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THE CRISIS AND THE NATION: “CONSERVATIVE PALINGENESIS” IN INTERWAR SERBIA

Torn, to become whole again, after long seeking for what is lost...
D.H. Lawrence

Abstract

This paper discusses one representative segment of the Serbian interwar conservative identity discursive formation. Being transposed to the Serbian interwar context, European spiritual, cultural and socio-political crisis frames such a discursive configuration that implies diverse programmatic strategies for its overcoming. The analysis of this “conservative palingenesis” permutation in Serbian context would be organized around the set of rhetorical figures and would-be analytical devices, such as: *counter-adamism*, *doubled-liminality* and *substance without form*.

Keywords: Conservatism, Nationalism, Antimodernism, Crisis

Introduction

This paper discusses one representative segment of the Serbian interwar conservative identity discursive formation that was situated in the immediate-national, broader-(meso)regional and general-paneuropean, after World War I context of *crisis*. It is the conceptualization of the spiritual, cultural and socio-political aspects of this crisis that provides the historical context and interpretative framework for the analysis of this discursive field.

The broadest theoretical and methodological frame for our analysis is defined by different existing researching interests: national, regional and European. Firstly, this research greatly benefited from the *oeuvre* of Milan Subotic on Serbian and Russian intellectual tradition,¹ then Misa Djurkovic’s work on conservatism,² and Bosko Obradovic’s special interest on Milos Crnjanski and “new nationalism” between the two wars.³ Secondly, this analysis is greatly indebted to the recent regional scientific

interest in “entangled histories” and the “discourses of collective identity in Central and Southeast Europe”.⁴ Finally, the impetus comes from the broad intellectual tradition of the “history of ideas” developed through several, well known, schools of thought.⁵

The very conceptual frame that we apply is built on the theoretical models set by Roger Griffin on *modernism*⁶, Sorin Antohi’s and Balazs Trencsenyi’s “working heuristic model” of *antimodernism*,⁷ and Marius Turda’s conceptual device of *conservative palingenesis*, that was introduced in his analysis of the Romanian “cultural-modernists ideas of national renewal” from the beginning of the 19th century.⁸

Roger Griffin’s in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of modernism showed that *modernism* is “the generic term for a wide variety of countervailing palingenetic reactions to the anarchy and cultural decay allegedly resulting from the radical transformation of traditional institutions, social structures, and belief systems under the impact of western modernization (...)”,⁹ and that “this matrix is usefully seen as the search for transcendence and regeneration, whether confined to a personal quest for ephemeral moments of enlightenment or expanded to take the form of a cultural, social, or political movement for the renewal of the nation or the whole Western civilization. The drive towards renewal may even seek to regenerate an entire historical epoch experienced as ‘decadent’(...) by identifying a portal within linear time that opens onto the prospect of rebirth”.¹⁰ He demonstrated that this narrative strategy relies on the rhetorical figures and modes of representation which include concepts such as “new dawn” or “new beginning”, among many other tropes.¹¹ This “generational mood” condensed in the concept of modernism, from his perspective aims at inaugurating “an entirely new socio-political order” (...) conceived as an alternative modernity which holds out the prospect of putting an end to political, cultural, moral and/or physical dissolution, and sometimes looks forward to the emergence of a new type of ‘man’”.¹²

In trying to broaden Griffin’s interpretative framework, Sorin Antohi and Balazs Trencsenyi are, pacing Antoine Compagnon,¹³ introducing the heuristical distinction between *modernism* and *antimodernism*.¹⁴ For our introductory purpose here it is useful to emphasize that they define antimodernism as: “a) the negative double of modernism and b) the critique of modernism *within* modernism, not *outside* of or *separate from* it”.¹⁵ In underlining the “dark” side of the interwar antimodernism,¹⁶ and its “negativity”,¹⁷ they understand it as: “a neo-palingenetic, revolutionary, transfigurative, future oriented alternative that pervades and shapes

every realm of the human experience, from belief systems to aesthetics, from ideology to politics, from individual and collective (speculative) anthropology to cosmology and metaphysics".¹⁸

Starting from Marius Turda's analysis of a Romanian case of the "conservative palingenesis", we would like to deploy this concept in the slightly broader sense, as an umbrella concept which subsumes heterogeneous elements produced by different analytical devices, such as "Konservative Revolution", "New Nationalism" or "Political Romanticism".¹⁹ Besides, we emphasize that we use the word "palingenesis" in its value-neutral, etymological sense, as the *rebirth* or *regeneration*. We do not imply by its use any ideological content.

Being transposed to the Serbian interwar context, European spiritual, cultural and socio-political crisis frames such a discursive configuration that implies diverse programmatic strategies for its overcoming. Formed through polemical subjects by which interwar discourses of national identity were framed, we will analyze this "conservative palingenesis" permutation in Serbian context through the following units of analysis: First, the conceptualization of the sense of crisis and second: the strategies of its overcoming by conservative identity discourses.

The proposed conceptual frame we would try to apply in the analysis of the programmatic, although not fully-fledged "canonical" texts of Serbian conservatism,²⁰ of the three representative authors of the epoch. That is: Milos Crnjanski (1893-1977), Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic (1895-1976) and Vladimir Vujic (1886-1951). We would try to situate their work into the emphasized broader modernist/antimodernist framework and to reconstruct their attitudes regarding above mentioned units of analysis.

In what follows, we will firstly present the historical and discursive context in which our three "cases" developed their ideas. Then, we will proceed to the analysis of the conservative-palingenetic discourses of the proposed three case studies. Finally, we would present the concluding remarks.

1. Context: The Generational "Structure of Feeling" – The Sense of Crisis and Liminality

The general context for (anti)modernists rethinking of conservative models of national self-identification and self-presentation is paneuropean "structure of feeling",²¹ constructed by the sense of crisis and dramatic

identity disorientation after World War I. Being the formative generational experience,²² WWI opened the space for the new generational wave of reaction to modernity and modernization process. In the Western core the normative project of modernity was problematized from the different perspectives since the second half of the 19th century. As Griffin demonstratively showed, the loss of the transcendent shelter turned the “myth of progress” into the trope of decadence.²³

Not only the breakdown of the “ontological continuity” with Christianity, but the losing of the utopian energies created by the normative project of Enlightenment too, provoked the modernist reaction through different aesthetic responses which expressed the existential despair of the modern European. This longing was radicalized during the interwar era when ambiguous sense of the ongoing crisis and the liminality,²⁴ the sense of living in the “interregnum”, in-between epochs, “sense of ending and beginning” - was transformed into several different bids for transforming and re-rooting the society.

As was identified by Sorin Antohi and Balazs Trencsenyi, the “meso-regional” adaptation of this discourse, through “the entanglement of modernism and anti-modernism may well be one of the most authentic (...) East European responses to modernization and modernity (i.e., the “West”).²⁵ This ironic and “paradoxical Europeanization”²⁶ of this meso-region, created the space for the individual and collective, “epiphanic and programmatic”²⁷ visions of creating new authentic sense of community and national regeneration.

The Serbian interwar conservative discursive formation, by which the very concept of nation was being reconstructed, stems from the specific “diagnosis” of the “crisis”. Namely, the immediate historical context for analysis of the Serbian variation of this discourse is provided by the creation of the new state-“Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes” in 1918. Thus, the *conservative turn* in Serbian self-identification and self-presentation, was framed by exogen, broader European crisis context, and endogen (supra)national context of the newborn state. The conservative identity discourses in interwar Serbia presented here could be understood as representing the point of the intersection of the genre of “crisis literature”²⁸ and the genre of “national metaphysics”.²⁹ What follows are the three famous “cases” of Serbian cultural critic circle that can be linked to the above emphasized theoretical debate.

2. Milos Crnjanski: The Serbian Attitude

Although not chronologically, “the case of Milos Crnjanski”, “logically” precedes and frames the terms of the debate that follows.³⁰ Being one of the most significant Serbian writers, the leading avant-garde poet, and one of the most complex intellectual figures in the interwar period in Serbia, the personality of Milos Crnjanski and his opus have always been demanding hermeneutical task. To analyze his complete *Weltanschauung* would go beyond the aim of this article. Here, we will focus only at the one segment of his, more than stratified, *oeuvre*.

The reconstructing of the conservative-palingenetic impulses in the thought of Milos Crnjanski, we center around the rhetorical figure of the “Serbian attitude”³¹ developed in the series of his famous texts published in the periodical “Ideje” 1934-1935.³² In the life and work of Milos Crnjanski a critical turn should be emphasized. Namely, up to this shift, parallelly with the thematization of the “Slavic idea” one can find his enthusiastic “integral Yugoslavism”, as an ideological and cultural attempt of explicating unity of the three people which constituted Yugoslavian state at the time. But just before and especially after the assassination of the King Alexander I Karadjordjevic on October 9, 1934 in Marseilles, the conservative reaction of Crnjanski came to the fore. The catalyst effect of that tragic event was transformed into his programmatic vision of the “New Nationalism”,³³ or to the more clear call for the rebirth of the Serbian nation as the solution to the interwar identity crisis - what he simply called the “Serbian attitude”.

For our analytical purpose, we reconstruct his discursive strategy on the two interconnected planes. Firstly, through his “crisis discourse” in which we discern three recurring motifs: anticommunism, antiseperatism and anti pseudo-pacifism. Secondly, through his attempt of the conservative palingenesis through the “culture of memory” discourse and rejuvenating Serbian identity through the restoring of its traditional values, especially the values of the Serbian Medieval golden age of the Nemanjics dynasty.

First impulse in describing the parameters of the national identity crisis Crnjanski gets from the growing influence of the marxist worldview. In analyzing this nuance of discourse we find the specific conservative-revolutionary trope of “uberfremdung” useful. The critique of superimposing of the foreign values was brought to paroxysm by Milos Crnjanski’s contribution to the discourse, by sharp stressing of the “colonial” position of Serbian culture, especially literature. The main target

of Crnjanski's critique is especially communist ideology imports in the so called "social literature" form. The key message not only of his essay called: "Mi postajemo kolonija strane knjige" (Vreme, 1932) ("We are becoming the colony of foreign literature"),³⁴ but from the later publicist efforts from the time of the editing the periodical "Ideje" (1934-1935), is that the "foreign spirit" destroys national feelings. It is especially visible in imported marxist literature, which in his interpretation, by simulating the care for the rights of the proletariat, actually aims at deepening the crisis of identity into which Serbia entered just after the World War I. His strong opposing to the imposed "aping" of foreign attitudes³⁵ is represented in this clear anticommunist position.

The other sources of crisis Crnjanski sees in the post-WWI separatist tendencies which were connected with the relativizing of Serbian moral and factual victory in WWI, in the "pseudo-pacifist" manner. In the series of articles, where "Oklevetani rat" ("The Slandered War")³⁶ and "Otrovni pauk" ("The Poisonous Spider"), have the most prominent place, he argues against the so called "pacifistic propaganda".³⁷ His argument is that, the discursively constructed pacifism that comes from the western side of the country, is nothing but a "pseudo-pacifism", that it doesn't have anything against the wars, but the Serbian victory in wars. This debate, which most famous expression was his "polemics with Miroslav Krleža",³⁸ had been led along the lines of Crnjanski's perception that: "(...) For years, in our regions a sabotage against everything that is state, and in intellectual circles against everything that is national, takes place".³⁹

In his perception, the congruence of the communist, separatist and pseudo-pacifist factors substantively contributed to the crisis of the "Kingdom of Yugoslavia", and called for the prompt answer in order of its rescuing. In trying to show "the spiritual resistance"⁴⁰ he calls for the cultural and spiritual reawakening of the Serbian nation. That was the reason why Crnjanski, through his periodical "Ideje" starts the defense of tradition and formulates an attitude filtered from Yugoslavism, with a clear Serbian tonality:

I feel like I am coming back (...) after fifteen years of bitter self-deception (...) to the Serbians (...). Maybe today I am alone, but I am sure that soon there will be millions of us who will say: (...) let's leave aside the nebulousness immediately. Let's look at the things from the clear Serbian perspective.⁴¹

In constructing new “Serbian attitude”, Crnjanski uses the discursive strategy which we would name *counter-Adamism*.⁴² As a working heuristic concept it includes, as one of its aspects, the emphasis on the purpose of Serbian history developed by ancestors, historical and ontological continuity with the normative concepts of past, which implies that Serbs do not start “from the scratch”, but have the hard task to keep up with standards already achieved. Its first pillar is the strategically used memory for the constructing of identity. In Crnjanski’s discourse is for the first time clearly visible the “cultural memory” in Serbian conservative-palingenetic form.⁴³ To consolidate Serbian identity Crnjanski refers to the great victim of the ancestors, especially in Balkan wars and the World War I. In its relativizing from the western parts of the state and in its forgetting from the Serbian side, Crnjanski sees the biggest malaise of the time. In emphasizing the scope of the victim of Serbian ancestors for forming the state, in the way of *counter-Adamism*, he uses the past, memory and history, “the space of experience” of the Serbian nation to formulate its “horizont of expectation”.⁴⁴ He develops this topics in several articles, pointing to the moral capital of the Serbian wars, the pride and chastity of the Serbian warrior and his sacrifice for the liberation of the country.⁴⁵ In the text called “Tragedija Srpstva” (“The Tragedy of Serbianness”), he points to this long line of the ancestor’s sacrifice, from the centuries long Turkish occupation to the modern times, culminating with the assassination of the “King-Martyr” Alexander I Karadjordjevic.⁴⁶ Thus, Crnjanski sees in the cultivation of the memory the *conditio sine qua non* of the survival of the Serbian nation.

The second pillar of his counter-Adamism is, after pointing to the Serbian warrior tradition and sacrifice, the restoring of the Serbian spiritual and cultural tradition. He is openly against “aping” any foreign political or ideological movements, being “Italian, German or Russian”.⁴⁷ In his own words: “For the good of this country, the Serbian element to be powerfull as it used to be doesn’t need any other help, but to return to his own ways (...)”.⁴⁸

That silent return is guaranteed because Serbs have “the thousand years old culture”,⁴⁹ which core could be identified in the personality and work of Saint Sava and Nemanjic’s dynasty as an eternal regenerative source. Crnjanski stylizes Serbian past exactly through the founding act of Saint Sava in forming the national identity “so early in the Medieaval times”, forming the Serbian normative concepts of “social justice” and “national ethics”.⁵⁰

In Crnjanski's understanding, "after Saint Sava's life, the people introjected powerful features of his character".⁵¹ In the call for the rebirth of this spirit, Crnjanski expresses the "sense of beginning" and sees the new dawn for the Serbian nation.

Thus, after full circle which started by afterwar melancholy, avanguard breakthroughs in poetry, Slavism and Yugoslavism, Crnjanski understands Serbian future as a return, an *anamnesis* from the 'Odyssey of Spirit' to use this Hegelian term, but not to some petrified past, but to the eternal values guaranteed and affirmed by Serbian Orthodox spirituality and eternal disposition of Serbian spirit towards freedom. In the spirit of Saint Sava he sees "the hidden strength of Serbianess", the one which could "feeble, but which have not disappeared and which regenerates itself".⁵²

In this frame he insists on "reorganizing" of Serbian nationalism, asserting that "without one truly nationalistic epoch in Serbian politics (...) Serbian questions will not be solved. Never",⁵³ and adds: "Otherwise, this boring comedy will last still, and it will end, once again, as Serbian tragedy".⁵⁴

3. Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic: "The Belgrade Man"

The representative interpretative model of national regeneration expressed in the Serbian interwar context in which the conceptualization of the crisis united with the discourse of "new man" can be unambiguously found, is the work of Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic.⁵⁵ In analyzing Velmar-Jankovic's narrative on existential crisis and identity-crisis in interwar Serbia, the concept of "liminality" could prove to be a useful heuristical device. This sense of living between two epochs, to live in-between, in the period of an ending and a new beginning too, can be actually understood as the very symptom of crisis.

In the interpretation that he offers, the structure of crisis in Serbian interwar context is determined by both external and internal factors. In analyzing the Serbian post-WWI moment of crisis, Velmar-Jankovic is explicit:

"First and fundamental ground of our crisis, both spiritual and material-and these two cannot be separated- lyies in the fact, that the power of faith in a grand leading idea, the kosovian one, has lost its strength, - and the new ideal hasn't been found yet".⁵⁶

In interpreting Serbian history he emphasizes a certain paradox, that, just in the moment of fulfilling its "covenant", the idea of liberation and unification, Serbian spirit entered the state of fatigue, started to lose its *raison d'être*, and to "run away from itself", to feeble its Christian Orthodox faith and that in that way had actually opened the space for the "Western materialism" which conquered that space immediately.⁵⁷ The context of crisis is formed on the one side from the exogenous factor: in his words, this is the time when Europe itself started to be "deeply sick".⁵⁸ But endogenous factors are more important: the very foundations of Serbian identity were shaken after war in the making of a new state and in losing the traditional system of values. The system of Serbian values tested by centuries he summarizes as follows:

The complex of spiritual foundations of Serbian national community consist of: Christianity through Orthodoxy, St.Sava's folk church, patriarchal and heroic worldview, respect for ancestors and the ideas of the old Serbian state, humanity expressed in epic poetry and the whole oral tradition preserved through family life and peasant home, nurtured by folk's language...⁵⁹

Cutting himself off from this value-system, a Serb in Velmar-Jankovic's view becomes "pure colonial object, a false European, last westernizer from the periphery, foreign to others and to himself, too".⁶⁰ The noticeable Serbian "tiredness" of himself comes not just from the size of sacrifice in World War I and previous Balcan Wars,⁶¹ but from the question: was all this sacrifice vane? This question raises from the general feeling in Serbia that the new state, with Croats and Slovenes shows no respect that Serbia invested its "independence, its name of the state, its national name of the Serb"⁶². In sum, the combination of the exogenous and endogenous factors produced the deep identity crisis, crisis in cultural orientation, loss of enthusiasm and historical fatigue without precedent in Serbian tradition.

In his descriptive and normative projection of "the Belgrade man", this author searches for the way out of the identity crisis which he perceives and explicates. New man, the "Belgrade man" is at the same time an old one, the Serb which have to testify the historically affirmed canon of values in the new context- if he aims to survive. It is the context in which, in his view Serbia is becoming "colonial pseudoculture".⁶³ He rejects that path of development.Why?

As axiomatic he takes the attitude that “the Serb” is essentially “uneuropean”.⁶⁴ What are the arguments that he gives to support such a thesis? His answer is very direct: Because Serb was never submitted to Rome. Velmar Jankovic perceives that neither in spiritual, nor in the military or civic sense, the Serb never felt nor admitted Roman power as superior”.⁶⁵ This fact determines very serious consequences regarding to Serbian history and identity. As such, in Velmar-Jankovic’s vision the Serb is, although geographically situated in Europe, “paradigmatic antipode of the “homo europaeus” which is the product of the “caesarian Rome” and “catholic Rome”.⁶⁶ In his interpretation, Serbs had different learning curve:

Spiritually, the Serb didn’t feel neither Caesar, nor Gaius, nor Virgil, Aristotle nor Plato, nor Thomas Aquinas. He had his Saints and his Orthodoxy, but didn’t with his national features deny the universal character of Christianity.⁶⁷

Velmar-Jankovic quotes a German historian Leopold Ranke, that “Serbs are self-made”.⁶⁸ It is exactly that kind of consciousness, that they are “self-made”, and that they payed for the freedom extremely high a price, that created a specific mentality of resistance to every imposed rule. That “agonic” life, life “beyond ones strength” made this type of man, man of “Belgrade orientation”.⁶⁹

But right after the physical liberation from the Turkish rule, Serbs came under “spiritual occupation” of the West. It culminated after 1918, when enormous sacrifice and loss weakened the nation and brought to disorientation, melancholy, and historical fatigue.

That’s why he insists that Serbs should *return* to themselves, once more in history. Not to be influenced by European *taedium vitae* which always comes at the end of life. In his vision, Serbs are young nation, with the old tradition-“the future nation”.⁷⁰ That means that that tradition was cut off by Turkish centuries long cruelty. But, paradoxically, it was also saved and conserved in that way. Serbian tradition is a tradition of suffering, and as such, in his understanding is capable to “compensate all other experiences of modern man”.⁷¹

Velmar-Jankovic’s key message is that this kind of spirit the Serbs should keep, and with it they can continue to live. In addition, he emphasizes that Serbian history was modeled by three kind of man: saints, leaders and enlighteners.⁷² Saint Sava is the embodiment of these three virtues.⁷³ In this vision, Serbs have to live up and catch up to these, not imposed

European standards. In that sense Serbs don't have to "wait on anybody, nor to any gifts, promises, but creatively to make their own tradition alive. To make a renaissance of its own".⁷⁴

4. Vladimir Vujic⁷⁵: The Return to Saint Sava

Starting from the spenglerian "morphology of cultures", which roots can be found earlier, in the Russian 19th century thought of Nikolay Danilevsky(1822-1885) and Konstantin Leontiev(1831-1891)-,Vujic searches for an abandonment of situating the Serbian culture within the division West-East, and claims for independent (South Slavic culture) which in his terms, has its own right on specific "spiritual style" and cultural expression.⁷⁶

By criticizing attitudes by which this culture should be subsumed under historical constructs of either "West" or "East", he pleads, in his own words, for a "new romanticism", one without complexes, one which has its own right to exist.⁷⁷ Because it is not some "sad" remembrance of an old nation about its days of youth, but it comes from a "young nation" par excellence, one which has its "Middle ages" ahead.⁷⁸

In that sense Vladimir Vujic is very critical towards schematic apriori western historiographic linear-progressist conception which assumes the line "Ancient times-Middle Ages-Modern age", and emphasizes asynchronicity of spiritual and historical rhythms between West and South Slavic history, which is being oversimplified by that scheme.⁷⁹ By accepting this historical scheme, in his view, this culture is posited in the state of beletedness, sentenced to eternal catching-up with "progressive" Western world. That's the reason why he claims, without complex: "No, we are not Europe".⁸⁰ By legitimizing this "neoromantic" impulse which had to have liberating effect from foreign cultural patterns, he rejects, in Spengler's style, Western "faustian" culture, decadent one, which lives its last days through its civilizational hypostasis. In a palingenetic manner Vujic asserts that: "we just have to be born for the second time".⁸¹

Therefore, new enthusiasm, historical youth, almost mystical expectation of the new cultural and spiritual rebirth-all these are markers of a conservative-revolutionary impulse which frame a new narrative in the Serbian discursive field. Vujic addresses serious remarks to any attempt of "transplanting" of the "European spiritual fatigue" to "us" which are in

the phase of finding our own, young expression of the autochthon culture. He tries to make his argumentation stronger by asserting that:

All features of one civilization: a loss of faith and genuine religiosity, an importation of all possible Eastern sects, theo-spirito-anthroposophy, moral vagueness, the development of decadent professionalism, sex as the basis of life and of its understanding, lies, brutality and perfect hypocrisy—all that clearly testifies that the life of the contemporary West is for us an impossible spiritual content.⁸²

He repeats, once more: “No we are not Europe, and it is just as good”.⁸³ But he adds immediately, that “we” are not the “East” neither—especially not that one with which the “orientalizing” stereotypes of laziness, indolence, belatedness ...are connected to.⁸⁴ He rejects especially the “moralizing type” of Easternism which comes from the perspective of Western moral and spiritual crisis and which sees in East cure for all its maladies⁸⁵, because, in his interpretation, we who are not West, should not look for the cures on the East.

West is attracted to East by its “wish for the rejuvenation”, there he goes for salvation and cure, as he lost its spiritual substance.⁸⁶ Serbs just don't have any need to repeat this way. Serbs are “young people”, and should look in their own national ethos for the “formulae” of its own “cultural style”.⁸⁷ In sum, neither West, nor East, but constructing an authentic Serbian Weltanschauung, Vujic sees as the imperative of the time.

Vujic's conception of culture is an “organic” one:

Every culture has its spirit, its soul...” he asserts and adds: “Every folk, every people becomes *nation* only when it fulfills a duty, a task, agency, mission of the soul of one culture, when creates stylistic expressions of culture. Otherwise it represents nothing more than animal material, whose existence means nothing...”⁸⁸

So, where Vujic sees the basis of the Serbian culture? By rejecting, not only the imitating of West and East, but the possibility of their synthesis too, he nevertheless takes the Spengler's starting point, the projection of the great future of Slavic people..⁸⁹ He stresses the central message of the Dostoyevsky's speech in the front of the Pushkin's monument: “Humble yourself, proud man”.⁹⁰

Therefore, it is in "Slavic thought" where Vujic finds that regenerative spiritual force which represents value antipode to the general European fall, and which stems from its exploitative materialistic urge. In his perception, although Slavic thought is the Orthodox Christian thought, and in crisis itself, it differs from the European crisis because it is in the faze of "rising" of the spirit, while European is in the faze of "decadence", of leaving the historical scene.⁹¹ "Slavic thought" in his interpretation is nothing else but panhuman "vision of salvation", which goes beyond any projection of "social progress or material plane".⁹² But for one who is thinking this kind of thought, in this time, it represents a great burden and responsibility. In his words:

Today this Idea is an Idea-martyr. Belonging to it is martyrdom. Accompanied by poverty and mocking. Slavic thought is today a donquixotian endeavour, the spiritual one (...).⁹³

By making this "Slavic thought" more concrete, applying it to the Serbian cultural context, Vujic offers one of the most illustrative formulations of Serbian culture. In his famous text: "Return to Saint Sava", in analyzing spiritual markers of Serbian culture, Vujic asserts:

Saint Sava's⁹⁴ escape to the monastery and Dositey's⁹⁵ escape from the monastery are two great symbols of our spiritual culture: the right way and the left way (...) First one, St. Sava's founded that spiritual direction which presupposes Christlikeness as a model of living; the other one started that spiritual direction which leads to rationalism (...).⁹⁶

In that way, in a great paligenetic arch, which goes from the reconstruction of the idea of Europe, through Slavic tradition, Vujic comes to the quintessence of Serbian identity- "Svetosavlje"⁹⁷ and Serbian epic tradition as to eternal source of renaissance. Saint Sava was the first one who defines Serbian identity as the one who possess the power not only to understand both West and East, but to take its own authentic position towards them. Saint Sava's dictum: "To be East to the West and West to the East" is the categorical imperative of Serbian ethos to which was addressing Vladimir Vujic, in his search of overcoming the Serbian national identity crisis.

Concluding remarks

Although differing in nuances, accents and rhetorical strategies in their narrative patterns, the structural similarity in the discourse of the three representative cases of conservative-palingenetic reconstruction of Serbian interwar identity is evident. What stems from the presented segment of the interwar Serbian conservative-palingenetic identity discourse, we would try to summarize as follows.

The above discussion should have shown that this discourse is *conservative*. It (re)formulates the tradition in the language of the Modern age. It represents the discursive reconstruction of a tradition. Conservatism is always a reaction-it is activated when the tradition is endangered. Being a reflexive reaction either/or a reactive reflexion, the very appearance of the rational argumentative defense of tradition is the symptom of the *crisis* of that particular tradition. In a paradoxical attempt to conserve the tradition on the reflexive plane, this discourse reflects *the crisis of Serbian identity* in interwar period.

Thus, on their *descriptive* level, the analyzed discourses are centered around *diagnostication of crisis*. Starting from the general and *generational* traumatic experience from the World War I, and the paneuropean interwar "structure of feeling" reflected in the sense of existential crisis, these authors conceptualize specific Serbian configuration of the crisis, pointing not only to the external, but to the internal factors, too. Among them the emphasis on the scope of the Serbian sacrifice in the World War I, historical "fatigue" that it provoked and the distancing from the transcendental shelter of the Orthodox Christianity, conjoined with social and political crisis of the political system which culminated in the assassination of the King Alexander I Karadjordjevic-are the context-specific factors that were catalyzing this conservative discourse. The central trope of not only the Serbian victory in the WWI, but of the transgenerational sacrifice for the freedom of the ancestors which culminated in that war led to the specific conceptualization of Serbian history in this discourse, which we would name *counter-Adamism*.

In addition, the conceptualization of the Serbian aspects of crisis is done in the cultural critic (anti)modernist manner, reflecting the conservative-revolutionary trope of "interregnum", liminal *inbetweenness in time*, between "sense of ending" and the mystical expectation of the "new beginning". The palingenetic moment, using this concept in its ideologically neutral sense, is evident in recurring calls for a rebirth, reawakening and regeneration of the nation.

On the *prescriptive* level, this “new beginning” was developed through different identity-narratives and explanatory “strategies of recovery”, or the solutions to the perceived state of crisis. In that sense, this debate can be read as an “autochtonist” discourse in Serbian context. It is a “nativist” answer given to the “eternal” problematic situation posed by the modernity when society faces its belatedness and marginality facing the European achieved standard.⁹⁸ That situation produced new metaphysical energy and the strive for transcendence. In this discourse it includes organic conception of the nation defined by the concept of *Svetosavlje* with its normative historical and ontological status. The two essential values that stem from this concept are: Orthodox Christianity and national freedom expressed in the authentic Serbian “Neither East nor West” (geo)political *inbetweenness in space*. So, in this *doubled liminality*, in the sense of *inbetweenness in time and space*, we localize the source of Serbian interwar discursive habitus and metaphysical drive that make the constitutive part of this attempt of making a “positive Sonderweg” conservative identity reconstruction. Thus, the (re)essentialization of Serbian identity was being constructed through the Serbian Sonderweg thesis: “our crisi”s is different from the European one—marked by the different causes and results of WWI and “our solution” to it, marked by the distinctive normative ideals localized in the golden age of the Nemanjić’s dynasty, especially in the concept of *Svetosavlje*—is different.

In the reconstruction of the Serbian identity in this discourse, Europe (i.e. West) has the privileged status of the “significant Other”, as a negative normative concept. The resentment and disenchantment with the Western domination was the source of reprogramming the identity and formulating the alternative normative projections of the nation by producing the binary oppositions between “us” and “West”. This discursive strategy is marked by the “paradoxical Europeanization”.⁹⁹ Through the irony of history of the interwar period, by being anti-European, these authors were being European, *par excellence*. Being contrasted to the liberal and left-radical world-views on the one side, and to the European totalitarian ultranationalistic projections on the other, the system of values of the Serbian “New Nationalism”, its conservative palingenesis could be read not only as a reaction to the European modernization and westernization, but as a specific *reaction to reaction* to the European conservatism in its totalitarian mode, too. Its dual axiological discursive structure perfectly reproduces itself in problematizing the relation between Serbia and Europe making of antiwesternism one of its key structural elements.

The paradox, which is meso-regional specificity, is that this discourse of national uniqueness was constructed by the appropriation of the “transeuropean antimodernization discourse”, as was showed by Roumen Daskalov and Diana Mishkova:

The univerzalization of the nation and the discourse of national uniqueness and the existence of a narrative of national authenticity available and utilized across Europe drew its authority precisely it applied transnationally, and national uniqueness was conveyed to the international audience through common ‘European’ language. It was thus the transnational discourses, exchange and entanglements that shaped and legitimated nations and established their supposed differences.¹⁰⁰

The key intellectual figures which critical reactions were discussed, present the paradoxical type of “westernized antiwesternizers”, which search not only for the rejecting of West, but its *Aufheben* in Hegelian sense of the term. We find the Sorin Antohi’s and Balazs Trencsenyi’s heuristic concept of “conservative anti-totalitarianism” useful and adaptable in understanding the cases studied above.¹⁰¹

The discussed attempt of conservative palingenesis in interwar Serbia proved not to meet its aims. By preserving the modernist/antimodernist ambiguity reflected in paradoxical conceptual dynamics of degeneration/regeneration, status quo/revolution, past/future, negativity/positivity, end/beginning, pessimism/optimism, the reflexive reconstruction in the discourse of the three cases discussed, proved to be more of a symptom, than the solution to the identity-crisis. The discursive shift marked by turning from (Yugo)slavism to the more conceptually clear “Serbian attitude” seem to come too late. By the World War II, the identity crisis was amplified by the civil war in Yugoslavia and another circle of enormous number Serbian victims-and the solution to it was postponed, once again. Bur, although the discourse they brought up was put aside and marginalized by the communist regime, it still represents the metapolitical disposition, which still preserves relevance in the Serbian identity crisis which is not solved till today.

These three authors had tragic life trajectories, marked by emigrant lives in the exile.

Their conservative-palingenetic programme wasn’t successful in explicating and formulating the social and political system that would reflect their system of values. In sum, it remained *substance without form*.

NOTES

- 1 Milan Subotic is one of the leading Serbian social scientist who works in the “history of ideas” paradigm. Among his most important works are: *Sricanje slobode: Studije o pocecima liberalne misli u Srbiji XIX veka*, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Institut za filozofiju i drustvenu teoriju, Gradina-Nis, 1992; *Tumaci ruske ideje: Studije o ruskim misliocima*, Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd, 2001; *Put Rusije: Evroazijsko stanoviste*, Plato, Beograd, 2004; *Na drugi pogled: prilog studijama nacionalizma*, Institut za filozofiju i drustvenu teoriju, Filip Visnjic, Beograd, 2007; *Ruske teme: Mesijanstvo, Inteligencija, Nacija*, Logos, Beograd, 2013.
- 2 See Misa Djurkovic’s, pioneering in Serbian scientific context, effort in understanding the phenomenon of conservatism: *Konzervativizam i konzervativne stranke*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2007.
- 3 See Bosko Obradovic’s work: *Milos Crnjanski i Novi Nacionalizam*, Hriscanska misao, Beograd, 2005.
- 4 In this sense, among the many other regional contributions, the most important are the projects led by Diana Mishkova and *Balázs Trencsényi*. From their long substantive contributions to the debate, one of the most recent works instructive for this research were: *Entangled Histories of the Balkans, Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, Edited by Roumen Daskalov&Diana Mishkova, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2014 and *Anti-Modernism:Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, Edited by Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and *Balázs Trencsényi*, CEU Press, Budapest, New York, 2014.
- 5 These three distinguished scientific paradigms are the British “Cambridge School”, German “Begriffsgeschichte” approach and the French “post-Annales” school.
- 6 See: Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.
- 7 The concept was developed in: “Introduction: Approaching Anti-modernism”, in: *Anti-Modernism:Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, Edited by Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and *Balázs Trencsényi*, CEU Press, Budapest, New York, 2014.
- 8 See: Marius Turda, “Conservative Palingenesis and Cultural Modernism in Early Twentieth-century Romania”, *Totalitarian Movements and Political religions*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 437-453, December, 2008. The religious, philosophical and scientific aspects of the concept are explained in : Constantin Iordachi, “God’s Chosen Warriors: Romantic palingenesis, militarism and fascism in modern Romania”, in: *Comparative Fascist Studies: New perspectives*, Constantin Iordachi (ed.), Routledge, 2010. We use the concept “palingenesis” in its value-neutral, etymological sense of a word,

- as the *rebirth* or *regeneration*. We do not imply by its use any inherent ideological content.
- 9 Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, p. 54.
- 10 *Ibid.* pp. 39- 40.
- 11 *Ibid.* p. 53.
- 12 *Ibid.* p. 55.
- 13 See: Antoine Compagnon, *Les Antimodernes: de Joseph de Maistre a Roland Barthes*, Gallimard, Paris, 2005.
- 14 See the discussion in: "Introduction: Approaching Anti-modernism", in: *Anti-Modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, Edited by Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balázs Trencsényi, CEU Press, Budapest, New York, 2014, pp. 1-43.
- 15 *Ibid.* p. 3.
- 16 *Ibid.* p. 8.
- 17 *Ibid.* p. 4.
- 18 *Ibid.* p. 3.
- 19 For the conceptual nuancing of these analytical tools, see : Balázs Trencsényi, "Bunt protiv istorii: konservativnaia revoliutsiia I poiski natsionalnoi identichnosti v mezhoennoi v Vostochnoi i Tsentralnoi Evrope", In: *Prokhorova I, Dmitriev A, Kukulín I, Maiofus M, editors: Antropologíia Revoliutsii*, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie (Nauchnaia biblioteka), Moskva, 2009, pp. 207-241.
- 20 As "canonical" in this sense, and forming the conservative meta-discourse inside which the ideas of those three authors were developed, are works of Sveti Vladika Nikolaj Velimirovic and Sveti Justin Celijski.
- 21 As Ekaterina Kalinina showed, the concept of "structure of feeling" was developed by the cultural theorist Raymond Williams, and it "denotes the culture of a particular historical moment: a common set of perceptions and values shared by a particular generation" (Ekaterina Kalinina, *Mediated Post-Soviet Nostalgia, Södertörns högskola, Elanders, Stockholm, 2014, p. 25*).
- 22 Starting from the Williams' concept of 'commonly experienced time' as "crucial to the concept of cultural generation", Kalinina adds to her analysis that "central to such a notion of generation is the shared experience of the same 'formative events (such as wars, revolutions or social movements) or shared new experiences (...) Different experiences and formative events should be seen among the major reasons why a structure of feeling cannot be learned" (*Ibid.* pp. 28-29).
- 23 Roger Griffin, *op.cit.*, p. 45.
- 24 In analyzing Arnold van Gennep's and Victor Turners concepts of "liminality" or "inbetweenness", Roger Griffin emphasizes that: "the liminal stage (...)

- enables human beings to nourish themselves with metaphysical energy unavailable in 'normal' phases of reality, and thus refuel society with transcendence on their symbolic return to it" (Roger Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 104).
- 25 Sorin Antohi, Balazs Trencsenyi, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
- 26 *Ibid.* p. 23.
- 27 Roger Griffin makes the distinction between these two kinds of modernism, defining the 'programmatic modernism', as such a movement "in which the rejection of Modernity expresses itself as a mission to change society, to inaugurate the new epoch, to start time anew. It is a modernism that lends itself to the rhetoric of manifestos and declarations, and encourages the artist/intellectual to collaborate proactively with collective movements for radical change and projects for the transformation of social realities and political systems (Roger Griffin, *op. cit.* p. 62). On the other side he proposes "to call the type of artistic modernism that gravitates around unexpected and unsustainable experiences of the lightness of being 'epiphanic' (...)" (*Ibid.* p. 63).
- 28 Sorin Antohi, Balazs Trencsenyi, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
- 29 *Ibid.* p. 32.
- 30 The "case" of Crnjanski was thoroughly explained in: Bosko Obradovic, *Milos Crnjanski i Novi Nacionalizam*, Hriscanska misao, Beograd, 2005, pp. 49-111.
- 31 This notion was firstly introduced by him in his text: Milos Crnjanski, "Do tog mora dociti", *Ideje*, No.30, 1935, Beograd, in: Zoran Avramovic, *Milos Crnjanski, Poliiticki spisi*, Sfairos, Beograd, 1989, pp. 63-66.
- 32 As was shown by Obradovic (*Ibid.* p. 31), the discursive strategy Crnjanski had developed through several texts, mostly "introductions" to his periodical "Ideje", which first number appeared just few days before assassination of the King Alexander I Karadjordjevic, in Marseilles, in 1934. In all of them one can notice that he was firmly determined to actively participate into the public field already occupied by the proponents of communism and separatism.
- 33 The concept of "New Nationalism" was introduced and developed, primarily by Milos Crnjanski and Vladimir Vujic who explicitly use the term. Bosko Obradovic was the first who notices this fact and who identified and analyzed this paradigm of thought, and the one who made the model of "New Nationalism" as the heuristical device for understanding this tradition of thought in Serbian culture. See: Bosko Obradovic, *op. cit.* p. 114.
- 34 Milos Crnjanski, "Mi postajemo kolonija strane knjige", *Vreme*, XII/3659, Beograd, 9.III 1932, p. 2 and *Vreme* 3662, Beograd, 12.III 1932, in: Bosko Obradovic (ed.), *Precutani Crnjanski (1932-1935)*, Dveri Srpske, casopis za nacionalnu kulturu i drustvena pitanja, no. 25, 1/2005, Beograd, 2005, pp. 6-8.

- 35 "That doesn't mean, and it goes without saying, that we want to make the Chinese wall from the whole foreign literature, nor that we are looking to favorize every banality only because it is ours, but we want to point to a certain speculation which is going against our writers and our literature as such" (*Ibid.* p. 8).
- 36 Milos Crnjanski, "Oklevetani rat", *Vreme*, XIV/4379, Beograd, 16.III 1934, p. 5 in: : Bosko Obradovic (ed.), *Precutani Crnjanski* (1932-1935), Dveri Srpske, casopis za nacionalnu kulturu i drustvena pitanja, no. 25, 1/2005, Beograd, 2005, pp. 26-28.
- 37 Milos Crnjanski, "Otrovni pauk", *Ideje*, no.10, Beograd,1935, in: Zoran Avramovic, *Milos Crnjanski, Poliiticki spisi*, Sfairos, Beograd, 1989, pp. 112-116.
- 38 See: Milos Crnjanski, "Miroslav Krleza kao pacifista", *Vreme*, XIV/4442, Beograd, 22.v 1934, p. 3 in: : Bosko Obradovic (ed.), *Precutani Crnjanski* (1932-1935), Dveri Srpske, casopis za nacionalnu kulturu i drustvena pitanja, no. 25, 1/2005, Beograd, 2005, pp. 28-33.
- 39 Milos Crnjanski, "Otrovni pauk", *Ideje*, no..10, Beograd,1935, in: Zoran Avramovic, *Milos Crnjanski, Poliiticki spisi*, Sfairos, Beograd, 1989, p. 114.
- 40 *Ibid.* p. 115.
- 41 Milos Crnjanski: "Do tog mora doci", *Ideje*, No. 30, 1935, Beograd, in: Zoran Avramovic, *Milos Crnjanski, Poliiticki spisi*, Sfairos, Beograd, 1989, p. 66.
- 42 The concept of "Adamism" was developed by Emil Cioran in his seminal work "The transfiguration of Romania" (Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1990). Being critical to the passivity and lack of historical purpose, he suggested that "Adamism in culture does not mean anything else other than that every spiritual, historical and political problem is tackled for the first time, that everything we do is determined by new values, in an incomparable order and manner" (the translated excerpt is from: Emil Cioran, "The Transfiguration of Romania", in: Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balázs Trencsényi,(eds.), *Anti-Modernism:Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, Edited by CEU Press, Budapest, New York, 2014, p. 360.
- 43 Jan Assman's concept of "cultural memory" (Jan Assman, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity", *New German Critique* 65, pp. 125-133, 1995), Ekaterina Kalinina interpretes in a way that "a group build its understanding of unity and uniqueness upon this preserved knowledge and is able to reproduce its identity" (Ekaterina Kalinina, *op. cit.* p. 31).
- 44 These notions are introduced by Reinhart Koselleck. See: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Translation and introduction Keith Tribe, Columbia University Press, New York and Chichester 1985/2004.

- 45 Such "lieux de memoirs" he treats in the texts, such as: Milos Crnjanski, "Krf, panteon nase ratne slave" ("Corfu, the Pantheon of Our War Glory"), *Vreme*, 7.10.1933, in: Bosko Obradovic (ed.), *Precutani Crnjanski* (1932-1935), Dveri Srpske, casopis za nacionalnu kulturu I drustvena pitanja, no. 25, 1/2005, Beograd, 2005, p. 49, or "Dvadesetogodisnjica bitke na Kumanovu 1912-1932" ("Two decade Anniverasry of the Kumanovo battle 1912-1932) (*"Two decade Anniversary of the Kumanovo battle 1912-1932*), *Vreme*, 23.10.1932), in: *Ibid.* p. 44-45.
- 46 Milos Crnjanski, "Tragedija srpstva" , *Ideje br. 24, 4.5.1935*, in: Zoran Avramovic, *op.cit.* pp. 75-79.
- 47 Milos Crnjanski, "Ideje Milosa Crnjanskog", *Ideje* no. 1, 1934., in: Bosko Obradovic (ed.), *Precutani Crnjanski* (1932-1935), Dveri Srpske, casopis za nacionalnu kulturu I drustvena pitanja, no. 25, 1/2005, Beograd, 2005, p. 5.
- 48 Milos Crnjanski, "Tezai antiteza", *Ideje*, No..28, 1.6.1935, in: Zoran Avramovic, *op.cit.* p. 70.
- 49 Milos Crnjanski, "Nasa hiljadugodisnja kultura", *Ideje*, No.7, 1934, in: *Ibid.* pp. 125-129.
- 50 *Ibid.* p. 127.
- 51 *Ibid.* p. 128.
- 52 Milos Crnjanski, Spaljivanje mostiju Svetog Save, *Ideje*, No. 25, Beograd, 1935, in: Zoran Avramovic, *op. cit.* p. 61.
- 53 Milos Crnjanski: "Social basis of our nationalism", *Ideje*, No. 20, 1935, in: *Ibid.* p. 94.
- 54 Milos Crnjanski: "Do tog mora doci", *Ideje*, No. 30, 1935, Beograd, in: Zoran Avramovic, *Milos Crnjanski, Poliiticki spisi*, Sfairos, Beograd, 1989, p. 64.
- 55 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic (1895-1976), Serbian writer, critic, psychologist. Editor of the periodical "Novi vidici" (Belgrade/Sarajevo 1928-1929). Between wars (1918-1941) worked in the Ministry of Education. In the three year period (1941-1944), worked as the assisitant of the Minister of Education, in the government of Milan Nedic. From 1944, lived in emigration, in Italy and Spain. Died in a car accident in Barcelona in 1976 (See more on the biographical data in: Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, *Ogledi o knjizevnosti i nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, pp. 425-426). In the interpretation of his ideas here, we are using his texts: Vladimir Velmar Jankovic: "Za prvu orijentaciju", *Novi vidici*", no.1, Beograd, 1928, pp.1-2 in: Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, *Ogledi o knjizevnosti i nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, pp. 35-37; Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Duhovna kriza danasnjice", in: *Ibid.* pp. 37-57; Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Istorijski idealizam srpskog naroda", in: *Ogledi o knjizevnosti nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, pp.

- 249-257; Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Otadzbina i inteligencija", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, pp. 225-248; Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, *Pogled s Kalemegdana: Ogled o beogradskom coveku*, Biblioteka grada Beograda, 1991 (Firstly published in 1938).
- 56 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Duhovna kriza danasnjice", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, p.40.
- 57 *Ibid.* pp. 43-44.
- 58 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, *Pogled s Kalemegdana: Ogled o beogradskom coveku*, Biblioteka grada Beograda, 1991 , p. 91.
- 59 *Ibid.* p. 58.
- 60 *Ibid.* p. 131.
- 61 And the sacrifice was immense. According to Velmar-Jankovic, Serbia lost in Balcan wars and the World War I around 1.500.000 of people (*Ibid.* p. 112).
- 62 *Ibid.* p. 114.
- 63 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Duhovna kriza danasnjice", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, p. 52.
- 64 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, *Pogled s Kalemegdana: Ogled o beogradskom coveku*, Biblioteka grada Beograda, 1991, p. 82.
- 65 *Ibid.* p. 83.
- 66 *Ibid.* p. 82.
- 67 *Ibid.* p. 84.
- 68 *Ibid.* p. 47.
- 69 *Ibid.* pp. 47-57.
- 70 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Duhovna kriza danasnjice", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, p. 49.
- 71 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Duhovna kriza danasnjice", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, p. 60.
- 72 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Istorijski idealizam srpskog naroda", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, pp. 250-251.
- 73 *Ibid.* 251.
- 74 Vladimir Velmar-Jankovic, "Otadzbina i inteligencija", in: *Ogledi o književnosti I nacionalnom duhu, Igraci na zici*, Zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, Beograd, 2006, p. 239.
- 75 Vladimir Vujic (1886-1951), Serbian philosopher, mathematician, cultural critic. The Translator to Serbian language of the Oswald Spengler's "Der

- Untergang des Abendlandes" ("The Decline of the West). Died, practically forgotten in the emigration, in Brasil. The year of his death was not known until recently, when thanks to the research effort of Vladimir Dimitrijevic, is now verified.
- 76 See: Vladimir Vujic, "Oslobodjena misao", in: Vladimir Vujic, *Sputana i solobodjena misao*, zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, 2006, pp. 231-238. In this context it would be interesting to refer to the concept of the "stylistic matrix" developed by the Romanian poet and philosopher Lucian Blaga. In applying his theory of culture to philosophy and literature, his attitude was that "every cultural creation followed a certain pattern, a matrix composed of three essential elements: material life, spirituality and 'style' (uniting the first two elements)" (Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balázs Trencsényi (eds.) *Anti-Modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, CEU Press, Budapest, New York, 2014, p. 206.
- 77 Vladimir Vujic, "Oslobodjena misao", in: Vladimir Vujic, *Sputana i solobodjena misao*, zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, 2006, p. 268.
- 78 *Ibid.* p. 247.
- 79 *Ibid.* pp. 232-233.
- 80 *Ibid.* p. 247.
- 81 *Ibid.* p. 246.
- 82 *Ibid.* p. 254. (Translation cited according to: Zoran Milutinovic, *Getting Over Europe: The Construction of Europe in Serbian culture*, Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York, 2011, p. 107).
- 83 *Ibid.* p. 258.
- 84 *Ibid.* pp. 258-262.
- 85 *Ibid.* pp. 260-261.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 Vladimir Vujic, "Stvarne reci o nasoj kulturi, *Narodna odbrana*, Beograd, 1932, in: Milan Radulovic, *Modernizam I srpska idealisticka filozofija*, Institut za knjizevnost I umetnost, Beograd, 1983, pp. 215-217. In this passage is recurring reference to the similarity with Lucian Blaga's concept of "stylistic matrix" obvious.
- 89 Vladimir Vujic, "Oslobodjena misao", in: Vladimir Vujic, *Sputana i solobodjena misao*, zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, 2006, pp. 269-274.
- 90 *Ibid.* p. 271.
- 91 *Ibid.* pp. 272-273.
- 92 *Ibid.* p. 273.
- 93 *Ibid.* p. 269. The mentioning of Don Quixote by Vujic here is not accidental. He was one of the best connoisseurs of the Spanish literature and thought, especially Miguel de Unamuno (More on this see in his text: Vladimir

- Vujic, "Lik Kihota", *Narodna odbrana*", Beograd, 1929, in: Vladimir Vujic, "Oslobodjena misao", in: Vladimir Vujic, *Sputana i solobodjena misao*, zaduzbina Svetog manastira Hilandara, 2006, pp. 201-227.
- 94 Saint Sava, first archbishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church (1219), Saint and enlightner. The founding father of the Serbian nation with his father Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi. His work *Nomokanon* is the constitutional act of Serbian Church and the central pillar of Serbian identity.
- 95 Dositey Obradovic (1739-1811), first Serbian minister of education, modern enlightner.
- 96 Vladimir Vujic, "Povratak Savi Svetitelju", *Svetosavlje*, god.III, sveska 2, 1934, pp.97-108, in: *Bosko Obradovic* (ed.), *Tajna Svetosavlja: nepoznati pogled na licnost Svetog Save*, Catena Mundi, Beograd, 2013, p. 65.
- 97 The normative concept of *Svetosavlje* represents the substantial value-core of the ideas of national identity and regeneration in interwar period.
- 98 This topic was broadly discussed in: Roumen Daskalov&Diana Mishkova (eds.) *Entangled Histories of the Balkans, Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, Edited by, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2014. As Milan Subotic competently put it in elaborating the two "ideal-type"positions of "nativist" and "westernizers": "the most famous case of these sort of discussions-the well known polemics of the Russian 'Slavophiles' and the 'Westernizers' represents the paradigm which has been reproduced until our days in the different intellectual milieux of the EasternEuropean societies. Its long vitality does not stem from the complexity and the 'openess' of the argumentation, but from the problematic situation which is being reproduced in different temporalities in the societies which are confronted with the feeling of its own marginality in relation to the historical *mainstream*" (Milan Subotic, "Mirca Elijahade: Bekstvo od 'terora istorije'", *Treci program Radio Beograda*, no.151-152, *LETO-JESEN*, Beograd, 2011, pp. 147-148.
- 99 The notion used by Sorin Antohi and Balazs Trencsenyi, *op.cit.* p. 23.
- 100 Roumen Daskalov&Diana Mishkova (eds.) *Entangled Histories of the Balkans, Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, Edited by, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2014, p. 11.
- 101 They competently argue that : "One cannot simply equate conservative anti-modernism with some sort of radical nationalism or totalitarian propensities. While the interwar attempts at reviving conservatism started out from the criticism of the preceding liberal epoch and of political modernity as such, it could also be critical of the Nazi and Fascist models (...) A possible ideological outcome of all this was conservative anti-totalitarianism as mentioned above-the rejection of totalitarianism exactly as a manifestation of modernity" (Sorin Antohi, Balazs Trencsenyi, *op.cit.* pp. 37-38.

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