbiosis between the Magyar minority and the Slavic population.”²⁴⁷ Thus Ekmečić is pushing the Self's current territorial possessions and claims as far back through horizontal time as possible, some 1500 years. His view on Ottomans is of course, highly negative and he disputes virtually every single point that Bosniak authors makes about this era. He states that the theory of Bosniak Muslim aristocracy stemming from medieval Bosnia is merely an Austrian

²⁴⁴ Милорад Екмечић *Дуго кретање од клања до орања: Историја Срба у новом веку*, Београд СР: Evro-Giunti, 2010, p. 11, p. 24

²⁴⁵ Ibid p. 19

²⁴⁶ Ibid p. 30

²⁴⁷ Ibid p, 32

fabrication²⁴⁸. He also disputes the Bosniak theory of Vlach origins of Bosnian Serbs as “a part of modern day racism” adding that the Vlach was merely a slur name for Serbs and “the first known Serb to be called by this slur was Mehmed Paša Sokolović.”²⁴⁹ On just a couple of pages he deconstructs the Other’s narrative, accuses them of racism and claims one of their most notable figures as a member of the Serbian self. The Ottomans themselves are not some emancipating force. The fact that Christian merchants emerge as a proto-capitalist class stems from “oriental aptitude to reveling (*sladokusno uživanje*) in slothfulness”²⁵⁰, where all the hard work was left to Christian minorities more attuned to capitalism. In fact, he states that Orthodoxy allowed an interest rate of 8% paving a way for the development of the Orthodox bourgeoisie class²⁵¹ and capitalism itself, which would later make these merchants and hired soldiers heroes of Serb history.²⁵² Orthodox Christians are thusly more Western than the West themselves. Ottomans were also exceptionally brutal according to Ekmečić and bent on subjugating Serbs and defiling their holy national and religious symbols. The remains of saint Sava were burned in 1594²⁵³ and they were using the church of tzar Lazar in Kruševac as a stable for centuries²⁵⁴. (The trope of ones sacred places used for profane means was also utilized by Imamović). The Turks were the enemy and by extension Serb turncoats who served them, i.e. Bosniaks. Turkish reprisals against Serb uprisings were immensely brutal, according to Ekmečić. Particularly brutal was their practice of making pyramids of human skulls called by Serbs *ćeke kule*. Ekmečić states that from the middle of the 18th century “*ćeke kule* would become milestones of Serbian history.”²⁵⁵ It goes without saying that all instances of Bosniak victimhood are omitted or downplayed in his discourse, just like Serb victimhood is downplayed by Imamović and other Bosniak authors. In much the same way Imamović construct an ideological link across horizontal time between *Gorski vijenac* and Serb contemporary genocidal nature, Ekmečić does the same with Ibn Wahab and modern Bosniak genocidal nature. It is interesting to point out that as he sees *ćeke kule* as milestones of Serbian history he sees the carrying of the

²⁴⁸ Ibid p. 69

²⁴⁹ Ibid pp 73-74

²⁵⁰ Ibid p. 69

²⁵¹ Ibid pp 59-60

²⁵² Ibid p. 108

²⁵³ Ibid p. 45

²⁵⁴ Ibid p. 102

²⁵⁵ Ibid p. 99

shroud of Mohamed in Sarajevo in 1876 as a milestone in the development of Islamism.²⁵⁶ The Wahabi revolt led by Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahab and Muhammad bin Saud coincided with the First Serbian Uprising. Wahhabism, according to Ekmečić was the first phase of Islamism, which would become “the silent companion of the Serbian people’s development from that time up until modern times.”²⁵⁷ Islamism would follow Serbs in 1876 when the panislamist movement formed and Serbia would fight for its full-fledged independence, as well as in 1992 where it would be one of the key forces driving the dissolution of Yugoslavia. He argues that Bosniak and Albanian troops that fought for the Ottoman/Egyptian coalition against the Wahabis got infected with Islamic fundamentalism. When they came back to the Balkans they brought this fundamentalism with it and spread it amongst the population. Islamic fundamentalism in Bosnia during the 1990s according to Ekmečić was its ideological descendant.²⁵⁸

Predictably he views the two Serbian uprisings and Serbian expansion during the 19th century in a generally positive light. He utilizes many of the same tropes used by Bosniak authors: the western/capitalist Self, heroic victim, genocidal Other etc. Ekmečić dubs the two uprisings as Serbian revolution. For him this revolution is “the most important event in the national history of the Serbian people, because it established the foundation for an independent state and a society based on free enterprise” and in this revolution Turkey “lost three of its armies, more than in any war with a European Great power.”²⁵⁹ The western/capitalist credentials and battle prowess of the Self are placed front and center, right at the beginning of the narrative concerning the tumultuous 19th century. Serbs dismantle the decadent Oriental empire, by establishing a modern, capitalist, free and democratic state. Cities blossom into modernity once Serbian bourgeoisie takes the resources of the state from the lazy oriental aristocrats. This perspective is markedly different from Imamović and any aggressive acts against Muslim populations are downplayed. The Other is presented as an Islamist. Bosnia and Sarajevo are viewed as hotbeds of this malignant ideology. According to Ekmečić the Muslim imams of Sarajevo issued fatwas calling for Jihad against the Serbs in 1805 and 1807 and 20 000 out of 50 000 Bosnian Janissaries lived in Sarajevo. “That fanatical core made that city into a conservative, holy center of the defense of

²⁵⁶ Ibid p. 299

²⁵⁷ Ibid p. 151

²⁵⁸ Ibid p. 153

²⁵⁹ Ibid p. 127

Islam in its traditional form.”²⁶⁰ Serbian expansion was halted by Muslims in Bosnia and Rascia, as they were more loyal and devoted to Islamic Empire than the Turks themselves. The First Serbian Uprising is presented as a series of brilliant victories, tough political negotiations and ultimately as being abandoned to the Turks by the Great powers. In this way his views are roughly parallel to Imamović’s telling of the Bosnian uprising. Serbian forces would be crushed by the Ottomans by late 1813 and Bosniak troops played a pivotal role in that campaign. According to Ekmečić: “They avenged the defeat at Mišar in 1805 by slaughtering 12 000 people. When they entered Belgrade, they left behind them a hideous sight of slain and maimed people.”²⁶¹

His view on the Great Eastern Crisis 1875-1878 is also radically different from Imamović. These uprisings are viewed by Ekmečić as efforts of exploited and subjugated Christian peasant masses against their Muslim overlords. The Muslim response was ruthless. According to Ekmečić, after the Herzegovina uprising had begun (1875-1878), a shroud was brought from Muhamad’s grave to Sarajevo, galvanizing the Bosniaks to embark on a jihad against Christians. The results were terrible for the Christian population. Ekmečić uses English sources (Arthur Evans writing for the Manchester Guardian) to state that “6000 men, women and children were slaughtered in cold blood, 81 churches were burnt and 250 000 people were forced to flee to the Hapsburg empire.”²⁶² In total, he claims that the entire conflagration in BIH between 1875 and 1878 took 150 000 lives. Serbian victimhood is presented as a constant across horizontal time, at the hands of many Others. Ekmečić recounts that men led by Dedaga Čengiđ, a Bosniak aristocrat, led a campaign in 1840 of raping of Serbian women and girls to create mixed offspring of better quality. This was also repeated by Hungarians in 1940s and Ekmečić draws from the writings of Milovan Đilas about his cellmate in asserting these claims that “men were forced to watch as their mothers and sisters would change their race.”²⁶³ The Self is constantly a victim, Others constantly seek its eradication and examples such as this one serve to personalize the collective suffering.

The agrarian reform, which was in part the cause of all this commotion, is not dealt with extensively as with Bosniak authors, although Ekmečić does hold polarly opposite views. He

²⁶⁰ Ibid p. 172

²⁶¹ Ibid p. 191

²⁶² Ibid p. 289

²⁶³ Ibid p. 274

states that in the late 19th century there were 85 000 Christian serfs, 25 000 of them Catholic, with no Muslim serfs at all.²⁶⁴ It is no wonder that 14 peasant revolts erupted in BIH in a span of a century, according to him. The problem was that arable land which was controlled by the state (*timars*) was given to the Muslim aristocrats by the Ottomans and later this decision was confirmed by Austria. This is the *Kanun nama* of 1858 mentioned by Imamović. It is not viewed as affirmation of private property by Ekmečić, rather it is viewed appropriation of public property by Muslim aristocracy and consequently as unjustly exploiting Christian peasant masses.

Ekmečić presents Bosniaks in a negative light across horizontal time, as an invented and unnatural nation, constructed by foreign powers. The entire process starts with Benjamin Kalay, who seeks to contain Serbian expansion and separate Bosnia from Serbia ideologically, all in tune with Hapsburg interests. His Bosnian nation is a complete fabrication, an unsuccessful attempt at creating a synthetic nation from nothing. Even Bosniak symbols, as well as Albanian ones, are pure Austrian fabrications according to him. He claims that the Sarajevo Archives (Sarajevski arhiv) “still keeps the bill for 15 forints that was payed to a Viennese painter “for painting the coat of arms and flag”. Two-headed black eagle was invented to be closer to the Austrian coat of arms. From 1889 the Bosnian coat of arms was introduced in a similar fashion, by examining old collections of Medieval coats of arms.”²⁶⁵ That coat of arms was abandoned in Yugoslavia and Bosnia (or more specifically Bosniaks) would adopt its current coat of arms, gold lilies on a blue shield, in the 1990s.

Ekmečić is clear that Bosniaks were Serbs. He states that communism created Bosniaks in the 1960s. According to him communism “opened the valves for creating the Muslim nation, by separating Muslims from their ethnic roots from which they emerged in the 15th century.”²⁶⁶ Muslim intellectuals played a key role in this process. He explicitly names Muhamed Filipović, Nijaz Duraković, Zlatko Lagumdžija and Arif Tanović for turning the Communist party into a Muslim party.²⁶⁷ In this way he counters Imamović’s claims of a greater-Serbian core within the Communist party. For Ekmečić, Croatian and Bosniak nationalists hijacked the Communist parties of Bosnia and Croatia, which made future conflict with the Serbs inevitable. Thus, the

²⁶⁴ Ibid p. 273

²⁶⁵ Ibid p. 327

²⁶⁶ Ibid p. 204

²⁶⁷ Ibid p. 545

two discourses mirror each other almost perfectly. Ekmečić personally attacks practically all Bosniak intellectuals analyzed in this thesis. Alija Izetbegovic is of course accused of being an islamist and additionally colluding with the Nazis, during his youth as a member of the “Young Muslims” group.²⁶⁸ As for the awakening or reawaking of Bosniak nationalism during the communist period he puts the blame on Zulfikarpašić and Filipović. He accuses Filipović for historical revisionism and Zulfikarpašić, (a weapons smuggler according Ekmečić) of financially aiding his endeavors.²⁶⁹ He even extends this criticism to Noel Malcolm and his work *Bosnia a Short History*, for fabricating history. In Ekmečić’s own words: “The disease of the Bosnian Muslim intellectual of wanting to mythologize the past in its entirety became and international infection.”²⁷⁰

It goes without saying that Ekmečić blames Bosniaks for the war. After decades of preparation of slowly fabricating and mythologizing its past, of taking over the state and the Communist party from within, changing internal laws, Bosniaks were ready to strike. According to the Constitution of 1974, which Ekmečić consistently criticizes of being against Serbs, Bosnian municipalities had the right to secede and join other republics. The Bosnian communist party would pass two amendments to the constitution making this municipal or regional self-determination illegal.²⁷¹ What followed was an illegal referendum, killing of Serbian civilians in Sarajevo at a wedding. Other persecutions would follow which made Serbian rebellion unavoidable. Naturally this is omitted by Imamović.

Serbs were maligned across the world, unjustly so. “In the western states open Serbophobia spread. It reigned in societies where secret or open anti-Semitism used to exist.”²⁷² The Serb is the victim of the Others machinations and irrational hatred in the same way the Jew was half a century prior. This equation of one’s own victimhood to the Jews is a constant thread in his discourse and common with all other authors. Nazi policies had their roots in Austrian policies against Serbian insurgents in BIH in the late 19th century and in early 20th century, when Serbs were the first people in Europe to be put into concentration camps.²⁷³ Serbs and Jews would later

²⁶⁸ Ibid pp 543-544

²⁶⁹ Ibid p. 536

²⁷⁰ Ibid p. 546

²⁷¹ Ibid p. 549

²⁷² Ibid p. 552

²⁷³ Ibid p. 347

be co-victims of the Nazi holocaust in the 1940s. The Croatian and Bosniak Others were instrumental allies to the Nazis in this genocidal campaign, holding fierce hatred for both Serbs and Jews. He states that: “The camps (Nazi labor/death camps) are a part of an industrial system of death. However, the first genocide is perpetrated by the Muslim and Catholic neighbors on a local level.”²⁷⁴ He emphasizes this point by presenting personal examples of the Other’s aggressive nature, a common theme in all works analyzed. He states that: “For those who survived those days, for their entire future lives they would hear the repeated words “like ducklings”, from the stories of children going to school, who repeated what the adults told the day before, how Orthodox children flew like ducklings when they were thrown into the pits... Former Orthodox Serbs, with a passion, seek to erase all traces of their own heritage from their minds.”²⁷⁵

He also uses the same trope as Imamović, of the two Others colluding to exterminate collective Self, forged by shared pathological hatred towards the Serbs. As he states, both Catholicism and Islam were intolerant towards Orthodoxy and based on this shared intolerance, most Muslims accepted their Croat Muslim identity.²⁷⁶ Sarajevo itself was a great example of how successful this assimilation of Muslims into Croats and earnest fascists. According to Ekmečić Yugoslav soldiers in Sarajevo during the last days April war of 1941 “saw that 10 000 Jews were more afraid of their Muslim neighbors than the oncoming German soldiers. News of Serbs being eliminated would soon appear.”²⁷⁷ This goes directly against what Imamović claimed, a tolerant city and people protesting against the persecution of its neighbors, with crimes being Croatian ruses meant to blame Muslims. Ekmečić goes on to claim that Bosniaks and Croats participated eagerly in fascist military formations. He also accuses Smail Balić, ally and friend of Zulfikarpašić in the Yugoslav/Bosniak political emigration, of being an ideolog of El Hidayah and the Young Muslims, whose member was Alija Izetbegovic. Ekmečić asserts that the group “remained a pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic organization. Its entire ideology and political goals were transferred to the later emerging Muslim fundamentalism”.²⁷⁸ He claims that this ideology had and has its stronghold in Sarajevo which was up until 1943 the most fanatical Nazi power base

²⁷⁴ Ibid p. 453

²⁷⁵ Ibid p. 446

²⁷⁶ Ibid p. 445

²⁷⁷ Ibid p. 445

²⁷⁸ Ibid pp 464-465

and within it only 1400 out of 10000 Jews survived until the end of the war.²⁷⁹ In short, Ekmečić uses all the established tropes in too many instances to present here, to thoroughly deconstruct and delegitimize the Other's discourse, while elevating the Self to a position of supreme victimhood. In this way his discourse is the mirror image of Bosniak discourse, particularly the discourse used by Mustafa Imamović.

4.2 Words of the grandfather

This chapter will deal with the discourse of Dobrića Ćosić.²⁸⁰ His influence cannot be overstated and his opus of written work is massive, far beyond the scope of this thesis. Only three works are singled out as objects of analysis: *Босански Рат*, *Српско питање у XX веку* and of course the infamous Memorandum SANU. The first book is in essence a short journal of his time as president of Yugoslavia and negotiator during the Bosnian war. This is his work where he most explicitly deals with the Serbian issue in Bosnia, while in his other works it is overshadowed by Kosovo and Croatia. Since this thesis primarily centers on Bosnia and the Bosniak-Serb conflict, this book was chosen in favor of his other more notable works. Additionally, as it is a journal written “in real time”, so to speak, it allows both myself and the reader to see his views in their raw, unfiltered, emotional and personal form. Thus, the style is personal, informal, bereft of academic jargon and mannerisms. The second book is *Српско питање у XX веку*, which is an abbreviated version of the series of books *Пишчеви записи* where he presents his own personal and political history, as well as the history of Yugoslavia and its peoples. *Српско питање у XX веку* presents a series of lectures, interviews and speeches in which Ćosić talks about “the Serbian national question” and thus it fits well with the topic of the thesis. This book shows that the author operated in a narrative framework of SFRY, where Serbian national problems in Croatia and in Kosovo were at the forefront, with Bosnia coming to the fore in the late 80s. Memorandum SANU holds the same weight as *Islamska deklaracija*, as being viewed as one of

²⁷⁹ Ibid p. 465

²⁸⁰ He is a prolific author, former member of the Partisans and the Communist party, leader of the nationalist Serbian dissidents within it, distinguished member of SANU, renowned novelist, a former president of Yugoslavia and onetime ally of Slobodan Milošević, respected by almost all Serbian leaders from both RS and Serbia. His political and academic influence, as well as political development, closely mirror those of Zulfikarpašić and Filipović.

the if not the key document which riled up nationalist tensions in the country. Ćosić is credited for this Memorandum, although it is not entirely clear how much he contributed to its writing. Being a member of SANU at the time of its writing (1986), he probably did have some part to play in it.

Српско питање у XX веку deals with a myriad of problems Serbs faced within SFRY and Ćosić's view of said issues. Bureaucratization of the state, inefficient economic system, social stratification, lack of democracy and discrimination of Serbs in Kosovo and Croatia are one of the most prominent themes. For the purpose of this work I will focus on his views regarding Bosnia and compare them to Bosniak authors. Ćosić noticeably shifts his discourse from a more Yugoslav centric to a Serb centric one during the 1980s. In a series of lectures before and in the first years of the Yugoslav civil war he starts to sharply criticize Yugoslavia, more precisely Serbia's and Serbi position within it. In his view the seeds of Yugoslavia's destruction were sowed when it was founded. As Ćosić claims, during the unification of 1918 "Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were not motivated by the same goals, nor did they give equal contributions to it (the unification)."²⁸¹ Serbs of course sacrificed the most for this union and were the most selfless in the construction of the new state, according to him. A trope widely held by Serbian authors. In hindsight this is viewed by many Serbian intellectuals as a mistake, Ćosić himself included. The three nations held widely differing national ideologies and religions, which was not taken into account by Serbian leaders at the time of the unification of 1918.²⁸²

The second unification of 1945 was also unjust towards the Serbs and their leaders yet again lacked foresight as to what problems can arise if they do not act in accordance with Serbian national interests. One of the first problems Ćosić finds is the unjust equation of Croatian and Albanian crimes on one side, with the Serbian or more specifically četnik crimes on the other. The first ones were deliberate and fascistic genocidal crimes against Serbs, while Serbian crimes were merely a retaliation against them (or as Izetbegovic would say "incidental cases"). This unjust symmetry between crimes and antifascist struggles of all sides in the name of brotherhood and unity "became the ideological (*idejna*), moral and psychological basis for resurgence of nationalism, chauvinism and separatism, with the deadliest possible repercussions on Serbo-

²⁸¹ Добрица Ћосић *Српско питање у XX веку*, Београд СР: ЈП Службени гласник, 2009, р. 137

²⁸² Ibid p. 137

Croatian relations.”²⁸³ This unjust union produced an unjust internal system and an unjust Constitution of 1974. Serbs, who sacrificed the most for the two Yugoslav unions, were being punished. Thus, Ćosić himself rejects any confederacy between Yugoslav republics if the 1943 and 1974 borders remain unchanged. He views them as undemocratic, illegitimate, illegal, with no basis in history, serving the needs of the Communist party and detrimental to the Serbian people.²⁸⁴ The AVNOJ borders of 1943, postwar equation of the peoples and the Constitution of 1974 inevitably led to increased ambitions among the Other nations and to a spread of radical ideologies among them, along with Serbophobia.

Ćosić’s view on Bosniaks is similar to those of other Serbian authors. Bosniaks were invented in 1967 by the communists, Bosniak-Serb animosity is even more intense than the Serbo-Croatian one and “the spirit of jihad permeates Muslim politics on Yugoslav soil.”²⁸⁵ The SDA is an expression of this spirit of jihad, viewed by Ćosić as unambiguously islamist in nature with the goal of expelling Serbs from Bosnia. Now we turn to his diary, *Босански рат* where he is far more personal and emotional in his assessments of the Other, the Self and the war. In his entry from 16th of April 1992 he states that the war had started. “It was started by Muslims, Sarajevo bandits, by killing Serbian “četniks”. For Muslims and their Zelene beretke all Serbs are četniks... Along the river Drina Serbs are being slaughtered on a massive scale. Serbian villages are burning. Of course, Serbs will retaliate... Black Bosnian blood is boiling.”²⁸⁶ The Other is blamed for the war and the Self is clearly the victim. The “black burning blood” trope is interesting, it attests to the violent nature of all Bosnians, regardless of national identity. This dark vision of Bosnia and Bosnians, or even more broadly the Dinaroids, is largely established by Andrić, Selimović and Cvijić who coined the term *violentni Dinaroid* or the violent Dinaroid man. Regardless, even though Bosnian Serbs are not excluded from this violent nature, their violence is reactionary not proactive. Muslims declared the war and their goal is to “eradicate the Serbs from the first Muslim republic in Europe.”²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Ibid p. 138

²⁸⁴ Ibid pp 133-135 and p. 141

²⁸⁵ Ibid p. 183

²⁸⁶ Добрица Ћосић *Босански Рат*, Београд СР: ЈП Службени гласник, 2012, p. 7

²⁸⁷ Ibid p. 9

Across the length and breadth of this book he does criticize Serbian actions as well as Serbian leaders such as Karadzic and Milosevic. These criticisms are overshadowed by the volume of victimhood tropes and blaming the Other. He is particularly bitter after the London conference of August 1992, at the way the Serbian delegation and Serbs were treated. He was of course a member of this delegation. He states that the Serbian people “were ruthlessly punished for creating Yugoslavia and for fighting for its existence. The creation of Yugoslavia was perceived as the embodiment of greater Serbian ideology and attempts to defend that country were perceived as aggressions against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.”²⁸⁸ The Self is almost naïve and altruistic to a fault, which makes it ultimately the greatest victim (same as with the Bosniaks). He is extremely critical of the West across the length of his book, often equating Nazi Germany and the US, presenting the West as still harboring its Nazi essence, albeit in a diluted form with another target instead of the Jews, the Serbs. According to him Germany and the US, by being particularly harsh against the Serbs, were washing away their own past sins. As he claims “Serbs are the scapegoats of the end of a criminal century.”²⁸⁹ Western racism and imperialism made the last century criminal in nature. Serbs were just its final victim. This is a poignant and drastic claim to victimhood, similar to the Bosniak one that they were always victims of Western aggression or neglect.

It is important to note here just how influential Ćosić was and how he was connected to other authors analyzed. He was one of the Serbian intellectuals pleading for the release of Alija Izetbegovic during the 1980s, when he was imprisoned for his *Islamska deklaracija*. He claims that he along with other Serbian intellectuals, including Ljubomir Tadić (father of former Serbian president Boris Tadić) who would later serve along Ekmečić in the Senate of RS, pressured the communist government to release Izetbegovic. He was later released. Ćosić perceived his role in Izetbegovic’s release as critical, a role that he would later regret. He states that his actions “attest to my and Serbian, as best I could say, naïve “principled stance” motivated by Yugoslavianism and democracy.”²⁹⁰ This trope of our tolerance being taken advantage of by the backstabbing and conniving Other is present in both narratives. Once Serbs realized that they were being swindled and that a new genocide was being prepared against them they reacted. He states that Serbian

²⁸⁸ Ibid p. 24

²⁸⁹ Ibid p. 46

²⁹⁰ Ibid p. 162

intellectuals from BIH, among them Ekmečić and Karadžić, formed the SDS to rally the Serbs against such a possibility. Čosić states that he procured the initial funds for the party's founding, through his contacts in the famous Geneks company.²⁹¹ In short, Čosić is tied to all other authors analyzed not just discursively, but personally and politically. This is precisely why he and all the other authors were chosen as objects of analysis, because they are all connected politically, personally, academically and operate within a shared discursive/textual field.

To summarize, Čosić clearly toes the line of Serbian national narrative, some would argue that he even forged it in its modern form. His stance on the Other is highly negative, the Self is positive and everything that the Other is not. This can best be seen from his speech held at the European parliament in April of 1993. "Even though we live surrounded by chauvinistic ideologies and regimes, even though we are even today exposed to genocidal terror in Croatia and genocide at the hands of fanaticized Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian people are by their nature ethical, freedom-loving, agreeable and friendly towards other nations and they respect those who are different from them... Serbian extremists in Bosnia commit vengeance and crimes against Muslims, which terrify the majority of the Serbian people. Those incidents have not clouded our collective mind."²⁹² As in the Bosniak case, Serbian crimes are presented as "incidental cases" or aberrations from the otherwise tolerant Self and do not fundamentally change its benevolent nature, while the Other is by and large, nationalistic and fanatical, its crimes being systematic. To illustrate this point Čosić, like other authors analyzed, provides personalized and emotional presentations. The other is presented as monstrous, backstabbing as starting the chain of violence first. Crimes of the ingroup are downplayed as retaliations. "Alija's supporters slaughtered their Serbian "neighbors", they chopped their heads off with axes, roasted them on spits, raped girls in front of their fathers, chopped hands of old women, committed monstrous acts. General Mladić showed me the pictures of massacred Serbs... I see them even now. With such crimes Muslims caused ruthless Serbian vengeance."²⁹³ The two discourses mirror each other perfectly.

Regarding the Memorandum, much like Čosić's own work, it does not address the issue of Bosnia. The Memorandum was a product of its time, thus it mostly deals with the problems of

²⁹¹ Ibid p. 162

²⁹² Ibid p. 73

²⁹³ Ibid p. 136

the communist system and dying of the communist ideology, as well as with the social crisis stemming from it. Serbs are of course presented as victims, but the Memorandum mostly addresses their plight in Kosovo and Croatia, which were at that time places of contention. What needs to be singled out is that the Memorandum is written in a schizophrenic tone. Namely, the authors seek to defend the concept of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavianism, the welfare state, while simultaneously advocating for a democratic market-based system and defending endangered Serbian rights. In this regard it mirrors Bosniak authors views on Bosnia, Bosniaks and integral Bosnian identity.

Huntington points out in that: “Powerful societies are universalistic; weak societies are particularistic.”²⁹⁴ He was referring to Asian globalism and the emerging Western protectionism and particularism. Bosniaks within Bosnia are the majority and by sheer strength of numbers more powerful than the Serbs. Likewise, Serbs within Yugoslavia constituted almost half of the population. Therefore, it is to be expected that nations which seek to retain or expand their hold of the state, legitimize these claims with a more universalistic discourse. The Memorandum is a perfect example of this. It states that if the country is to reform it “must free itself from ideologies which place nationality and territoriality front and center.”²⁹⁵ This sentiment is repeated multiple times, rallying against the particularization of the state, economy and culture. This process, it is asserted in the Memorandum, inevitably breeds nationalism and separatism. Thus, the Memorandum suggests that the country should be reunified. “Otherwise, we will create and we are creating, generations who will be less and less Yugoslavs, but in greater degree dissatisfied national romantics and self-indulgent nationalists.”²⁹⁶ These views are sharply contrasted by decrying the mistreatment of Serbia and Serbs within SFRY.

Serbia and Serbs are viewed as victims of prejudice, hate and economic exploitation. The conflict in Kosovo during the 80s is described as a genocide against the Serbs and Croatian policies towards Serbs are viewed as systematic discrimination. All of these measures were introduced, stimulated or tacitly accepted by the Communist party, which was from the outset against Serbs, according to the Memorandum. Ideological concepts of Serbian bourgeoisie, of

²⁹⁴ Samuel P. Huntington *Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, New York US: Free Press, 2002, p. 109

²⁹⁵ Memorandum Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti (nacrt), Jesen 1986, <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/memorandum%20sanu.pdf> accessed June 16 2018, p. 8

²⁹⁶ Ibid p. 29

greater-Serbian nationalist threat and Serbian economic dominance were all constructs before the Second World War, with no basis in reality of the 1980s. Their aim, according to the Memorandum was to “instill in the Serbian people a sense of historical guilt, to subvert its resistance to political and economic subservience to which they were constantly exposed.”²⁹⁷ In other words, the Memorandum discursively disputes the claim that Serbs and Serbia are oppressors, with its own counterclaim that they are oppressed, while simultaneously maintaining the veneer of Yugoslavianism. In the end the document clearly states that the greatest problem in the internal makeup of Yugoslavia is that “the Serbian people does not have a state as all other peoples do.”²⁹⁸ In this regards the documents views towards Yugoslavia, as well as Ćosić’s views presented before, mirror the views of Bosniak authors towards Bosnia as a whole. The country should be simplified, unified and the Others should be more grateful to Our selfless contributions. We are the victims of our own selflessness, trust and tolerance for the Other.

The reader should take the views expressed in the Memorandum as the views of SANU as an institution, not Ćosić personally. It is important because it is essentially a policy document, widely talked about and criticized up until this day, much like *Islamska deklaracija*. It is usually depicted by the Croats and Bosniaks, as well as Serbian (liberal) intellectuals themselves, as a harbinger of nationalist policies to come. Given the fact that only Ćosić could be tied its creation, out of all the other Serbian authors analyzed, it is placed within this chapter.

4.3 Words of the father

This chapter will deal with the work of Radovan Karadzic, the national leader of the Bosnian Serbs and one of the founders of Republika Srpska. He is much less prolific an author than Izetbegovic was. Nevertheless, Karadzic and Izetbegovic are mirror images of one another, far more so than other authors analyzed, as they are perceived as fathers of their respective states. For the purposes of this thesis *Мермерне истине о Босни*, his opening and closing statements during his trial in the ICTY in Hague in written form, will be analyzed. This book is particularly

²⁹⁷ Ibid p. 19

²⁹⁸ Ibid p. 31

important, since he is defending his own innocence and (by his own admission) the Serbian position. Thus, he presents a discursive defense of his and the actions of his people.

Karadzic starts his opening statement criticizing the legitimacy, legality and justice of the ICTY. His sense of mission, of being tasked to defend his nation in court as he did in the war is evident in his first words of the opening statement. “I am here before you not to defend my humble self, one man. Rather, I am here to defend the greatness of one small nation in BIH, who have for five hundred years suffered and shown great resilience and readiness to persevere in freedom... I will defend our people and its mission/interest (*stvar*), which is just and holy. With that I will be able to defend both myself and that people.”²⁹⁹ He sets himself up discursively as the martyr for his people, who are prejudged as guilty as a collective. A powerful statement and an unequivocal expression of victimhood. He follows this up with decrying the Other while lifting the Self to a superior moral position. He states that his party the SDS proposed the leader of the Jewish community in BIH as the minority member of the joint presidency. The SDA proposed Ejup Ganić the future wartime general of the Bosniaks, who at that time identified as a Yugoslav. He would eventually get voted in as a member of the joint presidency. Karadzic calls him a wolf in sheep’s clothing and accuses him for war crimes against Serbs in Sarajevo. The SDA elected him, in Karadzic’s view, to achieve dominance which is “the basic model of fundamentalist thinking and acting” and the SDA sought to “achieve the goal of an islamist state as was envisioned 50 years ago by the actors of our drama.”³⁰⁰ This strategy of presenting the Self as tolerant, particularly by stressing its kinship with the Jews, while demeaning the Other as a nationalist/islamist/fascist, is salient in both discourses.

The discursive stage is set, like in all other works analyzed, with clearly defined roles. Karadzic moves on to stress how he and his people were the ones willing to negotiate, the peaceful side of the conflict. He states that the SDA broke 11 out of 12 truces³⁰¹, while he on the other hand accepted for out of five peace plans for the Bosnian conflict.³⁰² He goes on a tirade of criticisms aimed at the Bosniak leadership and the West for supporting the Other. He accuses aid agencies, NGOs and journalists from the West of spreading what today we would call “fake news”. On multiple occasions he describes various incidents, such as Markale, as false flag operations,

²⁹⁹ Радован Караџић *Мермерне истине о Босни*, Београд СР: Игам, 2016, р. 9

³⁰⁰ Ibid p. 10

³⁰¹ Ibid p. 21

³⁰² Ibid p. 26

where Bosniak leaders attacked their own civilians to provoke Western sympathy and retaliation against the Serbs. Same as all other Serbian authors he criticizes the West as being ungrateful for the Serbian role as a bulwark against the Ottomans and for imposing that bulwark role on the Serbs yet again. He states that the West forced Serbs and Croats to stay in BIH to essentially contain Muslims and prevent a creation of an Islamic state. He wants the West to take responsibility for Bosniaks and BIH. “The Europeans should confront this project. Why should Serbs want to be gatekeepers yet again? ... We do not want to spend our lives on this.”³⁰³ The West is also accused of being duplicitous, allowing the dissolution of Yugoslavia and forcing BIH to exist. Likewise, the West did not tolerate some solutions which existed in the West, most notable ethnic confederacies and ethnically divided regions and cities, as in Belgium. This is a major point of criticism by Karadzic, Western double standards.

Karadzic espouses all the characteristic tropes of a victimized Self, same as with the other authors. What stands out is his insistence that the Other started this war and that the Serbs merely reacted. In this way he is similar to Ćosić and his views on the nature of the war are radically different from Izetbegovic. Karadzic states that “Serbs did not have actions; Serbs had reactions.”³⁰⁴ The Other was proactive and systematic in its drive to create an ethnically pure Muslim state. Serbs merely defended themselves, crimes of the collective Self were aberrations of the otherwise tolerant nature. To illustrate this point, he gives an example of a purely Muslim unit of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) “Meša Selmović”, who according to him fought for “the values common to Serbs and Muslims: democracy, secular state...The commander of that unit is now the mayor of Bosanski Brod.”³⁰⁵ The members of this unit are the “good Muslims”, since they fought for Republika Srpska, in much the same way as the Serbs within the SDP party in Sarajevo and the Army of BIH were the “good Serbs” for Izetbegovic and Filandra. The bad ones are islamists, nationalists and fascists. Karadzic also claims that there are still majority Muslim villages and towns in RS, while the same cannot be said for FBIH.³⁰⁶ We are tolerant they are not. Ethnic cleansing was their goal not ours. Those are the points he is trying to make, same as Alija Izetbegovic.

³⁰³ Ibid p. 73

³⁰⁴ Ibid p. 61

³⁰⁵ Ibid p. 201

³⁰⁶ Ibid p. 291

Everything that Izetbegovic claims, Karadzic turns on its head, presenting a mirror image where the roles are reversed. Sarajevo, according to Karadzic was not a city under siege. Rather the city was divided and that is one of his marble truths.³⁰⁷ The city was embroiled in a civil war, same as the country as a whole and it was not an object of aggression. The Other manipulated the narrative to garner sympathy from the West. He states that 105th brigade had its headquarters in a nursery and that Muslims in Sarajevo had three times more men than Serbs besieging them.³⁰⁸ In short, the entire siege of Sarajevo is viewed by Karadzic as emotional manipulation of the international public in the West, to draw them into the conflict on the Muslim side. The Other is viewed as continuously being bloodthirsty towards the Self. Karadzic in the same way that Imamović claims that the Other would slaughter the Self on holidays, thereby implying that the Other views the killing of the Self almost as a celebration. Naturally, the roles are reversed. Karadzic claims “They have been killing us, both in World War 2 and in this war, on our greatest holidays.”³⁰⁹ The difference is that according to Karadzic, Muslims kill Serbs on Serbian holidays, when they are most vulnerable. Imamović claims that Serbs are on the contrary, more aggressive on holidays, stemming from the traditions of *Gorski vijenac*. Karadzic also stretches these aggressive impulses of the Other across horizontal time, as we can see. The SDA itself is presented as stemming from *El Hadija* and SS Handzar, compared to the ustaše³¹⁰, accused of colluding with Nazis through the infamous mufti of Jerusalem El Huseini, during the Second world war a guest of the Izetbegovic family, according to Karadzic.³¹¹

Srebrenica is viewed in a different light as well. Karadzic claims that the enclaves were never demilitarized. Rather, in his view they were military strongholds behind Serbian lines. The cities were supplied by weapons during the length of the war, a fact that even Izetbegovic acknowledges.³¹² Karadzic views Srebrenica as constructed site of pilgrimage, martyrdom and a Bosniak myth. He views the number of Bosniak victims as fabricated. As stated before, all authors seek to dispute the Other’s high casualty numbers, while presenting the casualties of the Self as higher, either in absolute, relative or percentile terms, depending on what is most useful.

³⁰⁷ Ibid p. 130

³⁰⁸ Ibid p. 131

³⁰⁹ Ibid p. 152

³¹⁰ Ibid p. 183

³¹¹ Ibid p. 72

³¹² Nermina Šaćić i Behrija Čehović *Alija Izetbegović: Govori, intervjui i pisma 2001*, Sarajevo BIH: Stranka demokratske akcije; centar za analitiku, dokumentaciju i odnose s javnošću, 2002, p. 77

Karadzic claims: “The number of victims in Srebrenica, in Sarajevo, number of victims anywhere, is false and inflated, with a falsely presented structure of the civilian/soldier ratio.”³¹³ In Karadzic’s view Bosniak victim status is undeserved and a product of deliberate fabrication. The true victim is his people and he himself.

In brief, Karadzic presents a view of an embattled nation, under constant state of siege and maligned by the West and its local neighbors. In such circumstances, according to him, Serbs showed remarkable restraint in what was a purely defensive and reactive war, which was forced upon them by Others. Bosnia, which Izetbegovic and other Bosniaks authors see as inherently tolerant, is something wholly different in Karadzic’s eyes. He asks the ICTY “Why should Serbs accept BiH as their country if it is Serbophobic. Who can guarantee that Serbophobic Bosnia will not at one point become Serbocidic?”³¹⁴ Bosnia is inherently violent and presents an existential threat to the collective Serbian self. Therefore, Serbs should take their part of it and leave. In this regard he shares the views expressed by Ćosić. Likewise, he also believes that forming Yugoslavia was a mistake and that that mistake cost the Serbs 1.5 million lives in the Second world war and tens of thousands in the latest war.³¹⁵ Thus far, Serbian discourse shows a remarkable level of consistency and is the mirror image of the Bosniak one.

4.4 Who are we now and who are our enemies?

This chapter, same as the Bosniak one, deals with the question of what Serbs are today and who is/are their Other. The two books analyzed are *Историја Републике Српске* and *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина*. These two books make two different but compatible points. The first one seeks to anchor Republika Srpska as far back in history and possible, to prove that it is a legitimate, self-sustaining, natural, democratic state, deserving of independence. Conversely, the second book seeks to persuade its readers that Bosnia and Herzegovina was and is an untenable state that will inevitably dissolve itself. The cover of the book itself is telling, as it shows the country split along entity lines, with each entity drifting further from the other. Nenad

³¹³ Радован Караџић *Мермерне истине о Босни*, Београд СР: Игам, 2016, р. 289

³¹⁴ Ibid p. 181

³¹⁵ Ibid p. 212

Кесмановић is the author of *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина* and coauthored *Историја Републике Српске* with Čedomir Antić, a distinguished professor of history at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Nenad Кесмановић is the former dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Banja Luka, professor both in Banja Luka and Belgrade Faculties of Political Sciences, member of the Senate of Republika Srpska and advisor to president Milorad Dodik. Nenad Кесмановић is by virtue of his academic and political position, most notably the fact that he was a dean in Banja Luka, a mirror image of Šaćir Filandra on the Bosniak side. Content wise his books deal with the issue of his group's national identity, similarly as Filandra's *Bošnjaci nakon socijalizma*. For this reason, his works have been chosen as objects of analysis and placed in this chapter.

It has already been stated in the introductory chapters that the authors of *Историја Републике Српске* view it as their mission to write a national history, in much the same way as Imamović views the role of his work in the national discourse. Here it is important to note that there are differences between the identity of Serbs as a whole and Bosnian Serbs as a subgroup. Without going into too much detail, as the topic itself necessitates a separate study altogether, perception of the Self and the relevant Others differs in the two Serbian states. Most notably, some of the more established Others in the Serbian discourse: Germans, Americans, Turks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Croats; play a less prominent role than Bosniaks, in the case of Bosnian Serb discourse. This is of course understandable, due to the fact that Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks relations are much more intensive in comparison to other Serbian Others. Therefore, a more apt headline of this chapter would be: What is Republika Srpska, from whence it came and who are its enemies? This question is answered in these two books.

Историја Републике Српске seeks to root the existing Serbian (quasi)state in Bosnia as far back in time as possible, as is to be expected. On the first page in the introduction chapter the authors express the following claims. "Republika Srpska was created by the Serbian people and from its inception it was defined as a state in which it (the Serbian people) was sovereign... In the time of Bosnia's early statehood, it harbored/expressed (*baštiniti*) Serbian and Nemanjići state traditions, there was a religious kinship and most of the population had a Serbian ethnic identity."³¹⁶ As with all other works the first pages are critical, as it is here where the authors

³¹⁶ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 17

express their key point and the “mission” of their work. With these words, Kecmanović and Antić construct a chain of meaning, linking Republika Srpska of today to Medieval Bosnia and transferring its current realities (Serbian identity and state traditions) to ancient times. This is a clear expression of a nation, or sub-nation, stretching across horizontal time. The fact is acknowledged by the authors themselves, claiming that their endeavor was necessary since Serbian traditions were left out from the constructed Bosnian statehood by Croats, Bosniaks and the West.³¹⁷ Here we can see, within two pages the Others, who are robing of us of our history, clearly defined. The question from the headline is already answered.

The book itself starts from the Medieval era, even though Republika Srpska is 26 years old and the book is named as its history. Practically speaking the book deals with the history of the Serbs and Serbian statehood in Bosnia, which the authors present as being ancient and ever-present across horizontal time. Medieval Bosnia is claimed as Serbian from its very inception. Imamović’s two key starting claims, that Bosnia formed prior to other South Slavic states and that its first ban Borić was a Bosniak, are disputed by Kecmanović. He claims that Bosnia was ruled by Mutimir, a member of the Vlastimirović dynasty and that his brother’s Strojimir’s golden seal is the oldest existing proof of South Slavic statehood.³¹⁸ They are of course members of a Serbian dynasty. Likewise, according to the authors the first Bosnian ban Borić was a Serb. They assert this claim in a roundabout way, claiming that Greek sources used Dalmatian and Serb as synonyms. Borić was named as a ruler of the Dalmatian land of Bosnia³¹⁹ in said sources, therefore he was a Serb. Thus, the Other’s earliest claims to existence, identity and statehood are deconstructed and claimed as belonging to the Self.

The authors then move on to disprove and present counterclaims to almost every single claim of the Other. The Bosnian church is presented as a sect of Orthodox Christianity, all Bosnian bans and kings are presented as Serbs, as well as dukes of Herzegovina and Zahumlje. Tvrtko I, the greatest of all Bosnian rulers, is presented as being a Serb, or at least espousing Serbian state traditions, by adding the name Stefan and crowning himself with two crowns (*dvogubi/sugubi venac*) of Bosnia and Serbia.³²⁰ The stage is set. Bosnia was Serbian ethnically, politically and religiously. The Bosniaks who emerge can now be presented as turncoats from that primordial

³¹⁷ Ibid p. 19

³¹⁸ Ibid p. 42

³¹⁹ Ibid p. 46

³²⁰ Ibid pp 56-57

essence, in the same way as Serbs are presented in Bosniak discourse. The Ottoman period is viewed negatively, as to be expected and the two authors start disputing Bosniak claims regarding this period. They view Vlachs, as a social status/class of herdsman, not an ethnic identity, as Bosniaks claim. Kecmanović and Antić use the same author that Imamović used, Benedikt Kuripešić, to assert the claim that Vlachs were Serbs, not a Romance people who were later assimilated by the Serbs. They claim that Kuripešić wrote that Vlachs sang songs about Serbian medieval heroes³²¹, prior to the establishment of any Serbian Orthodox Churches in the areas which they settled. This is a common theme, using the same sources, yet cherry-picking the claims that suit one's own narrative. Imamović does not mention the Serbian song singing Vlachs. Likewise, Kecmanović and Antić do not mention that the best janissaries and bureaucrats were Bosniaks, a claim which Imamović takes from Kuripešić and presents it to the reader.

It goes without saying that *devshirma* is viewed as the highest form of oppression and that Mehmed Paša Sokolović as a product of this practice was originally a Serb. This is universally held as a truism by Serbian authors and Kecmanović and Antić are no exceptions. It is interesting to note that the two authors present Serbian insurgents from Herzegovina and Montenegro during the Kandyian war (1645-1669) as victims of persecution at the hands of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Muslim aristocrats, a narrative opposite to the Bosniak one. Evlija Čelebija, a medieval Ottoman explorer whose written work is held in high regard by the Bosniaks, is presented by Kecmanović as a participant in the punitive persecutions against the Serbs.³²² In much the same way is Bosniaks seek to delegitimize Serbian literary greats, like Njegoš and Andrić, these two authors try to do the same with Bosniak ones.

Even though the Self is presented as a victim, it is also a heroic victim, same as with all other authors. Kecmanović and Antić state that as much as a third of the army of prince Eugen of Savoy consisted of Serbs.³²³ Thus, the Self as a heroic victim is simultaneously persecuted and one of the key contributors to one of the greatest historical defeats of the Bosniak Other, the fall of Sarajevo in 1697. Many Bosnian Serbs will leave with prince Eugen and settle in the lands which the Austrians took from the Ottomans, present day parts of Serbia, Croatia, Romania and

³²¹ Ibid pp 68-69

³²² Ibid p. 75

³²³ Ibid p. 77

Hungary. Conversely, Muslims from those areas would flee to the Ottoman controlled Bosnia, thereby fermenting the creation of a separate Bosnian Muslim identity, according to the authors.³²⁴ The Other's identity is presented as a relatively recent phenomenon, as opposed to the Self's ancient identity, in much the same way as Bosniaks claim that Serbian identity in Bosnia emerged in the 19th century. Additionally, the presence of the Serbs in Sarajevo is pushed back to the 17th century with the formation of their Church centered municipality, attesting to their deep roots in the country, something which Bosniak authors do not mention.

Unsurprisingly the authors present the Serbian revolution in a positive light. Kecmanović and Antić focus on the terror which Serbs in Bosnia suffered at the hands of Bosnian Muslims, punitive and preemptive measures because of the uprisings in Serbia. Many Serbs were enslaved, count Ivo of Semberija spent all his wealth buying off the enslaved peasants from Bosnian aristocrats and many were killed. The authors depict the persecution of Serbs after a botched uprising of 1807 in the Krajina region in grim detail. The captives had their ears and heads chopped off and sent to the vizier, mounted on pikes on border forts and many captured insurgents were impaled on spikes. The authors state that "only the Ramadan fast and protests of some Turks stopped the slaughtering of Serbs."³²⁵ The Other is vindictive, vicious and bloodthirsty. None of this is mentioned in Bosniak sources. The Bosnian uprising of 1830-1831 is not depicted as a multicultural uprising of all Bosnians seeking political autonomy, as in the Bosniak case. Rather it is represented as an attempt of a landed aristocracy to retain its feudal privileges in the face of reform. The authors lament that the end of this uprising was not met with real reform. Rather the Agrarian issue remained and the Saferic order of 1858 solidified the feudal system to the detriment of Christian serfs. From this exploited position, many Serbian uprisings in BIH would stem. They are mentioned by Ekmečić also, but not by Bosniak authors.

In an effort to root Republika Srpska as far back in time as possible Kecmanović and Antić try to find its political precursors and progenitors. Granted, Medieval Bosnia was Serbian, in their view, but it was a unified Bosnian state encompassing roughly the borders of modern day BIH. One needs to find a state-like entity covering the lands of present day Republika Srpska, in order to stretch the existing polity and identity across horizontal time. The autonomous region of Herzegovina under Luka Vukalović in 1858 is presented as a beginning of an autonomous

³²⁴ Ibid p. 78

³²⁵ Ibid p. 93

Serbian state in Bosnia.³²⁶ This autonomy was short-lived and BiH would return to Ottoman dominance where Serbs were suppressed and mistreated, forced to accept that their language is Bosnian, forced to recognize the jurisdiction of the Greek patriarch of Constantinople instead of the Serbian church and consequently be classified as Greeks by the Ottoman administration. The Self is a constant victim. Bosnia and Herzegovina would later become “a colony of Austria-Hungary”³²⁷, in the words of the authors. Thus, the Austrian occupation is viewed as colonization, from the outset in a highly negative light, as opposed to the Bosniaks. Austria-Hungary continued all the Ottoman policies, transferring the churches to the jurisdiction of Constantinople, forbidding Serbian language, enforcing Bosnian language and identity, defending Muslim feudal rights etc. Interestingly enough, in much the same way as Bosniak authors blame Bosnian Serbs for their inaction in Bosniak uprisings, most notably the ones from 1830 and 1878, Kecmanović and Antić blame Bosniaks for their inaction in the Serbian uprising in Herzegovina of 1875. Bosniaks were called to join this fight for a modern nation and yet they did not heed this Serbian call, choosing to aid the Ottomans in their calls for religious war. “For them the basis of their existence was Islam and system that existed in the Ottoman empire.”³²⁸ The Bosniak Other is Oriental, Islamic and anti-modern as opposed to the Serb. This is of course radically different from the Bosniak view on the Eastern question and Christian uprisings in the Balkans.

Despite Austrian and Bosniak oppression, despite Kallay’s attempts to assimilate them, the Serbs remained true to their primordial Serbdom, which existed since time immemorial. Not only that, Serbs still managed to create and maintain their church municipalities (*crkvene opštine i crkveni odbori*). The authors explicitly state that these church municipalities were “nonterritorial precursors to Republika Srpska”.³²⁹ Another instance of rooting the Self and its state in other historical political units. These municipalities were outlawed and all church-based life was subservient to the Patriarchy of Constantinople. Simultaneously, Bosniak religious ties to Istanbul were severed and tethered to Vienna, as was already mentioned in previous chapters. This infringement upon both groups religious autonomy and identity by Vienna would become a basis for their short-lived cooperation in the first decade of the 20th century. This was already

³²⁶ Ibid p. 101

³²⁷ Ibid p. 119

³²⁸ Ibid p. 112

³²⁹ Ibid p. 122

covered with Imamović and on there are no major contradictions between him and these two authors in the issue of the Serbo-Muslim coalition. The authors have a different view of the Agrarian issue but that was also stated earlier.

Regarding the outbreak of the First world war, Kecmanović and Antić seek to justify the assassination of Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip and his coconspirators. The act itself is not framed as terrorism, rather it is viewed as regicide and tyrannicide, a long established European practice. Franz Ferdinand is thus painted as a legitimate target, as the authors claim. “Franz Ferdinand was, even in the context of his time, an anti-Semite and a racist. He considered the Serbs as a nation of bandits and he called the Serbian heir apparent Alexander a “Gypsy”, after meeting him.”³³⁰ They lament the fact that many such assassins were hailed as heroes while the Serbian ones were vilified. As to be expected *Mlada Bosna* and Gavrilo Princip are viewed as pro-Serb oriented, not Yugoslavs. This is viewed as a positive fact, as opposed to the Bosniak authors’ stance. Incidentally, the face of Gavrilo Princip adorns the cover of *Историја Републике Српске*.

The Austrian response to the assassination was an orchestrated pogrom of Bosnian Serbs, aided by the Bosniaks and Croats. The authors view the subsequent Muslim elite apologies and denunciations of these pogroms as political opportunism, since they had no other choice but to go with the Serbs after the Great War. In the same way Bosniak petitions to the NDH in the Second world war are also viewed as being motivated by opportunism and fear of reprisals, rather than some innate tolerance and altruism.³³¹ The *Šuckori* and Bosniak members of the Austro-Hungarian army are viewed by Kecmanović and Antić as willing instruments of Austrian aggression against the Serbs.³³² This is of course a radically different view from the Bosniak one. The Great war that followed these events is depicted through the lens of the Serbian heroic victim, who suffers immensely yet ultimately triumphs. The Austrian campaign against Serbia and Serbs is described by the authors as “a colonial campaign with genocidal elements.”³³³ After the war had ended the authors view the first Yugoslavia by and large in a positive light. The resolution of the Agrarian issue is presented as a just end to a century of feudal exploitation and more of a class issue than a national one, since very few Muslims, the very large landowners,

³³⁰ Ibid p. 140

³³¹ Ibid p. 188

³³² Ibid pp 143-144

³³³ Ibid p. 150

were impacted by it. The establishment of the Banovinas is viewed as good move by the Yugoslav elite of the time. Vrbaska Banovina, comprising what is now the northern part of RS is viewed as its precursor and its establishment as a period of emancipation of the region.

As expected the authors see Serbs as the only people that had been truly committed to Yugoslavia. The beginning of the Second world war and the Others actions against the Serbian Self was a wake-up call for Serbian illusion. The authors claim that the resistance movements in Bosnia and Yugoslavia were at first Serbian uprisings responding to genocide.³³⁴ Their view of World War II is predictably one of Serbian victimhood, heroic struggle and dominance in both resistance movements, četniks and the Partisans, which are both depicted in a relatively positive light. Although they do stress that Bosniaks were members of SS and ustaše divisions, they do acknowledge that Bosniaks were active in the Partisan movement in significant numbers. According to them, some Muslims also supported the četniks, with units in which they dominated, prominent positions in the movement as a whole and fielding up to 4000 fighters.³³⁵ This is never mentioned by Bosniak authors. Apart from their contribution to antifascist struggle, Bosniaks had a large role to play in the genocide against the Serbs during the Second world war, as the authors claim. They go into great detail when describing this genocide against the Serbs, with statistical accounts, enumerating victims for numerous sites where Serbs were killed en masse. What is particularly interesting that Kecmanović and Antić stress Serbian victimhood in the Srebrenica region during the Second world war. They explicitly state that “in the Srebrenica county (*srez*) Serbs made up 70% of the war victims, from 1941 to 1945 out of 1011 Serbs 90% were killed by the ustaša. Muslims suffered 400 casualties, mostly killed by četniks.”³³⁶ The Other did it first. Any Serbian crimes which happened later and the authors do acknowledge them, are reactions to the genocide suffered at the hands of Croats and Bosniaks. The authors as expected, present the two Others as having affinity towards fascism and anti-Semitism, blame the communists for sweeping these facts under the rug and Western scholars for keeping them there. Kecmanović and Antić dispute Noel Malcolm’s claims that Muslims proportionately suffered more casualties during the Second World War than the Serbs with their own reading of the available data. They state that in BIH 209 000 Serbs died which made 20,3% of the total

³³⁴ Ibid p. 178

³³⁵ Ibid p. 186

³³⁶ Ibid p. 201

Serbian population in that region.³³⁷ If this is contrasted with Imamović's claim that Bosniaks lost 8% of their population, then Bosnian Serbs are the Superior Victim, even though percent-wise Serbs as a whole may have lost less than Bosniaks. Even if the facts are the same in both discourses, their readings differ widely.

Their view of SFRY is roughly comparable to the views of other Serbian authors analyzed. All the tropes are there. Serbs were persecuted, split into various republics and regions, the Constitution of 1974 was unjust, Bosniaks dominated Bosnia and many Serbs left the state as they did not feel welcome, Muslims are Serbs by origin. It is important to note that these authors, as said above, do acknowledge that a specific Bosnian Muslim identity started to emerge from the 18th century onward. Their identity did not come out of the blue. In the view of Kecmanović and Antić its definitive formation into a separate nation was unnaturally sped up by the Communists in the 1960s and 1970s.³³⁸ The communists were also to blame for enforcing Bosniak Victimhood perception and forcing Serbian guilt, by diminishing their plight and accentuating their misdeeds. In their view Bosniaks were Serbs who converted to Islam under Turkish influence and pressure. They claim that the entire Bogomilist theory of Bosniaks is an attempt to wash away the collective turncoat complex.³³⁹ Kecmanović similarly dismisses the concept of integral Bosniakdom. He sees it as nothing but an expression of Bosniak nationalism. According to him "Bosniakdom even before Alija was a metaphor for an extended Muslim Bosniakdom (*muslimanstvo*), much in the same way as Yugoslavianism was even before Radovan a metaphor for extended Serbdom."³⁴⁰ These internal problems of Yugoslavia, forced Serbian guilt and victimhood of others, three different political cultures existing in one single republic, economic downturn and political tensions between the elites would eventually lead to the Bosnian civil war.

Kecmanović and Antić have a very different view of the war than their Bosniak counterparts. Izetbegovic is viewed as fundamentalist, the SDA as an Islamist party and Bosniaks are in general blamed for the war. They even criticize the Bosniak liberal opposition party SDP. They claim that the leader of SDP Enes Duraković reacted to the procession of the remains of tzar Lazar by exclaiming that the smell of incense was suffocating him. As such they see the Serbian

³³⁷ Ibid p. 207

³³⁸ Ibid p. 233

³³⁹ Ibid p. 240

³⁴⁰ Ненад Кеџмановић *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина*, Београд СР: Филип Вишњић, 2007, р. 75

view that he was a nationalist and the SDP is a crypto Muslim party as justified.³⁴¹ In *Nemoguća država* Kecmanović is much more critical of the secular/liberal Bosniaks. He implies that there is no real difference between leaders of various Bosniak factions and that they all in the end adhere to the same nationalist agenda, some more openly than others. That is why, as he states, after the fall of communism and Yugoslavia “the islamic radical Alija Izetbegovic, the civic nationalist Zulfikarpašić and the national-communist Filipović all quickly found themselves on the same front.”³⁴² As expressed by other Serbian authors, the declaration of Bosnian independence is viewed as illegal, since Serbian members of the government were not allowed to veto it, which they had a legal right to do. The subsequent declaration of an independent Republika Srpska was merely a reaction to this act of discrimination. The violence that erupted and would later boil into a full-blown war can squarely be blamed on one side. The two authors cite statistics which state that Serbs made up 71% of prewar victims in incidents of ethnic violence in 1991.³⁴³ According to them this fact shows who started the war. What follows is a detailed description of the War with numerous crimes against the Serbs and some Serbian crimes presented in detail. The war according to them is not a war of Serbian aggression but “a civil war on national and religious grounds.”³⁴⁴ After the war ended Serbs would yet again be subject to discrimination and Bosniaks along with their western allies would constantly seek to dismantle Republika Srpska and forcefully unify the country under Bosniak dominance. This pressure never ceases even though Republika Srpska is much more tolerant than FBiH. Kecmanović states that in the parliament of Republika Srpska (in 1997) around twenty Bosniak and Croat MPs had seats while in the FBiH there was only one Serb.³⁴⁵ The victimhood narrative and fear of extinction dominates their discourse.

The authors address multiple cases of Muslim victimhood, stating multiple times, as Ćosić did, that a lot of them were false flag operations or overly exaggerated. According to them Bosniak special units Ševe were tasked with conducting massacres of their own people in Sarajevo and

³⁴¹ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 259

³⁴² Ненад Кеџмановић *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина*, Београд СР: Филип Вишњић, 2007, р. 118

³⁴³ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кеџмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 298

³⁴⁴ Ibid р. 304

³⁴⁵ Ненад Кеџмановић *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина*, Београд СР: Филип Вишњић, 2007, р. 203

pinning them on the Serbs.³⁴⁶ This was done to galvanize the Bosniak populace and the Western public against the Serbs. In particular, Kecmanović and Antić address the case of Srebrenica. Unsurprisingly, they do not accept the Bosniak claim that Srebrenica was a genocide. They state that it was a massive war crime conducted as a vengeful reprisal for prior Bosniak crimes against the Serbs. The authors state that “up until April 1993 in the Srebrenica county up to 91% of Serbs were killed or expelled and 81 out of 93 villages were destroyed.”³⁴⁷ Even though they denounce and regret Serbian actions in Srebrenica they vehemently deny its classification as a genocide. This classification is again viewed as a product of Western washing of their own sins with Serbs as collective scapegoats. The entire bloody event is also depicted as a giant false flag operation. The authors claim that the chief of police of Srebrenica Hakija Meholjić and one of Bosniak war commanders Ibran Mustafić testified that Srebrenica was intentionally sacrificed by Sarajevo to draw the West into the war. According to Kecmanović and Antić, Izetbegovic himself admitted this when he said that “Clinton told him that a massacre of 5000 Srebrenica Muslims would be sufficient cause for NATO to take an action against the Serbs.”³⁴⁸

Lastly the authors have a positive opinion of their wartime leaders, as do the Bosniaks. They were the fathers of the state and it is natural that both they and the state are defended as being “good”. In their mind Karadzic is innocent of war crimes despite his conviction. Serbs were not the aggressors and Karadzic’s judgement is unjust for even though the conflict was a “three-sided civil war, whose political cause was the Muslim-Croat majorization of Serbs, Izetbegovic and Tudjman were never indicted.”³⁴⁹ The book has one overarching point. Republika Srpska is the frame of reference of Bosnian Serbs, their national home and something worthy of protection. It is ultimately a natural and sustainable state. BiH has no value to them nor is it sustainable in the long run. “Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be a single country because it does not have a single soul”³⁵⁰. This is explained succinctly by Kecmanović in his other book. He as all other Serbian authors points out the glaring similarities between Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He states that citizens of Bosnia declared themselves as Muslims, Croats and Serbs at the ballot box, by voting for the nationalist parties. Thus, “as Yugoslavia is falling apart

³⁴⁶ Чедомир Антић и Ненад Кецмановић *Историја Републике Српске*, Београд СР: НИП Недељник, 2017, р. 326

³⁴⁷ Ibid p. 329

³⁴⁸ Ibid p. 334

³⁴⁹ Ibid p. 371

³⁵⁰ Ibid p. 225

because there are not enough Yugoslavs, so too is the case with Bosnia, for there are not enough Bosnians.”³⁵¹

³⁵¹ Ненад Кеџмановић *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина*, Београд СР: Филип Вишњић, 2007, р. 25

Conclusion: Should we change and I why we must not?

To sum up this exhaustive and exhausting analysis of the two national narratives with a short answer to the self-imposed questions of the conclusion; no. We should not change. The main reason why is that the entire national narrative of both nations is steeped in myth. That does not mean that what either side says is true or not. Their tales may be true, but they are mythic in the sense that they are tales which “give to a certain event a paradigmatic meaning and to a certain person exemplary character.”³⁵² In all of the key points of their narratives: medieval Bosnia, character of the Ottoman era, the nature of the Serbian uprisings, the Agrarian issue, the two World Wars and two Yugoslavias; events with paradigmatic meaning dominate, sending messages of a timeless innate aggressive nature of the Other as opposed to the good Self. These tales have become a part of the national narrative of the elite. The authors and the works chosen wield comparable influence in their societies and the discourse used mirrors the Other side perfectly. Furthermore, the Other’s own identity is denied, believed to be just a turncoat offshoot of the Self. How could Serbs accept the theory of their Bosniak descent or Bosniaks the theory of their Serbian descent without demeaning their own sense of Self? How could they accept the Other in any other fashion unless the Other accepts to come back to the fold, to their primordial Self? They can’t. We want the Other to accept our stories which deprive it of its own autonomous existence. This is something inconceivable. Yet that is how they are presented in our stories, which are foundational to our own national identity. Thus, the two nations have reached an impasse. Changing national discourse, particularly in relation to the Bosnian war may be the solution, but it is deeply problematic. Such a discourse, particularly if it is disseminated as official nationalism is unlikely to change. It is produced by the state and serves its interests; therefore, it is politically costly to critically analyse the creation of said state, a product of a recent bloody war.

Said claims: “Since the struggle for control over territory is a part of history, so too is a struggle for social and historical meaning.”³⁵³ He states that all societies need an Other

³⁵² Ђуро Бодрожић, *Српски идентитет*, Београд, Српска књижевна задруга, 2015, р. 24

³⁵³ Edward W. Said *Orientalism*, London UK: Penguin books, 2003, pp 331-332

and they constantly reproduce them in a discursive conflict involving individuals and institutions. This thesis explored the Bosnian conflict over meaning and identity, which reproduces the Self and Other across messianic time, in the works of a few notable individuals. Undoubtedly, to get the full picture one should explore the length and breadth of textual work by other individuals and institutions, from the very bottom of popular nationalism in the dark corners of the Internet to textbooks, required readings and official national histories disseminated in schools. This was just an analysis which scratches the surface of the deeply conflictual relationship between the two groups. I hope that this skin deep analysis has convinced the reader that the two narratives clash over practically all notable events in their respective national histories, both ancient and recent. Despite some differences within each national group, both Bosniak and Serbian authors show a remarkable consensus on key issues within their own groups. The authors chosen as object of analysis were political leaders, intellectuals, well read and well-travelled. However, their discourse does not deviate from popular nationalist discourse known to any man or woman living in “the magical land of Bosnia”. The war for territories has stopped but the war for meaning is in full swing. This three-sided war for meaning has lasted for at least a century, since the magazines *Behar*, *Bosanska vila* and others started engaging the other side, deconstructing their claims, presenting counter-claims and defending them against inevitable narrative attack that would eventually come. Unlike Said’s Occident and Orient, all three sides constantly engage one another, their languages are mutually intelligible and there exists a relative power parity between them. With the knowledge of the language and with cultural sensitivity to Bosnian realities, one can relatively easily access and explore a wealth of discursive material. This is what makes studying Bosnia as a place of national, civilizational and religious conflict rewarding. Living in the reality that is Bosnia is a different question altogether. The Self and Other unlike in any other place in the world are neighbors. In Bosnia, a torn country, with the wounds of war still fresh in the peoples’ minds, where the relationship between the Self and Other was always intimate, due to all the reasons mentioned above, the neighbor has a special role. In the context of Bosnia, the neighbor

“could be not only the closest protection but potentially the closest and that means the most dangerous enemy.”³⁵⁴

To summarize, all sides are locked in a war for meaning, wielding mythologized narratives, with clearly defined Victims and Aggressors. Thus, no one is willing to compromise with the Other, since they are utterly villainized in the Other’s narrative and any acquiescence may disrupts one’s own narrative and consequently cause an identity crisis and popular backlash. We cannot know who we are unless we know who we are not. Both sides are clear who they are. Who they are not is much clearer. They are not the Dissonant Aggressive Genocidal Fascist Uncivilized Nationalist Bosniak/Serb/Croat Other. This is the point on which all authors agree. I will leave the reader with one clear expression of this narrative and why neither of them can change. Kecmanović gives a chilling view of the emerging Bosniak identity. He states that “this people has paid in blood to get its Kosovo, its Obilićs, its tzars Lazars, its Vidovdans, its Brankovićs, in short its own heroes, martyrs and traitors. It came to pass as with all the others before them, sooner and later, but always painfully, as is inevitable.”³⁵⁵ In Other words, they have fully become our mirror image, they have become a fully-fledged nation tempered in the embers of war paying their nationhood in blood, as we did long ago. They need an enemy and no one is better suited for such a role than the neighbor whom they fought to become a nation, Us. The same holds true for both Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks.

³⁵⁴ Ненад Кеџмановић *Немогућа држава: Босна и Херцеговина*, Београд СР: Филип Вишњић, 2007, р. 40

³⁵⁵ *Ibid* p. 249

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