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ANDRIĆ AS AN OBJECT OF HATE: RECEPTION OF IVO ANDRIĆ'S WORKS IN THE POST-YUGOSLAV CONTEXT¹

V "medkulturnih" krogih in literarnih revijah se občasno pojavljajo polemični teksti, v katerih se presojojajoče razpravlja o Andrićevih pripadnostih kot tudi o političnih konotacijah njegovih del, in sicer v luči zapletenih zgodovinskih povezav med tremi južnoslovanskimi državami, ki si Andrića lastijo kot svojo intelektualno "lastnino": Bosna in Hercegovina, Hrvaška in Srbija. V kontekstu literarnih, zgodovinskih in političnih interpretacij njegovih del se je Andrić znašel v središču debate o posebnih identitetah južnoslovanskih etničnih skupin.

'Intellectual' circles and literary periodicals occasionally feature polemical texts addressing Andrić's affiliations and political connotations of his work judgmentally, in the light of the complex historical relations between the three South Slavic nations that claim this author as their intellectual 'property': Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. In the context of the literary, historical and political interpretations of his works, this author found himself at the center of the debate on the particular identities of the South Slavic ethnicities.

Ključne besede: Ivo Andrić / jugoslovanska kulturna zapuščina / Andrićeva pripadnost / jugoslovanska identiteta / interkulturalnost / nacionalna literatura

Key words: Ivo Andrić, Yugoslav cultural legacy, Andrić's affiliation, Yugoslav identity, interculturality, national literature

Introduction

Ivo Andrić is one of the most prominent literary figures from the region of the former Yugoslavia. In 1961 he received the Nobel Prize in Literature for, as noted in the jury's exposition, 'the epic force with which he has traced themes and depicted human destinies drawn from the history of his country'. The expression "his country" used by the Nobel Committee was unquestionable at the time. In his speech in Stockholm for the *Nobel Prize Award Ceremony*, Andrić described his country as a "small country in between whole worlds": he considered the recognition he received as recognition of his country and its culture (Andrić, *Istorija i legnda* 65–69). His country was Yugoslavia (1918–1991). Immediately before World War I, as a high school boy, Andrić campaigned for the creation of this country; he saw it come to life and remained to live and work there. In his lifetime Andrić was considered a Yugoslav writer. Some fifteen years after his death, in the 1990s, Yugoslavia fell apart in a bloody civil war. The dissolution of Yugoslavia raised, beside other issues, the question of the Yugoslav cultural legacy and, consequently, the question of Andrić's affiliations. Today, Andrić's *oeuvre* is incorporated in the canons of the separate(d) national literatures (formerly constituting the common Yugoslav literature) – Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian. How-

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ever, ‘intellectual’ circles and literary periodicals occasionally feature polemical texts addressing Andrić’s affiliations and political connotations of his work judgmentally, in the light of the complex historical relations between the three South Slavic nations that claim this author as their intellectual ‘property’: Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. In the context of the literary, historical and political interpretations of his works, this author found himself at the center of the debate on the particular identities of the South Slavic ethnicities. As noted by the Bosnian literary critic Ivan Lovrenović, “Andrić is, actually, some kind of great prism, refracting and reflecting the grand trans-historical paradigms and ideologies, neuralgic questions of emerging and fluctuating collective identities, and traumatic experiences of the periodic inter-ethnic conflicts and pogroms ...” (Lovrenović, “*Ivo Andrić, paradoks o šutnji*”).

The criteria for incorporating Andrić’s work into the separate national literatures include his ethnic origins and affiliations, and his work in the frameworks of a specific national culture, in thematic and linguistic terms – as a personal artistic choice.

Andrić was born in Bosnia, whose history largely inspired him, and which he claimed as his spiritual homeland (Jandrić, *Sa Ivom Andrićem* 296). This was the basic standard for incorporating Andrić into the literary canons of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In ethnic terms, Andrić was a Croat and his early works featured in Croatian literary periodicals. He was therefore included into the canonical ‘Lexicon of Croatian Writers (*Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca*)’. He operated within the frameworks of Serbian culture, spent the major part of his life in Belgrade and wrote his most important works in the ‘*ekavska*’ variant of the Serbo-Croatian language – in Serbia, he is undeniably considered a Serbian author. Whose writer is Ivo Andrić, after all?

The “issue” emerged with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In the early 1990s, the Yugoslavia that had been created after World War I as a political union of South Slavs fell apart in a bloody civil war, waged most severely between the three sides – Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia. Due to his accomplishments and political career, Andrić was ‘used’ in a particular manner in the relations between the sides in conflict – between the Serbs and Croats, Serbs and Moslems, even the Serbs and Albanians.² In the post-Yugoslav period, mainly, the controversies and debates around Andrić were of a political, rather than literary, nature. Literary considerations were used exclusively to support this or that political premise, or in reconstitution of the national identities. The Croatian writer Predrag Matvejević noted the following in his foreword to an Italian edition of Andrić’s works: “Croatian nationalists accused him of betraying his nation. The Serbian ones intended to proclaim him as a true Serb, ignoring the differences that revealed his background and development. Bosnian Islamic nationalists objected to his descriptions of suffering of the Christian population under the Turkish yoke – at the same time forgetting their own Slavic origins (even ignoring the fact that Andrić’s works were exceptionally well-received in Turkey). True Yugoslavs who followed his lead were scarce and too weak to defend him from the passionate nationalist verdicts or appropriations.

² In 1939, as an officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Andrić wrote a report on the Albanian question published in 1977 by Bogdan Krizman in the Zagreb-based journal *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 2 (pp. 77–89). Albanian intellectuals from Kosovo later considered this report as a confirmation of Andrić’s allegedly ‘anti-Albanian’ attitudes. (Karaulac, *Andrić u diplomatiji* 63)



What else but a mask was left to a sensible man who found it hard to carry the burden of his own talent, anyway – perhaps the greatest writer born in the Balkans in the last few centuries!?” (Matvejević, “*Andrićeve čuprije i naše krive Drine*”).

Language and affiliations

As for Andrić's literary affiliation, indeed “affiliations”, a few initial remarks on his language seem necessary: for the major part of Andrić's life, the central South Slavic language was consensually termed as Serbo-Croatian.³ According to the 1981 census, the Serbo-Croatian language was used by the 73% of the Yugoslav population – by the Serbs, Croats, Moslems (Bosniaks) and Montenegrins (Bugarski, *Jezik u duštvenoj krizi* 21).

Nevertheless, with the dissolution of the common state (Yugoslavia), the Serbo-Croatian language ceased to exist as the poly-centric (one) language – for exclusively political reasons – split into four different languages: Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian/Bosniak (Bosniaks call their language ‘Bosnian’, while in Serbia and Croatia it is mostly termed as Bosniak), and Montenegrin. Differences between particular dialects of the Serbian or Croatian language are more pronounced than differences between their standard variants. The cultural ‘establishments’ in Croatia, Montenegro and slightly less so in Bosnia and Herzegovina insist on the ‘purity’ of language and linguistic differences (especially between the Serbian and Croatian language), occasionally in grotesque forms (Kordić, *Jezik i nacionalizam* 76).

In linguistic terms, Serbo-Croatian is one language. Mutual identity between its two opposed variants (Serbian and Croatian), established linguistically, exceeds 75% (depending on idioms). According to Morris Swadesh, the basic vocabulary of the two variants is identical, including the structure of the syllable (major criteria for identification of a language). Mutual intelligibility exceeds 90% (Kordić, *Jezik i nacionalizam* 98–101). In sociolinguistic terms, it is one standard language: polycentric and with differing standard variants in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. From the perspective of social psychology, based on the attitudes to language and identification of the speaker – some still consider all the languages derived from the Serbo-Croatian as one language, while others opine that they are cognate, but separate languages (Bugarski, *Jezik u duštvenoj krizi* 13).

³ The history of the Serbo-Croatian language begins in 1850 when prominent Serbian and Croatian intellectuals who considered South Slavs as “one people which, consequently, needs one literature and one language”, signed the so-called ‘*Bečki književni dogovor*’ (Vienna Literary Agreement), adopting the ‘*štokavian*’ dialect as the basis for the common Serbo-Croatian language. A hundred years later, the so-called ‘*Novosadski dogovor*’ (Novi Sad Agreement) from 1954 officially established the Serbo-Croatian (Croat-Serbian) language as the common language of the Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins (later including the Moslem Bosniaks). The common orthography of the Serbo-Croatian language was drafted in 1960. This tendency was disrupted in 1967, when 19 most prominent cultural institutions of the Socialist Republic of Croatia signed the ‘Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language’ (*Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika*). With this declaration, they distanced themselves from the Novi Sad Agreement, considering this document as a ‘plot’ to impose the Serbian literary language on the Croats. On the politics of language in Yugoslavia, and history of the Serbo-Croat language relations – also nationalism from the perspective of language and cultural affiliation (Kordić, Snežana. *Jezik i nacionalizam*)

Andrić considered Serbo-Croatian as one language. He wrote, therefore, in Serbo-Croatian, and in both dialects – “eastern” and “western” as he called them. He wrote his first pieces of poetry in 1911 in the “eastern dialect” (*ekavica*), and from 1912 he wrote in the “western dialect” (*ijekavica*). He was accordingly included in the ‘Anthology of Young Croatian Lyric Poetry’ (*Antologija mlade hrvatske lirike*) in 1914. Gradually, after 1920, he shifted exclusively to the “eastern dialect”. Andrić definitely considered Serbo-Croatian as one language and wrote in all its variants.⁴

In Croatia, Andrić’s place in the national literature is reduced to his early period when he wrote in Croatian, according to the editors of the two representative Croatian literary encyclopedias featuring Andrić – ‘Lexicon of Croatian Writers’ (*Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca*) and ‘Lexicon of Foreign Writers’ (*Leksikon stranih pisaca*).

In terms of language, it is, however, difficult to separate Andrić’s “Croatian” and “Serbian” phase, because Andrić’s linguistic substrate incorporates a whole “štokavian universe”, as noted by the Bosnian literary critic Ivan Lovrenović. “Philological analysis demonstrates that on semantic, lexical and syntactic levels Andrić’s language draws profusely and, expression-wise, fruitfully from the whole štokavian reservoir – uninhibited by the standard-language ‘borders’ between Serbian and Croatian.” (Lovrenović, “*Ivo Andrić, paradoks o šutnji*”).

As aforementioned, Andrić, except *en passant* in some of his interviews and statements, never entered into discussions on the name of the language he wrote in, although he clearly derived his language from the legacy of Vuk Karadžić, Njegoš and Slavic folk poetry.⁵

For Andrić, unity of the Serbo-Croatian language was not an issue. The sources of this conviction should be sought in his cultural affiliations grounding his linguistic, national and political orientation – and those were definitely Yugoslav. According to Ivan Lovrenović: “In order to understand this author better concerning the questions of belonging or subjective sense of one’s position in the wider, collective-historical identity, we should apprehend the content of what he calls *jugoslovenstvo*.” (Lovrenović, “*Ivo Andrić, paradoks o šutnji*”).

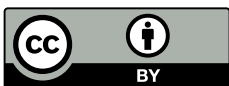
Yugoslav identity

The concept of *jugoslovenstvo* emerged in Croatia and Serbia in the first half of the 19th century, under the influence of Herder’s romanticist postulate of identity between the language and the nation. Politically articulated as the concept of union of the South Slavic ethnicities, which inhabited several countries before World War I – Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro and Austro-Hungary – this was the leading South Slavic political paradigm in the 20th century.⁶

⁴ On Andrić’s attitudes to language and its denomination, see Jandrić, *Sa Ivom Andrićem* 131–133.

⁵ Andrić’s essays on South Slavic literary topics were collected in the book *Umetnik i njegovo delo*. Most of these essays were dedicated to Vuk Karadžić and Njegoš. (Andrić, *Umetnik i njegovo delo* 9–116)

⁶ On the rise and fall of the concept of *jugoslovenstvo* in the context of Yugoslav literature, see Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*.



The only two ethnic groups with a nation-state in the early 20th century were Serbs and Montenegrins. The Croats, Slovenes, Bosnian Moslems and Macedonians lived under the rule of Austro-Hungary and Turkey, respectively. After the Balkan wars, since 1912, the Turkish empire was expelled from the Balkans, while Serbia and Montenegro expanded their territories. Croatia and Slovenia remained parts of the Habsburg empire which (with German support) annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. This annexation provoked resistance among all ethnic groups in Bosnia, especially among the progressive youth overwhelmed with the powerful idea of *jugoslovenstvo*. One of these organizations was 'Serbo-Croatian Progressive Youth' (*Srpsko-hrvatska napredna omladina*), whose members (including the young Andrić) considered the Serbs and the Croats as one nation – calling themselves Serbo-Croats or Yugoslavs (*Jugosloveni*). As Serbia happened to be the leading independent South Slavic state, it was considered the Piedmont and core of the future federation of equality of the South Slavic nations. Andrić's acquaintance Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke *Franz Ferdinand*, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne: this violent act was the cause for declaration of World War I (Dedijer, *Sarajevo 1914* 291–394). Because of his revolutionary political engagement the Austrian authorities arrested Andrić in July 1914. He spent the following three years in penitentiaries of Šibenik and Maribor, and was subsequently confined at Ovčarevo and Zenica (Karaulac, *Rani Andrić*).

As a professional diplomat, between the world wars Andrić held some of the most prominent positions in the ministry of foreign affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the highest being the position of ambassador in Berlin (Karaulac, *Andrić u diplomatiji*). After World War II, Yugoslavia became a communist country. Andrić maintained good relations with the communist authorities, which reciprocated by awarding him with highest tributes and honors (Popović, *Andrićeva prijateljstva*). In spite of the accusations for his 'conversions' and 'anti-national heresy' (including 'Jesuitism'), which could be heard occasionally while he was still alive, he remained loyal to the ideals from his youth, stressing that he always remained a Yugoslav, opposed to any display of chauvinism (Jandrić, *Sa Ivom Andrićem* 73).

Andrić adopted and informed his cultural and national paradigm in such circumstances, remaining loyal to his convictions until the end of his life. As for the nationalist perception, the Serbs considered him a Croat, and Croats as a Serb: in 1937 the great Serbian author Miloš Crnjanski wrote to Andrić: "I sincerely believe that you are the only one among us who is neither a Serb nor a Croat, but both." (Popović, *Andrićeva prijateljstva* 120). It should be added that Yugoslav literature as a whole never came to life: the borders between national literatures did exist, despite being diffuse.⁷ Neverthe-

⁷ "The Croatian Illyric movement in the 1830s and 1840s and the linguistic and literary work of the Serbian scholar Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864) were Yugoslav in their fundamental view. In the 20th century two outstanding literary critics and scholars, the Serb Jovan Skerlić (1877–1914) and the Croat Antun Barac (1894–1955) were clearly Yugoslav orientated, and after WWI the influential literary magazine *Književni Jug* (The Literary South) stressed the common Serbo-Croatian literary aspects. After WWII the Yugoslav ideology once more gained impetus as being one of the ideological foundations of socialist Yugoslavia. In its efforts to promote a Yugoslav common literature, the Encyclopedia of Yugoslav writers from 1971, for instance, registered writers from Yugoslavia regardless of their nationality. It should, though, be underlined that Serbian and Croatian literatures still existed as two distinct categories. During the years, monographs



less, Andrić never gave permission to be included in an anthology compiled exclusively according to national standards. Consequently, already in 1933 he refused to be featured in the ‘Anthology of Croatian Storytellers’ (*Antologija hrvatskih pripovjedača*), claiming: “I could never be a part of a selection which principally excludes poets otherwise close to me, only because they are of other faith or were born in another province. This is not my recent belief – it has been with me since my early youth and now, in my old age, such basic values do not alter.”⁸ Andrić described his loyalty to the Yugoslav ideals in 1971, in his confessions to Ljuba Jandrić: “I was for *jugoslovenstvo* since the times when Austro-Hungary was to be banished from our threshold. We, high school boys from Sarajevo, were against hegemony of any religion or nation. (...) I do not want to sound like a boaster when I mention that I was president of the progressive Serbo-Croatian youth in Sarajevo. (...) I was for *jugoslovenstvo* in 1941, when the Communist Party of Yugoslavia introduced Marxist convictions into everything... I was for *jugoslovenstvo* again in 1948, and I still am – and I would rather die like this then change beliefs in my old age!” (Jandrić, *Sa Ivom Andrićem* 73–76).

However, *jugoslovenstvo* was brought into question after Andrić’s death. The dissolution of Yugoslavia formally began when the former federative members of the common state proclaimed independence – first Slovenia, then Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, and, some ten years after, Montenegro as well. Resistance to these processes came from the largest Yugoslav republic, Serbia. This was the major cause of the ensuing conflicts, including the bloodiest among them – the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the most renowned Yugoslav writer internationally, during the war in the former Yugoslavia Andrić was often mentioned in the Western literary periodicals as an author of novels and stories that might help understand the Balkan history, inter-ethnic hatred and character of the Balkan wars. In that sense, his story ‘A Letter from 1920’ published in 1946 was the most frequently cited example.⁹

In the newly formed states, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the processes of forming and forging national identities were opposing the former Yugoslav ‘supra-

about Serbian and Croatian writers as well as of writers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and textbooks of Serbian and Croatian literature were published, but no history of Bosnian literature.” (Jacobson, ‘*Who’s Whose? The Balkan Literary Context*’ 267–279)

⁸ Ivo Andrić’s letter to dr Mihovil Kombol, 20 November 1933, cited in: Jandrić, *Sa Ivom Andrićem* 75–76

⁹ “Blood ties and hatred can be tricky. On a recent television talk show, a Croatian American and a Bosnian Muslim both attacked me for failing to note that in Sarajevo, at least, Muslims, Croats, Serbs and Jews had usually got along. I recommend that they and others read ‘The Damned Yard: And Other Stories’ by Ivo Andrić. A Bosnian Croat, Andrić won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961, mainly for his novel *The Bridge on the Drina*.” In one of his stories, ‘A Letter From 1920’, first published 73 years ago, Andrić explained: “Yes, Bosnia is a country of hatred. That is Bosnia. And by a strange contrast... there are a few countries with such firm belief... so much tenderness and loving passion... or with such a thirst for justice. But in secret depths underneath all this hide burning hatreds, entire hurricanes of tethered and compressed hatreds... Thus you are condemned to live on deep layers of explosive, which are lit from time to time by the very sparks of your loves and your fiery and violent emotion.” Andrić said that the people of the region denied this hatred, and consequently hated outsiders who mentioned it to them. The often invisible border between hate and love, and unity and disunity, is further explored in Andrić’s novel ‘*The Days of the Consuls*’ (1945), about the small Bosnian town of Travnik in the early 19th century, and the political atmosphere found there by the French and Austrian consuls. (Kaplan, “A Reader’s Guide to the Balkans”)



identity', propagandistically identified with the project 'Great Serbia'. As a result, this demanded a purist insistence on linguistic and *cultural idiosyncrasies* of separate national cultures and, consequently, exorcism of any Yugoslav elements (identified with the Serbian influence) (Kordić, *Jezik i nacionalizam*). In Serbia, this process was less pronounced. Serbian culture thus incorporated the legacy of Yugoslav culture. However, this did not remain unchallenged, and it affected the reception of Andrić's works. On a tide of anti-Yugoslav and anti-Serbian sentiments, the Croatian and Bosniak nationalist circles insisted on Andrić's 'heresy', his 'anti-Croatism' and allegedly 'anti-Moslem' attitudes. In Serbia, although less so, his 'Jesuitism' and non-Serbian origins remained under scrutiny.

What follows is a brief account on these processes, as they evolved in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

Andrić in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia, already in the 1960s the first isolated claims emerged that Andrić's works, predominantly describing Bosnian circumstances, expressed a marked anti-Moslem stance. With the beginning of the war in Bosnia in 1992 such opinions were accepted and further elaborated in the Bosniak nationalist circles.¹⁰

The most frequently cited 'proof' of Andrić's intolerance towards the Bosnian Moslems (beside the novels *Na Drini ćuprija* and *Travnička hronika*, and some of his short stories) was Andrić's doctoral dissertation, defended in Graz in 1924 – *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule (Razvoj duhovnog života u Bosni pod uticajem turske vladavine)*. It was not published until 1982, appearing in the first issue of the edition *Sveske Zadužbine Ive Andrića*. Andrić wrote on the destructive impact of the Turkish rule on the evolving spiritual life in Bosnia, through various forms of repression over the non-Islamic population. Andrić's dissertation was associated with the historical framework of his literary pursuits, and perceived as his ideological platform. In his stories and novels, Andrić merely disclosed his negative attitudes towards the Turkish government and Bosnian Moslems in a literary form. In that sense, for some Bosniak critics Andrić's dissertation represented an insulting and tendentious historical forgery (Rizvić, *Bosanski Muslimani u Andrićevom svijetu* 57–59, 82–84): it was, moreover, a platform for displaying the world of the Bosnian Moslems in his literature which firmly situated the Islamic characters in a negative context (Rizvić, *Bosanski Muslimani u Andrićevom svijetu* 75–78).

Symbolically, the war in Bosnia began in Višegrad, the town of Andrić's childhood he famously described in his greatest work, the novel *Na Drini ćuprija*. On July 1, 1991 a person named Murat Šabanović broke and threw in the river Andrić's bust which had stood near the bridge, claiming later that he was ordered to do this by Moslem leaders

¹⁰ In his 1967 essay entitled 'Bosanski duh u književnosti – Šta je to?' ('Bosnian spirit in literature – what is it?'), an attempt at mapping the space of the Bosnian national literature, Muhamed Filipović already claimed that Andrić's works "divided Bosnia more than many armies that marched across and spilled their blood on its soil". (Filipović, "Bosanski duh u književnosti – Šta je to?")

who boasted of this act, considering it as appropriate to do away with the ‘Bosnian Rushdie’.¹¹

In the academic camp disclosing the allegedly ‘anti-Islamic’ attitudes in Andrić’s work, the ‘groundbreaking’ contributions came from the Bosniak intellectuals Muhsin Rizvić and Šukrija Kurtović. They accused Andrić of distorting historical facts. The objections, therefore, did not address Andrić as a writer, but Andrić as a historian, which was absurd *per se*. In 1996, in his comprehensive study (influential among the Bosniak nationalists) *Bosnian Moslems in Andrić’s World (Bosanski Muslimani u Andrićevom svijetu)*, the literary historian Muhsin Rizvić, after a thorough analysis of Andrić’s work, put forward the claim that Andrić depicted the Bosnian Moslems in a negative light. According to Rizvić, Andrić’s novels *Na Drini ćuprija* and *Travnička hronika* impose a sense of historical guilt on the Turks and Bosnian Moslems, justifying the crimes committed over the Moslem population in the 1990s (Rizvić, *Bosanski Muslimani u Andrićevom svijetu* 169, 441).

Some time later, the Bosniak *Cultural Community* ‘Preporod’ from Tuzla demanded the renaming of Ivo Andrić Street in that city. Explaining the proposal, Muhidin Pašić (chairman of the society) claimed that Andrić wronged the Bosnian Moslems, thereby considerably contributing to hatred towards the Moslems in general. Andrić should, accordingly, be treated as a war criminal who inspired Serbs for their evil deeds in Bosnia.¹² In order to confirm their assessment of Andrić ‘scientifically’, in 2000 ‘Preporod’ organized a conference ‘Andrić and the Bosniaks’ (*Andrić i Bošnjaci*) and published a conference book. The opening ‘editor’s note’ to this volume suggested: “In the complex Balkan reality of the past and present times, the Bosniaks were and still are exposed to hostile ideologies which consider them as people which should be (due to its ‘historical guilt’) expelled from this region. In the literary department,

¹¹ Interviews with Murat Šabanović in the magazine *Slobodna Bosna*, Sarajevo, 20 April 2000 and 7 December 2000

¹² “In his political texts Andrić undeniably demonstrated a marked national-chauvinist stance which, according to (the Bosniak intellectual) dr Esad Duraković, borders racism. He imbued his literary works with the statements coming from them. It is therefore impossible to separate Andrić as a political writer and Andrić as a literary author. I take the liberty of saying that Ivo Andrić, precisely because of his literary pursuits, bears a grave responsibility, perhaps greater than the realizers of the project ‘Great Serbia’. He is one of the ideological architects of that project, along with certain members of SANU. If he were alive, we would probably launch an assessment of his responsibility for the crimes in Bosnia, for all the horrors that happened to the Bosniak people. In any case, the fact that he received a Nobel Prize has no importance whatsoever... Genocides over the Bosniaks that happened so far resulted from attempts at accomplishing the national-chauvinist project ‘Great Serbia’. It was, basically, conceived by Garašanin, verified by Moljević, then Mihajlović, and finally in 1986 by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU). Ivo Andrić found his place in that chain with his political, but also with his literary writing. There he attempted to disqualify and demythify positive Moslem characters (*A. Derzelez*) and to satanize the whole Moslem-Bosniak history with his unhistorical explanations... Besides his literature, in his political texts, like his doctoral dissertation and the racist program of relocation of Albanian Moslems from Kosovo, Andrić expressed his pathological hate towards the Moslems and Islam in general. After all, several Bosniak intellectuals already made their statements on this matter. As such, Andrić holds a prominent position in the project ‘Great Serbia’ and we opine that he does not deserve a street in Tuzla called by his name... We only want to communicate that Ivo Andrić – as everybody likes to say, our only Nobel Prize winner – was among those who spread hate and unrest in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Muhidin Pašić, interview in the Sarajevo weekly *Dani*, 20 August 1999.



those anti-Bosniak ideologies find their most fundamental support (and nourishment to contemporary anti-Bosniak practices) in the works of Njegoš, Mažuranić and Andrić. Knowledge on and interpretation of those works in a way which does not exhaust itself in an immanent approach to a literary piece is an important task for the Bosniaks in their struggle for survival, a struggle which was dramatically aggravated by the latest events (aggression on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992–95).” (Maglajić, *Andrić i Bošnjaci*).

Such misuse (indeed falsifying) of Andrić's work was vigorously criticized by liberal writers and intellectuals (Stojić, “*Sramnička hronika*”). A debate between the Bosniak literary critics and university professors of literature, Munib Maglajić and Enver Kazaz, was indicative in that sense: Maglajić advocated Rizvić's judgments, while Kazaz deconstructed them. Kazaz disclosed the traps and deceptions of the ideological reading of Andrić's work: “On these terms Andrić became opiate and a crucial argument in the battles between right ideologies. Similar or almost the same was the academic reception which readily embraced the attributes Serbian, Bosniak, Croatian; namely, reception which proclaimed its own ideological focus as the supreme platform of national identity.” (Kazaz, “*Egzistencijalnost/povijesnost Bosne – interpretacija u zamci ideologije*”).

On the other hand, the respectable Bosniak literary critic Nedžad Ibrahimović points out: “The whole dispute around Andrić contains an underlying story about a search for identity. Identity of Bosnia and Bosniaks (inside), identity of literary works and Andrić (within).” (Ibrahimović, “*Kontekst u tekstu ili fiktivna biografija u nejasnom interpretacijskom kontekstu*”).

In spite of the protests from certain Moslem intellectuals, in Bosnia and Herzegovina Andrić is currently perceived as a national literary figure – due to his origins, the content of his work and his writing.¹³ As such, he features in the curricula of the elementary and high schools, and universities. In a poll launched by the weekly magazine *Dani* from Sarajevo, a jury of nine respectable critics and theorists of literature from Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed Andrić's novel *Prokleta avlija* as the finest Bosnian novel of the 20th century.

In his already cited essay ‘Ivo Andrić, paradoks o šutnji’, Ivan Lovrenović disclosed the Bosnian identity as a form of ethnic supra-identity, in an analogy to the formerly forged Yugoslav identity. In that sense, he referred to Andrić, who used to be ‘the most Yugoslav writer’, as ‘the most Bosnian writer’. “Thus Ivo Andrić, his literature, – beside all things he was and he ‘belonged to’ – is currently the only solid and safe place of the complex Bosnian identity, container of that identity which renders it clearly comprehensible. And here comes a dreary paradox: the process of creation and divergence of the three separate and isolated national cultures in Bosnia and Herzegovina – which may

¹³ “Ivo Andrić, his literature, – beside all things he was and he ‘belonged to’ – is currently the only solid and safe place of the complex Bosnian identity, container of that identity which renders it clearly comprehensible. And here comes a dreary paradox: the process of creation and divergence of the three separate and isolated national cultures in Bosnia and Herzegovina – which may easily turn out to be irreversible – produces a cultural situation wherein such identity is, in fact, unwelcome. Result: in Bosnia today, the most-Bosnian writer and, for that matter, an author of absolute, supreme aesthetic value, is undervalued by some, and misjudged by others.” (Lovrenović, “*Ivo Andrić, paradoks o šutnji*”)



easily turn out to be irreversible – produces a cultural situation wherein such identity is, in fact, unwelcome.” (Lovrenović, “*Ivo Andrić, paradoks o šutnji*”).

Andrić in Croatia

Andrić came from a Croatian catholic family and his first works were published in Croatian literary periodicals. He was included in the representative ‘Lexicon of Croatian Writers’ (*Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca*). This edition featured the following criteria for incorporating an author into the ‘body’ of a national, in this case Croatian, literature: “The notion of a ‘Croatian writer’ refers here to authors who wrote in Croatian, who belonged to the Croatian literary tradition and who operated within the Croatian cultural circle. It, likewise, refers to authors who clearly displayed their affiliation with the Croatian literature (e.g. some writers of Serbian or Bosniak origins).” However, the editors of this Lexicon did not insist on exclusivity of their selection, allowing for a possibility that some authors might be observed within the frameworks of more than one literary tradition – a double or triple affiliation should not be an issue. In Andrić’s case, such multiple affiliations had never been a matter of dispute.

Moreover, in Croatia, beside the *Lexicon of Croatian Writers*, Andrić was included in the *Lexicon of Foreign Writers*. Here (again) we encounter the claim that Andrić does not belong to a single national literature: he may be considered a Croatian writer in terms of his ethnic origins and language of his early works; in terms of personal choices and his writing, he operated within the frameworks of Serbian literature since the year 1920 (*Leksikon stranih pisaca*, 38–39).

Nevertheless, such appreciation of Andrić’s work evolved gradually. In the early 1990s, when Croatia became an independent state and at the peak of its nationalist euphoria, Andrić was ‘expelled’ – libraries disposed of his books, while he was denounced as a dishonest and immoral man who betrayed his homeland and rejected his ancestry for the sake of his career. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, his affinity for the Serbian cause came from his need to court Belgrade and the Serbs in power, and boost his diplomatic career. Likewise, after the war, he courted the ‘Yugo-communist Belgrade’. His works were observed from the same perspective.¹⁴

Such objections were already being stated in Croatia in Andrić’s lifetime. On a similar occasion, when at the assembly of *Matica hrvatska* in 1970, Šime Đodan proclaimed that Andrić, among other things, had renounced his people, he made a resigned comment: “It is a downpour which will never stop. I wish, more than anything, that I did not live to experience this... It is cruel and stirred by the wretched intentions of the *ustaša*! What do they want from me? And what for? I do not deserve it! All my long life I stood for unity and brotherhood. (...) Some Serbian chauvinists have also tried to defame me... Chauvinism is the same everywhere and always has the same intentions: to oppose true art and true harmony. I am saying this mainly to show that every national-chauvinism, including the one we refer to right now, always comes with

¹⁴ On the public defamation of Andrić in Croatia in the early 1990s, concerning the articles of the Croatian writer Branimir Donat in the Zagreb magazine *Vjesnik* from 29 December 1990 and 5 January 1991, see Karaulac, *Andrićeve kule i gradovi* 65–72



a hidden agenda, and that no less important task of us writers is to resist it wherever and whenever necessary.” (Jandrić, *Sa Ivom Andrićem* 73).

Nationalist defamation of Andrić had been criticized in the circles of liberal Croatian intellectuals.¹⁵ As the nationalist euphoria gradually lost its edge, Andrić's works began to be appreciated as paramount for Croatian literature, and Andrić himself as a Croatian writer. Academic Dubravko Jelačić, on the occasion of including Andrić in the representative edition ‘Centuries of Croatian Literature’ (*Stoljeća hrvatske književnosti*) described him as a “Croat who, due to unfortunate (we might say) circumstances, operated mainly within the frameworks of Serbian literature – like Vladan Desnica, to the contrary, a Serb who featured in the Croatian literature. As the Serbs already did in one of their editions of selected novels, selecting a novel from Desnica, we shall include Ivo Andrić in our edition ‘Centuries of Croatian Literature’ with the same right. I shall repeat: I am not saying that Andrić is a Croatian writer (...), but I am saying that he is *also* a Croatian writer, and that he *also* must not be ignored or forgotten. This correlative conjunction actually connects two separated identities. Andrić is, namely, both a Croatian and a Serbian author.” (Jelčić, “*Andrićeve hrvatske teme i Andrić kao hrvatska tema*” 18–19). Indicative for the attempts at re-introducing Andrić into the Croatian literature (including the claims that he based his literary expression on the Croatian literary heritage) is a remark from the Croatian writer and academic Ivan Aralica. Contrary to Andrić's well-known statement that he learned his language from Vuk Karadžić, Njegoš and folk poetry, Aralica suggests: “It seems to me, and Krleža shared this opinion, that Andrić continued the type of storytelling powerfully introduced into the Croatian literature by Matoš, using ‘inherited’ storytelling patterns (Jelačić claims the same). In Croatian literature, as opposed to Krleža's storytelling, it would be plausible to return to the one that originally came from Matoš, adopted in its most developed form by Ivo Andrić.” (Maštrović, “*Da li je Ivo Andrić (i) hrvatski pisac*” 257–282).

Objections to Andrić's personality and ‘conversions’, however, remained.¹⁶ The best descriptions of his ‘reintegration’ into the Croatian literature are Ivan Lovrenović's essay ‘Place of Ivo Andrić in the Croatian Literature’ (*Mjesto Ive Andrića u hrvatskoj književnosti*) (Lovrenović, *Ex tenebris. eseji, članci, razgovori*) and Dubravko Jelačić's 1999 contribution ‘Andrić's Croatian Themes and Andrić as a Croatian Theme’ (*Andrićeve hrvatske teme i Andrić kao hrvatska tema*) to the magazine *Forum* from Zagreb.

In the edition ‘Croatian Literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 100 Volumes’ (*Hrvatska književnost Bosne i Hercegovine u 100 knjiga*), published by *Matica hrvatska* from Sarajevo in 2006, Andrić is the most-represented writer, with four volumes (*Travnička hronika, Na Drini ćuprija, Prokleta avlija, Priče*).

¹⁵ See the contributions of Strahimir Primorac to the Zagreb magazine *Erazmus* (1995) and Krešimir Nemeć to *Republika* (1992)

¹⁶ Indicative in this sense is Željko Poljak's remark from the book published in samizdat, Croatian Author Ivo Andrić (Hrvatski književnik Ivo Andrić): “The Croats gave great men to many nations in the world: to the Serbs they gave a Nobel Prize winner (Andrić) and the first president of the Serbian Academy of Sciences (Josif Pančić)”.

Andrić in Serbia

In the late 1980s Andrić was already a ‘target’ for the most aggressive Serbian nationalists – because of his origins and Yugoslav convictions, as well as his opportunism and careerism, first in the Kingdom, and subsequently in the communist Yugoslavia. However, his place in the canons of Serbian literature was never seriously questioned. The Serbian literary historian Radovan Popović suggests that Andrić’s choice to be a part of Serbian literature should be respected: “Andrić wrote and undersigned that he considered himself a Serbian writer and there he put a full stop.” (Popović, *Andrićevo prijateljstva*).

This is not to say that there had been no abuses of Andrić’s work in Serbia and among the Bosnian Serbs. Nationalist intellectuals reshaped and used it for their purposes, adopting the accusations from Bosnian and Croatian nationalists about his pro-Serbian, hegemonic engagement. In such terms, Andrić’s writing was interpreted as representation of the suffering (due to the Turks) only of the Serbian population – a variation of the nationalist propaganda. In the foreword to the 1995 Serbian edition of Andrić’s dissertation, the Serbian literary critic Zoran Konstantinović wrote that the novel *Na Drini ćuprija* was “a synthesis of Andrić’s insights into the spiritual life and suffering of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those insights were already scientifically verified in his doctoral dissertation.” (Andrić, *Razvoj duhovnog života u Bosni pod uticajem turske vladavine*). The leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadžić, distributed to the Western diplomats copies of Andrić’s story ‘*Pismo iz 1920*’ (translated by his associate, the Anglicist Nikola Koljević) to support his claim that the common life of different ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not an option (Lovrenović, *Duh iz sindžira. Eseji, članci, polemike*). The counter-efforts of the liberal intellectuals in Serbia amounted to disclosing of the abuses and falsifying of Andrić’s legacy.

On the other hand, in a segment of the Serbian public scene, there had been accusations (not so loudly pronounced, but nevertheless present) on account of his inconsistency, opportunism and ‘Jesuitism’,¹⁷ including objections to his sympathies for Islam and disqualifications because of his Croatian ethnic background.¹⁸ In the reception of

¹⁷ In an official note, written in the first post-war years, one of his colleagues - diplomats wrote about him: “Andrić is a type of a capable routinized diplomat; however, he is a clam and invertebrate. Personally honest, but pathologically ambitious and a great careerist. In his conduct with others dignified and very tactical (...)” Vladislav Ribnikar gave a similar assessment of Andrić in a conversation with Vladimir Bakarić during the second session of AVNOJ in Jajce. Describing the characteristics of several Yugoslav pre-war diplomats, he said about him: “A true Jesuit, sleazy and dainty.” When Jovan Dučić received from the cabinet of the minister of foreign affairs Milan Stojadinović a demand to enclose a matriculation certificate (he never acquired), he said resentfully: “This is a humbug of that Jesuit Andrić.” Isidora Sekulić also attached this qualification to Andrić, disclosing his nature in an accusing retrospective to Radovan Zogović who visited her in 1947/1948 in her house on Senjak. (Karaulac, “*Andrić u Berlinu*”)

¹⁸ Branko Lazarević’s book *Dnevnik jednoga nikoga, 1941–1946* contains most of the negative, defamation claims about Andrić, which followed him in his lifetime and after his death in particular circles in Serbia. Among other things, Lazarević wrote: “He is, therefore, a catholic, a Bosnian catholic. He is a Bosniak. This name, however, bears a bad name. This is where the janissaries, dahi from Belgrade, Austrian ‘šuckori’ came from: such is the whole of Bosnia except Bosanska Krajina. As intellectuals, they are very dishonest and unstable (the assassination in Sarajevo was carried out by men from Krajina and Herzegovina); they are ambitious, lustful, hungry for power, money, food... Ivo Andrić comes from those circles: moreover,



Andrić's work in Serbia there is an additional current accusing him of anti-Serbian sentiments concealed behind the mask of his Yugoslav affiliations – a claim adopted from the positions of the radical Serbian and anti-Yugoslav nationalism. Indicative in this sense is Mirjana Stojisavljević's essay 'Andrić's dissertation in a cultural and linguistic context' ('*Andrićeva disertacija u kulturološkom i jezičkom kontekstu*'). According to Stojisavljević, in his dissertation and literary works Andrić unscrupulously falsified historical facts at Serbian expense, favoring the pro-Western catholic impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This he did from declaratively Yugoslav positions; however, they were essentially pro-Croatian, indeed pro-catholic – aiming at 'catholicizing' the Serbian population and fragmenting of the Serbian cultural realm (Stojisavljević, "*Andrićeva disertacija u kulturološkom i jezičkom kontekstu*" 139). Besides, Andrić's support for the unity of Serbs and Croats in the Yugoslav community contained 'the evil spirit of Croatization', whereas 'the ideological construct of Andrić's literary work had been and had remained in the service of the Croat Roman-Catholic expansionism' (Stojisavljević, "*Andrićeva disertacija u kulturološkom i jezičkom kontekstu*" 125).

This demonstrates how in the post-Yugoslav period the most aggressive Moslem, Croatian and Serbian nationalists attacked Andrić from more or less the same anti-Yugoslav positions, using not literary but biographical, historical and political evidence to argue that his personal, political and literary pro-Yugoslav orientation actually threatened their respective national communities, cultures and identities. Observed together, they indeed demonstrate the impossibility of reducing Andrić's work to rigid national frameworks – and its essentially 'supra-national' character.

Enver Kazaz wrote the following about the interpretation of Andrić's work in the national key: "In our times Andrić's literature became an arena of open conflicts of competing ideologies. In the former, totalitarian system, they were admittedly concealed, but no less effective: subsequently, they crucially determined the profile and axiology of reception of this literature in a segment of academic literary circles. The wider reception could not remain unaffected by those conflicts either, to the point that a soldier of *Republika Srpska* in Višegrad used Andrić's literature in front of foreign reporters as an argument for his struggle and a support for his ideological leanings. On the other hand, the act of demolishing Ivo Andrić's monument (in the beginning of 1992 in the same city) may be understood as an ideological dispute with the writer." (Kazaz, "*Egzistencijalnost/povijesnost Bosne – interpretacija u zamci ideologije*").

he comes from the catholic Bosnia; from Bosnia the most cunning and unpatriotic, and the most Austrian. Fra Ivo comes from such Bosnia. However, if one would search for his attachments to Bosnia, the strongest would be for the Moslems. His work is almost exclusively Moslem-Oriental. He loved the East. He often repeated this to me, and this is the only thing he expressed clearly. He was more of a bey than a fra. He was almost sorry because Muhammad's faith expired in Europe, especially in Bosnia, and because it belonged in the past." (Lazarević, *Dnevnik jednoga nikoga, 1941–1946*, 340–353)

Conclusion

Andrić's legacy is paramount for the South Slavic culture. Its contemporary reception demonstrates that, even today, it cannot be reduced to narrow national frameworks, surviving as a measure of the irreducibility of the South Slavic heritage to separate ethnic identities. Andrić is currently perceived as the key intercultural South Slavic writer who, in terms of belonging, belongs to everyone who can read his works without a translation. The Croatian Slavist Zvonko Kovač provides a comprehensive list of writers from the South Slavic area who may be considered intercultural. According to his criteria of interculturality, Andrić assumes the "leading role, almost as a model" among those authors (Kovač, "*Ivo Andrić kao interkulturalni pisac*" 103). For Andrić, like in his famous novel, one of the most important symbolical images was the representation of a bridge – a testimony to the efforts of the human spirit to reach and connect separated riverbanks. Nevertheless, Andrić's writing itself represents such a bridge between the South Slavic nations and cultures.

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POVZETEK

Andrić kot objekt sovraštvā: recepcija Andrićevih del v postjugoslovanskem kontekstu

V »intelektualnih« krogih in literarnih revijah se občasno pojavljajo polemični teksti, v katerih se presojojōče razpravlja o Andrićevih pripadnostih kot tudi o političnih konotacijah njegovih del, in sicer v luči kompleksnih historičnih povezav med tremi južnoslovanskimi državami, ki si Andrića prisvajajo kot svojo intelektualno »lastnino«: Bosna in Hercegovina, Hrvaška in Srbija. V kontekstu literarnih, zgodovinskih in političnih interpretacij svojih del se je Andrić znašel v središču debate o posebnih identitetah južnoslovanskih etničnih skupin.

V postjugoslovanskem obdobju so z bolj ali manj enakega antijugoslovanskega stališča Andrića napadali najbolj agresivni med muslimanskimi, hrvaškimi in srbskimi nacionalisti, pri tem pa niso uporabljali literarnih, temveč biografske, zgodovinske in politične dokaze za razpravo o tem, kako je Andrićeva osebna, politična in literarna pro-jugoslovanska usmeritev dejansko ogrožala vsako izmed omenjenih nacionalnih skupnosti, kultur in identitet. Vse to kaže, da je Andrićevo delo nemogoče zreducirati v ozke nacionalne okvirje, poleg tega pa sodobna negativna recepcija pri domoljubnih kritikih na Hrvaškem, v Bosni in Hercegovini ter Srbiji potrjuje dejstvo, da je Andrić danes eden od ključnih interkulturalnih južnoslovanskih pisateljev.