

# **THE CROATIAN THOUSAND-YEAR DREAM: NARRATIVE AS THE SOCIETY EFFECT**

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This article explores the phenomenon of nation as narrative. This approach is rooted in political theory, more specifically, in post-foundational thought and poststructuralist narratology. The article is significantly informed by the so-called performative turn, especially in historiography. It will therefore focus on narrative and hi/story, as it is understood by Rancière: as a discourse which originally belongs to literature yet keeps escaping it. Relying on a literary technique, history constitutes itself as a science: this is why we can approach it by employing methods similar, albeit not identical, to those used to approach literature. The main argument put forward in this article is that society, understood in Laclauian terms, does not exist, whereas the (Croatian) society effect, that is, the illusion of society as a totality, is produced by the narrative of the so-called Croatian thousand-year dream. In other words, what Hobsbawm dubs the invention of tradition is founded upon the narrative's past, while the impact of the present of this narrative's narration is excluded from the mechanisms of the ontology of nationalism.

Keywords: "Croatian thousand-year dream", narration, performative turn, deconstructionist historiography, teleogenic plot

**Marko Marulić is the symbol of thousands and thousands  
of Croats who have given their life for Croatia.**

(Zlatko Canjuga at the formal session of the City Assembly  
of Zagreb on the occasion of the unveiling of the monument  
dedicated to Marko Marulić, April 1999)<sup>1</sup>

**We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians.**

(Massimo d'Azeglio, 1866)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lucić (2013: 292).

<sup>2</sup> He became the Prime Minister of Sardinia in 1849.

I'd rather die of shame than invoke the name of some dead king of mine, while you, if you'll excuse my noticing, exalt those very phantoms into a pathos-filled deity of national tradition and and mission... Such peasantry... And to say I am unaware of what curse it is to be unable to break away from one's peasant ways? Is it indeed possible you have never stopped to consider what constitutes that national mythos of yours: opanci – scraps of leather which once served as peasant shoes, church bells, brandy, cake, sausages, the sound of tamburica at Christmas, naïvely kneeling in prayer over the graves of dead feudal criminals and thugs, churchyards and bell towers.  
(Miroslav Krleža, *Banket u Blitvi*)

## INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses primarily on the exploration of one of the possible approaches to the concept of (Croatian) nation building – nation as narrative.<sup>3</sup> Since the 1960s, with the emergence of deconstruction in the field of the humanities and the so-called performative turn, history has been approached as a dynamic site of (re-)iterating past events, as a mythical construction with a certain ideological function – which is where the notion of narrative derives from. This paper will focus specifically on demonstrating that the idea and function of narrative can be explained by resorting to a concept which has been introduced by narratology – the concept of plot – with an emphasis on its ideological dimension. This assumption rests on the idea of the absence of society as a closed or even a possible totality, i.e., on the idea of the division of the nation as a subject which is at the root of the so-called subject formation in general (cf. Marchart 2007). Poststructuralist approaches firmly established their foundations in history as a discipline and in the historiographic method which, under the influence of critical theory in the 1970s, turned to an examination of its own effects, i.e., a critical examination of its own position (cf. Božić Blanuša 2011: 394). In that sense, reconstructionist historiography<sup>4</sup> (the nineteenth-century model of

<sup>3</sup> I use the terms “narrative” and “narration” to refer to Homi Bhabha’s concept of nations as narrations which emphasizes the fact that nations come into being as systems of cultural signification founded upon myths of origin (cf. Bhabha 1990). I consider the Croatian thousand-year dream as an example of a nationalist discourse which narrates the nation as a symbolic force by invoking the Homeland War as the foundational myth and establishing this event as a culmination of a continuous historical project in order to produce a continuous narrative of national progress. My goal is to set the stage for approaching the history of a nation as a narrative given that Rancière (cf. Rancière 1994) points to history (histoire) as an ambivalent concept which contains within itself the very thing that history as a discipline strives to avoid: narrativity. The idea behind the use of these terms is to establish an understanding of both nations and national histories as constructs.

<sup>4</sup> In his work entitled *Deconstructing History*, Munslow mentions Edward Royle and his work *Modern Britain: A Social History, 1750–1997* (cf. Royle 2012) as an example of the reconstructionist mode in historiography. He describes it as an interpretation of history followed by the so-called evidence which supports it, with the historiographer assuming an authoritative stance throughout this process. In the context of reconstructionist historiography, the link between reference, explanation, meaning and truth is epistemologically unproblematic. Munslow is rather severe in his criticism of the basic principles of reconstructionist historiography. He claims that the act of referencing what happened in the past “is not simply an act of

historiography) – fantasies about supposedly objective and impartial representations of past events – becomes of secondary importance as the issue of (political) subject formation through narrative comes into the centre of theorists' attention. This means that the focus shifts to an approach which sees history as a highly structured literary act which can, as such, only be performative. The effects to which performativity refers support ideological tendencies which are focused on creating a community resting primarily on the idea of a primordial national identity which is "fixed, unalterable and rooted in natural differences between groups of people" (Sekulić 2003: 144).

Given that history is understood as the act of narration, it can be approached from the point of view of literary theory, more specifically, narratology. Methodologically, this paper relies heavily on a combination of literary theory (poststructuralist methodology) and political theory – more specifically, post-foundational political thought which marks off the social as ontological, i.e. the site at which the narrative of Society and Society as the constitutive impossibility are constituted. The paper will therefore explore in more detail whether such a distinction corresponds to the distinction between the narrative and its effect, which has been mentioned earlier. In this distinction, according to Homi Bhabha (1994), the narrative always refers to the past of the story, whereas narration refers to the performative dimension, i.e. the effect of the story in the present. In exploring this distinction, the paper will rely on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's idea of the impossibility of society (2001), Homi Bhabha's idea of the temporal contradiction between narration and narrative (1994), as well as Lennard J. Davis' idea of teleogenic plot (2014). Our approach and key hypotheses will operate within the realm of what Laclau and Mouffe dub *the impossibility of society*. Laclau and Mouffe's thesis stems from their radical constructivism, their anti-essentialist approach with an ontology entirely founded upon the contingency of meaning. Moreover, Michel Foucault's genealogy and a series of lectures held at the *Collège de France* and published under the title *Society Must Be Defended* will figure significantly in the analysis. What interests us in particular is his consideration of historical contents that have been suppressed or transformed into functional coherences or formal systematizations (cf. Foucault 2003: 7). Moreover, knowledge – understood as the official knowledge about a people's history – contains what could be described as a metaphysical dimension embodied in the ideas of the people's victory, heroism or valour presented on a linear-causal timeline. We consider the *Croatian thousand-year dream*<sup>5</sup> narrative as this kind of knowledge. In the context of the narration of the nation, particular attention will therefore be devoted to Laclau and Mouffe's claim about the impossibility of society. The theoretical apparatus which has

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(referential) reconstruction" (Munslow 1997: 43). He argues that, as a textual representation of the past, "history is relative to all kinds of highly complex literary acts" (ibid.).

<sup>5</sup> Mythical story of Croatian's people's origins, which begins with the arrival of Croats to these lands in 7th century and ends with Croatian Homeland war in 1995. After the thousand-year long history of struggles with enemies, suffering and martyrdom Croats are finally achieving an independent national state, or, in other words, dream came true and all the sacrifice and innocent victims weren't pointless. The story is strongly marked with the idea of national continuity, although the concept of nation in Europe was unknown until 19th century.

been described here will be applied to the nation as an empty space in the narrative capital function, that is, to the ways of articulating the nation which renounce “the effect of the narration’s present on the narrative’s past” (Biti 2002: 157).

## DECONSTRUCTIONIST HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE “WITNESS PERFORMATIVE”

The terms narrative (*histoire*) and discourse, introduced into contemporary discussions in France by Émile Benveniste’s *Problems in General Linguistics*, were already being used by Gérard Genette and Roland Barthes (cf. Biti 2002: 10–11). Benveniste dubbed the utterance which describes a past action a (historical) narrative. This concept is equivalent to Austin’s notion of a constative since both refer to a previous state of affairs (ibid.). Dominick LaCapra resents the fact that historians neglect the performative aspects of language, while habitually approaching historical texts as mere sources of information, rather than as events (cf. Božić Blanuša 2011: 395). By referring to the event, LaCapra refers to the problem of textual interpretation (ibid.). If we understand it in this way, history may be claimed to represent itself as a constative and objective Truth or a “historical fact” which homogenizes a society’s identity, unifying it and helping legitimize the nation state, all the while supporting the sources of oppressive power in the form of a combination of state authorities and other institutions. In this way, the past of the narrative is falsely imposed as the present of narration, which means that a people as a subject is assimilated into the narrative as the object thematized in the narrative (Biti 2002: 157). Such a strategy employed by the narrative stems from its aspiration to preserve the hegemony of constativity, while this paper takes history as an inherently performative literary text. This performativity is abused by ideological state apparatuses with the aim of imposing the illusion of a total, unified Society. The epistemology which generates this kind of methodology subsists on the difference between the notions of *politics* and the *political*, *society* and the *social*, with *politics* and *society* referring to the ontic, and the *political* and *social* referring to the ontological in the sense of the constitutive impossibility of constituting society and an anti-authoritarian ethos which allows different forms of emancipation. The narrative is also understood as myth in the Laclauian sense – paradoxically, what we are therefore dealing with is, in fact, the disintegration of identity within the very process of its creation, that is, that which Alun Munslow refers to as deconstructionist historiography (Munslow 1997). In addition to introducing reconstructionist historiography, Munslow also introduces a distinction between constructionist<sup>6</sup> and deconstructionist<sup>7</sup> historiography. In considering

<sup>6</sup> What Munslow refers to constructionist historiography is a method, an approach to history, which relies on various particular explanatory concepts which have already been established, such as gender, class and the like (cf. Munslow 1997: 49).

<sup>7</sup> Here is how Munslow explains the term “deconstructionist history”: “Deconstructionist history regards the past as a complex narrative discourse, but one, as the French cultural critic and historian Michel Foucault has pointed out, that accepts that representation is not a transparent mode of communication that can

the literary dimension of history as a discipline, he raises the question whether historians shape their narratives based on evidence which reveals past events (and whether we can, therefore, speak of their retelling a story which happened) or whether they impose their own story on the evidence of the past (ibid.: 3). Munslow argues that “history is the study not of change over time *per se*, but the study of the information produced by historians as they go about this task” (ibid.). This means that, approached in deconstructionist terms, historiography is, in fact, “a representation of historical content” and not “history itself”, so such historiography consequently accepts “the autoreferential nature of the representation itself” (Božić Blanuša 2011: 349). Rancière understands history as a discourse, rather than as a scientific discipline. It is a type of discourse which identifies history’s possible objects of study, as well as various methods or procedures for studying it. Once it identifies history’s objects of study, this discourse contrives a proper manner of speaking about them. Rancière refers to these three elements of the historical discourse as “the poetics of knowledge”, where “poetics” is understood in the sense of a “making” or “invention” of a “discipline” for the study of the past that is simultaneously scientific, political, and literary (cf. Rancière 1994: 8). This provides us with a methodology to view the nation as a narrative. This is a commonplace concerning the performativity of an utterance, which performs an action as opposed to describing a previous situation (cf. Biti 2002: 10). The narrative structure of a nation simultaneously contains the pedagogical and the performative dimension, with elements of everyday life “repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture” (Bhabha 1994: 145). These signs fit neatly into the linear-causal narrative, that is, they are co-opted by state ideological apparatuses and institutions in order to be perpetuated with the aim of making present the time of narrating the narrative of the *Croatian thousand-year dream*. They are manifest in various aspects of political and social everyday life. Many of them are institutionalized and embodied in different state functions, state institutions, legal acts, anniversaries, rituals, rites, official speeches and the like. Narrative elements which constitute the narrative of the *Croatian thousand-year dream* can be understood as micro-spaces of the nation – signs which shape a certain state of affairs in reality, but which are twofold: both constative and performative – paradoxically, *a priori* established as Truth, yet simultaneously dependent on the success or failure of the performance; in the words of Homi Bhabha, these signs are “doubly inscribed” since the nation “must mediate between the teleology of progress tipping over into the ‘timeless’ discourse of irrationality” (Bhabha 1994: 142).<sup>8</sup> In order for the narrative elements mentioned here to become systematized as part of a broader narrative, their initial ontological genesis must be problematized. To demonstrate that the narrative of

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adequately carry understanding or generate truthful meaning. Deconstructionist history is a part of the larger challenge to the modernist empiricist notion that understanding emanates from the independent knowledge-centred individual subject designated variously as Man, humanity, the author or the evidence” (Munslow 1997: 10).

<sup>8</sup> This is precisely what Jović (2017: 20) notes when discussing the Croatian context: “The myth of the Croatian War of Independence does not succeed in resolving the controversy which arises between the claim that Croatia was created in that war and the narrative which presents it as eternal”, with its state legal continuity reaching into the distant past, all the way to the first Croatian kings, if not even further than that.

the *Croatian thousand-year dream* is a myth that exists only in the process of identity formation, and that it is possible as a story, yet impossible as the constitutive possibility of society, we must rely on the concepts of *articulation*, *suture* and *the chain of equivalence*, introduced by Laclau and Mouffe in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2001).

Since we are dealing with the 1990s in Croatia, and since we believe that that period is crucial for almost all aspects of political events taking place today, it is important to draw attention to another aspect of problematizing the constativity and performativity of (historiographic) texts. Here, we want to emphasize what Biti, referring to Nietzsche, calls the “perpetrator constative” and the “witness performative”. In his preface to the collection of essays *Politika i etika pripovijedanja* [Politics and Ethics of Narration] (2002), Biti refers to Nietzsche’s illustration of the reduction of a problem to its moral aspect. What interests him is the fact that only the person who attributes responsibility is freed from it, which he illustrates by referring to a story of predators and lambs: lambs blame predators as their slaughterers, so the problem is reduced to a question of moral responsibility. Lambs reject their own responsibility for denouncing predators as their slaughterers – they individualize the actions of their enemies through the “perpetrator constative”, while defining their own position through the “witness performative” (cf. Biti 2002: 24). We believe that it is precisely this instance of moral reduction that is crucial for an adequate detection of subjects who function as the bearers of the narrative of the *Croatian thousand-year dream*. Discussing the protest of war veterans on 66 Savska Road, which lasted 555 days,<sup>9</sup> Dejan Jović (2017: 29) offers his interpretation of the *Croatian thousand-year dream* as coming true thanks to the veteran-Creator.<sup>10</sup> In accordance with this, “those who have created something or invested in it obtain ownership over that which has been created and they have the full right to freely dispose of their property” (ibid.). We can add to that interpretation by referring back to the concept of the “witness performative”. Like Jović, we see veteran groups as the subject bearing the hegemonic interpretation. What must be added to that idea has to do with the ontology of witnessing or witnessing in general, as part of historiography in which a dimension of authenticity is introduced (cf. Assman 2011: 164). Aleida Assman distinguishes between four categories of witnesses (cf. 2011: 103–113).<sup>11</sup> The witness type which is the most pertinent to our interpretation of war veterans as witnesses to the fulfilment of the *Croatian thousand-year dream* is the type which Assman dubs the *religious witness* (Greek *martyrs*). A witness belonging to this type is not a disinterested observer but has experienced violence himself. According

<sup>9</sup> The protest started on 20 October 2014 and its leaders were Croatian war veterans Đuro Glogoški and Josip Klemm. After the Ministry of War Veterans and the Prime Minister rejected their 48 demands, war veterans on Savska Road 66 started demanding the immediate dismissal of the Croatia’s then President Ivo Josipović, the Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, the Minister of War Veterans Predrag Matić as well as his assistant Bojan Glavašević. In the end, the protest lasted 555 days, and a whole series of protesters’ official demands turned into a great public debate on the right political wing as to which real Croat is willing to bleed for Croatia and who is not.

<sup>10</sup> The general problem of the teleogenesis of history, as well as narratology in general, is the problem of the “agent” (Wlad Godzich, cited in Davis 2014: 217).

<sup>11</sup> These are: the court witness, the historical witness, the religious witness and the moral witness.

to Assman, this type is marked by victimhood and, what is more, “it manages to escape the violence of his persecutors by re-coding the *dying from* into the *dying for*” (2011: 106). From this point of view, witnessing surpasses the mere act of *witnessing* and transforms itself into a *testimony*, which then surpasses death itself – thus the *religious witness* rises from political subjugation into the state of religious superiority, while his *witnessing*, which is now a *testimony*, becomes “a true act of religious piety” (*ibid.*). The issue that we want to emphasize here is the fact that such a subject bears the narrative understood not only as the ontology of the social, but also as the official hegemonic historiography which claims to be a constative, Society and Truth.

## ERNESTO LACLAU: SOCIETY DOES NOT EXIST

In order to understand the ways in which a narrative is structured as a “linear equivalence of event and idea” or as “a holistic cultural entity” (Bhabha 1994: 140), we must discuss the basic premises of the poststructuralist, more specifically, post-Marxist anthropology of power as these may help us explore the politics of narrating the nation. Laclau and Mouffe transpose Gramsci’s concept of *hegemony* onto the field of discourse and discursive practices, while defining the Social only as an attempt at constituting society as a necessary, yet – what is of particular importance – impossible object or impossible totality (cf. Maslov 2009: 185). For them, the Social represents a field in which different discourses intertwine and struggle to stabilize elements into moments (*ibid.*), that is, to fix meaning. This process is referred to as articulation. Articulation understood in this way will be of particular importance to us as we make an attempt at applying the discursive theory of hegemony in an analysis of a narrative in the sense of an articulation of a discourse which strive for absolute suturing and fictive constativity, that is, the creation of a stable national narrative, i.e. the society effect. According to Laclau and Mouffe (2001), the social field rests on antagonisms. In other words, it is founded upon the impossibility of overcoming antagonisms, as well as the impossibility of fixing the original trauma which constantly “resists symbolization, totalization, symbolic integration” (Žižek 2008: 29). The original trauma of the impossibility of constituting society is, in its essence, the antagonism which prevents the constitution of society.<sup>12</sup> The point of relying on the discursive theory of hegemony in this paper is to explore the articulation forming nationalist discourses founded upon a reconstructionist narrative. Some of these discourses are manifest in the hegemonic, so-called *expert knowledges* (Foucault 2003) and they attain a hierarchically superior position in the structure of the hegemonic constellation. In order to explain this in more detail, we must dedicate some time to the discussion of the basic logic behind the concepts of *empty/floating signifiers*<sup>13</sup> (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 134-136) and *the*

<sup>12</sup> It was precisely in this sense that the previous section defined the social as the opposition to society or as the ontology which is constituted in the impossibility of constituting society.

<sup>13</sup> In Lacanian terms, the *Master-Signifier* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 11).

*chain of equivalence* (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 128-129). In *The Ticklish Subject*, Žižek claims that the struggle for ideological-political hegemony is always the struggle for the appropriation of terms (Žižek 2000: 176). Laclau and Mouffe's theory of hegemony and their principle of the ideological mechanism of hegemony are founded upon subjectivation or "entering the subject" (Žižek 2000: 182). In order for a certain element of society to become articulated as a political subject, the difference between the universal and the particular must be overcome.<sup>14</sup>

The difference between the universal and the particular can therefore be overcome through what Laclau and Mouffe call empty or floating signifiers (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 134-136). Empty signifiers are understood as "the signifiers of a lack, of an absent totality" (Laclau 1995: 42). Hegemony can exist only when the universal/particular dichotomy is overcome. In other words, representing the particular as the universal, with universality being possible only if it is embodied in particularity (cf. Laclau 2000), is the precondition of discursive hegemony. Furthermore, the meaning of empty signifiers is produced, that is, they are discursively filled due to *nodal points* or *quilting points*<sup>15</sup> (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 11) – privileged discursive points endowed with the ability to retroactively stabilize the chain of signifiers (cf. Maslov 2009: 185). These nodal points introduce "sutures" into the slippage of meaning and momentarily fix it, including the signifiers into a structured network of meaning. The *Master-Signifier*,<sup>16</sup> on the other hand, functions by representing a particular element as the universal structuring function within a certain discursive field; moreover, the entire organization of the discourse in question results from the function of that signifier: "The Master adds no new positive content – he merely adds a signifier which all of a sudden turns disorder into order, into 'new harmony'" (Žižek 2004: 393). On the other hand, the narrative of the nation, narrated by various institutional social actors, aims to completely blur the gap, i.e. the irresolvable tension between interiority and exteriority, thus creating the impression of Society as a sutured totality. There is no single true articulation which would stand for the totality of Society, which would be Society itself.

## THE STRUCTURE AND MANIFESTATION OF THE CROATIAN THOUSAND-YEAR DREAM – THE MYTHICAL PLOT AND DENOUEMENT

In Laclau's work, the function of myth is to disintegrate identity within a structure, an identity which does not exist outside the process of the very identity formation. This characteristic is important for the politics of narrative of the nation. The nation does not exist outside the

<sup>14</sup> Reading Laclau and Mouffe, Žižek comes to believe that every hegemonic operation is "inherently unstable and contingent". This is the deconstructionist element in Laclau and Mouffe's theory (Žižek 2008: 96-97).

<sup>15</sup> Lacan uses the term *points de capiton*.

<sup>16</sup> Also Lacan's term (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 11).



process of narration. Let us be completely clear: we consider the attempt at establishing Croatian national identity with its roots in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the culmination in the 1995 military Operation Storm to be a hegemonic narrative. Within it, this identity, so to say, “claims for itself” that it is stable and immutable. The central “topic” of this narration is dependent on a uniform identity of the Croatian people, that is, of Croatian society as a totality. In other words, what we are talking about here is a sutured hegemonizing narrative which presents itself as a totality or, to be more precise, the narrative is told in a manner which presents Croatian society as a constitutive or constative possibility. However, we are now discussing the level of the narrative. Once we situate this narrative in the field of the social, i.e., when we consider it as one part of the social which produces one of the society effects, we see it merely as a single part of the structure, which can, according to the equivalence principle, become linked with other discourses which contain compatible elements of narration. In this way, this type of discourse can represent the absent fullness of Society, it can substitute the lack of substance. However, when a discourse founded upon such narration is situated in the signifying field, it is faced with competition in the form of other discourses which compete with it in being filled with empty signifiers or, in other words, it is faced with competition in the form of other discourses which are also founded upon the aporia of presenting the particular as the universal. Contextualized, the discourse on Croats appears as one of many others in the field of the political or the social. However, that discourse, as an illusion of society’s embodiment, refers to the mythical elements of the narrative which function as an answer to the constitutive impossibility of society. Our task, then, is to expose this process of constructing the presence of a unified Croatian Society as impossible, i.e. as nothing more than another narrative.

The entire history of the Croatian people, which is considered to be the object of expert knowledge, begins with the mythical story of the arrival of Croats to the area and is considered to be the beginning of the uninterrupted (continuing) Croatian history.<sup>17</sup> This kind of history also implies a story of the same kind of continuing threat from various enemies since the 7<sup>th</sup> century until today, in which the Croats had successfully overcome every one of them, and had succeeded in keeping their (unified) identity during all of the 14 centuries, so that the end of that long and hard struggle in this kind of narrative could be finished on 5 August 1995 in what is officially called the military Operation Storm in Croatian history. So, we can consider those parts of the institutional imagining of the nation in which one can find a type of narration which tends to construct the thousand-year

<sup>17</sup> In his seminar *Encore*, Lacan gives a paradoxical statement in the context of the basic impossibility of the *Real* of sexual relations: the “doesn’t stop not being written” (Lacan 1975: 94). Žižek takes that paradox as an explanation of the phantasmal character of traumatic events (cf. Vuković 2009: 8). According to this kind of explanation, the traumatic violence of the Creation represents an inability of joining reality, except through phantasmal scenarios which can be mythological, religious, scientific (ibid). Vuković states that, according to Žižek, this kind of scenario is not understood as a historical event, but as a “permanent phantasmal presence, an undead spirit which simply has to be put in motion if the symbolic order is to become effective.” In this sense, “trauma assumes the function of the basic phantasm, the pathologically fictional, non-original scenario which blocks the way to the primordial trauma” (Vuković 2009: 29).

continuity of the Croatian national identity, the threats from various agents (enemies) and the final solution of the narrative with the military Operation Storm, a narrative with the basic function of filling the absent fullness of Society, i.e. the absolute suturing of Society. In other words, we are considering narration which puts to the fore the time of the nation, but obscures the presence of the act of narration, narration which refers to the precisely specified characteristics ascribed to agents which do not step out of the frames of that which is considered to be “Croatian”, to be hegemonic and formative for the structuring of the Croatian Society effect. Such perspectives in considering the hegemonic national identity based on a glorious past and mechanisms through which this kind of glorious or heroic past is given significance of ultimate legitimacy and determinateness of expert knowledges are referred to as *strategies of symbolic nation-building* (cf. Pavlaković 2016), and they are, in fact, tightly connected to the articulations of stories or myths.

Moreover, in the context of the *strategies of symbolic nation-building* Jelovica and Kolstø (2016) state that the modern, but also the postmodern conditions under which the processes of nation building are taking place in the Balkan states have “made symbols and rituals a potent tool in the hands of the builders of the nation” (Jelovica and Kolstø 2006: 7).<sup>18</sup>

In order to outline the story of the *Croatian thousand-year dream* we will turn to the articulation of the described discourse within the media, political speeches, state documents, monuments, renaming of streets, etc. We will look back at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as this period is central for the process. When the Croatian Democratic Union party (HDZ)<sup>19</sup> won the first multi-party elections in 1990, a lot of measures were taken in order to fix the national identity and the past in accordance with the invention of tradition, identity construction and the subjugation of those historical knowledges which were not an apology of a “pure” and homogeneous national identity. Through various institutions and by employing the historian as an expert and a scientific authority, points were created in the public and political spheres which served as generators of discourses sutured with “Croatianness”. At the same time, because we define the phenomenon through a Laclauian prism, national identity as particularity is represented as universality and a chain of equivalence is created and is articulated as such in the public sphere, whereby the experience of those with trauma is being generalized to the whole population or to its majority. In other words, what is described here is that which was characterized in one of the previous sections as the “witness performative” whose bearer is the “religious witness”, who functions as a spokesperson for the wider public.

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<sup>18</sup> In his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1915) Émile Durkheim was one of the first to recognize the crucial role of the rite and symbol in premodern religious societies in which he understands them as types of “techniques” which serve to strengthen the cohesion of the collective, but he leaves out the agents who use those techniques, i.e. the agents who hold those “techniques” in their hands (cf. Jelavica and Kolstø 2006: 7).

<sup>19</sup> HDZ – Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union).

One of the first moves of the HDZ was to renovate the pedestal of the monument to King Tomislav, by way of engraving the Croatian coat of arms<sup>20</sup> (cf. Pavlaković 2016: 34). Later, names of squares and streets which bore the names of people connected to the socialist tradition were changed.<sup>21</sup> Also, the medieval fortress of Medvedgrad was renovated, and *Homeland Altar* was built there, which served as a commemorative space for important national holidays (cf. Pavlaković 2016: 36). Another important factor was the restitution of the Catholic Church as one of the most relevant institutions in the process of nation building, in the context of the construction of a radical difference in comparison to the Orthodox peoples (Serbs) and Muslims (Bosniaks), but also as an important symbol of resistance to the former socialist state of Yugoslavia. One of the most striking examples of the invention of narrative continuity, i.e. the manifestation of the temporal-causal dimension of narrative, may be found in Pavlaković (2016) and will serve here as a very good illustration of the invention of national continuity. It is the example of the most vividly embodied myth of martyrdom – the Church of Croatian Martyrs in Udbina. The location was originally chosen because of the memory of the defeat of Croatian feudal lords against the Ottomans, but the biggest part of the stories about martyrdom refers to the victims of the Second World War, specifically those victims who were killed by the Partisans, as well as to the victims of the Homeland War (next to the church there is a replica of the white cross from Vukovar). In this way, a continuity of martyrdom is established, between the Ustasha regime from the Second World War and the Croatian Homeland War veterans. The time of socialist Yugoslavia between those two events represents a discontinuity, but it is erased from collective memory by a systematic politics of forgetting, as we have shown in the examples from the nineties. Therefore, the Church of Croatian Martyrs is a case in point of the narrative mentioned throughout this paper. The events which are considered to be crucial for the constitution of Croatian national identity are positioned in the same (physical) space, and we consider every one of them by itself as one of the plots of the *Croatian thousand-year dream* narrative. A narrative, exclusively in the literary sense, consists of a certain composition, i.e. of a preset structure. The elements which we are going to consider in the next section refer precisely to the plot(s), but particularly to denouement. More specifically, we consider the event which is officially referred to as the military Operation Storm to play a key role in Croatian history, i.e. it is both the end of that history as well as what subsequently gives meaning to previous events/plots. The claim which will be put forward in what follows is that everything is related to this sacred, taboo moment.

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<sup>20</sup> The monument was erected in 1947, but without the relief which depicts the coronation of King Tomislav and without the Croatian “chessboard” coat of arms (cf. Pavlaković 2016: 34).

<sup>21</sup> For example, the Street of the Socialist Revolution was renamed King Zvonimir Street, the Square of Brotherhood and Unity Petar Preradović Square, Lenin’s Square King Petar Krešimir Square, The Square of the (Socialist) Republic Ban Jelačić Square (cf. Pavlaković 2016: 35).

## THE TELEOGENIC REVISION OF THE HISTORICAL PLOT

In his text “Thick plots: History and Fiction” Lennard J. Davis problematizes the plot in the context of literature and in the context of history and historiography. Davis introduces a basic division of the plot: the type of plot called *mythos* (the plot of the epic and tragedy) and the novelistic plot (cf. Davis 2014: 205). The *mythos*-type plot refers to the “and-then-and-then” pattern: “These plots are episodic, and present the deeds (or *gestes*) of a hero in some chronological sequence” (Kellogg as cited in Davis 2014: 205). He also refers to them as *consecutive* or *causal*, because the elements of the plot are arranged in a clear linear or causal sequence. Moreover, Davis states that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century *consecutive* plots were being replaced by *teleogenic* plots – the latter term refers to those plots in which the “and-then-and-then” pattern is overridden by events which connect the plot with the very ending, i.e. the ending (*telos*) generates them. The information read at the end reshapes the previous, already read information – in this way, teleogenic elements are built into a whole “as sub-reforming units” (ibid.). The point is, therefore, in the fact that the teleogenic plot is by definition “created to be determined” by its ending (Heimann as cited in Davis 2014: 209) i.e. “the previous material is transformed by the ending matter” (Davis 2014: 210). In his book Davis states:

Narrativity is not simply confined to novels but, as many writers including Hayden White and Paul Ricoeur have shown, is a feature of history. History, in the view of many structuralists and those in the post-structuralist era, is no more than the stories we tell ourselves about what happened in the past. Such a view has become commonplace. In *Fictional Narrative and Truth*, L. B. Cebik argues that “extensive probing into historical narrative led to the conclusion that the features of narrative that were epistemically fundamental to that form of discourse were common to both its historical and fictional instances” (9). (Davis 2014: 212–213)

In an earlier period, history was defined exclusively by God’s will (or destiny). Only with the English, American and French Revolutions did the course of events start to be differentiated from religious events, i.e. from purely God’s will. It is a kind of rupture within the epistemology of history after which man became the agent of that same history (cf. Davis 2014: 214–215). That conception of history found its final foundation in Marxist thought. The essence of history as established by Marx is based on the teleological logic of historical progress which reaches its culmination in the communist social order, once class society disappears.<sup>22</sup> Davis finds a teleogenic plot *par excellence* precisely in Marx’s idea of class struggle and the proletariat as a true protagonist. If in the Marxist paradigm the proletariat represents the universal carrier of the revolution i.e. the true protagonist of history, then it also has the ability of changing past events, i.e. the ability to change the meaning of the plot in the story of past events (cf. White 1973: 315; Davis 2014: 216). In

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<sup>22</sup> If history has a teleological dimension and a predetermined goal and meaning, then a dimension of cause-and-effect is brought into this whole concept and also, in that sense, a kind of by-product or a necessary surplus of progressive motion toward the absolute enhisotid (cf. Parr 2008: 1–2).

line with this, we believe it is possible to draw a parallel between vulgar historical materialism and the teleogenic revision of previous plots of the narrative in the example of the *Croatian thousand-year dream*, but with emphasis on the fact that veteran groups would take on the role of the universal agent of history and the ultimate agent of its end, with one not so insignificant difference. The end of history as the end of class antagonisms refers to the dialectical agency of oppressed groups and their oppressors – a society, once freed from the class gap, gives new significance and meaning to previous historical plots. On the other hand, the end of Croatian history (i.e. the end of the *Croatian thousand-year dream* narrative) refers to the sacred, the cult, as if a premodern society were at stake. In this context, no historical agent comes to the stage of history as a man-subject who has the ability to achieve his own liberation through work or generally to change his history, but the point could rather be in the religious register in which the cult of the victim is being cultivated. Davis writes about an example of the teleogenetic plot on the religious level (and those kinds of plots generally refer to a time before the American, English and French Revolutions) as follows:

A teleogenic aspect of history's plot could only be on a religious level, as it was when Christ's coming transformed and reconditioned previous events. Thus the Old Testament could now be read in the light of the new, Moses' actions prefiguring those of Christ, according to early Christian hermeneutics. Christ's coming was obviously the most powerful pattern of a teleogenic plot, but it was not until the early modern period that such a plot could be secularized. (Davis 2014: 214)

However, what we are trying to show here is the transformation of the religious register. By entering the nationalist discourse, the semantics of the victim is transformed within a secular frame, i.e. even if it does not transform completely, it is definitely ascribed new values (cf. Assman 2011: 87): "Thereby, God as the recipient or the advocate for the victim is replaced with another absolute value, such as the Homeland." We claim that they exist together, and this can be particularly evident in the discourse on the Operation Storm or generally in the discourse on the *Homeland War*.<sup>23</sup> The plots from the *Croatian thousand-year dream* narrative are not secular plots, because they are based on martyrdom which belongs to the domain of the sacred. The final outcome embodied in the Operation Storm, as well as in the entire *Homeland War* "is being attributed with miraculous properties" (Jović 2017: 21). That miraculousness refers precisely to the redemption of all the sufferings during the thousand years of the continuity of Croatian national identity, which makes plots teleogenic in a manner similar to the coming of Christ reshaping the entire Old Testament.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For example, the exclamation "God and Croats".

<sup>24</sup> Renata Salecl explains the parallel between the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the soldier for national interests as follows: "In the assumption of *the death which is worthy of dying* there is a parallel between the sacrifice of the soldier for his homeland and the sacrifice of Christ in Christianity. Just as Christ was ready to die for others, the present-day soldier has to sacrifice his life for the 'just cause' of his homeland. Ernst Kantorowicz offered a historical explanation of that parallel in '*Pro patria mori* in medieval political thought', by emphasizing that it first appeared in the era of the Crusades when Christianity identified *the love*

## OPERATION STORM AS THE END OF THE CROATIAN THOUSAND-YEAR DREAM NARRATIVE

It was on 5 August 1995 that Croatian military and police forces restored Croatian control over the territory occupied by the Republic of Serbian Krajina, which Croatian history now officially refers to as Operation Storm. We will consider those articulations which contain references to Operation Storm, and they will enable us to analyze the ways in which history is reconstructed. The basic category which envelops the celebration of Operation Storm every year on 5 August in Knin is the category of victory. Therefore, we will consider the signifier *victory* as the Master-Signifier which retroactively structures and stabilizes the discourse on Operation Storm and revises previous plots in Croatian history, moreover – it makes them meaningful. In order to exemplify this discourse, which we consider to be produced by official state institutions, we will present some of its manifestations.<sup>25</sup> Firstly, 5 August is a national holiday referred to as Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day. In the public and media discourse and in political speeches, the attribute *magnificent* is most often combined with *victory*. In order for the discourse of victory to be set up not only as legitimate, but as a kind of sacred and unquestionable quasi-universal confirmation of “Croatianess” and the supposed liberation of the Croatian people, the Croatian parliament passed the *Declaration on the Homeland War* with 88 votes for and 4 against, on 13 October 2000 (cf. Koren 2011: 136), with the aim of stopping the so-called politicization and criminalization of the Homeland War, and the polarization of Croatian society.<sup>26</sup> The passing of this document, moreover, corresponded with the protests of Croatian war veterans and with the open letter from 12 active and retired generals of the Homeland War who accused the government of “criminalizing the will of the Croatian people to defend themselves from Greater-Serbian aggression and occupation” (cited in Koren 2011: 136). With the issuing of the indictments against Mirko Norac in February 2001, against Ante

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*of God with the love of brothers*. In that era, dying in defense of Christian brothers was proclaimed to be a martyred death. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as the power of the monarchy grows, the idea of *the holy war* has become secularized – it is being replaced with a *quasi-holy war* for the defense of the kingdom, or, later, for the defense of the nation symbolized in the crown. As the defense of the homeland starts to presuppose the fight for justice, the most honorable death becomes the death connected with *the agony for justice*. Kantorowicz claims that the state as such is started to be perceived as *corpus mysticum*, which is the secular form of the mystic body of Christ. This is the origin of the duty of every citizen to love their homeland more than they love themselves, which gives rise to the fact that every individual must be ready to sacrifice their life for their country” (Salecl 2002: 24-25).

<sup>25</sup> For instance, the celebration in the city of Knin and in the Knin Fortress or the military parade held in Zagreb at the 20th anniversary of Operation Storm on 5 August 2015.

<sup>26</sup> With the *Declaration on the Homeland War*, therefore, one version of history tried to be constituted as the only true version, and this indirectly means, if we observe it through the prism of political ontology, that one particular articulation of Croatian history tried to be imposed as universal, by way of inscribing terror and dramatic events of the war into an official state document passed by the highest state body. The necessity of passing such a declaration is, in our opinion, a symptom of an unsuccessful articulation of a discourse in the sense of the collapse of the presentation of the particular as the universal and an impossibility of creating an absolute chain of equivalence. Because of this, the attitude towards the Homeland War was attempted to be imposed through state institutions.

Gotovina in June and against Janko Bobetko in September of the same year, the tension in the triangle between veteran associations, the government and the European Union increased. The tension hit its peak when indictments against war veterans Ivan Čermak and Mladen Markač were issued. Čermak and Markač surrendered in 2004, whereas Gotovina was on the run until 2006. In the context of the operation Storm, the formulation “joint criminal enterprise” appeared in the indictment, and also “ethnic cleansing operation” (cf. Koren 2011: 138) which pointed to a conspiracy involving top state officials. During the government of prime minister Ivo Sanader, the Ante Gotovina’s whereabouts were discovered and he was arrested shortly afterwards. In this kind of atmosphere the Croatian parliament passed two new declarations: the Declaration on Operation Storm and the Declaration on the Condemnation of the Crimes Committed During the Totalitarian Communist Regime on 30 June 2006, with 64 votes for and 10 against. Parts of the declaration are based on some of the following phrases and formulations: representatives remember “the dramatic and tragic, but also victorious and glorious days” with “the feeling of excitement, pride and gratitude”, but, on the other hand, they express their concern over the characterization of Operation Storm by the Hague court as a criminal enterprise,<sup>27</sup> and they express “determination in their intention to defend the historical truth about Operation Storm using all legitimate means” (Official Gazette no. 76/2006, cited in Koren 2011: 139). Moreover, the text mentions the chivalrous Croatian soldier, a character regularly found in the public discourse on Operation Storm today;<sup>28</sup> civilian victims of Operation Storm are relativized, and the victims are being presented as collateral victims of the professional and honourable military treatment in accordance with the laws and customs of war. Specifically, in the context of the deaths of civilians the following formulation is used: “as usually happens in war” (cf. Koren 2011: 140). The declaration is an example of a performative *par excellence* and it is an example of the temporality of the iterating and re-iterating of the nation – it vividly shows the split between narrative and narration. The

<sup>27</sup> Let us quote from a speech Mile Bogović made in the Hague: “Also here are sons and daughters of those who lived and suffered for more freedom, who confessed for their sins which they had done against others and against their own. Those who did not come here are the more powerful ones of our people or those who fear the gaze of our prisoners. Those who came are people who preserved the spark of freedom and justice during a time when this freedom or justice did not belong to everyone, but only to them. (...) We came here bearing the cross of an entire nation, a nation which is on trial in this house here. Our prisoners are aware that they are just selected individuals, that a whole nation is on trial.” <http://www.hkv.hr/izdvojeno/komentari/mile-bogovic/9143-mons-dr-mile-bogovi-sude-nam-jer-smo-se-drznuli-stvoriti-svoju-dravu.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the statement made by Damir Krstičević, Minister of Defence, during the celebration of Operation Storm on 5 August 2017: “Thank you all for coming, I want to say, as a soldier, a commander and a participant in Operation Storm, that it is a symbol of military success, heroism and the crown of all victories [...] All of us knew that we were doing something good for our people and our country, we did not want a war, the Croatian army and police forces in synergy and unity. You saw that we came out as winners, you also saw our allies who said that Operation Storm is being taught in military schools as a brilliant operation”, he said. Lastly, he was asked if it was hot in 1995 as it is hot in Knin today. “It was the same, believe me. You can imagine, full military equipment, a soldier has to come down here from that top, you can imagine what that means in those conditions. But the secret to that victory are our people, courageous and heroic, that is that difference which resulted: the Croatian man.” <http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/uzivo-iz-knina-drzavni-vrh-polozio-vijence-krsticevic-se-prisjetio-1995-bilo-je-vruce-kao-i-danas/986674.aspx>.

repetitiveness of the performative attempts to enforce the past time of the narrative as the present time of narration is visible in the celebration of Operation Storm itself, i.e. in the celebration of Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day. The celebration is held in Knin, and the narrative is continued in the present as if it never ended, whereby it starts with the arrival of the Croats in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the acceptance of the Catholic faith, with King Zvonimir and other Croatian kings, all the way to the *magnificent victory* on 5 August 1995 – which continues to this day because it is the basis of all previous plots (the sufferings of the Croatian people) and the basis of that in which Society finds its substance. Not only that, but even more: Operation Storm, in the context of the creation of the Society effect through the narrative about the Croatian thousand-year dream, figures as the teleogenic revision and confirmation of the meaning of suffering for the preservation of the Croatian national identity which is allegedly unique and exceptional.<sup>29</sup> Precisely because of this, the history which refers to the Homeland War or Operation Storm is prescribed in the form of declarations which tend to bind society to a single interpretation. We can say that the importance of Operation Storm as the end of the narrative about the *Croatian thousand-year dream* as the revision of the so-called thousand-year-old suffering of Croats is so essential for the Croatian community that it represents a taboo. Blanuša (2017: 171) defines a political *taboo* as the hegemonic silence connected to certain mystified and sanctified words, concepts and narratives, promoted as important for a group's symbolic coming to consciousness of itself. A *taboo* is articulated as a social norm which a certain part of society shares – it is mostly proclaimed by the ruling elite as an unquestionable form of public thought which excludes any kind of critical examination of history. As a result, the mechanism of the taboo comes down to the relocation of certain problematic points in history to the sphere of the “forbidden” (Van den Braembussche 1998: 103, cited in Blanuša 2017: 171).

## CONCLUSION

To summarize: Laclau and Mouffe claim that it is “dangerous” to think that there are floating signifiers for an identity which has already been articulated. The constitution of a discourse depends on the terrain on which the discourse is being constituted, however, that terrain can easily be transformed at a certain moment (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 141). The question of hegemony which could threaten the autonomy of a discourse, according to Laclau and Mouffe, is wrongly articulated. They believe that the incompatibility between hegemony and autonomy could exist only if social movements were isolated “monads”, strictly separated from one another. However, even in sutured discourses there

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<sup>29</sup> “So, the creation, defense and the final liberation of the Republic of Croatia should serve to its revitalizing, primordial, exceptional and unrepeatable establishment, through which the talent, uniqueness and the creative energy of every individual could be discovered, and perfected and be applied, and the genius of the Croatian people could be reshaped and used” (Veselica 2005: 29).



are always signifiers which are not stable. We consider this segment of the discursive theory of hegemony to crucial because it allows us to denounce traditions as *imagined*, i.e. as denouncing the split between the time of the narration of the nation and the narrative of the nation. Creating a polyphonic structure of that which should be national history – the plurality of voices of social memory without censorship – is situated in the basis of Laclau and Mouffe’s project of radical democracy. Delegitimising and disqualifying any mention of the past at odds with what is proclaimed by the ruling elites is a commonplace in nationalist hygiene, which includes attempts at censoring critical interpretations as well as their exclusion in consort with a dangerous tendency towards totalitarianism. On the other hand, these tendencies, which are also present in the so-called developed liberal democracies, give all the more meaning to Laclau and Mouffe’s project of radical democracy. Still, it is important to mention in the conclusion that the idea of radical democracy, i.e. the polyphony of discourses within the ontology of the social, is only partly applicable to Croatian society. This allow for the claim that the Croatian society may be regarded primarily as a divided society whose zeal is produced and reproduced by the nationalist discourse where the premodern ideological apparatus of the Croatian Catholic church, their followers who simulate the characteristics of civil society and some veteran groups are trying to make it impossible to repay the debt owed them for their sacrifice of participating in the Homeland War. In postconflict societies with a heritage of multiple cultural traumas, such types of discourse, which are sutured by the signifiers from the metaphorical domain of “cultural heroism” exhibit a tendency towards self-preservation and simulating universality (overcoming the distinction between the particular and the universal) for as long as possible. However, Mijatović speaks of the prosthetic idea or the function of trauma, but this concept implies that it is no longer possible for the trauma to be overpowered, but that it is only possible for it to be represented.<sup>30</sup> Farrell refers to this as the regime of trauma, an instrument of regulation of different shapes of terror, i.e. as *terror management* (cf. Mijatović 2009: 145). Moreover, national identity is so essential within the idea of history as a narrative that it seems as if a possibility of critical distance which would be the first precondition for the possibility of the concept of *working-through* is impossible.<sup>31</sup> We can say that national identity takes on a pure metaphysical dimension, which is not very different from confessionalism. Misztal (2015: 299) connects identity with the “search for the soul”, and discourses which are based on that “search” generate metaphysical concepts. To conclude: the hegemony of the time of narration as opposed to the time of the narra-

<sup>30</sup> What Farrel dubs representation we will, in accord with Laclau, dub articulation. We do not want to completely disqualify the term representation; however, we believe that it can be used in the case of an already structured text, of already shaped (sutured) discourses, which produce certain effects which may be defined, described and called representations. The Laclauian hegemonic logic is articulatory, and not representational.

<sup>31</sup> *Working-through* “presupposes critical distance which a person makes in relation to their own problem, which enables them to clearly distinguish the past from the present and future” (Božić Blanuša 2011: 397). However, this concept is acutely missing from the Croatian political field, while its absence at the same time makes *acting-out* present – the repetition, making of a past experience present in the present, a re-living of trauma and a radical impossibility of overcoming a past traumatic experience.

tive about the Croatian thousand-year dream is what prevents an uprising of subjugated knowledges, i.e. counter-memories – the first step towards the democratization of the political field and the manifestation of counter-memory. For Foucault, counter-memory is an abstract space where the individual as a subject expresses resistance toward official and already established versions of historical continuity (as we have shown with the concept of the narrative) and in this way they always realize themselves anew as a subject or as a subjectivity (cf. Brkljačić and Prlenda 2006), and not as an object created by the hand of the Creator. In the Croatian context, Croatianness is an object created by the hand of the Creator, i.e. war veterans, as we have shown in one of the previous sections. Those Creators are in fact “outside the law” and “above the law” (cf. Jović 2017: 30) because their position as martyrs is situated in the religious register and is not compatible with the register of civil law. They are the ones who subjugate knowledge by a story, by myth, they disable any form of democratization. Be that as it may, any form of emancipation from the hegemonic subjugation of knowledge in the form of reconstruction of that which is allowed in the field of knowledge would be the first step towards a dialogical conception of history and towards overcoming the neurosis, the cultural trauma, despite the ingrained fantasy (which is also a part of the discourse of the ruling elites) about the supposed post-political or post-ideological society which necessarily has to turn towards the future, and not look back. Instead of, in Foucault’s terms, the uprising of subjugated knowledges or counter-history, current questions about identity are being exhausted in the fruitless aporia between dominant hegemonic narratives: they all go hand in hand with fantasies about the so-called post-ideological society and turning towards the supposed earning of profits or the development of technologies which should position Croats as a formidable competitor to other members of the European Union – all in all, it all comes down to the so-called “turning towards the future” and the idea of progress or a developed society which, in order to move forward, necessarily has to cut its ties with its past and all the ideologies through which the past burdens the present, not allowing it to become a technologically developed future, a competitive future, a future led by experts, a future of equals among equals, a future of the prosperity of the privileged classes. All these fantasies have a deep contradiction at its base: the idea of the flow of time. On the one hand, there are attempts to create a break in the continuity of history deepening the gap between now and then, a radical break with the past. On the other, there are attempts to create continuity; continuity which rejects one segment of the past through mechanisms of forgetting – and the period in question is the period between 1945 and 1991. The synchronic segment to be removed in order to create the radical break in continuity and establish fake continuity (which is based on an arbitrary expulsion of certain segments of the past thus making a historical break/overturn representing a point of a new common beginning) serves – on the declarative level – to achieve the described future, but is simultaneously a mechanism of repressive forgetting and legitimation of *taboos*.

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## HRVATSKI TISUĆLJETNI SAN: (PRI)POVIJEST KAO EFEKT DRUŠTVA

U ovome se radu fenomen nacije promatra kao (pri)povijest. Kao polazište za takvo razmatranje uzima se politička teorija, točnije postutemeljiteljska teorijska struja te poststrukturalistička naratologija. Važna pojava za ovaj rad je tzv. performativni obrat, posebice u historiografiji. U fokusu će dakle biti priča, odnosno (pri)povijest, na način na koji je shvaća Ranciere: kao diskurs koji originalno pripada literaturi, ali joj čitavo vrijeme izmiče. Koristeći književnu tehniku povijest se konstituira kao znanost – upravo joj je zbog toga moguće pristupiti sličnim, iako ne istovjetnim metodama kao i književnosti. Temeljna teza ovoga rada jest da društvo, laklauovski shvaćeno, ne postoji, dok se efekt (hrvatskog) društva, odnosno privid društva kao totaliteta stvara pričom o takozvanom *hrvatskom tisućljetnom snu*. Drugim riječima: ono što Hobsbawm naziva izmišljanjem tradicije temelji se na prošlom vremenu priče, dok se utjecaj sadašnjeg vremena pripovijedanja te priče isključuje iz mehanizama ontologije nacionalizma.

Ključne riječi: "hrvatski tisućljetni san", (pri)povijest, performativni obrat, dekonstrukcijska historiografija, teleogenetični zaplet