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CONSTRUCTING AND RETHINKING MONTENEGRIN NATIONAL IDENTITY

This article looks at the discourse about Montenegrin "personality and culture" (Dinko Tomašić) in the period between the early nineteenth century and the loss of an independent state in 1918. After years of war which has divided Montenegrins from some of their neighbours, the authors suggest that the new Montenegro might benefit from "re-discovering" a more pluralist identity, especially given the number of minorities in the republic, including Muslims.

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In her important book *Imagining the Balkans*, the Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova observed that in nineteenth century descriptions "the standard Balkan male is uncivilized, primitive, crude, cruel and without exception dishevelled" (Todorova 1997:14).[1] However descriptions of Montenegrin men are almost rather different. In the ethnographic writings from the period between the Napoleonic Wars and the formation of the first Yugoslavian state, descriptions of Montenegrins by visitors were often highly "positive" and perpetuated an idea of the men of Montenegro as heroic and independent. In the first decade of the twentieth century, readers of National Geographic magazine (1908:783) were informed:

> Physically the Montenegrins are among the largest and finest people in Europe… They are a race of warriors, always ready to take arms against external encroachments, and equally ready to defend at home what they

[1] We are grateful to suggestions made by the editors of this volume as well two anonymous referees, Karen Gainer, Božidar Jezernik, Charles King, Andy Wood, Mark Thompson, Alex Drace-Francis, Sabrina Ramet, Djordje Stefanović, Saša Pajević, Rada Daniell, Anna Davin, John Hope-Mason, Wendy Bracewell, Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Celia Hawkesworth.

> regard as their perpetual rights… every man, even the poorest, has the bearing and dignity of a gentleman.

At times the way in which men were described were almost erotically charged, with their muscularity and height being frequently remarked upon, which suggests that Montenegrins should be exempted from any "standard" Balkanist assumptions.

In this article, we will explore some reasons why Montenegrins might have been excused the indignity of descriptions that collectively demeaned them. It may also be the case that Montenegrin national consciousness as it developed in the era of state formation in the South East of Europe was moulded and shaped by a sense of their innately heroic "personality and culture" (to paraphrase Dinko Tomašić [1948]) and a collective sense of themselves was almost "codified" by such descriptions. The American anthropologist Zorka Milich, who carried out important fieldwork amongst centenarian women in 1990 (and thus gave us an almost unique window into the world of independent Montenegro), was not entirely uncritical about the region's culture as it has been traditionally constructed, stating "though the uninitiated might find many of the tribal practices of Montenegro primitive and distressing, it is essential that they be viewed in the context of a traditional warrior society – original and unpolluted" (Milich 1995:29). Some writers are now unsatisfied with interpretations that place Montenegrin national personality beyond criticism. After the war in Croatia in 1991 when the behaviour of the Montenegrins was frequently seen as anything but "heroic", Nebojša Čagorović (1993:129) suggested that it was time for Montenegrins to reassess who they really were and whether this collective image was still relevant, historically realistic or useful.

Some of the first ethnographies of Montenegro were written in the first decade of the nineteenth century by writers who came into contact with them as soldiers during military campaigns in Kotor during the Napoleonic Wars, particularly between 1806-1808 and 1813.[2] It was during these campaigns that their great military reputation was established beyond their Ottoman adversaries (Pismo rukom konzulu u Trstu; Kovačević 1998:33). There was little written about Montenegro of an ethnographic nature before this time.[3] Some major texts on Dalmatia and the Adriatic coast omit it all together (Konstantinović 1960:80), tending instead to discuss the inhabitants of the

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[2] Bronevskij (1836-1837); "Tableau des Bouches du Cattaro suivi d'une notice sur Montenegro" (1808); Vialla de Sommières (1820).

[3] In his recollections of youth, Carlo Gozzi describes Montenegrin life very briefly (see his *Memorie inutili della Vita di Carlo Gozzi*, vol 1 (Venezia Stamperia Palese, 1797, chapter 9). Gozzi, in common with other eighteenth century writers collapses some distinctions between 'Morlacchi' and Montenegrins. Other accounts include Mariano Bolizza, *Relazione et descrittione del Sangiacato di Scutari*, Venetia, 1614 and Marino Barleci, *De vita, moribus ac rebus praecipue adversus Turcos gestis Georgii Castroiti*, Argentorati, 1573.

Karst hinterland as "Morlacchi" (Gulin 1997:77-100; Wolff 2001). Indeed the notion of an Adriatic culture of the littoral and a Dinaric culture of the limestone hinterland is reified by a stark geographical contrast between the two. These early writings about Montenegro were highly dependent on the prejudices of the citizens of Kotor inhabiting an Adriatic littoral world, who described the highlanders in the harsh limestone mountains that surround their bay as "barbaric" (Hoste 1998:187-188).

Knowledge about Montenegro was then more seriously established by Romantic writers, particularly the poet Vuk Stefanović Karadžić and then later Petar II Petrović Njegoš. The importance of the former in the "making" of the reputation of this small Balkan state was acknowledged by Jernej Kopitar when he stated that "he alone was guilty for the fact that the whole world was travelling to Montenegro" (Konstantinović 1960:80). In subsequent years until the country lost its independence in 1918 these early writers were joined by scores of others of almost every other European nationality, who established what we might refer to here cautiously as a discourse about Montenegrin national identity. This has existed in various forms ever since and survived the demise of the independent state in many respects intact (Thompson 1992:157).

We have very few texts written about Montenegrin identity before the nineteenth century that would confirm that the process of identity formation had taken place quite separate from the ideological forces that were forging other modern European nationalisms elsewhere from the mid eighteenth century onwards. An idea of Montenegro certainly existed before contact with European writers and the discourse about Montenegro, which is remarkably developed, consistent and coherent, might have flourished independently of the writings of ethnographers and travel writers. Migration of refugees from surrounding areas was a significant process in the history of this region (Erdeljanović 1926) and it may well be that "the most independent and valorous individuals" (Boehm 1983:144) migrated there. Nevertheless, stereotypes about Montenegro had become so repetitious by the turn of the twentieth century that they call to mind Homi Bhabha's (1994:66) observation about the need to repeat stereotypes in order to effectively reinforce them. Texts about the country were often epigonal and uncritical to such a great extent that it appears that many of them could have been written without ever having visited the country (Erdeljanović 1926). This is certainly true about William Gladstone's pronouncements about Montenegrin political freedoms, prompted by the exigencies in the geo-political circumstances before the Congress of Berlin in 1878 as well as Tennyson's famous poem on the "rock-throne of freedom" (Tennyson 1926:533-534).

Physically Montenegro overawed its visitors, who were inspired by its sheer and vertical nature. As Jackson remarked, "a more inhospitable fatherland has never inspired its sons to shed their blood in its defence"

(Jackson 1887:57). In part the admiration for the lives of the Highlanders might have come in part from a literary trope that emphasized the essential difference between highlanders and lowlanders (Braudel 1949; Blok 2001; Živković 1997). Elsewhere the life of highlanders was admired and emulated for its masculine barbarity. The Caucasian Gorci attracted Russians to their numbers, who escaped to the mountains to pursue a "purer" form of life. (Mamedov 2002). Nevertheless, this discourse also has a particularly Adriatic origin. Fernand Braudel theorized a great deal in his magnum opus *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (1949) about the character of highlanders and their difference from lowlanders throughout the Mediterranean. Bojan Baskar (2002:47) has argued that he was influenced the Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić, whose work was well-known to French geographers and appeared on the eve of the Versailles Peace Treaty (which ironically signaled the end of independent Montenegro). The latter was following an agenda which was partly shaped by nationalism prior to the formation of the first Yugoslavia and thus wanted to emphasize the unified character of the Dinaric highlanders to create a "symbolic spine" to unify the South Slavs (Carmichael 2002). By using a mixture of geographical conjecture, anthropology and elements of folk culture, he deduced that the Dinaric types were forceful and brave, had a strong historical consciousness, linking their own daily struggles to the "memory" of the battle of Kosovo polje, that they had an almost inbred desire to kill Turks and a sense of revenge, freedom and bloody-minded independence (Cvijić 1918:281-379).

In some respects, the discourse about Montenegrins resembled the Enlightenment idea about the characteristics of the "exotic" and the "noble savage". Many descriptions clearly mirrored the values of the writers far more than the likely conditions in this part of South East Europe. One writer found that "(a)ll the Montenegrin peasants are gentlemen quite as much as they are soldiers" (*The New York Times* 1882, November 6th, 2). Courage, pride and independence were often noted as the defining characteristics of Montenegrins (Wingfield 1859:198; Denton 1876:79) and they were even considered to have a look of pride and freedom about them (Chopin 1856:137), which even distinguished them from the neighbours. Indeed the difference between these descriptions of Montenegrins and those of Christian peoples in the Balkans and Near East is very stark when we examine this passage from a traveller in Istanbul, who remarked that "four centuries of torture, of oppression, and of suspense have stamped its impress upon an entire community. It is true that the last twenty years have witnessed great improvements in the condition of the native Christians, but constant fear, constant agony, constant humiliation, have so crushed out every trace of manhood, that they are still a cringing, fawning, and abject race" (Goodell 1871:544). In Bosnia in the 1860s, two British travellers remembered the "hereditary insolence of the Mussulman Bosnian is met by the hereditary

cringing of the rayah" (Mackenzie and Irby 1867:20). Even the Greeks, who were subjected to Hellenistic projections about their putative links to the ancient classical society were described negatively. J. Theodore Bent noted that "(t)he character of the modern Greek has been formed by centuries of ignominious cringing" (Bent 1889:475). This could hardly be more different to Jackson's description (1887:37-38) of the Montenegrin, published some two years earlier:

> The costume of the Bocchesi (inhabitants of Boka kotorska) is not less picturesque than that of the Montenegrin, and indeed they are the same people in race and language, and scarcely to be distinguished but by the initials of his prince which the Montenegrin wears on his cap. And yet we thought the Highlander had about him a superior air of freedom and independence, which corresponded with the difference of his history and political condition.

We also encounter an image of a society which is seen to be in a perpetual state of mental struggle against the Turks (who are partially replaced by the Austrians in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Jackson 1887:67)), in which the role of political freedom is central and where Orthodoxy and the Prince-Bishop, the Vladika, are unassailable. Writers were moved by this idea of a perpetual struggle to maintain independence, although many expressed their horror at the spectacle of dozens of Turks' heads surrounding the Vladika residence (Marmier 1853:120). The fate of general Delgorges, whose head was turned into a football after the siege of Herceg-Novi, also prompted a rather disgusted response, although it is clear that public display of severed heads had only died out fairly recently in other parts of Europe (Jezernik 1998:163) and many of Delgorges' contemporaries died at the Guillotine.

The Vladike, dynastically represented by the Petrović family by the early nineteenth century, were often visited by travellers and writers, who generally admired them as agents of modernisation and fathers of the nation. Petar I introduced new crops to Montenegro and began a process of legal modernisation, which was to last throughout the nineteenth century. In 1813, William Hoste described him as "a man of education (who) has been some time in Russia and is very much respected by everybody. His influence is almost as unbounded with the Montenegrins, except in the article of plunder… (he is a)… very handsome man… tall; of commanding figure; and of a mild, but majestic aspect;… his manners graceful and easy" (Hoste 1813:187, 191). In a region where there was high illiteracy, the Vladika as an educated man also represented his people to foreigners because he knew foreign languages. Some writers were also impressed by the idea of a political leader who was an intimate terms with all the nation (Neale 1861:186). This is particularly true of Petar II Petrović Njegoš, the author of the mock epic poem *Gorski Vijenac*.

Gorski Vijenac (The Mountain Wreath) was published in 1847 by Njegoš, who was the Vladika from 1830 until his early death in 1851. The main theme of the poem is the supposed dilemma faced by his predecessor Danilo (1700-1735) about what to do with Montenegrins who had become Muslim. The poem has a unique status between art and culture. It is not a genuine historical account, but rather the poetic vision of an educated man who had read the fake epic Ossian as well as Ivanhoe and the Greek classics (Popović 1930:17). *Gorski Vijenac* was read by subsequent generations of Montenegrins and other South Slavs, achieving canonical status very rapidly. For Nobel prize winning Bosnian novelist Ivo Andrić, Njegoš was "the complete expression of our basic, deepest collective sentiment, for this motto (let be what cannot be!) deliberately or not, led all our struggles for freedom until modern times" (Ibrahimagić 2001:209-210). Whether Njegoš' work represents a kind of *Urtext* for popular sentiment or whether he himself was largely informed by and drew from popular culture is a moot point. Jovan Cvijić (1918:296 discussed in Baskar 2002:57) mentions an eighteenth century case of a Montenegrin of the Ozrinić tribe who dreamt that he was to rid himself of his Muslim neighbours, which he did and similar things may have occurred elsewhere in the form of a nocturnal culture in waiting. Therefore it is not completely fair to isolate a single text from the context in which it was written. However it is probable that Montenegro's identity was creatively manipulated by its intellectuals and other nineteenth century writers. This may be particularly true in the case of the idea of Montenegrins as "Serbs" or even "the best of Serbs",[4] which in part has its origins in Njegoš' own dedication of *Gorski Vijenac* to the Serb rebel hero Karadjordje.

The apparent readiness of Montenegrins to bear arms and fight was exploited by intellectuals in the creation of a strong and Serb dominated Yugoslavia in the first half of the nineteenth century. A paradigm about the Dinaric region and the violent character of its inhabitants was first established by Jovan Cvijić (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000:171-178). Vaso Čubrilović, a committed Serb nationalist familiar with the work of Cvijić, promoted the removal of Muslim populations from Yugoslavia in 1937 in his well-known memorandum to the Stojadinović government. He argued that "Dinaric" Montenegrins could be used to drive Albanians out of Kosovo since they exhibited many of the necessary violent "traits" to do the job (Ćović 1991:112-113).[5] Bojan Baskar (2002:156) has characterized these motives of Čubrilović as being shaped by a kind of 'cultural determinism' and cynicism.

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[4] If we define "Serb" as all orthodox *štokavski* speakers, then Montenegrins could be classified as Serbs. However in an era of nationalist expansionism, then the term is not unproblematic and has led to a division in Montenegrin politics between *Belaši and Zelenaši* since 1918.

[5] Here Čubrilović used a fairly established idea but turned it into an 'ideology of ethnic cleansing'. The Montenegrin military commander Marko Milijanov, writing in the later nineteenth century had thought that it would not be hard for the Albanians and Montenegrins

> In some settings, "tradition" is effectively used to justify, excuse and direct violence (Schwander-Sievers 2001:97).

The case of Čubrilović is all the more tragic given the fact that were contemporary alternatives. Djordje Stefanović (2005:472-473) has pointed out that Dimitrije Tucović, the leader of the Serbian Social Democrats, "developed a strong critique of anti-Albanian stereotypes and Serbian territorial ambitions (and)… found inspiration in the writings of Marko Miljanov who had called upon Serbs and Montenegrins to realize their similarities with Albanians". As the French historian Lucien Febvre reminded us, there are no necessities, only possibilities.

Writers influenced by Romanticism came to Montenegro in part to find a world apparently unspoilt by civilisation (Jezernik 1998:115). One journalist writing in New York Times (1882:2) opined that "(w)e should have to go back to time before the Norman Conquest to find an Englishman of the same stamp as the modern Montenegrin. In the late war, the Prince found a (man) of 80 years of age in the ranks. (He) told him he was too old to fight… and when the Prince insisted the octogenarian drew a pistol from his belt and shot himself". Many writers made links, usually very consciously between Montenegro and other societies, which were considered by heroic values, particularly ancient Greece (Noë 1870:33; Petermann 1899:578). The naval officer Vladimir Bronevskij compared Montenegro with Sparta in 1807, and claimed that he "saw a republic in the literal meaning of the word, a fatherland of real freedom where custom replaces law, manliness keeps guard on freedom, the sword of revenge thwarts injustice" (Jezernik 1998:117). His account clearly owes a great deal to Jean Jacques Rousseau's vision of an ascetic Sparta, as opposed to an effete Athens, set out in his *Discourse on Inequality* (1761) and later Njegoš was to juxtapose the lack of spirit in Venice with the more wholesome values of his homeland, effectively perpetuating this trope (Njegoš 1990:96-108, lines 1385-1692). As Paul Cartledge (1998) has observed:

> Sparta, by way of the mirage, was the fons et origo of the western tradition of political utopiography. Athenian theorists of a Socratic tendency found Sparta a suitably different and distant place on which to project their longings for radical political change at home, and many subsequent thinkers, including Rousseau, followed suit.

William Gladstone remarked that Montenegro was, if anything, *more* heroic than its classical antecedents: "the most romantic and stirring passages of other histories may be said to grow pale, if not by the side of the ordinary life of Tsernagora, at least when brought into comparison with that life at the critical emergencies, which were of very constant recurrence" (Gladstone

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to get along "since they are not far from you (Montenegrins), or you from them". Quoted in Ivo Banac (1984:297).

1877:365). According to Harry de Windt, author of the infamous *Through Savage Europe* (1907) who visited this region in the first years of the twentieth century, Gladstone "was still mourned throughout Montenegro" (Markovich 2000:153). In the following year, the *New York Times* (1878:4) informed its readers:

> The whole history (of Montenegro) is a most inspiriting (sic) and heroic one, and had it but possessed its "sacred bard" would have ranked with the annals of the immortal Greek cities which in population were not larger. The spirit of resistance and defiance has been transmitted from father to son… The farmers are said to leave their flocks for the skirmish with their ancestral enemies, with something of that gladness for battle which belongs to a more vigorous age of the world.

Writers from Britain often made comparisons between Montenegro and Scotland (Norris 1999:26). In part this reflected a vogue for the Celtic past in Britain at a time when the political hegemony of Westminster seemed unassailable and therefore an interest in the "twilight" romantic and harmless (Macaulay 1953:617). Montenegro seemed to a British public reared on the novels of Walter Scott to be fiction brought to life. As W. G. Wingfield (1859:127-128):

> I was presently trotting along the same road as last night, mounted on a villainous hack and preceded by a Cattaran, clad in the usual costume of the Bocca, armed to the teeth with gun, pistols and a dagger and stalking away in front of me like one of the Highlanders in "Rob Roy" or "Waverley".

T. G. Jackson (1887:58) remembered that

> Over the shoulders, generally worn scarf wise is flung the struka or national plaid, which serves these highlanders as the scotch plaid does those of our country.

Maude Holbach (1910:188-189) recalled that "(t)he tall well-knit figures of the men are set off to the utmost advantage by their picturesque and practical national dress, of which a distinguishing feature is a long scarf, like a Scotch plaid, thrown gracefully over one shoulder and finished with a fringe which almost touches the ground as the wearer walks. I was told that when men sleep in the open one end of this plaid, called a 'struka' is put beneath, and the other thrown over them". Comparisons with Scotland or Homeric Greece reinforced the idea that Montenegrins belonged to a heroic age that was fast disappearing, but also that they represented *Ur*-types, the basic stuff that the human character is made of. Bob Chase (1996:116) has remarked that:

> Romance… represented human beings as already-made, undeveloping, static types of human substance, continually undergoing stereotypical tests and adventures in a timeless unlocalized landscape and never growing older in the process.

Arguably the phenomenon most remarked upon by ethnographic writers in Montenegro was the apparently unfair division of labour, which left women to do all the work while men indulged in more libidinous activities.[6] In part this drew on the classic Orientalist description of the libidinous nature of the Turk,[7] – Reverend William Denton (1876:26) described it as "the most loathsome… sensuality". Heinrich Noë (1870:335) noted "the men do not work… Their profession (*Beruf*) is smoking tobacco and heroism". In Montenegro, travellers and ethnographers thought that they had found what Graham Dawson (1994:282) has referred to as "idealised, wish-fulfilling forms of masculinity to counter anxieties generated in a social world that is deeply divided along the fracture lines of ethnicity and nation, gender and class". There is an ambivalence in the way in which gender relations were depicted, because the writers were describing something which was seen as archaic and yet at the same time attractive. Francesco Petter (1834:234) felt that Montenegro verified Montesquieu's notion that the level of civilization that a nation had attained could be gauged by examining the way in which a man treated his wife. Heirorymus Rödlich (1811:72) reported that women in Montenegro were not allowed to sleep in bed with their husbands, but must sleep instead on the ground. They were also obliged to serve food, rather than sit down "at the man's table". The division of comfort appears to have been reinforced by both men and women as if it were quite natural.[8]

> The house master divides the food, giving sufficient to each one, so that he would sometimes go short himself if the girls and daughters in law were not always ready to offer him the best part of their portions. The country women of Montenegro always kiss that hand of a male acquaintance in greeting. On the road the man is met on mule-back smoking, the woman on foot with a load, and they neither of them would content to change their position and put the load on the mule and make the man walk (Jackson 1887:391).

Women did enjoy some benefits of status: they received "high respect" (Spencer 1866:246-247), they would not be robbed or attacked while on the road (Marmier 1853:297-298) their sexual honour was carefully guarded by

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[6] Many modern stereotypes at the level of popular culture revolve around the laziness of Montenegrin men. Pastoralists, who typically work for 15 hours a day rather than the engaging in the more intensive schedules of agricultural societies, are perceived as being less active elsewhere. This tendency may have become more pronounced by the need to perpetually defend the state boundaries and possibly even by the fact that the Montenegrins were supposed to be descended in part from the remnants of the medieval Rascian nobility.

[7] This theme is discussed in the highly influential book originally published in 1978 by Edward Said (1995).

[8] Andrei Simić considers that "self-abnegation" a key form of behaviour for perpetuating "cryptomatriachy" in the Southern Slav family unit (Simić 1999:26).

their male relatives (Chopin 1856:194) and they did not participate in war, except as cunning auxiliaries.

Being a hero was what made a Montenegrin man a man and he would carry arms even when he was involved in pacific occupations (Marmier 1853:315). Athol Mayhew (1880:284) remembered that "the Montenegrin is a fighting man or he is nothing, never having been taught any peaceable pursuits… Yet, despite the aggressiveness of his appearance, a Montenegrin never uses his weapons except in warfare against the enemy". Another sign of masculinity was the cultivation of facial hair. As Edith Durham noted "to be without a moustache, both in Montenegro and Albania, is held to be peculiarly disgraceful… When I mentioned in Montenegro that my brother was clean-shaven, I was told not to repeat such disgraceful facts about him" (Durham 1909:15-16). When a father was unhappy with his son, he would tell him that his punishment would be to die in his bed. As Vuk Karadžić recorded when one tribe (*pleme*) was challenged by another, a common insult would be "we know you and your family: all your ancestors died in bed with their wives" (Karadžić 1837:113).

Excessive work left Montenegrin women with sun-baked (*basané*) skin. Although as Vialla remarked they were remarkably strong and would suckle their children for several years (Vialla de Sommières 1820:vol 1, 95-96). The painter Maude Holbach (1910:177) made the following observations in Kotor:

> The Montenegrin market…, where the picaresque mountaineers offer for sale such dainties as smoked mutton and goat-flesh, as well as vegetables from the fertile district round Scutari (Skadar) interested me greatly and I longed for an artist's brush to reproduce the splendid figures of the men in colour, but was sorry to see that these noble-looking individuals left the hard work of carrying their produce to market to the overworked, prematurely aged women, whose existence seems to be little different to that of a beast of burden.

It was often remarked that moral values, particularly relating to what might be termed family values, were strictly enforced within Montenegrin society, particularly by the Vladike (Eisenstein 1902:179-180). Honour in business and in personal affairs were apparently part of a central belief system and protected by women within the family: "the women had to protect their children and their honour when the men were away, and this had its effect on their character" (Jackson 1887:389). Vialla, who wrote a remarkable full-length account of Montenegro c. 1810 believed that there was no adultery there, again echoing the values of the classical world (Vialla de Sommières 1820:vol 1, 166).

Economic life in Montenegro was considered to have lagged behind other European areas and writers offered various explanations for this:

> Down in these plains the land is said to be fertile, but the people have the character of being too idle to till it properly, and it seems to want draining (Jackson 1887:55).

And Xavier Marmier (1853:294) opined that "with their agricultural indolence and absence of industry, the Montenegrin people will never be rich". In part economic backwardness was attributed to the fact that women could not labour as well as men (Vialla de Sommières 1820:vol II, 74), although it was also thought that they were tougher than their female counterparts elsewhere in Europe (Noë 1870:334). Some linked the economic underdevelopment with a nostalgic idyll that they had created, particularly when they noted that clocks had only been recently introduced (Vialla de Sommières 1820:vol 1, 158). Others did not think that change would necessarily be a good thing. Cyprien Robert (1844:196-197) thought that if their society were modernized, particularly with the introduction of primary education, that they would loose their essential character, but added that they would rather live as shopkeepers in Kotor that "free men in the mountains".

That Montenegrin identity evolved in a particular way is part of modern history and something that we can do little to change.[9] Many Montenegrins are still in the grip of an idea about themselves, which can have extremely negative connotations Radovan Karadžić (who is well-known for his poetic self--fulfilling prophesies) described his native country as a "land of widows" and his late mother Jovanka as a "Spartan wife".[10] The language of heroism was appropriated by Romantic nationalists, then by communists (Žanić 1998:28) and then by reinvented nationalists in the 1990s. Heroism was finally "ingloriously buried" (Čagorović 1993:135) during the wars in the 1990s in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, in which many Montenegrins participated as cowardly aggressors. Nevertheless in these times of enormous political change, particularly with the recent growth in the numbers of Muslims living there, it may be of use to assess how far Montenegrin identity was dependent on the political and ethnographic ideas of intellectual nationalists. Or even more problematically how far it was dependent on non-Montenegrins who wanted to construct the idea of a pure society in which heroic values had survived.

The real Montenegro was never as "heroic" or as isolated from the outside world. It had economic links with Nikšić, Kotor, Budva, Bar, Skodra and Dubrovnik. Podgorica was an important Ottoman trading centre. Albanians had many similar beliefs in the bordering regions, particularly in

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[9] Sabrina P. Ramet has suggested that there are links between historic social structures in pastoralist societies such as Montenegro and more recent forms of violence (Ramet 1996:119-122).

[10] *The Reckoning*, Film broadcast on the United Kingdom's Channel Four, 30th July, 1998.

the Malësi e Madhe, which runs along the border between the two regions (Malcolm 1998:10). Many Montenegrin habits surely owe something to Ottoman culture, which suggests that isolation cannot have been that extreme. In addition, the Montenegrins had long term links with Russia through the Orthodox Church and the Venetian Adriatic. Montenegro was never completely cut off and could not have survived without imported gunpowder (Boehm 1983:7). Montenegro in some respects was clearly a nineteenth century idea, even a discursive creation. But ideas are sometimes more powerful than material forces alone. The youthful members of *Mlada Bosna* who competed for the privilege of assassinating Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914 had all memorised *Gorski Vijenac*, preferring heroic death to a lifetime of servitude under a foreign ruler (Anzulović 1999:92). The political task for the next generation of Montenegrins will surely be to build bridges with all their neighbours and perhaps they will have to re-evaluate aspects of their past if they are to gain the future.

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KONSTRUIRANJE I PONOVNO RAZMIŠLJANJE O CRNOGORSKOM NACIONALNOM IDENTITETU

SAŽETAK

Je li nacionalni karakter datost koju su formirala stoljeća nedokučive izolacije, lokalne tradicije i odgovora na vanjske uvjete? Koliko je nacionalni karakter ovisan o samo-pripisivanju, slučajnosti ili o romantičnim ili ciničnim projekcijama vanjskih izvora? U ovome se članku razmatra diskurs o crnogorskoj "ličnosti i kulturi" (Dinko Tomašić) u razdoblju između ranog 19. stoljeća i gubitka neovisne države 1918. Crnogorski muškarci bili su definirani maskulinim atributima kao što su heroizam, lojalnost središnjem liku vladike i posebno okrutnim ponašanjem prema neprijateljima (posebice muslimanima). Žene su opisivane kao hraniteljice obitelji podvrgnute autoritetu muškaraca i usmjerene ka održanju kreposnih obiteljskih vrijednosti. Za neke je autore Crna Gora bila Sparta ili ih je podsjećala na navodni život u škotskim planinama. "Atributi" crnogorskih muškaraca su među onim ciničnijima smatrani potencijalno korisnima u etničkome čišćenju Albanaca s Kosova u tridesetim godinama 20. stoljeća. Nakon višegodišnjeg rata koji je Crnogorce odijelio od nekih njihovih susjeda, autori sugeriraju da bi nova Crna Gora mogla iskoristiti "ponovno otkriće" pluralnijega identiteta, posebice s obzirom na broj manjina, uključivo muslimana, u Republici.

Ključne riječi: Crna Gora, romantizam, etnicitet, muškost