



Misrepresentation of the Bosnian War by Western media

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Abstract

In this paper I intend to analyse war reporting in Bosnian War. I am working in Foucaultian tradition of understanding discourse as a tool of power and Lacanian tradition of understanding phantasm as a imaginary scenario that gives one understanding of his social role and his way of desiring. I intend to expose, how war reporting uses traditional stereotypes in explaining the war in Bosnia. In my research I go beyond narrative analysis and expose political value of such reporting. Relying on the concept of phantasm I try to expose how the stereotypic reporting creates the passive position of reader: he is concerned but he cannot do much in this irrational, tribal war. In this way sensational, stereotypical reporting actually contributed to prevailing policy of passivity that was partially responsible for prolongation of the conflict.

Keywords

War reporting, Bosnian War, discursive power, fantasy

Introduction

Palestinian literary theorist Edward Said (2003) analysed a concept of *Orientalism*, a discourse about a geographic territory east of Europe. He revealed the Orientalism not as a science or knowledge about some specific space and time, but as a discursive construct, based on The West's stereotypes and myths about The East. He argued that the Orientalism is inherently entangled in western imperialism; with its stereotypical view it advocated western expansion. His work had a strong impact on other scholars, like Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova (2009). Similarly as Said, she conducted a study of Balkanism as a discourse about Balkans from the eighteen century till today. In contrast to Orient, the Balkans are geographically defined area, that is part of the European

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continent. Balkanism as a discourse explains Balkans as not completely European, as a place in-between; Balkans are European other, second, not yet truly Europe, that is marked by culture of primitivism, disorder and poverty.

Balkanism as a discourse was also used in war reporting from collapsing Yugoslavia. It was a part of a general trend in 20th century war reporting that has often used different stereotypes, myths and metaphors to represent the situation on the battlefield. This approach enabled easier explanation of complex conflicts, but it also create a misrepresentation of reality. While the Cold War reporting was systematically simplified by the model of two block tensions, the post Cold War conflicts tend to be more demanding, hence a new way of stereotypes based reporting gained its moment. When the war in Bosnia erupted in 1992, the war reporters developed specific pattern of reporting, that used the metaphors about Balkans, rooted in stereotypes analyzed by Todorova. Reports became less insightful and more sensational, hence they represented a disrupted overview of conflicts. Further on, they also had negative political consequences. As Allen and Seaton (1999: p.2) stated: "It enabled the governments of rich industrial states to absolve themselves of responsibility for what was happening, and helped them to adopt increasingly oppressive measures against refugees and immigrants".

In this paper I intend to analyze western media reporting on Bosnian War. As previous researches has already exposed, the reporting on Bosnian War (as well as other conflict in last decade of 20th century on western Balkans) was often bias, confusing and unclear in explaining the roots of the conflict. Burg and Shoup (2000) in their extended analysis of Bosnian war argued that extensive media coverage of the conflict presented it in a chaotic way. The coverage was focused on the main events, like the bombing of Sarajevo. In majority cases reporters expressed honest concerns about civil victims, but they did not explain the conflict: "The compelling nature of the story of Muslim victimization deterred most reporters from any efforts to examine the complex issues underlying the war" (p. 162). Such reporting distorted the reality of the war and consequently the idea of western military intervention had only minor public support.

To similar conclusion came also V. P. Gagnon in his work, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia And Croatia in the 1990s* (2004). He criticized the opinion of media (as well as of academia), prevailing at the time of wars in Croatia and Bosnia, that the conflicts were the results of ethnic hatreds. Instead, he states the thesis according to which the conflicts were strategically steered by the communist party of Serbia, more specifically its major conservative wing, so to demobilize Serbian population in potential social changes. Hence, the internal tensions that could erupt in Serbia were tamed by shifting gaze of population towards war and populist, nationalistic ideas. The conflict was also used by party elites as a base of future post-Yugoslavian geopolitical division, where extended territory would be controlled by centralized, conservative Serbian state. Similar political dynamic was by Gagnon also in Croatia; nationalistic and conflict oriented discourses were used by political elites to dominate the public sentiment and to demobilize potentials of social change. The western media could not recognize this

political root of the conflict, while the local Serbian and Croatian media were used in nationalistic propaganda and manipulation.

In this article I tend to further analyze the problem of the conflict reporting. More specifically, in this analysis I want to expose how media reporting disrupts the reality of the conflict. This is a type of qualitative analysis and its intention is not to grasp the stereotypical reporting in general, but to expose inclinations in discourse and hence prepare a ground for further qualitative research. I will limit my analysis on press media reports about war in Bosnia in years 1992 -1995. The source of the discourse will be western newspapers. The articles were chosen from openly available internet archives. First I filtered the article with help of keywords. Due to the abstract nature of analysed object I selected the articles subjectively, by the criterion of a stereotypical narrative. Hence this paper does not give figures on how many stereotypes were used in general, but the way how these stereotypes were embedded in media reports.

Metaphors and fantasies

By Foucault (1981) every society has its own ways of producing discourse. Through methods of limitation, selection, control and organization of discourse the truth is produced. Discourse is a product of relations of power in the society. Norman Fairclough (2001) describes the language as a distinctive social element that is inherently entangled with relations of power in society. The conventions of speech are ideologically determined. They are a result of power relations in society. Language is the other side of the physical power; while the physical power works through coercion, the power of language works through manufacturing consent.

I tend to analyse the discourse of war reporting with help of two specific concept: metaphors as a discursive function that can be used as power in discourse and fantasies as a part of the human psychic that can be used as a power behind the discourse.

Understanding of metaphors as an essential way in which our mind structures our thinking was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). In one of his articles, Lakoff (1992: p.1) explains his ideas as following: "In short, the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another [...] a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system". Contemporary media reporting very effectively uses the metaphors in excessive way. Especially when it comes to complex political situations or reporting from complicated conflicts, metaphors become key method of transferring the message. The problem is a lack of reflection. As Hellesten and Renvall (1997) revealed, because it constructs the understanding, it is hard to question metaphoric presentation.

The metaphors are not only problematic for receivers, but also for senders. While reporters use a metaphor to present message in specific way, it does not mean that the message will be received as intended. As Kennedy (2000) exposes, the metaphor can have completely opposite effect than intended.

I tend to combine the theory of metaphor with psychoanalytical concept of fantasy. I tend to expose, that metaphors are not effective only because of their explanatorily function, but also due to fantasies that metaphor stage.

In Lacan' psychoanalysis fantasy is a imaginative representation of one's social role; who am I in the eyes of others. As Žižek (2007) explains, the principle of fantasy is desire; not something that I desire, fantasy is based on the desire of others – what others see in me, what they find desiring about me. In this way the fantasy gives one his role in society. Žižek (2007): “fantasy does not mean that, when I desire a strawberry cake and cannot get it in reality, I fantasize about eating it; the problem is rather, how do I know that I desire a strawberry cake in the first place? This is what fantasy tells me”.

How does metaphors and fantasies come together? Metaphor does not only structure the understanding but it also stages fantasmatic scenario; it gives the receivers explanation and in the same way stages its position towards described event. One can recognize such mechanism in the work of Hellesten and Renvall (1997), when they talk about double bind, when a reader is divided between passivity given by media metaphor an activity of good citizen given by his political culture. In the language of psychoanalysis this division is division between two fantasmatic representations.

War reporting: bystanding or attached?

Ways of war reporting could be spatially represented on a single continuum of two principle of reporting. On one side is a “bystanders” reporting. In such reporting reporter only stands by and describes the event as objectively as possible (look Von Oppen: 2009). This is based on a classical idea of objective journalism. Reporter should represent events as they appear and not try to judge or interpreted them. On the other side is a “journalism of attachment”, proposed by BBC reporter Martin Bell (1997). In this approach a reporter should be ‘attached’ to the event. Reporter’s position should not be passive observation but active engagement, taking sides, making judgment and influencing a conflict. Both positions have weak spots that were criticized (e.g. how to be objective and how to make a moral judgment?).

Instead of advocating one of two extremes, my analysis proposes a balanced reporting, that can used both types of reporting. My critique is turned against sensational way of reporting. I want to show how sensational reporting does not help in conflict as well is not insightful. As Keen (1999) exposes, the war reporting in post-Cold War era, especially in economically unimportant places, has often fall on the level of irrationality, where the whole conflict is reduced to a metaphor of a chaotic confrontation of primordial tribes. He criticizes this way of understanding ethnical war and instead proposed that ethnic war should be explained as any other war, based on economic and political interest behind it. Thus, while my analysis is focused on stereotypes, it is also a proposition towards repoliticization of the war reporting.

Analysis

From Serbs as demonized aggressors

On 8. February 1993 British newspaper *The independent* published article titled *Bosnia War Crimes: 'The rapes went on day and night'*. The article tells shocking story about events that took place in Kalinovik camp, 40 kilometers south of Sarajevo. The local school building became a prison where young women were systematically raped. The story is a collection of testimonies of women kept in the school and authors comments and reflections:

'They came in with guns and grenades and they screamed at us,' Ziba's friend Emira recalls. 'The Chetniks shouted at us: 'Look at how many children you can have. Now you are going to have our children. You are going to have our little Chetniks.' They said they weren't interested in women who were expecting babies because they couldn't make them pregnant.'

Ziba, 26, mother of two, was among the first 12 women and girls to be selected by the Serbs at the Kalinovik camp. 'They called us 'bitches' and one of them pointed at me,' said Ziba. 'My two children were clinging to me and I was forced to leave them. They thought I was going to be killed.'

The article explains the situation in Bosnia through daily suffering of common people. It uses combination of reported speech and quotations in the effort to present to a reader the reality of war. A framing metaphor is “Serbs as Demonized Aggressors”: Serbs are the principle aggressors that are to be blamed for the war. The article, with its effective attached reporting, gives strong arguments for such a view. In the end is a short but effective political appeal:

The women were exchanged for Serbs in Croatian hands, early enough for those women who had been made pregnant - at least 15 of them - to have abortions in Mostar and Jablanica. 'I do not need to tell you what I think of those men,' said Ziba, now in a refugee house in Mostar. 'You can imagine how I feel as a woman. You know why they did these things.'

Nor, if United Nations plans for the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina are accepted, will Ziba and the other raped women ever return home. For Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen have seen to it that in a new federal state the area around Gacko will be awarded to her tormentors, the Serbs.

The article is a great example of an effective combination of attached and bystander reporting. It represents the war from a specific viewpoint in a way that gives perspective over the whole conflict and has effective and positive political appeal. While it does not venture into the realm of political background behind the events it still effectively mobilized the reader. The article also exposes how effective use of metaphors can help understand the events but still does not simplify it too much. The next article will contrast this way of reporting as an example of attached reporting which creates different metaphoric frame and consequently had opposing, passive effect.

On 23. July 1992 British newspaper The Guardian published an article titled *Serb Jihad in a Bosnian Town* written by Maggie O'Kane. The article describes events taking place in area surrounding Bosnia town Gorazde. The town was besieged by Serbian soldiers, who used their mortars to shell the town. The report gives special attention to Slavo Guba, leader of Serbian soldiers:

Maggie O'Kane (1992): *Over 500 shells and mortar rounds fell on the Bosnian town of Gorazde in an hour yesterday, killing more than 50 people, according to first aid workers. 'The town has been without water, electricity, food, medicines or doctors for months,' an appeal from the population said. 'Huge numbers of dead are being buried in the parks and gardens at night. The wounded are being operated on without any anaesthetics.'* Maggie O'Kane reports from Gorazde:

COMMANDANT Slavo Gub stands on top of a mountain and unscrews the legs of a green tripod to mount his telescopic sights. The streets of Gorazde jump up the mountain. The town is at his feet.

The title gives a lead metaphor that frames the whole article: War as Serbs Jihad. Latter is repeated in text, combined with main character of the article, Slavo Gub: "Commandant Gub used to be a technician at the post office in a small Montenegrin town. Now he is a soldier fighting in this Serb-led jihad." Thus the article gives interpretation of the events directly. In Bosnia, we are witnessing 'Serb-led jihad.'

The article is an example of attached reporting of Bosnian war through emotional observation. The author clearly stands against Serbs. They are demonized and blamed for chaotic state of things. While such position can have positive political appeal (as seen in previous article) there is no such case in here. Political aspects of the whole conflict are marginally presented and do not give any proposition what to do, as if the situation is already helpless:

Maggie O'Kane (1992): *The killing in eastern Bosnia is more like a pigeon shoot than a war. With their mortars and rockets, the Serbs are picking off villages and towns. Their leaders - Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic - have been insisting for months that if they do not take over these villages and towns and drive out the Muslims, then Serbs will become second-class citizens in an Islamic Bosnian state.*

War as irrational massacre

The report builds its dynamic through two contradictory fantasies. First is already exposed fantasy of demonic Serbs killing innocent Bosnian civilians:

Maggie O'Kane (1992): *"Day two of the ceasefire and by the time the cigarettes and coffee arrive the Serbs have landed 15 rockets on the trapped people of Gorazde. 'But what about the ceasefire? The paper Mr Karadzic signed in London?' the lunch party is asked. 'That's the London ceasefire,' the commander says."*

This fantasy stages the Serbs in the role of aggressors, Bosnians in the role of victims and the readers as the moral bystanders. While the article does not express this explicitly, it stages the fantasy which calls for western intervention against Serbs. One could argue that this description, by advocating an active position towards conflict,

establishes positive political consequences; If Serbs are to be blamed, then the west should intervene and tame the aggressor.

However author continues the article by shifting focus to the other side of the war. Firstly she quotes the statement of old Serbian women, where she describes the contrast between live before and after the war, the life of harmony compared to the live of conflict:

Maggie O'Kane (1992): *At a base camp at the bottom of the hill, Savka, a fat, kind woman of 60 settles on a bench and tells of how she used to tend the fields with her Muslim neighbours - but now, she says, the Muslims are sending crucified, headless Serbian children in batches of four down the river Drina.*

Secondly, the author exposes the abundance of equipment and men willing to fight regardless of their age. Thirdly, she exposes the easiness of war, how Serbs, assured of their dominance, sporadically, without consideration, shell the Bosnian city and how they drink coffee and chat, as if they would not be on the front:

Maggie O'Kane (1992): *As back-up, the Serbian attackers have a plentiful supply of second world war partisans who have unwrapped their rifles from oil-cloths and, at the age of about 70, are getting back into the swing. The Red Cross in Cajnice, 14 miles away, supplies cigarettes and coffee.*

Lunch at the command post is long and abundant - potato cakes and raspberry pancakes with as much plum brandy as a Serbian fighter can handle. No one seems to notice the boom, boom, boom of cannon fire that seems to be landing on a few gardens opposite the hill.

This composition of dispersed events has a confusing and demobilizing effect. While reader gets only bits of actual happening in Bosnia, all together they explain the conflict through the metaphor "War as Irrational Massacre." Further on, the metaphor stages a fantasy based on stereotypes about Balkans. Žižek (2008: p.99) describes this fantasy in the following way: "[...] to maintain an 'equidistance' towards all sides in the conflict - one cannot put all the blame on only one side; in this fraternal orgy of tribal killing, nobody is innocent." This narrative balances the sharp demonization of Serbs, by metaphorically saying, they are all the same, irrational barbers in their permanent conflicts. In contrast to the first article this one creates a position of passivity that Hellesten and Renvall (1997) talk about. It is directly based on stereotypical view of Balkans as European other, the less developed, more primitive. Active position is lost; reader cannot do allot in this slaughter.

The result of such reader's perspective on the war (based on demobilizing metaphor "War as Massacer" and fantasy of balkanises as crude, primitive people trapped in permanent conflict) was confusion and passivity presented in article *Bosnian Serb Attacks On Bihac Intensify* published on 25. July 1995 in Baltimore Sun:

Dan Feserman (1995): *As United Nations forces dug in their artillery for a well-publicized show of force near Sarajevo yesterday, Serbian forces took their business elsewhere, attacking the distant Muslim enclave of Bihac with renewed vigor and no U.N. response.*

That development, plus further delays and uncertainty with the United Nation's Sarajevo operation, illustrated once again the surreal atmosphere enveloping the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.

The article describes confusing situation of UN peace forces deployed in Bosnia. While it describes the situation in an objective way it does not question the political background of the situation. Further on, it gives impression that the situation is confused and there is no easy solution. While for the lack of an effective solution could be partly blamed western leaders, the real and cardinal reason is in the region itself, where everyone is partially responsible. The problem is in the perspective: the report creates filing of confusion in otherwise explainable situation. Again, we are faced with the attempt of balanced reporting, where the author tries to expose how no side is innocent:

Dan Fesperman (1995): *Yesterday, the Bosnian Serb army stepped up its attacks near the northwest Muslim "safe area" of Bihac, in what one U.N. forces spokesman described as "the most considerable military action in Bosnia in several months."*

Carefully avoiding attacks on the U.N. "safe area" within Bihac, they captured 30 square miles of territory and sent thousands of civilians fleeing, according to U.N. officials.

[...]

One of the lesser delays, but nonetheless symbolic of the United Nations' constraints, occurred when a British unit of Royal Engineers were stopped by Bosnian men and women who were turning hay in the road with wooden pitchforks.

"They wouldn't let us pass," Lance Cpl. Ady Hogg said. "It's their country. They can do what they want."

Balkans as second Europe

The narrative also reveals some aspects of psychical economy of readers; it gives western readers a fantasy of satisfaction of their own position, of being cultural and socially advanced. This fantasy is thus based on the readers' desire of becoming the desire of other. By Žižek (2008: p.31) this is exactly the way Lacan defines the desire: "That is to say: *objet petit a*, as the object of fantasy, is that 'something in me more than myself on account of which I perceive myself as 'worthy of the Other's desire'." Hence, by seeing Bosnia as the land of war with no order, The West becomes an object of desire.

The article *10,000 Serb Peasants Flee Deadly Advance* (29 December 1992) also published in Guardian further establishes the fantasy of Balkans as place of "irrational tribal war". The beginning of the article is an example of 'bystanding' reporting, where an author describes recent changes on the front by being focused on military tactics:

The Guardian (1992): *The offensive comes almost eight months after Serb troops backed by the Yugoslav army stormed into eastern Bosnia, capturing a string of predominantly Muslim towns in a series of lightning raids. Out-gunned, the Muslims fled into the mountains and launched hit-and-run attacks on Serb positions.*

Recently, their ambushes have proved increasingly effective, leaving the Serbs controlling little more than towns captured at the outset of the war. Buoyed by their success, the Muslims have become more adventurous, subjecting Serb strongholds such as

Visegrad and Foca to almost daily mortar attacks and launching a series of raids on border villages.

Follows sensational report about local affairs and daily dramas of people:

The Guardian (1992): *Nedeljko Filipovic, who with thousands of Serb villagers has sought shelter in the Serbian border town of Ljubovija, described how he and his family escaped in a boat and returned later to bury the dead. "My house was close to the river bank, so we jumped into a dinghy and made for the other side," he said. "We came back briefly to find the streets littered with corpses. They had all been shot."*

Nedeljko's son was among the victims. He bled to death after his shoulder was blown away by a high-velocity bullet. "I dragged him through the cornfields to the cemetery in Bratunac," Nedeljko said.

Once again we are dealing with an article, which is framed by narrative of how there is no one in particular to be held responsible, thus the whole war is an irrational tribal confrontation. It is based on the metaphor of 'War as a massacre' and 'Balkans as irrational other.' The political aspect of one country's aggression is lost.

The article describes the events in Bosnia on one side with coldness of military terminology and on the other side on the level of single individual. This dispersed type of reporting exposes how fantasy works. The lack of direct narration is an excellent field, where fantasy unifies the bits into one image. Void establishes object of desire, and fantasy creates an image that tangles pieces and anchor them to that object. In our example the fantasy belongs to a reader that enjoys the fact that his social reality is as an object of desire of Bosnian.

Looking back: who to blame?

Article *Bosnia's search for Pax Americana* is a type of looking back reports, where author looks over passed events and interpreted them into unified whole:

The Guardian (1995): *Between the Bosnian bloodbath and the dream of a Pax Americana, between Sarajevo and Dayton, Ohio, lie 44 months of Europe's worst conflict since the Second World War.*

The first paragraph introduces the problem. It establishes the fantasy quite literally: Bosnians in the search of Pax America. It describes the situation in Bosnia as terrifying (*Bosnian bloodbath*) and the only wish of the Bosnian people is to be a part of the western civilization, where peace and prosperity has been successfully guaranteed by American economic and military power (*Pax Americana*). Hence the article has clear ideological message that advocates western civilization and American dominance.

The Guardian (1995): *Its ripples have spread far beyond the Balkans: exposing the hollowness of western Europe's ambitions to forge common foreign policies on the world stage generating the worst tensions within the NATO alliance for 40 years triggering renewed post-cold war hostilities between Russia and the West dealing a lethal blow to United Nations peacekeeping and perhaps showing, with President Bill Clinton's potential foreign policy triumph, that the sole superpower is the only power able to mediate and bully the warring parties towards a settlement.*

The second paragraph introduces some analytical value about political situation. It exposes the problem of schism among western alliance and reopening of cold war block tensions. It also exposes the single-sided political decision that eventually made the necessary intervention.

Balkan in the West

Bosnian war “ripples have spread far beyond the Balkans.” This statement is based on one of the most fundamental stereotypes about Balkans.; as Todorova exposes (2009), balkanisation is a signifier used by readers to describe the process of internal disintegration and rise of chaos. In the case of the article, the balkanisation is spreading from Bosnia war towards Western Europe. But the article goes further and actually reverses ‘Balkans as European other’ stereotype: it is not the Balkans that are only partially European, it is the whole Europe that is partially Balkans.

The Guardian (1995): *More important is the grievous suffering inflicted by a war fought in the name of blood and soil, but which was caused as much by ruthless, power-hungry politicians as by nationalism: an estimated 200,000 dead - most civilians - scores of thousands maimed, more than a million people uprooted and dispossessed, an estimated 11,000 killed in Sarajevo alone. Add to this the inestimable cultural and economic losses, and the traumatising of an entire society.*

Further on the article switches to sensational reporting, in the sense of the description of horror that does not have any actual insightful value. It again describes Balkans as a land of the eternal war and irrationality and hence direct opposition of The West. The metaphor that unifies the whole report is again ‘war as a massacre’. In this case, however, the article was written when the war was already coming to its end. Hence it represents itself as historiography, by summering the fact of past events. This type of explaining the history was heavily criticized by Foucault in his article *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (1977). Foucault criticizes in it the linear understanding of history. History is not an evolution towards unified goal – this perspective is ideological, as it synchronies the past for the needs of the present. Foucault instead proposes geological understanding of history, where history is a set of discontinued, nonlinear historical periods that are divided by historical breaks. In the case of the Bosnian War, this braking moment was, by Žižek (2012: p.23), François Mitterrand visit in Sarajevo:

»Until Mitterrand's visit, the predominant perception of the Bosnian conflict was still a political one: in dealing with Serb aggression, the key problem was the aggression of ex-Yugoslavia against an independent state; after Mitterrand left, the accent shifted towards a humanitarian aspect - down there, a savage tribal war is going on, and the only thing the civilized West can do is to exert its influence to assuage the inflamed passions and help the innocent victims with food and medicine.«

War as confrontation of med generals

The last analyzed article, *Conflict In The Balkans: The Bosnian Serbs; Karadzic's Bosnian War: Myth Becomes Madness* (1995), written by Roger Cohen is a report focused on single

person, Radovan Karadžić, the President of self proclaimed *Republika Srpska*. It describes his general characteristics, his role in war, and more subtle characteristics of his appearance and personality. He is divided between being psychiatrist and poet on the one side, and a mad warrior on the other, that does not spare means to deal with Bosnians:

Cohen (1995): *Dr. Karadzic, who is 50 years old, confronted the crisis with typical bravado. He promised "a butcher's shop" if Western governments tried to rescue the United Nations hostages and declared today that "the sooner American planes get out of our skies, the less they will be shot down.*

A professional psychiatrist from Montenegro who has a reputation as an inveterate gambler and an indifferent poet, Dr. Karadzic loves to talk tough in pursuit of his vision of turning much of what is now Bosnia into an ethnically pure Serbian state. But his penchant for purple prose does not exclude sober political calculation.

The article presents the war through the metaphor of 'War of mad generals.' It reduces the reporting on conflict to the level of a single master-mind:

Cohen (1995): *Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, noted this week that the Roman Emperor Caligula once appointed his horse as a senator. "That horse," Dr. Karadzic said, "was more of a senator than Bosnia is a state."*

This was a graphic way of making a point that Dr. Karadzic has been determined to prove for more than three years -- that Bosnia does not really exist. In order to prove it, the Bosnian Serbs have cajoled and killed, negotiated and shelled, manipulated and massacred. This week, they took hundreds of United Nations peacekeepers hostage and shot down an American jet fighter.

While the narrator of the text is describing a mad man, it simultaneously exposes the structure of fantasy that stands behind his description. We are dealing with an *impossible gaze*² of neurotic reader, a gaze over impossible situation in which pleasure is revealed. In this case, the reader's *objet petit a* (object of desire) is not in suffering of the local population (imagining itself being the desire of Bosnians), but instead he finds its own enjoyment kidnapped by this specific man:

Žižek (2008: p.44): *That is to say: a neurotic has made the sacrifice of jouissance [enjoyment](which is why she is not a psychotic), which enables her to enter the symbolic order, but she is obsessed with the notion that the sacrificed jouissance, the jouissance taken from her, is stored somewhere in the Other who is profiting from it 'illegitimately', enjoying in her place.*

In the article the neurotic stand is a stand of reader, who points its finger at Karadžić, as the one that stole his enjoyment (and in more general it points at Balkans, as the land of forbidden enjoyments), which has to be removed. An interesting aspect of this psychical structure is the source of envy; what the neurotic stand of the article exposes is a symptom of The West, a civilization built on ideology of repressed violence, in the sense of not being used but still present as potential. Finally, what is the demand

² look Žižek, 2008.

of west towards Karadžić? Symbolic castration, introduction of the law and repression of the enjoyment.

Conclusion

Through the paper I sought to exposed metaphors in the reports about the Bosnian War and how they determine reader's way of understanding the war. I also look for fantasies that stage the reader's position towards the war. I relay on theory of discourse developed by Foucault and Žižek' interpretation of Lacanian psychoanalysis. I exposed how disperse reporting, focused on the level of an individual stages a fantasy about the Bosnian War. I sought to defend the thesis that reporting from Bosnia had stereotypical inclinations, that did not help explaining the conflict, but actually make it more vague, and established the position of passivity of the reader.

Firstly I expose the combination of the metaphor 'war as massacre' and two contradictory fantasies: "Serbs as demonized aggressors" and "war in Bosnia as irrational tribal war". The first fantasy stages an active position of reader, while the other passive. It creates an ideology of neutrality, to expose the war not as political, aggression of one state over the other, but as an irrational war, that is based on the barbaric culture of Balkan people.

Secondly I expose the combination of metaphor and fantasy of The West as a wonderland, an object of desire of Balkans. These combinations are rooted in traditional stereotypes of Balkans as lesser Europe. Further on, I draw attention to the fact that stereotype can have a reverse effect, by exposing the Balkans in the west.

Thirdly I look at the metaphor of "war as confrontation of med generals" and neurotic position of readers towards Balkans, that is based on fantasy of Balkans as a land of forbidden pleasures, which has to be repressed by readers. This combination is partially supplementing previous combination by revealing Balkans' qualities, which The West does not have. Media reporting pictures Balkan people as irrational and emotional. This becomes the envy of The West, as the forbidden enjoyment, that had to be repressed by readers. The fantasy reveals the latent violence that is included in western ideology.

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