

# JOURNALISTIC (RE)PRODUCTION OF HISTORY: TELEVIZED COVERAGE OF RADOVAN KARADŽIĆ'S ARREST IN SERBIA

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## **Introduction**

On July 21 2008, Serbian media scene was chocked by event still hunting the Serbian community: the arrest of Radovan Karadžić. He was captured as Dragan Dabić in Belgrade, where he was cultivating a long white beard, practicing alternative medicine, was a regular health magazine contributor and even gave public lectures. According to the Serbian radical party, he is »the greatest Serbian hero«, but former UN ambassador Richard Holbrooke calls him »a European Osama bin Laden«. A day after his arrest, the television program entitled »Television Serbia on Radovan Karadžić« showed on Television Serbia (TS) achieved the highest ratings of any program in Serbia (Gledanost RTS, 2008). Serbian electronic media have been for decades one of the crucial producers and reproducers of dominant nationalistic ideology (Milivojević, 1996; 2007). As many authors point out (Milivojević, 2007; Milošević, 2008), the nationalistic framework still characterizes most prime-time television programs in Serbia.

In the Serbian context, poets have traditionally played a crucial role in invoking nationalistic sentiment, and in this respect the political ascendance of the nationalist poet and a politician Radovan Karadžić was not as exceptional as it might have been in other national contexts. Serbian leaders have long had poetic ambitions, and poets have played an important role in the national political imaginary (Žarković, 2008).<sup>1</sup> Specifically, many scholars also point to the nostalgic sentiments expressed in Serbian nationalistic poetry – these offer simplistic ideals in order to avoid confronting the realities of daily life. Nostalgic sentiments can, as Boym argues, express both love of the past and hate of the Other (Boym, 2001). Karadžić was notorious for inciting Serbian troops with his speeches and

poems full of nostalgic sentiments for Greater Serbia.<sup>2</sup> In his own poetry, the butchery he had led against »the Turks«- Bosnian Muslims - was openly expressed.<sup>3</sup> As Čolović (2002) points out, »exile, destruction, death, and return to a forsaken homeland« as well as »hatred« are themes that commonly feature in his works and actions. The titles of his poems are illustrative here: *Goodbye, Assassins*, *A Man Made of Ashes*, and *War Boots*. Čolović (2002: 34) calls Karadžić's poetry »war-propaganda folklore« that transfers »conflicts from the sphere of politics, economy and history into the extrapolated sphere of myth.« The role of poets in the war of the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia has led Slavoj Žižek to famously declare that »instead of *the military-industrial complex*, we in post-Yugoslavia had the *military-poetic complex* personified in the twin figures of Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić« (Žižek, 2008: 17). This article explores the ways in which TS's journalists covered Karadžić's arrest, arguing that it complemented the aestheticization of politics enacted by his poetry. In this regard, we might supplement Žižek's account by noting the way in which the forms of forgetting, idealization, and nostalgia that characterized nationalist poetry were reproduced for mass audiences by the electronic media, creating a military-poetic-media-entertainment complex.

The first part of this paper introduces some historical frameworks and theoretical investigations. We briefly deal with Boym's »reflective« and »restorative« definitions of nostalgia - she distinguishes between two narratives of nostalgia that frame feelings of dislocation differently, since they both try to understand how we relate to a collective home (41). In the second part, we present a study which uncovers how TS's journalists exploit and further incorporate a particular social event (in our case, Karadžić's arrest) into nationalistic and a »restorative nostalgic« discourse. The research is based on critical discourse analysis (the analysis of recontextualization and the analysis of representation of social actors) (Fairclough, 1992; Van Leeuwen, 1996; Wodak, 1996, 2006). We argue that TS, while covering Karadžić's arrest, constructed a nationalistic discourse that invoked nostalgia for the prospect of the creation of Greater Serbia. Any connections between Karadžić, the Serbs, and especially the current government with war crimes in BH were brushed aside. This nostalgia for Greater Serbia, we argue, exemplifies a political paradox in Serbia: at the same time that information on the historical atrocities of the former Yugoslav regimes and of Serbia's role in these atrocities was being made available to the Serbian public, nostalgia for selected cultural aspects of the Serbian past is growing as well. The conclusions offer some observations directed towards answering how to refine theories of memory, nostalgia, and

journalistic/media culture in ways that might help to challenge the manipulation of popular discourses by those who seek to exacerbate the forms of nationalism, racism, and historical hatred that have divided the region.

### *The historical-political background*

In 1986, the Serbian Academy of Science and Art prepared a *Memorandum* – a long list of Serbian grievances against their position within the Yugoslav federation – which articulated the need for a collective mobilization of the Serbs throughout Yugoslavia. Slobodan Milošević, a Serbian president from 1990-2000, reproduced historical and scientific data for the construction of the ideology of Greater Serbia. Its crucial vision was the idea that all ethnic Serbs need to live in the same state (MacDonald, 2002).

In BH Milošević's vision of Greater Serbia was literally carried out by Karadžić. It was in 1990 that Karadžić, at the time working at Sarajevo city hospital as a psychiatrist, helped to set up the nationalistic Serbian Democratic Party (SDS). SDS was formed in response to the rise of Croatian nationalistic parties in BH, and dedicated to achieve the goal of Greater Serbia – to ethnically cleanse different areas of the country of any non-Serbs. BH's first free, multi-party elections in November 1990 were won by three dominant nationalist parties and they all immediately engaged in endless quarrels over what course the country should follow. In 1991, when Bosnian parliament held a session on the referendum for Bosnian independence, Karadžić famously declared:

If the Republic of Bosnia votes for independence the Serb paramilitaries will make the Muslim people disappear, because the Muslims cannot defend themselves if there is war (in Williams and Scharf, 2002: 43).

Less than two years later, Radovan Karadžić declared the creation of an independent Serbian Republic of BH (later renamed *Republika Srpska*) with its capital in Pale, a suburb of Sarajevo. He pronounced himself as the head of the state. Karadžić's political party, openly supported by Milošević, mobilized and organized the Bosnian Serbs in fighting against Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Croats in BH. The war in BH escalated in April 1992, when Bosnian Serbs started to besiege Sarajevo for 43 months, shelling Bosniak forces, and also terrorizing the civilian population with a relentless bombardments and sniper fire (MacDonald, 2002). Karadžić sought to eradicate any non-Serbs living in the city. Bosnian Serb forces – assisted by paramilitaries from Serbia proper – committed war crimes, including

ethnic cleansing, establishing concentration camps, destroying property, and massacring numerous sectors of the civilian population (97,207 civilian deaths) (*Population losses in Bosnia and Herzegovina 92-95*, 2007).

In his many public speeches Karadžić vigorously advocated the creation of a homogeneous Greater Serbia »by violence«, while he often skilfully related to specific historical events where Serbs had been positioned as »betrayed victims«. He used nostalgic practices, such as a constant focus on Serbian »old-centuries« warrior identity, as crucial mechanisms through which the very idea of »Serbianness« was reified. Karadžić was also well known for publicly celebrating the crimes against the Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, claiming these were committed in the name of Greater Serbia (MacDonald, 2002). For example, on 15 October 1995 in RS parliament, Karadžić publicly stated that he does not regret the »radical mission« in Srebrenica and defined the massacre as the »defence against the Turks« (Repe, 2008: 45).<sup>5</sup>

On December 14 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement brought an end to the Bosnian war and divided BH into two entities: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (with 51% of the territory) in which mostly Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats live, and Republic Srpska (with 49% of the territory) populated almost exclusively by the Bosnian Serbs. Ironically, as many point out, the Agreement legalized Karadžić's politics and his Serbian enclave, Republic Srpska (Repe, 2008). Today, this political entity is almost ethnically pure, and functions as a state within a state, having its own parallel political institutions (Verdery and Burawoy, 1999). Karadžić succeeded where other Serbian politicians had failed (i.e. Milošević) – he has, *de facto*, enlarged the territory of Serbia while creating a Serbian state in BH. In that way he has at least partially, realized the myth of Greater Serbia (Repe, 2008).

During the arrest of Karadžić, the political situation in Serbia was tense and deeply divided. For example, on July 29 2008 the demonstrations against Karadžić's arrest were organized by all nationalistic oppositional political parties, including the Serb Radical Party. The crowd of roughly 15,000 members screamed and chanted his name, while singing »Karadžić is a hero of all heroes.« On Facebook, his advocates created various groups such as »Free Radovan Karadžić«, and »Freedom for Radovan Karadžić« to mobilize support. At the same time, death threats against the Serbian president Borislav Tadić were waged, framing him as a Serbian traitor and Serb hater.

## Theoretical background

### *Collective Nostalgia*

Nostalgia has been often understood through medical metaphors. Stewart (1993) characterizes nostalgia as a social disease, and Boym (2001) sees nostalgia as »the incurable modern condition« (xiv). The world nostalgia envisions is different from what would be created only from collection of memories.

Nostalgia can be experienced in private as well as in public spaces. According to Davis (1979: 122–123), private nostalgia is fuelled by particular, even intimate, personal memories of an individual; collective nostalgia relies on collective/public images, symbols, and signs available to many within the same historical and socio-cultural context. Collective nostalgia is available to larger communities (e.g. ethnic groups, nations) and is often used in order to forge a collective sense. As such, public nostalgia dwells in the content of the group's history, and exploits the group's cultural symbols. In this sense it becomes possible that different symbols help to trigger the nostalgic and nationalistic sentiment. For example, the Chetniks' (Serbian Serb nationalist guerrillas who fought against Nazi occupiers and Tito's partisans during the 2nd World War) iconography, frequently displayed during public events, provoked nostalgia for Greater Serbia.

Boym conceptualizes nostalgia into »reflective« versus »restorative« one. She defines »reflective« one as a more critical one, since it calls the truth into doubt. In writing about nostalgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Boym argues that restorative nostalgia »attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home,« while reflective nostalgia »thrives in *al-gia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately« (xviii). Moreover, restorative nostalgia »does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition,« while reflective nostalgia »rests on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity« (xviii). On one hand, a reflective mode of nostalgia provides both a complicated emotional state and a complex relation to history. Reflective nostalgia is based on cultural memory, but it is concerned with individual and historical time. In this way, reflective nostalgia allows for the endorsement of a specific identity narrative characterized by personal memories of the collective history. On the other hand, restorative nostalgia occupies the sphere of those concerned with reconstruction of the past in the sense of *the restoration* of origins and tradition (Boym, 2001: XV). In their extreme forms, the advocates of restorative nostalgia are engaged in the »anti-modern myth-making of

history« (XV), usually to be found on the right of the political continuum. Often, they are in favour of the re-establishment of nostalgic practices that are held to be markers of their group identity (Boym, 2001: 41). At the level of everyday life the results of this view are observable in the pedantic restoration of monuments of the group's »historical past«, changing the names of streets and public spaces to reflect »our tradition«, rewriting of history in public discourse, etc. all in order to construct and support one single narrative of national origin. Instances of this type of nostalgia are easily found in the policies and acts of nationalistic parties all over former Yugoslav states (Volčič, 2007). Or, specifically in the Serbian case, during the rallies in support of Karadžić and against his extradition to The Hague, many carried Karadžić's and other nationalistic-historical figure's photos, sung songs about Greater Serbia and demanded renaming of the streets in different Serbian cities after Karadžić and other Serbian nationalistic-historical figures (Repe, 2008). In that way, the re-articulation of Greater Serbia as a homeland of Serbs took place. The fantasy is to replace old symbolic names with the names of Serbs associated with the vision of Greater Serbia. Such symbolism feeds the nostalgic sense of longing for some golden times and hope for the return of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Serbia still had a strategic power and control over most parts of former Yugoslavia. However, the important element of the nostalgic sentiment is that its objects are not available in the present. The point is that nostalgia is only experienced in the present, but only in relation to things from the past, which by the definition can never be again.

### *Serbian (Nationalistic) Journalism*

The media, and especially television, were among the crucial tools of the war effort in all former Yugoslav republics, and controlled by the nationalistic and populist forces, inciting ethnic hatred and denigrating the democratic opposition. In Serbia, during the 1990s, there was a dominant professional ideology of a so-called »nationalistic journalism.« There are a lot of elements characteristic of this journalistic discourse (De la Broose, 2003; Milivojević, 1996, 2007; Milošević, 2008; Suša, 2005): »us-versus-them« dichotomy, »my-nation-right-or-wrong« version of reporting, substantiation of the myths of superiority of the Serbian nation in relation to the other nations of the former Yugoslavia, and forging a sense of national pride and patriotism.

Changes in media policy came after the fall of Milošević's regime in October 2000, and ended the dominance of state television, but the poli-

cy changes still remain incomplete. The changes regulating the television were carried out chaotically, without any clear policy or legal frameworks. The new government recognized the importance of state television and slowed down the changes. TS, according to Milivojević (2007) does not play an explicit propagandistic role any more, since it does not use militant exclusionary practices and national hysteria. However, as many scholars note (e.g. Erjavec and Volčič, 2007; Milivojević, 2007; Suša, 2005), despite the fact that TS attempted to transform itself into a public service institution, TS does work as a state television, since it is not independent from governmental structures and it still predominately reproduces dominant political discourse. Milivojević (2007) asks a crucial question as to how TS should confront the traumatic past of the nation, since TS itself helped to legitimate, normalize and institutionalize a particular war culture that supported the expansionist and nationalist politics of the Serbian regime.

### **Method: Principles of recontextualization and representation of social actors**

The mainstream research on media discourses in recent years has been focused on a broad framework of a critical discourse analysis, which is concerned with diverse issues such as the projection of power through discourse, the instantiation of dominance and inequality in discourse, the ideological underpinning of discourse and discourse's affiliation with social change (Fairclough, 1989, 1995a, 1995b; 2003; van Dijk, 1988, 1989, 1993).

Fairclough (2003) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) adopt Bernstein's (1990) definition of recontextualization as a representation of social events. In the process of recontextualization, social events are not merely repeated. Rather, they are transformed in their new setting, perhaps through the addition of new elements, or through the deletion of others. In connection, Tannock (1995: 454) suggests that we can only ascertain whether nostalgia is progressive or regressive if we examine what has been excluded from a representation of the past. In his words, we need to »center essentially on what has been edited out of the nostalgic text – on the conflicts of interest and differences of position that are occluded, on the social groups and relations that are cut out of the picture, on the hidden values that may, intentionally or not, be in the process of being legitimated« (Tannock, 1995: 457).

The arrangement of events may change in the new context, or some elements may be substituted for others. While recontextualization often invol-

ves the suppression and filtering of some meaning potentials of a discourse (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), it is also a process which may expand meaning potential, through additions to, and elaborations upon, the previous text. As Bernstein claims, particular social fields, and networks of social practices, have been associated with »recontextualizing principles« (Bernstein, 1990). These are specific »principles« according to which they incorporate and re-contextualize social events. These principles underlie differences between the ways in which a particular type of social event is represented in different fields, networks of social practices, and genres. Fairclough (2003: 139-140) develops the following principles: Presence (e.g. which elements of events, or events in a chain of events, are present/absent, prominent/background?), Arrangement (e.g. how are events ordered?), Abstraction (e.g. what degree of abstraction/generalization from concrete events?), and Additions (e.g. what is added in representing particular events – explanation/legitimizations (reasons, purposes), evaluation?). Critical discourse analysis also sees recontextualization in terms of a dialectical colonization/appropriation. Recontextualization is a specific kind of a dialectic that appropriates and colonizes discourses from different spaces and times (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). The concept of appropriation accentuates the fact that, even in the process of colonizing, a new discourse enters potentially transformative relationships with existing discourses in the recontextualizing context. In this respect, our study attempts to uncover how Serbian national television appropriated Karadžić's arrest into a nationalistic discourse, while helping to create a specific type of nostalgic nationalism.

In order to identify TS's recontextualization, we also analyze how TS represented the main social actors, i.e. who is included within the »us« realm and who is positioned as »them«. As Hodge and Kress (1993) argue, one of the central discursive strategies in ideological struggles relies on the construction of in-and-out group identities using discursive means. We adopt Hall's »discourse of difference« (1989: 913) as the most effective method to think through binary positions.

## **Data**

We analyzed all 78 news items broadcast on all TS news programs from 21 of July (the day of Karadžić's arrest) up until 30 of July, 2008 (the day when Karadžić was sent to The Hague). Why this particular time-frame? As argued, it was during this period that the political situation in Serbia was intense, since the majority of opposition strongly challenged the president, government,



and institutions responsible for the arrest. Demonstrations in support of Karadžić were organized every day. On the 30 July 2008, the situation started to calm down, since Karadžić was sent to The Hague. Why the focus on this particular medium? We've analyzed TS's news program precisely because it is still the most watched program in Serbia, known for its pro-government orientation. Thus, the analysis of its program can help to explain official government politics (Milivojević, 2007; Tanasić, 2008). TS broadcast two special news programs (on Tuesday, the 22 July 2008 between 20.15 and 24.00; and Wednesday, the 23 July 2008 between 20.15 and 22.00) focusing on the arrest of Radovan Karadžić, called »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«, both having extremely high ratings of 60% (roughly 2.5 million viewers) in Serbia. The rest of the news programs (11.45-12.15, 17.00-17.25, 19.30-20.15) also enjoyed high ratings (*Gledanost RTS*, 2008). Within a whole analyzed news program, in terms of genres, the news reports dominated (56 items), followed by short interviews (9 items), news items (8 items) and statements (5 items). We analyzed all news items as a whole, since they present primary information to more than half of Serbian population (Tanasić, 2008; *Gledanost RTS*, 2008). Thus, we try to reveal how the most popular television news program in Serbia represented Karadžić's arrest and incorporated, re-articulated and appropriated it within representation of Serbian past and present. First, we follow a macro-structure analysis of recontextualization's principles to find out how TS represented Karadžić's arrest. Additionally, we employ a micro-analysis of the representation of the main social actors.

#### *TV Serbia's recontextualization of Karadžić's arrest*

##### *(A) Presence and absence of elements of chains of events*

Which chains of events were present, or absent, in television news dealing with Karadžić arrest? The analysis has indicated that TS broadcast the following recurring themes of the Karadžić's arrest:

- A. The life of Radovan Karadžić as Dragan Dabić;
- B. Karadžić's arrest as one of the crucial obligations and defining principles for Serbia on its path towards the EU;
- C. The details of Karadžić's arrest, and the legal procedures of the arrest;
- D. Karadžić's family;
- E. The legal procedures in the Hague Tribunal and the descriptions of Karadžić's future life in the prison;

- F. Different reactions of politicians to Karadžić's arrest;
- G. Karadžić's biography;
- H. Protests against the Karadžić arrest;
- I. Death threats against the Serbian president, ministers, and journalists favouring Karadžić's arrest.

Overall, the expressed nostalgia infused the ways in which other themes were represented, and it served as a kind of glue to connect the dominant topics. Specifically, nostalgia here is put to use in a variety of ways. Firstly, the analysis has showed that the most prominent theme has been Karadžić's hidden life as a fugitive.<sup>4</sup> TS has focused on his life as Dragan Dabić, his new physical appearance, clothing, speech, psychological state of mind, his alternative medicine interests, new love life, his shopping habits, his visiting of a »Crazy house« café, his writing for the alternative medicine journal »Healthy life,« his Web page, public lectures on energetic therapy, and his Croatian holidays. In a way, Karadžić becomes a commercial-nationalist media product, a political commodity sold to audiences.

The next most covered theme – also in quantitative terms – was devoted to a Serbian foreign policy towards the West, the European Union (the EU) and the International Community. Serbs have had a complex and traumatic relationship with the West. The longevity of the wish to be European, Western, or, on the other hand, the desire to preserve Serbian authenticity in opposition to the West has been noted by many scholars (Popov, 2000). For the advocates of civil society, the West signifies the source of the political and economic reforms that Serbia should undergo. For others, it represents a neo-imperialist threat to the Serbian state and culture. In this model, the West means either salvation or imperial domination. But for all who use it, »the West« remains a statement of future political intentions and a statement of national identity. Ironically, despite TS's selective coverage of the arrest, it has represented the event as a point of departure for Serbia in its cooperation with the West – for which Serbia should be rewarded with some concrete support and investments from the EU. TS's coverage further focused on minor details of the arrest: the legal procedures, the political consequences for Serbia, and the reactions of Serbian elites and Karadžić's family. TS emphasized the reactions of politicians to Karadžić's arrest, especially the representatives of the EU, the USA, NATO, the UN, Republic Srpska, BH, Croatia, Monte Negro, Russia and the main Serbian political parties. Different statements from Karadžić's close collaborators and »ordinary people« alike were recorded, expressing emotional desire and nostalgia for Greater Ser-

bia. They similarly celebrated the fact that during the BH war Karadžić partly realized Serbian dreams for Greater Serbia.

Moreover, the news reports speculated about how the trial in The Hague will take place in detail, and envisioned a life in a prison cell in Scheveningen for the once powerful and popular nationalist leader. The anticipatory portrayals of Karadžić's ignominious future is at the same time a nostalgic one, insofar as nostalgia is often triggered by images of grandeur in ruin (Boym, 2001). The pathos of the ruin, in other words, takes shape against the background of the splendour of the shadow of past glory cast by the wreckage of the present. In our case, Karadžić as once-great leader in decline. The everyday protests, organized to support Karadžić, have played a prominent role. The news programs also covered the death threats against the Serbian president, and some pro-European ministers, and journalists. Every day, TS repeated a short biography of Karadžić's life.

However, in order to recontextualize the analysis, it's more important to explore which chains of events were *not* represented (Fairclough, 2003). TS neglected to cover Karadžić's war crimes although they are widely acknowledged among local and foreign scholars (e.g. Čolović, 2002; Popov, 2000; MacDonald, 2002; Repe, 2008). The elision of history as a war criminal can be seen as a distinctly nostalgic practice, since restorative nostalgia clearly represents an idealized version of the past. When describing the main reasons for Karadžić's arrest, TS did not cover the crime-against-humanity charges of the Hague Tribunal against Karadžić. Instead, it focused only on the legal reasons for the arrest: »a significant step towards Serbia's EU membership« (22 July 2008, TV News), »enormous pressures from the Hague Tribunal and the EU« (24 July 2008, TV News) and »a Serbian ticket to finally enter European Union« (26 July 2008, TV News).

The analyzed news items completely ignored, for example, the complex theme of Serbian responsibility for the delayed arrest of Karadžić. Many crucial questions were not addressed, such as, who actually knew about Karadžić's whereabouts, who was helping him, and why the arrest came so late? Also, why does the current government refuse to offer access to secret archives that could help to answer the above questions?

Why has TS represented Karadžić's arrest in such a thematically imbalanced way? TS adopted the same (nostalgic) nationalistic principles for the construction of nationalistic discourses as in the past, i.e. refusal of acknowledgement after the wars, a denial of responsibility and a repression of memory (Broose, 2003; Milivojević, 2007; Milošević, 2008; Suša, 2005). Kammen's description of nostalgia as »history without guilt« (1991: 6) is

particularly pertinent in this regard. It can be argued that TS neglected negative information precisely because any reference to war crimes could question the myth of Greater Serbia. Furthermore, any critical coverage of the past could remind the Serbs about their negative role during the BH war. TS presented Karadžić's arrest as a Serbian shift towards the EU – and, in that, positioned a project of »joining the EU« as a positive process, something that brings Serbia closer to the EU, and to its »modern roots.«

### *(B) Arrangement*

How has TS »ordered« and »arranged« the main events of Karadžić's arrest? As argued above, the biography of Karadžić was reported in a linear way, following historical events, but lacking any interpretation of the events. A typical segment from TS's program is illustrative here:

1. Radovan Karadžić was born in 1945 in Petnjica village, near Nikšić. In 1960 he moved to Sarajevo, where he met his wife, Ljiljana. He finished his BA in medicine, and became a psychiatrist in a city hospital. He was intensively involved with politics from 1989...

On 12 May 1992, he became a president of Republic Srpska. He was a president until the 30 June 1996. The same year, in 1996, he left the political public life and gave the presidential power to vice-president of RS, Biljana Plavšić. In October 2004 he published his book *Miraculus of the Night*.

(22 July 2008, »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«)

Similarly, the events around Karadžić's arrest followed chronological order, with no additional explanations or interpretations:

2. Radovan Karadžić was arrested on the 21 July in Belgrade. After the initial hearing, the investigative judge of Serbia's special court on war crimes Milan Dilparić decided that Karadžić would be extradited to The Hague Tribunal.

A day after the arrest, Serbia's minister for UN Tribunal relations, Rasim Ljajić and war crimes prosecutor of the Belgrade County Court, Vladimir Vukčević showed the journalists a new photograph of Radovan Karadžić. He was living in New Belgrade under the false name of Dr. Dragan Dabić, while practicing alternative medicine.

On the 22 of July, the protests to support Radovan Karadžić were organized in Belgrade by the Serbian Radical party, and other right-wing organizations.

On the 23 of July, copies of different official materials from Serbian Army meetings were found in the apartment where Radovan Karadžić was hiding.

On the 29 of July, dozens of supporters of Serbian Radical Party showed their solidarity with Radovan Karadžić, while protesting against his arrest on the Belgrade's Republic Square.

In the morning, the lawyer of the former president of the Republic of Srbska claimed that he did not file an appeal against Karadžić's transfer to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague. He will attempt to prolong Karadžić's transfer. (30 July 2008, TV News)

First, then, the analysis shows that the coverage of the events of Karadžić's life, arrest and legal process followed a chronological order, representing these events as a sequence of connected and linear events. This form of reconstruction gives the events a specific meaning, since it differs from news-story conventions (presenting time-movement in terms of causes and effects). It also avoids explicit interpretation of any events (Bird and Dardenne, 1997), because it doesn't follow time in terms of cause and effect. Journalists use this chronological narration as a strategic ritual in reporting, since it insulates them from accusations of bias or distortion (Bird and Dardenne, 1997; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). The journalists attempt to legitimize their »objectivity« through presentation of facts, reliable sources, expert opinion, accuracy and fairness. However, while using strategic ritual in reporting, objective treatment of fact and deference to official sources, journalists function as uncritical conduits for military and government opinion instead of fulfilling their normative role as »watchdogs«.

The second most important effect of chronological narrative, besides naturalization, is the dramatization of events, whereby journalists attempt to attract viewers and with that, high ratings. Also for Serbian media, sensational tendencies proved commercially expedient, and commercial imperatives of media organisations generate cultural content that reduce social and cultural complexities. When TS reported crucial events from either Karadžić's political career and/or his arrest, TS has used the so-called »arrangement« principle in order to construct a belief in objective reporting: it created a linear connection between the events to offer only one interpretation of the events. In that,

Karadžić has been (only) the president of Republic Srpska (and not a war criminal), and now they have arrested him. While employing this particular principle, TS contributes to the masking of the responsibility of the Serbs for the crimes committed in BH. It continues to cultivate the myth of an innocent Serbia, propagating the thesis that Serbs have always been victims of some external enemy, conspiring to annihilate them. In that way, Karadžić is positioned as someone who acted strongly to revenge past wrongs. TS attempts to erase the Serbian crimes in BH that were committed in the name of Greater Serbia, with the political, military, economic support of the majority of the Serbs (Čolović, 2002; MacDonald, 2002; Popov, 2000; Repe, 2008).

*(C) Abstraction/Personalization*

What types of abstraction and generalization dominated the analyzed TS news programs? The arrest of Karadžić was generalized in two ways. First, the already limited coverage of Karadžić's war crimes was portrayed in »a relative way«, framed in terms of moral equivalence (see example 3) and described not as intentional acts but as »accidents.«

3. A journalist: What war crimes did Radovan Karadžić commit? What is he responsible for?

Vladislav Jovanović: We have to know that it wasn't only Karadžić who's been involved. Other presidents were participating, too, but they were not sent to The Hague. /.../ Accidents happened on all sides... and these have much deeper causes. (July 23 2008, »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«)

In the above response, the source implicitly acknowledged that Karadžić is guilty of crimes, but he has generalized them (»others were involved«) and relativized them (»in a war, this kind of thing happens – everyone was doing it«). This practice remains a crucial strategy for representing war crimes (for more, see Wodak, 2006). Moreover, the source used the term »accident«, which is a typical euphemism in Serbian nationalistic discourse (Luković, 2002): it transposes criminal acts into the unintentional realm of chance, thereby refusing to acknowledge that war crimes were also committed by Serbs. The use of the notion »an accident« is illustrative – since an accident can happen without an intentional cause by some external »objective« force. Because the journalist did not challenge the re-

lativization of crimes or at least, demand an additional explanation, an implicit agreement with the source of information was established.

TS claimed that Karadžić's arrest means a shift towards the EU path for Serbia – it attempted to frame the significance of Karadžić arrest as fulfilling the EU's requirements and thereby rendering Serbia deserving of being rewarded by the EU (see example 4).

4. Goran Svilanović, former Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs claimed that we the Serbs have now proven to the world that we are finally on the path towards entry into the European Union. He added that Serbia has to be rewarded by the EU. The EU has to cease its attempts at blackmail. (July 23 2008, «Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality»)

TS has used the »reverse« principle here. Personalization can be defined as a preference for or focus upon the individual actor(s) and human interest angles in events, while downplaying institutional and political considerations that establish their social context. Many authors claim that increased media personalization results from the values embedded in television (e.g. Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999; Swanson and Mancini, 1996). In this regard, the commercial and political values of entertainment take precedence over the public service ideals of journalism. Especially because of its visual nature, television tends to focus on personalities rather than on abstract entities such as parties and groups (Peri, 2004). Furthermore, the effect of personalized news is to decontextualize news events and especially to overlook structural power relations (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). The consequence is also to naturalize war, through the breakdown of war into episodes, or series of events, each reported and described largely in isolation. This logic serves to conceptualise war as disconnected »events« rather than as an ongoing political and military process. The »human story« becomes separated from the military-political policy of war, and the past. In a sense, restorative nostalgia is implicitly used here as »truth and tradition« – TS restores its vision of the golden past as a stable construct.

In the analyzed news stories, the focus on drama, visual spectacle, human-interest stories and personalization means a focus on one person only – that is, a heavy emphasis on Karadžić to the exclusion of other social actors and the social context that helped to frame Karadžić's life. All of this results in the construction of a narrative suggesting that Karadžić worked independently, without official Serbian state support. This meaning gets reinforced by the use of the word »only« (see example 5).

5. Only his nephew knew about Radovan Karadžić's life as Dragan Dabić. Dragan Karadžić: We usually talked in female voices, using female pronunciation, in order to deceive possible eavesdroppers. (23 July 2008, TV news)

TS's coverage of Karadžić's political life in the Republic Srpska during the 1990s also focused strictly on Karadžić only – as if he had acted in isolation, disconnected from other social actors and isolated from the historical and political situation. The aim here is to represent Karadžić as a strong, skilled leader, a Serbian »warrior,« contributing to the idea of Greater Serbia, while at the same time establishing a sense of distance from the crimes for which he had been held responsible (see example 6).

6. Aleks Buha: ... It was only Karadžić who knew exactly what was going on in BH at the time. And he should be credited for helping to create a Serbian state in BH. (July 23 2008, »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«)

The employment of the abstraction/personalization principle served to relativize Karadžić's crimes, and to position Serbs in a positive light. Furthermore, it represented Karadžić's arrest as the ticket that will allow Serbia to enter the EU.

#### *(D) Additions*

What was added in the TS's representation of the events about Karadžić's arrest? And were there different explanations/legitimizations and evaluations of the arrest? TS journalists have, through their selection of interviewees, nostalgically evaluated the war in BH as a victory, in which »the Serbs have finally achieved Serbian territory in Bosnia« or as »partly fulfilled dreams of Greater Serbia.« For example:

7. Milan from Čačak claims: This was a big victory for the Serbs. Karadžić made our dreams real! Honour to him! The only problem still ahead of us... is that the Serbs in Bosnia are limited only to the territory of Republik Srpska. But at least we have that. I say this in a loud and proud way! I am proud of this. People are scared to say this, but I am not... (24 July 2008, TV News)

But on the other hand, journalists evaluated Karadžić's arrest as a crucial obligation that needs to be fulfilled, in order to receive rewards from the EU:



8. Zoran Pavlović declared: European Union plays politics of negotiations. They have to reward us for this arrest – for example, they have to formally cancel visas for Serbian citizens, they have to accept Serbia into the EU candidature, and have to provide access to the EU financial sources, such as different funds. Serbia needs to advance towards joining the EU. (July 22 2008, »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«)

This arrest should also »help to improve the image of Serbia within the International Community« (24 July 2008, TV News). Thus, the representation of Karadžić's arrest was used to brand Serbia on the international map – to convey a message that Serbia »is creating a spiritual link with Europe and is coming to share the common European value system. It is now a modern, civilized state, eager to join EU« (23 July 2008, TV News).

### *The representation of social actors*

The ways in which main actors are represented serves chiefly as an affirmation of the ideology. Our analysis of social actors shows that TS used the binary oppositions: »we« versus »them.« Many scholars dealing with Serbian media propaganda show how, during the 1990s, the discourse of difference was a crucial element in nationalistic media discourse (e.g. De la Broose, 2003; Milivojević, 1996). The »production of Serbian enemies« was taking place during the end of the 1980s, whereby a whole spectrum of various enemies within and outside the Serbian borders was produced, from the very specific to the ethereally abstract, from the individual to the collective, from both the past and the present.

We counted all actors (n= 41) who were represented in the coverage as a »we« group. Specifically, in Table I, we introduce those actors, who appeared at least 20 times in all 78 news items (since some actors were rarely mentioned). A common characteristic here is that all the »we« social actors were positively represented, and were – except Karadžić – »collectivized« (Van Leeuwen, 1996: 50). This was accomplished not only through the use of the first person plural »we« (see example 9), but also through terms like »Serbia/Serbian nation« (see example 10), and »our nation« (see example 12). The »we« group discourse strategy attempts to assure that the positive image of Serbia/Serb prevails as homogeneous and consensual.

*Table I. Inclusion of social actors into »we«-group*

<b>Actor(s) of »we«-group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Serbia	221
(Radovan) Karadžić	202
Serbian nation	98
Serbian government	69
Serbian citizens	21

9. We, the Serbs, have now proven that we respect the international law. Serbian enemies cannot comprehend that the Serbs are successful in fulfilling the international requirements. (23 July 2006, TV News)
10. We have successfully proven to the International Community that the Serbian nation now meets all the criteria. The processes of modernization and Europeanization will follow. (22 July 2008, TV News)
11. Our strategy is to adopt a process of Europeanization and to preserve Serbian territorial integrity, including Kosovo as a part of Serbia. Our nation will defend Kosovo and will never allow Albanians to steal from us this Serbian cradle. (29 July 2006, TV News)
12. Velimir Ilić: Despite following the international orders and despite paying our dues, the EU and the Hague Tribunal treat Serbia unfairly, and this will also happen in the case of Karadžić. Do not have your hopes up. /.../ Tribunal is destroying Serbia. (30 July 2006, TV News)

Similarly, the »them« group was coded in a particular way. As Table II shows the words »Serbian enemies« were frequently used in order to construct an unspecified and anonymous group of »them«. Van Leeuwen (1996: 51) defines this act as an »indetermination.« In this case, it serves the purpose of inclusion of different social actors into a group of »Serbian enemies« and, consequently, the construction of a positive »we« group. In these binary oppositions, Serbia appears as a »stronger«, »better«, »more victorious«, »more successful«, i.e. a superior nation. It's clear here how nostalgia mobilizes unity, registers disappointment with the present by framing »Others« and positing alternative worlds that can exclude.

The »them« and the »Hague Tribunal« are constructed as the big »Other« and are both positioned as the main threats to the Serbian identity. They are both framed as destroyers of the Serbs. Additionally, the Kosovo Albanians continue to be the Serbian Other: they are represented as thieves, waiting to »steal« »the cradle of Serbia« (see example 11). They continue to be framed as eternal Serbian enemies (Popov, 2000) and the representation of Kosovo

as the »cradle of Serbia« continues to remain at the heart of the Serbian nationalistic imaginary (Erjavec and Volčič, 2009; Popov, 2000).

The Hague Tribunal becomes a Serbian »new« Other (see example 12) not only because of demands to arrest Karadžić and other military leaders, such as Mladić and Hadžić, but also because Milošević died there.

*Table II. Inclusion of social actors into »them«-group*

<b>Actor(s) of “them”-group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Serbian enemies	77
The Hague Tribunal	88
Kosovo Albanians	63
The European Union	59
International Community	20

The International community and the EU become relatively newly and differently represented social actors. In the coverage, the international community means different international organizations, such as UN, NATO, The Hague Tribunal and the European Union. International community and the EU in particular are depicted as not understanding the Serbs and as continuously blackmailing Serbia (for example, Karadžić is not enough – now Mladić and Hadžić are wanted, too). For the EU, a metaphor »Fortress Europe« is used, pointing to the restrictive laws, policies and practices resulting in the exclusion of non-citizens.

However, this representation is not exclusively negative, since Serbia wants to, at least on the surface, fulfil these requirements and offer full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal (Torov, 2008). The construction of Serbia’s superior status in relation to the International community and the EU is more implicit than it is in relation to the other actors, but is visible in TS’s statements of expectation – Serbia deserves to be rewarded by the EU (see examples 13).

13. The arrest of Karadžić means the fulfilment of all EU requirements; it means a ticket to enter the EU. They demanded that from us... and we fulfilled the obligations, since they told us we cannot even start a negotiation process. /.../ we gave them Karadžić, but now they want Mladić! The pressure from the EU is even stronger now. /.../ However, Serbia needs to be rewarded for Karadžić’s arrest. (23 July 2008, »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«)

Interestingly, the former Serbian enemies, Bosniaks, formerly one of the crucial social actors belonging to »them« group during the 1990s wars, were largely ignored during Karadžić’s arrest (see, for example, Erjavec and Volčič, 2007; MacDonald, 2002; Popov, 2000). Despite the fact that TS cites three different politicians from BH about Karadžić’s arrest, Bosni-

aks are not represented in any other context – neither as enemies, nor as victims. Perhaps this ignorance comes from the unwillingness to connect Karadžić and the Serbs with crimes committed in Bosnia.

Specifically, we also tried to find out *how* Karadžić is referred to in the news items. Naming and labelling of a politician is not only a descriptive usage of linguistic resources, but can be indicative of the social processes and practices embedded in the communicative situation regarding, for instance, the social and political position of this leader within society. The names used by the TS to refer to Karadžić are a case in point. For the analysis we counted all the words (n= 178) referring to Karadžić. Because there was a diversity of words, they are arranged into sub-sections, grouped in terms of semantic fields and presented according to their numerical presence.

*Table III. Lexicalization of Radovan Karadžić in the news items*

<b>Semantical field</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Karadžić's life as		103
Dragan Dabić		
	Alternative doctor/ doctor of alternative medicine	32
	Bio-therapist/energy-therapist	20
	Poet and a musician	19
	(Dr.) (Dragan) Dabić	10
	Friendly neighbour	9
	Bohemian	8
	Lawyer	5
The Hague Tribunal		22
	Most sought after fugitive	19
	Victim of The Hague Court/Tribunal	3
Nation/country		16
	Most Serbian Serb	7
	Strongest Serbian hero	6
	Hero of the heroes	3
Family relationships		16
	Brother	5
	Uncle	4
	Father	4
	Husband	3
Politics		15
	Successful/capable politician	8
	Leader of Bosnian Serbs	4
	Former president	3
Violent conflict		6
	War criminal	3
	Murderer	2
	European Osama bin laden	1

In TS's coverage, the emphasis is on the semantic field of Karadžić's life as Dragan Dabić. The use of words, such as »alternative doctor«, »bio-energetic«, »poet«, »musician«, »friendly neighbour«, and even »a lover« (see example 14), shows that TS attempted to explicitly position Karadžić as a nice, warm, friendly, emotional, loving, and intelligent man, who possesses some spiritual powers and cannot really be »a war criminal.«

14. Karadžić has been extremely intelligent and creative human. People perceived him as a bio-energetic, a therapist, a friendly neighbour, a poet and a musician. /.../ the editor of the newspaper *Healthy Life*, for which Karadžić contributed essays, claimed that he was bohemian. /.../ His colleagues say that he had a lover, a brunette called Mila. (23 July 2008, »Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality«)

On the other side, there are only three names referring negatively to Karadžić (»war criminal«, »murderer«, and »European Osama bin Laden«), published five times altogether. Because of journalistic attempts to present the coverage as »objective«, the news stories also had to include negative opinions from Western media and politicians (see example 15).

15. Richard Holbrooke declared: This is a historical day. A European Bin laden has finally been arrested. (22 July 2008, TV News)

TS covered predominately positive evaluations of Karadžić (for example, »the greatest Serbian hero«), as stated by Serbian nationalistic politicians:

16. Secretary General of Serbian Radical Party Aleksandar Vučić claimed: The Government arrested the greatest Serbian hero. (22 July 2008, TV News)

TS also positioned Karadžić within family relations, in order to portray him as a good husband, father, brother and uncle (see example 17).

17. Radovan was an exceptional uncle – says his nephew Dragan. (28 July 2008, TV News)

The analysis also reveals that TS covered Karadžić as a great politician. A statement from an »ordinary man« connotes that Karadžić is a good politician because he has gained territory for the Serbs. In the following report, similar implicit nostalgia for Greater Serbia can be detected:

18. Radovan Karadžić was an extremely capable politician, who really conquered more territory that historically belonged to the Serbs. Not like some other Serbian politicians. (22 July 2008, TV News)

### ***Discussion and Conclusion***

In this article, we attempted to explore how Karadžić's arrest was represented by TS's journalists. They still practice a so-called »nationalistic journalism«, which borrows its tactics from nationalistic ideology. Particular nostalgic sentiments were used, co-opted and appropriated by TS's journalists, in order to achieve political goal of channelling specific interpretations about the past and present. In that sense Svetlana Boym's insight that nostalgia is the "romance with one's own fantasy" (2001: xiii) is a very accurate description of the relationship between the nostalgic sentiment as employed by TS. We argue that TS' journalists used restorative nostalgia in ways that served both commercial and state interests, consolidating its place in an emerging synergy between government and market that we described, drawing on Žižek, as forming a military-poetic-media-entertainment complex. In TS's discourse, nostalgia for Greater Serbia was present amidst the evidence of crimes committed in its name. Moreover, Karadžić was portrayed as a leader who has at least partly realized Serbia's expansionist goals and made it possible for Serbs in BH to live together.

TS's journalists reproduced a specific type of nationalistic discourse – one which uses strategies of suppression of sensitive themes, including coverage of or reference to war crimes. Overall, TS glossed over contradictory elements that could compromise the ideal vision of Great Serbia. Nostalgic nationalism, as expressed in TS coverage of Karadžić's arrest requires some kind of a disappointment in order to re-create the idealized nostalgic construction of the past community it hopes to achieve in the future. This type of nostalgia functions as the search for continuity (Tannock, 1995). The renewed possibility of the future depends upon a strong narrative of return. TS's narrative articulates unity in terms of loss, by invoking nostalgia for a romanticized notion of Serbian unity in the past – a wholeness of community experience that has been eradicated by unjust external forces. Karadžić was predominately represented in a positive light: on the one hand, as a hero and a strong politician, and on the other, as a bio-energetic, a poet and a family man with a new identity. Any connections between Karadžić, the Serbs, and especially the current government with war crimes in BH were brushed aside. Thus, TS's journalists incorporated Karadžić's arrest into the predominant nationalistic discourse. They recontextualized pre-existing discourses to reproduce nationalism for a new, "pro-European" politics. They covered the "historical arrest" of Radovan Karadžić without serious attempt to confront the

traumatic past and reconcile with it. In that, nostalgia employed by TS's journalists exploited popular culture with its entailed "banalities" of everyday life.

## Notes

- [1] Serbian epics has always been a symbol of a national imagination (Čolović, 2002). Nationalist discourse wants to establish that a nation has always existed and in doing so often articulates and reinterpretes already existing discourses and other available cultural material, to convey a particular sense of belonging (ibid.).
- [2] Greater Serbia generally and in this paper specifically refers to the specific idea within *Serbian nationalism* – whose goal it is to unite all Serbs and Serbian lands in one state. Greater Serbia generally and in this paper specifically refers to the specific idea within *Serbian nationalism* – whose goal it is to unite all Serbs and Serbian lands in one state (MacDonald, 2002).
- [3] Serbian nationalists name the Muslims in former Yugoslavia »the Turks« (Erjavec and Volčič, 2007). In this example, Bosniaks are called »the Turks«.
- [4] Also in quantity terms, the largest number of news programs (more than half) has been devoted to the secret life of Radovan Karadžić as Dragan Dabić.

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