

Making Sense of the Present: Citizenship and Democracy in Postemotional and Postcommunism Societies

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Izvorni znanstveni rad
Primljeno: 23. listopada 1998.

Postemotionalism claims transcending the modernist-postmodernist debate by focusing on the pragmatic and real as opposed to purely academic concepts of democracy and citizenship. Autor's analyses refers particularly to the comparative aspects of postemotional publics and leaders in USA, Western Europe and in postcommunist societies.

Key words: CITIZENSHIP, DEMOCRACY, POSTEMOTIONALISM, POSTCOMMUNISM

From a purely academic point of view, abstract and lifeless, the current state of postcommunism represents the chaos of postmodernism that is loathed by modernists whereas progress toward democracy suggests privilege, purpose, centralised planning, and rationality, all of which make it a modernist phenomenon loathed by postmodernists (Rosenau, 1992).

In ivory tower discussions, the modernists speak and write about human rights, free markets, and democratic principles as items that can be exported to the sub-civilised postcommunist nations (Fukuyama, 1992).

The modernists seek to impose order onto the chaos of Balkanisation, a Russia run by mafias, "disorganised" economic systems, and nationalist and ethnic strife in formerly communist nations (Ritzer, 1992).

On the other extreme, one finds the postmodernists expressing indignation at the suggestion that any person, dogma, or concept in the West is somehow "privileged" in a chaotic universe devoid of truth. Why should the West's versions of human rights, free markets, and democracy be privileged? (Bauman, 1993).

Out of intellectual hubris or desire for consistency, the postmodernists in academia cannot allow this move, for if one privileges these notions regarding the politics of postcommunism, one must admit the existence of truth and principles in all other areas of discourse. But if the postmodernists were to allow this, then they would be forced to privilege "narratives" (or "stories") of truth, valour, moral causes and other phenomena as distinguished from falsehood, cowardice, immorality, and evil. This, the postmodernists cannot do. In academia as well as politics, despite some exceptions, the general response to recent wars from Croatia to Rwanda (and most recently, Kosovo), has been along the lines of the postmodernist journalist: If there is no truth, all one can seek is opposing points of view. So, the Croats have a point of view, and the Serbs have a point of view - both are equally legitimate and equally illegitimate. Similarly, the Tutsis and the Hutus have opposing points of view. So long as one is attentive to opposing points of view, one has performed one's duty as an open-minded intellectual in this, our so-called post-modern age. Implicit in this seemingly even-handed approach is the promise that the post-modern journalist, scholar, or politician will be able to return to the modernist West with its privileged concepts and privileged life-style.

If old-fashioned modernist distinctions and differentiation must be invoked, then they must be invoked when it no longer matters, when calling genocide what was labelled a "civil war" no longer makes a difference.

President Clinton referred to genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia after the killing had stopped. During the killing, his Administration called it tribal warfare.

This is one aspect of what I refer to as "postemotionalism" in my recent book (Mestrovic, 1997).

Moreover, the theoretical scaffolding of postmodernism carries with it the expectation that it will lead to tolerance, or can lead to tolerance (especially in Zygmunt Bauman's writings.). (Bauman, 1989; 1991; 1992).

But I agree with Akbar Ahmed (Ahmed, 1992) that intolerance and ethnic strife, not tolerance, seem to be the rule, not the exception, in the years that have accompanied the postmodernist discourse. Another plank in the post-modern scaffolding is that it purports to rebel against the grand narratives of the Enlightenment, which are depicted as having contributed to all sorts of evils, from the Holocaust to Communism (Lyotard, 1984).

The assumption is that this rebellion will produce a less evil world than that handed down to us by the Enlightenment legacy. Thus, the model often given is that of the "salad bowl" of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism to replace the oppressive model of assimilation. But the unforeseen consequence of multiculturalism has often been an emotional orgy of revenge, grievances, and contempt between the sexes and between other cultural groups in the West, and old-fashioned ethnic strife in postcommunist nations (Mestrovic, 1994).

What is the postcommunist nation supposed to do in this state of affairs? To seek the derivatives of the Enlightenment such as rule of law, rational and free markets, and the kind of civil society that leads to tolerant citizenship not only invites mockery by the postmodernists who point out that Communism was derived from the Enlightenment. Additionally, it is to seek ghosts from the past, because it is no longer self-evident that these lofty sounding phenomena exist in the West. Rather, the West indulges itself in a simulation of these modernist products and tries to cover up its uncivil society (from the perspective of its minorities), elite class structure, and other irrationalisms (Baudrillard, 1983).

On the other hand, to defy the West's new colonialism, to expose its hypocrisy, to seek one's own way toward citizenship and democracy is to run the risk of losing IMF funding, of being punished by economic sanctions, of being excluded from membership in coveted organisations from the EU to NATO, and so on. What should political, intellectual, and other leaders in postcommunist nations do under these circumstances?

In this analysis, I do not intend to stay locked within the parameters of the modernist-postmodernist debate. Rather, I shall attempt to transcend this debate by referring to what I call postemotionalism. I do not want to give glib replies to what I consider to be difficult, ambivalent, and ambiguous positions. And I would like to focus on the pragmatic and the real, not just the concepts of ivory tower academicians. Thus, one should begin with the observation that the serious issues being considered by postcommunist countries as to their political and economic futures are being eclipsed by President Clinton's sex life.

Moreover, the drama of President Clinton's political problems vis-à-vis sex is occurring in a postemotional society. Postemotional society harks back into the distant past in order to make sense of the present, from the Serbs invoking a grievance from the year 1389 in order to justify their violence in Kosovo and Greece using the memory of Alexander the Great in order to block the existence of Macedonia to France and England still nursing their wounds at losing their stature as founders of civilisation and the Enlightenment. Similarly, Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr and the Republicans are using the moral code of the Puritan era in order to hurt President Clinton politically when no other means worked (Whitewater, Filegate, Chinagate, Paula Jones and the other events from recent history fizzled out.) Yet 1998 is not the era of the Scarlet Letter! To the genuine surprise and disappointment of

much of the rest of the world - which is trying to cope with present problems and visions of the future - a moral code that used to evoke genuine emotions among the Puritans is being used today in order to depict the President as a criminal.

The American public, too, is postemotional. It does not see modernist things like perjury, obstruction of justice, or even adultery in the old-fashioned sense of an emotional outrage and desecration of marriage. At some level, the public knows that if anyone other than the President were charged with these things, it would be a very emotional matter indeed, likely to result in jail time, fines, or divorce and serious financial penalties. Yet it responds with a blase attitude, not moral indignation, when it considers these matters relative to the President. It's not just that the economy is doing well: the public is clearly aware that its emotions are being manipulated by both the Republicans and the President.

The postemotional President Clinton is a lawyer in an Administration that boasts more lawyers than any other in US history. His use of language and demeanour betray a lawyer's manipulative style. Thus, the President claimed that according to some definitions of sex and relationship, he did not lie when he denied having either with Monica Lewinsky. He was simply withholding information. He admitted to "misleading" others, but not to asking them to lie. Lawyers routinely work with the most emotionally charged events of life - death, divorce, injury, crime - but always in the least emotional manner possible. And so it is with President Clinton's performance: it is flawless, legally and professionally, but it lacks the real emotional fire of both love and contrition. But note that he and his Administration do something similar when it comes to foreign policy: They did not lie when they called Belgrade-sponsored genocide a "civil war" although they "misled" the world. They did not lie when they imposed "peace" in Bosnia, even though this "peace" has led to the de facto ethnic partition of Bosnia. And so on for Chechnya and other problem areas in the postcommunist world.

There are at least ten characteristics to this political interplay between the postemotional President and postemotional society. Leaders in postcommunist nations might benefit from recognising these characteristics. My reference to the "postemotional President" refer both to President Clinton and to a more generalised, ideal-type of such a President in the USA, Western Europe, or eventually, postcommunist nations. I see the postemotional President as the harbinger of the political future with implications for the postemotional citizen and postemotional education. It is impossible to do more than to sketch the parameters of this complicated interplay:

1. The postemotional President is "nice," and thereby neutralises any real opposition to him

Only a generation ago, all of the world's political leaders scowled.

Smiling, "nice" leaders would have been considered weak or non-serious. They either ignored or defied public opinion polls. Transparently racist and sexist remarks were expressed openly in the street and the media. In the current fin de siecle, at least in postemotional societies, much of that has changed. While most political leaders in postcommunist countries still scowl and do not smile, successful political leaders such as Bill Clinton smile and are regarded as "nice" by their constituents. Tony Blair is a clone of Bill Clinton in this cultural regard and is the vanguard of the postemotionalization of European politics. It was possible to get really mad at a scowling President Nixon, but nearly impossible to feel rage at the nice President Clinton. Postemotional society is a society without real opposition. If the opposition is perceived as "not-nice" - as is the case now with Newt Gingrich, the non-smiling Bob Dole and the Republicans - it will evoke fear, not support.

For example, the old-fashioned, inner-directed, and definitely not-nice President Truman dropped the atomic bomb on Japan without much explanation or concern for public

opinion. But contemporary postemotional leaders, such as Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, can cut aid to welfare mothers (arguably a mean act) without any risk to their popularity because they explained this act of "tough love" as a nice thing to do for poor mothers.

In international affairs too, Clinton withheld weapons from Bosnians while they were being slaughtered by Serbs and he kept a cruel economic embargo on Iraq that arguably killed hundreds of thousands of innocents, among other acts that were definitely not "nice." But despite some opposition to these acts, Clinton prevailed with the majority because he rationalised his decisions in nice terms: Giving Bosnians weapons to defend themselves would only have prolonged the war, and he was trying to help the Iraqi people by punishing their leader, Saddam Hussein, not them.

The lesson to be drawn for the Presidents of postcommunist countries is obvious: deal with the West through public relations firms and elect Presidents who are charming and know how to smile the Western smile. Milosevic has learned this lesson, and was America's darling at Dayton, whereas the non-smiling Tadjman and Izetbegovic were not liked by the Americans. Elect Presidents who are "nice" by Western standards, and you will go far.

2. The postemotional President must be capable of holding one's emotional fire

Old-timers and rare inner-directed types who manage to hold postemotional society at a distance today exhibit behaviours that most people find objectionable, namely: when presenting their views in private, to a family, or larger audience, they shout, use their hands wildly to gesture, and sometimes turn red in the face or exhibit other physical symptoms as signs of emotional commitment to what they are saying. A generation ago, showing one's emotional fire was a sign of sincerity, even distinction. Who will ever forget images of Khrushchev banging his shoe on the table at the United Nations? Or Hitler shouting madly at the Nazi rallies? In the current fin de siècle in the West - and it is important to note that emotional fire is still exhibited in Eastern Europe, Russia, and other areas outside the West - the inability to hold one's emotional fire in check is the kiss of death when it comes to respectability. Everyone knows, and expects, that TV commentators, professors, politicians, ministers, doctors, and almost everyone in postemotional society must present the most emotional messages (death, catastrophe, joy, indignation) in the blandest terms possible.

Contrast, for example, the relatively remarkable composure of Americans on TV who have survived a tornado with the weeping, wailing, and other disturbingly emotional reactions of their counterparts in a non-western nation to a natural catastrophe. The postemotional type in the West must not throw his or her self on the casket of a loved one, for example, though this is acceptable behaviour outside the West. The postemotional widow must not wear black for years after her husband's death; she must "bounce back" in about a week. And the postemotional President must not express genuine contrition, passion or other emotion vis-à-vis Monica Lewinsky, terrorism, or any other phenomenon.

Despite calls for such emotional catharsis by some Republican Senators, the truth is that American society would not stand for it - it demands tightly scripted and controlled presentations of the postemotional President's distilled emotions. This includes anger at terrorists: it must be a carefully-managed anger that cannot be misconstrued as blood lust.

Except for President Kucan, Presidents in most postcommunist nations still shout and turn red in the face when they speak. If they seek the financial fruits of the West's simulated concern for them, then they must emulate the self-control of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair.

3. The postemotional President is manipulative

Political leaders have manipulated their constituents in all places in all epochs, of course. Yet pre-postemotional societies, and some non-western societies today, had or still

have rigid caste, class, and other hierarchical systems that demanded or still demand instant obedience to authority. In by-gone days, a President might have denied a sexual scandal - had anyone dared to make it public - and his authority would have been enough to deter further probing. This was routine in Communist countries: defy Brezhnev or Tito or any other Communist leader, and you're out of the picture. But in postemotional society, where most people are other-directed and consider themselves to be everyone else's equals, manipulation becomes normative and authoritarianism is gauche. Thus, President Clinton's early denials of sex became the starting-point for further disclosure to the "jury of his peers," namely, the public, which feels almost equal to "Bill" in a democratic society. But it's not just the President whose authority has been levelled this way in postemotional society. Western children now manipulate their parents for privileges that simply would have been unheard of a generation ago. For example, since corporal punishment is on the decline or nearly extinct in the USA, most parents and authorities use the "time out" as punishment. In a "time out," the child is sent to one's room or a room in a school. But increasingly, children today demand to watch their favourite videos on their television sets in their bedrooms during the time out. Or children negotiate their compliance with rules by extorting other concessions out of their parents, such as extending bedtime. In general, social relationships, from the most private to the most public, involve the negotiation of "deals" based on implicit or explicit "agendas."

For example, opinion-makers have made the observation that Hillary and Bill Clinton represent the marriage of the 21st century, based not on love, but a common agenda. Feminists support Bill Clinton, not the woman he is purported to have harassed, because he shares their agenda. Even university professors and students in the US have arrived at an implicit "deal" based upon an understood "agenda:" The students won't bother the professor by coming to office hours if the professor won't make too many demands on the students such as requiring essay tests or papers. Politicians are allowed many scandals that might have brought them down in the past so long as they don't make demands on the voting populace, such as sending young men and women off to wars in which they might come back in body bags. In general, the postemotional self is prepared to make explicit as well as implicit deals in all walks of life, and he or she seeks out others who share one's agenda. The American public has made an implicit deal with the postemotional President Clinton: We will tolerate all of your scandals and let you manipulate us so long as you keep the not-nice conservatives off our backs. In this way, the American public manipulates the President too, because it fears the tendency of conservatives to want to impose Puritanism in the current fin de millenium.

The restructuring of postcommunist family and educational institutions implied by these insights would involve a shift from authoritarian obedience to negotiation and "deal-making" between authority figures and those without power. This is the only way to prepare the next generation for a world that seems to be following the American model of social relations. Internationally, postcommunist leaders must learn to discern the West's agendas, and wed themselves to that agenda. Ironically, Slobodan Milosevic was the one who did this very well from the outset of the war that began in 1991: he knew that the West's agenda was to suppress secessionism and that the West would support him, implicitly, against the "wild" (but actually mild-mannered) secessionist, Milan Kucan. Presidents Tudjman and Izetbegovic were simply naive, and wrong, to think that the West would support their drives for independence. Independence is simply not on the West's agenda today.

4. The postemotional President must possess superb social skills in order to succeed, or even survive politically

I anticipate the rejoinder that the postemotional President must have different social skills from those that were required in tradition-directed or inner-directed eras. Of course,

this is true to some extent: all politicians must possess some degree of social skills suitable to the eras in which they live. Here I am claiming something else, namely, that public relations have become an absolutely essential ingredient of all social life. Hence, the President of the United States as well as the government agencies that he controls all hire veritable armies of public relations experts whose job is to filter raw reality into something palatable for the masses. But something similar is true for celebrities, CEOs, corporations, schools, hospitals, churches, stores, and most other social institutions in the West. It is understood that one "slip-up," one "misstep," one politically incorrect statement caught by the media can result in lawsuits, loss of public support, and eventual demise for one's public life. For example, Monica Lewinsky's attorney, Mr. William Ginsburg, made the cardinal mistake in post-emotional society of writing an "open letter" to Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr that was emotional and combative. He was replaced almost immediately with a team of lawyers more seasoned in public relations whose first act was a "photo opportunity" in which they remained mute in response to all questions, yet smiled nicely.

Arguably, President Tudjman of Croatia has been the most hurt postcommunist leader due to his non-reliance on public relations experts. His jokes, remarks, and writings have been manipulated by such experts in the West in order to depict him as a racist and anti-Semite. Again ironically, it is President Slobodan Milosevic who has emerged as the most skilled postcommunist leader in terms of public relations: His current actions in Kosovo are explained as the imposition of "law and order" onto a land besieged by "terrorists." The postmodernists and modernists will never resolve their philosophical debates concerning truth. But pragmatically, the important insight is that in the postemotional world, public relations is everything, and truth is irrelevant.

5. The postemotional President regresses to childhood

Postemotional society indulges its children at the same time that it exposes them to adult themes at increasingly young ages: There are pilgrimage sites devoted to childhood such as Disneyworld, Six Flags and others; most restaurants have playgrounds on the premises, from McDonald's to Mr. Gatti's pizza and many others; cable television offers the 24-hour "Cartoon Network" and so many other channels devoted to children that previous generations - the last one raised on "Saturday morning cartoons" - could not have imagined today's variety; there exist department stores for toys such as Toys R Us; the Internet has children's sites; there are computer CDs for children devoted to games as well as learning reading and other skills - and so on. Yet today's Disney movies display cleavage; the Internet is deemed by many as dangerous to children because it exposes them to perverts; and the Cartoon Network has an awful lot of advertisements aimed at adults even though it is purportedly a children's channel. Even Las Vegas - referred to by Jean Baudrillard as "the great whore in the desert" - has been refurbished to be oriented toward children and families. The notorious 42nd Street in New York City has also been Disneyfied. History will record that no society prior to postemotional society was as committed to the fun of childhood. It is a society geared toward instant and immediate gratification of impulses, not restraint.

But the Presidency, too, has fallen victim to this general trend. The unspoken truth about President Clinton's several alleged sexual escapades is that they send a message to the country that immediate gratification of sexual impulses outside of marriage and within a position of power is OK. Along with Las Vegas and 42nd Street, the White House has simultaneously become a focus of sexuality and "family-oriented" values. Without the public's moral indignation that a White House intern was apparently seduced by the President of the United States, the public is accepting two disparate propositions: one can and should send one's children to Washington DC for training in political values and one sends one's children

there at their own risk sexually. But this is not fundamentally different from Las Vegas and other "sin cities" catering to sin and families simultaneously.

Is there a lesson here for postcommunist leaders? I think there is. The current President of France is supporting a theme park in the South of France that will simulate volcanoes. This is a child-like departure from the more serious Mitterrand's focus on the Louvre. Tony Blair is supporting the construction of a hugely expensive "millennium dome" which will basically be a British Disneyworld. Even Presidential Libraries in the USA today are really imitations of Disneyworld rather than what they sound like they are (serious-sounding "libraries"). Postcommunist leaders have not learned this lesson yet: Milosevic treats Kosovo too seriously when he should turn it into a tourist attraction for children, like the Alamo in Texas. All of the postcommunist leaders need to consider turning their gulags and prisons from the Communist eras into American-styled tourist attractions. This will earn them not only tourist money, but understanding and empathy from the postemotional West, which is busily Disneyfying all of its sites of sin.

6. The postemotional President is backward-looking

On both the collective and individual levels of analysis, postemotional society's energy is focused on the past, not the future. The postmodernists have uncovered some of this tendency in their writings on nostalgia and the recycling of music, fashion, films, and icons from the 1950s and 1960s. But this tendency extends far beyond popular culture. For example, some of the most significant political movements in the past few decades have been oriented toward the past: Following their education in France, the Ayatollah Khomeini tried to force Iran into the 12th century while Pol Pot attempted a similar, ancient, mythical "utopia" in Cambodia, respectively. The Serbs slaughtered Muslims in the 1990s in the name of a battle that occurred in 1389! Greece opposed Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia on the basis of a dispute over Macedonia's supposed role as the birthplace of Alexander the Great. The United States continues to suffer from its Vietnam Syndrome by avoiding all conflicts that can result in body bags, and engaging in short, winnable, 100% safe (for its warriors) wars. On local levels, too, one notices a similar tendency. The guides on the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas now refer to the San Antonio river by its Native American name. The Alamo is no longer referred to as a shrine to democracy - it really used to be called that, in writing - but has become a point of contention between Hispanics who claim that the Battle of the Alamo was fought for gold and Anglos who want to maintain the heroic version of events. From Scotland and Quebec to Kurdistan and long-forgotten peoples in Mongolia and Siberia, old cultural referents are being revived at a scale that most modernists could not have envisioned a generation ago.

Curiously, the American Presidency is not immune to this process. President Clinton is constantly trying to emulate his hero, JFK, and to re-create a simulated Camelot. In fact, President Clinton takes from any earlier President any aspect of his character or legacy as suits him at the moment: From JFK, the charm of youth and the stereotype of life in Camelot; from Nixon, a toughness toward Muslims; from Reagan, elementary supply-side economics; from Roosevelt, a supposed concern with the pain of every man and woman; from Lincoln, a multiculturalism and tolerance; from Jimmy Carter, the image of peacemaker in foreign affairs, etc. Ironically, President Clinton is said to be obsessed with his place in history, but will most likely not have such a "place" (in the old-fashioned sense) precisely because he is not making history through a focus on the present and the future.

Postcommunist nations are decidedly ambivalent on this point. On the one hand, they have the focus on the past down pat: Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, and Bosniak languages are being reinvented by going back to their "purity" centuries ago. This is but one example among many. On the other hand, postcommunist nations are anxious about their futures vis-à-vis NATO, SECI, the EU, other organisations, and of course, the civil societies, free

markets, and democratic principles mentioned at the outset. But here we have arrived full circle at the crux of the problem: Postcommunist societies, despite some tendencies toward postemotionalism, seem to be more forward-looking than Western nations, which are drowning in nostalgia, simulacra, and postemotionalism.

7. The postemotional President is post-therapeutic and post-anxious

It used to be chic to refer to ours as the "age of anxiety." But anxiety has mutated into something new that is difficult to conceptualise. Whereas shame and guilt preserved the privacy of neurotics in previous eras, postemotional society impels individuals to expose their own innermost feelings and secrets as well as the secrets of others in the public media and/or to others. Nothing is really private any longer.

Thus, the sexual affairs of Presidents prior to Bill Clinton were kept secret on the basis of shame and guilt. But the entire world discusses Bill Clinton's sexual life. In other areas of life, too, the postemotional President has disclosed fears, confusions, and ambivalence during press conferences that leaders prior to him would have found embarrassing to disclose. Such disclosures make Clinton likeable and enable ordinary Americans to conclude that he is as anxious as they are. Yet Americans do not hear Clinton's line, "I feel your pain," because postemotional society assumes that each person is locked in their own private universe of pain and meaning. There is no real sense of community anymore.

Postcommunist societies are nowhere near this state of post-anxious individualism. These societies are still driven by shame, guilt, and conformity to the expectations of various communities. If education in these countries continues to be geared toward making a good Slovene, Croat, Serb, or other nationalist citizen, he or she will be perceived as old-fashioned and somewhat dangerous by the postemotional West. On the other hand, who wants to educate their children to become lonely, isolated citizens of the global village but without any particular ties to village, family, neighbourhood, or even nation? Yet this is precisely what the postemotional West seems to be doing.

8. The postemotional President strives constantly to create fake communities

One of the most telling signs for postemotional society is the manner in which President Clinton's televised "town hall meetings" are staged. The very fact that a town hall meeting of yesteryear has to be staged bespeaks the nostalgia and focus on the past discussed earlier. But it also bespeaks a need to fake a feeling of community even though everyone knows that communities are pretty much extinct. Additionally, the simulation of community is driven by the anxiety that someone or a group will disrupt the idealised and televised sense of community. Hence, the participants in these town hall meetings are carefully screened; their questions are rehearsed ahead of time; President Clinton's answers are rehearsed ahead of time; and he gets feedback from small groups that rate him prior to the telecast. The result is a flawless depiction of community and harmony in America. It should go without saying that is a far cry from the spontaneous and unpredictable town hall meetings that used to occur in historical reality.

One must not idealise community. Traditional communities included - and in many postcommunist countries, still include - racism, sexism, and many forms of intolerance that postemotional societies have sought to eliminate because of the focus on "niceness." Tradition - and inner-directed societies were anything but "nice." What is interesting sociologically is that instead of letting go of the need for traditional community - with its warts and all - as incompatible with the needs of postemotional society for a nice, tolerant social environment, the postemotional self seeks to be manipulated into participating in a fake and idealised sense of community.

Thus, increasingly, political conventions are scripted and carefully controlled, as are most events that invite people to participate in a civic sense. The Presidential race between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole was scripted to an extreme degree. Synthetic "town hall meetings" were staged for the television camera; party conventions were scripted for the television medium; the candidates' rhetoric was compressed into sound bytes suitable for contemporary television. Bob Dole was coached to smile and eschew old-fashioned, inner-directed expressions of passion while Bill Clinton seems perfectly at ease in the other-directed ethos of managed niceness that looks constantly to the electorate as a jury of his peers. Similarly, PTA meetings, the openings of museums, football games, graduations, and other sites of "collective effervescence" are now carefully managed. The last thing that postemotional society wants is the spontaneous effusion of passions. Everyone knows that these events are staged, but they go along with the deceit for reasons already covered: nostalgia, anxiety that something unpleasant might happen, the need for niceness, infantile regression, and so on.

Ironically, the postemotional West has a lot to learn about the creation of what Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1995) calls "synthetic traditions" and communities from the post-communist nations. (For a critique of Giddens on this point, see: S. Mestrovic (1998) **Anthony Giddens: The Last Modernist**. London: Routledge). Communists were masters of creating the fake community or "spontaneous" meeting, such as the highly orchestrated rally in Kosovo in 1989 that ignited the most recent Balkan War. Thus, as the West is preaching liberalism, freedom, and openness to formerly Communist nations, it is increasingly engaging in near-totalitarian mind-control through the complete control of synthetic traditions and community life.

9. The postemotional President must be master of the empty gesture

NATO jets fly high over Albania - so high that nobody can hear or see them - yet one reads that these flights are meant to be construed as "signals" and warnings to Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia. Yet, clearly, Milosevic has not been getting the message for nearly a decade now. Similarly, American missiles slam into suspected terrorist sites in Sudan and Afghanistan, and again, these are supposed to be "signals" to terrorists. But everyone knows terrorism has become more visible in the contemporary world and cannot be stopped by a few missiles. Increasingly, the postemotional President does little more than mouth some slogans that are often obviously out of touch with reality. For example, President Clinton, like most other politicians today, talks about America's commitment to the rule of law at the same time that the USA is one of the few countries to oppose the establishment of a permanent Tribunal to punish international war crimes. The President refers to America's commitment to human rights in many speeches, yet most analysts felt that he appeased Chinese oppressors upon his recent visit there. The hard truths that these empty gestures mask are that NATO is impotent, the West will not stop Belgrade-sponsored genocide, terrorism is growing, America refuses to make the giant leap toward rule of law internationally by supporting an international Tribunal, and appeasement seems to rule international politics today.

But could it be otherwise? Could the postemotional President take tough stands regarding NATO, Serbia, China, and so on, and continue to enjoy high ratings in the polls? No, because committing the US to more than empty gestures in the world would force Americans to make sacrifices they are not prepared to make: to lose sons and daughters in battles; to allow Americans to go on trial for war crimes; to pay higher prices for goods if China were punished economically, and so on. The postemotional response of the empty gesture is the only one that really works in today's international politics, because it requires minimal commitment.

The postemotional President seems to grasp this intuitively. President Clinton's "travels" across America are post-modern in that they rely less on helicopters, buses, and planes, and

more on television and the Internet. On his voyages through cyberspace and the airwaves he offers some sensational surprises to his constituencies: robots on Mars; the "world's finest education system;" a minimum stay of 48 hours in birthing rooms so mothers can introduce their babies to the world; 100,000 new police on the streets; 50,000 volunteers to register voters; lowering the budget deficit; eco-protection of canyons in Utah; help to the handicapped; minority rights to gays and lesbians; intellectual freedom to academics; discipline, strength, and resoluteness to soldiers; peace in Bosnia; peace in the Middle East; a supercomputer that can perform more calculations in a second than all Americans could compute in a thousand years, etc.

Clinton's America is Disneyland. This, of course, is Baudrillard's central claim concerning postmodernism: all of America is the simulation of Disneyland (Baudrillard, 1987). A world of imagination and illusions, a world from the Wizard of Oz. In one of his speeches, he summarised his vision for America: "strong economy, good schools, safe streets, a clean environment, healthy children, successful families and communities." Where can one find such a place save Main Street USA in Orlando? Clinton offers a futuristic, utopian vision of America as the New World, the promised land of the 21st century, a land he wants to and knows how to lead American across "a bridge to the 21st century." According to the Nexus database, Clinton has used the bridge metaphor 243 times or 9.35 times per speech. The bridge metaphor taps into the American collective consciousness going back to mythical as well as real American crossings across rivers without bridges and to the romantic myths surrounding the Golden Gate Bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge, "bridging the gap," and other bridges, real or fictional.

What does this imply for education and citizenship in postcommunist nations? It is the height of cynicism to suggest that postcommunist children should be taught to see through Disneyfied promises of bridges to a utopian future. Can civil society be built on a society of cynics? It is difficult to answer this question, yet clearly, Disneyfied civil society already presupposes cynicism.

10. The postemotional President must smile and have nice teeth

Consider Senator Bob Dole's sour image in the last Presidential campaign versus the sunny, other-directed, nicest President ever, Bill Clinton. No matter what Dole said or did, he could not shake the grumpy image he created in the American consciousness. Dole's advisers tried to get him to smile, but he couldn't get it right. This would be a fascinating research project, to determine precisely what goes into the smile in postemotional society that is just right. Bill Clinton has the just right smile. No matter how many scandals dog Bill Clinton, his ratings in the polls stay high because he is so "nice" and his smiling demeanour is somehow perfect. Take careful note of where and how the postemotional President smiles: With Nelson Mandela in Mandela's prison cell (is this a happy occasion by inner-directed standards?), with his wife at the very spot where African slaves were shoved into waiting ships (is this something to smile about?), at a "roast" where he poked fun at his problems with women who accuse him of sexual advances, and so on. By all accounts, including the kiss-and-tell book by his former advisor, Clinton's was a studied, carefully crafted niceness that signifies something about him as well as the American society that he leads. It is simply to glib to dismiss the meaning of the smile as empty, as the postmodernists do, or to ignore it, as the modernists do. The smile in postemotional society should be taken very seriously. It is a central component of appearing "nice."

Having a nice smile goes with having nice teeth in postemotional society. History will no doubt record that no generation prior to this one had ever been as obsessed with clean, straight, pearly white teeth as this one. The nice smile is commensurate with the demand that

the postemotional self must live in a "nice" neighbourhood, have a "nice" family, and have a "nice" life (not just a nice day). I contend that postemotional types seek out the nice smile and nice lifestyle because these signify that the Other is like "us" - anxious, tormented ways that are understandable, able to be manipulated in predictable ways, and ultimately safe or safer than the truly Other. The truly Other is the inner-directed type, the traditionalist, the fanatic, the fundamentalist, the terrorist, the symbol of chaos and rage that cannot be tamed, manipulated, or controlled. This is why Bill Clinton's ratings go up every time it is disclosed that he is "like us" in America. This is why Newt Gingrich and the Republicans will never sway the postemotional type - Republicans are terrifying in their non-smiling demeanour. This is why the friendly Slobodan Milosevic will never be stopped from brutalising serious-looking non-Serbs who have serious-looking leaders. And so on.

The final lesson for the postcommunist world is that it must not become the terrifying Other for the postemotional West. Except for Slovenia, most of the rest of former Yugoslavia is precisely this symbol of Balkanization, chaos, and bloodlust that Americans fear. Russia, too, is frightening and seems non-nice. The postcommunist countries have to convince Western Europe and the US that they are "like them." But this involves a double hermeneutic, and some tricky manoeuvring: One has to discern the simulated self-image of what the West thinks it is (namely, the beacon of human rights, freedom, democracy, and so on) and the reality of what it is, namely, a postemotional and post-modern heap of contradictory tendencies. If the postcommunist world aims at the simulated image of the West, it may lose in the long run because the West no longer really supports NATO, human rights outside its borders, freedom (it fears secessionism) and other Western ideals derived from the Enlightenment. On the other hand, if the postcommunist nations aim at the cynical reality of the postemotional West by adopting public relations firms, hiring more lawyers, becoming more manipulative, electing smiling leaders and so on - they will become like the West. But the cost will be great. They will lose their souls. It is a difficult choice.

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**NA TRAGU SMISLA DANAŠNJICE:
GRAĐANIN I DEMOKRACIJA U
POSTEMOTIVNIM I POSTKOMUNISTIČKIM
DRUŠTVIMA**

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Postemotivnost smatra da - usredsredivši se na pragmatičke i stvarne, što znači neakademske koncepte demokracije i građanina - nadilazi raspravu što su je nametnule moderna i postmoderna. Autorova analiza zahvaća posebno uporedbama primjerene vidike postemotivnih javnosti i voda u SAD, Zapadnoj Europi te postkomunističkim društvima.