

When Criticism Goes to War

Njegoš, Andrić and Their Detractors

ZORAN MILUTINOVIĆ

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Introduction

Amongst the plethora of explanations offered in the 1990s for the causes which led to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–5), one stood out for its attractive simplicity and daring: Michael A. Sells's discovery of the ideology of Christoslavism in his book, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (1996). Christoslavism is 'the premise that Slavs are by essence Christian and that conversion to another religion is a betrayal of the people and race' and it was 'critical to the genocidal ideology being developed in 1989' (Sells 1996: 51). Serb nationalists created a mythology which presented Slav Muslims as Christ killers (ibid.: 31, 42) and they had to be exterminated as traitors to the race. Although Bosniaks, as Serbs and Croats, are Slavs, Serb nationalists referred to them as 'Turks' (ibid.: 41), thus changing their racial identity (ibid.: 41, 45). This genocidal ideology is presented in the works of two significant Serbian writers: Petar Petrović Njegoš (1813–51) and Ivo Andrić (1892–1975). Njegoš's drama, *Gorski vijenac* (The Mountain Wreath, 1847), 'portrays and glorifies the Christmas Eve extermination of Slavic Muslims in early eighteenth-century Montenegro', writes Sells (1996: 41). The characters in this play refer to Slav Muslims as 'Turkifiers' (*poturice*) or as 'Turks', and this 'crystalises the view that by converting from Christianity to Islam, the Muslims had changed their racial identity and joined the race of Turks who killed the Christ-Prince Lazar' in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 (ibid.). In the 1992–5 Bosnian war, the Serb nationalists also referred to Bosnian Slavic Muslims as Turks, Sells reminds us (ibid.). In *The Mountain Wreath*, Muslims have only two choices: to be baptized or be killed (ibid.: 42). The drama advocates the 'necessity to purify the Serb nation of the pollution of non-Christians' (ibid.), and it ends with the extermination of the Slavic Muslims (ibid.: 43).

In the twentieth century, this genocidal ideology was advocated by Ivo Andrić, maintains Sells. 'Even more explicitly than Njegoš, Andrić presents religious conversion to Islam as conversion to the Turkic race' (ibid.: 45), and

in his PhD dissertation, this Nobel Prize winner put forward ‘a particular ideology of conversion held by Christian nationalists in the Balkans’, that ‘a Slav who converted from Christianity to Islam must have done so out of greed or cowardice’ (ibid.: 46–7). This is not the only instance of Andrić’s alleged promotion of this genocidal ideology. In his famous novel *Na Drini ćuprija* (The Bridge over the Drina, 1945), Andrić related the legend that a fairy would not allow for the famous bridge, commissioned by the vizier Mehmed-pasha Sokolović, to be built until two Christian babies were walled up in it. Thus, underlines Sells, the ‘essentially Christian race of Slavs is trapped within the monumental structures of an alien religion’ (ibid.: 47). Moreover, Andrić misrepresented the Ottoman practice known as *devşirme*: Christian boys were taken from their parents, brought to Istanbul, forcibly converted to Islam and raised to be janissaries – Ottoman elite military units – with the brightest among them progressing to the upper echelons of the Ottoman state hierarchy – as indeed was the case with Mehmed-pasha Sokolović, who rose to the post of grand vizier. Instead, Serbian nationalists portrayed this opening up of the boys’ life prospects as ‘child tribute’ or ‘blood tribute’, notes Sells (ibid.: 47). The most compelling evidence of Andrić’s promotion of this genocidal ideology is the notorious description of impalement in *The Bridge over the Drina*: a Christian man who sabotaged the construction of the bridge was caught and publicly impaled. Andrić included this scene in his novel as a ‘symbol of Turkish and Muslim depravity, despite the fact that the punishment of impalement was also practiced in Christian Austria and elsewhere in Europe at the time’, concludes Sells, and claims that ‘Serb nationalist leaders in Bosnia evoked the Ottoman use of impalement in justifying the attacks on Bosnian Muslims’ (ibid.: 49), even though ‘some supporters of the Republika Srpska’, the Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, celebrate as their hero the fifteenth-century Prince Vlad of Moldavia (ibid.: 179), better known as Vlad the Impaler – or even better known as Count Dracula – for his fondness for having Turks impaled. Even though Sells warns the reader that this ‘brief reading of Njegoš and Andrić cannot do justice to the range of their work’ (ibid.: 179), his conclusion is powerful and clear: the genocidal ideology of Christoslavism is deeply ingrained in Serbian culture and advocated by their most celebrated writers.

This idea, however, is yet to find followers amongst scholars who study the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Slav nationalism and Bosnian and Serbian culture. Not only because the connection between Prince Lazar as

Christ in the epic oral poetry, on the one hand, and his Ottoman (Turkish) enemies as Bosnian Muslims, on the other, is too speculative to be fully convincing – there is no evidence that Serbs, nationalist or not, ever referred to Bosnian Muslims as ‘Christ killers’, and Sells does not corroborate his claim with any such instance – but mainly because the chief cornerstone of the whole theory rests on insufficient familiarity with the issues discussed and on a simple language misunderstanding. Sells is a specialist in Quranic studies, Sufism and Arabic love poetry. South Slav specialists, however, know that although Serbs and Croats did refer to Bosnian Muslims as ‘Turks’, this was also how Bosnian Muslims referred to themselves until the early twentieth century. In his history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Safvet-bey Bašagić (1870–1934), the father of Bosniak nationalism, refers to his people as *Bošnjaci*, *muslomani*, *muhamedanci* and *Turci* (Bosniaks, Muslims, Mohammedans and Turks). When, in the story ‘Pogibija i osveta Smail-age Čengića’ (Smail-aga’s Death and Revenge) by Osman Nuri Hadžić (1869–1937) and Ivan Milićević (1869–1950) – who published their jointly written fiction under the pseudonym Osman Aziz – the Bosniak camp is attacked by Montenegrins, one of the Bosniak characters shouts, ‘Whoever is a Turk, fight!’ (Tutnjević 2005: 42). In their book, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, Pauline Irby (1833–1911) and Georgina Mackenzie (1833–74) witness the following event in 1871: ‘A dervish, named Hadji Loya, met on the road near the town of Sarajevo a Pravoslav [Orthodox] priest on a horseback. He ordered him to dismount, telling him: “Bosnia is still a Mohammedan country; do you not see that a Turk is passing? Dismount instantly!”’ (Irby and Mackenzie 1877: 21). Indeed, there are no Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks in their book, only the Orthodox, Catholics and Turks. In his book *Orijent na Zapadu* (The Orient in the West, 1936), Mustafa Mulalić writes that in the *maktab* – an Islamic elementary school – he attended in the first decade of the twentieth century, he had to learn by heart the following formula as the answer to the question ‘who are you’: ‘I am a Turk, a *mumin* [believer], a Muslim, thank God’ (Mulalić 1936: 94). The Ottoman Empire did not divide its denizens into nations, but into confession-based millets: historians and social scientists do not doubt that ‘Turks’ was used to refer to all Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Vucinich 1995: 6; Filandra 2012: 164; Haverić 2016: 176–7), as well as in other parts of the Ottoman state (Deringil 2012: 203). One can learn this from Andrić’s novels as well: in both *Travnička hronika* (Bosnian Chronicle, 1945) and *The Bridge over the Drina*, one finds the author’s explanation that the terms ‘Turk’ and ‘Turkish’

are not used as ethnic names, but as ‘incorrect, but at the time ubiquitous designations’ (Andrić 1967a: 461, 1967b: 353). That ‘Turk’ simply meant ‘of Turkish faith’ and was used by Bosnian Muslims themselves is also confirmed by Bosniak nationalists who are otherwise hostile to Andrić (Isaković 1990: 7; Rizvić 1995: 80; Imamović 2007: 13–14), although, as we shall see later, not all of them drew logical conclusions from this fact. Calling Bosnian Muslims ‘Turks’ did not change their ‘racial identity’, as Sells maintains. It simply designated their religion. The same applies to the use of *poturica* (Turkifier), and *poturčiti* (Turkify) in *The Mountain Wreath*: in all dictionaries one finds ‘convert to Islam’ for the former, and ‘to turn Muslim’ for the latter. Sells’s conclusion that the usage of these two words ‘crystalises the view that by converting to Islam from Christianity, the Muslims had changed their racial identity and joined the race of Turks who killed the Christ-Prince Lazar’ is an error.

To say that Sells’s analysis of *The Mountain Wreath* does not do justice to it is to put it mildly: it leaves an impression of simplifying a very complex play. To start with, this play does not glorify the extermination of Slavic Muslims, nor advocates the necessity to purify the Serb nation. It *dramatizes* a political – not religious – conflict in eighteenth-century Montenegro: to defend the people by fighting a part of it. As soon as the reader sees in it that Christian Montenegrin characters address Muslim Montenegrin characters in this play as ‘brothers’, Sells’s claim that by converting to Islam the latter, either for Njegoš or for the characters in his play, have ‘changed their racial identity’ becomes unsustainable. To do it justice, we will look closer into this play in the first chapter, where it will become obvious that *The Mountain Wreath* is, far from being exceptional, a rather typical literary representation of a complex historical position of all South Slavs – including Bosnian Muslims. As for Ivo Andrić’s understanding of the reasons for conversion to Islam, historians in both Andrić’s time and in our own persist in believing that social, economic and political oppression of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire strongly encouraged conversions (Donia and Fine 1994: 44; Todorova 2009: 49; Redžić 2005: 35; Barkey 2008: 125; Deringil 2012: 247; Sundhausen 2014: 72–3). More specialized works, based on studying the Ottoman archives, demonstrate that conversion to Islam not only meant the improvement of one’s social position, lower taxes, removal of religious and cultural limitations, and new possibilities for social recategorization, but that it also immediately brought *money* to converts (Radushev 2010: 371). This ‘particular ideology of conversion held by Christian nationalists in the Balkans’, as Sells brands it, is commonplace in Ottoman and Balkan studies.

Equally universally accepted is the interpretation of Andrić's inclusion of several legends surrounding the building of the bridge over the Drina in the novel's first chapter: that a fairy would not allow the construction to progress unless two twins are sacrificed, or that an Arab – a Muslim, presumably – lived in a cell within the central pier. However, if one wants to invest some time in reading *The Bridge over the Drina*, one will see that the narrator is thus reporting the beliefs of Višegrad children, who grew up playing around the bridge. The narrator refers to these stories as 'legends and similar wonders' (Andrić 1994: 66), and also explains their roots: for the former, it is Ilinka, 'a poor stuttering half-witted girl', a servant from a nearby village, who got pregnant no one knew by whom, gave birth to stillborn twins and, three days after the village women buried her babies, came down to Višegrad to look for them (ibid.: 35–6). For the latter, a huge block of stone fell on the architect Antonio's assistant, a young Arab, and crushed him in such manner that the lower part of his body remained between the blocks – as if built into the bridge (ibid.: 63). One could modify Sells's claim that, for Andrić, the 'essentially Christian race of Slavs is trapped within the monumental structures of an alien religion' by adding that the 'Muslim race of Arabs' is also trapped within the structure, but as literary interpretation it would be as meaningless as the claim it modifies. These legends, explained and rationalized, are not included in the novel to pit Christians against Muslims, but to exemplify the process of memorialization: 'The common people remember and tell of what they are able to grasp and what they are able to transform into legend' (ibid.: 27).

One would prefer to leave the reader to decide if Andrić really misrepresented the Ottoman practice of *devşirme*: was it a premodern form of supporting the young with scholarships, or what the UN Convention on Genocide describes as 'forcibly transferring children of a group to another group'? Of Bosnian Serbs many things were said in the previous thirty years, but no one ever claimed that Count Dracula was their hero, and it would be very helpful if we could be given some evidence for this claim. As for impalement as a form of punishment, Sells is certainly right that it was also practised elsewhere in Europe, but does that mean one must not mention it in a historical novel set in the Ottoman Empire, which also practised impalement until the nineteenth century?¹ Sells is very confident and clear on this point: Andrić included the scene of impalement 'as a

¹ Impalement was practised in Bosnia and Herzegovina until the very end of Ottoman rule: foreign travellers recorded the last instances in 1876 (Reid 2000: 441–2).

symbol of Turkish and Muslim depravity'. Andrić wanted to present Turks and Muslims in a bad light. He, as much as Njegoš, used literature as an ideological, nationalist weapon.

This brings us to the theme of the book you are reading. Where does this come from, one wonders? How does it happen that an American specialist of Quranic studies, Sufism and Arab love poetry, sets aside some time for a laborious and time-consuming task of reading Serbian literature, and filters out two authors as the proponents of the Christoslavic ideology, one of whom glorifies extermination of Muslims, and the other who writes novels which give the Ottoman Empire, Turks and Muslims an undeservedly bad reputation? This is very unlikely, and my claim will be that in this analysis of Christoslavic ideology, Sells is actually following a well-established, deeply rooted and widely popular Bosniak nationalist discourse on Ivo Andrić and, to a lesser extent, Petar Petrović Njegoš. Ivo Andrić, this discourse claims, created and expounded in his works a nationalist ideology which instigated, or at least justified, the genocide of Bosnian Muslims, and in this regard he was one of Njegoš's followers. As, until very recently, the spread of this discourse was limited to the area where speakers of Andrić's language live, very little has been known about it outside this area.² Created in the 1960s, during the wave of Bosnian Muslims/Bosniak nationalism which accompanied their inclusion in the socialist Yugoslavia's catalogue of nations, this discourse was intensified in the nationalist atmosphere in the late 1980s and given grotesque proportions during and after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992–5. In the post-war period, this discourse became a well-established vehicle for putting forward the main elements of Bosniak nationalist ideology. As some of Andrić's best-known works were set in Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina, discussing them gives the proponents of this nationalist discourse a good opportunity to discuss the Ottoman state, and to put forward a revisionist history of the empire which disappeared from the map at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Andrić himself was an agnostic, and a lifelong political and cultural Yugoslav, who at the end of his life even joined the Alliance of Communists in Yugoslavia – the official name of the communist party – discussing his life and career gives them an opportunity to put forward a revisionist history of Yugoslavia, in which, allegedly, Bosnian Muslims were

² There are only three mentions of this discourse in the English language scholarship: Rakić (2000); Hawkesworth (2002) and Hun (2011).

disenfranchised, and the Islamist current of this discourse gains an opportunity to fight agnosticism and atheism.³ We will see that this discourse is not really about Andrić's works, not only because its propagators are not – with one notable exception – literary critics and scholars, but politicians from Alija Izetbegović's *Stranka demokratske akcije* (Party of Democratic Action, PDA), imams and officials of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also officials of the Bosniak cultural organization *Preporod* (Rebirth). It is a political discourse, which uses Ivo Andrić's works and career only as a springboard. What it claims may have some clout in the political arena; as literary criticism and scholarship it is naïve and dilettantish, but also wrong and harmful. This is a criticism which *goes to war*.

We will start by addressing the claim – not only made by Michael A. Sells – that Njegoš's play *The Mountain Wreath* glorified the extermination of Muslims in Montenegro: we shall see that neither was there such an event, nor that the author glorified it. We will read *The Mountain Wreath* against the background of historical events in which it came into being, and in the context of its contemporaries – Croatian, Slovene and Bosniak Romantic poems and plays, similar in style, literary ideology and topics – and show that far from being exceptional, and exceptionally evil, Njegoš's play is rather typical of its own time and place. The historical context in which South Slavs developed their national consciousness, and their individual nationalisms, imposed the plot structure in which *we* are not fighting an imperialist Other, the Ottoman state, Habsburg Empire or Venice, but *one of us* who serves that Other. That fight takes the garb of religious conflict and is filled with religious symbolism, but this only superficially covers the reality of an eminently political struggle for hegemony or liberation – depending on one's bias and the side one takes in it. Njegoš saw this as *tragic*, dramatized this conflict in the tragedy *The Mountain Wreath*, and Andrić followed suit by calling him 'a tragic hero' (Andrić 1976).

³ The list of Bosniak nationalists' complaints against secular Yugoslavia is very long. For the sake of illustration, while the manuscript of this book was being completed one of the vocal proponents of this discourse on Ivo Andrić, imam of the King Fahd mosque in Sarajevo and the former head of the hajj office of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nezim Halilović Muderis, claimed that in socialist Yugoslavia Muslims did not have the privilege of dental services: dentists, who were all Serbs, extracted their healthy teeth, and only Bosnian Muslims from communist families could expect dental treatment (L.S. 2023). In reality, however, Yugoslavia was the only European country with a state-financed Islamic theological faculty, in which between 1955 and 1970 no less than 620 mosques were built (Filandra 2012: 121) – almost one mosque every week in this fifteen-year period – and in which Bosniaks served as prime ministers and chairmen of the Yugoslav Presidium.

In the second chapter, we will reconstruct the genesis of the Bosniak nationalist discourse on Ivo Andrić by reviewing its three founding gestures: Šukrija Kurtović's long essay on Andrić's novels, Adil Zulfikarpašić's promotion of it and Muhamed Filipović's essay on the 'Bosnian spirit'. We will demonstrate that none of the three authors managed to supply convincing evidence, either biographical or textual, for the string of accusations: that Andrić presented Bosnian Muslims in a negative light; that he equated them with 'Turks'; that including negative characters in a novel must mean that the author considers the ethnic groups these characters come from to be negative as well; that all characters in fiction must be presented following the image their ethnic or national community has of itself; that Andrić hated all Muslims and wrote stories and novels in order to offend them; that he misrepresented the Ottoman state, which was a tolerant 'community of nations'; that he misrepresented the process of Islamization; that in his works one clearly recognizes his Christian bias and siding with Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire's arch-enemy; that he changed his ethnic identity out of greed and careerism; that he had no morals; that he was politically aligned with Adolf Hitler, Milan Nedić (the head of the German-appointed administration in Serbia during the Second World War) and Dragoljub Draža Mihailović, the leader of *Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini* (Yugoslav Army in Homeland) the royalist and nationalist military formation during the same war; that he served Tito's communist dictatorship, which awarded him the Nobel Prize for literature; that while Serbs were killing Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Second World War, he wrote his novels in order to justify those killings; that he undermined the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by maintaining that its population is composed of Muslims, Croats and Serbs, while it would be correct to say only that they are all Bosnians.

We shall further examine Muhsin Rizvić's arguments from his book *Bosanski muslimani u Andrićevom svijetu* (Bosnian Muslims in Andrić's World, 1995). Rizvić was a literary historian, and this book was to be a psychoanalytical interpretation of Andrić's fiction which would supply proper evidence for all accusations against this writer formerly raised by politicians, imams and nationalist ideologists. We will see, however, that Rizvić's familiarity with psychoanalysis was insufficient for this task and that while writing this book he did not employ the best parts of his theoretical and critical knowledge. His interpretations leave the impression of being arbitrary: to Andrić's sentences he liberally assigns meanings which are quite obviously not there, picks up words

and rearranges them in such a manner that they begin to mean something else, defies logic and contradicts himself. However, he also finds in Andrić's works characters, plots and meanings which overturn the main thesis of this Bosniak nationalist discourse – that Andrić hated and misrepresented Bosniaks and Islam – although this never prompts him to reconsider this thesis. The most significant parts of this book are those in which Rizvić the literary historian takes a back seat, and Rizvić the member of the Young Muslim group, the network of Islamists created before the Second World War, speaks up. Those parts reveal the political background of this nationalist discourse with clarity rarely achieved in other authors: Rizvić sees Andrić as a representative of the Christian, infidel world, which tore Bosnia and Herzegovina out of 'the house of Islam', the Ottoman state, where it rightly belonged, and in 1878 included it in a Christian empire, Austria-Hungary, and later in Yugoslavia. That Andrić was a member of the Young Bosnia movement and an opponent of Austria-Hungary's colonial rule in Bosnia seems to be conveniently forgotten in this argument. Rizvić goes even further and explicitly admits that Andrić, in his historical novels, represented a 'real historical and social fracture in the Bosniaks': that between 'their Islamic-Oriental being', traditional and traditionalist religion-based identity, and a possible new one, forged in a secular and modernizing post-1878 context (Rizvić 1995: 240). Thus, Rizvić implicitly overturned the thesis of Andrić's alleged historical misrepresentations, and also revealed the fissure in the 'Bosniak being', obvious in the late 1980s and 1990s, when this discourse on Andrić underwent rapid and extensive development, and still visible to this day: the fissure between one traditionalist, Islamic and Islamist Bosniak identity, and another which is modern, secular and ethnic. This fissure also explains why not all Bosniak readers subscribe to the theses and arguments we examine in this book. While the advocates of the former see in Andrić a symbol of the historical forces which were destroying their world – epitomized in the Ottoman state, the Islamic Empire based on sharia law which granted Muslims domination over non-Muslims – the supporters of the latter have no objections to Andrić's representation of the historical world.

Building on this discussion, it is possible to describe this Bosniak nationalist discourse on Andrić as *ressentiment* criticism. Following in Rizvić's steps, Esad Duraković made explicit what in Rizvić's book was only implicit. Andrić's 'false' representation of history, claims Duraković, inspires in Bosniak readers 'the feeling of shame for their history and mentality, and the feeling of a complete

cultural-civilizational inadequacy' (Duraković 1997: 117). Andrić is, for Duraković, a representative of the Western world which 'conquers and subdues' the Islamic world, and of its 'cultural and civilizational hegemony' (ibid.: 111–12). Thus, this *ressentiment* criticism of Ivo Andrić becomes a part of the *ressentiment* felt in some sections of the Islamic world, which is a reaction to the humiliation inflicted by the West's hegemony (Ferro 2010: 120).

We will conclude our overview of this discourse with a reading of Rusmir Mahmutćehajić's book *Andrićevstvo. Protiv etike sećanja* (Andrićism. Against the Ethics of Memory, 2015), which is so far the most substantial contribution to this Bosniak nationalist discourse on Ivo Andrić. Mahmutćehajić not only incorporates all claims made and positions taken in this discourse since the 1960s, but raises its main arguments to a new level by discovering a murderous ideology which inspired a several-centuries-long genocide of Muslims in Europe, and as this ideology found its best expression in Ivo Andrić's works, it deserved to be named after him: *Andrićism*. We will analyse the elements which constitute Mahmutćehajić's own political and ideological position – an amalgam of Islamism, René Guénon's anti-modernism, Eric Voegelin's Austro-fascism and Bosniak nationalism – and point out the rhetorical strategies Mahmutćehajić uses to suggest that Ivo Andrić was a Nazi.

We will also address the claims regarding Andrić's ethical profile, his diplomatic activities and his single properly historical work, the posthumously published PhD thesis on the development of intellectual life in Bosnia and Herzegovina under Ottoman rule. We will demonstrate that the claims from his dissertation which his Bosniak critics find most contentious can easily be identified in the works of most respected American, Turkish and Bosniak historians, and put into proper historical context the notorious *aide-mémoire* on the Albanian question. Lastly, we will briefly recapitulate Andrić's biography to demonstrate that, contrary to the accusations of careerism, moral deficiency and opportunism raised against him, his ethical choices, national identification and politics were consistent and inspired by his lifelong adherence to Yugoslav ideology.

In the final chapter, we will address the question of evil in Andrić's fiction and show that his representation of it is very far from the didactic, simplistic and fable-like approach characteristic of both poor literature and *moralizing* criticism, which naturally provokes opposition from the latter's supporters. We will conclude by arguing that the world represented in Andrić's prose is not, as is sometimes claimed, the world of evil, but a world whose ethical horizon reflects the entire experience of human life, similar to that depicted in Goya's paintings.

Sword, Priest and Conversion

The most important works of three of the four writers examined in this chapter are linked by the life, and especially the death, of Smail-aga Čengić, a minor Ottoman dignitary who governed the northern parts of present-day Montenegro. Like many others of his stature and position, it was quite unlikely that he would leave a lasting mark on the history of the South Slavs. Čengić entered the literary stage in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, when the region of Grahovo in Montenegro refused to pay tribute to the vizier of Herzegovina, Ali-pasha Rizvanbegović. This meant that Grahovo no longer considered itself part of Herzegovina and the Ottoman state, and decided to join neighbouring Montenegro, the confederation of Christian clans which did not recognize the authority of the sultan and boasted of being the only unconquered part of the Balkans. Ali-pasha had to save both his reputation and his income: in August 1836 he attacked the town of Grahovo, razed it to the ground, took many captives and restored his power over the region.¹ Among the casualties of the battle were Joko Petrović, the younger brother of the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš, and eight other members of the Petrović family, whom Njegoš had sent to help defend Grahovo. The real victor of the battle, however, was not Ali-pasha, but one of his officers: Smail-aga Čengić. The martial skills he displayed in this battle brought him such great fame that the Porte quickly promoted him to pasha and extended his fiefdom to include half of present-day Montenegro. Thus, from a subordinate officer he had become a dangerous regional rival to vizier Ali-pasha. Njegoš could not forget the death of his brother and cousins – by having their severed heads put on display Čengić only added insult to injury – and Ali-pasha had many reasons to fear the ambitious Čengić. What followed cannot be confirmed with any certainty, although many historians take it for granted that Njegoš and Ali-pasha worked

¹ For largely similar accounts of the battle of Grahovo and its aftermath, see Ćurić (1937) and Roberts (2007).

together to bring about his downfall.² There were also other local leaders of various levels of prominence who had their own interests in Smail-aga's removal: one of them was Novica Cerović, the chieftain of the Drobnjaci, a clan that lived in the border region between Montenegro and Herzegovina, which was under Smail-aga's jurisdiction. Four years after the battle of Grahovo, Cerović sent a letter to Smail-aga stating that his clan refused to pay tribute unless he came to collect it personally. This was a challenge, and Smail-aga responded to it as he was expected to. He came with his troops and took the most prominent men hostage. During the night, Cerović's people, aided by Montenegrins sent by Njegoš to help them, attacked Smail-aga's camp and killed him. His severed head was sent to Njegoš, thus leaving no room for doubt as to the identity of the co-conspirator. Whether he had had a part in the plot or not, vizier Ali-pasha had to be seen taking revenge. He sent a punitive expedition of some 20,000 troops against Montenegro, who burnt many villages to the ground, killed everyone they came across and brought back 170 severed heads to decorate Smail-aga's grave (Bašagić 1900: 157; Barac 1945: 138).

The last century of the decaying Ottoman Empire abounded in bloody events of this kind, yet it seems that no other comparable clashes and atrocities were met with such immediate and loud publicity. Newspapers across Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia and Serbia published extensive reports about the event, with *Narodne novine*, the newspaper of the Illyrian movement, running seven articles about it in 1840.³ In the Ottoman parts of the Balkans no less than forty oral epic poems circulated among both Christians and Muslims, describing the event with different emphases. One of them was published as early as 1845 in *Ljubitelj prosvešćenja* (Admirer of Enlightenment), a Serb journal in Dalmatia. It might have been read by Ivan Mažuranić (1814–90), a young lawyer in the Croatian town of Karlovac, located near the Bosnian border. What is certain, however, is that Mažuranić heard a first-hand report about the event from a Montenegrin who visited Karlovac shortly after Smail-aga's death. The visitor sparked great interest in Karlovac's Reading Room. Although very close geographically, for Slavs living in the Habsburg Empire, Bosnia was *terra incognita*. Ivan Mažuranić's brother, Matija, was one of the few travellers able to go and spend a period of time in Bosnia. On his return he published an anonymous travelogue, *Pogled*

² Only Bašagić cautiously mentioned that the sole source of this claim had been a widespread rumour (Bašagić 1900: 156).

³ The Illyrian movement was a cultural and political movement which, in the first half of the nineteenth century, advocated ethnic and cultural unity of all South Slavs, with the prospect of eventually achieving a nation state for all 'Illyrians' (Slavs in the Balkans).

u Bosnu (A Glance into Ottoman Bosnia, 1842). One part of it, in which the collection of tribute was described, for some reason remained unpublished and was only later found among Ivan Mažuranić's manuscripts. This part of Matija's travelogue, and the oral epic about Smail-aga's death offered Ivan Mažuranić material for his poem *Smrt Smail-age Čengića* (Smail-aga Čengić's Death), written in 1845 and published in 1846. Mažuranić had already acquired significant writing experience prior to writing the poem. When the Baroque epos, *Osman*, by the Ragusan Ivan Gundulić was finally printed in 1842, having been copied and circulated as a manuscript for a long period of time, Mažuranić was chosen to write the two missing chapters. Gundulić's epos is the *Gerusalemme liberata* of South Slav literature, which tells the story of the war between Poles and Turks in 1620–1 and the fate of Sultan Osman, killed during a janissary uprising in 1622. The epos is imbued with Slav-consciousness and the expectation that Polish arms would soon liberate all Slavs from under the rule of Islam. This conviction was expressed in a typical Baroque manner that the rule had lasted too long for 'higher justice' to tolerate the 'tyranny of the infidels' in Europe.⁴ Mažuranić occasionally published shorter works in Ljudevit Gaj's journal, *Danica*, and was allegedly the first author of Croatian literature to be offered royalties for his published work. He refused to accept any such fees, claiming that writing patriotic poetry was his way of serving the fatherland. This attitude defined the limits of his literary career. Later on, he would stop writing altogether and would serve his fatherland only as a state official. During the events of 1848 Mažuranić was close to Jelačić, the *ban* (governor) of Croatia, and wrote all his proclamations and speeches, but after the end of this tumultuous year, he continued to advance his career as a civil servant and politician. He became state prosecutor and took part in some very unpopular trials. Perceived in Vienna as loyal to the court, Mažuranić was appointed chancellor for Croatia, and subsequently became president of the Croatian Diet, and eventually became *ban* of Croatia – the highest post available to a Croat in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

During the six and a half years that Ivan Mažuranić spent in office, the modernization of Croatia, which had begun in the period of national revival, was finally accomplished. During his rule Mažuranić created the modern state in Croatia. (...) Mažuranić fundamentally reorganized the state apparatus,

⁴ One of the rare manuscripts of *Osman* was, in 1841, given by Njegoš to Antun Mažuranić, Ivan's elder brother, as a gift. For a member of the Illyrian movement a more appropriate present could not have been found, claims Ivo Frangeš (1995: 93).

reorganized the judiciary (...), introduced a new organization of higher and, even more importantly, of secondary education.

(Horvat 1936: 179–80)

However, by not writing while in office he demonstrated that literature and political service were for him, and not only for him, mutually interchangeable activities in serving the fatherland.

The historical event itself was significantly and freely transformed in Mažuranić's poem. Historians testify that the real Smail-aga was far from the demonic despot depicted by Mažuranić. The author clearly wished to represent the conflict between Christians and Muslims in general, and to conclude his work with a vision of the final triumph of the former. The first canto of the poem shows the arrogant tyrant having his Christian prisoners killed. They die silently – 'but to die / For the holy Christian faith / Is not hard for those who fight for it' – which only adds to Smail-aga's anger (Mažuranić 1969: verses 31–33). Losing his temper, he has an old Turk, Durak, killed for advising him to not tempt Fate by shedding blood. In the second canto Durak's son, Novica, flees to Montenegro seeking revenge. The third canto describes a group of Montenegrins, Novica amongst them, marching towards Bosnia. They come upon a shepherd-priest, who appears out of nowhere to justify their mission. This is the centrepiece of Mažuranić's poem – without it the poem would be a simple revenge story about a tyrant. The fourth canto shows Smail-aga and his people collecting tribute. The poor Christians have nothing to give, and to his demands 'Tribute, tribute, rayah!' (verse 644) they answer with: 'Some bread, master, it's so long since we've seen bread' (verses 645–66). This is the part of the poem in which Mažuranić has used his brother's eyewitness description of the torturing of Christians. Smail-aga does not believe that they have no money and has them tortured. He is a 'good warrior', Mažuranić says, if only he were a 'good man'. The epic time of heroic ethics is over: being a good warrior is no longer enough. Although Mažuranić's poem has oral epic poetry as its background, it clearly indicates that the time of heroism is over. This is Mažuranić's second legitimization of revenge. Educated readers would have seen Mažuranić's third legitimization in the fourth canto: a reader familiar with Homer hears an echo of the first verse of the *Iliad* 'O Goddess! Sing the wrath of Peleus's son'. By torturing the helpless Christians, Smail-aga, a good warrior, oversteps the limit that even heroes must respect, and thus deserves punishment. In his inhuman anger he commits *húbris*. Mažuranić explicitly indicates this link between Smail-aga and Achilles, by letting the Aga torture the Christians in the same way that Achilles mutilates

Hector's dead body under the walls of Troy. When, at the end of the fourth canto, the group of Montenegrins invades the Turkish camp and kills Smail-aga, no additional justification is needed. The last, fifth canto is entitled 'Fate' and contains a description of a grotesque mechanism: in a cottage near Cetinje, a puppet dressed in Smail-aga's clothes bows humbly when a visitor bangs on the floor. This is Mažuranić's Baroque vision of the mighty empire's demise.

The poem had already become the very centre of the Croatian literary canon by the second half of the nineteenth century, and survived the Marxist shake-up of the canon after the Second World War by virtue of a modified interpretation: in socialist Yugoslavia's schools, *Smail-aga Čengić's Death* was interpreted as a celebration of every strife for national liberation, thus not only including resistance to the Ottoman and Habsburg empires, but also Partisan resistance to German occupation, with an added dimension of class struggle between the rich tax collector and the poor *rayah*. However, older interpreters never had any doubts as to what Mažuranić's poem was about. In his monograph on Mažuranić, Antun Barac wrote:

He wanted to represent a segment of the centuries-long struggle between Christians and Muslims, between violent Turkdom and our people, and to emphasise the need of crushing Turkdom with no mercy. (...) To ask whether he had the right to present the event in such a manner, or whether it was appropriate regarding our Muslims, or whether it was along the lines of his later opinion on fanaticism, is an altogether different question. (...) This is how the poet raised a historical event, which was only one of countless other minor clashes at the border of Christianity and Islam, to the symbolic level where it mirrored the opposition between two spiritual elements: Christianity and Islam. And then he elevated it even further, by seeing in the act which he represented not only a struggle between two faiths, two world-views, but a clash between two most important principles in the world order: between justice and violence. The idea of justice's triumph, which sooner or later is meted out to anyone who resorts to violence, is the central motif of *Smail-aga Čengić's Death*. Here, Montenegrins are represented as a weapon in God's hand.

(Barac 1945: 179–83)

It is not only justice: it is God's justice. The third canto, in which the shepherd-priest appears before the group of Montenegrins, spells it out in no uncertain terms. The priest must not only justify Novica's revenge and Smail-aga's imminent death, but also all future strife against the Turks. Religious identity has central significance in his justification: the fight for Montenegro's freedom is, he says,

above all a fight for Christianity. After reminding the Montenegrins that their fathers and grandfathers fought for the liberty of their fatherland – which may be poor, but which is their fatherland nevertheless – the priest makes sure that they understand that which is most important within it: ‘Yet above all which adorns this cliff is/The holy cross which rises above you’ (verses 364–365). You are above all Christians, states the priest. You are to fulfil God’s will and do it with all your heart, because you execute what God in the Heavens wishes (verse 385). Then he reminds them of the ethical principles of Christianity: do not insult your brother, do not commit the sin of fighting the weak, be generous, help the wounded, and confess your sins. Mažuranić’s poem answers the threefold question of national identity in the following manner: we are a small, but heroic people fighting for our freedom; we are, above all, Christians; to sustain this identity, we must behave ethically. This attitude receives two immediate confirmations within the poem itself. Upon hearing the sermon, Novica demands to be baptized and thus gives another dimension to his own, personal revenge. Instead of being a Muslim avenger, he becomes a Christian fighter against Islam. The second confirmation is the end of the third canto: ‘The company stands full of Almighty God’ (verse 470). With it, Mažuranić’s legitimization of Novica’s revenge and the Montenegrins’ fight is complete: they are executors of God’s will, and everything they commit comes from God.

Much has been written about Novica, but what purpose this character serves in Mažuranić’s poem remains unclear. The allusion to Novica Cerović, the ringleader of the plot in which Čengić was killed in 1840, seems to be obvious, but why Mažuranić would want to transform him into a Muslim with a Christian name, who then wants to convert to Christianity, is less clear. Barac touched upon this question, but left it unanswered. Goy claimed that Novica served only as a catalyst and then disappeared, his acceptance of Christian baptism removing the slightest sense of Islam’s participation in victory (Goy 1966: 332). The same effect could have been achieved by a character with a Muslim name, who would also – as Novica does – disappear before the battle begins, and by keeping his own faith leave the glory of victory to Montenegrins. Unless Mažuranić’s intention was to emphasize Novica’s Slavic origin, and thus also point to the fact that Smail-aga Čengić too, despite standing for ‘Turkdom’ in Mažuranić’s poem, was not a Turk either, but a Slav whose ancestors had converted to Islam, it seems that the function of this character in Mažuranić’s poem can be reduced to two moments only: Novica must initiate the action (and thus, quite appropriately,

ought to bear the name of the historical initiator) and he must be baptized. Although conversions from Islam to Christianity were rare, for complex social and legal reasons (it entailed losing privileged social status and was, until the mid-nineteenth century, punishable by death by the Ottoman authorities), and although Novica's conversion was not necessary for the development of the plot in Mažuranić's poem (the squad was already on its way to avenge Novica's father's death regardless of his faith), it serves here the same ideological function as the publicity given to a Soviet dissident's successful escape to the West: he 'chose freedom', to use the Cold War's favourite expression, or he 'chose justice, goodness and the true God', as would be more appropriate in the present context. His demand to be baptized not only promotes the conviction that Christianity is a better faith than Islam – as is confirmed by the Muslim who, once freed from social and legal constraints, supposedly makes an unbiased judgement – but at the same time creates an irresistible identification position for readers. At the time, readers of such a poem would only have been Christians, for the chances of Mažuranić's poem being read by Muslims were next to none. Mažuranić, however, could have counted on all Christian Illyrians reading it and sliding into the identification position he offered them: our religion is better, and God is on our side.

Prešern

A sword, a priest and a conversion: the Slovene poet France Prešern (1800–49) links all three elements in the poem 'Krst pri Savici' (Baptism on the Savica) published in the year of the battle of Grahovo (1836). The poem tells the story of what took place in the early Middle Ages, when the ancestors of present-day Slovenes were baptized and simultaneously conquered by the Franks. The main character is the Slovene leader, Črtomir, who, along with a handful of his warriors, fights Valjhun, a baptized Slovene fighting on the Frankish side. Again, as in *Smail-aga Čengić's Death*, religion stands for identity and freedom, and again the battle is fought not against the conquering Other, but against an apostate, 'one of us' who, by accepting the conqueror's religion, becomes a traitor and executor of the conqueror's will. Freedom is lost not in battle with a foreigner, but to a renegade and traitor. Črtomir himself does not explain his loyalty to his old Slav religion as loyalty to the gods he believes in, but as a result

of the conviction that a loss of faith would mean a loss of identity and freedom. He and his people lose the battle, losing their liberty and faith at the same time. The defeated Slav leader tries to find his beloved Bogomila, hoping that the love and happiness she offers will bring him solace. However, in the meantime, Bogomila, formerly a priestess of the Slavic religion, has been baptized too, and become a nun. Now she demands that Črtomir also agree to baptism, telling him that the two of them cannot hope to be together in this life ever again. As in *Smail-aga Čengić's Death*, it comes as no surprise that there is a priest at hand, ready to deliver his sermon. On listening to him, Črtomir resignedly accepts baptism and thereafter leaves for Aquileia, the regional centre of Christianity. Returning from Aquileia, he himself becomes a preacher – thus joining those who had deprived him of his old religion, his identity and liberty.

If *Baptism on the Savica* is to be understood as a work which contributes to the process of defining Slovene national identity at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it can only be understood as a negative national myth. Except for Roman Catholic interpreters, who recognized in Črtomir a model Christian clergyman, all interpretations in the twentieth century have indicated Črtomir's weakness and passivity. The main argument for this school of interpretation is Črtomir's insufficiently motivated spiritual transformation. He does not accept the baptism out of love for Bogomila – she tells him that the hope of them being together is lost forever – nor does he undergo a religious spiritual transformation, for there is not a word about that in the poem. In one recent interpretation, Slavoj Žižek claims that Črtomir identifies himself with the source of his own defeat and thus transforms the defeat into a triumph of redemption: the wound is not experienced as a wound any longer, but as something salutary (Žižek 1987: 35). Thus, the ideological message of *Baptism on the Savica* would be altogether negative and not in the least in agreement with the activist optimism of the national movements among the South Slavs at the beginning of the nineteenth century. 'The national identity is therefore symbolised in *Baptism on the Savica* as a structural lack', claims Juvan (2002: 356).

There is a possibility of moderating this negativity with an extended interpretation: Prešern's 'message' to the Slovenes would be, Cooper claims, 'that the fate of their small nation lay with learning to accept the inevitable, and often superior, impositions of the larger European community and to adopt them for profitable local use as tools to maintain the nation' (Cooper 1981: 219). This extension, however, does not solve the problem of understanding *Baptism on the Savica*. Had this been Prešern's message, he would have written *Baptism*

on the Savica in German: at the time of its writing, the German language was, for Slovenes, an inevitable superior imposition. Writing in German would have meant accepting what is inevitable in order to preserve the nation. Writing it in Slovene, however, was an act of resistance, an act not in the slightest in Črtomir's manner. And this is exactly what Prešern does.

According to Slovene literary historiography, *Baptism on the Savica* occupies within the canon of Slovene literature the same status that *Smail-aga Čengić's Death* occupies in modern Croatian literature: the canonical work, the founding gesture, not only the milestone of literature, but the highest literary expression from the period of building modern national identities. As far as Prešern's status is concerned, he was even said to be something that Mažuranić never was, despite his central position in Croatian nineteenth-century cultural and political life: the founder of the Slovene nation (Wachtel 2006: 16–22). The Slovene idea was to be central to his poetry, if not for anything else, then because it was written in Slovene and not in German. This might be surprising, considering that he was mainly an author of love poetry: *Baptism on the Savica*, with its national theme, is more the exception than the rule in his opus. Unlike Mažuranić, a chancellor and governor of Croatia, Prešern played no significant role in the political life of Slovenia. Mažuranić wrote during the period in which the Illyrian movement was at its zenith, but Prešern wrote *Baptism* a quarter of a century before the political national movement among Slovenes had been founded. The view of *Baptism on the Savica* as a negative national myth can be dismissed if one interprets it as the personal confession of a resigned man, not necessarily as the Slovene national epos with the pretension of expressing the national identity that was coming into being at the time, as Ivan Prijatelj did⁵ (Bernik 1987: 11). However, the context in which we are trying to interpret it makes possible a comparison with Mažuranić's poem. From the standpoint of answering the question of national identity, Prešern's poem offers an answer that is completely understandable within the context of its conception. Living in Karlovac, close to the border with Ottoman Bosnia, Mažuranić founded the identity of his people in Christianity, understood as a positive difference from the conquering Other. Prešern's Other, Austria, was of the same religion, and differentiation could not be expressed in religious terms. But there is nevertheless a difference: as

⁵ Boris Paternu quotes from one of Prešern's letters to Čelakovski, in which the poet claims that *Baptism* was no more than 'a meter exercise' to win the sympathies of the clergy (see Paternu 1994: 181).

opposed to the Other of the same faith, we are Slavs, who once had our own gods and liberty. Both have been lost long ago. The religion of the conquering Other equals enslavement; our religion means freedom. What Prešern's poem lacks in comparison with Mažuranič's is a dimension of political activism, a call to arms for national liberation – in other words, a *sword*, a heroic Črtomir who would refuse baptism. However, neither the political nor the cultural circumstances at the time of writing *Baptism on the Savica* encouraged that kind of activism.⁶ What Prešern's poem has in common with Mažuranič's, apart from the basic triangular structure of sword-priest-conversion, is that the conquering Other is absent from the scene, but is represented by the Same, Valjhun, a Slav who sides with the conqueror by accepting his faith and thus becomes the executor of his will, an auto-colonizer and apostate. Preserving liberty, identity and religion in both poems means fighting those amongst one's own people who, through religious conversion, became the Other and the enemy.

Njegoš

The same triangular structure is obvious in Petar II Petrović Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath* (1847). The man behind the conspiracy in which Smail-aga Čengić lost his life, Njegoš was an unenthusiastic warrior.⁷ In 1832, as a nineteen-year-old prince-bishop, he started a campaign to take Podgorica from the Ottomans – and failed. The Ottoman massacres and reprisals were so severe that Njegoš would never again consider engaging in anything similar. However, this first move of the young ruler reveals a lot about his wishes and aspirations: the Podgorica campaign was Njegoš's contribution to what he had regarded as joint Balkan action against the Porte. In 1831, a part of the Bosnian nobility led by Husein-bey Gradašević rebelled against the introduction of modernizing reforms, which among other aims were intended to secure a better position for Christians in the Ottoman state by guaranteeing them personal security, security

⁶ Prešern's poem, however, can also be understood from a different perspective if we take Valjhun to be its 'hero'. The emphasis on its tragic aspect would not change – 'a Slovene is killing a Slovene, a brother / oh, how frightful is human blindness' – but Črtomir would become the negative character and the Other, an apostate, who would have to take the blame for the bloodshed. His conversion would thus mean his return under the wings of the Same: after Novica's baptism, this would be one more example of successful conversion. However, conversion as a means of preserving the nation remains the central element of the poem even if we change the perspective.

⁷ Instead of being his pen name, as Sells claims, Njegoš is the second part of his surname, and, as was the custom at the time, indicates the clan his family belonged to.

of possessions and honour, and equality before the law and in taxation. With his move to take Podgorica, Njegoš actually sided with those who were trying to prolong the political, economic and legal inequality of the Christians. A letter to Gradašćević shows how he understood these events: 'from now on, we shall be together', wrote the nineteen-year-old monk to the experienced veteran of many battles, adding some advice on military strategy, requesting ammunition – a constant refrain in Njegoš's letters – and proposing a larger campaign against the sultan (Njegoš 1951: 113–15).

After some initial successes, the Gradašćević rebellion failed mainly because the rival group of Bosnian nobility, led by Ali-pasha of Mostar and Smail-aga Čengić, supported the Porte.⁸ Having learned a lesson, Njegoš tried his best to secure peace at the borders of his small principality and good relations with the much larger and stronger neighbouring Ottoman provinces. Diplomacy bore some fruit: in 1838 and 1842 he signed two treaties with Ali-pasha, sealed with 'blood-brotherhood' between the signatories, thus making his western and northern borders as peaceful as possible. He was less successful in his diplomatic dealings with Russia, his official protector, and Austria, which competed with Russia for influence in the Adriatic. Russia had good relations with the Porte during Njegoš's rule and was suspicious of his stubborn insistence on the need for Christian liberation, while Austria did not have much sympathy for Njegoš's liberal political views. As Mažuranić in Croatia, although on a much smaller scale, Njegoš was busy trying to modernize Montenegrin traditional society. He introduced basic state structures, such as the Senate, courts and police, opened schools, and in order to finance them he also, to the great displeasure of his subjects, began levying and collecting taxes. His greatest disappointment, however, was Montenegro's relations with its eastern neighbour, Osman-pasha Skopljak, the vizier of Scutari. As indeed were Ali-pasha, Smail-aga and Husein-bey, Osman-pasha Skopljak was also a Slav from Bosnia. His father, Suleiman-pasha, had commanded the Bosnian troops which crushed the First Serbian Uprising (1804), and was afterwards appointed vizier of Belgrade. Upon taking

⁸ Although the grand vizier himself led the campaign against Gradašćević, the Porte could not have succeeded without the help of certain loyal Bosnian nobles, whose troops were crucial in crushing the rebellion. Bašagić's ancestors fought on both sides, and here is how he described what had happened to his father's family: 'On that occasion, Bosnians torched everything and enslaved all who bear the name of Redžepašić; what is more, they did not even spare the mosque in Zalom-Palanka, but torched it in the unruly rage brought about by their fanaticism. In Bratače they set fire to Bašaga's house with the women and children still inside, so that they had to jump out barefoot and with their heads uncovered' (Bašagić 1900: 145).

up office, Suleiman-pasha had hundreds hanged and impaled (Karadžić 1969: 368; Ranke 1973: 301–2).

In 1843, Osman-pasha invaded Montenegro and seized the islands of Vranjina and Lesandro in Lake Scutari. Though fairly small, these islands were important strategic points: not only did the livelihood of many Montenegrins depend on fishing and exporting dry fish, but these two islands gave Osman-pasha a 'stranglehold over Montenegro, cutting off trading access to Podgorica as well as the use of the lake itself' (Roberts 2007: 207). The last years of Njegoš's life were filled with futile efforts to regain the islands. When, in 1847, a drought-caused famine struck Montenegro, Osman-pasha began instigating a revolt in the Crmnica part of Montenegro: in exchange for Osman-pasha's wheat, the chieftains began a rebellion against Njegoš, which was reinforced by troops from Scutari.⁹ In terms of understanding Njegoš the politician, and also Njegoš the writer, the letter he sent to Osman-pasha on 5 October 1847, a year after he had completed *The Mountain Wreath*, is highly significant:

You say that I always ask for something. And what would I ask, or with whom would I ask? When Bayezid (also known as Yilderim) had conquered Bosnia, and when wild Asiatic hordes had crushed our small but heroic kingdom, my ancestors and some other families, who had not perished fighting the Turks, left their homeland and fled to these mountains. I am all alone, I am an orphan. Just remember where my brothers are, the famed and celebrated princes and dukes of our kingdom. Where is Crnojević (Bušatlija), where is Obrenknežević (Mahmutbegović), where is Kulinović? Where is Skopljak, where is Vidajić? Where is Filipović, where is Gradašćević? Where is Stočević, where is Ljubivić, where is Čengiće?¹⁰ And where are many others? Where are the lords and our best people, to search for our homeland and our glory all together, so that we can be united? It is then that I would, together with them, ask for something great.

God only knows when they will remember their glory, and for how long those brothers of mine shall shun my company and call themselves Asians, and for how long they will labour for the benefit of foreigners, while disregarding their own people and what benefits them. Who is it that this handful of highlanders fights, for the sake of our common honour and our name, ever since that unfortunate day when the Asians crushed our kingdom? Our own brothers who

⁹ Some commentators claim that Njegoš had those contemporary 'traitors' in mind while writing about a fictitious seventeenth-century clash between Christians and Muslims in *The Mountain Wreath* (Popović 1984: 125).

¹⁰ All surnames are of famous Muslim Slav noble families from Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

turned Turks. A brother fights a brother, a brother slaughters a brother, and the ruins of our kingdom are soaked in blood. This is our common tragedy! This disaster and the hate between brothers are the reasons, much more so than the power of the foreigners, for our heroic people being the servants of foreigners, as you yourself are. (...) More than anything else, I would like to see unity between brothers of the same blood, raised with the same milk and in the same cradle. (...) When you talk to me as my brother Bosniak, then I am your brother and your friend too. But when you speak as a foreigner, as an Asian, as a foe of our people and our name, then I am against it, as any other well-meaning man would be against it.

(Njegoš 1955: 355–8)¹¹

He never regained the two islands. The events of 1848 gave him some reasons to rejoice, and he sent warm and enthusiastic letters to the Croatian ban Jelačić, who took his troops northwards against the Hungarians. Njegoš saw in Jelačić, as he had in Gradašćević, a leader of the long-awaited South Slav uprising against foreign rule – even a Messiah – but this time he refrained from offering the help of Montenegrin troops. Although 1848 was one more disappointment to him, worse was to come. In 1850 the Porte sent Omer-pasha Latas, originally a Serb from Croatia, to Bosnia to force the disobedient Bosnian beys into accepting *Tanzimat* after having resisted it for decades. Latas had most of them killed, including Ali-pasha of Mostar, Njegoš's ally and blood-brother, 'all along robbing, burning, punishing both the guilty and the innocent, not sparing women and children', reported Bašagić (1900: 172). Latas decimated the ruling Muslim class in Bosnia and Herzegovina, continues Bašagić, thus 'destroying the force which had been fighting tirelessly under the red banner with the crescent and star for Turkey and its power for four centuries' (ibid.). Njegoš spent the last year of his life suffering from tuberculosis and fearing that 'brother' Latas, after having crushed Bosnia, would then mete out a similar fate to Montenegro.

The theme of *The Mountain Wreath* is the extermination of Montenegrin Muslims at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century. Although such an event never occurred, the confrontation between Slavs who remained Christian and those who accepted Islam was more than

¹¹ Njegoš's survival in socialist Yugoslavia's canon is largely due to his Slav sentiments which were interpreted along the lines of 'brotherhood and unity', and his celebration of liberation from foreign rule: the two pillars on which rested the legitimacy of Tito's regime. More on Njegoš's canonization in Wachtel (2004).

real in Njegoš's time, if not in Montenegro itself, then certainly on its borders.¹² The characters in *The Mountain Wreath* distinguish between Ottomans and Muslim Montenegrins. The former are historical enemies, who had conquered the Serbian medieval kingdom and who now exercised their tyrannical rule. 'You rule the throne you've unjustly taken,' says Bishop Danilo, addressing the Ottoman Empire (Njegoš 1986: verse 56).¹³ Montenegrins are proud of their liberty, but at the same time aware of the danger surrounding them. Fighting the Turks is a fight for liberty, not a conquest: 'I don't burn down either lands or people' (1193), says a Montenegrin in *The Mountain Wreath*. Bishop Danilo continues: 'But to place a foot upon the tyrant's neck/to make him know what the right of man is/this is the most sacred of one's duties!' (618–621). This morally unproblematic fight is not the theme of Njegoš's play – it is the fight against one's own brethren who have sided with the conqueror that constitutes a moral dilemma which can be a proper topic for a romantic tragedy.

Njegoš's intention formally to model *The Mountain Wreath* upon Greek tragedies has been discussed at length.¹⁴ What is more, in one of the most powerful essays on the Montenegrin poet, Ivo Andrić called Njegoš himself a 'tragic hero'.¹⁵ But Njegoš's play resembles Greek tragedy in a further sense, to which Koljević pointed in his study of the relationship between oral and written literature (Koljević 2005). In the epic world the question of the morality of a heroic action, such as fighting one's enemies, is impossible; when these

¹² That the extermination of Muslims did not happen has been a commonplace in history and literary criticism ever since Ilarion Ruvarac's book *Montenegrina: prilošci istorii Crne Gore* (1897). In addition to the latter, two authors have reconstructed the literary sources of Njegoš's play (Banašević 1957; Aubin 1972). It may come as a surprise to those who view this play as the 'apotheosis' and 'celebration' of extermination – even as a 'licence to commit genocide' – that Muhsin Rizvić, the leading twentieth-century Bosniak literary historian, began his book on *The Mountain Wreath* by calling it 'the apotheosis of freedom' (Rizvić 1985: 7).

¹³ Hereafter quotations will be followed by line numbers.

¹⁴ A hint at Greek tragedy is present already in Dedication: 'Orestes' justice comes like the bolt from heaven to Aegisthus' (28). For the most detailed discussion on the topic see Deretić 1969: 60–5. Deretić does not question the widespread consensus that Njegoš modelled his play upon Greek tragedy, but claims that for every formal element borrowed from Greek tragedy Njegoš could also have found a parallel one in the South Slav oral tradition. This means that Njegoš did not simply copy a model of the Greek genre, but that he repeated the historical process of its development from the simpler genres of poetry, such as the dithyramb or the oral epic poem, into the more complex genre.

¹⁵ The following paragraph clarifies what Andrić meant by the tragedy of Njegoš's position: 'It was not only a conflict of two religions, nations and races, it was a clash of two elements, of East and West, and Fate wanted this clash performed mostly on our territory, thus halving and separating our national corpus with a bloody wall. We were all brandished and thrown into this fight of elements, and one fought for the side one happened to find oneself on, with the same sense, heroism and faith in the righteousness of one's cause. The tragedy of the conflict was thus intensified even more by the unavoidable conflict between brothers' (Andrić 1976: 16–17).

questions become possible, then the epic and heroic world is no more. Although *The Mountain Wreath* has South Slav epic poetry as its stylistic, thematic and occasionally formal background – in addition to Njegoš's Greek models and European Romantic drama – the epic world, with its heroes, values and deeds has become questionable in it.¹⁶ Hence the dramatic form, claims Koljević, in which the epic-heroic construction of the world can be examined. It may be added that there is one more similarity with Greek tragedy, which appears in similar historical circumstances.¹⁷ As in tragedy, there is also a polarity between the chorus ('kolo') and the tragic hero (Danilo) in *The Mountain Wreath*, the difference being that here their roles have been reversed: the chorus stands for traditional heroic values, and the hero for new modes of thinking. However, here too the hero is a problem: not because his values, derived from mythical and heroic traditions, need to be overcome, but because his ethical and political thought cannot be in harmony with the ancient heroic tradition of his people. What needs to be questioned and overcome in Greek tragedy is the tragic hero, whose values stand in the way of the development of the legal and civic order of the city-state. In *The Mountain Wreath*, it is the values of the chorus that Danilo must question, which are ethically problematic and also stand in the way of the historically new political phenomenon: nationalism. Nationalism must transform Montenegrin clans – which fight one another in blood feuds, raid neighbouring regions of the Ottoman state for booty, adhere to different religions and, when circumstances allow, also fight the Ottomans – into a unified and homogenized entity, a nation strong enough to stand up to foreign rule once and for all. However, it must deal with the contradictions of the ancient

¹⁶ On nationalism in Romantic drama see Carlson (1995). Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* has been discussed as Njegoš's direct inspiration ever since Ruvarac brought it up in 1897 (most extensively by Aubin 1972: 237; Rizvić 1985: 39–41). Aubin also mentioned similarities between *The Mountain Wreath* and Casimir Delavigne's *Vêpres Siciliennes*. Although quite obvious, the parallel with Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Hermannsschlacht* has not yet been discussed. Carlson's overview of nineteenth-century nationalistic drama helps place *The Mountain Wreath* in its literary context. To place it in the proper historical perspective, one should recall the extent to which the standards of expression have changed since Njegoš's time. For instance, ten years after Njegoš published *The Mountain Wreath*, Charles Dickens expressed his anger upon hearing about atrocities in the Indian Mutiny in the following manner: 'I wish I were Commander in Chief in India. The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental race with amazement (not in the least regarding them as if they lived in the Strand, London, or at Camden Town), should be to proclaim to them, in their language, that I considered my holding that appointment by the leave of God, to mean that I should do my utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested; and that I begged them to do me a favour to observe that I was there for that purpose and no other, and was now proceeding, with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the earth' (Dickens 1995: 459).

¹⁷ See Jean-Pierre Vernant's brief account of the historical moment of Greek tragedy in Vernant (1972: 13–17).

heroic tradition, which at the same time demands fighting the religious Other, but also protects this Other as a member of a clan. And finally, it must raise the ethical question: if heroic values, such as being a good warrior who prides himself on bloodshed, are no longer viable by themselves but must be justified by some higher aim, such as liberty of the people, how can bloodshed be justified if it is inflicted on a part of that same people?

The Mountain Wreath begins with the monologue of young Prince-Bishop Danilo who is keeping vigil during the night before a meeting to discuss how to deal with the growing number of Muslims in Montenegro. In this monologue a motif appears that is characteristic of the whole period of national movements: 'My people sleep a deep and lifeless sleep' (37), declares Danilo. When the Montenegrin chieftains, who have come to the meeting and fallen asleep around Danilo, wake up, it turns out that they are all far more 'awake' than Danilo himself. In Njegoš's play the chieftains are belligerent advocates of a traditional heroic worldview, having little doubt as to the need to fight their Muslim brothers. They view the rising number of Muslims as a form of aggression, as a threat to the independence of Montenegro and to the survival of their religion and identity. Although never conquered militarily, they maintain, Montenegro will eventually fade away if this process is not confronted. The only man who has any doubts is Danilo: although he agrees that the 'domestic evil' is more of a threat than the Turks themselves and that something must be done, he sees this fight as problematic. Muslims find themselves in an ambiguous position: they are still a part of the same people, but at the same time against it. Thus, at the very beginning of *The Mountain Wreath* religion is stated to have as great an importance for national identity as ethnicity. Religion and ethnicity are understood as values in themselves: Danilo wants to remain faithful to both, but he sees that a part of his people has surrendered one of them. His moral situation indeed resembles that of heroes in Greek tragedy, who must choose between two mutually exclusive values. Moreover, supporting one of them often means fighting a close relative, a 'brother', who supports the opposite one. A recipe for tragedy: loyalty to his people, to its liberty and independence, demands a fight against one part of the same people. This moral, intellectual and political dilemma is the true theme of *The Mountain Wreath*, for the eventual clash with Muslims is shown only in brief reports and takes up only 141 out of 2,819 verses.

Danilo's words leave no room for doubt as to his understanding of the impossible position he finds himself in. At the end of his introductory monologue, he says: 'When I think of today's council meeting / flames of horror flare up deep

inside me / (...) O wretched day, may God's curse be on you! / when you brought me to the light of this world' (79–80, 84–85). The last two verses refer to Danilo's captivity in the previous year, when he narrowly escaped being killed: now it seems to him that being dead is better than having to even discuss action against Muslim Montenegrins. The former verses, however, introduce the word *užas*, which means horror, nightmare, something too awful for words, and which will be used throughout the play to refer both to the action demanded by the chieftains and to the play itself. Serdar Vukota, for instance, uses it to curse their own country and life of incessant fighting and dying, describing it as 'toržestvo užasa' ('a triumph of horror', or 'a solemn festival of horror' in Mihailovich's translation, 986), and Danilo himself repeats it when it seems that he, for a brief moment, may side with the belligerent chieftains: 'Nek propoje pjesna od užasa/ oltar pravi na kamen krvavi!' (674–675). Njegoš's elliptic, dark verses are often difficult to understand: the first verse may mean 'let there be a poem composed of horror', but also 'let the poem, faced with horror, sing out'.¹⁸ The meaning of the second verse changes slightly depending on our understanding of *prâvi* as the adjective, or as the verb *praviti* in the imperative – 'the real altar on the bloody rock', or 'make an altar on a bloody rock'. But the suggestion is clear: there is nothing heroic, nothing epic, and nothing to celebrate in what will follow, only bitterness and despair. 'Instead of a Homeric invocation of Muses (...), Bishop Danilo speaks out in images which poetically question his own intended meaning', claims Koljević. 'In any epic and action-led understanding of history, this "poem" would be belligerent, inspired, without a trace of "horror", and the "altar" would be, whatever else it might be, as clean as the driven snow, not to say as clean as an idea. However, in Bishop Danilo's spiritual cleft stick, "horror" and "blood" bear witness to him being driven ethically beside himself' (Koljević 2005: 104). He never agrees with the action, but at the end of the play we see him welcoming the news that the chieftains have undertaken it, even without his consent.

The motivation for Danilo's change of heart is twofold: on the level of the plot it is prepared by a series of events, and on a philosophical level it is motivated by a non-Christian cosmology delivered by Abbot Stefan. Instead of letting the chieftains start carrying out their plans, Danilo demands that the representatives of Muslims be invited to negotiations. If they agree to re-conversion and to

¹⁸ Rizvić interprets these verses as an instance of Romantic 'horrible beauty' which appears where ethical and aesthetic impulses collide (1985: 17).

respecting Christian customs, they could privately profess whatever they wanted. What is demanded of them is political loyalty to Montenegro, instead to the Ottoman state. They soon appear and on hearing the proposal to return to their abandoned religion, which is simultaneously a threat of annihilation if they do not, one of them sneeringly asks why a lion should be afraid of a goose. A small spring empties into a larger one, says another. The side they are on is stronger, and it is only natural that the stronger one should win, they claim. A third Muslim, however, calls for peace: the country is big enough for both groups to live in it like brothers, with faith chosen freely. Both sides have stated their arguments, and from this moment on *The Mountain Wreath* turns into an account of the arguments that prove the impossibility of peaceful, brotherly coexistence among them.¹⁹ Immediately after the pledge for peace, one of the Muslims admits that a beautiful turban on his head is a gift from the Bosnian vizier, and this admission is followed by the arrival of a letter from the vizier himself, addressed to Danilo. The vizier demands that the Christian Montenegrins capitulate and threatens them with annihilation just as they had threatened the Muslims before the letter had arrived. A wedding procession suddenly passes by made up of both Christian and Muslim Montenegrins. They walk together, but sing different songs. A Muslim sings about Sultan Bayezid, who 'slaughtered all who did not turn Turkish / You spared only the common, poor people / to do our will and wail before the Cross' (1818–20). The revellers are followed by a funeral procession: Turks have killed a Montenegrin, having deceived him into coming to negotiate by guaranteeing his safety. This is followed by a group of Montenegrins who accuse an old woman of being a witch. Since Danilo and the chieftains do not believe in witches, the old woman must eventually confess that the Bosnian vizier has blackmailed her and compelled her to sow discord in Montenegro. But this is still not enough to convince Danilo that bloodshed is unavoidable. The next scene, however, introduces blind Abbot Stefan. He is in favour of armed action, but his arguments are neither ethical nor political. Although he does not offer any explicit arguments for the strike, he paints a dark vision of human existence in which 'Our time on earth and human destiny' (2290) appear as 'two faces of the highest absurdity' (2291), and our waking state seems to be even

¹⁹ Schmaus also claims that this part, which he interprets as the conflict between two major religions, represents the core of the play in which all important arguments are played out, and after which nothing of any relevance is left to be said (Schmaus 1963). However, there is not much to indicate that the conflict is between Islam and Christianity per se; the conflict described in the play owes everything to the local circumstances in Montenegro. An exception is the verse 'awesome symbols, the Crescent and the Cross' (631), in which the blame for centuries-long bloodshed is placed equally on Christianity and Islam.

more perplexing than our dreams (2331). His question 'What is man' is followed by the answer 'and man must he be!' (2329). Man is a feeble creature constantly deceived by the chaos of earthly life, and he realizes that the earth is not the right place for what one must be: a spark of humanity, which partakes in the substance of its creator. One must be in a world which is 'a tyrant to the tyrant/let alone to a truly noble soul' (2499–2500), in a world which is a 'work of infernal discord' (2501), a battleground in which a rose defends itself with its thorns, animals fight with their teeth and horns, winds struggle with other winds, day with night, sea with shore, and – people with other people. This is the world in which Danilo must make his decision. The opposition between the spiritual and the ethical in a human being, and the historical world in which that being must live and act, could hardly be expressed more powerfully. However, for Stefan, in this world everything is armed for defence, and hence:

Your destiny it is to bear the Cross
Of the fierce fight against brothers and foes! (...)
Under a shroud of glory I see you
And our nation's honour resurrected.
I also see the altar turned eastward
And a fragrant incense burning on it.

(2348–55)

Abbot Stefan's cosmology, concluded on a religious note, leads to a justification of the fight with Montenegrin Muslims. The horror which floods the end of the play does not result from the conflict between a hesitant ethical thinker, such as Danilo, and the belligerent chieftains, who 'fear too much contemplation' (519). Their differences are too strong for us to take the chieftains seriously: most of them are characters on the verge of being comical, and their epic and heroic world had already died under Danilo's questioning gaze. The horror results from the contrast between Abbot Stefan's metaphysics and its translation into the historical world. This contrast and the horror resulting from it are *Njegoš's creation*. The author wanted the reader to feel this horror. A day after the dialogue between Abbot Stefan and the bishop, on Christmas Day, news of the horrible clashes between Christians and Muslims all over the country reaches them. Upon hearing the news, a stage direction in *The Mountain Wreath* tells us, 'Bishop Danilo cries, but Abbot Stefan laughs' (2725).

The play, however, ends in a different mood: at the very end Danilo receives the messengers with words of gratitude and without tears, and Abbot Stefan

invites them to take Holy Communion without confession, just as Mažuranić's priest does. If there was a sin in what they had been doing, he would take it upon his soul. Is this conclusion a case of a poetical non sequitur? The end seems to contradict the whole play, without resolving any of its many questions. What does Danilo's eventual siding with the chieftains and Abbot Stefan mean, and why does he stop weeping? It does not seem that the prince-bishop within the playwright began, at the very last moment, to worry about the possible effect of his play on his subjects, who still needed lots of action-inspiring ideological constructs if they were to continue their fight for liberation. After all, only a tiny minority of them could have been expected actually to read the play published in Vienna. Had he written the play following such ideological concerns, it would not have been a play about a hesitant thinker and the horrors of Montenegro's history, but a proper heroic song suitable for propaganda purposes. Koljević claims that Danilo accepts the action 'out of despair, which is mirrored in one of those paradoxical (...) peaks of Njegoš's thought: "One bears evil for fear of greater one! The drowning man clutches even at foam"' (438–9) (Koljević 2005: 101). Rizvić believed that this was Njegoš's message to his contemporaries, who in the famine-stricken year of 1846 began to defect to the Ottoman side, and translates it as: 'in spite of all understanding for you, and no matter how much I resisted the pressure of the chieftains and the people, I may be forced to accept their demands for vengeance' (Rizvić 1985: 32). Again, had this been Njegoš's coded message, those defectors would not have had a chance actually to receive it.

A parallel with Goethe's *Faust*, completed fifteen years before the publication of *The Mountain Wreath*, may help us understand this apparent poetic non sequitur. In the fifth act of Goethe's play, Faust becomes a hero of modernization, under whose direction the face of the earth changes for the benefit of the people. His project is a community of free individuals and a landscape adapted to human needs: mastering nature and transforming the way people live together. Philemon and Baukis, the very embodiments of human goodness and piety, stand in the way. They are killed to make way for the project which will ultimately benefit humanity. Although Faust is responsible for their death, Goethe passes an unexpected judgement on him: upon Faust's death his soul is taken away from Mephistopheles and elevated to heaven. The hero of modernization is forgiven. Did Goethe write an apology for the murder of elderly couples? No, he dramatized the paradoxes of modernization, the project which he welcomed although it came at the price of the death of people such as Philemon and Baukis. An ideologist of modernization would have probably tried to sweep such a high

price under the carpet, but the poet Goethe represented its tragic side too. An ideologist of nationalism would never have written *The Mountain Wreath*, a play which staged the dark paradox of liberation from foreign rule in the nineteenth-century Balkans, and which unearthed the moral absurd 'in the traditional ethics of epic heroicity (...) – asking the question, with the help of mad and maddening metaphors, of whether one's historical survival is worth the negation of one's own humanity' (Koljević 2005: 103–4). Njegoš staged the tragic side of nationalism, and this is why Danilo weeps at the end. However, he also, and without any hesitation, rejoiced in nationalism, hence Danilo's joy upon hearing the news of the clashes, and Abbot Stefan's offering of Holy Communion without confession. Just as Faust was, those who are about to die fighting are forgiven and elevated to heaven. And again, as in Prešern's and Mažuranić's poems, it is not a fight against the conquerors, but against the apostates who side with them.

Nationalism has two faces, says David Aberbach, 'expressing the most admirable and the most despicable in human nature. Nationalism has inspired – and been inspired by – secular ideas of liberty and justice, but has also contributed greatly in bringing about two world wars' (Aberbach 2003: 255). The great poetry of nationalism, which *The Mountain Wreath* undoubtedly is, absorbs this duality, and thereby becomes complex, ironic and ambivalent, Aberbach continues, 'even to the point of undermining itself' (Aberbach 2003: 265) as the poetry of nationalism. As interpreters, we must be able to see its two sides: the affirming, nationalist one, and the self-undermining, humanist one.

Bašagić

The life and career of Smail-aga Čengić's great-grandson, Safvet-bey Bašagić, shared some striking similarities with those of Njegoš and Mažuranić.²⁰ Bašagić's father was an Ottoman official and a representative of Herzegovina in

²⁰ On Bašagić's life and career, see Kreševljaković (1934), Mulabić (1934) and Zaplata (1935). Although his ideas and achievements fit the description of a canonical writer perfectly, Bašagić was canonized as a Bosniak national writer only in the 1990s, beginning with the re-publication of *Kratka uputa* (A Short Instruction) and continuing with 'a surprising, but in no case accidental, revival of interest in his work' (Kajan 1994). The first re-publication of his works after the Second World War, edited cautiously and in a very non-confrontational manner by Rizvić, appeared in 1971, and coincided with the official recognition of Bosniaks as one of Yugoslavia's constituent nations. What hindered his canonization in socialist Yugoslavia, as we shall see presently, was the lack of 'national-liberatory' elements in his works: anything resembling resistance to foreign rule, and at least something which could have been interpreted along the lines of 'brotherhood and unity'.

the Ottoman parliament. After completing religious instruction and schooling in Sarajevo, Safvet-bey studied Oriental languages and history in Vienna. Upon his return to Sarajevo, he taught Arabic in a school and in 1908 returned to Vienna to write his doctoral dissertation. In 1910 he became a member of the Diet of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the same year Franz Joseph I appointed him president of the Diet – the highest post a Bosnian could aspire to in the country occupied by Austria-Hungary. After the First World War he worked as a curator at Sarajevo's *Zemaljski muzej* (Provincial Museum), retiring in 1927. For four decades Bašagić was the central figure of the Bosniak national movement, always at its forefront as a contributor to the journal *Bošnjak* and the editor of *Behar*, as one of the first Bosniak writers who gave up writing in Middle Eastern languages and began introducing European literary genres, and as the energetic founder of the cultural societies Gajret, Elkamer and Muslim Club. While Mažuranić had a keen interest in his people's older literary tradition, and while Njegoš collected Montenegrin oral poetry, Bašagić researched Muslim writers from Bosnia and Herzegovina who wrote in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. His book on the topic is still an authoritative study on the Bosniak contribution to Islamic literature (Bašagić 1986). In the introduction to this book, Bašagić outlined his literary-political programme: Muslims needed to adapt to new conditions, and to do what they had already done after the Ottoman conquest. Much as they accommodated the demands of the Islamic occupier, and thus rose to power, wealth and glory in the Ottoman Empire, they ought to do the same to achieve a similar status in Austria-Hungary. Literature was a weapon in the new struggle for entering Western education and culture. The Muslim elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered two significant setbacks in the second part of the nineteenth century: the first was when Omer-pasha Latas decimated its ranks, and the second when Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, thus separating the province from the Ottoman state and including it in a Christian one.²¹ Although the Muslim elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina preserved its privileged economic position up until the 1920s, when the land reform was finally implemented, with the province's inclusion in Austria-Hungary it lost its privileged political and social status. Bašagić believed that the feeling of gloom and defeat could be defused by learning new martial skills: the epic time, the time of heroism on the battlefield was over, and in the battle for progress they would need a modern education. The Muslim renaissance would come

²¹ The occupation began, notes Rizvić, when, following the emperor's order *ban* Ivan Mažuranić sent officials from Croatia to Sarajevo (Rizvić 1973, vol 1: 54).

through acquiring modern knowledge, which would bring progress and culture (Bašagić 1999: 259–61). The prerequisite for that, however, was an awakened self-consciousness. In order to know who they were, the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina needed to remember who they had been.

The group of Bosniak beys and intellectuals which led the movement in the 1890s promoted the theory about the ‘Bosnian nation’, devised by the Austrian-Hungarian authorities to curb growing Serbian and Croatian nationalism (Rizvić 1973, vol. 1: 113–18). Alongside Muslims, the Bosnian nation was also to include Serbs and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although without their national names and under Muslim primacy. In Bašagić’s version of the Bosnian nation, however, Serbs and Croats were left out altogether. For the ninth issue of the journal *Bosniak*, Bašagić contributed the following verses:

‘Bošnjaku’

Znaš, ‘Bošnjače’, nije davno bilo,
Sveh mi svijeta! nema petnest ljeta,
Kad u našoj Bosni ponositoj,
I junačkoj zemlji Hercegovoj,
Od Trebinja do brodskih vrata
Nije bilo Srba i Hrvata.
A danas se kroza svoje hire
Oba stranca ko u svome šire. (...)
Oba su nas gosta saletila,
Da nam otmu najsvetije blago
Naše ime ponosno i drago;

(Bašagić 1891a)

‘To the Bosniak’

You know, *Bosniak*, it wasn’t long ago,
Upon my word! Barely fifteen years ago,
When in our proud Bosnia,
And heroic land of Herzegovina,
From Trebinje to the gates of Brod,
There were neither Serbs nor Croats.
Today, following their whims,
Both foreigners made themselves at home here, (...)
Both guests are harassing us,
To rob us of our most sacred treasure
Of our name, proud and dear;

The last three verses refer to Serbian and Croat nationalists' claims that Bosnian Muslims were either previously Orthodox or Catholic Slavs, hence Serbs or Croats who converted to Islam. Against this, Bašagić advocated the 'Bogomil theory', according to which only Muslims, as the sole 'true' Bosnians, could be 'at home' in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus making Serbs and Croats 'foreigners' and 'guests'.²²

The most systematic of Bašagić's attempts to awaken Bosniaks' consciousness by reminding them of their glorious past can be found in his book *Kratka uputa u prošlost Bosne i Hercegovine* (A Short Instruction to the Past of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1900). As in Bašagić's poem 'Bošnjaku', this historical overview never mentions any Serb or Croat presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They appear only at its fringes, always as *rayah*, and always as a threat to the Ottoman Empire which relied on Bosniaks for its defence and survival. Prompted by Russians, Montenegrins used every opportunity to harass Herzegovina and Albania, writes Bašagić, but Turks repaid them like for like by exterminating them in any possible way (1900: 117). During the Serbian uprising, the Porte was busy in Egypt and Syria, and the burden of putting down the uprising fell on Bosniak shoulders (ibid.: 119), but at least the booty from Serbia was so plentiful that a sheep sold for as little as thirty pennies (ibid.: 124). When the Ottoman Empire fell into 'peace-loving lethargy, Bosnian and Herzegovinian Muslims on their own account fought incessantly with neighbouring Christians, and with their inherited religious fervour and proud consciousness of their earlier position as the ruling class, preserved untainted Islam in its perfect purity' (ibid.: 126). They shed blood from Dalmatia to Russia fighting for Turkey and its power (ibid.: 152); for two centuries they were a rock-solid wall on the borders of the Ottoman state and more than once saved it from certain disaster (ibid.: 172). They opposed *Tanzimat* defending their privileges, which in the course of time had become their historical and natural rights (ibid.: 161). They had warned that the reforms would lead to no good, and only in 1878, when Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, did everyone realized that they were right (ibid.: 169).

However, in spite of his emphasis on the demise of epic time and heroic values, Bašagić's poetry bursts at its seams with bloody swords and, as in the

²² For a discussion on the Bogomil foundation myth of Bosniak ethnicity, see Fine (2007). The 1895 population census in Bosnia and Herzegovina showed that 42.94 per cent were Orthodox, 34.99 per cent Muslim and 21.31 per cent Roman Catholic (Pejanović 1955: 48).

poem 'Hercegovački ponos' (Herzegovinan Pride) from his first collection *Trofanda*, it is difficult to see any other reason underlying it but that of the heroic pride of a warrior (Bašagić 1928: 100–101). Its first verse 'Read the past of my house from a bloody rock', recalls Njegoš's 'make an altar on a bloody rock' – although without Njegoš's bitterness, despair and clear suggestion that there is nothing heroic or epic in it, but that this bloody rock gives rise to the 'poem born in horror'. One of the poems in the same collection has the title 'Pogibija Čengić age' (Death of Čengić Aga): it is a narrative poem much shorter than Mažuranić's *Smail-aga Čengić's Death*, and with an understandably different emphasis. While in Mažuranić's poem the death of Smail-aga is presented as divine restoration of justice and order in a world in which terror and cruelty had threatened to reign unchecked, Bašagić presented the death of his great-grandfather as a cowardly stabbing in the back of a proud hero by – a rabbit. 'Pride' is the most important requisite of Bašagić's poetic language, claims Maximilian Braun, and is always reserved for Bosniaks, while contempt and disdain become Montenegrins, the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, Karadjordje and the Ottomans (Braun 1934: 66–7). Yet the group that receives more than Bašagić's contempt and disdain is neither the religious nor ethnic Other: it is the Bosniaks who side with the Other. His first contribution to the journal *Bošnjak* was the article entitled 'Bošnjačkim trutovima' (To the Bosnian Drones). The drones, who never contribute anything, but let themselves be fed by industrious bees, are Muslim Slavs who consider themselves Serbs or Croats.

In every flock there are sheep which go astray, and it might be that there are some among us, but sacred duty calls upon every Bosniak to lead them back to the right way, if at all possible, but if it is not, then to tell them to their face that they are deluded renegades of a proud people, to which their grandfathers and ancestors belonged, and that they are mean traitors to their homeland (...), who give up their faith and their people for their money and interests. (...) The Orthodox do not surprise me, for their faith ties them to Serbs; I am not surprised by the majority of the Catholics, for they also have their religious and political reasons to side with Croats, but I am surprised by a great minority of Muslims, who follow the former or the latter. (...) Do they believe that in time the rest of us will follow them too, so that they can become apostles of Croatian and Serbian propaganda? (...) Oh, my heroic people! If this is what they want, you should get to know your own drones and at every opportunity try to exterminate them so that not a trace of them is left.

(Bašagić 1891b: 2)

The verb Bašagić uses in the last sentence is *istrijebiti*, exterminate, which has the same root as *istraga*, extermination, used by Njegoš to refer to the action taken against Montenegrin Muslims in *The Mountain Wreath*. When once asked by a friend to explain the striking similarities between his first play and Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath*, Bašagić denied ever having read 'the thing,' although Rizvić did not find this denial convincing (Rizvić 1973, vol. 2: 262). In *Abdullah-pasha* (1900), Bašagić's first play and the first play of modern Bosniak literature, one finds the similar triangular structure of a sword, priest and conversion, so striking in the other three works of South Slav literature written in the mid-nineteenth century. The historical background of the play is briefly narrated in Bašagić's *A Short Instruction*: in 1784 Bosnian vizier Abdullah-pasha Defterdarević received orders from the sultan to surrender a small part of northern Bosnia to Austria. The vizier and Bosnian beys pleaded with the sultan to reconsider his decision, but to no avail. Although Abdullah-pasha died of a stroke, in the folkloric traditional rendering of the event he was sent a poisonous drink, as a death sentence for opposing the sultan, which he received with the words: 'I'll give my head, but not a single stone' (Bašagić 1900: 111). As in *Smail-aga Čengić's Death* and *The Mountain Wreath*, here too the author preferred tradition to historical records: the plot of Bašagić's play is based not on history but on the national-romantic interpretation of it. As it would have been inconvenient to write about ceding Ottoman territories to Austria in post-1878 Bosnia, Bašagić modified the story by replacing Austria with Venice. Written in long rhymed verses, *Abdullah-pasha* does not rely metrically on the oral epic tradition; however, it is thematically related to the *sultanic epic poems*, a distinct sub-group in Muslim oral epic. They promote a specific interpretation of local history, based on 'the conflict between loyalty to the cause of Islam and the sultan, on the one hand, and the aspiration to autonomy on the other, which gives rise to a curiously divided consciousness expressed in the "sultanic poems": the sultan, surrounded by traitors, is saved by his loyal but slandered Bosnians' (Schmaus 1953: 99). They are the sultan's most loyal subjects who 'guard the borders of the Empire with the utmost fervour, and the traitors, the "emperor's renegades", are the sultan's favourites, embodied in the person of the grand vizier whom the oral poetic hyperbole shows to be a false Muslim and a fervent Christian' (Maglajlić 1999: 22). The fatal ambiguity again: the culprit is someone whose religious identity is not clear and obvious, but ambivalent and uncertain, 'one of us' who sided with the enemy – an apostate.

The play begins with a meeting of viziers in the grand vizier's office in Istanbul. The grand vizier hurries a discussion of Venice's request that two Bosnian border counties be ceded to it, and he succeeds in obtaining the consent of the other viziers by misleading them into believing that the two counties are, in fact, 'a church with two steeples'. After the meeting, we see him discussing a bribe with the Venetian ambassador: he is selling a part of Ottoman Bosnia to Christian Venice. The sultan signs the decision not knowing what it is about. The grand vizier's wife and one of her friends overhear his monologue and immediately give their judgement: the grand vizier is 'a traitor to the faith and the sultan', and he 'would sell us all to the infidel'²³ (Bašagić 1999: 199–200). The second act takes place in Abdullah-pasha's residence in Travnik, the Bosnian capital. He receives the order from a messenger from the sultan, but refuses to obey it. It cannot, however, be considered a rebellion, for he says that one should obey the sultan, who rules the state and defends the faith, but Abdullah-pasha cannot be a part of an act of treason in which the land of his fathers is given away by 'an infidel to the infidels, for a couple of pennies' (205). Although the play does not explicitly portray the grand vizier as secretly a Christian, which was a convention in sultanic epic poems, all characters begin to refer to him as an 'infidel' from the moment they realize that he is involved in a political plot with Christians. For them his religion is not determined by what he believes in, but by his political loyalty or lack of it. On uttering the legendary sentence 'I'll give my head, but not a single stone', Abdullah-pasha drinks the poison and dies, he says, 'as a Muslim' (206). In the next scene we witness the events that unfold in the pasha's house after his death: his daughters demand revenge, and a number of Bosnian nobles gather to decide what to do next. The pasha's last wish was to not let the 'apostates from the faith split our country' (217), but the act of disobeying the sultan, who is also the caliph, creates a tragic alternative: defending the faith by fighting the one who is the supreme faith's defender, the caliph. Two beys claim that the one who 'gives Turks to Vlachs' contravenes shariah law, and thus ceases to be the caliph.²⁴ It is obvious that the beys cannot resolve this dilemma, and as in Njegoš's play, someone with a higher authority is needed to direct everyone to the right course of action. As in *The Mountain Wreath*, here it is also a man of religion: Sheikh Fevzi. He does not address the problem explicitly, but as Abbot Stefan or Mažuranić's priest did, recites a hymn to the sun, liberty and homeland, and continues with praise for the proud heroes who refuse to be

²³ Hereafter, quotations will be followed by a page number.

²⁴ 'Vlach' is a derogatory term used by Bosnian Muslims to refer to Christians.

slaves by opposing tyranny and its chains. This resolves the dilemma – ‘justice is at our side and God will help justice triumph’ (222). With the decision justified by God’s will, they devise a plan: instead of taking up swords and fighting the sultan, they will send the pasha’s daughters to Istanbul ‘in defence of their faith – for the honour of their homeland’ (226) with a message for the sultan, for ‘one can’t be allowed to give the land to *vlahs*, and thus bring sorrow and misery to thousands of Muslims’ (235). The pasha’s daughters, aided by the grand vizier’s wife and the sultan’s mother, secure an audience with the sultan. Upon hearing about the plot, the sultan reverses his decision and sentences the grand vizier to death. In the final tableau of Bašagić’s play the sultan faces the audience, and the Ottoman flag is raised above his head, with everybody singing: ‘Turkish glory is dawning / better days are near / As long as there is the sultan, there will be people / God, give him a long life’ (255).

Until the First World War, claims Sinanović, no Bosniak gathering could be held without a performance of *Abdullah-pasha*, so popular was it with audiences (Sinanović 1996: 82). The present significance of Bašagić’s play was certainly not lost on them: the two counties that the sultan gives to Christian Venice in the eighteenth century stand for Bosnia and Herzegovina, surrendered to Austria-Hungary to administer in 1878.²⁵ The emphasis on the sultan’s capacity as caliph is more a late-nineteenth-century element of Ottoman state ideology, rather than something found in the original historical context. The idea of the caliphate only began to acquire importance with the waning of Ottoman military power, and was inscribed in the first Ottoman constitution, in 1876 (Buzpinar 2005: 19). Throughout his reign, Abdülhamid II (r.1876–1909) strongly emphasized the Islamic character of the Ottoman state and his position as caliph, ‘and with it the argument that unconditional obedience to the sultan-caliph was a religious duty explicitly stated in the Qur’an and hadith’ (Buzpinar 2005: 24). The act of treason as an explanation for a historical defeat curiously resembles another element from *The Mountain Wreath*: the Kosovo myth, repeatedly recalled throughout the play, which explains the loss of the Serbian kingdom as due to treason on the part of Prince Lazar’s closest lord, who sided with the Islamic conqueror. Lazar, as the story established in oral tradition goes, chose

²⁵ Rizvić claims that the resistance to ‘giving the land to the Vlachs’, and the explanation for the sultan’s consent to the occupation in 1878 as a result of treason on the part of his advisers, dominated Bosniak public opinion (Rizvić 1973, vol. 2: 256–7). Sinanović finds in *Abdullah-pasha* an even more contemporary meaning: the vizier-traitor, who gives away land, reminds him of Fikret Abdić, a secular Bosniak leader opposed to Alija Izetbegović’s Sarajevo government, who during the 1992–5 war ran the Bihać region in northern Bosnia and made peace with Bosnian Serbs and Croats (Sinanović 1996: 77).

certain death in battle over life as a Turkish vassal, and thus became a martyr for his faith. Abdullah-pasha also becomes a martyr for his faith, a *şehit* (240), by choosing death over surrendering a part of his fief to the Christians – which would mean converting it to Christianity. Although in *Abdullah-pasha* proud ancestral swords are raised, there is no battle in which they would be used, and everything is settled with the diplomatic skills of four women. Both in the original historical context of Bašagić's story and at the time of his writing the play, a battle was never an option: one did not fight the sultan in the name of Islam, and a small Muslim elite, after the failure of the popular uprising against Austria-Hungary in 1878, could not dream of trying to fight the occupier again.

However, the priest is still there. He recites praises to liberty and justifies the fight against tyranny and power and blesses the sacrifices it may demand. With his words, a character in *Abullah-pasha* remarks, 'he can turn a lamb into an angry lion' (223). Although he never mentions or alludes to his religious office, it is assumed that a higher authority stands behind him, which gives him the right to speak, and obliges the others to listen and obey. It is even more obvious with Njegoš's and Mažuranić's priests, who also recite praises to liberty, justify the fight against tyranny and bless the necessary sacrifices.²⁶ Moreover, Abbot Stefan and Mažuranić's unnamed priest absolves the warriors from sin even before they have committed any, for they are the instruments of God's will. Their words abound in religious symbolism – their warriors fight the Other of the different faith, which is not the case with Bašagić's sheikh – and are crowned with conversion: Mažuranić's priest baptizes Novica, the Islamic avenger, while the action in Njegoš's play has mass conversion as its desired aim. Bašagić's sheikh, however, wants to prevent a 'conversion' of two Bosnian counties. Nevertheless, disregarding the contextual differences between the three figures, vengeance is what they explicitly demand (Mažuranić), what the other characters understand in their words (Bašagić), and what the action of the other characters comes down to after listening to them (Njegoš). J. G. Wilkinson, who met a warrior-priest while travelling in Montenegro in 1844, was puzzled by his manner of uniting two offices in one person – by what Wilkinson defined as 'killing bodies and saving souls' (Wilkinson 1848, vol. 1: 517).²⁷ And the culprit is never the Other, it is always – even in Prešern's poem – an apostate, a renegade, someone ambiguously placed between *us* and *them*, by being one of us, but siding with

²⁶ The similarities between Prešern's, Mažuranić's and Njegoš's priests were briefly mentioned by Živančević (1981: 86). Rizvić also points to the similarities of function of the priests in *The Mountain Wreath*, *Abdullah-pasha* and *Smail-aga Ćengić's Death* (Rizvić 1973, vol. 2: 257).

²⁷ 'A most hospitable individual', he also noted without any irony.

them nevertheless: a Bosnian Slav Čengiċ who serves the Ottomans, Muslim Montenegrins who sided with the historical enemy, or the grand vizier, a *gâvur*, an infidel, who is actually Christian and serves the interest of the Christian state. Hence the paramount importance of conversion in Prešern's, Mažuraniċ's and Njegoš's works, and of the opposition to it in Bašagiċ's play: conversion is an act of sealing someone's belonging to a group. An apostate can be redeemed through re-conversion – as Novica in *Smrt Smil-age Čengiċa*, who was thus relieved of the ambiguity and became one of *us* again, or as Muslim Montenegrins who accepted conversion to Christianity – or 'redeemed' in death, as is the case with Čengiċ, the Muslim Montenegrins who refused conversion, and the grand vizier, because death also abolishes the ambiguity of their position.

Do these works present the grandchildren of the heathen Slavs as those who came down from the North and settled in the Balkans, only to slaughter each other for the sake of two Middle Eastern religions? Not at all. Despite the religious symbolism – altars, crosses, caliphs and crescents – what they do has nothing to do with any religion. The baptism of Novica resembles the act of drafting a soldier or recruiting a member to a political party. Črtomir's conversion is left unexplained, but it clearly does not follow from his spiritual transformation. Montenegrins tell their Muslim neighbours to embrace the faith of their forefathers to 'guard the honour of our dear fatherland' (855), and as long as they do, they can privately believe whatever they want: 'as for the rest, do what your heart desires' (863). The grand vizier shows his 'true' religious adherence only when he makes a wrong move in the political field. Treason, a political act, defines his confession. As far as the Bosnian beys in *Abdullah-pasha* are concerned, he could privately believe whatever he wanted, he could even be appointed patriarch of Constantinople, and they could not care less. But he cannot give 'their' land to the Christians. In the works of the three Christian writers, the political act of treason is cured by the religious act of conversion, and in the work of the Muslim writer the religious act of (secret) conversion is revealed by the political act of treason. The major works from the period of their respective national revivals show South Slavs not as fighters for Mohammed or for one or the other versions of Jesus, but as fighters for freedom or domination – depending on the observer's position and allegiances.

Historical Contexts, Fictional Texts and Political Programmes

There is no doubt that this is literature of nationalism: the literature of sword, as one of our central metaphors suggests. Prešern had been writing before Slovene political nationalism matured in the second half of the nineteenth century, and

therefore Črtomir sheaths the sword. Njegoš and Mažuranić wrote while their respective nationalisms were at their peaks, and therefore in their works the triangular structure is present in its purest form. In Bašagić's play, written at the peak of the Bosniak national movement, the triangular structure is blurred by the author's historical position: liberation from foreign rule is expected of the sultan, who is still – at least nominally – the sovereign of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and who should reverse his decision to let Christians rule the Bosniaks. Consequently, the sword must fall on the necks of those who originally advised him. However, it is worth recalling that the policies of the three writer-statesmen were far from this sword metaphor: after 1848 Mažuranić began his long march through the institutions of Austria-Hungary and became a trusted Croat at the court in Vienna. There is no evidence of Njegoš having conflicted with Muslims in Montenegro, in fact there is ample evidence that he did his best to stop local clashes and preserve the peace with the neighbouring Ottoman provinces. Bašagić was also trusted in Vienna and advocated not only the acceptance of Austria-Hungary's occupation, but a change in Bosniaks' cultural pattern as well. As politicians, all three writers were quite moderate in their respective national and political contexts.

Although the triangular structure springs from two aspects of the political history of the region, everything built on it is a result of the workings of *the autonomous laws of literature*. The first historical aspect in question is not just religious intolerance, although South Slavs have had their fair share of it.²⁸ In the first phase of their liberation from foreign rule, Serbs, Montenegrins and Croats in Montenegro, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina had to confront their 'brothers,' as they called them, their ethnic and linguistic kin who occupied privileged positions in the two empires, and who had understandable interests in the preservation of the empires. Fighting the Ottoman state, Njegoš and his Montenegrins actually fought against Bosniak beys, whom Mažuranić and the

²⁸ Njegoš and Mažuranić explicitly advocated religious tolerance. See, for instance, Njegoš's poem 'Pozdrav rodu iz Beča 1847', or Mažuranić's Canto XV in Gundulić's *Osman*, with the much-quoted verses 'Oh, be he accursed, that for faith / Turns upon his brother' (Canto XV, 469–70). Indeed, Mažuranić was opposed to the Illyrian movement's programme, one of the most important demands of which being that Protestants should not be allowed to take up residence in Croatia (Šulek 1965: 191). Moreover, Njegoš's and Mažuranić's religious tolerance set them against the majority of their compatriots: 'Their hatred of the Turks is excessive; they detest, and execrate them,' noted Wilkinson on Montenegrins in 1844 (vol. 1: 441), but in Mostar, where he observed members of all three confessions, he added: 'the Greeks and Catholics are more bitter in their hatred of each other, than the Turks and Christians' (vol. 2: 68). Here 'Greeks' stands for Orthodox Christians, as 'Turks' stands for Muslims. It can safely be assumed that Wilkinson did not intend to 'change their racial identity', and that he was merely following the custom. To put religious tolerance in a wider historical perspective, it is useful to recall that Catholics in the United Kingdom were emancipated in 1829, and that the Ottoman Empire's emancipation of non-Muslims – at least nominally – followed twenty years later.

Illyrians also perceived as enemies of the Illyrian nation. Mažuranić's main political enemies in Croatia at that time were not Hungarians, but 'Magyaroons', Croats who supported Hungarian rule over Croatia. As Bašagić's *A Short Instruction* testifies, once the border between the two empires stabilized, and especially after the Serbian uprising in 1804, Bosniaks perceived Christians in the Ottoman state, and not Austria-Hungary, as their main enemy. Bosnian beys demanded greater autonomy from the Porte, and even fought against it under Gradašević, but their loyalty to the Ottoman state was never in question.²⁹ This attitude grew even stronger after 1878, when Austria-Hungary began relying on Catholic officials to rule Bosnia, most of whom were Croats. This is the fatal ambiguity so poignantly reflected in the works of these four writers: the main enemy is not an altogether different Other, but 'one of us' whose *political loyalty* lies elsewhere. This political loyalty is translated here into *confessional terms*. Even Prešern, whose political Other was of the same faith, searched for a plot as far back in the past as he could, until he eventually found the story which made it possible for him to express the difference between Slovenes and Austrians in religious terms.

The second historical aspect points to the dynamics of the formation of national identities in conditions of linguistic unity, religious disunity, and conflicting political and economic interests. Throughout the nineteenth century ran the historical dynamic of the attempted mutual assimilation of identities which had not yet hardened into national ones: Vuk Karadžić's claim, which he inherited from Dobrovský via his teacher Kopitar, that all the speakers of štokavian dialect were Serbs, irrespective of their religion; Ante Starčević's claim that all who lived between Ljubljana and Bulgaria were Croats, and that Bosnian Muslims were the best Croats; Bašagić's claim that there had never been any Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, and that they were all Bosniaks.³⁰ What all these claims have in common is a disregard for religion, which differentiated these identities,

²⁹ The Bosniak historian Enver Redžić wrote: 'The interests of the Bosnian nobility and the Porte might not have always been identical, but temporary misunderstandings could not have put into question mutuality and unity between Bosnia and the Porte. (...) It is telling that after these clashes between the Porte and Bosnian beys, the broad masses of Bosnian Muslims remained loyal to the Muslim feudal class, and that Bosnian Muslims as a whole remained attached to the sultan' (Redžić 2005: 115).

³⁰ Neither Karadžić's article 'Srbi svi i svuda', nor Starčević's 'Ime Srb' is available in English translation, which may be the reason for a number of misinterpretations of the former, migrating from one book to another without any reference to the original text. Karadžić's article is available in his *Sabrana dela* (vol. 17, Belgrade, 1972, pp. 31–48). Its context, with special reference to Karadžić's ensuing discussion with Bogoslav Šulek and to Starčević's contribution to it, is explained in the book by the Croatian historian Viktor Novak *Vuk i Hrvati* (Belgrade 1967), which has an extensive summary in English (pp. 601–34).

and the recognition of sameness and unity based on a shared language. Karadžić, Starčević and Bašagić did not expect the other two groups to give up their respective religions: paradoxically, religion did not matter to them, even though adherence to different religions had created the fissure in the body of the nation-to-be in the first place. However, these claims also show the aspirations of the claimants that *their* respective group should occupy the central position in that unity. To mend the fissure in the nation-in-the-making and to achieve liberation from foreign rule, the other two groups, albeit already belonging to that unity, should have been *politically converted* to the centrally placed identity, and thus contribute to its strength. Conversion in the previous sentence is a metaphor. What is a metaphor in political discourse can be objectified in literature: the works interpreted in this chapter objectify the political metaphor and transform it into a religious and spiritual act, thoroughly stripped of all religious and spiritual connotations. Translated into political terms, the first two elements of the triangular structure claim that victory (sword) will result from unity (conversion). In this respect, the canonical works of South Slav literature in the period of Romanic nationalism do not differ greatly from other similar European examples. The difference is introduced by the third element: unity is to be based on religious identity (priest), and there were at least two of them – Christianity and Islam.

History can explain the choice of themes in literature, but history cannot account for everything in it. While this triangular structure, as the political unconscious of the four works, can be related to history and politics, everything that is built on it results more from literary impulses than from history: in poems and plays the imperative to tell a good story, measured by literary and not historical and political criteria, reigns supreme. Hence the liberty in treating historical facts in all the works discussed, from sheer invention in Njegoš's play, to Mažuranić's and Bašagić's departure from the facts. How can one write a Romantic poem about a demonic tyrant's fall, if the tyrant in question must be represented, with historical accuracy, as a quite sensible and just local ruler who fell into a trap? What happens to martyrdom and the greatness of Abdullah-pasha, if he dies of a stroke, as he actually did, many years after he had obeyed the sultan? How can anyone write a 'Greek' tragedy about the horrors of history, about an isolated Romantic hero and his inner conflict of loyalties, if warring parties sort out all their differences in a friendly discussion? Once the theme was there, its literary shaping did not follow either historical truth or present-day conflict resolution manuals, but the *logic of the chosen genre* and the *literary*

ideology of the epoch, using all means available to amplify the meaning: a bit of Achilles's inhuman greatness to increase Smail-aga's demonic character, slaughter on a larger scale to intensify the 'Greekness' of the tragedy or the operatic chalice of poison to magnify Abdullah-pasha's martyrdom. In the words of Stoppard's Player, 'The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means' (Stoppard 1988: 59). However, this literary amplifying is hardly translatable back into history and politics, for such a translation would demand ignoring the very forces which had shaped the poems and plays, namely the demands of their respective genres and the Romantic values which the authors ascribed to. This is even less acceptable if such a reversed translation results in political programmes which are the exact opposite of what the authors advocated as politicians and statesmen.

The prevailing moralistic disposition of much contemporary cultural criticism would demand that one explicitly express one's disapproval of the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of these nineteenth-century writers, in much the same way that the ideological disposition of official literary criticism in socialist Yugoslavia in the first years after the Second World War demanded that, whatever else a work under study might have been about, the interpreter gave their support for workers in their class struggle. Both attitudes are irredeemably ahistorical, focused on the present significance of what is being interpreted, and on contemporary ethical and political concerns, while altogether disregarding the past meaning of literature and its historical understanding. We may well believe that the conflict between the Trojans and Greeks might have been best solved around a conference table and ask whether Odysseus really did have to kill all of Penelope's suitors, but it is a very naïve form of literary criticism. Would Hamlet not have done better had he reported Claudius to the police, instead of taking justice into his own hands? Should an interpreter not explicitly state their disapproval of Faust's seduction of Gretchen and incitement to the murder of Philemon and Baukiss? Ought we not to demand that *Lolita* be banned as an apologia for paedophilia, lest someone else, less experienced in literary criticism, come to the idea that we harbour the same sexual inclinations? The demand that literature from past centuries be 'deconstructed' in order to fit our present moral and political concerns can be only ironic: if deconstruction, which is the other name for the ethics of reading, taught us anything, it was that literature is language which cannot be reduced to unambiguous and unequivocal meanings, let alone political programmes. An interpretation which would observe the full historical context, while abstaining from the reduction of complex language

representations to it, and which would take into account the surplus of meaning always created by them, proves more efficient in dealing with the troublesome ethical and political implications of past literature than ahistorical moralizing.

Prešern, Mažuranić, Njegoš and Bašagić did not create South Slav nationalisms. As with many other phenomena, here it is also not possible to unearth the foundational text, to which the whole complex historical phenomenon of nationalism can be reduced. South Slav nationalisms would have existed even if the four authors had never put pen to paper. The main contribution of Prešern, Mažuranić, Njegoš and Bašagić to nationalism is that they wrote in their own languages, instead of in Latin, German, Hungarian, Old Church Slavonic, Turkish and Arabic. They consolidated the authority of the nation at a deeper level by being subversive of the languages of the supranational traditions and foreign rulers, and this is what in their own historical context makes them nationalists in the first place. Even if they had only written about daffodils, they would have achieved the same result: testifying to the idea that there was an entity called nation, by proving that one of its attributes – its language – can be used as a form of cultural expression. Mažuranić's poem about the triumph of justice appears as an infinitesimally small contribution to the discourse of nationalism if we compare it with the 'text' written by those 170 severed heads which decorated Smail-aga's grave: the former was accessible to few, the latter could have been 'read' by many. The same can be said of Njegoš: the everyday minor clashes on the border, and the Lesandro and Vranjina affair must have had, in Njegoš's lifetime, an infinitely stronger impact on the development of nationalism than a play about the ethical dilemmas of the Romantic prince-bishop printed in Vienna. And of Bašagić too: the loss of the privileged position must already have been felt by his Bosniak audience before he wrote *Abdullah-pasha*, and loyalty to the Ottoman state expressed in the play could not have been created by it. To believe the opposite would be to succumb to what Said named *textual attitude*: to misunderstand the relationship between language representations and reality, and to ascribe the same attitude to the audiences of these four writers (Said 1979: 92).

Ressentiment Criticism

A curious event epitomizes the attitude of Bosniak nationalists towards Ivo Andrić: on 1 July 1991, Murat Šabanović, one of the founders of the Green Berets, the paramilitary wing of Alija Izetbegović's Party of Democratic Action (PDA), decapitated Andrić's monument in Višegrad and threw the head into the Drina River. The whole action was videotaped by another PDA activist, and the tape was sent to the PDA headquarters in Sarajevo. In an interview given many years later, Šabanović explained that he had been ordered to do so by Ejup Ganić and Omer Behmen, the closest associates of the PDA leader. He also mentioned that, when collecting money for the Party in Arab countries, top-ranking PDA officials had used the tape to demonstrate 'how Bosniaks destroyed the monument of their Salman Rushdie' (Delalić and Šaćić 2007: 407). Although there are no similarities between Rushdie, who in *The Satanic Verses* satirized the prophet's inspiration and some aspects of Islam, the religion he was brought up in, and Andrić, an agnostic from a Christian background who never even mentioned the prophet, let alone satirized his religion, for the PDA the latter came to stand for all offenders against Islam and enemies of Bosniaks. Several years before this symbolic murder of Andrić in Višegrad, and ever since, he and his work have been the target of a hate campaign orchestrated by the three most important Bosniak political, religious and cultural organizations: the PDA, the Islamic Community and the cultural association Preporod. Since it would be impossible – not to mention tedious – to list all instances of Andrić-bashing events, allegations made against him and people participating in this ever-intensifying campaign, the following list should be taken as a mere illustration of the type of accusations raised against and curses thrown at this Nobel Prize winner.

Muhamed Huković, one of the PDA's founders, wrote for the Sarajevo daily *Oslobođenje* in May 1990 claiming that Andrić's work would forever remain an obstacle to good inter-ethnic relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tanasković

1994: 226). In September 1990, Nihad Kreševljaković, the son of Sarajevo's PDA mayor, wrote in the magazine *Vox*, owned by a prominent PDA politician, accusing Andrić of completing his three major novels in Belgrade 'under fascist protection' while Bosniaks were being slaughtered in Bosnia (Tutnjević 1994: 241). Imam Asim Zubčević wrote in 1996 about Andrić's morbid anti-Muslim sentiment and his work filled with hatred, accusing him of facilitating Yugoslavia's accession to the Tripartite Pact in 1941 (Zubčević 1996). In the same year Mustafa Imamović, the leading Bosniak nationalist historian, denounced Andrić as a racist who planned deportations of Albanians from Kosovo and Macedonia (Imamović 1996: 265–6). In the summer of 1999, on behalf of Preporod, Muhidin Pašić demanded that Andrić's street in Tuzla be renamed, adding that – had he not been dead already – Andrić should have been put on trial for all the crimes committed against Bosniaks during the war 1992–5 (Tutnjević 2002: 222–3). Kemal Zukić, the director of the Centre for Islamic Architecture of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, wrote for the radical Islamist internet portal, Saff, about Andrić as a 'fascist sympathizer and favourite' who demonized Bosniaks and pitted others against them (Zukić 2011). Sead Zubanović, a publicist close to the Islamic Community, claimed in 2015 that Andrić was awarded the Nobel Prize thanks to the lobbying of the Četnik organizations abroad and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He further claimed that this prize justified the 'genocide' of Bosniaks in the Second World War, that Andrić had lied about having a PhD, and had offered his services to Ante Pavelić, the leader of the fascist Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War (Zubanović 2015). Nezim Halilović Muderis, imam of Sarajevo's King Fahd Mosque, built and supported by the Saudis, claimed in 2016 that Andrić had been a 'great Četnik ideologue' (Beganović 2016), and Fatmir Alispahić, a columnist for the radical Islamist portal Saff, accused him of racism, chauvinism and of inspiring the genocide of Bosniaks (Alispahić 2014). However, by far the most imaginative and daring was Aziz Kadribegović, the editor of the Islamic Community's journal *Preporod* – not to be confused with the eponymous cultural organization – who in 2006 quoted from a supposedly newly discovered letter from Andrić to Niko Mirošević Sorgo, a former Yugoslav diplomat, thanking him for dedicating one of his poems to Andrić. In this letter, Andrić allegedly refers to Bosnia as 'the environment of stench, suet, laziness and depravity of the followers of the Arab sham' (Kadribegović 2006: 202). Kadribegović, however, misspells Sorgo's name – who may have known Andrić

personally, as they both worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but there is no evidence that they were friends or ever exchanged letters – misquotes the poem supposedly dedicated to Andrić, and makes an error when writing the year of publication of Sorgo's poetry collection, which raises doubt that he ever had it in his hands. Moreover, if the reader looks up this poem in Sorgo's book, no dedication to Andrić is to be found: Andrić is never mentioned in this poetry collection, and the copy of this incriminating letter has never been produced. One may wonder how Kadribegović could have expected that such a puerile plot would be taken seriously, but it actually was: Andrić's allegedly derogatory description of Bosnia and Muhammad is quoted as the crown evidence against him not only by lumpenintelligensia on countless Bosniak internet portals, both in Bosnia and abroad, but also by scholars, such as historian Ivo Banac, who might be expected to know better about academic evidence and critical use of sources (Banac 2013).

This list only scratches the surface: beneath it lies a vast discourse which weaves together the most important themes of Bosniak nationalism. On the surface, it appears to revolve around Ivo Andrić and his works. However, in reality, this discourse employs Andrić's works as a pretext to address the pivotal themes of Bosniak nationalism. It aims to present a revised version of the histories of the Ottoman Empire and Yugoslavia, highlighting the roles of Muslims and Bosniaks within these states. This tactic creates a public sentiment that, masquerading as literary criticism, seeks to evade the scrutiny of scholarly historiography. While ostensibly interpreting Andrić's work, this discourse is, in essence, crafting a political programme – one driven by Bosniak nationalism and/or Islamism. This agenda is rooted in a deep-seated resentment that traces back to 1878, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was removed from 'the house of Islam' and incorporated into a Christian empire. This move initiated a process of secularization and modernization in this former Ottoman province. Except for a few exceptions, this discourse is propagated by amateurs lacking formal or genuine expertise in historiography and literary studies, who are regularly high-ranking officials of the PDA, the Islamic Community and Preporod. As it also serves to maintain political tension and constantly keep the most important topics of Bosniak nationalism in the public eye, Ivo Andrić has been given a place in Bosnia and Herzegovina like Salman Rushdie in the global Islamic revival – a reading which is guaranteed to raise passions – and those PDA officials who presented him that way to their Arab supporters were not too far from the truth: in the last

thirty years, Ivo Andrić was indeed transformed by Bosniak nationalists into a Bosnian Salman Rushdie. This was possible because Andrić, a secular agnostic who was politically and culturally a Yugoslav all his long life, wrote historical novels and stories that portray Bosnia and Herzegovina in Ottoman times in a way that is consistent with the picture painted by modern historiography, but does not confirm the revisionist aims of the Bosniak nationalist historians. In what follows, we will discuss the most important manifestations of this Bosniak nationalist discourse, which presents itself as literary criticism of the works of Ivo Andrić. We will begin with the first wave, which coincided with the first wave of post-war Bosniak nationalism in the 1960s, and then turn to the second wave in the 1990s and after.

The founding text of this discourse was Šukrija Kurtović's (1890–1973) long essay '*Na Drini ćuprija i Travnička hronika* od Ive Andrića u svjetlu bratstva i jedinstva' (Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge over the Drina* and *Bosnian Chronicle* in Light of Brotherhood and Unity). Kurtović, who wrote this essay in the late 1950s, was a politician and publicist without any experience or knowledge of literary criticism: in exploring what was for him an unfamiliar terrain, he obviously needed a guide and found it in Leonid Timofeyev's *Literary Theory*, a popular compendium of Socialist Realist poetics translated in Yugoslavia in 1950. Socialist Realism, however, did not take deep roots in Yugoslav literature, and in the late 1950s, when that literature was experiencing its second modernism, Kurtović's arguments that Andrić had failed to present scientific truths in a popular and accessible way, or failed to advocate a 'positive moral tendency', and had instead written a 'pure fantasy' based on 'poetic intuition', must have seemed unpublishable to the modernist editors of the Yugoslav literary magazines. The essay was published in short instalments between April 1961 and November 1963 in the émigré journal *Bosanski pogledi* (Bosnian Views), owned and edited by Adil Zulfikarpašić (1921–2008) in Zurich. This journal served as the main platform of Bosniak nationalists abroad: Zulfikarpašić's knowledge of literary criticism was as rudimentary as Kurtović's, but they shared nationalist convictions and goals, and Zulfikarpašić obviously knew how to use Kurtović's essay.

Kurtović's main claim – that Andrić's works spread intolerance and hatred of Bosniaks – is based on the following evidence: Andrić uses the term 'Turks' to refer to the ancestors of the present-day Bosniaks; he wrote his main works during the Second World War in 'Nedić's Serbia'; all Muslim characters in his

works are degenerate idiots, uncultured, perfidious villains and sadistic savages. Andrić also deliberately misrepresented history, Kurtović claimed: contrary to what the reader sees in Andrić's novels and stories, the Ottoman state was tolerant, and all ethnic communities lived in it in perfect harmony. Through his negative portrayal, Andrić betrayed his Christian bias and sided with the archenemy of the Ottoman state, Austria-Hungary, which occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 and annexed it in 1908.

If counting positive and negative characters in a novel could ever serve as a criterion for judging fiction, it would be easy to demonstrate that in Andrić's works all ethnicities and religions – with the exception of Jews, who are always only positive – have their fair share of 'idiots' and 'villains', as well as a corresponding number of complex characters who are neither devils nor angels. Kurtović, however, does not mind the negative characters of Serbs and Croats in Andrić's novels, but strongly objects only to the negative Muslim characters in them – blurring even the distinction between Ottomans and Bosniaks, since this difference is always clear enough in both novels – leaving the impression of believing that everything said about a character in fiction automatically applies to everyone who belongs to the same ethnic group in reality. Consequently, he demands that all Muslims in literature be represented according to the elevated ideals about a good Muslim that the faith and folk culture recommend. This demand strongly resembles the demands of Socialist Realism and Lukács's call for a perspective which describes the forces that create socialism 'from the *inside*' (Lukács 1963: 93): just as Socialist Realism had to infuse fiction with the ideals of socialist society, Kurtović's poetics demands that the reality of Muslim society be represented according to its own normative horizon, and by analogy could be called Muslim Realism. Kurtović also does not distinguish between the claims of literary characters and narrators in fiction and arbitrarily assigns the claims he disapproves of to the author. His knowledge of the plots and his understanding of the actions are fragmentary and unreliable, often giving the impression that they are based on secondhand information. He also has no clear conception of fiction, and reads Andrić's novels as documentary records of real events, trying to guess who among Andrić's contemporaries, friends and acquaintances is behind which name.

His main argument is that Andrić deliberately falsifies the historical reality of Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to give Bosniaks a bad reputation. This argument is, however, refuted by Kurtović himself every time he tries to

support it with evidence. For example, he criticizes Andrić's description of the entry of the French consul Daville into Travnik in *Bosnian Chronicle*: the consul rides through the streets, while Muslim women appear quietly cursing and spitting at the windows of the houses he passes. This was not possible, Kurtović claims, because it would have contradicted the customs and views of the time (Kurtović 1993–4: 396). Yet, on the very same page Kurtović claims that this behaviour of the Muslim women of Travnik was, in fact, a 'justified and sympathetic patriotic gesture'. Impossible and contrary to customs, invented to give Muslim women a bad image, or justified, patriotic and sympathetic? Cruel Ottoman methods of punishment – impaling, displaying severed heads on poles, nailing ears to wooden boards – were also impossible and were included in Andrić's prose only to misrepresent the Ottoman Empire, and at the same time Kurtović claims that these methods of punishment were justified because those who were punished committed crimes against the Ottoman state (ibid.: 393–4, 404). Andrić represented Ottoman society as corrupt 'in order to ridicule' it (ibid.: 399), and, at the same time, 'our Muslims knew well about the terrible corruption and incompetence in Istanbul. Everything was for sale ...' (ibid.: 398). Andrić maliciously represented Muslims as conservative supporters of the Ottoman Empire (ibid.: 422–7), and, again, Kurtović himself says that they 'had no other choice but to rely on Turkey' (ibid.: 398), they could find no other way than to hide in their own conservatism (ibid.: 417), and considered the progressive new generation of young Muslims 'traitors and enemies – Vlachs' (ibid.: 423). This is the typical argument Kurtović makes in his criticism of what he sees as Ivo Andrić's deliberately malicious misrepresentation of Bosnian Muslims: he singles out something as Andrić's mean invention, and immediately not only confirms it himself, but often also claims that it was a good thing.

At the top is Kurtović's idealization of the Ottoman Empire as a tolerant multicultural state – in which all religions and ethnicities were respected and protected, lived together harmoniously and in friendship – and his conclusion that 'our nation was far less endangered in Turkey than in other European states' (ibid.: 397). Andrić sides with Austria-Hungary and its occupation of Bosna in 1878 – Ottoman rule in Bosnia was certainly not an occupation for Kurtović – and ignores its 'imperialist intentions' (ibid.: 409), while representing as sympathetic those characters, such as Bosnian monks, who longed for a life under Christian rule (ibid.: 397). Thus, Ivo Andrić, a member of Young Bosnia who was imprisoned during the First World War for his opposition to

Austrian-Hungarian rule and his Yugoslav nationalist orientation, in Kurtović's interpretation becomes an agent of the Christian empire which seized Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Islamic Ottoman Empire in 1878. Kurtović writes his critique of Andrić's prose from the perspective of Ottoman patriotism and presents no evidence that Andrić 'spread hatred' (ibid.: 402) of Muslims in Bosnia in his novels and stories.

Kurtović pays Andrić only a single compliment: his style is 'beautiful' and his vocabulary 'rich'. However, Kurtović reminds the reader that such attention to stylistic detail is 'Gobelins-like', and that Gobelins tapestries are always made by *women*. From Kurtović's literary perspective, informed by orally transmitted heroic epics, sung by men, to men, about men's exploits, there is nothing more reprehensible than the judgement that an author lacks masculinity (ibid.: 431) and writes like a woman.

The essay, which obviously could not be published in Yugoslavia – and considering Kurtović's arguments, it is easy to understand why – must have been a treat for Adil Zulfikarpašić's émigré journal and the circle of Bosniak nationalists who rallied around it. Zulfikarpašić, a businessman and politician, was as accomplished a literary critic as Kurtović, but wisely refrained from attempting to analyse Andrić's fiction: in his introduction to Kurtović's essay he focused instead on Andrić's character and Ottoman and Yugoslav history. Andrić is a 'despicable soul' (*Bosanski pogledi* 1984: 131), an opportunist and renegade (ibid.: 335), a 'servant to all Great Serb regimes', who, as royal ambassador to Berlin in the late 1930s 'recommended to his government the introduction of racial laws', enjoyed German protection during the Second World War, and created a justification for the genocide of Bosniaks in his novels (ibid.: 133). The real motive for Andrić's hatred of Bosnia, according to Zulfikarpašić, is its *antemurale* position – Bosnia was the Ottoman Empire's first line of defence against the Christian West (ibid.: 132). Zulfikarpašić and some of his comrades-in-arms similarly intensified their criticism of Andrić as soon as Andrić received the Nobel Prize in 1961, elevating him to a 'communist ideologue' who owed his world fame and fortune only to the Yugoslav government (ibid.: 163).

Zulfikarpašić's émigré journal had some following both in Yugoslavia and abroad, but probably not strong enough to solidify such an image of Ivo Andrić in the Bosniak readership – until the late 1980s, when Zulfikarpašić returned to Yugoslavia and invested his considerable resources in reinforcing the already rising tide of Bosniak nationalism. He republished all issues of *Bosanski pogledi*

in Sarajevo in 1991 – which now became a kind of encyclopaedia of all positions taken in Bosniak nationalism available to all – including Kurtović's essay, and assisted Alija Izetbegović in founding the PDA by becoming one of its two vice chairmen. Zulfikarpašić was immensely active and outspoken, and in numerous interviews, public appearances and political rallies, he vigorously promoted his political views and understanding of Bosnian history. Surprisingly, this self-professed liberal actually defended an *estates of the realm* worldview: he lamented the abolition of serfdom and claimed that his father's loss of 500 serfs during agrarian reform was 'cruel and genocidal' (Đilas and Gaće 1994: 25–7).¹ Zulfikarpašić did not see Bosnia's entry into social and political modernity as a social and political measure, but as 'fanaticism' inspired by 'religious motives' (ibid.: 29): a Christian hatred of Islam. He also promoted the view of the Ottoman Empire as an ideal tolerant state that protected all religions, their institutions and their material culture (ibid.: 67–8). He defended the Bosnian feudal class's violent resistance to *Tanzimat*, a series of reforms in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire which, among other measures, tried to introduce legal, social and political equality of non-Muslims. He argued that these reforms were unnecessary and harmful from the point of view of Bosnian Muslims because they undermined 'certain achievements, that we shared with the Turks, from which we had no reason to distance ourselves or abandon them, since they were progressive and guaranteed our prosperity' (ibid.: 105). This, however, is a very unusual kind of liberal political thought: considering the legal, social and political inequality of non-Muslims as progressive hardly defines a liberal position. What shines through in Kurtović's essay, Zulfikarpašić expresses with disarming honesty: the Ottoman Empire was 'our state, the state which fulfilled our interests' (ibid.: 588), in which Croats and Serbs functioned as a 'fifth column' from a purely confessional point of view – to help the Christian Austro-Hungary (ibid.: 107). Serbs and Croats had this in common with the Armenians, Zulfikarpašić claims, who also as a 'fifth column attacked the Turkish army from behind' (*Bosanski pogledi* 1984: 84). In summary, agrarian reform and the abolition of serfdom in Yugoslavia was genocide, while more than a million Armenians lost their lives in a legitimate struggle against the fifth column. Ottoman patriotic sentiments,

¹ Since Austria-Hungary preserved the Ottoman system of serfs' obligations to their feudal lords, agrarian reform and the abolition of serfdom in Bosnia and Herzegovina were implemented only after the First World War in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between 1919 and 1931. See Donia and Fine (1994: 96 and 127).

revisionist views of history and Bosniak nationalism formed the background against which criticism of Ivo Andrić and his work emerged.

However, the second strand in the first wave which created this discourse was more modern. Muhamed Filipović (1929–2020), who would later become the other vice chairman and co-founder of Izetbegović's PDA, in his 1967 essay 'Bosnian Spirit in Literature – What Is It?', called Ivo Andrić 'the best and the greatest representative of literature which is not Bosnian but which has divided Bosnia more than many an army marching through' (Filipović 2006a: 5). In doing so, Filipović introduced a new argument into this discourse: he did not claim that Andrić misrepresented Bosniaks or hated Islam, but that Andrić was subversive and dangerous because he did not see the Orthodox and Roman Catholic inhabitants of Bosnia as *Bosnians*, but as Serbs and Croats, thus undermining the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rakić 2000: 164). In contrast to traditional Bosniak nationalism based on religious difference and ties to the Ottoman Empire, this argument heralds its more modern form: the replacement of the three national identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a supposedly more inclusive and overarching one – the *Bosnian* – which, however, turns out to be the *Bosniak* identity in the second step. In a recent article, Riccardo Nicolosi analyses Filipović's construction and relates it to the discourse of Bosniak nationalism in the 1990s. He claims that the Bosnian identity, which was constructed as multi-ethnic and is so inclusive that it has surpassed all ethnic identities and become pan-human, is in the second step rooted in Islamic and Ottoman tolerance and reduced to one of the three ethnic identities it was supposed to surpass – the Bosniak identity (Nicolosi 2023).

Filipović continued to make the same claim and in the 1990s became the leading ideologue of the secular wing of Bosniak nationalism, in whose books its main myths are endlessly repeated: Bosnia has always been what Europe only strives to become – a place of universal tolerance and multiculturalism, where all tensions have been brought in from outside; Bosniaks were an absolutely innocent people who had never harmed anyone; the Ottoman state had never imposed its religion on others; *devşirme* – 'the blood tax' – was a normal Islamic acculturation; Bosniaks were descended from medieval Cathars, who would have collectively embraced Islam, and thus the only autochthonous people in Bosnia known as 'Good Bosniaks'; until the end of the nineteenth century there were no other ethnicities in Bosnia; Serbs and Croats were merely immigrant nomadic Vlachs who were nationalized by Serbia and Croatia; Bosniaks never

participated in violence against Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War, they even protested against it, and they should remain what they were destined to be – the leading nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Filipović 1996).²

In this way, Kurtović, Zulfikarpašić and Filipović created this Andrić-bashing discourse. Its main statements are the following: Andrić equates Bosniaks with Turks, and imposes on them a historic guilt for the centuries of Ottoman rule. He offers only negative images of Bosniaks, showing his hatred for them, for Islam and for *our country* – the Ottoman Empire. He sides with Austria-Hungary and demonstrates his Christian bias. Andrić was an opportunist, who was born a Croat but later declared himself a Serb, acted immorally and was associated with Hitler, Milan Nedić and the Četnik leader Draža Mihailović. At the same time, albeit somewhat paradoxically, he served the ‘communist dictatorship’, which promoted him in return. Andrić wrote his novels during the Second World War, when the Serbs were killing Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to justify these crimes. By acknowledging the existence of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he undermined the unity of the country, since all the inhabitants of this country were only Bosnians. In the coming decades, very few new elements will be added to this list. What will happen is the rhetorical dramatization, intensification and dissemination of this discourse, and the corresponding effort to give this discourse a theoretical and philosophical grounding.

This discourse, as can be seen, emerged at a time when modern Bosniak nationalism came into being. We will see below that it was revived and intensified during a period of increasing nationalism in the late 1980s and 1990s. Muhsin Rizvić (1930–94) was the first to attempt to give academic legitimacy to this discourse. As a young man, along with Alija Izetbegović, he belonged to the Young Muslims group (Omerika 2014: 185), a network of Islamists founded before the Second World War as a variant of the Muslim Brotherhood and led by Muhamed Handžić, the leader of the conservative current of the Bosnian ulema. They rejected all ‘Westernization’, interpreted sharia literally, rejected all modernization efforts and advocated a return to the ‘original Islam’ of the past. They also rejected secularization and understood Islam not as a mere religion

² To this list, Filipović occasionally adds some chauvinistic remarks, such as that Bosnians did not swear until the Serbs brought swear words to Bosnia after the First World War (Filipović 2006b: 99–100), or that ethnographic studies confirm the Serbs’ propensity for incest, sexual exploitation of children, infanticide and ritual slaughter of the elderly (Filipović 1999: 68).

but as a universal ideology which governs all areas of public and private life. The Young Muslims advocated a pan-Islamist political programme, the creation of an Islamic society and the political unification of the Islamic world. They also rejected all but formal and official contact with Jews and Christians, and rejected Yugoslavia, arguing that Bosniaks should follow the example of Pakistan, a nation created on the basis of religious identity (Trhulj 1992: 122–7; Bougarel 1997: 341–3, 539). Rizvić was a professor of literature at the University of Sarajevo, and published a number of works in the 1970s and 1980s which codified the Bosniak literary canon, adding to the process of Bosniaks' national affirmation in Yugoslavia. In 1990, he became the first president of the cultural society Preporod. The manuscript of his book, *Bosanski muslimani u Andrićevom svijetu* (Bosnian Muslims in Andrić's World), which he completed at the end of his life, was edited and published in 1995 by his successor as the head of Preporod, Enes Duraković.

Rizvić's intention was to prove all allegations listed in Kurtović's essay – and in the footnotes he quotes extensively from it, repeating almost the whole essay – but in a form which should resemble proper academic literary interpretation. At the heart of Rizvić's argument is the claim that Andrić hated Bosniaks, and portrayed them in a negative light in order to gain advantage in the Serbian cultural milieu – which he joined as a 'renegade' – and in his diplomatic career. He interprets almost all of Andrić's works from a perspective which was obviously intended as a kind of psychoanalytic approach, attempting to read Andrić's novels and stories as involuntary symptoms that reveal the author's complex psychological state: guilt for being born a Croat, and either an opportunistic hatred of the identity he had to leave in order to become something else, or hatred of the identity he had to adopt. The most important evidence in this construction is the character of Omer-pasha Latas from Andrić's eponymous unfinished novel, historically a Serb from Lika in Croatia who converted to Islam, became an Ottoman general and in the 1850s crushed the resistance of Bosnian beys to the *Tanzimat* by decimating their ranks. Latas is, in fact, Andrić's autoportret, claims Rizvić.

This equation, which is at the heart of Rizvić's argument, defies logic. Latas cruelly murdered dozens of Bosniak beys, Rizvić believes, not because this was his mandate in a state which often resorted to such methods – as Latas had previously done in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, and had earned a reputation as an efficient military commander in precisely this way long before he was sent to Bosnia – but because he resented being born a Serb and

having to convert to Islam for opportunistic reasons. His cruelty to and hatred of Bosniaks is compensation for this resentment. How does this translate to Andrić? We will have to return to this later but let us assume for a moment that Rizvić is right, and that Andrić really 'converted', changed his identity from Croat to Serb out of sheer opportunism and careerism. In this case, and parallel with Rizvić's simplistic psychological interpretation of Omer-pasha Latas, Andrić would have hated the Serbs, not the Bosniaks, or would 'assign a historic guilt' to the Croats, and the Bosniaks would never have appeared in this naive psychoanalytical fairy tale.

This is just one of the instances which show that Rizvić did not worry too much about logic and coherence of his own interpretations. His knowledge of psychoanalysis was insufficient: he knew that the Oedipus complex had something to do with parents, but he did not quite understand what exactly (Rizvić 1995: 531). His frequent use of the adjective *psychotic* – which often refers to Andrić as a person, and implies that he was literally *insane* – is confusing until the reader realizes that this is not what Rizvić is trying to say, for his use of this term in other contexts demonstrates that he simply confused *psychic* with *psychotic*. No psychoanalytic interpretation of literature can be based on such knowledge. What Rizvić attempts to present as psychoanalytic interpretation is merely a succession of rather wild assertions and absolutely arbitrary misreadings. He starts from the assumption that Andrić suffered from 'complexes' and 'repressed drives', and created a number of literary characters which would, in literary fiction, do whatever their creator could not or dare not do in reality (ibid.: 76). Consequently, this empowers the interpreter to attribute all sorts of thing to Andrić as a 'repressed drive' without having to justify these attributions in any way. Kurtović, who had no knowledge of the basic operations of literary interpretation, freely attributed certain assertions of Andrić's characters to their creator whenever it suited him. Even more disturbing, Rizvić, a professional interpreter of literature at the academic level, does the same. Andrić 'puts into the mouth' (ibid.: 382, 401, 430, 485) of his characters his own derogatory views and sentiments about Islam and Bosniaks. However, when Andrić's characters make derogatory remarks about Christianity, Serbs and Croats, for Rizvić this is not Andrić's 'putting into their mouths' his own thoughts, but the characters speaking for themselves. Rizvić goes through Andrić's works from one sentence to another – regularly missing all the meanings to be found at a level above a single sentence – and finds a very large number of characters with which the author 'identified' himself,

but never attempts to justify these conclusions. Andrić regularly 'identified' with Western and Christian characters, but also with Ottoman dignitaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina who were not sympathetic to Bosniaks. If Rizvić is to be believed, in *Omer-pasha Latas* Andrić identified with no fewer than five characters: a leader of the Serbian community, a Croatian painter, two unlikeable Ottoman dignitaries and Omer-pasha himself. Rizvić never tried to justify these 'identifications': they are based, like everything else in this book, on his interpretative principle of absolute arbitrariness.

He arbitrarily projects meanings onto Andrić's sentences which are quite obviously not there, and never bothers to justify these projections in any way: for example, Rizvić interprets Karagöz's claim from *Prokleta avlija* (The Damned Yard) that no one is innocent in the prison he governs as Andrić's coded allusion to 'the historic guilt of "Turkified", Islamicised Slavs' (ibid.: 453). Similarly, Rizvić interprets Kolonja's position in *Bosnian Chronicle* between 'the two worlds, Christian and Muslim', as Andrić's reference to his own position 'between Serbdom and Croatdom, expressed allegorically in a form of identification' (ibid.: 384). Rizvić interprets the meanings, which are obviously diametrically opposed to the interpretations he wants to impose on them, simply as Andrić's 'duplicity' (ibid.: 267). The overall impression left by his book is that of a parody of literary interpretation.

It is to his credit that Rizvić, in his slow, pedestrian manner of going through Andrić's work, also recorded facts which refuted his overall argument. However, these facts never caused him to reconsider his thesis, or at least to modify it a bit. In reading Ljubo Jandrić's book of conversations with Ivo Andrić, Rizvić encounters a number of Andrić's sympathetic assertions about Islam, the East and Ottoman Bosnia, imbued with – in Rizvić's own words – 'tolerance and benevolence, with pointing out Eastern wisdom and Islamic morality' (ibid.: 634), but this encounter with facts that refute his main contention never prompted him to reconsider the latter. He finds similar meanings in Andrić's fiction as well: sympathetic Muslim characters, positive characterization of Islamic culture and depiction of the historical world from a Muslim point of view. Rizvić always records them with approval, and honours such parts of Andrić's novels and stories with badges such as 'artistic realism' (ibid.: 293) or 'realistic objectivity' (ibid.: 227) – realism and objectivity here obviously mean that Andrić spoke the truth – and even occasionally claims that some parts of Andrić's stories and novels look as if they were written by a Bosniak writer, or at least by an author who felt compassion for 'the tragedy of the Bosniaks'

(ibid.: 289), yet his overall argument remains the same: Andrić hated and misrepresented his people.

There are two elements in Rizvić's critique of Andrić's work which stand out clearly in comparison to the other authors who contributed to this discourse. The first is his justification of Andrić's use of 'Turks' when referring to all Muslims in Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina. Andrić's Bosniak critics, including Rizvić himself, find this offensive and claim that by not distinguishing between Ottomans and Bosniaks in his historical novels, Andrić places the 'historical blame' for Ottoman rule on the shoulders of Bosniaks (ibid.: 145). It seems that the equation of Ottomans with Bosniaks is much more explicit, for example, in Zulfikarpašić's insistence on the Ottoman Empire as 'our state', or in Rizvić's own blurring of the difference between them (Rizvić 1995: 78, 138), or by the insistence of a number of older authors and contemporary Bosniak academics and political and religious dignitaries that Bosniaks are 'Turks' (Bašagić 1900: 124, 150; Marić 2008; Imamović 2014), than by Andrić's historically attested novelistic use of this term for all Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. Rizvić, who for many years studied Bosniak written tradition and knew it well, was aware of this and pointed it out in his book: in the Ottoman period, Bosniaks did not reject the appellation 'Turks', but embraced it as a sign of their Islamic identification and citizenship – because they considered the Ottoman state as their own – and used it themselves (Rizvić 1995: 80). Rizvić also points out that Andrić uses the term 'Christians' to refer to Serbs and Croats in his novels, rather than using their national names (ibid.: 181) – one also finds the pejorative term 'vlachs' for them, or the equally pejorative 'Švabe' for Germans, in the characters' utterances – and that he demonstrates historical accuracy by changing 'Turks' to 'Muslims' precisely when the time represented in *The Bridge over the Drina* comes to 1900, the year in which the ancestors of present-day Bosniaks stopped calling themselves 'Turks' and proposed 'Muslims' as their confessional-national name (ibid.: 254, 257, 279). Is this not enough to at least drop this accusation against Andrić? For Rizvić, it is not, and despite all the evidence he himself has presented, he continues to blame Andrić for using the term 'Turks'.

While almost all other Bosniak nationalist critics accuse Andrić of falsifying historical records to misrepresent their nation, Rizvić accuses him of adhering too strictly to history. The Morić brothers were villains and bullies, and that is how they are portrayed in written Bosnian history. In the traditional, orally transmitted ballad, however, their characters have been given a more romantic

image. By presenting the Morić brothers in his story 'Đerđelez Alija' in a way that is more in keeping with history than with the ballad, Andrić 'morally and physically degraded those heroes of the noble ballad', claims Rizvić (ibid.: 20). In *Kritika bosanskog uma*, Tarik Haverić asked: 'Andrić did not want to introduce in his fiction the brothers Morić as "the heroes from the noble oral ballad", but as historic figures: the brothers were thugs, and *as such* he wanted to portray them. Why should it be "morally and physically degrading" to portray thugs as thugs' (Haverić 2016: 117–18)?

This is just one of the examples of Rizvić's unintentional defence of Ivo Andrić's handling of Bosnian history. Elsewhere, he reminds the reader that, for example, Andrić's account of the conservative rejection by the Bosniak beys to all modernizing measures introduced by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Bosnia and Herzegovina after 1878 is not historically inaccurate, that, moreover, similar descriptions can be found in the works of Bosniak writers, and that it is a 'realistic picture of the psychological state of Bosniaks at the time' (Rizvić 1995: 241), or that Andrić's depictions of corruption in Ottoman Bosnia correspond with similar criticism of 'Bosniak-Muslim mentality' voiced by Bosniak writers. In Andrić's works, however, this is 'spoken from a foreign mouth (...) with Andrić's *a priori* negative connotation' (ibid.: 228). It is not historically inaccurate – similar descriptions can be found in the works of *our* writers – but here it comes from a *foreigner*, and this makes it offensive and demeaning.

Ivo Andrić was born in Travnik and grew up in Višegrad and Sarajevo: why is he, for Rizvić, *foreign* instead of *ours*? Who are Rizvić's *us*? Obviously not all Bosnians belong. Rizvić's perspective becomes perfectly clear in his commentary on Andrić's story 'The Pasha's Concubine', in which the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the occupation by the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in 1878 serve only as a historical background to a human drama of beauty, innocence and evil. In this story, Veli-pasha, one of the Ottoman officials in Sarajevo, leaves Bosnia and Herzegovina 'coldly' and 'without any feelings for the Bosniaks, who are left at the mercy of the Austrian-*gâvur* enemy of many centuries', according to Rizvić (ibid.: 114). Here we find the emotional centre of Rizvić's criticism. Is it not strange that someone who criticizes Andrić for using the term 'Turk' to refer to all Muslims should here refer to Christians by the pejorative term *gâvur* (infidel)? This is no longer a literary criticism of Ivo Andrić's works, but a historical reflection of a former member of the Young Muslim group, a network of pan-Islamists and anti-Yugoslavs,

who cannot control his feelings and their expression when writing about what he considers a key event in modern Bosniak history: Bosnia and Herzegovina torn from 'the house of Islam' and incorporated into a *gâvur*, Christian state. Instead of lamenting this tragic event in his books, Andrić remained 'cold'. He never wrote anything negative about the Austro-Hungarian rule, Rizvić claims, and this was by no means accidental, this arose 'from his very Christian being' (ibid.: 252). Rizvić sees Andrić, a member of Young Bosnia – an anti-colonial movement of Bosnians from all backgrounds – an agnostic and political Yugoslav whom Austria-Hungary had to imprison during the First World War, as an *agent* of that *gâvur*, Christian world which defeated *our* state and took Bosnia and Herzegovina from it. This is why Andrić is *foreign*, and not one of us. Nor can Andrić's Yugoslav political and cultural orientation excuse him, as Yugoslavia was no better than Austria-Hungary: it was 'Serbian-integralist', and Andrić's Young Bosnian characters in *The Bridge over the Drina* speak of it with 'Orthodox Christian mystical fervour' (ibid.: 266). Therefore, Andrić always remains *foreign* and not *one of us*, and even if he says exactly what *our* writers say – *we* must find it offensive.

One anonymous reviewer suggested that this book explains which writer represented Bosniaks in a manner Muhsin Rizvić found to be appropriate. This has been discussed by Tarik Haverić, one of the Bosniak opponents of this discourse about Andrić, in his book *Kritika bosanskog uma* (2016). Rizvić praised Alija Nametak (1906–87), claiming that in his stories Bosniaks were represented just as they were. Nametak was also one of the earliest contributors to this nationalist discourse about Andrić, publishing an article against him in Zulfikarpašić's journal *Bosanski pogledi* (1984: 234; no. 18–19, 1962) under the pseudonym M. H. Stupac.³ The reason for using a pseudonym may have been Nametak's political reputation: during the Second World War, Nametak was the director of the Croatian National Theatre in Sarajevo, appointed by the Independent State of Croatia – the puppet state of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, which in a massive campaign of genocide exterminated 320,000 to 340,000 Serbs, 30,000 Jews and 30,000 Roma – and also published in the fascist journals *Hrvatski narod*, *Hrvatska svijest* and *Novi list*. After the war, Nametak was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, of which he served nine. Haverić reads Nametak's story 'Za obraz' (For Honour, 1942), which is today studied by

³ Rizvić, however, believed that the real author of this article was Muhamed Hadžijahić (Rizvić 1995: 169).

Bosniak pupils as compulsory reading.⁴ In it, an elderly Bosniak, Bećir Đuliman, talks about the tragedy that befell him and his family at the beginning of the Second World War. He lives in a mixed Bosniak-Serbian village in Herzegovina. One day, his son Vejsil arrives from the nearby town of Stolac, and recounts to Bećir what had happened on the preceding night: 'All is good, father, God willing. Soon there will be not a trace left of *vlahs*.' The reader may remember that *vlahs* is a derogatory name Bosnian Muslims use for Christians. 'Of the *vlahs* that went to bed last night in Stolac', continues Vejsil, 'one half did not wake up today, and even now they are being hunted and sent, as they say, to compulsory labour'. Bećir immediately understands what compulsory labour stands for – execution – but he is not happy about it: not because it is morally wrong to kill innocent people in their beds or at execution sites, but because *vlahs* are more numerous, and may be tempted to take revenge. In the evening, the Muslim men in the village meet to decide what to do next: the elderly are quiet, but the young demand that they all, as soon as night falls, go from one *vlah* house to the next, and 'dispatch all men to "compulsory labour", winking as they say this to one another'. The *vlahs*, however, have already heard what had happened in Stolac to their coreligionists, and strike first: during the night they attack Muslim houses, including Đuliman's, who – ostensibly hiding in a corner – watches his whole family being killed.⁵ Only his youngest daughter survives, and is taken away by the attackers. At that moment, Bećir comes out and with a hand grenade kills both the two attackers and his own daughter: 'Everything for honour', he says, 'and honour above all else'. Haverić comments on this story in the following manner:

Hardly anywhere else in South Slav literature is the banality of evil reviled as clearly as in these several lines by Nametak. Just imagine: all the young in the village are ready to go from door to door at night, gather the Serbs (who, until that moment, have done no harm to them!) and take them to the nearest pit, and no-one objects, saying that this wouldn't be right! And all the elderly argue against this, but only because of they are technically unprepared for such an endeavour, and not for some other reason, for example, because such an act is horrific and unacceptable. (...) Muslims in the Independent State of Croatia plan a slaughter of their Serbian neighbours, who have done nothing wrong,

⁴ The story is proudly displayed at Islamist web portal Saff: <https://saff.ba/za-obraz-prica-alije-nametka-zbog-koje-je-1945-godine-osuden-na-petnaest-godina-robije/> (accessed 8 June 2024).

⁵ This fictional description of the beginning of intercommunal violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina fully corresponds with its historical reconstruction, based on archival sources, presented in Bergholz (2016).

but the latter act first (perhaps because they had heard what had happened on the preceding night in Stolac and decide to strike first). And that this is not a Serbian fabrication or invention, but an accurate picture of the events penned by a contemporary writer, and that Bosniaks are exactly as presented by Nametak, is confirmed by the high priest and guardian of Bosniak authenticity, Muhsin Rizvić. (...) While cleverer communities would hide the existence of a literature such as Nametak's, Bosniak authorities include the story 'For Honour' in compulsory reading at school (...).

(Haverić 2016: 27–9)

The modern Bosniak identity was formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the basis of the rejection of the Ottoman heritage, similar – though much less radical – to the rejection of this heritage in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secular Turkey. Although nostalgia for the Ottoman state, based on sharia law and ruled by a caliph, is not a necessary element of Bosniak nationalism, which also has a secular wing, this discourse on Ivo Andrić has this nostalgia as its basis: from Kurtović's explanation that Bosnian Muslims 'had no other choice but to rely on Turkey' (Kurtović 1993–4: 398), via Zulfikarpašić's description of it as 'our state, the state which supported our interests' (Zulfikarpašić 1991: 588), to the following claim by Rizvić:

Andrić, actually, has exposed the real historical and sociological rupture in the Bosniaks, as an inevitable and, in the historical sense, logical temptation and the drama of their Islamic-Oriental being, which emerged under the influence of Turkish rule, faced with the expansion of the Western-Christian world, against which they waged war for centuries to preserve their homeland at the border of the empire.

(Rizvić 1995: 240)

The awkwardness of this sentence – which is preserved in the translation, and strives to be as accurate and literal as possible – is not accidental. Here, Rizvić emotionally formulates the core of his criticism, and very likely the core of all Bosniak nationalist criticism of Ivo Andrić. Instead of some mean falsifications and historical fabrications, Andrić, in his works set in late nineteenth-century Bosnia and Herzegovina, depicted the *real* historical and social rupture: this rupture was *in the world* and consequently found its place in the *represented world* of Andrić's stories and novels. This was a rupture between an identity that had emerged in an Islamic empire based on sharia law, which guaranteed Muslims a privileged position and hegemony, and which was rooted in Middle Eastern traditions and knowledge, on the one hand, and

a possible new identity which could have emerged in a Christian state, that was secular and modernizing, bringing Western traditions and knowledge, but which had nevertheless been a historical enemy for many centuries, on the other hand. Andrić's Bosniak nationalist critics do not necessarily hate Andrić: they hate this rupture. As they see it in Andrić's historical novels and stories, they blame the representation, not the thing itself. Whenever they see, in Andrić's works, a representation of this rupture shaped from their own point of view – not 'cold' and detached, but emotional and 'tragic' – they praise Andrić for his 'realist objectivity' and promote him to an honorary 'Bosniak writer' (Rizvić 1995: 227).

This rupture is still felt today and explains – among other things – the fact that not all Bosniaks support this criticism of Andrić's works. If hatred of Bosniaks, Turks, Islam and the Orient were truly demonstrable in his novels and stories, then quite likely all Bosniaks, Turks and Muslims would probably respond to it. But they do not. A number of Bosniaks wrote with admiration about his work (Midhat Begić, Midhat Šamić, Hatidža Krnjević, etc.), or opposed this nationalist criticism (Amila Kahrović-Posavljak, Tarik Haverić, Muharem Bazdulj, Nedžad Ibrahimović, etc.). Andrić's works are continuously translated into Arabic and Turkish, and admired by critics. Surprisingly, Turkish literary critics lead the way in praising Andrić: since its first translation in 1962, *The Bridge over the Drina* had been reprinted twenty-eight times by 2013, and since August 2004, the Turkish Ministry of Education has recommended the work for reading in secondary schools (Gürçağlar 2013: 193). Turkish literary critics praise Andrić's humanism and balanced treatment of both Turks and Serbs, and express surprise at his 'neutrality' (ibid.: 194–5). Moreover, Siri Korkut claimed that Andrić's novels and stories could be used as an effective means of promoting Turkey abroad, as literature written by such a 'Turkophile' can help with tourist and political propaganda (ibid.: 195). Orhan Pamuk also expressed his admiration for Andrić and stated that he considered himself Andrić's follower (Vulićević 2016). How is this possible?

The fracture mentioned by Rizvić is that between the two possibilities of Bosniak identity: one is secular, ethnic and modern, the other Islamic and traditional, and historically linked to the Ottoman Empire. The former has been developing in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of the nineteenth century, and although it never completely suppressed the latter, it obviously took the lead throughout the twentieth century. It was challenged in the 1980s when, in the

wake of the global Islamic revival and the taking advantage of the weakening of communist control of the public sphere, the promotion of the Bosniak identity as primarily Islamic and traditional gained ground. This Andrić-bashing discourse is but one front in this struggle for dominance, and it is hardly surprising that it revolves repeatedly around the Ottoman Empire – ‘the house of Islam’ for Bosniaks who insist on religion as the basis for their identity – and the year 1878, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was torn out of it, incorporated first into the Christian Austro-Hungarian Empire and later into secular Yugoslavia. This criticism of Andrić is inspired not by his works – in which his Bosniak critics have so far been unable to find a single sentence which could serve as evidence for their accusation of hatred of Islam, Bosniaks, Turks and the Orient – but by the sense of *ressentiment*.

That this is a *ressentiment* criticism is best seen in a short article ‘Andrićevo djelo u tokovima evrocentrizma’ (Andrić’s Works in Eurocentric Currents) by Esad Duraković, professor of Arabic literature at the University of Sarajevo. Since psychoanalysis obviously failed as a theoretical framework for this criticism in Rizvić’s 1995 book, Duraković chose Said’s concept of Orientalism as the basis for it. Andrić’s work is Eurocentric and Orientalist, and it ‘negates’ ‘Oriental-Islamic spirituality’, that is, Islam and the culture based on it. Duraković’s attempt could have been more convincing if he had offered at least some evidence for this claim, but instead he merely concluded that ‘the analysis of Andrić’s work in terms of evidence by citation is not a necessary condition here: the intrinsic and extrinsic approach has been skilfully used by many authors’ (Duraković 1997: 114).

Of these *many authors*, only two are mentioned in a footnote, Kurtović and Rizvić, as the essay on Andrić’s knowledge of Islam by the third author mentioned, Aleksandar Popović, is later dismissed by Duraković himself as irrelevant. Andrić’s work is a ‘literary Ottomanization of Bosnia’, ‘demonization of the Oriental-Islamic world’, demythification of Bosniak myths and satanization of Bosniak history. Andrić has not become a historian, as his misrepresentation of Bosniak history and his manipulations of it would be obvious to academic historians, but a writer who ideologically reshaped this history in his fiction. He presents a false history as authentic, his Bosniak readers accept this false representation as their own and it inspires in them a sense of ‘collective guilt, a sense of shame for their history and mentality, and a sense of utter cultural-civilizational inadequacy’ (ibid.: 117). In non-Bosniak readers, however, this portrayal arouses feelings of contempt for Bosniaks, and a strong

emotional urge to fight them, Duraković says. Andrić's literature, he argues, is steeped in racism (ibid.: 118), amnestying crimes already committed and preparing new ones. Those who accept Andrić's world as authentic, Duraković argues, will see the extermination of Bosniaks as justified. Those who admire him – his Arab and Turkish translators, as well as many Bosniaks – are in fact literarily illiterate and naively and immaturely fascinated by the authority the Nobel Prize confers on him (ibid.: 120).

It is difficult to believe that in Bosnia and Herzegovina – not to mention Turkey and all Arab-speaking countries – only Kurtović and Rizvić have adequate literary education and maturity, which is lacked by all those unable to find a single example of these accusations in Ivo Andrić's novels and stories. It is very unfortunate that Duraković did not find it necessary to support his claims with evidence, nor did he bother to explain his own terms. 'Literary Ottomanization of Bosnia' is obviously a variation of Said's 'literary Orientalization of the Orient', but such lazy rhetoric is insufficient and far from having the value of proof unless it is supported by evidence. Duraković does not specify which aspects of Bosniak history or which of its 'most prominent leaders' Andrić 'satanized' (ibid.: 115), because in Andrić's fiction only one can be identified: Omer-pasha Latas, who, however, is not accepted as a Bosniak in Bosniak tradition, as he is always referred to as a 'renegade' or a Serb, and was 'satanized' as the butcher of the Bosniak elite as early as the mid-nineteenth century.

As for Bosniak myths, Andrić wrote only about Đerđelez Alija, the oral epic hero, whom he portrayed in his first published story in a rather typical modernist manner of dealing with myth: he *humanized* him. It is somewhat ironic that one of the best analyses of this story was published by a Bosniak author, Hatidža Krnjević, in 1980. A specialist in oral literature, she saw Andrić's first story as reflecting the conflict already present in oral epic: the conflict between epic and heroic dignity, on the one hand, and lyric sensibility aroused by beauty, on the other (Krnjević 1980: 181). Andrić destroys epic pathos and the dead canons of oral epic poetry, Krnjević claims, not to portray Đerđelez Alija as a monster, as Duraković maintains, but to humanize him and show him as a lonely, unprotected and vulnerable being facing beauty (ibid.: 183–5). Why would this be offensive to anyone?

Duraković does not explain what exactly in Andrić's stories and novels arouses in him the feelings of guilt, shame and inferiority. Such feelings, however, cannot be caused by lies that other people tell about us: we respond to lies not with guilt and shame but with indifference or anger. The complex mixture of feelings that

Duraković describes as a typical Bosniak reaction to reading Andrić's works – which is really only the reaction of *some* such readers, who have in common not good literary education and maturity but nationalism and/or Islamism – is more akin to the feeling of *ressentiment*: bitterness, humiliation, powerlessness and inferiority. *Ressentiment* is the feeling that occurs when we think we are being wronged and have suffered injustice, accompanied by a sense of powerlessness (Scheler 2010).

Andrić is not a 'Eurocentric' and 'Orientalist' writer who 'negates' Islam because Duraković could find evidence of it in Andrić's works, but because he perceives Andrić as a representative of that Western world which 'conquers and subjugates' the Islamic world (Duraković 1997: 111), and of the Western world's 'cultural and civilizational hegemony' (ibid.: 112). It is no coincidence that all these accusations against Andrić ultimately boil down to one theme: the fate of the Ottoman Empire and the year 1878, when Bosnia and Herzegovina were taken by the rival *gâvur* Empire. This *ressentiment* criticism of Ivo Andrić and his work is part and parcel of the *ressentiment* felt in a section of the Islamic world, which Marc Ferro sees as a reaction to humiliation by the cultural, civilizational and political hegemony of the West (Ferro 2010: 120). It is difficult to see how Andrić could be blamed for this: writing about the takeover of Austria-Hungary in 1878 in *The Bridge over the Drina* or using these historical events as the background for other human dramas in 'The Pasha's Concubine', and writing about them *dispassionately*, seems to be his only sin.

Duraković's article on Ivo Andrić and Eurocentric currents was reprinted along with Kurtović's essay in a book which also attempted to give this discourse a semblance of academic dignity: *Andrić i Bošnjaci* (Maglajlić 2000). The collection emerged from a conference organized in 1999 by the cultural association Preporod and the Islamic Community, via the office of the mufti of Tuzla. With the exception of Nedžad Ibrahimović's contribution, which attempted to challenge the discourse analysed here, all other authors offered journalistic opinion pieces which merely repeated the same old arguments or reiterated the nodes of Bosniak nationalist ideology. In this regard, the editors' remark at the beginning of this collection – that learning how to properly interpret Andrić's works is 'an important element in [Bosniaks'] struggle for survival' (Maglajlić 2000: 7) – is more than indicative of the nature of this type of scholarly work. As might be expected, such efforts to combine academic knowledge and ideological struggle run into difficulties: historian Ahmed S. Aličić, whose contribution opens this collection, claims on the one hand that Andrić's fiction is historically

accurate, that he presented Bosnia's history even more accurately than academic historiography, and that he attacks no religion in particular (ibid.: 15), and on the other hand that Andrić had an 'innate idea of seeing everything foreign and Turkish in a negative light' (ibid.: 12). How did he see everything Turkish in a negative light and yet present the history of Bosnia more accurately than academic historiography, and not attack Islam? Munib Maglajlić disagrees: Ivo Andrić failed to equip his novels and stories with a list of documentary sources – and ignored Ottoman sources entirely – and so the documentary value of his fiction is only apparent (ibid.: 18–19).⁶ He was a 'Great Serbian' diplomat, claims Hadžem Hajdarević (ibid.: 21), Andrić was a slave to mythical thinking, and his fictional representations of atrocities committed by Muslims against Christians in Ottoman Bosnia call for revenge (ibid.: 23). Historian Salih Jalimam echoes Hajdarević's claim that Andrić was a mythomaniac and presents as a major discovery the fact that while interned in Bosnia by Austria-Hungary's authorities during the First World War, Andrić attended a Red Cross charity ball and donated four crowns for war widows and orphans, which in his view means that Andrić lied about his wartime internment. Jalimam thus blurred the distinction between prisoners and internees – the latter have freedom of movement as long as they do not leave their place of internment – and accused Andrić's 'Great Serbian nazi' interpreters of mythomania (ibid.: 30). Historian Safet Bandžović presents a catalogue of rumours, insinuations and defamations, demonstrating his ignorance of Andrić scholarship, in which the claim about Andrić's alleged contributions to the interwar journal *XX vek* (The Twentieth Century) under the pseudonym Patrius has already been refuted (Đukić-Perišić 2012: 348–9). Vedad Spahić, professor of Bosniak literature, claims that the real Bosnia is the exact opposite of the one Andrić portrays in his works, and that he represents a chauvinist ideology in his dissertation (ibid.: 48).⁷ Contrary

⁶ This comment is reminiscent of the criticism of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* voiced by a number of state officials and religious dignitaries in Islamic countries. Mohamed Husayn Fadlallah pointed out that Rushdie did not rely on 'scientific and logical arguments'. Iranian Prime Minister Mir Husayn Musavi criticized *The Satanic Verses* for being 'neither a critical appraisal nor a piece of historiographic research'. Shaykh Ahmad Kaftaru, Syria's mufti, reproached Rushdie's novel for 'its lack of scientific, accurate or objective methods of research'. The lack of scientific research and objectivity in this work of fiction was also highlighted by the government of Kuwait. See Pipes (1990).

⁷ Vedad Spahić was a member of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the PDA list (Hasić 2012). During the 1992–5 war, Spahić was the editor of *Zmaj od Bosne* ('Dragon of Bosnia'), a journal sponsored by the PDA and the Islamic Community through the office of the mufti of Tuzla. This journal was highlighted in the report of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia (E/CN.4/1994/3, 5 May 1993, para. 72) for publishing articles such as 'Every Muslim should have a Serb he swears to kill'.

to what one reads in them, the Ottoman state could have been proud of its confessional tolerance (ibid.: 57), and it is not true that conversions to Islam were inspired by 'hunger for power' and 'vulgar materialism' (ibid.: 55). Andrić claimed in his dissertation that the literary culture of all three religions in Bosnia was quite limited in the Ottoman period, but Spahić considers this judgement 'an attack on the spiritual essence of the Bosniaks' (ibid.: 58) and demands that literature written in Persian, Turkish and Arabic be counted as part of the Bosniak literary culture: if someone writes in a foreign language, Spahić asks, must that mean that he belongs to a foreign literature? Actually, it must – Kafka is never considered a Czech author.⁸ Bećir Macić sees Andrić as an ideologue of Greater Serbia and bases this claim on a series of either dubious or simply untrue assertions about the *aide-mémoire* on the Albanian question attributed to Andrić (to which we will return later). Muhamed Huković, the chairman of the local branch of Preporod in Tuzla, demands that the Serbian oral epic poem from the beginning of the nineteenth century *Početak bune protiv dahija* (The Beginning of the Revolt Against the Dahis), which tells the story about the First Serbian Uprising against Ottoman rule in 1804, should be translated into English and sent to the UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, who can thus see how this song promotes intolerance and incites hatred. He also recycles several of the commonplaces of this Bosniak nationalist discourse about Ivo Andrić and reinforces the idea that Bosniaks are eternal victims of their Christian neighbours.

The most ambitious contribution in this collection, however, is the chapter by Rasim Muminović, who was a Marxist philosopher until the 1990s, when he replaced writing interpretations of Ernst Bloch with a kind of discursive production which can rightly be considered the most chauvinist output of Bosniak nationalism. Muminović did not try to be very original: he collected the

⁸ Spahić repeats here a widespread claim by Bosniak nationalists that all Persian, Turkish and Arabic-writing authors who were in one or another way associated with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Ottoman period can be nationalized and transformed into Bosniak authors. The list of about seventy such authors was compiled by Safvet-bey Bašagić's in his book *Bosanci i Hercegovci u islamskoj književnosti* (Bosnians and Herzegovinians in Islamic Literature, 1912). However, the connection of many of them to Bosnia – let alone their Bosniak identity – is not entirely obvious. Bašagić lists authors who came to Istanbul or Cairo from Bosnia, but may have been Turks or Arabs and not necessarily Bosnian Slavs; those who served the Ottoman state in Bosnia only for a time, those who had one parent from Bosnia but never set foot in the country and those of whom Bašagić says that 'it is not known whether they were our compatriots or not' (Bašagić 1986: 22). There are also some authors whose Bosniak identity is more than just questionable: a certain Mahmud-pasha, born in Kruševac in Serbia, from a 'Tribal' (Serbian) father and Greek mother. What exactly makes Mahmud-pasha a Bosniak writer?

most frequently raised points in this Bosniak nationalist discourse on Ivo Andrić and presented them. The author of *The Bridge over the Drina* was a servant of the Greater Serbian ideology, he hated Bosniaks and inspired the genocide against them. How exactly did Andrić do that? He ‘deliberately portrays the rule of the Ottomans as tyrannical and the “domestic Turks” as traitors, and both allegedly tyrannically treat the “rayah”, cruelly, stupidly, arrogantly, as they are basically degenerate, perverted persons, Islamic obscurantists and fanatics’ (ibid.: 119). Nothing in Andrić’s fiction, speeches, interviews, letters or other records suggests that he might have viewed Muslims as degenerates and pervers. However, the philosopher Muminović has published two books in which he proves that all Serbs, since their coming to the Balkans, have been degenerates and pervers.⁹

⁹ In *Fenomenologija srpske genocidne svijesti* (Phenomenology of Serbian Genocidal Consciousness, Ankara, 1995), Muminović repeats several times that what he says about the Serbs does not refer only to *some* Serbs, or to Serbian extremists, but to the whole nation (10, 181). He vacillates between a catalogue of animals (‘sick monkeys’, 185, ‘dogs’, 186, ‘sick gorillas’, 224), but decides that it is an insult to animals to compare them with Serbs (194, 250), and opts for ‘Satans’ (121) and ‘Satan’s offspring’ (122). All Serbs are ‘mentally disturbed’ (153), ‘pervers’ (170) and ‘fascist bastards’ (174). The second, expanded version of the same book was published in Sarajevo under the title *Srbizam i stradalništvo Bošnjaka* (Serbism and the Suffering of Bosniaks, 1996). In it, Muminović repeats the claim that he is writing about *all* Serbs (36): all Serbs are ‘infantile’ (34), ‘paranoids and half-insane’ (32), mentally ill (32), morally disturbed (32), with ‘perverted consciousness’ (31), degenerate (35) and he also declares that Serbs are neither human nor animals (35). He makes sure that the reader understands that these diagnoses are to be applied to all Serbs since the arrival of Slavs in the Balkans (86), and writes a sentence that involves urine and bladders of those fallen in the Kosovo Battle (67), which cannot be repeated here for understandable reasons, but which raises the question of whether the Yugoslav educational system awarded the doctorate in philosophy too lightly. Ivo Andrić is called a liar in this book, who pits the Serbs against the Bosniaks with his lies about the Ottoman state (85).

‘Andrićism’ as an Ideology

All the scattered elements of this nationalist discourse were reassembled and intensified in Rusmir Mahmutćehajić's book *Andrićevstvo* (Andrićism, 2015).¹ Mahmutćehajić, whom his translator and promoter Frances R. Jones frames by labelling him a ‘Sufi philosopher’ (Jones and Arsenijević 2005: 75), studied electrical engineering in Sarajevo and received his PhD from the University of Zagreb in 1980. He taught his subject at the University of Osijek in Croatia and served as dean in the late 1980s.² In the years leading up to the war in Yugoslavia, he ‘was the key strategist of Bosnian independence’ and also ‘instrumental in establishing the Patriotic League’, the paramilitary wing of the PDA which would later become the Muslim-dominated Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Banac 2000: x).³ From 1991 to 1994, when he resigned, Mahmutćehajić was vice-president and minister of energy, mines and industry in the PDA government, responsible for organizing weapons manufacturing. Banac notes that ‘all forces (...) that promoted the negotiated settlement of the Bosnian war’ had a prominent opponent in Mahmutćehajić, and that the diplomacies of major powers blamed him for obtaining military aid for Bosnian Muslim forces from the ‘wrong countries’, namely Iran (ibid.: x). The founder of the paramilitary forces, the opponent of a negotiated settlement to end the war and the link

¹ The first chapter of this book is available in English translation as ‘Andrićism: An Aesthetics for Genocide’, *East European Politics & Societies* 27.4 (2013), 619–67. Wherever possible, I will quote from this English-language translation.

² For Mahmutćehajić's career, see Filandra (1998: 378 and 381–2) and Banac (2000: vii–xi).

³ Although the Army claimed to be all-Bosnian, it was, in fact, a purely Bosnian Muslim force. Filandra recounts the visit of the commander, General Rasim Deliç, to the First Battalion of the Seventh Muslim Brigade on 9 September 1993: for the occasion, the battalion had three flags, one with the state coat of arms, a green ‘national’ flag and a black jihadi flag with Arabic inscription as Islamic. To greet the commander, the unit shouted, ‘sebiluna al-jihad’ (our way is jihad) and sang a modified version of a song sung by fascist Ustaša units in the Second World War. ‘This aspect made this unit prestigious and elite throughout the whole army’, Filandra concludes (2012: 326). For more on the army's activities during the 1992–5 war, see Schindler (2007).

between the PDA government and foreign Islamist forces began to reinvent himself from 1995 as the promoter of the image of Bosnia as 'unity in diversity' and of dialogue and tolerance. Mahmutćehajić's commitment to being on the side of unity, dialogue and tolerance, however, is only 'at least official', as his translator Jones says of the cosmopolitanism of Alija Izetbegović's wartime government (Jones 2011: 20). It is difficult to summarize his position on this or any other topic, due to the peculiarities of his discourse, ridden with contradictions and inconsistencies, vagueness and imprecision, assertions without any supporting evidence, counterfactual claims and his belief that rhetorical variations have the power of proof. What may appear as linguistic or stylistic inaptitude in Mahmutćehajić's writing actually results from his attempts to always hold two opposing positions: to present himself as a critic of all ideologies and at the same time as a representative of the truth handed down to us from above; as a Bosnian patriot and as a proponent of a global Muslim state; as an advocate of equality and as an Islamist who opposes secularism; as a moralist who deplores killing, bloodshed and destruction, and as the founder of a paramilitary force responsible for much of that same killing and bloodshed; as a Bosniak nationalist and as a champion of tolerance, trust and 'unicity'. Bridging these positions is very difficult indeed, and in order to do so, Mahmutćehajić has to resort to the vaguest style which only occasionally achieves conceptual clarity. In general, it is clear that Mahmutćehajić is an opponent of rationalism and secularism, liberalism and modernity, an anti-modernist of René Guénon's variety: since the times of the Enlightenment, the West has fallen into barbarism (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 34); modern Western civilization is materialistic and intellectually barren because, mired in positivism and agnosticism, it does not rely on transcendent principles (ibid.: 56).⁴ Mahmutćehajić, like all other anti-modernists, believes that salvation lies in returning to the tradition, which stands for religion, or more specifically to the Tradition, which stands for the Islamic holy book.⁵ The 'being of Bosnia', which is 'the treasury of Tradition', cannot be understood without understanding the difference between the Tradition and the

⁴ I quote from the translation of *Bosnia the Good* by Marina Bowder, Frances R. Jones, Merima Osmankadić and Oto Lukačević (Mahmutćehajić 2000a); however, I will also quote from the original (1997) to point the ways in which the translators have altered the source text in order to soften its extreme edges. Since the modifications are too numerous, only a representative sample will be included.

⁵ On the tradition of European anti-modernism, see Compagnon (2005) and Stern (1961).

'paganism of modernity' (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 8).⁶ Christianity, in his view, is responsible for much of the moral decay in Europe: Western culture has always been incapable of understanding how detrimental its opposition to the rights of others to choose their own way of life is (ibid.: 219); the genocide of Jews and Muslims in Europe, which has been going on for centuries, cannot be explained without considering Christianity as a core characteristic of Europe (ibid.: 204); crimes committed against Bosnia are always discussed only as simple, individual crimes, instead of analysing them from the perspective of the sacred tradition of the perpetrators – which is Christianity (ibid.: 212).⁷

Rusmir Mahmutćehajić's intellectual and social profile fits perfectly into the description of the 'new Islamist intellectual' outlined by Olivier Roy (1994). Mahmutćehajić sees contemporary history primarily as a struggle between Christianity and Islam, and the 1992–5 Bosnian war as only an instance of this global conflict. Although the war certainly had a religious dimension, prevailing scholarly interpretations see it as a conflict of three nationalisms, each defined in *the second instance* by Islam, Roman Catholicism or Orthodox Christianity (Abazović 2014: 39).⁸ Mahmutćehajić, however, sees both the war and Bosnia's present as a conflict between three confessions: as in the times of the Ottoman Empire, Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs appear in his writings only as bearers of their respective 'religious teachings'. The possibility that some of them might be agnostic or atheist, or adherents of ideas which have nothing to do with theology, is never considered. Hence his 'inappropriate theologizing of politics' (Filandra 2012: 169), evident in his preference for the term 'Muslims' instead of the official term 'Bosniaks' for Bosnians of Islamic cultural background. When Bosniak intellectuals discussed renaming themselves in the years before the war – the Bosniak communist and intellectual elite chose the name 'Muslims' in the 1970s – Mahmutćehajić was among those who opposed it, claiming that renaming

⁶ 'Novovjeko poganstvo', is translated into English as 'the shallow vulgarity of our new-age outlook' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 6) instead of as 'paganism of modernity'. 'Novovjeko' refers to the historical period following the Middle Ages, usually referred to in English as the modern period. That Mahmutćehajić is not referring to a 'new-age outlook', but to modernity becomes obvious in the second part of this paragraph when he contrasts 'the society based on Tradition', that is, religion, with 'the secular society established for the purpose of gaining material well-being' (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 8). Since the translators correctly translate 'novovjeka civilizacija' as 'modern civilization' later in the texts (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 58), it transpires that they were not unfamiliar with the meaning, but may have found Mahmutćehajić's association of modernity with paganism too compromising.

⁷ The English translation modifies this sentence in such a manner that Christianity as such does not appear as the basis for the crimes, and substitutes this with 'the use of Christianity by the anti-Bosnian elites' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 217).

⁸ The same is true of the larger Yugoslav conflict, of which the Bosnian conflict was but a part. For an instructive overview of the prevailing schools of interpretation, see the first chapter in Jović (2009).

would weaken the sense of belonging to Islam, which makes no distinction based on race, ethnicity and language. He accused his opponents of promoting 'ideologies and worldviews of the lower order', which were secondary when compared to belonging to Islam: 'Choosing between Bosnia as the homeland of Bosniaks, and Islam as the "homeland" of Muslims, he chose Islam' (ibid.: 168). For those familiar with political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the emphasis on one of these two designations is crucial: as Bosniaks, they are one of the three Bosnian nations, defined by their culture, history and traditions, and may even be atheists and agnostics; as Muslims, they are members of the 'nation of Islam', defined primarily by their religion. This seemingly innocuous question has quite significant consequences, as we shall see shortly.

Modern culture, Mahmutćehajić argues, resembles a tree without roots: the social order of the contemporary world is not based on a 'transcendental principle' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 57) – that is, it is secular, with sovereignty derived from people instead of from God and his holy book. 'But for a Muslim, law in its totality is a part of religion', claims Mahmutćehajić (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 55).⁹ 'Islam's laws are God's laws, but the Message and the Example of God's Messenger oblige people of Islam to testify to their faith, before all nations, in carrying out God's laws and prohibitions within their own communities' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 24). This is, in a nutshell, the very self-declaration of an Islamist and the definition of the Islamic political imagination: Islam is a political ideology as much as a religion (Roy 1994: vii–ix). Only God legislates, 'neither the people nor the parliament nor the sovereign can be sources of law' (ibid.: 61); and the inevitable consequence is the rejection of the notion of popular sovereignty. Mahmutćehajić rejects democracy quite explicitly in a brief discussion of Plato. He lists Plato's main forms of political order, positioned on the scale from the best, which is aristocratic rule, via timocracy, oligarchy and democracy, to tyranny as the worst. 'Aristocracy corresponds today to theocracy' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 35). This is how Mahmutćehajić translates Plato: theocracy is the best political order. Theocracy is the rule of God, through the medium of his book; in practical terms, among Muslim societies, theocracy is Iran, where the *ulema* rules (Filandra 2012: 83). 'Theocracy is the rule of the higher order', claims Mahmutćehajić (1997: 43), but the English translation omits this sentence (Mahmutćehajić 2000b: 35). 'Democracy by

⁹ The English translation modifies this sentence by introducing a general religious perspective instead of the Muslim one: 'From the religious perspective religion and law are inseparable' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 57).

its very nature is the precursor of dictatorship and demagogy', continues the author (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 43): it is in the *nature of democracy* to degenerate into dictatorship or demagogy.¹⁰ Focusing on the region, Mahmutćehajić claims that Croatia and Serbia were dictatorships and demagogies in the 1990s, while Bosnia and Herzegovina was a democracy – an assertion that is in dire need of some supporting evidence – but in the future Bosnians should be 'directed towards "general good" which is realised by following transcendent principles' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 36): Bosnians should be steered away from secular democracy based on popular sovereignty, towards the theocratic system. Due to 'the complexity of Bosnian culture', Mahmutćehajić argues, in Bosnia 'the theory of secularism cannot be applied in the same way as in the West' (Mahmutćehajić 2003: 249) – although even more complex societies, such as India, testify that secularism greatly helps in managing religious diversity. 'This will require a fundamental and decisive reconsidering and denying of lower forms of freedom, and re-establishment of order' (Mahmutćehajić, 1997: 44) – naturally, in theocracy some forms of freedom will have to go, as in the English translation the verb 'denying' had to go.¹¹

On what will this theocratic system be based? Which 'transcendent principles' are Bosnians to follow when they are divided between two religions – to put aside, as Mahmutćehajić does, all those who have no religion at all? 'Islam considers itself the final and most complete message from God', Mahmutćehajić reminds the reader (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 23). The followers of Muhammad have:

a task of building a model community, guided by their obligation to establish a place where people will be brought into God's moral structure (*madina*). Wherever Muslims are living, they should order their community and their society on the basis of the Message and Example of God's Messenger. They should desire that the whole world be transformed into a *madina*, a community of believers.

(ibid.: 23–4)

Those who are not Muhammad's followers, such as Christians, 'are ruled by their own sacred laws'; however, '[t]heir independence ceases only at the point where it limits or endangers the primacy of Islam as the final and complete

¹⁰ The translators kindly soften the edges again: 'Democracy is, however, always vulnerable to displacement or demagogy' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 35) – not quite the same meaning as in the source text.

¹¹ On the conflict between the secular-democratic and theocratic political conceptions in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Jović (2013: 152–4).

God's message' (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 27–8). This is Mahmutćehajić's political vision: a theocratic state, based on Islamic law, in which non-Muslims can enjoy freedom as long as it does not contravene *the primacy of Islam*. This is the old, traditional status of *dhimmis*, 'protected' and 'tolerated,' just as he envisaged it in December 1990: Serbs and Croats had to adapt all aspects of their development to those of the Bosnian Muslims (*Srebrenica Report*: 328). They cannot be put on an equal footing with Muslims, they are only tolerated as long as they submit to Islamic law. Even tolerance has its limits: to tolerate what contravenes Islam is impossible, because otherwise '[t]olerance becomes the name for the abandonment of the basic principles without which religion is not possible' (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 56).¹² This vision is not limited to Bosnia and Herzegovina: it is global. Mahmutćehajić explains this in the following paragraph, which is – we can now say unsurprisingly – omitted in the English translation of *Bosnia the Good*: 'The world community of Muslims is the categorical and integral political ideal. This community is determined not by human, but by God's laws. No sovereign or authority can change these laws. This is the multiplicity of laws based on God's commands' (ibid.: 31). This is, according to Mahmutćehajić, how Islam facilitates the unity in diversity. This unity appears to be very clearly structured: Islam preserves its primacy, and from that position supports, 'tolerates,' those who submit to it, as long as they respect the primacy of Islam. If unity in diversity is the dialogue between the sacred traditions, one wonders, what – under the circumstances – could this dialogue be about? It is certainly not a dialogue of cultures, comments Nicolosi in his analysis of *Bosnia the Good*, as it is based on the recognition of Islam's supremacy (Nicolosi 2023: 116). This is a crypto-nationalist thesis disguised as multiculturalism.

Mahmutćehajić's opposition to nationalism is convincing only when it is voiced from the perspective of a cosmopolitan global Muslim state, in which all ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences disappear under the bright light of Islam. When he discusses Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, his arguments are those of all ethno-nationalists. He calls on a dialogue of mutual recognition and complete honesty, and even appears ready to admit that in the 1992–5 civil war 'there were no innocents among the political and military leaders in all three parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina' (Mahmutćehajić 2000b: 37), but just as the reader pricks up her ears to hear some self-criticism from the vice-president of the wartime Bosniak government – what one hand has offered, the other takes

¹² Mahmutćehajić's view of the value of tolerance is omitted in the English translation (2000a: 57).

away: 'Greater Serbian' and 'Greater Croatian' forces supported and encouraged Bosniak politicians who advocated an Islamic state and opposed the secular one (Mahmutćehajić 2000b: 43); they may have even financed those Islamist Bosniak politicians (ibid.: 49); the Islamic Mujahaddin units in Bosnia – holy warriors for Islam from other Muslim countries – 'have been connected with the presence of the French security services' and 'the leading Western nations opened the door to Iranian activity in Bosnia' (ibid.: 60). Thus, self-criticism turns into its opposite: rogue Bosniak politicians were paid by Serbs and Croats to advocate an Islamic state in Bosnia, while for the Mujahaddin units and Iranian interference in the war the responsibility lies with the 'West', claims this advocate of the Islamist, theocratic state. After citing a number of ethno-nationalist claims by Bosnian Serb and Croat politicians, Mahmutćehajić adds: 'One could quote a host of examples of reactions by Bosniak politicians that exactly mirror anti-Bosnian propaganda' (ibid.: 72) – however, one does not quote them. In *Bosnia the Good*, one reads the following lyrical paragraph:

The blood of *shaheeds*, those who testified with their lives that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger, cleanses this world, and enables the scent of the rose, its testimony to the love of God, and the Paradise open to those who refuse to be enslaved to anything but God.

(1997: 134, emphasis added)

Shaheeds, Islamic martyrs who died to testify that Muhammad is God's Messenger, in the English translation surprisingly become martyrs for Bosnia's multi-confessional and multi-ethnic future:

The blood of those who died in the belief that Bosnia stands for all faiths and all peoples cleanses the world. Thus we are enabled to perceive the scent of the rose, its testimony to the love of God, and the Paradise open to those who refuse to be enslaved, or allow others to be enslaved, to anything but God.

(Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 143, emphasis added)

Mahmutćehajić's ethno-nationalism is most evident in his reinterpretation of Bosniak history. In almost all of his publications, from *Živa Bosna* (1994) to the recent work *Andrićizam* (2015), he repeats the cornerstones of contemporary Bosniak mytho-history: in addition to the myth of the ideal tolerance of non-Muslims in the Ottoman state, these are also the representation of Muslims as the victims of a centuries-long genocide in Europe, the myth of the Bosnian uninterrupted statehood from the Middle Ages to the present and the famous *Bogomil* myth. Their main purpose, as Srećko M. Džaja noted, is 'to marginalize

the Serbian and Croatian presence in Bosnia' (Džaja 2003: 58) and 'to create the idea of Bosniaks as the cornerstone people' in it (ibid.: 53). The *Bogomil* myth was created at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of the joint efforts of several Romantic historians and Austro-Hungarian officials, who sought to create a Bosnian nation in order to suppress already formed Serbian and Croatian identities in occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹³ Due to the almost complete lack of historical evidence, this was merely an assumption which crumbled when twentieth-century historians, equipped with advanced methodology and some counterevidence, re-examined it.¹⁴ The myth maintained that after the Ottoman conquest in the mid-fifteenth century, the members of the medieval Bosnian Church, which was supposedly heretical and dualist, collectively embraced Islam which would make them the ancestors of the present-day Bosniaks, and the latter the only true heirs of ancient Bosnians. According to the *Bogomil* myth, the followers of the Bosnian Church were theologically similar to dualist, neo-Manichean Cathars, and were considered heretics by the Roman Catholic and Serbian Orthodox churches, which instigated a genocidal campaign against them. As victims of their neighbours both from the east (Serbia) and from the west (Croatia), the *Bogomil* saw their salvation in Islam, which was in any event theologically closer to their beliefs than Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and converted *en masse*. The twentieth-century historians, however, demonstrated that it was not a dualist or heretical church; that its ritual was similar to the Catholic and Orthodox practice; that it was not persecuted, as the churches coexisted cordially and peacefully, and members of all three churches were present at the court; that it was never a state church, and that there is no evidence that the majority of the population ever belonged to it; that by the time of the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia in the 1460s, only a handful of its members remained, and sought refuge in Dubrovnik; that *en masse* conversion to Islam never occurred. Rather, it was a slow and gradual process, which took place only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Bosnian Church was long gone.

¹³ The leading role in creating the *Bogomil* myth belonged to Austro-Hungarian administrators Janos von Asboth and Benjamin Kállay, who invented and promoted it in the 1880s in order to provide ideological support for separating Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbia and Croatia by supposedly proving that only Muslims, the group Austria-Hungary relied on after occupying the province in 1878, were indigenous to it, while Serbs and Croats were outsiders and foreigners. The same argument about Bosniaks/Muslims as the only true Bosnians has always been promoted by Bosniak/Muslim nationalists. The reconstruction of the creation of the myth in Wenzel (1996).

¹⁴ The most authoritative study of the Bosnian Church is Fine (2007), a brief summary of the argument in Fine (2002: 3–6).

The new Bosniak historiography, however, revived the *Bogomil* myth and transformed it into the founding Bosniak national myth. Mahmutćehajić not only frequently retells it in his books, but embellishes it: for instance, he is the author of the thesis that the head of the Bosnian Church handed his crozier to the sheikh of the Mevlevi dervish order, and thus symbolically converted his flock to Islam. Mahmutćehajić also extends the *Bogomil* myth further into the past, and constructs an 'uninterrupted' continuity composed of quite disparate and disconnected elements (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 117–39). The first in line is Alexandrian bishop Arius, exiled to Illyricum after the First Council of Nicaea (325 AD); Arian heretical Christianity supposedly took hold of Srem and Slavonia – parts of Serbia and Croatia – where also some Muslim presence was confirmed, and from where came the first-known Bosnian *ban* Borić (twelfth century); Borić bequeathed his estate in Hungary to a Templar monastery; although the Knights Templars were zealous Crusaders who wore white mantles with a red cross, Mahmutćehajić claims that they were 'under the influence of Islam' (ibid.: 119). From the Templars to the Bosnian Church, formed in the mid-thirteenth century, is but a short step, and the Church naturally metamorphoses into Islam and present-day Bosniaks. What connects Arius's followers, the Knight Templars, the Bosnian Church and Bosnian Muslims is their religious difference, the status of heretics, and 'a historical experience of persecution and genocide' (ibid.: 139). One may or may not believe in such a construction; anyway, an 'exclusively rationalist and dogmatic-secular approach', which demands evidence and logical coherence, is not the right path to understanding 'the essence of Bosniaks' being' (Mahmutćehajić 1997: 105). This fable resembles early nationalist chronicles more than modern historiography; its expected effect on the reader should be to justify Bosniaks' claim on Bosnia, to prove that 'since the medieval foundations [they have an] active and historical right to Bosnia' (ibid.: 39) at the expense of Serbs and Croats, who in the fable stand for persecutors coming from outside to eradicate different paths to God.¹⁵ Dubravko Lovrenović, a Bosnian medievalist who devoted a book to debunking nationalist myths of all three nations in the new Bosnian historiography, maintains that Mahmutćehajić's arbitrary construction is 'based on [the] reviving of stereotypes, on conceptual and factual confusion, [and] unsustainable simplifications' (Lovrenović 2009: 276), that he

¹⁵ In the English translation, their 'historical right to Bosnia' becomes their 'historical rights within Bosnia and Herzegovina' (Mahmutćehajić 2000a: 33) – a significantly different meaning, for the original implies that Bosnia belongs to Bosniaks only, while the translation acknowledges that others may have similar rights as well.

demonstrates ‘intellectual arrogance (...) which laconically eliminates several generations of historians’ (ibid.: 277), and

creates and nourishes the post-war cultural paradigm – the cultural value system of living under the conditions of constant siege – which creates conflict and mistrust. The most detrimental effect of this myth is reflected in the cult of suffering which has recently imbued the whole of Bosniak historiography, and which blames Christian Europe for the so-called *Bogomil* and Bosniak tragedy.

(ibid.: 300)

This myth responds to the claim that ‘Bosnia does not have its myth or its mythology’ which Muhamed Filipović, in 1967, put forward in ‘Bosnian Spirit in Literature – What is it?’ (Filipović 2006a: 10), the programmatic manifesto from the earliest phase of modern Bosniak nationalism which has already been mentioned here, and is hardly proof of ‘cosmopolitanism’; however, one may want to understand this concept: rather, it is proof of ethno-nationalism of those who promote it.

Mahmutćehajić’s view of history as an academic discipline is ambiguous. On the one hand, he accuses Ivo Andrić of promoting representations of Bosnia and Herzegovina which have nothing in common with the real history of that country and which only the ‘ignorant and ideologically biased’ can find credible, and even claims that ‘everybody immediately realized’ that Andrić’s dissertation, submitted to the University of Graz, had nothing to do with academic scholarship¹⁶ (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 106). On the other hand, Mahmutćehajić himself does not come across as a great believer in academic scholarship and science: as an antimodernist, he believes that science is a fruit of modernity and, as such, inferior to the religious worldview. Science is only a myth (ibid.: 540), the work of ‘priests of modernity’ who ‘present the great lie as the great truth’ (ibid.: 537). If this is so, why should Andrić, or anybody else, be reproached for their academic and scientific inadequacy? Moreover, we have already seen that Mahmutćehajić’s version of Bosnian and Balkan history is entirely mythical and fictional, and has been rejected and ridiculed by academic historians, which hardly recommends him for the role of defender of academic historiography. This, however, did not discourage him, and in *Andrićism* he presents an expanded version of the mytho-history from *Bosnia the Good*. The Bogomil myth is still

¹⁶ However, in the report on Andrić’s viva, the opposite is stated: Andrić received the grade ‘outstanding’ for his dissertation (Šmit 1982: 240–5). Mahmutćehajić uses the noun *nauka* and the adjective *naučni* derived from it, to refer to science, humanities and social sciences at the same time, similar to the German noun *Wissenschaft*.

its basis, but Mahmutćehajić is here more concerned with developing a grand historical scheme of the suffering and ordeal of Muslims in Europe, and especially in the Balkans, from the end of the Battle of Vienna in 1683 to the present day.

Mahmutćehajić claims that the history of the Muslims from the end of the seventeenth century has been the history of genocide, extermination and expulsion, thus repeating the historical vision best formulated by historian Mustafa Imamović, and widely propagated by the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁷ Mahmutćehajić calls 'Andrićism' the ideology which served as the basis for this genocide which lasted several centuries, and since Andrić is the author who gave it the best expression in his stories, novels, essays and dissertation, this criminal, murderous ideology bears his name. The followers of 'Andrićism' are many: communists, Christians, modernizers, Europeans, fascists, racists, orientalists, Croatian nationalists, travel writers from the West, Prince Eugen of Savoy and in Serbia, almost everyone – including Ivo Andrić and his sympathetic interpreters – from St. Sava in the thirteenth century to the present day. As the direct opposite to the torment and suffering that all these historical actors orchestrated against the Bosnian Muslims, stands the Ottoman Empire – the 'Ottoman community of nations', as Mahmutćehajić renames this state. In his view, it sets the highest standards of tolerance. Those who claim that the social, economic and political subjugation of non-Muslims in the Ottoman state was a strong incentive for conversion to Islam – and that is virtually every single historian who has studied the subject – are mistaken, according to Mahmutćehajić, because they seek the causes of historical processes 'outside theology, in mere politics' (ibid.: 124), and cannot prove their claims in any rational discussion (ibid.). The causes of historical processes should be looked for in theology, and here is an example of rational discussion: the whole question of conversion seems superfluous to him, because 'one cannot become a Muslim', says Mahmutćehajić, 'because being human already means being a Muslim' (ibid.: 507). It seems that we all are already Muslims, only some of us have yet to become aware of it, and the question of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman state makes no sense. So much for rational discussion and proper historical scholarship.

Mahmutćehajić grossly exaggerates Ottoman and Islamic tolerance, the peaceful character of Muslims in contrast to the aggressiveness of Christians,

¹⁷ When once confronted with the accusation from professional academic historians that his book *Historija Bošnjaka* (The History of Bosniaks 1996) was 'mythological', Imamović replied: 'If my book really created a myth about Bosniaks, I consider it a great compliment (...). I can freely say that the readers of *The History of Bosniaks* can take what it claims to be the truth, and that they do not have to' (*Šta hoće SDA* 2001).

falsifies historical records and simplifies complex historical processes. Moreover, he believes that historical realities disappear if they are simply renamed, as in the case of the 'Ottoman community of nations'. What *Andrićism* offers as historical knowledge is merely a fable produced in order to enhance nationalist mobilization. In that respect, there is no difference between the intentions of his book *Dobra Bosna* (Bosnia the Good 1997) and *Andrićism*, published almost twenty years later. Somewhat different is Mahmutćehajić's choice of 'master thinker', the guiding intellectual authority he follows in these two books. In *Bosnia the Good* it was René Guénon (1886–1951), whose 'traditionalist' thought fits seamlessly into the Islamist political imagination.¹⁸ What Guénon, a former ardent Catholic who converted to Islam, shared with Islamists was a contempt for tolerance, rationalism, secularism and democracy, while simultaneously affirming theocracy and the belief that a small 'intellectual' elite could change the world by dismantling all the results of modernity and thus restoring the Golden Age of the Middle Ages, when 'tradition' – religion – still determined the way people saw the world, produced knowledge and regulated their social relations. Guénon's thought was also occidentalist: he saw the West and Christianity in the same negative light in which Orientalists see the East and Islam. It is not surprising that his disciple, Julius Evola, the second man in the traditionalist movement, was the most important ideologue of European fascism after the fall of Hitler and Mussolini. Evola drew practical political conclusions from Guénon's thought, which brought him close to the fascists. He was one of the editors of the *Regime fascista*, the main journal of the Italian fascists – in which Guénon also published his articles – with the ambition of becoming the intellectual leader of the movement. He failed to achieve this goal, but after the Second World War Evola did become the leading ideologue of the extreme right in Italy. This made any association with Guénon and Evola a bit embarrassing, and consequently their inclusion in *Andrićism* is not explicit – although the traditionalist, antimodernist worldview which they espoused is still very much present. The new 'master thinker' in this book is someone very similar to Guénon and Evola, and fully compatible with Mahmutćehajić's Islamist thought: Eric Voegelin (1901–85).

¹⁸ Mark Sedgwick, an authority on both historical and contemporary manifestations of traditionalism, mentions Mahmutćehajić as the leading representative of traditionalism in the Balkans. See Sedgwick's blog at <https://traditionalistblog.blogspot.co.uk/2008/07/new-books-by-rusmir-mahmutcehajic.html>

Voegelin belonged to the milieu of 'Black Vienna', the conservative Catholic thought in Austria immediately after the First World War, which created the ideological and political conditions for the development of austro-fascism, the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg variant of the fascist regimes in Italy, Spain and Portugal, and thus contributed significantly to the Nazification of Austria after the *Anschluss*. 'Black Vienna' was a cluster of different ideological perspectives, which differed in detail, but shared the most important positions: antisemitism, German nationalism, authoritarianism, a rejection of modernism and the European Enlightenment, and corporatism as a social model (Wasserman 2014: 6). The thinkers who belonged to it considered democracy a negative product of the French Revolution, advocated authoritarian rule of strong leaders, and corporatism as an alternative to both capitalism and communism. They were not the same as the German Nazis – who had their own people in Austria – and after the *Anschluss* some of them joined the new regime, some went into 'inner emigration', and some emigrated abroad. Voegelin belonged to the last group. After the war, most of them resumed their pre-war activities and ideological and intellectual positions, and presented themselves as the opponents of Nazism. This was possible because of an important difference between austro-fascism and German Nazism: the strong influence of Catholicism on the former, and the emphasis on the religious dimension within it.

Voegelin glorified the authoritarian state and corporatist social order, and his book, *The Authoritarian State* (1936), was an explicit endorsement of the strengthening of the state through authoritarian measures – while at the same time attempting to present himself as an opponent of *all* political ideologies and to disguise his austro-fascist convictions with academic jargon (ibid.: 212). His vision of 'Austrian unity', which excluded liberals, democrats and Jews, represented the fascist middle way between Nazism and democracy, and fitted comfortably into the discourse of European fascism between the world wars (ibid.: 213). In the books he published after the war, he promoted the term *Gnosticism*, which stood for any secular ideology which promised to change the political order and was broad enough to include Nazism and Marxism as well as liberalism. In contrast to Gnosticism, Voegelin advocated 'transcendental order', the opposite of the secular idea that people themselves can define political and social order. The order is defined by God, not by people. One can clearly see in this idea traditional political Catholicism, the resistance to modernity and the demand for the restoration of *spiritual* social order: the old goal of all antimodernists, a desecularized society which transfers transcendental order to a social one.

Mahmutćehajić, the PDA's *éminence grise* (Bougarel 2017: 205) and the vice president of its wartime government, has reinvented himself since leaving the corridors of power as a historian, philosopher, religious teacher and now also as literary critic and interpreter. We have seen that the version of Balkan history he presents in his publications is merely a naïve and pretentious retelling of nationalists' myths and fantasies, and there is no reason to believe that he can be taken seriously as a philosopher and theologian. Now we must turn to Mahmutćehajić as a literary critic.

Although Mahmutćehajić seems to believe that *Andrićism* can pass not only as an academic book, but moreover as an *indisputably* academic book (Pressing 2017), it can only be understood as an amateurish attempt which unsuccessfully imitates academic works. It lacks logical structure, even at the micro-level of a single paragraph, and endlessly repeats the same claims without ever providing evidence for any of them. Mahmutćehajić oscillates between theological assertions – such as ‘The world is God and what He makes sacred. He is the Living One. Death never reaches Him. Accordingly, the life of the world is only the sign of the Living One’ (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 363) – which have nothing whatsoever to do with Andrić's work, paraphrasing ideas from books the author found interesting, but which are equally irrelevant in this context, nationalist whining about the suffering and torment of his people throughout history, metaphysical and epistemological digressions, and sheer banalities presented as ultimate wisdom, such as ‘darkness is merely an absence of light’ (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 249).

His language lacks precision and clarity, and he often resorts to strategic ambiguities in which he both asserts and does not assert something, allowing the like-minded reader to infer meanings – wild accusations and unbelievable claims about Andrić – which would otherwise be very difficult to maintain explicitly with any degree of attachment to truth. He is unfamiliar with the scholarly field in which he seeks to intervene, showing only minimal awareness of a handful of titles from the Andrić scholarship, and opening up long-settled debates, repeating claims already refuted and asking questions already answered. The book also lacks the slightest conceptual framework: for example, it creates the concept *nacijstvo*, but does not explain it.¹⁹ Throughout the book, *nacijstvo* is used as a substitute for the more common *nationalism*, sometimes alternating with it. Only at the end of

¹⁹ *Nacijstvo* has *nacija*, nation, as its root. However, it is also closely associated with *nacizam*, Nazism, which may have been the reason for its invention. Mahmutćehajić's overarching goal in this book is to present Andrić as a Nazi, and Andrićism as a version of Nazism.

the book does Mahmutćehajić – and here the reader recognizes the author's effort to give *Andrićism* some semblance of an academic form – remember to clarify his central concept: 'This study uses the concepts of "nation" and "nationalism" in the meaning given to them in European experience after the eighteenth century, and in Bosnia and its surroundings only after the second half of the nineteenth century' (ibid.: 531). However, both concepts acquired *more* than one meaning during this period, and the point of such clarification, even if it does not occur until fifteen pages before the end of the book, when this clarification becomes meaningless, is to specify which one exactly the author has in mind – but this hardly becomes clearer after this explanation.²⁰

Mahmutćehajić's treatment of sources is also a cause for concern: he rewrites texts at will if this can support the interpretations he wants to impose on them. For example, he focuses on Andrić's admission that he never understood the orally transmitted ballad *Hasan-aga's Wife* – which is not unusual, since the ballad is elliptic and contains a riddle debated in literary scholarship for nearly two centuries – and then offers his own interpretation. Without discussing any of the known interpretations, Mahmutćehajić boldly states the following:

The mourning song of the noble wife of Asan Aga can be seen as the relationship between Hasan-aga, the head of the household who, faced with the choice between conversion to Christianity, exile, or execution to save his castle, decided to renounce his testimony to the messengerhood of Muhammad, and his noble wife, mother of his five children, who chose to follow her stony heart, in which love of the Prophet Muhammad was dearer to her than all else.

(Mahmutćehajić 2013: 660)

However, the ballad never mentions that Hasan-aga is faced with this choice. This is Mahmutćehajić's addition to the poem, which makes it easy for the interpreter to incorporate it into his *perennial plot* about sufferings and agonies of Muslims, who are always faced with the choice of converting to Christianity, going into exile or dying. Similarly, he 'improves' Andrić's works as well: the reader does not learn the cause of Kolonja's death in *Bosnian Chronicle* – a murder or a suicide? – but Mahmutćehajić presents Kolonja as having been murdered by an angry Muslim mob, and in this detail sees Andrić's tendentious representation

²⁰ The only theorist of nationalism mentioned in this book is Elie Kedourie, a conservative from the right end of the political spectrum, a follower of Joseph de Maistre, and a theoretical essentialist who lamented the demise of the Ottoman state. There is no place in Mahmutćehajić's theoretical pantheon for Anthony Smith, or for the constructivist Benedict Anderson, and even less for leftist thinkers like Ernest Gellner or Eric Hobsbawm.

of Muslims (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 423). Throughout this book, the interpreter ignores what Andrić's works really say, and adds to them at will what might suit his interpretative intentions.

The main interpretative procedure used in this book could be called *non sequitur* hermeneutics. For example, Mahmutćehajić quotes Ivo Andrić's explanation for his decision to reject the German authorities' offer to flee from Germany to Switzerland alone in 1941, leaving the Yugoslav embassy staff behind: 'I promised myself: you will go with your people. You will rather die than do anything else'. And instead of Switzerland, he actually returned to occupied and bombed Belgrade, where he spent the entire war. Mahmutćehajić interprets this simple existential decision as Andrić's 'political philosophy' (Mahmutćehajić 2013: 637). This decision presents Andrić as a 'man of modern ontology' (ibid.: 638), which leads the interpreter to the following question: 'What horror is not generated in that rupture between responsibility to the truth and responsibility to the nation?' (ibid.). How is this division of responsibilities, one may ask, implied in Andrić's decision to return to Belgrade? Why should we believe that Andrić rejected responsibility for the truth – this would mean going to Switzerland? – and accepted responsibility to the nation? But this is not all, for Mahmutćehajić sees deeper layers of meaning in this simple decision: 'If one is with the nation, there can be no responsibility towards God as the judge before whom we each stand, with every atom of good and every atom of evil we have committed' (ibid.). Not only responsibility to truth, but also responsibility to God would be to go into exile in Switzerland. How so? 'Locating the telos in the nation necessarily means that there is one true nation and one true God, and that every other nation has a false god' (ibid.). To summarize: Andrić's decision to be with his people during the war, instead of going into exile in Switzerland, is to be understood as the ultimate horror, a rejection of the truth, a locating of the telos in the nation and a denial of all other nations and at the same time, albeit contradictorily, a rejection of one's responsibility before God and denial of all other gods. If one does not want to go into exile, does this mean denying others the right to believe in their own gods, which is at the same time modern ontology? This is not interpretation – this is incomprehensible confusion.

This is the predominant hermeneutical protocol in *Andrićism*. An another example: Andrić explained that, although he grew up in Bosnia, he did not know much about the interior of Muslim homes because the strict social separation between Muslims and Christians, dating back to the Ottoman period, prevented a more intimate knowledge of the family relationships and domestic lifestyles

of those of other faiths at the time. That was the reason for his decision not to write about the intimate and family life of Muslims. Not to venture into what one does not know about seems to be a wise decision. However, Mahmutćehajić overlooks this wisdom and sees in it Andrić's 'fear of everything Muslim, which (...) expresses itself as hatred' (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 61). Why fear and hatred, when Andrić simply says that he does not write about what he does not know? Not just fear and hatred, Mahmutćehajić claims, because this refraining leads directly to violence: 'Ignorance of it must be the source of unjust judgement and violence' (ibid.). If you refrain from making any judgements about what you do not know, this becomes the source of unjust judgement and violence? As if this were not terrible enough, Mahmutćehajić goes even further. By refraining from writing about their domestic and intimate life, Andrić revealed that he knew nothing about their humanity either:

Ivo Andrić acknowledges his impotence in the face of the interiority of the Muslim testimony to the oneness of God, the messengerhood of Muhammad and the return of all things to God, as the heart of the Muslim family (...) This is an admission of the crucial impossibility of knowing the heart of humanity, whether Christian, Muslim, or any other. It is an inviolable mystery, a shoreless sea, a timeless time, and a placeless place.

(Mahmutćehajić 2013: 643, 2015: 64)

But that is not all: to these three *non sequiturs* – psychological, cognitive and theologico-anthropological – Mahmutćehajić adds a fourth, a political one: 'To write about Bosnian Muslims without knowing about them anything behind the thresholds of their homes, is to lie in the service of nationalism, using racist and Orientalist means' (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 67). Mahmutćehajić seems to believe that *any* conclusion can follow from *any* sentence: this is the main principle of his interpretations in *Andrićism*. This only reinforces the reader's impression of reading a literary criticism written in complete disregard of the elementary categories of literary theory. Mahmutćehajić not only continues the praxis of his predecessors in this Bosniak nationalist discourse on Ivo Andrić, failing to distinguish between the claims of the author and those of his fictional characters, but also offers an explicit justification for ignoring this elementary distinction (ibid.: 307–9), insisting throughout the book that all characters' utterances are the utterances of Andrić himself: 'Andrić asserts through the mediation of Friar Mirko Krneta' (ibid.: 132), or 'puts' his thoughts 'into the mouth' of Mujaga Mutapdžić (ibid.: 214). For more dubious examples, such as when a Christian character in *The Bridge over the Drina* thinks an

obviously racist thought about a Roma character, Mahmutćehajić uses ‘according to the horizon contained in the author’s narrative imagination’: this is Andrić’s intellectual horizon, not a thought of a racist character in his fiction. However, this game of attributing stops whenever a Muslim character expresses a racist or chauvinist opinion of his Christian neighbours: indeed, it would be somewhat unusual to attribute these claims to Andrić.

Moreover, Mahmutćehajić explicitly claims that all of Andrić’s characters are portraits of real people, who once lived in Bosnia and whose maliciously distorted representations in Andrić’s fiction cause grief to their ‘real ancestors’ today (ibid.: 36). How fictional characters can have real ancestors remains unclear. That this is not an oversight, or just a matter of a careless and unfortunate formulation is confirmed by Mahmutćehajić’s elaboration of the relationship between fiction and reality. Referring to a comment by Ivan Lovrenović, a Bosnian critic who had previously pointed out the ‘fatal substitution of literary fiction with historical reality, and to their mixing’ in the chapters of *Andrićism* previously published in Bosnian journals, Mahmutćehajić raises his objection: ‘one should ask where and when this author or anyone else offered the criteria – if they are possible at all – for distinguishing between the two’ (ibid.: 366). This shows that the concept of fiction is negated in *Andrićism*, and that everything in Andrić’s prose is treated as a documentary representation of historical reality. However, this is not Mahmutćehajić’s last word on the subject: elsewhere he also claims that Andrić’s prose is ‘fictional literature which distorts factual history’ (ibid.: 304). At the same time, it transpires, he claims that the distinction between fiction and historical reality is impossible, and that Andrić’s fiction falsifies that from which it is indistinguishable.

However, since undisputable scholarly works – the status Mahmutćehajić claims for *Andrićism* – must be theoretically grounded, the author also offers a theoretical position for understanding the relationship between literature and politics. His own contribution to this is the claim that ‘literature comes into being and exists in the world, ergo it is always political’ (ibid.: 414), which is just another *non sequitur*: not everything that exists in the world is political, something is only *worldly*.²¹ And since this original theory about the relationship between

²¹ This assertion is Mahmutćehajić’s variation of Edward Said’s assertion about the wordliness of all texts (Said 1983: 4). Mahmutćehajić often makes Said’s claims his own, but does not always indicate the source of his inspiration: for example, he copies Said’s famous sentence from *Orientalism* about the possibility of having true representations of anything (Said 1979: 272), but instead of presenting it as a quote from *Orientalism*, Mahmutćehajić presents it as his own questioning of the post-structuralist theory of truth (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 331).

politics and literature does not get off the ground after a few pages, he simply refers to Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* as a theoretical background. This would be a welcome development in *Andrićism* – the book characterized by a complete disregard for even the most basic elements of literary theory – if the author were truly guided by Jameson in his thinking about literature and politics. This, however, is not the case. It is difficult to imagine two critical positions more at odds with each other than those of Jameson and Mahmutćehajić. Jameson looks for the latent, unconscious in a text, which conceals the totality of real historical life, in its *form*, not in its content, while Mahmutćehajić seems to be unaware of the existence of form itself, and always focuses only on the explicit utterances of the characters and their author. While Mahmutćehajić believes that all Andrić's characters are real people who once walked the earth and now have descendants who are dissatisfied with their literary representations, Jameson questions the very concept of character in literary interpretation. Heathcliff from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is incomprehensible to traditional criticism, which can only vacillate endlessly between Heathcliff as romantic hero or tyrannical villain, Jameson argues. Instead, he should be understood as an impersonal process, a unit of history in which opposing forces collide: as a figure of capitalism, a focal point in which social, economic and historical circumstances combine with the formal possibilities of representation. This is very far from Mahmutćehajić's approach to Andrić's works.

What was only implied in the works of Mahmutćehajić's predecessors in this nationalist critique of the works of Ivo Andrić – the demand that all Muslim characters in fiction be portrayed according to the elevated ideals about a good Muslim recommended by faith and folk culture – and what we, following the similarity of such requests with the recommendations and demands of Socialist Realism, have called Muslim Realism, in *Andrićism* becomes a fully fledged poetic and critical programme. Mahmutćehajić reads Andrić's story 'The Pasha's Concubine' and notes that some of the Muslim characters in it disregard the Quranic regulations on the marriage rights of virgins and widows, and he 'identifies' these characters as two dervishes who actually lived in Sarajevo during the period represented in the story. Since he does not bother to provide evidence for his claims, the reader must accept this identification as a given. He concludes that Andrić had deliberately and maliciously misrepresented not only these two dervishes but the whole Muslim community of Sarajevo as immoral, evil and indifferent to evil (ibid.: 154–6). This, in his judgement, is slander and testifies to Andrić's ethical deficiencies (ibid.: 156). In Andrić's story 'In

the Camp' (Za logorovanja) Mahmutćehajić focuses on the character of Mula-Jusuf, an Ottoman Turk who abuses his position as imam to sexually exploit a captive Christian girl, and claims that Andrić slanders all Muslim dignitaries with this representation (ibid.: 218–19). In the story 'Olujaci', in which a jealous Muslim man sets fire to his own house and kills his wife, her brother – whom he mistakenly believes to be her lover – and himself, Mahmutćehajić recognizes another example of Andrić's defamation of Muslims (ibid.: 219), since they supposedly never succumb to such emotions. However, he reaches the peak of this kind of criticism in his reading of *The Bridge over the Drina*, in which the Drina washes up the half-naked body of a young Muslim girl who committed suicide to escape an arranged marriage: Andrić 'unashamedly exposes her', objects Mahmutćehajić (ibid. 252), since – one might infer – Muslim girls appear fully covered in public even under such circumstances, and so it should be in fiction. At the same time, Mahmutćehajić completely ignores all Christian characters in Andrić's fiction who do the same or worse.

If these are examples of literary representations that Muslim Realism disapproves of, how should Muslims be represented in fiction? Instead of representing them 'without the inner secret and un-reducibility to any of their images', they should be represented as 'original and unrepeatable images of God' (ibid.: 239). Although non-Muslim literary characters can be reduced to some of their images and represented without 'inner secrets', all Muslim ones can be only 'images of God'. They live in a world which is an assembly of sacred signs, and Andrić's failure to present them as such is another example of his malicious misrepresentation: how could Alihodža in *The Bridge over the Drina*, asks Mahmutćehajić, live next to the bridge and not realize that its thirteen arches symbolize the secret of number thirteen, which refers to Muhammad (ibid.: 273)? 'Could Alihodža then have been without the knowledge of the meaning of *tabut* and its connection with the prophet Musam, whom God uses as an intermediary to announce the coming of the prophet Muhammad as his brother, who is like him and who speaks what God hands him down' (ibid.)? This is a difficult question, and instead of trying to give an answer to it, let us limit ourselves to summarizing Mahmutćehajić's recommendations: instead of jealous husbands and half-naked drowned women, Muslims should be represented in fiction as unrepeatable images of God, counting bridge arches and using their symbolism to ascend to God. Non-Muslims, on the other hand, were to be represented in a way that foregrounded the violence, evil and depravity of their world, which Andrić – at least in Mahmutćehajić's view – unsurprisingly failed to do:

the famous writer has no feeling for the horrors of the Crusades, the orgies of the Inquisition that raged through Europe, the persecution of Muslims, Jews, and heretics, or even the profound need of the people destined for Bosnia's mediating role to find a celestial reason for monasteries and churches, synagogues, and mosques, and to find in the One the reason and purpose of opposing the exclusivity that would keep Europe in the grip of horrific persecutions and killings for more than a millennium. Nor is that all.

(Mahmutćehajić 2013: 646)

The basic antithesis of Muslim Realism is now clear: the horror of the Crusades, the orgies of the Inquisition and the persecution of Muslims, Jews and heretics on the one hand, and the inner secret of those created in the image of God seeking a heavenly reason for interreligious harmony, on the other.

The most outrageous accusation Mahmutćehajić makes against Andrić in this book is that of Orientalism, racism and fascism. The charge of Orientalism is, unsurprisingly, based on Edward Said's book *Orientalism*, but Mahmutćehajić's understanding of Said's ideas is seriously distorted. When Mahmutćehajić begins to introduce Said's theory in the second part of his book, any reader familiar with it must wonder whether his understanding of *Orientalism* and its philosophical background justifies any application Mahmutćehajić wishes to make. 'Reality is indeed reflected in the consciousness of language', says Mahmutćehajić (2015: 314). Let us benevolently assume that 'consciousness' here serves to reinforce the impression that we are reading a philosophically informed discussion – language cannot have consciousness – but the idea that language *reflects* reality is at odds with Foucault's theory of discourse, which forms the background of Said's theory of Orientalism. Language *constructs* reality, claims Foucault, and Said follows suit. If discourses reflect reality, then the accuracy of that reflection can be measured: some will be closer to the truth than others. If it constructs it, then the question of truth can no longer be asked. Instead of trying to confirm the correspondence between representations-as-truths and reality, Nietzsche argues, we can only study their genealogy – who, when and why imposes certain representations *as truths* – and Foucault and Said followed suit: Said's *Orientalism* is a genealogy of British, French and American discourses on the Orient.²² The

²² At the beginning of this discussion of Said's theory of Orientalism, Mahmutćehajić (2015: 315) quotes Nietzsche's famous sentence about truth as a 'mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms' from 'On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense' (Nietzsche 1971: 46), but he changes Nietzsche's idea by misquoting him: instead of 'truth', Mahmutćehajić writes 'language'. Had he grasped what Nietzsche was trying to say, and quoted him correctly, Foucault's and Said's position would have been easier to understand: truth is a representation which power managed to impose on us, and its correspondence to reality can never be verified.

idea that 'reality is indeed reflected in the consciousness of language' could not be further from the point, and here it is evident that Mahmutćehajić uses Said in the same way he used Jameson: without any precise understanding.

However, if the reader disregards these theoretical errors and benevolently attempts to examine the evidence Mahmutćehajić provides to support this accusation against Andrić the Orientalist – they will find none. Mahmutćehajić offers no evidence for his claim and only repeats it endlessly throughout the book. Despite many extensive quotations from Andrić's works in *Andrićism*, there is only one sentence in it in which one can recognize the Orientalist prejudice. Its author, however, is not Ivo Andrić, but Rusmir Mahmutćehajić: 'Toma Galus speaks from the horizon of the secular worldview (...). Bosnian Muslims cannot participate in such *entelechia*, because they are beyond the division of the Western subject, whose ratio has the capacity to objectify everything outside itself' (ibid.: 263). To claim that Bosnian Muslims lack the rational capacity to see objects outside themselves as objects of rational analysis, and that this quality distinguishes them from Westerners is a textbook example of Orientalist claims. This proposition essentializes and homogenizes them (this characteristic is in their essence and they all have it in common) and constructs them as subjects with lower-order cognitive and rational abilities (they are irrational and inferior).

The charge of racism is also not supported by valid evidence. His first piece of evidence is the expression 'dog's hauling,' used by the French consul Daville in *Bosnian Chronicle* to describe Bosnian singing. Again, the judgement of a literary character is attributed to the author. However, this expression refers not only to Muslim singing, but also to that of Bosnian Christians. Andrić had found this description in a 1658 French travelogue from Bosnia (Šamić 2005: 228) and this detail has already been interpreted as Andrić's subtle way of pointing to the hypocrisy of Westerners in Bosnia. Daville shares it with Austria's consul, von Mitterer. The description of Bosnian singing von Mitterer offers as his own contribution to this diplomatic ethnography is rhetorically very similar to the description of his own wife's singing, accompanied by harp, that the consul gives later in the novel. The consul has the same 'language of passion and daring feelings' in his own home, but it does not prompt him to call this expression of hidden passions 'barbaric,' as he does with the Bosnians' singing. Not every reader needs to be perceptive enough to notice this subtle parallel, but it has been a well-known element of Andrić scholarship ever since Svetozar Koljević introduced it in his essay 'Andrić's Babylon' (Koljević 1979: 21), and can hardly

serve as evidence of Andrić's racism. Mahmutćehajić's second piece of evidence is Andrić's representation of the 1914 Sarajevo pogrom in *The Woman from Sarajevo*, which he even calls 'biopolitical racism' (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 363). This representation is also based on a description of the anti-Serbian pogroms in Bosnia in 1914 found in Vladimir Ćorović's historiographical account in *Crna knjiga* (Ćorović 1920) – another occasion to reflect on the relationship between fiction and historical reality – where both Muslims and Catholics participate in this act of violence. Not only can the motives of those involved not be called racism, for chauvinism is certainly a better term in this context, but the attribution of the motives of these historical actors to a writer who merely represents them in fiction hardly deserves this designation.

Most daring is Mahmutćehajić's repeated allusion to Ivo Andrić as a supporter of Nazism. Mahmutćehajić takes the first step in formulating this outrageous accusation by equating Muslims with Jews: 'In Ivo Andrić's literary fantasy, then, the Bosnian Muslims are de facto Jews' (Mahmutćehajić 2013: 647). And just as Primo Levi mentions in his memoir that concentration camp inmates called 'Muslims' those who had given up trying to survive and surrendered to their fate, Mahmutćehajić concludes that Muslims are Jews not only in Andrić's work, but also historically: 'On the very margins of existence, expecting day after day to end up in Auschwitz and almost certain death, the Jews were turned into Muslims and reduced to the utterly powerless remnants of a vanishing life' (ibid.: 647).²³ This is not yet enough, and the following conclusions place Andrić in the ranks of the persecutors of Jews-Muslims during the Second World War:

The entire literary work of Ivo Andrić is incomprehensible without the ideological currents of the time in which it was created and accepted, first and foremost nationalism in the broadest sense, National Socialism and Leninism (Mahmutćehajić 2015: 291). And why is this work of art, created *in times* of the ideological domination of National Socialism, needed by the ruling system of Yugoslav Real Socialism? (ibid.: 345). Ivo Andrić's narratives were created and endured *within the framework* of the endeavour of fascist aestheticization of politics and the communist politicization of aesthetics (ibid.: 417). This narration was created *under the conditions* of the visible rise and results of Nazi and fascist ideology, and its political power (ibid.: 432).

(emphasis added)

²³ *The Holocaust Encyclopaedia* asserts that the origin of this designation is unclear, but that it may have originated in the visual similarity of those about to die and Muslims at prayer (Gutman 1998: II, 978).

What does it mean that Andrić's work was written *in times, within the framework and under the conditions* of Nazism? What does this strategic ambiguity imply? If Andrić was in any way connected to Nazism and fascism, this connection must be proven either by biographical or textual evidence. If such evidence cannot be provided, then this insinuation is simply slander and nothing more.

Mahmutćehajić's ethical indictment of Ivo Andrić – 'the whole fictional world of Ivo Andrić is a lie opposed to the Reality, opposed to goodness, beauty and love' (ibid.: 150) – is repeated endlessly in *Andrićism*, but without any evidence to corroborate it. The monotonous repetitions in which the author accuses Andrić of 'depriving Bosnian Muslims of their essential humanity' (ibid.: 350), of representing them as 'otherness totally opposed to humanity' (ibid.: 248), of assigning to them 'religious and racial otherness' (ibid.: 361) and thus calling for violence against them, are merely a restatement of the same accusations that Kurtović formulated sixty years ago – and in those sixty years no one has managed to provide any evidence for this.

Andrićism is only ostensibly about Ivo Andrić and his works. At the book launch in Mostar in January 2017, Mahmutćehajić began his speech with the following sentence: 'On the occasion of our meeting today with regard to the great question of Bosnia' – not 'to the great question of Andrić's work' – and went on to enumerate the entire repertoire of Bosniak nationalist themes (*Razgovor o knjizi 'Andrićevstvo: Protiv etike sećanja'*). This book is merely *an occasion* to open a discussion on these issues and says much less about Andrić than it does about the interests and concerns of Bosniak nationalism – for which it could serve as a comprehensive manifesto. About Ivo Andrić it tells us nothing.

Andrić as a Diplomat and Historian

Regarding Andrić's moral and political profile, the Bosniak nationalist discourse does not introduce any new elements beyond what is already known. Andrić was born into a Roman Catholic family in a country where confessional identities had not yet solidified into ethnic ones. In late-nineteenth-century Bosnia and Herzegovina, after four centuries of being part of a state based on confessional identities, this transformation took several generations. There was a tendency for Roman Catholic identities to evolve into Croatian, and Orthodox Christian identities into Serbian. This was not a precise process: significant numbers of Serb Catholics existed both in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Dalmatia. This was unsurprising, given that Serbs, Croats and the ancestors of present-day Bosniaks inhabited the same region and shared the same language, which left room to choose one's identity freely. Thus, it was not uncommon for siblings to adopt different identities. For example, Andrić's friend and writer, Ivo Vojnović (1857–1951), identified as Croat despite his Serbian heritage from his father's side – who was from a famous Serbian family from Kotor – and an Italian mother. His brother, Lujo Vojnović (1864–1951), however, identified as Serb. Similarly, Mehmed Spaho (1883–1939), leader of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization, identified as Serb, whereas his brother, Fehim Spaho (1877–1942), the grand mufti of Yugoslavia, identified as Croat. Moreover, choosing different identities at different life stages was also not unheard of: Safvet-bey Bašagić shifted between being Bosniak, Serb and Croat, and there are instances, like a certain Atif mentioned by Tone Bringa, who during his long life managed to embrace all three identities – plus Yugoslav and 'undeclared' (Bringa 1995: 29). It is very difficult to judge which identity was the 'right one' and when someone becomes a 'renegade' in all these cases: as identity results from identification, the 'right' one was always the chosen one.

In his youth, Ivo Andrić supported the policy of 'national unity', viewing all Yugoslavs as part of the same ethnic and national community. From that platform

he worked towards uniting Serbian and Croat student organizations in Sarajevo before the First World War. When he enrolled in Zagreb University in 1913, Andrić identified as Croat (Đukić Perišić 2012: 336). The following year, he contributed six poems to the collection *Hrvatska mlada lirika* (Young Croatian Lyric, 1914), published in Zagreb. However, he did not explicitly declare his ethnic identity after the First World War. This was a period of his active diplomatic service, and if he had opportunistically wanted to advance his career by identifying as Serb, as his Bosniak critics allege, this would have been the right time. His friend, Ivo Vojnović, referred to Andrić as Serb in one of his letters (Popović 1991: 34), and Carl Schmitt, who met Andrić through his Serbian wife, also referred to him as Serb in his diary (Đukić Perišić 2012: 338). We will never know the reasons, and speculating about them is not very meaningful. Vojnović and Schmitt might have misunderstood him, or he might have told them as much. Vojnović, a cosmopolitan, likely did not attach much importance to his friends' ethnic identities. There is one indirect instance of Andrić's ethnic identification from 1923: in a letter to V. J. Marambo, he mentioned that he was undoubtedly 'Croat by birth', but to what extent this made him 'a Croatian writer', he emphasized, was another matter (Đukić Perišić 2012: 332). Ten years later, he declined an invitation to be included in Mihovil Kombo's *Anthology of New Croatian Lyric* (1934), stating that he saw no point in excluding writers he considered close to him merely because of their 'different faith or province' (ibid.) – not because of their different ethnic identity, but rather because of their different regional or confessional identities. For Andrić, they all shared the same ethnic and national identity – Yugoslav – and he did not find value in publishing a regional or confessional anthology.

However, from the moment his diplomatic career concluded and the prospects of opportunistically changing his ethnic identity ceased to hold any advantage, Andrić's explicit identification with the Serbs grew. When questioned by the Gestapo in Bad Schachen in 1941, Andrić identified himself as a Serb. The advantages such identification might have gained him in the eyes of the Gestapo agents remain unclear. In 1942, he declined to publish with the *Srpska književna zadruga* (Serbian Literary Association) during the occupation, asserting that there were no doubts about his identity as a Serbian writer (ibid.: 333). Again, the benefits of identifying as a Serb in German-occupied Serbia in 1942 are not readily apparent. Furthermore, after the conclusion of the Second World War and the end of his diplomatic career, when he was merely a pensioner and writer, in a country led by a Croat, Andrić consistently identified as a Serb. He indicated

his Serbian identity on the application form for his personal ID in 1951, on the application to join the Communist Party in 1955 and on the marriage ceremony request form in 1958. In 1957, he initiated and later became a member of the editorial board of the book series *Serbian Literature in One Hundred Volumes*, published by *Matica srpska*. He oversaw the publication of two volumes of his own works in this series and became an honorary president of the Serbian Literary Association in 1972.

We can only speculate about why Andrić consistently identified as a Serb from 1941 until the end of his life. However, what we can assert with great certainty is that he had little to gain from such identification. Claims that Yugoslavia under Tito was a country dominated by the Serbs and that adopting Serbian ethnicity conferred various privileges, heard very often in the 1990s, were unconvincing to those familiar with the country's dynamics.¹ What we do know unequivocally, without the need for speculation, is the answer to the question about Andrić's moral integrity. Young opportunists in Sarajevo before the First World War did not establish revolutionary societies, as this would have led them, like Andrić during the war, to imprisonment. Careerists do not resign from their ambassadorial posts due to disagreements with government policies formed without their input, yet Andrić did so upon learning of the Yugoslav government's agreement with the Third Reich facilitated by Danilo Gregorič, the director of *Vreme* journal, effectively side-lining his own representative in Berlin (Karaulac 2008: 72). Those present at the signing ceremony documented Andrić's displeasure with this agreement (Đukić Perišić 2012: 362). It has already been mentioned that at the start of the Second World War, he had the chance to depart for Switzerland alone, without other Yugoslav embassy and consulate members in Germany, but he rejected the offer and returned to Belgrade. Opting for Zagreb over Belgrade, an option presented by the Gestapo and hoped for by Ante Pavelić, the leader of the Independent State of Croatia, would have been more convenient, yet Andrić declined, remaining in war-ravaged Belgrade until the war's conclusion (Juričić 1989: 221; Džadžić 1996: 358). An opportunist and conformist might have signed the Appeal to Serbian People, a declaration condemning both resistance movements, presented to Serbian intellectuals by

¹ When, on 30 August 1990, in the French Institute for International Relations in Paris, Alija Izetbegović claimed that 'Serbs always tried to maintain their hegemony in Yugoslavia', Jean Barrio simply asked him, 'Why did Serbs accept that a Croat ruled them for such a long time?' (Izetbegović 2001: 436). To this question, judging by Izetbegović's own account of this exchange, he had nothing to answer.

the occupying authorities in 1941. However, Andrić declined this as well (Đukić Perišić 2012: 370–1). During the war, he abstained from publishing, waived his pension and insisted that ‘without religion’ be indicated on his occupational ID, even though it raised suspicions of his communist affiliation (Pavlović 1998: 148). These decisions hardly align with those of an opportunist or careerist; rather, they are testimonies to his courage and moral integrity.

Following the war, Andrić subsisted on his pension and royalties. Until 1958, he resided in a rented room. Unlike other prominent Yugoslav writers, particularly those close to the Party, who enjoyed state villas, chauffeured limousines and summers on the island of Brioni with Tito, Andrić’s lifestyle was much more modest. His political and ideological orientation did not sharply shift in response to political changes around him. Whether under Austria-Hungary, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or socialist Yugoslavia, he remained a political and cultural Yugoslav. He regarded the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as the last remaining representative of Yugoslav political ideology and joined its ranks. If his Bosniak critics can find comparable consistency, quiet determination and self-respect in their own lives, they are undoubtedly fortunate individuals.

The two non-fictional texts frequently cited as proof of Andrić’s alleged Islamophobic views – his PhD dissertation and a brief *aide-mémoire* on the Albanian question found in the Yugoslav Ministry for Foreign Affairs archive – hardly validate these accusations. Andrić’s studies at Jagiellonian University in Krakow were disrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. After the war, with assistance from Tugomir Alaupović, his teacher who later became a minister, Andrić secured a position in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. When new regulations necessitated an academic degree for Andrić’s role in the Yugoslav consulate in Graz, he was granted leave to complete his studies at the University of Graz. In that era, undergraduate studies at German and Austrian universities culminated in a PhD dissertation, akin in scope and significance to present-day MA by research or MPhil dissertations at British universities. Not driven by academic aspirations, Andrić’s reflection on his PhD dissertation in a letter to a friend underscores its place in his life: ‘I have devoted a considerable amount of time and energy to this work. Now I must contemplate engaging in something more meaningful’ (Karaulac 2008: 36). He did not publish this work, but such non-publication does not imply concealment or prohibition, as his Bosniak critics regularly assert. Many of us, even those aspiring to an academic career, refrain from publishing their MA dissertations, much like Andrić, the writer and diplomat without any academic ambitions, did.

The title of his dissertation was 'The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule'. Here, 'spiritual' is an approximate translation of *geistiges Leben*; 'intellectual' or 'cultural' life would provide a more accurate representation and better reflect Andrić's actual topic – the literary culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Ottoman era. Andrić's assertion that the Ottoman state's influence had a negative impact on intellectual life in Bosnia and Herzegovina certainly does not endear him to critics who regard the Ottoman Empire as *our* state. Even less palatable is his overall assessment of Bosnia at the close of Ottoman rule: a land devoid of roads, postal services and printing presses – until the latter third of the nineteenth century, in Bosnia and Herzegovina books were painstakingly copied by hand. An administration riddled with corruption leaned on the goodwill of local potentates (Andrić 1982: 91–109). Over half of its inhabitants resided in legally, socially and politically subservient positions, enduring daily humiliation, limited rights and often being forced to relocate to hills and mountains for tolerable living conditions (ibid.: 71–89). This segment of the population lived isolated from their own cultural and civilizational area and was simultaneously unable to communicate with the currents of the culture and civilization it was forced to live in due to language barriers (ibid.: 53). The land was characterized by conservatism within the ruling elite, which vehemently resisted change, deeming it a threat to their privileged status (ibid.: 95). Does this assessment emanate from a place of animosity, or does it find grounding in reality? The latter seems more plausible. Andrić's portrayal of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Ottoman rule mirrors the accounts provided by other historians – both Bosnian and international, such as American and Turkish sources. Arthur Evans pointed out that in the final years of Ottoman rule in Bosnia there was not a single bookshop in Sarajevo, a city with a population of 50,000 to 60,000 people (Evans 1971: 254). The first printing press only arrived in Bosnia in 1866 (Lovrenović 2001: 107). Although madrassas and maktabas – religious schools where boys memorized the Quran – were numerous, the first school teaching non-religious subjects did not open in Bosnia until 1864 (Vucinich 1995: 13). The first secondary school emerged in Sarajevo only after Austria-Hungary's takeover (ibid.: 14). During Andrić's attendance, a staggering 87 per cent of Bosnians were illiterate (Glišović 2012: 31). In 1900, a mere ten Bosniaks had attended universities (Filandra 2012: 305). By 1910, only 5.64 per cent of Muslims in Bosnia could read Latin and Cyrillic scripts, which were necessary for accessing modern secular knowledge (Omerika 2014: 17).

One of those Bosniaks with a university degree at the time, Safvet-bey Bašagić, described Bosnians as ‘a mass of neglected and mentally stunted mob’ in the introduction to his published PhD dissertation (Bašagić 1986: 13). Strangely, this remark does not trigger offence in Sarajevo, possibly because it does not come from a ‘foreign mouth’, as Rizvić put it. Donia and Fine also concur that the Ottoman state left behind a ‘negative legacy’ (Donia and Fine 1994: 69), stating: ‘In the mid-1870s, Bosnia was one of the most backward areas in Europe. (...) Economically Bosnians were less well off than their neighbours in any direction. (...) Catholic and Orthodox peasants were subject to many abuses at the hands of Muslim landlords in the late Ottoman years’ (ibid.: 75–8). Halil Inalcik, a most prominent Turkish historian of the Ottoman Empire, further validates this view:

While a rapidly developing and humanistic Europe was ridding itself of all forms of medievalism, the Ottoman Empire clung ever more zealously to the traditional forms of near-eastern civilization, becoming by the time of Süleiman I, when these reached their full perfection, self-satisfied, inward-looking and closed to outside influences. Even if the Ottomans had throughout their history borrowed a number of discoveries in technology, medicine and finance, they adopted them only for military or other purely practical purposes. They never fully broke away from the values and outlook of near-eastern culture, sanctified by the *seriat*, and never wished to understand the mentality that had created European implements and methods. As early as the fifteenth century there had been some European observers who sought to describe objectively the Ottoman state, religion and culture, while the Ottomans, convinced of their own religious and political superiority, closed their eyes to the outside world.

(Inalcik 1994: 52)

Andrić’s depiction of Bosnia at the end of the Ottoman rule aligns closely with analogous descriptions by other historians. Similarly, his assessment of the literary culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina – or the lack thereof – does not deviate significantly from other scholars’ viewpoints. Up until the 1820s, there were no Serbian schools, and the Orthodox Church was under the sway of Greek bishops who showed little interest in fostering non-Greek education. Beyond a few hand-copied books used in church services, there was scarcely anything that could be labelled as Serbian literary culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The state of literary culture among Bosnian Muslims was only slightly better. Although there were individuals who wrote in Persian, Arabic and Turkish, it is challenging to discern whether these writers were ancestors of contemporary Bosniaks or simply Arabs, Turks or Persians with

some connection to Bosnia – perhaps through a Bosnian parent or a period of residence there. Labelling a work written in Turkish or Arabic, published in Istanbul or Cairo, by an author possibly born in Bosnia, as part of ‘Bosniak literary culture’ remains highly debatable. This perspective is shared even by Bosniak nationalist cultural historians, like Bašagić in 1912 (Bašagić 1984), and Smail Balić, who, with the benefit of a century of academic research, examined the field in 1997 (Balić 1997).²

Discussing the cultural accomplishments of Bosnian Muslims, Balić observes that of the ‘approximately thirty poets of the Ottoman period who composed their work in Croatian’ – Balić adhered to the theory of Bosnian Muslims being ‘the cream of the Croatian people’ – ‘barely three or four can withstand rigorous literary criticism’ (ibid: 159–60). This assessment over a span of four centuries is notably underwhelming.³ The literary culture that could be termed ‘Croat’ in Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina holds somewhat more substance, mainly due to the writings of Bosnian Franciscans in the nineteenth century. However, even this is relatively basic compared to literary outputs in the same language during the same era in the vicinity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Genuine literary culture in Bosnia only emerged after Austria-Hungary’s occupation of this former Ottoman territory. The subsequent proliferation of schools, the advent of newspapers and literary journals, and increased interaction with other cultural centres provided a foundation for the growth of both authors and readers. As demonstrated, Andrić’s conclusions regarding the literary culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina are hardly radical or inflammatory, and they find affirmation even among Bosniak nationalist historians.

What remains as a potential source of contention lies in the three paragraphs where Andrić presents his cultural and historical perspective on Bosnia under Ottoman rule. In one of these paragraphs, Andrić asserts that in 1463, Bosnia

² ‘At the time, their own people did not understand them’, says Bašagić about Muslim writers associated with Bosnia who wrote in Middle Eastern languages, ‘because they expressed their thoughts and wrote their works in Arabic, Turkish and Persian, and what masses do not understand, they cannot take to heart’ (Bašagić 1984: 21).

³ ‘Cultural life in Bosnia under the Ottomans was traditionalist’, explains Balić. ‘While neighbouring Dalmatia was refreshed by the ideas of humanism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Croatian humanists nurtured the new ideas of the West in their land, brilliant men of letters in Bosnia were almost exclusively occupied with religious, moralistic, and mystic themes. There was no cultural exchange between the Ottoman Empire and the West until the seventeenth century, and the subsequent relations were very superficial and limited to diplomats and wealthy businessmen. (...) All cultural achievement was viewed in the light of the religious tradition and remained subservient to it’ (Balić 1997: 140). ‘Muslim literature in Croatian remained devoid of influence and enrichment from the other national territories. This separate existence led to an ossification of form and thought, and the language remained poor and stunted’ (ibid.: 160).

was conquered by a warrior nation whose social institutions and practices contradicted Christian culture. He notes that this conqueror's religion reshaped the intellectual landscape in Bosnia (Andrić 1982: 51). This assertion does not carry inherent controversy: indeed, the Ottomans were, by nature, a warrior people, and their state was 'principally based on the idea of conquest' (Inalcik 1954: 112), which was understood as *gaza*, a holy war against Christians (Inalcik 1994: 3). Their religion, social institutions and practices indeed diverged from those prevalent in Bosnia, and this encounter genuinely influenced the intellectual life in this country.

Continuing to the second paragraph criticized by Andrić's Bosniak detractors, he discusses the added complexity brought by conversions to Islam. He paints a picture of a dividing line that separated the 'Serbo-Croat national and linguistic' community into two segments, as if delineated by a boundary following the Danube, Sava and Una Rivers, as well as the Dinaric Mountains. Over the ensuing four centuries, what Andrić regarded as a single nation – all South Slavs speaking Serbo-Croatian – remained split by this figurative wall, living within the confines of two distinct empires, the Ottoman and Habsburg, and existing in a state of more or less perpetual conflict, a condition he refers to as a 'horrible history' (ibid.: 53). This passage reads as an objective and factual account of historical events as long as the reader remains impartial within this 'horrible history'. That is, as long as the reader perceives the persistent warfare between two empires and civilizations, with South Slavs on both sides participating in the conflict, as a tragedy, akin to Andrić's portrayal in his essay on Njegoš (Andrić 1976). However, if the reader aligns with one of the two empires, faiths and civilizations involved, the interpretation of Andrić's statements changes. In this scenario, his criticism may not stem from his alignment with a particular side – because he appears to take neither side, whether in this depiction or his political life, where he, as a member of the Young Bosnia movement, was imprisoned during the First World War as an opponent of Austria-Hungary. The criticism could instead be directed at his omission of overt alignment with 'our side'.

The third paragraph, often deemed most contentious, merits a full quotation:

By right of geographic position Bosnia should have linked the lands along the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, two peripheries of the Serbo-Croatian element and two different zones of European culture. Having fallen to Islam, it was in no position to fulfil this, its natural role, and to take part in the cultural development of Christian Europe, to which ethnographically and geographically it belonged.

What is more, thanks to the domestic Islamized element Bosnia even became a mighty bulwark against the Christian West. And in that unnatural posture it was to stay for the entire duration of Turkish rule.

(Andrić 1990: 17)

The notion that Bosnia served as a bulwark of Islam against Christianity is a source of pride for Bosniak nationalists, from figures like Safvet-bey Bašagić in the early twentieth century (Bašagić 1900: 172) to Adil Zulfikarpašić at the century's close (*Bosanski pogledi* 1984: 132). This perspective is generally not considered offensive. In the paragraph under scrutiny, Andrić reiterates his lifelong political stance: that Bosnia occupies the geographical centre of the same people, the speakers of Serbo-Croatian. He suggests that had it not been divided between two empires, the area inhabited by this people could have formed a unified cultural zone, capable of bridging the gap between two variants of European culture, the Mediterranean and the Central European. Unfortunately, by being part of the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia did not unify this space; rather, it fragmented it. Most critically, Bosnia not only failed to fulfil this connecting role by being part of the Ottoman Empire but also missed out on participating in the cultural development of Christian Europe.

Andrić's Bosniak critics interpret this as a reflection of his Christian bias and regret that a segment of the Bosnian population embraced Islam. They perceive it as being directed against their faith and, by extension, their very existence. These critics endeavour to find evidence of this 'hatred' against Muslims in Andrić's literary works, yet their attempts have yielded no compelling results thus far. However, in this paragraph Andrić the agnostic does not say that Bosnia missed its opportunity to remain Christian, but the opportunity to participate in the *cultural development* of Christian Europe, and this is an altogether different thing. The cultural development of Christian Europe from which Bosnia was excluded was *secularization as the precondition of modernity and progress*. In Christian Europe, Christianity was defeated as the power which shapes the understanding of society, politics and nature, and it made possible this very cultural development by admitting the defeat and agreeing to become a private affair, a prayer and a rite, instead of a social, political and scientific force which shapes the way people live together, regulates their relationships and produces knowledge. Only when defeated, Christianity opened the way for a political order which is not a copy of the transcendental one, but one which slowly and painfully developed into democracy, and for knowledge which is not

theological dogma, but science. Christian Europe is the Europe of a defeated religion, and its cultural development is exactly what Andrić's dissertation vividly describes as lacking in Bosnia: secularization, modernity and progress, roads, railways, schools, libraries, printers, literacy, universities, equality before the law, less poverty, the protection of honour, property and life. Andrić was an agnostic, and ascribing to him a religious bias is a false perspective. What he actually says in his dissertation is neither more nor less than what every secular intellectual in the Balkans – including Turkey, where Ziya Gökalp was at that very same time expressing the same idea (Gökalp 1959), as well as a number of progressive Bosniaks from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, such as Mustafa Mulalić (1936) – offered as the answer to the question: 'What is it that holds us back, and why can't we be as the rest of Europe?' Traditionalism, as described in Inalcik's already-quoted paragraph, and inertia resulting from it, was their answer to this question. That tradition, as the obstacle to progress and development – the 'cultural development of Christian Europe' – they saw in the Ottoman state, shackled by its religion which defined the political order, the social norms and the knowledge of the world. When looking at his own homeland at the time of writing his dissertation, Andrić saw, as did everybody else but the staunchest Ottoman patriots, the maintenance of this tradition – embodied in the religious Islamic Empire, headed by the absolutist sultan who was at the same time caliph – as the main reason for Bosnia's backwardness and the absence of literary culture in it.

Is it offensive? Or just a legitimate search for historical explanations, always expected in PhD dissertations of this kind? Was not this same idea at the core of Mustapha Kemal's political programme, devised to sever all links between the modern secular Turkey and its Ottoman, Islamic past? Is it not true that all post-Ottoman nation states began to make progress and gradually catch up with Western and Central Europe as soon as the withdrawal, and eventual disappearance, of the Ottoman Empire made secularization possible? It may be true, but in the eyes of his Bosniak critics this does not excuse Andrić for doing the same. Truth, as Muhsin Rizvić already reminded us, becomes offensive if it comes from a foreigner, and the fact that Andrić is here in accord with Mustapha Kemal only underlines his guilt. When, after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in 2001, Bin Laden spoke about 'eighty years of humiliation of Muslim peoples', claims Ferro in his book *Resentment in History*, it was a very precise allusion to Mustapha Kemal's abolition of the caliphate and his attempt to modernize Turkey by secularizing it, and the founding of

the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo in 1928 was a direct reply to this blasphemy (Ferro 2010: 121). Agreeing with Mustapha Kemal is obviously not always advisable, especially if you ask the Muslim Brotherhood's followers.

The second non-fictional text which serves as evidence of Andrić's Islamophobia and (Serbian) nationalism is the *aide-mémoire* on the Albanian question (*Aide-mémoire* 1988), found in the archive of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This is a note prepared for the prime minister, Milan Stojadinović, before his meeting with the Italian foreign minister, Ciano, in 1939. Its purpose was to brief the prime minister about the current state of affairs, and to remind him of all open questions and previously taken positions. It may have been written in the Political Department of the Ministry headed by Andrić at the time, even by him personally – or supervised by him – as Stojadinović wrote Andrić's name on it. Its historical context is the following: after more than a million Greeks were expelled from Anatolia, and a similar number of Armenians physically eliminated, the new Republic of Turkey desperately needed to renew its population. As it tried to build its legitimacy on Turkish nationalism – instead of on Islam and Ottomanism, as the Hamidian Empire before it – and wanted to strengthen its own Turkish character, the new state relied on immigrants from the former Ottoman provinces. The process of immigration was regulated by *Iskan kanun*, the Immigration Law (1934), which specified that only Turks could be let in, although in practice this meant Muslims in general, as it was believed that they could be easily assimilated and become Turks. Thus, Albanians and Bosniaks, in addition to Pomaks and Tatars, also 'benefited from this law' (Akgündüz 1998: 112). When Turkey signed a convention with Romania in 1936, Muslims from Dobrudja were able to settle in Turkey: in the convention, Romania pledged to let them leave and pay for the possessions they left behind, and Turkey to let them in and provide conditions for their settlement. Immigration was voluntary: one had to apply to be included in this process. It is obvious that both countries saw this as beneficial, as the result was the same on both sides: national homogenization. Between the two world wars this was the usual way of dealing with minority issues: it was generally assumed that minorities at one's borders was a security threat, and that resettlement was a legitimate and efficient way of dealing with it. Turkey approached Yugoslavia with a similar proposition – while working in Geneva in 1935, Andrić reported that Turkish Foreign Minister Aras proposed that Yugoslavia could let 200,000 Muslims leave for Turkey, adding that Aras himself explicitly mentioned Albanians because their mentality

made them similar to Turks (Andrić 1992a: 134–5) – and in July 1938 the Convention, which envisaged that 40,000 Muslim families would emigrate for Turkey, was signed. However, the outbreak of the Second World War put an end to the process, and the convention between Turkey and Yugoslavia was never ratified.

This *aide-mémoire* reminded the prime minister of the position taken at the peace conference in 1920: that Yugoslavia supported the existence of an independent Albania as the best solution, but that it reserved the right to claim its northern part should other powers try to occupy the country (*Aide-mémoire* 1988: 196). When, after the war, Italian troops had occupied Albania, the narrative continued, Italy, Yugoslavia's enemy from 1918, the attitude it will prove once more only two years after Stojadinović's meeting with Ciano, began promoting the idea of Greater Albania which would include parts of Yugoslav territory. Even after Italy had ended the occupation, King Zog I ran Albania as an Italian protectorate and brought about exactly what Yugoslavia feared in 1920: an Albania in the hands of Yugoslavia's enemies, and an enemy at its southern borders instigating separatism and threatening war. 'Taking a part of the Balkans', continues this *aide-mémoire*, 'by a non-Balkan power, and without any ethnic justification, is a dangerous precedent for all Balkan peoples' (*Aide-mémoire* 1988: 203). As much as Yugoslavia should try to avoid a conflict with Italy, it should also oppose Italian occupation of Albania, which would present a threat to its southern regions. The *aide-mémoire* concludes: 'For us, a division of Albania could be contemplated only as a necessary and unavoidable evil which cannot be opposed, and as a great damage out of which one can derive as much benefit as possible, i.e. choosing a lesser evil between the two' (ibid.: 204). Should the situation develop towards the division of Albania between other countries, Yugoslavia should demand its north, in which case it would get 200,000 to 300,000 ethnic Albanians who were mostly Roman Catholic and not on good terms with Muslim Albanians. 'The question of Muslim Albanians' migration to Turkey in this case would be posed under different circumstances, as there would be no powerful action to prevent it', concludes the *aide-mémoire* (ibid.). Migration mentioned at its end referred to the Convention signed with Turkey in 1938. Interpreting this sentence as Andrić's plan for 'ethnic cleansing' of Albanians, as his Bosniak critics insist, is at best an ignorant, and at worst a malevolent misreading. Even if this *aide-mémoire* was really penned by Andrić himself – Stojadinović's handwritten

indication on the margins of the document is insufficient proof – this is neither Andrić's political programme nor his literary work. It is a document of Yugoslav foreign policy in the 1930s, written by a civil servant, and reflects the policy of its government in times when solving minority issues by migration was considered both legitimate and acceptable.

Literature, Evil and Moralizing Criticism

It is insufficient to say, as Sells does, that the interpretation from which we started does not do justice to Njegoš; now we may also add Andrić. What we examined in this book is not merely literary criticism, which may be, and often is, subjective, erroneous and lacking in depth. This is a criticism that goes to war, using past literature as a springboard for fighting contemporary ideological and political battles. To accomplish this, it must misinterpret both the personalities of the authors it singles out and their works, simplifying all complexities it encounters. It distorts the obvious meanings of the works it employs for its ideological and political purposes, imposing new meanings on them that cannot be justified by any acceptable method of interpretation. In its attempts to present itself as ethical, it dons the mantle of moralist criticism, supposedly caring for values, yet its cynical use of literature ultimately devalues everything. Taking its claims seriously and attempting to envision the type of literature that would earn its approval, one is left with the concept of didactic, simplistic, fable-like writing which advances the critics' ideological, political and religious truths. This is a world in which eternal good perpetually battles eternal evil, where anyone with objections must align with evil. However, reducing the world to the perpetual struggle between good and evil is not ethical criticism, nor even moralist criticism – it is *moralizing* criticism. Ivo Andrić crafted a world which stands in stark contrast to this didactic, simplistic and moralizing perspective. In what follows, we will first explore Andrić's potential to address evil in literature, and conclude by depicting his understanding of the human world.

Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know that literature is not duped by morality, to modify Levinas's famous opening. This topic, however, must be approached with the highest level of caution. Evil eludes complete understanding; it cannot be integrated into our categories of comprehension and mind, and is in that sense, as Levinas claimed, transcendent (Levinas 1983: 158). Evil is 'the point at which ethics and metaphysics,

epistemology and aesthetics meet, collide, and throw up their hands,' as Susan Neiman states (Neiman 2015: 5). In spite of that, books that present the connection between evil and literature as a self-evidently privileged relationship are increasingly appearing (Bataille 2000; Flahault 2003; McGinn 2003; Eagleton 2010). Philosophers also develop their ethical theories using stories offered by fiction. Hannah Arendt found inspiration for constructing one of the most famous modern understandings of the phenomenon of evil in the works of writer Hermann Broch. Could one conclude from this that where ethics, metaphysics, epistemology and aesthetics throw up their hands, literature comes into play as a discourse more suitable for considering the theme of evil? And that, when we want to think and speak about evil, it is better to turn to writers and their stories rather than seeking advice from ethicists and metaphysicians? The idea is appealing, but caution is advised once again: if literature indeed has a privileged relationship with the phenomenon of evil, it does not necessarily mean that it can do what ethics and metaphysics have given up, and, more importantly, that it can do it their way.

Although Andrić avoided auto-poetical statements, fragments can still be found in his prose that, often with a considerable dose of irony, testify to his views on literature. If the seemingly privileged relationship between literature and evil is in question, one such fragment can be found in *Bosnian Chronicle*, where the narrator says the following about Daville, a consul who engages in writing poetry in his free time: 'Daville's experience of evil in the world left him bitterly dejected while his experience of good aroused his enthusiasm and a kind of moral elation. It was from these moral reactions, which were really strong, if not constant or always reliable, that he created verses lacking in everything that would have made them poetry' (Andrić 1996: 70–1). An author's moral reactions are not sufficient in themselves for good literature: the condemnation of evil and the enthusiasm for good are not even the beginning of good literature. If such a privileged relationship exists, for Andrić it certainly does not lie in the ethical agility of the writer, but in something else.

If we were to choose one of Andrić's works which thematizes the phenomenon of evil and nothing else, it would have to be the short story 'Mustafa Madžar' (Mustafa the Hungarian). Mustafa is the embodiment of radical, non-instrumental evil: one day, he rises and begins to kill seemingly without any reason. Killing others is not a means to an end for him; it is not even a goal in itself. It rather appears as the manifestation of something that Mustafa carries

within himself, or something that he embodies. He abuses and kills as others breathe. At the beginning of the story, Mustafa is depicted as a warrior, a man without eros in Freud's sense of this word, lacking emotional connections with other people, but also as a lover of books with an inclination towards music. That is what can be learned about him before he embarks on his murderous rampage: he is a fearless warrior who avoids others, and lives with books and music. What of these three is important in understanding Mustafa's character, or his predisposition to evil, if it even existed? The aggressiveness that Mustafa displays in war – where aggression is socially desirable – has a completely different status from the aggressiveness he will later exhibit. In war, aggression is instrumental, serving a purpose, and there it is not called evil but rather, from the perspective of his community, heroism. This is how his community perceives him and, for this very feature, respects and celebrates him. Mustafa could easily be imagined without his inclination for book and music, and it seems that through this detail Andrić wanted to suggest the unreliability of the widespread belief that 'culture' suppresses evil in a person, that it 'refines' and educates them for the good. The absence of emotional connections could be both a consequence of evil in Mustafa, and a condition that facilitates the conception of evil in him. At the beginning of the story, this is still unknown. As has already been said, Andrić avoided psychologizing his characters, and where he offered traditional contours of psychological portraits, he almost always included either too much or too little material from which a psychological portrait can be constructed. In both cases, the outcome is the same: if there are too many elements, they become ambiguous and the picture becomes blurred, while if there are too few, there is not enough material for psychological understanding to begin. If the writer does not want to interpret the characters psychologically, how can we know why someone is doing something? The character could explain it themselves, but that is difficult if the character lacks strong connections with other people to whom they could confide. This is why, in this story, Andrić included Mustafa's dreams, which partially reveal his motives. Only partially, because dreams still need to be interpreted, especially when they are, like Mustafa's, far from direct explanation.

The entire story 'Mustafa the Hungarian' is composed as an alternating presentation of Mustafa's dreams and reality. Even the first dream – about the boys in Crimea and Mustafa's inability to escape from Russian soldiers, which could be interpreted as a guilt dream – supports the broad paradigm which our monotheistic culture has, for centuries, been responding to with the question

unde malum: the world, and each of us individually, is a stage where two principles, good and evil, fight a battle. The famous sentence, ‘The world is full of scoundrels,’ which appears at the very beginning of the story – first when Mustafa observes his comrades hesitating to engage in battle, and then when he hears the wailing of the persecuted crowd against whom the Turks seek revenge – suggests that Mustafa should be understood as a moralist with an impure conscience. It is to him, who is visited by the memory of the abomination in which he participated, that the task is given to condemn the moral state of the world – the abomination of the world. But the story continues, and Mustafa, tormented by dreams and insomnia, embarks on his private mission against unarmed Christians, doing exactly what he previously called abomination. Thus, he himself, despite the dream of the boys in Crimea and the possibility of interpreting it as a dream of guilt and an impure conscience, becomes a ‘scoundrel’. If we already know that Mustafa is not devoid of the ability to distinguish between good and evil, both in his memory of past events and those he witnesses in the present, what drives him to do precisely what he knows is evil?

In response to that question, the episode with the two monks from the Sutjeska Monastery provides an answer. When Mustafa tells them to freely throw away all three decrees – the sultan’s, the vizier’s and the Sarajevo mullah’s – which confirm their right to freely practise their faith, it becomes clear that the motive driving him is the need for *unlimited* self-affirmation. He no longer recognizes anyone above himself and desires to be *everything*: this rejection of otherness, of others who hinder his self-affirmation, sheds light on and explains Mustafa’s solitude at the beginning of the story. Voluntary solitude is also a rejection of others, a severing of ties with the world, as a refusal not only to depend on others but also to share a common world with them.¹ For someone with such a desire to be completely satisfied, both the world and everyone in it must disappear. Hatred, just like love, can occupy the minds of others; if one is not loved and does not love in return, one can occupy the same place in others’ consciousness that love deserves through the hatred one feels and arouses in others. This is why Mustafa tells the monks to throw away all three decrees and say, ‘Mustafa the Hungarian commanded me’ if anyone asks what they are doing.

¹ Commenting on Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Peter Dews says: ‘Evil arises when the subject turns inward, isolates herself, exalts her own power of choice, failing to acknowledge the prior claim of the shared human world in which her very existence is grounded. “Abstractly, being evil means singularizing myself in a way that cuts me off from the universal (which is the rational, the law, the determinations of spirit)”’ (Dews 2008: 90).

This means: spread the news about the new me, I don't need your admiration and respect, I want your fear. And that seems to calm him down: he can finally fall asleep and rest. Relief does not come to him from living with others, but from aggression towards them and their elimination: exerting power brings him peace and tranquillity, a sense of self that coexistence with others cannot offer. Now Mustafa sleeps without disturbing dreams, until he is awakened by the friars' prayer mentioning God as 'the greatest good'. Not the sultan, vizier and Sarajevo mullah, with whom Mustafa has already measured himself, but someone who is above them all and guarantees the existence of good in the world. The monks, therefore, have not yet been defeated, for they invoke an even higher power as their protection against Mustafa. That is why he then shoots at them and leaves 'as if fleeing from them'. He is running away from the failure to obtain the monks' confirmation of his divine being, a being beyond coexistence with others and above the common human world – for they continue to mumble about a god who is not Mustafa.

Mustafa lies down again, falls asleep and immediately dreams: he is fighting two outlaws, and behind them he sees a woman whom he likely raped, perhaps even disfigured. In his dream, he is assailed at the same time by the legitimate enemy – the outlaws – and by the scoundrel within himself, the memory of the evil he had committed. The world is full of beasts who inflict harm on the powerless, like Mustafa did to those boys or to this woman, who now attack him in his dreams, but in reality he defends himself from them by becoming an even greater scoundrel. What angers him the most is when the vizier, the sultan, God and the greatest good are mentioned because he can only defend himself through the complete, radical annihilation of the world in which what he has done exists as 'vileness', and perhaps by annihilating all those who can call what he does 'vileness'. To prevent that, Mustafa must destroy such a world in which something called 'vileness' can exist: if that is not easily and quickly achievable, the re-evaluation of all values and the creation of a new morality might be necessary. And immediately after, we see him above the water, reflecting like a mirror, in which he sees himself with a saintly halo around his head, composed of a swarm of flies illuminated by sunbeams. Mustafa has become a saint for himself, the embodiment of goodness, by creating an inverted world in which he is no longer a scoundrel and does no harm. Then he rides calmly, as if in a dream. He arrives at an inn, lies down and dreams again: once again, the boys from Crimea visit him, and in the dream he hears a voice saying, 'You should have roasted them'. He should have been even more radical in evil, killing them

in agony because the complete annihilation of the other, especially the other who could remember the committed evil, is the only thing that satisfies. This new voice in the repeated dream is the outcome of creating the inverted world in which evil has become good, and Mustafa a saint. In the previous dream, Mustafa was tormented by immobility, the inability to escape the Russian soldiers – from the condemnation of his own conscience. In the repeated dream, there are no Russian soldiers and no condemnation of conscience. Instead, there is regret that the evil did not go further, become even more radical and vile. The torment of immobility before the Russians is replaced here by the torment of failing to capture the boys: they ‘slop away’ and ‘fly like clouds’, so the command of Mustafa’s ‘saintly’ voice to pursue evil to the very end cannot be fulfilled. There is no memory of the past without remorse: it always returns in dreams, either as vileness committed, or as a missed opportunity to reverse the world in a timely manner, through radical evil.

Mustafa kills Abdulselam-bey because the bey is a ‘coward and a liar’, and then he goes to Sarajevo. While listening to the conversation of Sarajevans, Mustafa responds to the remark that there are plenty of baptized scoundrels – Christians, they mean – by saying, ‘Both baptised and unbaptised: the world is full of scoundrels’. Everyone looks at him in astonishment, and he believes that ‘all those faces’ are turning against him. He wants peace and tranquillity, but all those other faces, that multitude of others who, by their mere presence and existence, take away his own self, the others with whom he cannot exist unharmed hunt him, and he defends himself from them: he grabs his sabre, a chase begins and the people, accustomed to such commotions, participate in it with bloodthirsty malice, ‘no matter on which side’. Many do not know why Mustafa is being chased, but the mob grows until he falls on the ground. His last thought is again, ‘The world is full of scoundrels’.

Should the end of the story be understood as the triumph of good? It is good that they stopped him, Mustafa certainly did not sow goodness in the world, and the saintly halo above his head seen in the water could only be a product of a mind completely detached from reality. However, what kind of good is it, and what kind of world is it, where one evil, Mustafa, is suppressed by another evil, a bloodthirsty mob who do not even know why they are pursuing him, who have not heard of the boys in Crimea, the friars from Sutjeska and Abdulselam-bey, and at the end of the story they stand towards Mustafa just as he previously stood towards others? Although wicked and vile, in the end Mustafa even evokes some compassion as a lonely man, powerless to defend himself, whom

the bloodthirsty mob persecutes and ultimately kills: an evil moralist who falls as a victim of the wicked mob.

It transpires that the story 'Mustafa the Hungarian' cannot be assimilated into the interpretative pattern of the struggle between good and evil, after all. It is Andrić's most extreme story about evil, and there are several reasons for that. The first is the narrative focalization on Mustafa's consciousness. The entire story is narrated from his perspective. If there were even a minimal possibility for evil to be seen from the outside, from some other perspective, there would be a point of view from which the world would not necessarily appear as those famous four models mentioned by Kant in his essay 'The End of all Things' – caravanseraï, penitentiary, madhouse and cloaca (Kant 1996: 224). One could believe that there is something else in the world besides those who commit violence and those who suffer it, or, worse still, that sometimes those who suffer violence are the same as those who commit it. The second reason is that the evil itself embodied in Mustafa the Hungarian is extreme or radical. It always aims at the destruction of the other as such.² The third reason is the end of the story: a scoundrel says that the world is full of scoundrels, and in the end it transpires that he is actually right – Daville would not be able to find anything enthralling here. However, in spite of that, 'Mustafa the Hungarian' remains a story that captivates the reader's imagination and refuses to be forgotten.

To understand why this is the case, one should imagine a story in which everything is the opposite: a story about a good person who travels the world and does good, and everybody responds to him with goodness. This is not to be found even in the lives of saints, because even there, some kind of evil, some devil, must appear to tempt the future saint. Or, a story about Mustafa who meets a good woman, who either makes him a good man, or deceives him so that some good guardians of order arrest him and take him away, to prison or a madhouse. In fact, Andrić did write such a story: it is 'Aska and the Wolf', his only story *for children*.

Unlike tragedy, which shows the downfall of a 'man in the middle', who must choose between two mutually exclusive values, two goods that, despite their conflict, continue to be considered values, here there is neither good nor values. There is only tension between two evils, neither of which can be 'right', and

² Although Hannah Arendt disavowed her term 'radical evil' (Arendt 2000: 396), Richard J. Bernstein, following in her footsteps, defines radical evil as a 'systematic effort to render human beings superfluous as human beings' (Bernstein 2002: 225).

thus become even a relative good. Neither Daville nor his critical equivalent, moralizing literary criticism, would know what to do with this story. What presents itself as ethical criticism would probably want to point out the ethical lessons of literature (e.g. that Mustafa is evil), or criticize this story as ethically flawed ('Andrić is wrong: there is also good in the world', or 'Andrić should not have, in any way, given credit to an evil character, as it relativizes the condemnation of evil') believing that this can contribute to the development of a regional ethics, proper to literature. However, only some philosophers insist that the task of literature is to offer us examples of good and evil, based on which they can further develop their ethical theories. Unlike consul Daville, good writers rarely adhere to that demand and seldom write didactic fables for adults in which both good and evil are equally unambiguous. In such cases, ethical criticism should offer only a description of this tension created by the story, to be a portrayal of a model of a world in which two evils clash, and where one of them triumphs, but that victory still cannot be called good. Unlike ethical treatises, literature can give voice to this tension, maintain it without imposing solutions and not offer any way out.³ And more importantly, such ethical criticism could become a description of what happens after reading: the reader's need to escape from the story, to forget it because of the unbearable idea it imposes as its meaning – that one cannot understand the world in which different forms of evil fight, some with a pronounced need for moralizing, and where little else exists.

From this perspective, it becomes clear what makes the story 'Mustafa the Hungarian' extreme. The world depicted in Andrić's story 'Trup' (Torso) is no more tolerable, as it also portrays the clash of two cruelties. Chelebi Hafiz is Mustafa the Hungarian under a different name: he is also, like Mustafa, a man of books, schooling and culture. About him is also said what we saw in Mustafa's character: 'Everything that is alive and stands upright bothered and irritated him. That's why he burned and destroyed everything. And he was only angry that he couldn't press the last blade of grass into the ground, that he couldn't make a stone burn' (Andrić 1967c: 140). Like Mustafa, only complete destruction can satisfy Chelebi Hafiz because any other existence is an obstacle to his self-affirmation. He may be even more radical in his destructive rampage, as he 'pacifies' Syria for

³ 'Poetry can record that struggle without settling it', claims Susan Neiman discussing Pope's *An Essay on Man*, 'and this alone may give it an advantage over philosophy, which seeks a conclusive solution (...). For resolving it would require him to reduce the very many perspectives one can take on the matter into one final and decisive one. Since the poem itself is about the multiplicity of perspective, such finality would be false to the reality of human experience' (Neiman 2015: 34).

years: while everything was fleeing from him, he 'trampled and left everything behind and pursued only lives as if they were prey' (ibid.: 141). Judging by the story that Friar Petar listens to, Syria had already been 'pacified', but Chelebi Hafiz did not stop. Here, Andrić introduces the most radical aspect of evil, which was also particularly emphasized in Mustafa's case: violence against those who are helpless and unprotected. Faced with Chelebi Hafiz's army, people flee into the desert and hide in caves, but hunger and thirst force them to venture out in search of water and food. That is when Chelebi Hafiz's men ambush and kill them 'like wild animals at watering holes' (ibid.). It is no longer a matter of atrocities committed against the enemy in war, but rather of pure evil that cannot be explained by anything: this is why evil cannot be defined in any other way than through tautology – it is inexplicable, incomprehensible, something that 'defies reason', causing ethics, metaphysics and epistemology to throw up their hands.

However, while in the story 'Mustafa the Hungarian' no defence against evil was possible, except perhaps the possibility of it being nullified by another evil, the slave who tells the story of Chelebi Hafiz to Friar Petar has the ironic consolation that every evil will eventually be defeated by its own mistake: namely, by the possibility of it ceasing to be evil for an instant. Evil is defeated and overcome not by good, as some metaphysical and religious conceptions optimistically see it, but by ceasing to be evil 'in the blink of an eye', 'in a split second' (ibid.: 142). Chelebi Hafiz felt compassion 'for a weak and half-dead woman'. 'In a split of a second, he stopped hating and pursuing her, and that was enough for a sword to find him as well' (ibid.). He saw in front of him a half-naked girl who, a moment before his sword was about to strike her, uttered a short and quick prayer. It is clear from his subsequent actions that what he saw was more important than what he heard: if her invocation of God's mercy had reminded him of the evil he was committing, he would have perhaps merely spared her life, but Chelebi Hafiz ordered the girl to be taken to his harem, where she became 'the dearest of all beings to him, the only creature he felt compassion for, someone close to him, and the only being he ever trusted' (ibid.: 144).

This is the plot twist briefly mentioned before as a possibility that, when it comes to the story 'Mustafa the Hungarian', might satisfy moralizing criticism: evil is halted by a value, beauty and Chelebi Hafiz is, if not transformed, at least halted. However, it is precisely that value that inflicts upon Chelebi Hafiz a torture incomparable to anything in Andrić's fiction. The Syrian woman not only leads Chelebi Hafiz's torment but also refuses to allow it to end quickly,

which would perhaps contain a hint of mercy. She demands to watch him suffer, but also that Chelebi Hafiz sees her watching. Her refined vengeance does not aim to torture his body and bring death; rather, it seeks to kill in him what is the most sensitive part in a human being: she wants him to witness how the only being he loves, that is closest to him and whom he trusted, finds pleasure in his suffering. This is undoubtedly an even more radical evil than the one driving Mustafa the Hungarian to randomly kill people he encounters on his path, or the massacre carried out by Chelebi Hafiz in Syria. It is not beauty that has defeated evil and saved the world; instead, two evils have once again clashed, and the tension this time may be even greater because beauty temporarily conceals evil. This raises unavoidable questions about what kind of world allows evil to appear as beauty, where beauty ends and evil begins, or how certain we can be in any definitions of evil and beauty.

However, 'Torso' is still experienced as a less extreme story because, instead of consistent focalization on one character, it is mediated through a chain of narrators, beginning with Chelebi Hafiz's servant. This is his story, and Friar Petar only appears as a transmitter of and commentator on that story. Unlike 'Mustafa the Hungarian,' where there is nothing else besides the world seen through the eyes of the evil protagonist and his dreams, in 'Torso' there are two framing narratives: one, by an impersonal narrator who remembers the late Friar Petar, and the other by Petar himself, framing the story of Chelebi Hafiz. Both framing narratives not only temporally and geographically distance the story of Chelebi Hafiz – it happened in Syria, a long time ago – but also reduce it to a report given in broad strokes, allowing the reader to remain safely anchored in two framing worlds: the one in which the impersonal narrator recalls Friar Petar, and the one in Akra, where Friar Petar spends his days in exile. Not much is said about these two worlds in 'Torso,' but it is enough to assume that they are not worlds of radical evil, like Mustafa the Hungarian's world or the world of Syria 'calmed' by Chelebi Hafiz. The reader can assume that these two worlds resemble the one they have in their own experience. Furthermore, the story 'Torso' is normalized by Friar Petar himself. He heard the story, now he paraphrases it, just as the story 'Mustafa the Hungarian' was paraphrased here, and in the end, he emerges as its interpreter and critic. The story of evil evokes disbelief even in those who, as Friar Petar says at the beginning of the story, have witnessed all sorts of wonders and have seen both evil and good: 'And is all of that really true and exactly as he told me,' Friar Petar wonders, 'or did the slave make it

up and add things from his own mind' (ibid.: 145)? The truth of the world or the fiction of literature? Even if it is only fiction, if Chelebi Hafiz's servant not only added but also invented everything – and those who create fiction do so for various reasons – it is a fiction that engulfs the one who heard or read it, it presents itself as an enigma that demands interpretation, and it is not easily surrendered to oblivion. And then the *interpreter and critic*, Friar Petar, says: 'I cannot forget what I heard and saw (...), nor can I interpret it' (ibid.: 145). There is no lesson for adults in which, as in moralizing treatises, evil and good will be unequivocal, so that all the Davilles of this world can revel in good and condemn evil and believe that they have achieved a great intellectual and moral feat. There is no comforting interpretative way out, there is only an acknowledgement of the tension that the story has created – a tension inherent in a model of the world in which two evils clash, one of them emerges victorious, but that victory still cannot be called good.

In this acknowledgement of Friar Petar's inability to interpret, explain, rationalize, to reduce the complexity and ambiguity of the world to the simplicity and unequivocality of rational construction, while simultaneously acknowledging that the enigma posed by the story refuses to disappear, that despite not being assimilated into the discursive knowledge we already have about the world, stories continue to remind us of the inexplicable and incomprehensible, a distinction emerges between the subject of knowledge and the subject of existence, insisted upon by François Flahault (2003: 9). The subject of knowledge must respond to the story by acknowledging that it cannot explain it; but what is incomprehensible to the subject of knowledge, what it may not be able to express or hear, is recognized, heard and expressed without interpretation by the subject of existence. Perhaps this is why all answers to the question *unde malum* are found either within the narrative tradition itself or, if they go beyond its boundaries, must take the form of a story that fits into a philosophical, religious or psychoanalytic context: as a narrative from which ethics arise and to which, in the end, it always returns, as a mythical story offered by religion instead of an explicit answer, or as a dream through which the subject of existence interprets itself, only partially, and never without residue, to the subject of knowledge.

Is the world Andrić depicts in his fiction – the world of evil, as is sometimes claimed? Two stories discussed here seem to suggest such a claim. The world of Andrić's fiction, however, is more complex than this and stages a different ethical

horizon, the one seen in Goya's paintings, closer to the full experience of human life than to a black-and-white representation of it.

Although readers of English translations of Andrić's works would be more familiar with his novels *The Bridge over the Drina*, *Bosnian Chronicle* and *The Damned Yard* than his stories such as 'Anikina vremena' (Anika's Times) or 'Nemirna godina' (An Unsettled Year), Andrić was more of a storyteller than a novelist. Even these three significant novels are composed of what can be read as more or less autonomous stories. What connects the stories about the various characters is a place: in *The Bridge over the Drina* they are diachronically threaded around the town of Višegrad, in *Bosnian Chronicle* they are synchronically connected around the town of Travnik, and in *Prokleta avlija* (The Damned Yard) they are linked in a spiral manner around the Istanbul prison described as 'a whole small town of prisoners and guards' (Andrić 1992b: 149). Only his fourth novel, *Gospodjica* (The Woman from Sarajevo), has a recognizable novelistic structure, centred on one main character and narrated in a linear manner – but it has never been read much, and today seems to be all but forgotten. The difference between Andrić's three celebrated novels, and the one which is less so, is indicative of the nature of the author's imagination and narrative interest. The unity of the former three novels is guaranteed by the places in which different and numerous characters enter the stage, but the places are always the same. Only in the fourth novel does the place of action change, when Rajka, its main character, moves from Sarajevo to Belgrade. *The Woman from Sarajevo* is a study of a single character and focuses on her psychology: this is what gives it its unity even after the place changes. That which is of the greatest importance is preserved even after Rajka's move to another place. A similar device was used only in a small number of stories, and is entirely absent from the remaining novels; it was used in his earliest stories 'Put Alije Djerzeleza' (The Journey of Alija Djerzelez) and 'Mustafa Madžar' (Mustafa the Hungarian), and in one of the later stories, 'Žena na kamenu' (The Woman on the Rock), which are also studies of one character or one psychological trait. The majority of Andrić's stories, however, and all three great novels, are not focused on a single dominant character, even if a proper name forms part of the title, as in 'Mara milosnica' (The Pasha's Concubine). What matters most is not individual psychology.⁴ Andrić tried to repress any interest in psychology as much as possible when he wrote about people. It means that he was never led by the question of what made somebody do this or that, but

⁴ On Andrić's reduction of the psychological dimension of his characters, see Hristić (2005: 114).

by the fact that something had been done, and that it had effects on the lives of others. This takes his stories out of the individualistic vision of the novel genre and leads them into the vision characteristic of traditional storytelling: people living with one another.

Nevertheless, places such as Višegrad, Travnik or the Istanbul prison are much more than just formal compositional devices which link different stories together. 'If Andrić's main character from Turkish Bosnia should be named, then it is the *kasaba*', wrote Zdenko Škreb (1985: 224).⁵ The *kasaba* is the world of merchants and craftsmen, somewhere halfway between the world of the village – and its loyalty to the epic – and the world of the metropolis with its individualism and the novel as its appropriate literary expression. Not tied to the land and freed from the chains of the collective, and the mythical, which expresses itself in epic stories about heroes, but still not in the modern metropolis, in which a mobile individual's psychology is the beginning and the end of everything, these merchants and craftsmen are for the most part, directed to one another. They are what Aristotle called *politēs*, people living in towns, the inhabitants of a *polis* – the Greek version of the *kasaba* – with all the liberties and limitations that go with it. Although there is always a tyrant whose absolute power must be obeyed, a pasha in Travnik or the sultan in Istanbul, the townspeople regulate their day-to-day life themselves. They no longer believe in the myth about Đerzelez Alija, but have not yet created their own myths about victors who can live independently of others, or even against them. In the master narrative of the nineteenth-century European novel, Balzac's *Le père Goriot*, self-confident Rastignac surveys the metropolis from the heights of Père Lachaise, ready to come down to challenge it. In a similar setting, Mihajlo in 'Anika's Times' surveys Višegrad from a hill equally determined to do what he must, but instead of challenging the town he runs away. For denizens of the *kasaba*, a tiny fissure of freedom opens up between, on the one hand, the monolith-mythical rural life in which they listen with awe and terror to a poem about an epic hero who alone had the right to act freely and make his own decisions, and on the other hand, the freedom and indifference the inhabitants of a modern metropolis enjoy and suffer. Within that fissure, anything they do has immediate consequences for the lives of others. They might not be shackled by the monolithic tradition which defines every one of them in a similar manner, but it does not mean that they are free to define themselves. It is as if they can step outside of the monolith and

⁵ The Turkish word *kasaba* comes from Arabic *kasbah* – small town.

commit a sin or an offence, but cannot ultimately live with it. Since they are no longer controlled by myth, they control one another. This *directedness* to the other, surveilling and being surveilled in return, expresses itself in the stories which they tell one another, and about one another. The best stories are always about those who step outside the order which the *kasaba* tries to establish. In *Bosnian Chronicle*, a young French diplomat, Des Fossés, explains it in the following manner:

The existence of such outcast and isolated people, abandoned to their passions, their disgrace and rapid ruin, just showed how firm the links were and how remorselessly strict were the laws of society, religion and family in patriarchal life. And this applied to the Turks as well as to the rayah of all faiths. In these societies everything was connected, one thing locked firmly into another, one thing supporting another, and watched over by everyone. Each individual took care of the whole, and the whole of each individual. Each house observed the next house, each street oversaw the next, for everyone was responsible for everyone else, and all were responsible for everything. Each person was closely linked with the fate not only of his relations and those in his household, but also of his neighbours, fellow-believers and fellow-citizens. This was both the strength and the enslavement of these people. The life of each individual was possible only within that pattern and the life of the whole only in accordance with those conditions. If anyone stepped outside that pattern, following his own instincts and will, it was as though he had committed suicide and, sooner or later, he would inevitably be destroyed. Such was the law of these communities, mentioned even in the Old Testament. It was the law of the classical world as well. Marcus Aurelius wrote somewhere: 'Whoever avoids the obligations of the social order is an outcast'.

(Andrić 1996: 118)

Andrić's Bosnian stories are set in a time before merchants and craftsmen had succeeded in creating the myth about the invincible and self-sufficient individual, and the sentence formulated by Aristotle in *Politics* still applies to them:

We thus see that the polis exists by nature and that it is prior to the individual. Not being self-sufficient when they are isolated, all individuals are so many parts all equally depending on the whole. The man who is isolated – who is unable to share in the benefits of political association, or has no need to share because he is already self-sufficient – is no part of the polis, and must therefore be either a beast or a god.

(Aristotle 1952: 6)

One of those who stepped outside the order and followed their own instincts is the main character in 'Anika's Times'. The narrator, however, never explicitly says which instincts Anika followed in particular, and what made her 'reveal herself to the kasaba'. All the reader is told is that she made her decision after waiting endlessly for Mihajlo to make up his mind about taking her as his wife. Mihajlo's hesitation is justified to a certain extent by what he had gone through before coming to Višegrad, but how Anika's disappointment turns into the drive to destroy the *kasaba* and herself, is left open to the reader's interpretation. The narrator's interest does not lie in the sphere of psychology, or at least not primarily. He is more interested in the consequences Anika's decision has for other people's lives. However, before beginning the story about the girl who came to believe that she could live in opposition to others, and be 'either a beast or a god', the narrator determines the story's true place and its real dimensions. The learned Mula Muhamed recorded in his notebook all important events in the *kasaba* and the wider world. In the year of Anika's decision to step outside the order, he noted three more significant things: that somewhere in Germany a devil was born (luckily it was such a small one that it could be captured in a bottle), that some Bonaparte challenged the sultan's rule over Egypt and that the rayah in Serbia rebelled. And then, closer to home:

That same year a young woman, a Christian (God confound all the infidels!), was overtaken by evil, and created such commotion and gained such strength that her evil reputation spread far and wide. Numerous men, both young and old, had gone to her, and many a youth had gone afoul there. And she placed both authority and law under her feet. But someone was found to deal with her, too, and she was crushed according to that which she deserved. And people were again put straight and were mindful of God's commands.

(Andrić 1962: 7)

Of all that happened in that year the town chronicler, Mula Muhamed, recorded four threats to the order: one clearly metaphysical, two political and one ethical – which all, due to Mula Muhamed's interpretation, turn out to be metaphysical rebellions against the order God implanted on the earth – with the reassuring remark that all of them had been overcome, that the world was still in its proper place, and that the order was still as God wanted it to be. This is one of the stories, contracted into a formula of several sentences, which townspeople tell one another, or about one another, in order to pass on the experience of human life. 'Anika's Times' represents a development of the formula into a story

about Anika, but as it is told by someone who is not a merchant or craftsman, it becomes a story about the *kasaba* as well. Contrary to its original teller, Mula Muhamed, the narrator of 'Anika's Times' is never tempted to convert evil into transcendence: for him, evil is always entirely human. Much as beauty is human as well, laying down one's arms and surrendering to it is also human. As Petar says: 'We can resist any trouble, save *that*'. *That* is Anika, whose beauty owes nothing to the place that had given her life, but which 'happened' to the place much in the same way as miracles or disasters happen. However, if the merchants and craftsmen cannot resist this beauty, and thus do harm to themselves and others, the *kasaba* can:

In the *kasaba*, where men and women resemble one another like sheep, it happens sometimes that chance will bring a child, as the wind brings seeds, who is deprived and stands out from the usual order of things, causing ill-luck and confusion, until it is cut down itself and the old order re-established.

(ibid.: 70–1)

And after Anika's death,

The *kasaba*, which had been momentarily deranged, could again sleep peacefully, walk freely, and breathe regularly. If a similar blight should occur – and it will at some point – the *kasaba* will again resist it, succumb to it, struggle against it, break it, bury it, and forget it.

(ibid.: 127)

Until then the *kasaba* shall retell the story about Anika's beauty, evil and misery. Why? In order for other girls who eagerly await a proposal, or boys who come of age when they behave like the fish in the Rzav, to hear the story about Anika and learn something from it? Hardly. The *kasaba* knows that something similar will happen again despite all the warnings, and that others' mistakes and misfortunes rarely help one not to be led astray. The telling of the story has a different purpose.

This purpose is represented in 'Anika's Times' in the image we already touched upon. After he had decided to kill Anika, Mihajlo climbed the hill above Višegrad, sat there and surveyed both rivers, the houses, the roofs, the sunset behind the pine trees and the mountain tops disappearing as dusk fell. He even saw what could not be seen from such a distance: the doors of the shops, the people and their smiles and greetings. Despite being detached from the hustle and bustle of the town, the people's greetings and the children's voices, Mihajlo was still close enough to encompass everything in his gaze: this

gaze, which encompasses everything, but which is not part of that everything itself, brought him peace of mind. 'All this is life', repeats Mihajlo three times. All this: the shops, people greeting one another, Anika's beauty, her evil and misery, children's laughter, Mihajlo's own misfortune which first brought him to Višegrad, and the seven years of happiness which he lived through in the town. Mihajlo's all-encompassing gaze and the sentence which accompanies it are the image of Andrić's poetics: they do not contain any attempt at totalizing, such as Mula Muhamed's intention in his chronicle to find the hidden law behind world events. They do not even attempt to explain everything, because not everything in the world lends itself to explanations; but they do recognize that, although inexplicable, beauty and evil, seven good years and misfortune, coexist side by side in the world. And that all that is contained in what we call the experience of human life. The peace of mind brought about by this all-encompassing gaze resembles wisdom.

Wisdom – this word disappeared from the discourse of literary criticism a long time ago. Philosophy abandoned it as well, keeping the second part of its Greek name as one would keep one's surname inherited from a long forgotten ancestor, in whom one is not all that interested. Thus, wisdom began to resemble a drought-ridden territory claimed by no one, a realm which nobody is greatly interested in. We do not consider as wisdom any specialized or applicable knowledge, such as healing or building bridges, but only deep insights into the ultimate, most important questions of human existence. Here, language already betrays us, because it does not seem possible to explain what wisdom might be without resorting to foggy metaphors of 'depth' and 'end'. The simplest way of putting it might be to say that a wise person is someone who knows true answers to the questions of the meaning of existence and of the nature of relationships between people, who has succeeded in seeing past the rough waves at life's surface and has clearly seen the calm bottom of the ocean. It seems that the idea of wisdom cannot do without the parallel image of depth. This kind of knowledge never achieves anything practicable, it does not heal the sick nor does it build bridges, but it is a precondition of all other knowledge, because it teaches us which knowledge is worthwhile and what can be achieved with it. And, most of all, wisdom is believed to bring peace of mind, and take away the uncertainty and the tearing apart which accompany every misled quest for truth, and the disappointment arising from it. 'Wisdom is the virtue of old age', says Hannah Arendt, it smells of maturity and experience, and not only of the individual but of the experience accumulated by generations (Arendt 1970: 109). That is why

it is never to be found anywhere in the vicinity of innovation, revolution and experiment, and never at beginnings, but always at ends. Consequently, the title of sage tends to be reserved for those whose long lives are rooted in longstanding, most often religious, traditions.

How can we be sure that something is endowed with wisdom, or that someone is a sage? Beauty can be recognized by those who are not beautiful themselves, but in order to recognize wisdom one has to be wise oneself. Only if we are in possession of true answers to the questions about the meaning of existence and the nature of human relationships can we declare someone else's knowledge and experience as wise. It means that the claim about someone's wisdom is always, above all, the demand that our wisdom be recognized and respected. This might be a reason why literary criticism shies away on the rare occasions when talking about wisdom seems to be possible.

Walter Benjamin was among the last critics to write about the wisdom of the storyteller: 'Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom. The art of storytelling is nearing its end because the epic side of truth – wisdom – is dying' (Benjamin 2002: 146). Benjamin is enigmatic here as usual. He uses the word wisdom in relation to the art of storytelling, but only after he has changed its meaning. 'Counsel woven into the fabric of real life' cannot help one overcome a specific difficulty – for instance, how to save oneself from the dangers brought about by beautiful girls who have decided to '*reveal* themselves'. Counsel is 'less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story' (ibid.: 145–6) and rests on one's ability to tell the story in the first place. Wisdom, then, has nothing to do with 'depths', 'meaning' or 'old age'; it is the ability to tell a story which communicates human experience, whatever it might be. Wisdom has as its content no true answers to ultimate questions, but only 'the fabric of real life'. It is, to follow Benjamin, the ability to transform life into the experience laid out in the form of a story, and it belongs to a storyteller as much as to every reader or listener who accepts the storyteller's proposal and continues the storytelling – who takes over the storyteller's ability to see real life, his own and that of others, as experience communicable by means of a plot and characters.

Nevertheless, there are many storytellers whom no one would consider wise, although their ability to tell a story is never questioned. It is said that Goethe and Tolstoy are wise, but never Gogol or Proust. Again, Thomas Mann is considered wise, but not Joyce or Beckett, although no one questions their abilities to rebottle life into experiences exposed in the form of a story. In order to deserve

this honourable title, a storyteller has to offer something more than this ability. That something can be called, similar to the reality effect described by Barthes, the *wisdom effect* (Barthes 1986).

As for Andrić, the wisdom effect is produced by characteristics of his narration which largely correspond to the characteristics commonly found in the popular idea of wisdom. In his novels and stories, one hardly ever finds traces of the great literary experiments and artistic revolutions which unfolded during his lifetime. Although classifying Andrić as a realist writer would raise eyebrows, no one would protest against the claim that his work belongs to that broadest narrative tradition in European literature in which Flaubert and Chekhov, but also Gide and Mann, fit comfortably. As in the novels and stories of Thomas Mann – a writer whom Andrić admired more than all his other contemporaries – in Andrić's works that which is specifically modern is achieved by means which cannot be detected at the language level.⁶ Both of them drew upon the accumulated experience of that long tradition, which in their works leaves an impression of living its last splendid days – the impression of old age and sunset. They leave such an impression even in their earliest published works: in 'Death in Venice', and in 'The Journey of Alija Đerzelez', Andrić's first published story. What is felt as old and experienced in these stories, written by relatively young people, is the old age and experience of the tradition, not of the authors.

What is more, more than any other writers of the same tradition, Mann and Andrić seem to be authors whose stories come from the depths of memory (these depths again!), from legend and history. Mann's medieval and Oriental stories, the Biblical paratext of *Joseph and His Brothers*, the modern version of the legend of Faust, Andrić's story about the Muslim epic hero Djerzelez Alija, his transformations of the legend of two brothers in *The Damned Yard*, historical wefts in *The Bridge over the Drina* and *Bosnian Chronicle* – are all the result of reliance on what has already been told in the past. In the case of Andrić, this distancing of the subject in the past is accompanied by a cultural distancing, as in the Oriental exoticism of 'Trup' (Torso) and 'Priča o vezirovom slonu' (The Story of the Vizier's Elephant), or in all other stories from Ottoman Bosnia, which was already a distant past in his time. In 'Razgovor s Gojom' (A Conversation with Goya), in which the foundations of Andrić's poetics are formulated, 'the old gentleman' Goya says that

⁶ On Andrić's appreciation of Thomas Mann, see Tartalja (1991: 74–90).

it is useless and mistaken to look for sense in the seemingly important but meaningless events taking place around us, but that we should look for it in those layers which the centuries have built up around the few main legends of humanity. These layers constantly, if ever less faithfully, reproduce the form of that grain of truth around which they gather, and so carry it through the centuries.

(Andrić 1992c: 16)

So not contemporary life, but what is distant in time, or made to look distant because it is felt as culturally different, offers a basis for a story which can achieve the wisdom effect.

A legend is something that comes to the storyteller as already transformed by previous storytelling. *Mythos*, a story, is what someone has already told to someone. Andrić does not narrate from the tradition of folklore storytelling, which was very rich among the South Slavs, but he fully embraces the tradition of oral narration. The story about Anika is a story about what the old people of the *kasaba* have remembered from the tales of even older witnesses. In 'Torso', the narrator retells what he heard from Friar Petar, who in turn had heard the story from Chelebi Hafiz's servant, who could not have witnessed the events in Syria himself but must have learnt about them from someone else's story. Friar Petar is Andrić's archetypal storyteller; old and ill, lying on his deathbed:

Friar Petar was still able to tell long and beautiful stories, but only if he could find listeners whom he liked. No one could say what the beauty of his stories consisted of exactly. In everything he said there was something 'smiling and wise' at the same time. But, in addition to that, around every word he said there hovered a special overtone, as a sound nimbus, which, missing from other people's speech, remained in the air and flickered even after the words he uttered died away. This is why every word that Friar Petar said, meant more than it did in everyday speech. This is now lost forever.

(Andrić 1967c: 135)

Through travelling the world, and living a long life, wise Friar Petar had seen 'good and evil', but the narrator of 'Torso' does not say what his wisdom consisted of exactly, save his ability to transform Benjamin's 'fabric of real life' into experience exposed in the form of a story. In doing this, Friar Petar would draw upon what he had experienced himself, as well as what he had heard in stories told to him by others. In *The Damned Yard*, every character has a story to tell: at times a simple one, such as the athlete's, at other times a false one, such

as Zaim's, and also profound and wise ones, such as Kamil's. Friar Petar listens to them all, and says:

For, what would we know about other people's souls and thoughts, about other people and consequently about ourselves, about other places and regions we have never seen nor will have the opportunity of seeing, if there were not people like this who have the need to describe in speech or writing what they have seen or heard, and what they have experienced or thought in that connection? Little, very little. And if their accounts are imperfect, coloured with personal passions and needs, or even inaccurate, we have reason and experience and can judge them and compare them one with another, accept or reject them, partially or completely. In this way, something of human truth is always left for those who listen or read patiently.

(Andrić 1992b: 174)

Friar Petar is a listener and a storyteller at the same time: in the Istanbul prison, he listens to stories, and upon returning to his monastery in Bosnia he retells a story composed of Zaim's, Haim's, Kamil's and his own stories. Since *The Damned Yard* is narrated as a recreation of Friar Petar's story by a young monk, Rastislav, the 'counsel' of which Benjamin wrote seems to have been taken. A chain of storytellers was created, a chain in which the next listener accepts the storyteller's proposal and continues the storytelling by taking over the previous storyteller's ability to see real life, his own and that of others, as an experience communicable by means of stories. It would be possible to say that what they pass on further is the tradition of storytelling, which in any event is already implicit in the other: a tradition, that which is given over or handed down, is possible only thanks to the act of continued storytelling, and the other way around – storytelling is the effect of inserting oneself into tradition, into the chain of storytellers and listeners who, when their time comes, become storytellers themselves.

It is thus fully comprehensible why the central narrative consciousness in Andrić's stories is always repressed into the background.⁷ The voice which tells the story – if it is not individualized as one of the characters – remains concealed in the background, for the story is not about him, but about us, and it is not his, but ours, everybody's and no one's. If we are to continue with spatial metaphors, it would be better to say that the narrator is high above the level of events: like Mihajlo in 'Anika's Times', the narrator also seems to be up on the hill above

⁷ On the narrative voice in Andrić's novels and stories, see Lešić (2005).

a town, from where he can see everything, but remain detached from it, calm and tranquil – in a word, epic. He can also say, as Mihajlo does, ‘All this is life’: passion and ecstasy, but also the downfall which follows afterwards. This calm of the narrating voice contributes to the wisdom effect as well. From his elevated position, the voice is able to tell of things that surpass the individual position of those included in the events. Since he narrates from the tradition in which the memory of other events is preserved, he knows about similar or even identical occurrences, which happened before the one which is narrated. This is how the story about Vujadin in ‘Anika’s Times’, ‘before it had completely disappeared into oblivion, provoked memories of other disasters and other times which have been long forgotten’, and the story goes back to Anika, and in conjunction with her even deeper in the past to ‘Tijana’s Riot’. The storyteller knows about them all, and he also knows that Anika’s story is far from unique: sooner or later, it will all happen again with some other girl in the *kasaba*. However, the storyteller also knows that both Anika’s and Tijana’s times are in the past and forgotten. At the end of the story, we see how the veil of oblivion falls on all events. Mara in ‘The Pasha’s Concubine’ begins to be eclipsed while those who attended her funeral are still returning home from the cemetery. Rifka in ‘Ljubav u kasabi’ (Love in the Kasaba) was remembered only until the following spring, when a new beauty appeared in the *kasaba*. Only a few months after her marriage, no one mentions the beautiful gypsy girl, Gaga in ‘An Unsettled Year’. The memory of a story resists the oblivion of humans: a story can recognize a pattern and a rule in the constant cropping up and disappearing of everyday life, the calm bottom of the ocean under the turbulence above. Marta L., the opera singer in ‘The Woman on the Rock’, resurfaces from the sea ‘powerful as the world, which constantly changes but remains the same’ (Andrić 1981a: 225). Those who insert themselves into chains of storytellers and hand down what they receive, who shun individual perspective to carry through what has endured for centuries, are entitled to such claims. Who else, apart from them, could pretend to have grasped what was and what will be, and to have understood the dynamics of change and sameness in it? When they write such a sentence, it does not sound gnomic in the way that a formula which sums up individual experience does, but as a universal truth. By sounding as a universal truth, it achieves the wisdom effect.

But what exactly have we determined about the world by establishing that it constantly changes but nevertheless remains the same? What the storytellers

hand down to one another, and what reaches us as if from the depths of the past, lacks any specific content. It is not the shaping of individual experience in a novel, which no matter how polyphonic it might be nevertheless tends to follow a handful of lives, consciousnesses and worldviews, and thanks to that does achieve a specific meaning. And, contrary to religious traditions, which also come from afar and for the most part remain oral, the storytelling tradition claims neither this nor that about the nature of the world and human relationships. Instead of advocating any specific content, the tradition of storytelling merely validates itself as the ability to shape human experience in stories. If the 'story of the human condition (...) that men never weary of telling one another' (Andrić 1981b: 68) has any content, message or counsel, then it can be expressed only by the sentence which Mihajlo silently tells himself while surveying houses, people, smiles, hills, children's laughter, pine trees, Anika, beauty and evil: 'All this is life'. All: the paradox of the character in 'Pismo iz 1920' (A Letter from 1920), who escapes Bosnia, 'the land of hate', only to find death in the Spanish Civil War (which is one more version of the old Oriental folk story 'Death in Samara'). It is also the madness of Mustafa the Hungarian, who, disgusted by people and by himself, begins to kill everyone who happens to come his way, until he is killed himself; the suppressed erotic desire of Alidede in 'Smrt u Sinanovoj tekiji' (Death in Sinan's Tekke), which still surfaces as a bitter regret in his final hour; the comedy of a struggle with an elephant which accompanies servitude to the elephant's master in 'The Story of the Vizier's Elephant'; the decision of Vizier Yusuf to leave the bridge bereft of any inscription in 'Most na Žepi' (The Bridge on the Žepa). And most of all, it is the destiny of beauty, which harbours the seed of destruction and tragedy in 'The Pasha's Concubine', 'Anika's Times' and 'An Unsettled Year': beauty and evil stay side by side, as extremes which touch one another. This simultaneous and contiguous existence of beauty and evil prevents the storyteller from passing final, unambiguous judgement on the world. Instead of giving the world closure, as religion does, the wisdom of the storytelling tradition opens it up to the multitude of its phenomena, and to the irreducibility of a closed and final meaning. 'Truly wise', wrote Andrić in his notebook, 'would be a man who would on every occasion and in every moment keep before his eyes the infinite and immeasurable multiplicity and diversity of phenomena in human life and social relations, and who would be constantly and consistently guided by this knowledge in his thinking and acting' (Andrić 1977: 167–8). It is almost as if someone whom you approach for advice, counsel, guidance and

an answer to the question of why we are here and where we are heading replies: Open your eyes wide and you will see wonders, as I saw them.

The ability to see humans simultaneously as innocent, beautiful beings, such as Mara the concubine, and as embodiments of monstrous bestiality, such as Mustafa the Hungarian, was crucial in Andrić's choice of Goya for a figure of an artist with whom to identify. What was it that Andrić could see at Goya's centennial exhibition when he visited the Prado in 1928? An artist of unrivalled success, who rose up from a modest background to the position of King's Painter, saw the misery of the hovels of the poor and the splendour of the Spanish court, the sensuous joys of life in Madrid and the horrors of famine in the war from 1808 to 1812. Two of Goya's paintings, both still in the Prado, illustrate the breadth of vision which both Goya and Andrić shared. Both paintings share the same subject: the 15th of May, the day of St. Isidro, the patron saint of Madrid. On that day the Madridians crossed the Mazanares and went to the spring of healing water. However, the two paintings represent two very different visions. On the one hand, *La pradera de San Isidro* (St. Isidro's Meadow, 1788) portrays a splendid spring day, with white Madrid houses across the Mazanares, and under the blue sky a bridge over the river, resembling the one in Višegrad. Closer to us we can see houses, roofs, people going about their business and, as Andrić's Mihajlo might add, 'people's greetings and smiles'. In the foreground, a group of young men and women sit on the grass, in elegant, graceful positions. A girl pours wine into a young man's glass; the others exchange a kind word, or a smile – and this binds them together. This is a world without suffering, fear or evil. On another wall hangs *Peregrinación a la fuente de San Isidro* (The Pilgrimage to the Spring of St. Isidro, 1821–3) which portrays the same landscape, but plunged into a darkness which conceals the sky, Madrid and the river. Out of the darkness crawls a long column of weary and tormented people. They are crowded together, one on top of another, as if shackled together. And in the foreground, we see human faces disfigured from suffering and evil, their own and that of others. Both visions belong to the same painter.

In that exhibition, Andrić could also see Goya's beautiful *Majas*, nobly relaxing in the anticipation of sensual pleasures; the smile of the beauty in *El quitasol* (The Parasol); the demure beauty of his *La aguadora* (The Water Seller), who might easily have been a woman from the bazaar in Sarajevo; the Duchess of Alba, a self-conscious beauty who seems to be wondering why her orders have yet to be obeyed. And at the same time and on the same walls he could see the spectacle of madness in *Corral de locos* (Yard with Lunatics) or *Manicomio o*

Casa de locos (The Madhouse); a man just about to stab a helpless woman lying on the ground, humour emanating from the grotesque scenes of *Los caprichos* (The Caprices) and most importantly, *Los desastres de la Guerra* (The Disasters of War), the scenes of violence, suffering and death with title-commentaries such as *Yo lo ví* (I Saw It), *Y son fieras* (And They Are Like Wild Beasts) and *Porque?* (Why?). On one of them, *Popolacho* (Mob), we see a man lying on the ground being beaten to death by a man and woman, while the mob cheers them on; on another, parts of a dismembered body hang on a tree; on yet another, a group of men and women are being shot by an invisible firing squad. And finally *Saturno devorando a su hijo* (Saturn Devouring His Son): *mythos* – a story which people have been telling one another different versions of – comes in at the end to give the final comment on the meaninglessness of horror, violence and death. Those beautiful girls, and these horrors, all this is life.

We started with Michael A. Sells's discovery of Christoslavism and the genocidal ideology supposedly explicit in Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath* and Ivo Andrić's novels and stories. However, we saw that this discovery is no more than a restatement of the long-standing, well-developed and widespread discourse created by Bosniak nationalists, some of whom have occupied leading positions in the most important Bosniak national organizations, such as the Party of Democratic Action, the cultural association Preporod and Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As this discourse has never offered a detailed analysis of *The Mountain Wreath*, which would have made possible a close examination of the arguments supporting the characterization of Njegoš as a promoter of this genocidal ideology, we read his drama in a context created by other similar South Slav works, and we found that it did not significantly differ. On the other hand, this Bosniak nationalist discourse has offered many critical analyses of Andrić's works, and we examined the arguments put forward in the most significant ones. We found that none of them convincingly proved the claim about Andrić's hatred of Bosniaks and Islam and his promotion of that alleged genocidal ideology. On the contrary: we found that his critics, ill-equipped for literary criticism, resorted to fabrications, falsifications, misreading and wild accusations without any supporting evidence. Instead of proving that Andrić in his works promoted a genocidal ideology, the authors whose work we examined in this book use their discussions regarding Andrić as opportunities to promote Bosniak nationalist ideology. We also examined Andrić's sole historiographical work and found that its arguments did not much differ from those put forward in the standard works on Bosnia and Herzegovina penned by

American, Turkish and Bosniak historians. In the end, we demonstrated that Andrić's worldview and his understanding of evil do not easily lend themselves to a moralistic and moralizing approach, let alone to political imputations.

Njegoš and Andrić are certainly not the only authors to have been subjected to such treatment in the present-day climate of politicizing, moralizing and misreading, and weaponizing literary criticism and cultural history. This is not the first time in literary history – not only of South Slavs – that writing about literature has been used for political purposes. It is to be hoped that the idea that one can remain unbiased whilst evaluating empirical evidence, and that interpretations should not be judged on the basis of their conformity with our political views, will prevail again.

Appendix

Bosniak Nationalism

Bosniak nationalism's main claim is that Bosnia and Herzegovina – and in some cases parts of Serbia and Montenegro known as the Sandžak – belong to Bosniaks only, as only they live in these spaces. In this argument, Serbs and Croats must be considered Bosniaks who strayed away from the main body of the nation. This claim can be found in the earliest expressions of Bosniak nationalism, such as 'The Future or Progress of Mohammedans in Bosnia and Herzegovina' (1893) by Mehmed-bey Kapetanović Ljubušak (1839–1902), a high official of both Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian imperial administrations: 'some Christians say that they are Serbs, and some that they are Croats,' writes Ljubušak, 'but never mind, this has arisen from some political sources. Time itself will erase it' (Ljubušak 2008: 47). They are manipulated into believing that they are Serbs and Croats, but this misconception will fade away in time. When in 1878 Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian and Croatian ethnic identities had already been formed. Bosnian Muslims, however, considered themselves to be a part of the greater Muslim religious identity, and thought the very idea of ethnic identities to be an imported, Western and unnecessary novelty: they preferred to continue living in the classification inherited from the Ottoman Empire, which distinguished between 'Turks' (i.e. 'of Turkish faith', Muslims) and *dhimmis* or *raya* (i.e. non-Muslims). As Turkey – how the Ottoman Empire was referred to – was obviously in decline and some Bosniaks, Ljubušak amongst them, realized that the Austro-Hungarian occupation was not a temporary measure, it was advisable to leave behind the association with 'Turks', and the new ethnic label 'Bosniak' (Bošnjak) was proposed. Previously, 'Bosniak' referred to the regional identity, and included Serbs and Croats as well as Slavs of the Islamic faith. Ljubušak supported the journal *The Bosniak* (*Bošnjak*) which had the task of propagating this new ethnic identity of the Slavs of the Islamic faith in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the most prominent contributors to *The Bosniak* was Safvet-bey Bašagić, whose poem 'To the Bosniak' (1891a) expresses the same

basic claim of Bosniak nationalism: until recently, says the poem, in Bosnia and Herzegovina 'nije bilo Srba ni Hrvata' (there were no Serbs or Croats), and in the following verses refers to them as 'foreigners' and 'guests'. In the same year, Bašagić published in *The Bosniak* an article in which he suggested that Bosniaks who identify as Serbs and Croats should be exterminated, so that not a trace of them is left. In his *A Short Instruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina's Past*, Bašagić claimed that Orthodox Christians came to Bosnia and Herzegovina only in the eighteenth century, without explaining who lived there before the Ottoman conquest (Bašagić 1900: 17). The same idea about Bosniaks being at home in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Serbs and Croats were merely guests in it, can be heard today from Ljubušak's and Bašagić's heirs: Sanjin Kodrić, the president of the primary Bosniak cultural association Preporod, recently claimed that it was well known how 'Catholic Bosniaks' had become Croats, the 'Orthodox' became Serbs, and 'Bosnian Muslims remained Bosniaks' (Kodrić 2019). Serbs and Croats are merely Bosniaks of a different faith, duped by propaganda and manipulations from Zagreb and Belgrade. This idea neatly mirrors the one advocated by Serbian and Croatian nationalists: that Bosniaks are Serbs and Croats who deserted the national ranks by converting to Islam. The consequence is the demand that Bosniaks should politically dominate the country. A survey conducted in 2012 found that the majority (51.6 per cent) of Bosniaks believed that due to their numerical strength, they should enjoy the leading role in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Abazović 2012, 161). This belief is expressed in the demand that the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established by the peace agreement reached in Dayton in 1995, which ended the war, be revised and the country centralized, which would bring about Bosniak political domination over Serbs and Croats. As the most recent manifesto of Bosniak nationalism put it: what is happening at the moment is Bosnia and Herzegovina's 'transformation into a gradually Bosniak (super)majority state, and the possibility for its further transformation into a *de facto* Bosniak nation-state. While that outcome is not yet the formal position of any major political actor in BiH, including the SDA [PDA], it appears like an increasingly logical conclusion of the country's current political and demographic trajectory' (Mujanović 2023: 118).

The second main claim of Bosniak nationalism is the construction of Bosniaks as an absolutely innocent nation, which throughout its history never did any harm to anyone, while continuously suffering violence. Although all nationalisms construct their nations as innocent victims, most do allow for some imperfections, or at least a possibility that their nations were also sometimes

perpetrators. Bosniak nationalism declines this possibility and puts forward the image of an ethically irreproachable nation: ‘Dobri Bošnjani’ (Good Bosniaks), the expression found in medieval manuscripts, even though historians explained that it had referred to ‘well-off Bosniaks’, or those who possessed goods. Revisionist historiography supports this claim by proposing a number of nationalist myths: the myth about absolute tolerance in the Ottoman state, the myth about ten or eleven genocides, which Bosniaks supposedly suffered throughout history, and the myth about their disenfranchisement in socialist Yugoslavia (‘Jedanaest genocida’, 2004; Muderis 2011). Of special significance is the nationalist revision of Second World War history, in which any collaboration with the regime imposed by the occupying powers is denied, and Bosniaks fashioned exclusively as victims of atrocities, but never their perpetrators. The same applies to the construction of the history of the war in 1992–5, which does not tolerate any mention that Bosniaks may too have been perpetrators of atrocities and war crimes. The new, revisionist Bosniak historiography promotes two more important myths: the myth of uninterrupted Bosnian statehood from the Middle Ages to the present day and the *Bogumil* myth. The latter refers to the invention of Austro-Hungarian officials and Romantic historians at the end of the nineteenth century, which fashions Bosniaks as descendants of the medieval members of the Bosnian Church, oppressed by both Orthodox Christians and Roman Catholics, who jealously guarded their religious independence, but who joyfully converted to Islam en masse after the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia.¹

Bosniak nationalism has two streams: the Islamic (and often Islamist) and the secular. The former was dominant in the 1990s and early 2000s, but was weakened by the death of Alija Izetbegović, its main proponent, and the United States’ demand, in the wake of 9/11, that Islamist fighters from the Middle East and North Africa, who participated in the 1992–5 war and who had remained in the country, be expelled, and Bosniak connections with radical Islam severed. The main forces behind this stream are the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Party of Democratic Action. The aims of this stream are succinctly expressed in *Islamic Declaration*, probably a collective work later ascribed to Alija Izetbegović: the author rejects secularism in Tunisia and Turkey, and praises Pakistan as an Islamic state; advocates for the establishment of an Islamic order and Islamic government as a unity of faith, law

¹ On the myths in revisionist historiography of all three nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Lovrenović (1996, 2009).

and politics; underlines the incompatibility of Islam and non-Islamic political systems; and claims that there can be no peace or coexistence between Islam and non-Islamic social and political institutions, as an Islamic state must be an expression of Islam as a religion. Following leading Islamist thinkers, such as Qutb, Al-Banna and Maududi, *Islamic Declaration* rejects nationalism and advocates for a supranational pan-Islamic state spanning all societies from Morocco to Indonesia, and from Central Asia to sub-Saharan Africa, which will have Islam as its ideology and pan-Islamism as its politics. Non-Muslims would enjoy religious freedom and protection in this state, providing that their activities did not contradict Islam. The creation of such a state would begin with a religious revolution, and end with a political one, and should be undertaken as soon as Muslims become morally and numerically strong enough to destroy the existing non-Islamic government (Izetbegović 1990). How this project would look in Bosnia and Herzegovina was explained by Adnan Jahić, the speaker for PDA's parliamentary group, in his article 'Krijeposna muslimanska država' (Ethical Muslim State) in 1993: it 'will have a MUSLIM IDEOLOGY based on Islam and its juridical, moral and social principles, as well as on those elements of Western origin which do not contradict them'; 'the principle of complete equality will be guaranteed by the law to all citizens, but the level of social success of each individual will depend not only on his own work, but also on his degree of acceptance and enforcement of the principles and spirit of the MUSLIM IDEOLOGY' (Bougarel 1999). In a less explicit manner, the partiality for a polity based on an Islamic legal and political order is expressed in a revalorization of the Ottoman state – which Bosniak nationalists refer to as 'our state' – and in the praise it is regularly given in revisionist historiography, and, as this book demonstrates, literary criticism.

The secular stream of Bosniak nationalism, which has predominated in the public discourse since the PDA toned down its pan-Islamist bias, advocates for a *civic state*, an expression which confuses foreigners: it refers to abolishing all power-sharing arrangements introduced by the Dayton Peace Agreement, including territorial autonomy of the Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska) and the cantons with Croat majorities in the other entity (Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina), which would, due to their recently achieved numerical majority, open the road to Bosniaks' domination in the country. Instead of as a multinational state, composed of Bosniak, Croat and Serbian nations, the secular stream of Bosniak nationalism sees Bosnia and

Herzegovina as the state of the Bosnian nation, in which its Bosniak component will naturally predominate.

A detailed historical account of Bosniak nationalism is available in Bougarel (2017). An eloquent and passionate presentation of the secular stream's main ideas and objectives is available in Mujanović (2023).

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