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## **RAPE AND THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL<sup>1</sup> SOLDIER**

The subject of this essay is collective rape during the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina. The aggressor's militant groups, fuelled by the idea of a "Greater Serbia" and the politics of ethnic cleansing described in the political programme of the SDS<sup>2</sup>, carried out the organized, collective rape of women of other nationalities in Bosnia and Hercegovina, in particular of Bosniaks.<sup>3</sup>

It is generally acknowledged that the crime of collective rape in Bosnia and Hercegovina was a carefully planned method of ethnic cleansing and a method of achieving war aims. Not only have historians, sociologists, politicians and journalists described it as such: for the first time, rape has been defined as a war crime in international law. In line with new legislation, the first war criminals to commit rape in Bosnia and Hercegovina have been put on trial in The Hague.

The violence committed against the women of Bosnia and Hercegovina was thus not the result of the accumulation and suppression of wild passions and instincts, nor did it spring from aggressive, destructive needs that often surface during the chaos of war; this violence was part of a political strategy, one of the means of waging war. In addition, it was used for the purification, defence and justification of the national identity of the nation in whose name it was committed. This violence is quite different in character and weight from the crime of rape when it is a violation of the norms of civilized society.

History has shown that in most wars, violence against women usually takes place on territories that have been captured or that are occupied. The function of torture of women who "belong" to the enemy is primarily humiliation of the enemy. At the same time, the demonstration of superiority over a woman's body is perceived as a manifestation of the soldierly qualities of strength, heroism, physical prowess and competitive spirit, even though in many cultures it is considered quite the opposite.<sup>4</sup> An act of rape in war, where it is not part of a war strategy, is usually the result of disorder and a lack of military discipline, or a breach in the relationship between subordinates and their superiors. Even when it occurs as the result of a lack of discipline, however, this behaviour is usually tolerated by the military structure, which tries to hide it without discussion, investigation or punishment. It is fair to say then that one of the darkest sides of many wars is violence against women. Rape is directly opposed to the basic military principles of honour, dignity and pride, which only permit violence against other armed soldiers.

Psychoanalysis would use Freud's interpretation of taboo to explain this violence: the idea that cannibalism, incest, and rape are the expression of primordial needs and instincts, which have been suppressed throughout the history of civilization. In extreme situations, such as war, the ties that keep the forbidden act bound up break, and these primordial instincts and passions, until then suppressed by laws and by the norms of civilized behaviour, come to the surface. In other words, the breaking of the chains of taboo is a return to primordial instincts and impulses buried deep in the human psyche, which have laid dormant, awaiting release. For something that has been suppressed and buried has by no means been definitively removed and destroyed. Clearly, war is a situation conducive to the resurfacing of these instincts and passions. From this perspective, violence against women can be explained

as a denial and rejection of the laws of civilized society which normally protect women. Women are the victims of blind human forces derived from primordial, elemental instincts that destroy and negate all cultural and civilized norms. The unleashing of these forces is a violation of law, a suspension of taboo, an offence.

However, the violence perpetrated in Bosnia and Hercegovina against women of other nationalities is an example of the use of violence to create a pure and unstained national identity and, based on this, a political strategy. This violence was not spontaneous. These were not isolated incidents resulting from the chaos of war, when all civilized norms and laws are breached. On the contrary, this violence was used to liberate a stranger within the soldier's self, and for the soldier to define himself in relation to that liberation and purification.<sup>5</sup> The violence was therefore not only a violation or suspension of the law: it actually became law, and it was used to profile and achieve national unity. As such, it was not a barbaric act outside all rational norms, but the result and expression of rational thought, a way of creating an awareness of community, collective solidarity, and national unification.

How could such an act, however collective and rational in nature, be used to create a national identity and to enable soldiers to identify with their own ethnic community? I will attempt to answer this question in the remainder of this essay.

### **The Transitive Female Body**

In an act of collective rape, the female body functions as a transitive body. It is not "used" in a natural way to unite, albeit violently, a male and a female body. On the contrary, it "serves" to connect one male body with another male body.<sup>6</sup> This means that in the act of violence it is not only her femininity, which until then has been

protected by the norms of civilized behaviour, that is taken away from the woman; the act also engages her ability to retain the experience of a soldier in her body. Despite its forceful nature, the act symbolizes the unification of the experiences of different soldiers. The woman's body, with its ability to retain the experience of penetration by a man, makes it possible for the movements and touches of a number of different soldier-bodies to connect and unite in a collective "embrace". In this way, a woman's body, like a country's flag, embraces every single person, bringing them closer together. In order to generate this very important feeling of collective participation, the rape must be collective. Such a feeling is an expression of collective actions through an explosion of violence, and it unifies the group. As Rene Girard<sup>7</sup> points out, in order to achieve unity, the group must identify a common victim. The woman-victim brings the group together, giving it a new feeling of unity.<sup>8</sup>

In his discussion of nationalism and sexuality, George Mosse considers the role and culture of the friendship<sup>9</sup> that developed between young German and English students, where a structure of association was based on the cult of male domination. He explains that the purpose of friendship is to unify male experiences at a higher level, based on reason, and to exclude women, who represent base instincts and shallow sentiments. Mosse likens the role of male collectivism to that of national symbols, which are meant to instil feelings superior to the pleasures of the flesh and the passions associated with women.

By using a woman's body as a conduit, the act of collective rape unifies male experience through passion. However, in this case, the body of a woman is not excluded as unreasonable or incapable of reasoning and conditioning itself according to reason. On the contrary, it serves as a bridge, a medium through which male domination is unified and one male body is connected to another.

Unlike the body that Mosse considers, whose main function is to represent the young, strong, clean body of a man in control of his instincts and his sexuality, the body of a woman who has been raped represents, in its sexuality, the power to unite one male body with another, as well as the ability to regenerate and renew a soldier's manly power. The process of collective rape imposes itself as a mechanism of collective initiation into a world where male power and force rule. The intention is not to harness base instincts and passions in the name of reason, or to control them in the name of some higher cause, such as a national cause, but to regenerate and renew the soldiers' masculinity. So it does not use the image of a male body beyond the pleasures of the flesh, above all the shallow and superficial impulses associated with women, but chooses to display male potency and sexual prowess through passion and the explosion of bodily instincts.

In many cultures, death is considered a symbolic, bodily and cosmic renewal, a form of regeneration. The rituals of death and sacrifice symbolize purification, regeneration and fertility.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in this initiation through the act of collective rape, the female body is used to regenerate, awaken and unite male powers. Indeed in many cultures woman is equated with danger, dirt, sin, and death, while man is equated with eternity, purity, permanence and justice.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the aim of collective rape, in addition to the regeneration of male sexuality, is for the female body to rid the male body of its "femininity", through negation of the other. In order for a national community to regenerate and liberate itself from everything that represents the threat of death, pollution, impermanence, and femininity, it is necessary to exclude women of other nationalities from the community through the act of rape, by doing so rendering the community strong, pure and eternal.

For nationalists, the symbol and perception of woman that Bloch discusses is reflected in their relationship with other nations. Another

nationality symbolizes danger, pollution, mortality and femininity, and so, by attacking women, they are projecting their feeling towards that other nationality. For nationalists, the body of a woman is a metaphor for a different, strange, other nation. When they choose to exclude the foreign nation, they do so in the name of male superiority and denounce female inferiority, which, I repeat, is a symbol of anything external, everything that comes from the outside and is related to another nation.

### **A Process of Collective Initiation**

In this way, a woman's body is used to confirm a man's masculinity and define him as a soldier, and penetration of a woman's body becomes a process of initiation. During this process it is not important whether contact with the woman's body is a personal experience. What matters is the ability to penetrate, the ability to forcefully possess another body, and, above all - the violence itself as a kind of collective orgy. A woman's body becomes the foundation for the creation of a man's body. So the act of collective rape does not negate the man-soldier figure. On the contrary, it is through such violence against women that the man-soldier figure is constructed. The act of violence is therefore not at odds with soldierly discipline: the collective rape not only creates the man-soldier figure for each individual soldier; by bringing them together in an act of violence, it also constitutes a relationship between them.

For the construction of the soldier-figure, it is important that the woman's body is made completely different to that of the man. Through the act of rape, her body must be dishonoured, humiliated and, in a symbolic way, polluted. The act of rape pollutes a woman's body, leaving an imprint on it as an object of violence, which accentuates its inferiority. On the other hand, pollution and purification during initiation are always related to the creation of a

new man.<sup>12</sup> In primitive cultures, for example, the aim of initiation is to create a new, mature member of the community. The boy who undergoes this dangerous rite of passage has to cleanse himself of the dirt of his childhood and immaturity in order to become a full member of the community. By liberating himself from the illusions of his youth, he is regenerated and recreated.

In order to recreate a national identity and renew its unity, a woman belonging to a different nationality must be polluted (especially if she is once believed to have held the same national identity and then abandoned it). Only when she has been dishonoured and humiliated will she represent the dirt that must be removed from the national body. Only through such a process of purification can one's own national body be recreated. And while the process of initiation is a ritual developed through tradition and repeated many times to create a new, mature member of the community, the act of collective rape is a ritual which aims to create tradition itself, to create a collective identity, a collective image of self which will make the nation stronger and more mature. The act creates an individual with a new feeling of belonging. So the primary objective of collective rape is the creation of a national community, a collective identity. The aim is to wake the national community from a long sleep, to set a new course for it and enforce a feeling of unity and reunification. This process changes the identities of individuals, the individual perspective of each soldier, and, finally, his attitude towards women.

The creation of this collective identity is without question based on the male principle that of strength and a nation's power, as opposed to the excluded female principle, based on the images of pollution, mortality and change. One's own must be strong, united and pure, cleansed of all traces of the female principle. The aim is not to control the inferior female principle, but to remove it altogether. This translates into the need to permanently exclude all

cultural influences of the foreign nation, to destroy all traces of the foreign nation within one's self, so that one's own nation can regenerate and unite.

### **The Phallus-Gun - the Desire to Possess Another Person**

The act of penetrating a female body can be compared to the relationship between a soldier and his gun. The penetrating phallus is an obvious metaphor for a bullet entering human flesh.<sup>13</sup> Like the penetrating phallus, behind every bullet fired at another man is the desire to penetrate the body of another, to master it and take it over. The very sound of a bullet signifies this desire. A bullet is therefore not only a negation, a means of destroying another person and his body. Penetration of the bullet also liberates the desire to possess another person, to occupy his insides.

On the other hand, firing a bullet at the body of an enemy reveals the need to internalize someone else's body. When the phallus-gun enters the body of an enemy via a bullet, it both takes ownership of that body and confiscates it, as in cannibalistic rituals in which the enemy's body is sacrificed. The act of sacrifice involves not only the destruction and negation of the enemy's body through consumption; it also symbolizes the internalization of the enemy's soul: the image of the enemy will be preserved in the group that performs the ritual. In this way, the enemy continues to exist not as an opponent, a member of a different tribe, or some foreign body, but as a member of the community that has eaten him. He becomes a member of the ethnic community that carried out the ritual of his sacrifice.

In literature, the relationship between a man and a woman is often represented by figures of cannibalism. In order to possess and keep the loved one and fully possess the body of the beloved, that

body must be eaten and internalized. Only then will it become eternal, and the love everlasting. This quest for complete union with another body, the desire to reach inside another person, is the idea of absolute love. One cannot only love the looks, the body or the surface of the skin of the loved one; one must penetrate the very centre of the body, every heartbeat, down to the tiniest pulsation of every organ. On the other hand, as Bataille reminds us, like the act of sacrifice, an erotic desire is the ambition to move from fragmented, non-continuous isolation to continuity, to merge and achieve endless unity.<sup>14</sup> For Bataille, death through sacrifice and an erotic act are linked: both take a man out of his fragmented, non-continuous isolation into endlessness, continuity and unity. He observes that as a human sacrifice, every organ speaks with uncontrollable strength. There is a free polyphony of body, which is not determined by a dictatorship of prohibitions and laws. Similarly, an individual, in the act of making love, leaves his or her fragmented isolation and, during union with another body, there is a free flow of uncontrolled energy and his or her bodily instincts achieve unlimited freedom.

Aside from the free expression of physical passion in which erotic passion is linked to passion for death, there is also the process of internalization, which Bataille pays little attention to. Individual organs do not 'kiss' other organs simply in order to achieve liberation from inhibition, and cannibalistic rituals are not performed merely to release a flash of uninhibited individual force from severed human organs: the process is an expression of the desire to possess another person, the desire to internalize another person, to drag him into oneself.

So cannibalism also involves the wish to possess, to internalize, the same feeling that the soldier has when firing a bullet at another body. By shooting at another body, the soldier aims to transform and internalize that body and assimilate it. In other words, a body

that has been hit by a bullet belongs to the body that has shot it. It is no longer the body of an enemy but now, transformed, becomes part of the identity of the shooter. The urge to consume or to shoot an enemy is also conditioned by fear of the unknown, the different, of all that comes across as intimidating. So the aim is to transform anything that is unknown or different and that belongs to a different ethnic group into something familiar, identical, recognizable, and close, and to make it part of one's own identity. The body that has been eaten or killed is incorporated into one's own ethnic community. Both the act of cannibalism and that of shooting an enemy aim to diminish the fear of the unknown and the different, and to overcome that fear by transforming the victim.

### **Multiethnic Marriages as "Errors of History"**

In the context of these observations, the collective rape of women in Bosnia and Hercegovina is in many ways unique. First, the history of Bosnia and Hercegovina shows that it is incorrect to talk of stark cultural differences between the perpetrators of the rape and their victims. The victims of the rape did not come from some distant, far-away land. Their customs and culture were not wildly different from those of the perpetrators of the crime. On the contrary, they lived in the same country as the men who raped them, they shared almost exactly the same language, in most cases their traditional way of dressing was very similar, and, most importantly, they shared the same everyday existence. Moreover, the fact that the three ethnic groups held different religious beliefs had never prevented them from mixing cultures, something which directly affected the way of life, so that for example, there were many mixed marriages.<sup>15</sup>

So the soldiers who took part in acts of collective rape did not identify their victims as members of a foreign culture quite differ-

ent from their own. Nor were the victims of the crime demonstrative about the fact that they belonged to another culture. Fear of the unknown as a potential motive for this crime can therefore certainly be ruled out. The criminals knew their victims only too well: in Bosnia and Hercegovina the boundaries between people of different cultures were never rigid, which ensured that no one cultural identity could isolate itself from its surroundings, however much it might have liked to. No hard and fast boundaries existed between the Serbs, the Croats and the Bosniaks.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, neither fear of danger, nor the chaos of war can be taken as justification or even as motivation for this crime. When the war, or better, the aggression, on internationally recognized Bosnia and Hercegovina began, and paramilitary units acting under the umbrella of the YNA (Yugoslav National Army) committed the first rapes of Bosniak women, there was no war chaos and none of the panic usual in situations of war, nor was there later on. In a classic war situation there are two sides, both of which are armed, and both of which have strategies of attack and defence, and clear war objectives. In the Bosnian war, the side that was attacked - the internationally-recognized multiethnic Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the citizens who defended its status - was not only unprepared in terms of lacking sufficient weapons to defend itself against attack by the YNA and paramilitary forces from Serbia<sup>17</sup> and Bosnia and Hercegovina, organized by the SDS and its leader Radovan Karadžić,<sup>18</sup> but it was also given no opportunity to prepare for the attack.<sup>19</sup> It was certainly not war chaos or fear in the face of danger, then, that united the aggressors as a group and that was the motivation for collective rape. On the contrary, violence against women was at the very core of the strategy for the attack on Bosnia and Hercegovina. It was planned as part of that strategy and carried out as an organized crime which the paramilitary forces of Radovan Karadžić used to express and strengthen

their ideology. This brings me back to the fundamental question: what was the basis of an ideology that made collective rape an integral part of its strategy, and whose adherents organized and committed such rape?

The motivation of the aggressors was not to negate another ethnic group because of unbridgeable differences and cultural opposites. The intention behind this ideology was to create differences where they did not exist, and to make existing differences bigger, in order to give the impression that the purpose of the rape was not to internalize a victim's body and make it part of the national body that committed the crime. The differences were forcefully imprinted on a woman's body: through violence, the aggressors produced a body that was quite different from the body of their own national identity. The function of the violence was to produce differences, therefore, to create a single coding system, accredited by a phallus, and to separate one culture from another on the basis of hierarchical values, by naming and coding everything foreign.

In this way, the body of a woman represents the violent drawing of boundaries between the two cultures. Rape is used to question or even to put an end to multiethnic life, which does not acknowledge strict separation between one culture and another. The ideology behind the strategy of collective rape is the creation of cultural differences in order to lock each culture into separate identities, just as male bodies, in the act of collective rape, become locked inside themselves. An immediate consequence of that "locking in" is that the concept of mixed marriages, renounced by the same ideology as "mistakes of the history", is called into question.

There has always been, and there still is, a large number of mixed marriages in Bosnia and Hercegovina. The nationalist ideology declared them dangerous for the health and purity of the nation. By declaring multiethnic marriages to be dangerous, and referring

to them as "mistakes of history", the ethno-nationalists aimed to inhibit sexual freedom, which is itself based on cultural interchange and the concept of mixing different nations. And since mixed marriages had been one of the most important features of life in Bosnia and Hercegovina, the aim of collective rape was to make clear that one's own people had to be cleansed of all traces of impurity, rid of all cultural mix, through the strengthening of old and the creation of new differences between the different ethnic groups, and the creation of a new coding system. Only once all traces of intermingling had been erased, would it be possible to return to a pure national unity based on the principles of one people, one religion, one territory, one language, i.e. a unity free of all influences from other nations and cultures, especially those "inferior" cultures that most endanger the superior one.<sup>20</sup>

As I have said, there are two aspects to this process of purification. On the one hand, it creates a new body, a body that has experienced initiation and becomes, to paraphrase Mary Douglas, a new national man. On the other hand, the process reflects a return to a primordial, clean, innocent national body, which is not subject to the influence of the foreign, the unknown, or anything that might affect its initial state of cleanliness. The idea is to awaken a sleeping national unity from its slumber, so that it can return and become one with its lost unity.

Under Fascism, when racial legislation was enforced, multiethnic marriages were also attacked in the name of the protection of the purity of a race. But whatever the Third Reich defined as "impure" or a "mistake of history", was considered historical waste, dirt that could only pollute the purity of national unity, and it was removed and destroyed in the concentration camps and gas chambers. It was thus not necessary for the "pure" race - the perpetrators of the crime - to define itself through the collective rape of women of "inferior" races. According to its racial theory, a woman from a lower,

impure race was considered infectious; she was too unclean to touch, let alone to have sexual intercourse with.<sup>21</sup> The body of a Jewish or a Gypsy woman, for example, was considered so impure that it could only be "purified" in a gas chamber.<sup>22</sup> It was very important for the fascist project, that Germans should only have sexual intercourse with members of their own race, so that they produced pure-blooded offspring. The victims of this project were often German mothers who gave birth to weak children, often with some disability, children who were then killed in the name of the racist ideology of the Third Reich.

### **The Function and Preservation of Violence**

In many communities, there is an uneasy attitude towards menstrual blood<sup>23</sup>, the only internal bleeding with a natural outlet. It symbolizes danger because it flows from the very centre of a woman's sexual and social identity<sup>24</sup>, and blood calls for blood: it causes social unrest. For this reason, the Nazi regime did not choose some bloody and spectacularly violent means of execution. The extermination that took place in concentration camps was the product of rational thought. The method of extermination meant that the killing became an automatic, administrative action, and that to work in the camps was like working in a factory, much like the one in Chaplin's 'Modern Times'. Moreover, during the execution, the executioner felt, as Theodore W. Adorno<sup>25</sup> says, bored and tired: the death of another man was no more than a technical problem for him, an obligation, and a task that tired him out. The violence was thus systemized and the administrative details were carefully planned. There were laws and regulations which set up a system of continuous violence and established a rhythm into which it was difficult to introduce change.



Such rational systemization ensured that the violence could not be disrupted in a moment of passion or on impulse, but that it would continue. The executioner became a person who merely followed instructions; mass killing became the product of the modern administrative obedience and bureaucratic functionalism that the Polish anthropologist Zygmunt Bauman<sup>26</sup> speaks of. This is why it was possible for the perpetrators of mass killings to be good husbands, law-abiding citizens, and caring fathers who eagerly carried out their family duties outside the concentration camps. In short, to paraphrase Hannah Arendt, they had the small minds of mere bureaucrats.

In Bosnia and Hercegovina, however, the function of the bloodshed that took place with the rape and torture of prisoners in concentration camps such as Manjača, Omarska, and Keraterm, causing social unrest and conflict, was to construct a new ideology. The purpose of the bloodshed was to create something new, to initiate the renewal of a nation. In other words, rape was carried out not to cleanse the nation, but in the name of change, in the name of creating a new national identity, a new national unity. The fear that the blood of women might cause social unrest and disorder within the army, or destabilize national politics, was suppressed. The blood of women was used to produce new national symbols, to create new divisions between men and women, between one nationality and another, and to create a new language of national unity.

The question remains: how could the language of Serbian nationalism, which advocates the purity of its own nation, condone and even promote a strategy of ethnic cleansing and the rape of women who in that same language were considered impure and polluted?<sup>27</sup> Part of the answer undoubtedly lays in the fact that rape produces women who, although already polluted, are dishonoured and polluted further still and who, as such, become even further removed from

the pure nation. As the source of pollution, they must be rejected completely. The process of rejection and sanitization leads to the recreation and reunification of the national identity. In this way, rape creates an ideology; the ideology is constituted and recreated through violence and a new self-image is formed.<sup>28</sup> In addition, violence and collective rape produce divisions and put an end to multiethnic life. The logic behind bloodshed is that it will produce unrest: it produces women who are impure in order to create new relations between nationalities. Through bloodshed new social relations are established and a new national man is produced, a man who, by taking on the role of warrior, embodies the individual and the common national experience.

### **The Mother Nation**

Another particularly interesting relationship created by the nation-warrior through the rape, negation and humiliation of the body of the woman of a different nationality is the following: the nation-warrior carries out the act of rape in the name of another woman's body, symbolized by the motherland, in other words, the mother nation as the "imagined community"<sup>29</sup> from which everything originates. To determine who he is, he must exclude the body of a woman of a different nationality in the name of another woman's body - the woman who represents omnipotence, who gives birth to everything and is the source of everything.<sup>30</sup> In this way, the return to the motherland and to one's spiritual roots is a return to the universal principle of creation, from which the very essence of man is born. A man's essence is in his national essence which contains the theological and biological code for his creation, and which turns the above-empirical non-determinism of Kant's moral law into a tangible collective spirit, not conditioned by external influences, and made manifest in national freedom.

In the view of nationalists, national freedom is not subject to any kind of historical determinism. On the contrary, it is national freedom that shapes history and gives it direction. At the same time, the laws of evolution are apparent in the laws of national freedom, the laws that make one nation superior to others. Very often, the concept of a national spirit coincides with the concepts of vitality, sustainability and strength in relation to outside dangers.

With its aim of uniting history and transcendence, nationalism proclaims the elements of its ideology to be universal, eternal and self-explanatory. It is one's national essence that pushes one to carry out a moral action, to achieve a moral unity that originates in the motherland and the mythology of the land. In many national mythologies, land is the source of self-determination, which shapes the national identity, especially when that land is a "promised land", "the land of ancestors," "the land we live on". Land has one other important characteristic: it represents a mythological connection between the motherland and Fate. According to national mythology, the memory of a nation and its historical destiny are written in the soil of the motherland. A nation's past and present are connected through the soil. By nurturing a nation's history within herself, the motherland provides unity, and protects the nation from the foreign and the unknown. It also proclaims a mythological unity in which there is no difference between the past and the present, between ancestors and their sons, between the individual and the collective destiny.<sup>31</sup>

In his discussion of Fascism, Wilhelm Reich suggests that the fascist national ideology encapsulated a frustrated sexual desire which had been transformed into the collective need for a pure mother, a motherland. The collective desire to return to the motherland is a frustrated desire. It has not been released through orgasm, and thus, inventing the myth of return to the motherland, it reprimands and negates itself. That is why Fascism, by inventing

the myth of a pure, healthy body, failed to free the body. In fact, by denying a body release through orgasm, Fascism reprimanded and negated the body further still. The perfection manifest in the body of the winner, the body of the athlete, and the body that conquers mountain peaks, and all the logic of vitality present in the Nazi ideology and so obvious, for example, in the films of Leni Riefenstahl, are a mechanism that leads to the frustration and negation of the body. There is no doubt, therefore, that one reason for the immense cruelty of the Nazi ideology is the morbid cult of the motherland that Nazism nurtured, which utterly negated sexuality and the body.

On the other hand, the nationalist ideology's myth of return to the motherland often contradicts another principle, that of self-determination. A key tenet of nationalism is that every nation should choose itself through a process of self-determination and must achieve independence and autonomy in order to decide on itself. Kant was one of the first to point out the importance of coming out of adolescence: in order to be able to reason publicly and freely, each person must have the courage to leave his adolescence behind him.<sup>32</sup> His view was that each individual must be autonomous and independent in order to be able to choose him or herself freely, without external influences. Fichte later transformed this idea and translated individual autonomy into collective national autonomy, that is, an autonomy that must condition and determine itself.<sup>33</sup>

In order for an individual to be autonomous and independent, he must be free from any parental influences that might limit his freedom. The role of a mother is to exert parental influence. Admittedly, a mother lacks the authority of the father figure represented by the symbol of the monarch, the king who forbids, negates, and punishes all thought of independence or self-determination. The tutelage and power of a mother are made manifest in her care for her chil-

dren and in her motherly love, which is so strong that her sons do not even love themselves as much as their mother loves them.

Motherly love is so intense that a son cannot even fully comprehend it: such love is above his head. In its excessiveness it is also found in national symbols, insignia, flags and military rituals. Motherly love radiates from the strong colours of the flag and the anthem-like tunes of patriotic songs. It is capable of gathering everything into its embrace, an embrace which is a nest of closeness and understanding, an understanding that is even greater than a son's understanding of himself. The mother watches over and protects her children more intensively than they could ever watch over and protect themselves. Sons, moved by the colours of the flag, feel loved by that flag and every one of its colours. This is not a question of them projecting their own love onto the flag: they genuinely feel loved and embraced by the flag they see before them.

So a mother's love and her all-inclusive embrace diminish her sons' independence and autonomy. Although she does not do this in a rough or cruel way, as a fatherly-kingly law might, she nevertheless penetrates her children with her love and care. She gets under their skin, controlling and supervising them almost imperceptibly, and by doing so, denying them the possibility of choosing themselves. There is an interesting paradox here: rape, the aim of which is to confirm a man's maturity, at the same time denies that maturity. For the very ritual of a soldier's initiation, by which he is to prove that he is independent, fit to wear a uniform and defend it in the name of the cult of the mother, at the same time reveals his lack of independence, his immaturity, incompleteness, and childishness. By devoting himself to his mother, he is also giving her his immaturity, his dependence and childishness.

On the other hand, the very act of collective rape, carried out in the name of the cult of the motherland, made soldiers feel they were nothing but cowards. By doing something quite opposed to their military values, they discovered that they were not in the least bit brave, that they were not heroes, nor were they able to determine themselves as men. Carried away by the Nietzschean herd instinct, they gambled and lost their individuality, freeing themselves for good from all the values and ideals of military manhood, heroism and pride. They had revealed their true selves.

Even when they were purifying their own bodies, cleansing themselves of those other bodies, when they were removing them in the name of the return to the cult of the mother and confirming their manly values, or when they were attempting to renew and regenerate their manhood, they were in fact only demonstrating their lack of manly pride, showing that there was nothing heroic about them at all. Their intention to free themselves from themselves and their own preconceptions of what a man should be, through this crime carried out in the name of the cult of the mother, was sheer cowardice. By revealing their true selves in this way, they demonstrated that they were not heroes at all, that they had none of the national pride they spoke about so much; they had no concept of national unity and were unable to make decisions for themselves in a manly way.

For this reason their crime had to be anonymous, performed in a group in which they could hide their individual selves. Whereas heroism involves putting oneself in danger, this crime, which hid the perpetrator in a motherly embrace, was performed with no danger or threat to the perpetrator. To demonstrate military pride or heroism, a man must confront his enemy openly so that he can prove his superiority and humiliate him. However, there was nothing heroic about this crime, hidden in anonymity, in a motherly national embrace, and carried out against someone who was unarmed and

powerless. It lacked all trace of military dignity and pride. It thus becomes apparent that the return to the motherland is actually an escape from the self, an escape from the desire to commit a crime, which one hides not only from those around one, but also from oneself.

### **Inclusion-Exclusion as the Principle of Negation**

The principles of exclusion and inclusion - the exclusion of a woman's body, and its absolute inclusion, - destroy the female principle in the man in almost exactly the same way. Soldiers who excluded a woman's body through rape not only excluded a woman of another nationality from their immediate surroundings in the name of the motherland, they also killed the female principle in themselves. As Deleuze puts it, desire is multiplicity, which through every fold, construct and bend, connects the male and female principles, and which, by creating an "organless body", represents creativity. Creativity and the creative impulse are therefore only possible where desire is multiplicity, and where the male principle does not exclude the female one and vice versa. That is why, in Deleuze's view, the process of writing, or the creative process, is a constant "coexistence" with a woman, a child, an animal, a man: it is a never-ending process. A mature, independent individual harmonises both the female and the male principles within him or herself.

The exclusion or inclusion of the female principle, however, equally negates the multiplicity of a desire where the male principle freely addresses the female principle, and vice versa. Therefore one cannot say that in the soldier it is only through the exclusion of the female body that has been raped that the female principle is negated, above all because the principle of inclusion - especially in the symbol of the motherland - also negates the soldier's female

part; in fact it negates free communication and correspondence between female and male parts, which only together can create an autonomous individual.

According to this pattern, the relationship between the motherland and a woman of a different ethnic background can be explained as the relationship between a mother who represents something pure, sacred, and esteemed, and the woman who uses her charm and seductiveness to steal away the mother's child. The purity of the motherland is absolute: she gives her child absolute love. For the young girl who tries to steal away the body of the mother's child, the mother's love is untouchable. True, the son feels desire towards the young girl but at the same time he is aware that his desire is a sin through which he abandons and betrays his mother. But the guilt of betrayal is not his. The guilt is in the beauty of the young girl and her conspiracy to steal the child away from his mother. In that horrible moment of doubt, the son negates the body of the woman, that is, the female principle within himself. He excludes it from himself and returns to his mother's embrace. The relationship between nationalism and any form of multiethnic lifestyle works in the same way. To communicate and mix with another nationality, to open up to women of other nations, means to betray the love of the motherland that gave birth to you. Those other women will always try to steal something from you, from the excess of your mother's love.

One further contrast is worthy of note when considering the concepts of inclusion-exclusion of the female principle in the national soldier. Namely, the physical relationship a national soldier has with a woman of a different nationality in the act of rape is an example of exclusion, whereas the return to the motherland, a fantasy that the soldier creates in his mind, is an example of inclusion. That fantasy takes on a reality of its own, especially when people are killed for it, or when soldiers are sent to war to protect the glory and

pride of their motherland with their lives. The deaths of her son-soldiers actually strengthen the motherland's love for them. Through death, they return to her lap where she will save and keep them forever, embrace them in their eternity and preserve them in their glory.

One other aspect of the relationship with the motherland should be noted: those who commit crime in the name of the motherland are absolved of all guilt. In other words, to commit any act in the name of the motherland is to remain forever innocent with regard to one's own actions, like a child who cannot be held responsible for its actions. This is why the perpetrators of the crime of rape do not even attempt to confront their crime. When they talk about it, if they talk about it at all, they talk as if it does not concern them, or imply that they were manipulated by someone else and talked into committing the crime. Sometimes they even claim that the victim herself seduced them and deceived them. According to the conspiracy theory they hide behind, they are not criminals, but the victims of someone else's machinations. In reality, they are cowards unable to face up to their own crime.<sup>34</sup>

## **The Invention of Patriarchal Culture**

The paradoxical relationship between the body of the woman and the body of the mother, portrayed in the hierarchical system of binary opposites - inclusion/exclusion, maturity/immaturity, real body/fantasy body - with all the inherent divisions, destroys the female principle within one's own nation in order to produce a national war hero who embodies the strength and courage of the nation, and who gives the impression that he is able to decide by himself in a manly way. Elements of a traditional, patriarchal culture, a culture based on the predominance of a male, phallus-centred principle, are present in the concept of the national soldier.

Traditional patriarchal culture is marked by male domination in nearly all structures of social relationships. In such a culture, only mature males are in a position to take decisions for the benefit of the family or society.

The relationship described above between the symbolic representation of the sacred, pure woman-mother, and the immoral, impure woman-girl, destined to steal children away from their mother, matches the stereotypical differentiation in patriarchal cultures between woman the mother and woman the prostitute. In patriarchal cultures, a woman is either a mother or a prostitute. Her sexuality is diminished in order to preserve the family, reserved for biological reproduction. Outside of that, a woman's sexuality is an offence, and is seen as prostitution or a sign of carelessness towards her own body. The mother's sexuality is tied to the concept of private life. Its function is to maintain the identity of the household, whereas the sexuality of a free woman, whom patriarchal society views as a prostitute, is connected with public life and her externalization. By labelling all manifestations of sexuality outside the home as prostitution, patriarchal culture aims to deny a woman's right to take a man's place in society. Only men are permitted to enter public life. Only they can participate in making decisions and finding solutions for the problems of the community. By labelling a woman a whore or a prostitute, men are trying to prevent her from committing the offence of sneaking into public life. Since a woman's sexuality is determined by her private life, all paths that take her away from the hearth and the home are closed to her. In this way she is excluded from all decisions of common interest: the decision-making is left entirely to the male authority.

Collective rape takes a woman's private sexual status, the status she has in a patriarchal culture, and brings it into public view and, by doing so, compromises her role of bearer of the identity of the home. The insistence on making her sexuality public, on making

her available to the collective, has the function of excluding her from the family context, a context that protects her and assures her particular, still important, position in the patriarchal structure's world order. Collective rape transforms a woman into a prostitute and makes it impossible for her to retain her position in the sphere of family life. She loses her value and is excluded from the community she belongs to.

A patriarchal culture exercises power over another culture by symbolically proclaiming the other culture to be impotent, undeveloped and incapable of existing independently. The other culture is represented as an object only capable of suffering violence. In other words, the other ethnic community is "feminine" because it does not demonstrate the independence to be able to make decisions for itself. It is inferior because it is dependent and as such it is the object of violence.<sup>35</sup> The inferiority of one national community and the superiority of another and its culture are projected onto the body of the woman who has been raped. The violence done to a woman's body is used to prove the importance, power and value of a particular national culture. But rape, as a method of proving nationalist values, is not just a demonstration of superiority over another nation, with the aim of excluding that nation and cleansing oneself of all traces of it. The act of rape also causes the woman's exclusion from her own national community. For a woman who has been raped has been dishonoured, according to the patriarchal value system. From the moment she becomes a victim of the violence, she carries something shameful and humiliating inside her, something that has proven her physical impotence, and contaminated and ashamed, she is excluded from her own community.<sup>36</sup> The victims of such violence also have to face the problem of articulating their suffering. The public context is patriarchal, and is structured so that it is primarily men who have the opportunity to express themselves. That is why the victims of

such violence talk about their suffering - if they talk at all - in a broken and inarticulate manner, full of pauses, sighs, tears, murmuring, silences, and gestures...<sup>37</sup>

The fact that the rape, although opposed to the values of patriarchal culture, as I have established, was nevertheless carried out in the name of that culture, should not be overlooked. The nationalism that took root in Yugoslavia at the end of eighties and the beginning of the nineties, called for a return to the original values of patriarchal culture, values which the hierarchical structure of male authority claimed were long lost. It was therefore necessary for each nation to re-establish those values. However, The call for a return to the original values of patriarchal culture, however, did not result in the restoration and renewal of what had been lost and forgotten, but in a new patriarchal culture that Hobsbawm calls an "imaginary patriarchy," an invented tradition.<sup>38</sup> The call for a return to original traditional values, so loudly announced, in fact heralded their deepest crisis, just as the demand for the re-establishment of allegedly lost male domination was part of that same, insoluble crisis. Even the crime of rape, committed in the name of the restoration of a patriarchal male culture, is basically none other than a drastic demonstration of the values of that culture. A patriarchal male culture really is oppressive for the female body. It negates its independence, but at the same time it has no real need to prove its power and superiority over that body through the act of rape. Rather, it is more likely that those who commit such a crime merely invent arguments claiming that their manliness is in crisis, and more than that, that their connection with tradition is in crisis.

The expectation that the soldiers' manliness will be restored, that forgotten traditions will be renewed and the soldiers' crisis will come to an end if they exclude a woman, another nation, by raping her, is not only disappointed, but quite the opposite is achieved. Instead, reality clearly confirms that both their traditions

and their manliness have been lost for good. Their crisis deepens further. For no tradition has been rediscovered through the act of rape, no new man produced, or former man renewed. All that has been achieved is that criminals have been produced who committed their crime in a cowardly manner - in a collective, as a group. The abstract idea of a national goal merely served to enable the individual to blend in, to hide his individual crime in the collective anonymity of group action. Not only is collective rape not an expression of male power, it is also the most obvious demonstration of men's inability to make decisions in a manly way and to confidently control their sexuality. A "manly" decision process involves an independent decision, even if this means the decision to commit a crime, and not a decision hidden behind the collective will, sheltered in anonymity.

### **Strangers at Close Quarters**

Earlier I stated that the aim of collective rape was to produce pronounced differences between the internal and the external, the pure and the impure, the familiar and the foreign, and to equate woman with the external, the impure, the unfamiliar, characteristics usually attributed to a foreign nation, in order to exclude her. But, as Ulrich Bielefeld<sup>39</sup> points out, every stranger, when deprived of his identity, is bound to retain something of the familiar. The image of a stranger is both fiction and reality, which means that in every new image of the stranger, it is hard to draw a line between foreignness and ownness because a part of one's own identity is present in all that is perceived as foreign. In the image of a stranger we see an image of ourselves as something foreign, something unknown. This is similar to the inverted narcissistic reflection where, when we want to make something appear foreign, we see our own reflection as foreign and unfamiliar. Similar-

ly, when we speak about a stranger, more often than not we are speaking about ourselves, about our vision of the stranger, our vision of what is foreign, and not about the actual characteristics of a separate person. In the same way, as Fanon points out,<sup>40</sup> the vision of the colonial world represented the suppressed alter ego of the white man. For a racist, a black man really does represent danger, violence, and elementary cruelty, yet these are all phobias and projections of feelings that the white man carries within himself. The black mask is actually a truthful reflection of what hides beneath a white skin and of what the white man sees as opposed to himself and his own identity.

The perpetrators of collective rape in Bosnia and Hercegovina, acting in the name of a Greater Serbia, used rape to exclude a woman from her surroundings and turn her into a stranger. At the same time, they left an imprint of something familiar and recognizable on her body. Many testimonies of Bosniak women<sup>41</sup> who were raped confirm that the perpetrators referred to the act of violence as the women's new baptism and as their return to the true faith, to the Serbian nation and the holy Serbian brotherhood. The women also recounted how the perpetrators of rape addressed them as "Turks" and said this was their revenge for what happened in Kosovo, etc.

This act of violence, however, proves in fact that it is impossible to "baptise", adapt, and internalize another nation in order to make it one's own. Had they truly wanted to convert Bosniak women, the aggressors surely would not have used rape to convert them or to bring them back to "the true faith". Persuasion and propaganda are undoubtedly more efficient ways of doing this. The use of violence demonstrates that the aim of Serbian nationalism was not to convert Bosniaks, but to humiliate them and contaminate them through violence and bloodshed. Bosniaks were turned into Serbs

by being made to carry Serbian humiliation inside them: they were transformed into recognizable strangers.

A Bosniak could never be a complete stranger - with independent characteristics, completely separate from and different to those of the Serbian nationalist, since if he possesses something completely different and separate, he becomes unrecognizable and cannot be associated with the familiar: he is utterly estranged. Serbian ethno-nationalism did not require Bosniaks to become absolute strangers and absolutely different. It required a recognizable stranger, a stranger who had some similarities, just enough to make him a stranger. To put it simply, it is impossible to conceive of separation, fragmentation and polarization without an element of similarity, without some unifying feature. By leaving their seed in a Bosniak body, the aggressors created a body which was different, but which at the same time had a unifying mark. As such, that body had to be rejected and removed. And the body that bears the marks of rejection is conditioned by that rejection. In this case, it bears something similar, something Serbian - Serbian humiliation or contamination, committed in the name of the creation of an ethnically pure Serbian state.

Similarly, Serbian nationalism aims to demonstrate that the Bosniak nation is problematic, inferior and immature, like a woman, and that it does not have the manly strength necessary for decision-making and self-determination. A similar separation of nations on a male-female basis was nurtured by the colonialists, who saw the "primitive tribes" of their colonies, as an immature, undeveloped conscience, which, by remaining at the level of a child's or a woman's mind, was incapable of taking decisions. The tribes were unable to take care of themselves and their community.

However, the violence committed in Bosnia and Hercegovina is different from colonial violence, primarily in that the aim of this vio-

lence was not to conquer and rule an inferior foreign nation or to take decisions on its behalf and control its destiny, to govern it and impose a social structure. On the contrary, the purpose of this violence was to make another nation inferior, to remove it from within oneself, to exclude it and proclaim it incapable of recreating itself. The excluded nation is present within the nation that excluded it only once it has been removed and excommunicated. At the same time, it is present because the humiliation and the violence become part of its own national identity: Bosniaks are in fact Serbs because they carry Serbian humiliation inside them.

### **The Bosniak Male Body**

The act of collective rape creates a group spirit and brings about the unification of a group or nation, as discussed earlier. Therefore it is not so much the female body itself that is important here, as its function as a bridge between one male body and another, creating a feeling of 'brotherhood and unity' among the soldiers.

In the act of collective rape, the female body also serves as a conduit from the aggressor to a foreign male body. In other words, a female body is used indirectly to reach a Bosniak male body. The aim is not to achieve unity with the Bosniak male body as with a female body, nor to unite all three in a single national embrace, but to humiliate and degrade that body as one incapable of protecting his wife, mother or sister. The violated body of a Bosniak woman is used as a conduit to a Bosniak male body in order to emphasize its impotence and incapability. At the same time, the very mechanism that excludes the man, proclaiming him powerless and incapable, includes him in a certain way. This is because, symbolically, a woman also represents possible "possession" by a man. It is this notion that she may belong to someone else that is important to the perpetrator of rape, primarily because, if that is



the case, the rape humiliates and negates the man she belongs to, and demonstrates that he is incapable. According to the Serbian mythical concept, the Bosniak-Muslim is the brother who has betrayed the Serb. He converted to another religion, Islam, and renounced his origins. Through punishment, the sinful brother is brought back to the fold. In this sense, the rape of Bosniak women had a dual role: it was used to punish and humiliate a brother, and then, through his suffering for his sins, to return him to his motherland. Therefore, when a Bosniak man is excluded and negated through the rape of his wife, the idea is that through such punishment and humiliation he regains his "original" national identity.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Mother Bosniak**

Undoubtedly the most horrifying aspect of the collective rape that took place in Bosnia and Hercegovina as part of the global strategy of ethnic cleansing is the fact that the women were raped until made pregnant and only set free when it was too late for them to terminate their pregnancies. It was impossible for a woman to identify the father of her child because in most cases he was one of the men who had taken part in collective rape. He was part of a collective whole, a group, a community, even, in some symbolic sense, the national identity itself.

When I spoke of the "mother-son-young woman" triangle, I emphasized the son's dilemma and his effort to exclude the attractive young woman in order to return, finally, to his mother, his roots, his protectress and guardian. By forcing Bosniak women who had been raped to keep their children, the Serbian aggressors attempted to prevent them from becoming, even symbolically, the origin and protectress of their national identity. In this way, the symbolic ability of a son to return to his mother and prove his attachment and faithfulness to her through the rejection of a young

woman was also denied. The intention of this crime was to eliminate the possibility of a young woman ever becoming a mother in the full sense. By impregnating her, the aggressor left an imprint not only on her, but also on her family and culture. He created a whole series of conflicts which destroy the symbolic unity between mother-tradition or the motherland and her offspring.<sup>43</sup>

In other words, the rape of Bosniak women turned them into bad mothers, mothers bereft of all motherly authority, who are not even able to take care of their children. This last point is especially true, because, as Melanie Klein<sup>44</sup> describes, even in normal circumstances, after the first traumatic experience of birth itself, a child goes through a period in which it displays strong sadistic tendencies towards its mother's body or, more precisely, towards her breast, when it attempts to dismantle it and deconstruct it. At the same time, experiencing guilt for this destructive urge, the child internally projects its ideal mother, its super-ego. It wishes to renew and refashion the mother it has torn apart, to compensate for the damage it has done to its mother, the object of its desire. An ideal mother therefore symbolizes both love and, at the same time, a threat to the desire to negate the mother's body. In this way, she has two faces: one that represents love, understanding and care, and another that represents a threat to the son's sadistic desire to negate and dismantle his mother, and disunite.

So the creation of an ideal mother, in this case a motherland, is only possible through the negation of another mother, or if another mother is proclaimed bad, dirty and unworthy. In this way, the son's fear is liberated - the fear he projects onto his ideal mother, his image of the perfect woman, understanding and inclusive. One mother is thus sacrificed in order for the son to reach his true mother and suppress and mask his own fear and the feeling that his ideal mother is pursuing him. By turning a young woman into a mother through an act of violence, a woman who, because she

has been raped, is no longer ideal, pure and whole in the way a true mother is, and by making it impossible for her ever to become such a mother, the perpetrators of the crime wanted to liberate themselves from their own fear and the feeling that they were being pursued by their own ideal mother. By sacrificing their own child, they wanted to prove their love for their true mother, the mother nation.

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Since both the principles of exclusion and inclusion destroy the female principle in a man, the question remains: who was it that provided the material for the first part of this essay? The second part of the essay can be summarized as follows: how can a process of destruction and separation at the same time be a process of merging and unification and, all this, in the broadest context of collective rape in Bosnia and Hercegovina and the creation of the national soldier? Unrelated to this, it is my duty, in conclusion, to return, albeit briefly, to that other question: what kind of relationship is liberated in the process of destruction and separation and repeated merging and unification, in this case when a woman is raped?

There is no doubt that the perpetrators of collective rape in Bosnia and Hercegovina belong to the so-called mythical structure of conscience, of conscience that is in constant cyclical return. For the perpetrators of rape, death and sacrifice represent a return to the One, the motherland or Mother Nature. The mythical structure of conscience re-establishes itself in a constant cycle of death and resurrection, which does not mean that what dies in that conscience always returns in some new shape or context, as in Nietzsche's idea of an eternal cycle, where the shape of a circle always represents innovation, the creation of something new. According to the nationalist concept the circle is linked primarily to the idea

of the motherland. Everything is born and everything dies in her embrace. Everything returns to her unity and nothing can happen outside her. If it does, it is an act of infidelity, a betrayal of the mother's love.

The return to the motherland does not mean the renewal of the motherland, therefore, the motherland remains the same, unchangeable and eternal, even though everything inside her is changing, just as everything in nature is changing. Thus, unlike Nietzsche's eternal cycle that changes itself through repetition, for every repetition brings a new perspective and is a new creation, the motherland is a matrix within which changes happen but which itself never changes. Everything returns to it and everything comes from it. For this reason, the mythological nationalist conscience always faces the problem of how to return to the motherland, the motherland that holds the code of creation and the code of every individual person.

Is it not then true that the violence against Bosniaks and Bosniak women was actually a way of returning them to the motherland? Namely, a Bosniak has betrayed his mother and become a brother-traitor by accepting another religion. And the reason women were the victims of such terrible violence in Bosnia and Hercegovina is primarily that according to the national concept, it is woman who has carried the seed of betrayal within her as part of her being, ever since the biblical apple, picked from the Tree of Knowledge. Accordingly, woman was the first one to betray the national unity, to accept Islam and marry a "Turk".<sup>45</sup> Therefore, when the criminals, motivated by a mythological national concept based on the idea of return to the motherland and a closed circle, punished and abused the Bosniak woman, their primary intention was to break her and dismantle her through torture, injury and abuse, and to create a woman that would be absolutely different - impure, deformed and rejected. Afterwards she was to be punished for her

betrayal, again through torture and pain; the act of punishment was meant to bring Serbs and Bosniaks together, join them and return them to the embrace of the mother. The return of a Bosnian woman to the motherly embrace, in the view of Serbian nationalism, was only possible through physical attack, torture, deformation, punishment and rape. In this way their punishment took on a symbolic character - it was a kind of purification, a kind of religious, moral and ideological Purgatory. In order to make sure the Bosnian woman was completely cleansed of her sin of infidelity, she needed to be directly polluted, deformed and tortured.

### **P.S.**

As a member of the opposite sex, to write this essay I had to awaken the female principle within myself, so that in my writing I could become a woman myself (Deleuze) and be at all able to comprehend the mechanisms of inclusion-exclusion that negated the female principle during the collective rape that took place in Bosnia and Hercegovina. The awakening of the female principle through my writing has helped me to uncover the politics of ethnic cleansing behind rape and the creation of the national soldier.

### **Notes**

1 Translator's note: In this essay 'national' and 'nationality' are used to refer to the three ethnic communities in Bosnia and Hercegovina, the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks. Many members of these communities identified with the two ethnic motherlands (Serbia and Croatia), and during the war the nationalist parties played on these associations to create dreams of a greater Serbia and an enlarged Croatian state.

2 Srpska demokratska stranka (Serb Democratic Party), the Bosnian Serb nationalist party led, from its inception, by Dr Radovan Karadžić, a psychiatrist and a war criminal, originally from Montenegro. The name of the party was taken from the Serb nationalist party in Croatia, which was founded some time earlier by Dr Jovo Rašković, a psychiatrist from Split, in response to the legalization of political pluralism in Yugoslavia.

3 "The systematic mass rape of Bosniak women of all ages - from six-year old girls to old women - is a form of the crime of genocide unknown in the history of mankind. The Serbian-Montenegrin aggressors killed a number of the women that had been raped, while the youngest among them did not survive the shameful act. For the purpose of the mass crime of rape, the aggressor even established special brothel-concentration camps (especially in the area of Prijedor) where women who had been raped repeatedly were held until they were so heavily pregnant that it was medically impossible to remove the unwanted child. Many imprisoned women gave birth after having reached the stage when it was impossible to terminate their pregnancies. The data gathered up to now show that 25,000 - 30,000 Bosniak women of all ages were victims of this horrendous crime. The data are still incomplete, due to the extremely intimate and sensitive nature of the experience." Prof. Dr. Smiljka Čekić, "Uzroci, ciljevi i razmjere agresije na Bosnu i Hercegovinu 1991-1995." ("Causes, Aims and the Scale of the Aggression on Bosnia and Hercegovina 1991-1995"), published by Vijeće kongresa bosanskomuslimanskih intelektualaca, 1995, page 29.

4 One of Aristophanes's famous comedies shows the difference between male and female sexual urges in an ironic light. In the comedy, the war between two forces is brought to an end when women from both sides retire to a tower and start blackmailing the men, denying them physical pleasure. This causes the men's warrior impulses to weaken until they cease altogether, which brings the war to an end. Even in ancient times, therefore, male impulses were seen as being opposed to those of women.

5 Fethi Benslama, on the rape of women in Bosnia and Hercegovina with the intention of making them pregnant, where the women were held prisoner until an advanced stage of pregnancy; the so called "violence of purists" - those who engage in ethnic cleansing and, at the same time, in the systematic insemination of the enemy; this is seen as "the intention to leave an imprint of the body of an unacceptable stranger in the body of another, in the same way he assumes the other is imprinted onto his". ("Identitet i izvlaštenost", lecture on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity with Bosniaks, organised by INTER-SIGNES Magazine on 30 January 1993, Arche de la Fraternite, Paris.)

6 In colloquial Bosnian speech, group sexual intercourse with a female body, whether forceful or not, is called "redaljka" (line-up), which implies order and unity of the group through the act itself.

7 See: Rene Girard, *Nasilje i sveto* (Violence and the Sacred), Novi anthropos, Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1990.

8 A similar group spirit is created in relation to the female body when a group of soldiers tells sexual jokes about one soldier or uses particular expressions and language constructions. The purpose of the jokes is not to emphasize the intimacy between a man and a woman by an anecdote, but to emphasize, through a play on words, the collective male experience of the female body. In other words, these jokes are not a way of recalling the experience of a female body, but a way for the soldiers to experience their own bodies through a female one. The female body is just the instrument they use to achieve this.

Similar to this is way homosexual relationships are viewed within military structures and hierarchies. The military attitude is based on the idea of brave and decisive men and is in opposition to anything which represents a female or a homosexual experience of reality. But the very way in which any female or homosexual experience of reality is excluded from the logical military structure, is reminiscent of a homosexual structure and experience. For example: shouting, the manner in which a superior addresses his subordinate, is indicative of the intention of one male body to catch another male body. A decision or a command from headquarters goes through the bodies of all the soldiers and permeates them all; as if tactile, it touches all their bodies with its fingers, sending them to their deaths. Or when soldiers, when taking an oath, turn towards the flag and pledge their allegiance, it is the flag that brings them into touch with each other, and its colours with their symbolic power, unify them in a trance, as if in a common orgy.

9 See: George L. Mosse, *Sessualita e nazionalismo, Mentalita borghese e rispettabilita*, Editori Laterza, 1984.

10 For more on this, see: Maurice Bloch, Jonathan Parry, *Death and Regeneration of Life*, Cambridge University Press, p. 82.

11 Maurice Bloch, essays - *Death, Women and Power*, in *Death and Regeneration of Life...*

12 Mary Douglas, *PURITY AND DANGER, Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Mary Douglas, 1966.

13 More about violence in war and the role of the phallus in Klaus Theweleita - *Male Fantasies*, GZH, Zagreb, 1983.

14 Zorž Bataj, *Eroticism of the Tear of Eros, Zodijak*, Belgrade, 1972.

15 This is not to say that there is only one nation, nor that the three nationalities are the same and that the differences between them should be eradicated by mixing cultures. I simply wish to explain that no nationality was defined by its own rigid, clear-cut boundaries. On the contrary, nationalities were defined through the very mixing of their cultures.

16 The most important feature of multiethnic life in Bosnia and Hercegovina was the absence of territorial boundaries and strict cultural divisions. There

were never rigid boundaries between cultures, and this led them to mix and exchange influences. There was not a single piece of territory in Bosnia and Hercegovina which could have been described as ethnically pure.

17 It was clear from the supplies and weapons at their disposal that paramilitary forces from Serbia - Arkanovi tigrovi (Arkan's Tigers), Beli orlovi (the White Eagles), Sešeljevi četnici (Sešelj's Cetniks), and others - were part of the command structure of the Yugoslav National Army, and in the service of the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević.

18 At the top of this hierarchical pyramid involving all the paramilitary forces and the YNA, was again the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević.

19 The UN introduced an arms embargo against the countries of the former Yugoslavia as early as 1991. This affected the official structures in Bosnia and Hercegovina in particular: in line with a decision of the Yugoslav Presidency, all weapons in the possession of the General Defence of Bosnia and Hercegovina were taken over by the YNA, which then became the aggressor, leaving the Bosnian defence to fight with "bare hands". The embargo only prolonged the "bare hands" situation.

20 For example, a threatening letter written by the Serb secret society, "Mlada Bosna" (Young Bosnia), and sent to the Serb Civic Council in Sarajevo, gives a list of Serbs or the "wastes of Balijas" (Balija - a pejorative term for a Muslim) as they called them, proclaiming them sentenced to death by the organization. An excerpt from this letter states that: "The times of 'turčenje' (converting someone into a Turk, a Muslim) have not passed, and even today there are Janjčari (those who were converted to Islam by the Turks), a dirty waste of a dignified and brave nation. It is that Serb waste that has taken up the Turkish sword and given deadly wounds to those who are better than them: Serbs who live in Christ's faith and love." (Daily newspaper "Oslobodjenje", 5 January 2002.)

21 I am by no means trying to imply that the Nazis did not commit rape, it is just that the Nazi regime did not use rape to constitute its official ideology; it used the method we are all aware of.

22 Moreover, the relationship between jailer and victim in a concentration camp was based on the fact that the victim had been reduced to a non-presence; his true presence lay in his elimination. For this reason, a victim - in practice, an absence - did not possess characteristics; even before his execution, he had not taken up any space in that place. Primo Levi (Se questo e un uomo) has given an illustrative example of this when he describes a conversation between two German women - workers in a chemical laboratory - where he, as a prisoner, was also working. The two of them were talking very openly about their lives, their secrets and personal issues, paying no attention to him: for them, he was just a thing, an object that did not even deserve to be noticed. Levi notes that it was not that the two treated him with derision, or that they insulted and rejected him. They simply did not have any view of him: for them he had been erased even before he reached the gas chamber: he was an absolute non-presence.

23 see Rene Girard

24 "It jeopardises the relationship between genders within one social unit and, because of the interiorizing, the identity of each sex in relation to differ-

ences between the genders." Julia Kristeva, *Moći užasa*, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1989.p. 85.

25 see Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima moralia*, published by Veselin Masleša, Logos, Sarajevo, 1987.

26 see Zygmunt Bauman, *Modenita e Olocausto*, Societa editrice il Mulino, Bologna, 1992.

27 Muslim women were considered dirty by Serb nationalists because they had accepted Islam and by doing so had betrayed their own faith and nation, originally the Orthodox faith and the Serb nation, apparently.

28 This was quite opposed to the Nazi ideology with its racial laws which eliminated and removed the racial "waste" without needing to perform any spectacular violence such as orgies and passionate killings, - in order to justify its laws, primarily because the very implementation of those laws, carried out by an administrative apparatus, represented the violence, removal and elimination themselves.

29 Benedict Anderson, *Nacija: zamišljena zajednica* (The Nation: An Imagined Community), Plato, Beograd, 1998.

30 The role of woman is very important in the creation of a national identity. Woman symbolizes pride, stability, reproduction etc., but in this context, she most often symbolizes mother. For the mother symbolizes the home, reproduction, and she also symbolizes something innocent and intact, the preserver of tradition. Her care for her children is symbolically represented as care for the whole nation. That is why many anti-colonial movements regarded the mother as a symbol of a genuine and primordial culture, pure and unpolluted by the influences of colonial culture and the colonial way of life. By caring for her family, a mother preserves her culture and prevents it from falling prey to foreign influences and becoming assimilated. In short, it is not unusual that the role of a woman is considered as very important for national unification, especially when her role is that of a mother who embodies the unity of the nation and of the family.

31 For the connection between the motherland and mythology see Geoffrey Hosking, *George Schopflin, Myths and Nationhood*, Hurst & Company, London, 1997.

32 see Kant, "What is Illumination?"

33 For more on the shift of the idea of self-determination from the "individual" to the "collective," see Kedurie, *Nationalism*.

34 Slavoj Žižek tends to recognize in the theory of conspiracy an image of Lacan's great Other, who constantly follows you, who steals your own pleasure from you, and who at the same time has a protective role. The feeling that someone is constantly "on your tail" places you at the centre of attention and, in some paradoxical way, protects you from your own spy who constantly supervises and controls you. You are able to project all your sins onto someone else, onto this invisible other, who follows you and conditions you. In some way, one could say, the theory of conspiracy projects a spy within you. Because of this, you begin to feel as though your actions and decisions belong to someone else. Someone else used your hand to commit those crimes, to commit rape. You are an innocent victim because this other in you

is against you; he is the perpetrator of your crimes. Is it not then true, from this perspective, that the great Other and the motherland have already met on their way, which they walk together in an embrace?

35 That is not to say that a patriarchal culture supports and approves of any violence; on the contrary, this type of crime only imitates patriarchal culture; the crimes are committed for reasons which correspond to elements of a patriarchal culture, but they are carried out in a completely different context and despite the fact that this type of culture strongly opposes such violence.

36 If a man has been imprisoned and tortured, his torments acquire a symbolic character in the eyes of his community: they become symbols of heroism, stamina and pride. When a woman is raped, however, her suffering and torment are not talked about. In the eyes of a patriarchal community they are shameful, even though their weight is great, and the level of pain a woman endures often exceeds a man's pain threshold.

37 See Janja Beč's book, *Pucanje duše* (The Shattering of the Soul), which, through fragmented testimonies of the women of Srebrenica, articulates their suffering in a literary and authentic way and is exemplary for this.

38 See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, 1983.

39 see Ulrih Bilefeld, "Foreigners: Friends or Enemies", published by "Biblioteka XX VEK" Belgrade, 1998.

40 see Frantz Fanon, "Black Skin, White Masks" Pluto Press, London, 1986.

41 see "Molila sam ih da me ubiju, Zločin nad ženom Bosne i Hercegovine", ("I begged them to kill me, Crimes Against Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Testimonies") Svjedočanstva, Savez logoraša Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, 1999.

42 For more on this, see Senadin Musabegović, *Krug i sadašnjost* (The Circle and the Present), *Dijalog*, 3-4/2001, Sarajevo.

43 I am referring here to the intentions of the perpetrators of the rape and not to the actual connection between a mother and her child. No matter what the crime is, the connection between a mother and her child is equally intense and is usually not subject to any ideology.

44 See Melanie Klein, *The Psycho-Analysis Of Children*, London, 1949, translated and published in "Envy and Gratitude" by "Biblioteka Psiho", Naprijed, Zagreb, 1983.

45 Consider, in particular, the Serb epic "Banović Strahinja", which develops this topic in an artistically very exciting and beautiful way.