

2014

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Published In

Davison, Joan and Jesenko Tesan. "Sarajevo Heart of Europe? Global Politics, Symbol(ism) & Liminality in the Centenary of WW1." *International Political Anthropology* 7, no 1 (2014): 27-46.

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Sarajevo Heart of Europe? Global Politics, Symbol(ism) & Liminality in the Centenary of WW1

Joan Davison and Jesenko Tešan

Abstract

The analysis highlights the inter-connection and intra-connection between societal facts (mythology, symbols, and religion), socio-anthropological concepts (imitation, liminality), and psychological factors (human will and “I will”) with global politics. The approach identifies dynamics and “repetitions” which can affect individuals and societies, perpetuate tension and violence, and constrain certain political outcomes. Thus follows the particular shortcoming of International Relations theory as the product of rational choice, which strives to separate the unconscious from the conscious, to understand and remedy certain socio-political conflicts. Conversely, this analysis employs the theory on mimesis, imitation, hence, memory “me willed” (as the distillate of modernity). The work demonstrates that mimetic theory and deep-down, bottom-up, “underground” human and societal impulses are indispensable for understanding certain political environments. Specifically, this will add the concept of liminality and a focus on symbolism to explore the mimetic dynamic preceding and following the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and thereby unpack an axial moment in international relations: the 100 year anniversary of WW1 on 28th June 2014 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H).

Key words: conflictual mimesis, IR theory, liminality, sacrifice, symbol.

Introduction

Certain musical pieces hold the possibility to convey symbols or symbolic meaning, awakening in the listener memories and feelings of past experiences. Such symbols allow one to reach beyond the physical world, but also provide the context for one to become the victim of false experiences. Likewise, myths, rituals, and symbols create bridges to past and distant memories, simplifying and portraying the foundation for permanent human adaptability and survival. For instance, momentous, memorable dates, such as 28 of June 1389, 28 of June 1914, 28 of June 1989, and 28 of June 2014, can be relevant for global politics, both international and domestic. These dates constitute a significant sensory marker (i.e., that is they serve as an “axial” informative sign) for human memories, relations, culture, and myths.

In particular these specific symbolic dates are central to this paper as they denote St Vitus Day, Vidov-dan, the holy day of South Slavs, particularly in the Orthodox Church.¹ If one is not aware of the whole – to read the symbol – to comprehend the relationship between WW1 and Vidov-dan, then a wealth of historical information remains incomplete concerning the past century in B&H.

The argument of this paper then focuses upon the symbolic importance of both Vidov-dan and Sarajevo,² the date and space of mimetic violence. Memory and ritual confront the expected “resurrection” of the mortal victim corpse – Archduke Franz Joseph Ferdinand – in Sarajevo’s City Hall on June 28 2014, at the international

conference which occurs on the Holy Day, marking a hundred years of a bloody century and the beginning of a potentially different century. Further, the celebration of “Sarajevo Heart of Europe” symbolically positions the city at the center of a continent, a conflict, and a century of suffering, as well as central to future peace. In this regard, we envision that the developing Europe of the 21st century possesses the potential to be a different regime than previous state-centered balance of power systems because its character includes post-Westphalian aspects which break with the traditional IR (including European) preferential attentiveness to states. Certain European Union (EU) policies and structures already recognize the agency of trans-national groups and regions, non-business interests, and minority individuals. Citizens of Europe are free to possess multiple identities, and carry their freedoms across borders. A century, in which these norms of Europe become globalized, could produce the resolution of tensions between democracy and self-determination, as well as the elevation of ethical concerns in world politics.

Yet, challenges exist, and symbols and mimetic repetitions keep the past alive. We are aware that Europe lacks “innocence” (in Platonic and Nietzschean terms) because it possesses and remains bound up to the past and memory. Thus to transition from the concluding century, we must address fundamental issues of liminality and the collapsing of agency. Critical is the fact that neorealist, institutionalist, and liberal international relations’ prescriptions inadequately resolve these issues because these approaches assume rationality and fail to address the irrationality of betwixt-and-between or liminal situations. *The question then is whether in the new century with the EU’s pillars extending beyond security and economics to justice, Europe is able to appropriate and unify the whole.* We contend that for liminal entities such as B&H, transformation demands attention to mimetic dynamics and continuing liminality.

The concept of liminality explains the precarious contexts marking identity transitions during which structures become confused and authority vacuums ensue. The violence, especially mimetic, in the sense of Rene Girard (1977), associated with the world wars as well as the revolutions beginning in 1989, are understood as liminal events with the evolution of the democratic imagination. First, the death(s) on 28 June 1914 ignited a long expected war and marked the initiation of permanent liminality on a global scale. The so-called Peace of Versailles preferred the sovereign state and its self-determination, acknowledging victors with territory and punishing losers with reparations, precisely the type of peace which entraps people in a liminal state. Thus, the primacy of self-determination, especially in certain “different” contexts such as poly-ethnic places where the ethnic cum-linguistic markers were not “clean,” meant the liminal confusion of the war did not end (McNeill, 1986). Rather the violence simmered under the guise of various European totalitarianisms and reignited at the global level with World War 2.

Yet again some people and regions continued to exist within a liminal violence of totalitarianism after WW2, lacking status in the transformed Europe. In some of the 1989 cases, democracy was consolidated, but in other instances, elites interrupted the process with nationalistic ideologies and mythologies so that now, as Szokolczai argues, permanent liminality prevails. Incipient nation-states, such as B&H,³ struggle as liminal states, without a re-aggregated identity. Not only B&H, but the Ukraine, Kosovo, and

Moldova, experience liminal situations. Even within the EU, people and societies in the Basque region, Northern Ireland and Cyprus, struggle with identity. Solutions for these liminal regions cannot be developed within IR under the umbrella of the Westphalian model of state negotiation and action. This model was followed with the 1919 Versailles Treaty and again in the 1995 Dayton Treaty, and did not lead to freedom from liminality and mimetic violence. Notably within B&H, individuals still must select between elite constructed and defined illusory masquerade identities, thereby sacrificing the freedom to reincorporate to a real identity.

Free human beings cannot exist in liminality and under the spinning wheel of Bateson's double bind formulation, but nor can they exist in dictated, exclusive groups. The mimetic violence of the century of 1914-2014 sacrificed the Wilsonian promises to make the world safe for individuals and democracy. In 2014 liminal, weak people remain in a void without rights and freedom. Identity, scapegoating, uncertainty, mimetic violence, sacrifice, and struggle contributed to Jun 28th of 1914, the European Great Wars, and the B&H Tsunami of 1992; these same processes allow the ongoing avoidance of resolution, and trap the human condition. This analysis strives to highlight the relevance of perpetual liminality within B&H in order to inform efforts to resolve violence and free identities.

Liminality and Global Politics

Political scientists adopted the concept of liminality from anthropologists who developed it to explain the rites of passage, public rituals, and dark states marking identity transitions during which the existential structure becomes extraordinary (that is, beyond the ordinary) and a void ensues (van Gennep, 1977; Turner, 1967, 1969). According to Harald Wydra (2007) democratisation in post-communist environments became a symbol of a larger drama – that is a fundamental historical brokenness or rupture of ontological political structure/reality – than merely the end of monolithic communist party power (see also Lefort, 1986, 1988, 2007; Horvath, 1998; Horvath and Szokolczai, 1992). In many cases, the liminal experience created an opening space or “authority vacuum” for a democratic force to find its voice, but in some instances the experience also provided opportune space for the construction of *conflictual mimesis*, à la René Girard, hence ethnic conflicts. Indeed, as studies of B&H suggest, elite activities of “trickster logic,” and “shifts in meaning,” hijacked the liminal experience, exploiting the popular democratic imagination, and thereby disrupting the consolidation of democracy (Horvath, 1997, 1998, 2008).

Political dissidents qua theorists and novelists previously recognized and warned against such dynamics within communist systems. Milovan Đilas in Yugoslavia already in the late 1950s identified the rise, following the Yugoslav 1945 revolution, of a completely new and parasitic organism, namely – “The New Class”. His work and ideas were unwelcomed by the post-1945 Yugoslav dictatorship, which sentenced him to horrible conditions in the Yugoslav Croatian top-secret island-prison, Goli Otok (Isola Calva). Vaclav Havel (1985) spoke of the “Power of the Powerless”, whilst Andrei Sakharov, the Soviet nuclear physicist, indirectly tapped into Girard's mimetic theory arguing the

nuclear race, the mimetic violence, of the bipolar world order would destroy “peaceful co-existence and intellectual freedom”.

In IR, realist and neorealist theorists dismiss the relevance of domestic voices in global politics, instead focusing upon the high issues of security, power, and national interests. The cost of such parsimonious approaches is to overlook that “wars are essentially liminal experiences” (Mälksoo, 2012: 490). Institutionalists also neglect the agency of individuals and the benefits of democratization from below. International regimes such as international law open the possibility for states and other entities to act in ways contrary to popular and individual will because that which is not proscribed, is assumed to be permitted. Even seemingly liberal (and potentially liberating) doctrines of just war and humanitarian intervention, become inconsequential in the shadow of the sovereign interests of states, too often focused upon countering violent power, and too rarely attentive to the rehabilitation of the victim.

Consider, for example the application of the theories of Gregory Bateson (1958, 1972), René Girard (1976, 1978, 1977, 1991), Gabriel Tarde (1905, 2010) and Arpad Szakolczai (2000) to the start of WW1. State leaders raced towards violence, circumnavigated semi-developed international laws, and acted to maximize national interest and relative power. The conflict began in Sarajevo on Vidov-dan, 28 June 1914, the same date as the launch of the Holy Kosovo Battle of 1389 to determine who is “...faithful and who is not!”⁴ In 1914, the Austro-Hungarian government presents Serbia with the Ultimatum after the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Franz Joseph Ferdinand. The ultimatum directly challenged the foundation of Westphalian international relations, national sovereignty. Russia understandably perceived the developing situation as a direct threat to its security, interests, and power. Germans then claimed to fear Russia’s mobilization, and Britain entered the conflict in order to protect the neutrality of Belgium and the balance of power: a par excellence example of Girard’s theory on “conflictual mimesis”. Tapping into and borrowing from mimetic theory, Archduke Ferdinand is killed, and he and the assassin, Princip, at once both, became the victim(s) who make possible the intensification of the accumulative forces of mimesis. The relationship between the Archduke and Princip seems consistent with Mälksoo’s suggestion that “most of international politics happens precisely in between different political subjects that are themselves ‘happening’ as a result of multiple relational links to others” (2012: 483).

Two important rivals, Austria and Serbia posture and position, and later the rivalry expands to Germany, England, Russia, and eventually the USA. All the states, in imitation and unison, became hypnotised by the initial antagonism and mimetic violence. After the victim has been killed this initial antagonism begins to split, divide and multiply along Bateson’s double bind relationship theory. Paradox then emerges where this schismatic relationship becomes attractive and above all “desired”. In other words, passion, devotion, and desire become part of global and local politics. Considerations of state sovereignty were only myopically understood: that is in terms of oneself, not the other’s sovereignty. So too states sidestepped the recently established Permanent Court of Arbitration, and violated the relatively new Hague Conventions. Waltz explains that the various states understood the costs of war:

but have trouble reading its contours perhaps because they try to look too far ahead and see imaginary dangers. In 1914 Germany feared Russia's rapid industrialization and population growth. France and Britain suffered from the same fear about Germany and in addition Britain worried about the rapid growth of Germany's navy. In an important sense World War 1 was a preventive war all around (2000: 40).

Girard's reality of mimetic accumulation (1978) then emerges as overlooked. Ancient hatred and honour, political ideologies and nationalisms, functioned only as a symbolic trigger for the sacrificial ordeal. What propels war and violence was actually the mimetic process. The decisions of individual states might be understood given uncertainty and the desire to avoid the worst individual outcome, but the totality of the mimetic interactions led to "irrational" elements in an extraordinary situation. The political action and the meaning of the words of nationalist youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina are misunderstood and lost. Mlada Bosna/Young Bosnia was a pre-WW1 liberation movement trapped in a seemingly distant empire. The youth of Mlada Bosna became the victim and scapegoat in the macrocosm of events and mimetic violence. Their agency was trivialized until 1991 and again 2014, when their voices resurrected, and the questions regarding the terra incognita of Bosnia and Herzegovina revisited with the "celebration" of "Sarajevo as the Heart of Europe" entwined with the commemoration of the World War 1 Centenary. Is the war finally ended, or do the myth, symbolism, and violence of Vidov-dan persist?

Consider too the perversion of just war doctrine, intended to make war a rarity, into an elastic theory regularly referenced to justify such military action, i.e. violence. Also consider the contemporary debate and ambiguity regarding "humanitarian" intervention. Some interventions defy the threshold of "just" as residential areas become battlefields and civilians are caught in extreme spirals of mimetic violence. Inconsistencies and uncertainties also provide space for the presence of the irrational sacrificial element in extraordinary situations such that mimetic violence leading towards genocides can be re-imagined as ethnic cleansings or even just, defensive pre-emptions of the same mimetic process. B&H too frequently experiences such dynamics within its permanent liminality.

Authentically just wars are not punitive, but generative, rehabilitative and restorative. Conversely, if violence is a mimetic process and runs out of control, it becomes an unconstrained or "irrational," "justice," supplanting the "reason" for war. The identification of us and them, of enemies and victims, and evocative symbols, often is resurrected when one starts neglecting the processes learned to keep violence at a distance and minimum. Particularly in situations of schismogenesis, tricksters pervert just war doctrine emphasising a particular moral imperative so that violence and murder to achieve political ends becomes "desirable, attractive, and perhaps obligatory". Slobodan Milosevic's speech on 28th June 1989 in Kosovo and Metohija serves as an example for the symbolic, emotive evocation intended to transport the audience to the Vidov-dan and the Kosovo Battle of 28th June 1389 against the Ottomans. The mimetic device offered a moral justification for the violent mass scale sacrifice throughout the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.

Indeed, related to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ontology of war is complex, consistent with Mälksoo's contention that wars are liminal experiences in which identities are blurred (2012: 482). Civil wars often include both local and supra-local desires, motivations and objectives. Such wars introduce participants with multiple identities originating in the lack of anonymity among combatants coupled with frequent broad alliances (Kalyvas, 2003). Thus the questions whether Radovan Karadzic was a Montenegro Serb or a Yugoslavian Serb, and fighting for the independence of Bosnian Serbs or against secession, fail to appreciate the complexity of the situation and his "multiple relational links to others" (Mälksoo, 2012: 483). Here we must acknowledge, however, that while global actors failed to protect local innocent civilians, the scandalous vacuum of post-communist Bosnia and Herzegovina provided a vessel for the trickster logic and the perpetuation of liminality (Horvath and Thomassen, 2008; Horvath, 1997, 2008). This "rationalization" is the saving power of the scapegoat in the purest sense of Girard's mimetic theory. Thus, we note that irrespective of the causes or justifications of WW1 or the B&H violence of the 1990s, the symbols and symbolisms are repeated.

The mimesis of the irrational masking itself as the rational is the one constant in the events following the assassination of 1914 (which liminality might constitute as sacrificial), WW2, and post-communist transition. This liminal void enables liminal authorities to emerge who sometimes, as the consequence of the "out-of-orderly" situations of wars, revolutions and mimetic violence are polluted figures, which liminality theory deems scandalous (Horvath, 2013). In post WW1 and WW2 Europe, and in particular Eastern Europe which moved through war to communism and then post-communist transition, the flux and liminality provide ongoing vacuums and "allow[s] for the extended conceptualization of a political subject (that is, self-liminal-other) which has fundamental implications for the traditional categories of actors (that is, state and non-state) in international relations" (Mälksoo, 2012: 483). Attentiveness to the need of liminal individuals and societies to re-aggregate their identities could facilitate transition to a time and place of freedom.

Scapegoating: The Case of Sarajevo on 28 June

We show the eruption of liminality in two contexts: related to date (28 June) and related to place (B&H). In turn, the fact that world war erupts involves Europe. Thus symbolic date and action at once transform the situation, and the evolution of power relations, collision of value systems, and schismatic social relations pour into liminality. These phenomena then interactively fuel the grand scale war, mimetic delirium and trickster logic which persist in B&H.

This liminal case of B&H contrasts with van Gennep's (1977) authentic "rites-of-passages" model in which facilitators or masters of the liminal passage remain apart, while the liminal individuals ultimately transition out (and aggregate) into a higher social status a la Vaclav Havel's "brighter future." Indeed, Victor Turner's emphasis on *communitas* and the potentially powerful influence of liminality on personality and reaction are critical to the B&H case. As Turner understands the critical nature of the liminal transformation, it:

served not only to identify the importance of in-between periods, but also to understand the human reactions to liminal experiences: the way liminality shaped personality, the sudden foregrounding of agency, and the sometimes dramatic tying together of thought and experience. (1969: 14)

This case also calls attention to Girard's warnings of the tricksters within the *communitas* such that van Gennep's master is no longer a neutral actor but rather possesses particular, indeed dark, interests in the shaping of personality, thought, and experience. Further, liminality entailing wide-scale societal transformation, such as associated with violent conflict, and lacking a master, becomes vulnerable to the mimesis, permanence, and schismogenesis of which Szakolczai and Bateson warn. Consistent with their understandings of liminality, the symbol and symbolism associated with the centenary of WW1 demands the revelation and appreciation of the specific state of mind(s).

In reference to the symbolism of the start of WW1 event, and in particular Vidov-dan, we suggest a technique to reach back from the "second reality" (see Wydra, 2007: 61-75). In other words we highlight Vidov-dan, WWI, and 2014 Jun 28th as simultaneously and in duality evoking both the symbol and specific crisis in consciousness associated with the years of blood and vengeance, that is permanent liminality. Thus the analysis concurs with Mälksoo and Wydra, but also emphasizes the particular situation of B&H: the phenomenon of multifaceted liminality in which fluid identity is generated as possible and desirable, however, the higher status of the "rites of incorporation" (Gennep, 1977) as fully "consolidated" freedom in either Europe or B&H remain beyond. Considering then Mälksoo, who exactly engages in liminality? Is it the elite, the masses, or both? Who are the elite, solely Balkan or also European? (Mälksoo, 2012). And, can European societies and elites aggregate their identity and exist on the higher status of free and peaceful, while B&H remains in the void of liminality? The case of Vidov-dan, B&H, WW1, and the 2014 Centenary present an illusion of liminality purified in Europe while the democratic identity of the B&H "communitas" anguishes, embraces, and imitates the myths and symbols of tricksters.

While the century of 1914-2014 witnessed anarchical challenges to the nation-state order, B&H's domestic situation served as a microcosm for the macrocosm. The perpetuation of René Girard's "mimetic theory" or in IR language "international anarchy", within and among states, manifested the failures, hypocrisies and ambiguities of the 20th century. Today B&H accepts the Dayton Accords of 1995 as only a second best solution which terminates outright violence, because it leaves untouched (and perhaps kindles) the grotesque wartime identities and "double bind business" (Bateson, 1972; Girard, 1978). The Dayton Peace Accords enshrined the identities (ethno-religious) and roles (tricksters) so that people could not freely retake their natural identity and normal roles within the context of a democratic peace. As long as the Accords protect the trickster elites and ethno-democracy, the mimetic violence turns into symbolic logic expressed in the terms of the Treaty, in the purest sense of Bakhtin's argument (1981).

Still unresolved is the identity of the World War 1 scapegoat, still unaccomplished is the Century's promise to make the world safe for democracy and to create a peace built

upon “the right of people great or small, weak or powerful” (Hoff, 1999: 210). The arguably small and weak people of B&H remain in a schismatic condition without freedom. Mälksoo refers to a type of “post-war phase [...] marked by a prolonged state of juridical-political limbo” (491). Within B&H the century-long global tension between scapegoat, pride, self-determination, liberty and democracy interacts with the liminal loss and confusion of identities engendering frustration, tension, and wanderlust. Perhaps, a new century can end the liminality of the excluded.

Joan Hoff focuses upon the passing century and illuminates the reality of international anarchy. She shows that despite attempts to promote international institutionalism and liberalism, the century did not move much beyond state sovereignty, and therefore, implicitly, did not address the status of liminal individuals and the collapsing of agency. Indeed the role of “outsider” within the B&H context is particularly ironic as “outsiders” disrupted B&H’s deep tradition of tolerance and coexistence among religious groups, and created the vacuum for the mimesis and the exploitation of ethnic identities.

Authors such as Greble (2011) and Donia and Fine (1995) carefully describe the organizational authority of early religious communities of the region, noting the general weakness of ethnic identities until the surge of nationalism beginning in the late 1800s and peaking during WW2. With the rise of nationalism in the 1800’s, ethnic identity both complicated and reinforced religious affiliation and organization.

The participation of Muhamed Mehmedbašić with Gavrilo Princip in Young Bosna, and the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, illustrate the complexity of the taboo of the anthropological concept of scapegoat in IR. Often the assassination which precipitated WW1 is tied to Serbian nationalists, but Mehmedbašić, a Muslim, was a member of the political movement Young Bosna. This national self-determination movement and organization attracted both individuals who promoted pan-South Slav unification, including B&H, based upon South Slav or Yugoslavian identity, as well as individuals who promoted the Slavic and Serbian objective of unification into a Kingdom of Serbia whilst threatening the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the heart of the Balkans. Mehmedbašić seemingly rejected the existing status quo of Austrian authority, but his personal objectives are open to debate. Indeed, perhaps both Mehmedbašić and Princip had entered their own liminality in which they broke with any allegiance to Austria, while uncertain about future preferences, which might have been more consistent with the Hungarian “way” and the vision of Benjamin Kállay for Bosnia and Herzegovina (see especially Donia, 2006).

Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian and Herzegovinian Serb, who shot the Archduke, indeed conveys this in between state of liminality when he testified at his trial, “I am a Yugoslav nationalist, aiming for the unification of all Yugoslavs, and I do not care what form of state, but it must be freed from Austria” (Malcolm, 1994: 153). The symbol of this starting point then is critical. In anthropological language there appears evidence that the young men who plotted the assassination sought the right to decide their own identity, determine their own future, and push forward South Slavs’ (Yugoslavs’) national self-determination. More importantly they offered the scapegoat as an outcome of their own sacrifice, to be imprisoned, tortured, and eventually executed for the crimes they committed. Whether intentional or unintentional, this scapegoating would serve to allow,

later in the century, through the resurrection of the glorious victim, the ultimate liberation for Bosnia and Herzegovina from all empires, Ottoman or Austrian. The young men rejected a stagnant identity in empire(s) associated with pre-war Europe.

Following WW1, Yugoslavia did come into existence as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Kingdom neglected the concept of democratic citizenship, however, and preferred the seeming simplicity of constructed national identities. Additionally problematic was that within this structure, B&H lacked recognition as a legal jurisdiction. WW2 also proved particularly cruel to the people of B&H. Past, unsettled matters of identity thrust individuals into the very deep, chaotic violence of the liminal condition. Concentration camps and inter-ethnic violence terrorized the population and disturbed the multi-religious status quo (Greble, 2011). Leaders of diverse groups within Sarajevo tried to act with Solomon-like wisdom to protect people of all traditions, but individuals clearly suffered as the weak and innocent usually do in wars, and continue to suffer under the double bind.

Following World War 2, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia replaced the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. This new conceptualization of statehood neglected the notion of democratic citizenship, and as such could not meaningfully claim to respond to the inherent individual right to self-determination. As Hoff suggests, “national self-determination has been a more successful guiding principle [...] than democracy” (1999: 204). In multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, state independence failed to resolve questions of “nation, popular sovereignty, and national will” (Ibid.: 205).

B&H certainly did benefit from the emphasis of Titoism on a brotherhood and unity consistent with its historic multi-religious tolerance (Ramet, 1989, 1992, 1997). Judt (2005) contends that Yugoslavia even returned to its traditional cosmopolitanism in the post-war era. Yet, Titoism also supplanted concepts and pursuits of individual liberty and democratic citizenship. In this context of dictatorship and persistent liminality, the 1990s’ collapse of the socialist, federal, Yugoslav system offered new, and sometimes polarizing, choices to the population.

As notions of freedom and self-determination swept from Eastern Europe into Bosnia and Herzegovina, alternative organizing concepts of liberalism and nationalism confronted the people. In the 1990s, social mass uprisings and movements followed the trend and desire throughout the dissolving Soviet bloc, and people of all backgrounds sought democratization (Dahl, 1971, 1989; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995; Markoff, 1996; O’Donnell, 1996; Offe, 1996; Palma, 1990; Rustow, 1970). Civic municipal movements invigorated a bottom-up consciousness consistent with democratic transition based upon a consensus against dictatorship rooted in ‘insight’ and imagination (Wydra, 2007, 2008, 2009). Their outreach built on cosmopolitan civic traditions and seemed to be molding a new *communitas*. Yet, xenophobic, exclusive nationalisms also emerged in response to the system’s collapse and reacted against these movements (Crnobrnja, 1996; Gellner, 1983, 1997; Kedourie, 1993). Authoritarian elites then manipulated ethnic and religious histories and tensions to protect their status (Belloni and Deane, 2005; Crocker, 2007; Enyedi, 2005; Fischer, 2006). Finally, mimetic violence, rather than ideologies and ancient hatreds, emerged as the main pillar of the civil war. These memories and symbols fed on the critical nature of religious and ethnic identities and the horrific anarchy of liminality,

all of which returned under the machinations of the elitist tricksters. The chaos of liminality then intensified as the elite consciousness ruptured from that of the larger community with the elected Parliament at times viewing the people as traitors and usurpers, and at other times simply allowing the popular voice to be invisible, and thus abandoning the people of B&H into nothingness and powerlessness. The elites rejected the legitimacy of the people, and instead perceived them as threats (Tešan, 2013). The sense of the people as the embodiment of sovereignty remained invisible. Filipović, a member of the Assembly, articulates the attitude of the trickster elites toward the peaceful protestors:

As Bosnia is under the dual aggression: internal and external [...] At the moment in B&H what happens is anti-constitutional secession. Today in Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliament/ Assembly we have a group of adventurers trying to make some kind of internal coup proclaiming a Committee of National Salvation (see 1992 Archive tape 1/2ss)

Further, within the liminal vacuum immediately preceding the outbreak of violent conflict in B&H, the elites tinkered with the symbolism and political culture to ferment rapid constructions of “imagined communities” as part of their own “new class” survival. In anthropological language, amidst the spiraling mimetic violence, the first human victims were taken, Olga and Suada,⁵ and sacrificed for the purposes of the accumulative mimesis. Thus the mimetic violence continues as elites tried to benefit from their political offices, and all sides maneuver to defend their schismatic desires and truths. Individuals and communities remain in a void, and the liminal entity struggles with the basic human issues of identity and sovereignty.

Many authors assert that the 1992-1995 war destroyed the traditional values of B&H civic identities (Belloni, 2004: 340; Crocker, 2007; Mujkić and Husley, 2010: 155). Of contending significance, however, is that more than half the population desires to move beyond the memories of the war, and the overwhelming majority of the population expresses a willingness to embrace an identity as a citizen of B&H and join Europe (UNDP, 2009). Efforts from below to resurrect cosmopolitanism and claim individual self-determination persist (Kaldor, 2006). Consequently, the end of the climatic century of 1914-2014 leaves unanswered the question of identity and popular individual and national sovereignty within B&H. Yet, while the question is unanswered, it clearly has been asked. Without hesitation, citizens of B&H remember their historic tolerance and cohabitation, their 1984 Olympiad spirit of cosmopolitanism, and their shared march forward in the early 1990s.

Currently, however, liminality prevails with mimesis clouding the merits of democracy and popular sovereignty. The individual identities and social structure remain glued into a state of hypnotic and hectic roles associated with the middle liminal phase inherited from two elements: communism and violence, with the former the tricksters' “irrational” logic and the latter embedded into the Dayton Treaty. Here the mimetic violence of permanent liminality, in Szakolczai's terms, is understood as an intrinsic part of Girard's argument on “desire” and Bateson's schismogenesis component. Both society

and people are in a net of suspended roles associated with communism and mimetic violence in which groups and individuals exist in a spiral of violence, lacking the metaphysical freedom to claim an identity. On the societal level the fictional structure emerges as the manifestation or the permanent suspension of the *collapsing* structure ad infinitum influenced by the legal-bureaucratic arrangements of the “peace treaty” as a consequence of mimetic violence.

Some theorists of democratic consolidation and nationalism automatically accept the arguments of Rebecca West’s *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, and concur with Ivo Andrić’s mighty pen that the root and cause of conflict and violence in B&H was the ancient ethnic marker.⁶ Now the extraordinary state of existential threat and the explosion of liminality associated with the appearance of schismatic “trickster logic” locks human psychology into a treaty of mimetic violence in which “I” and “me” i.e., freedom, democracy, and self-determination are absent. Thus, the questions of symbols, double-scapegoating, the Archduke and Princip, victimhood, and sacrifice, which contributed to the Sarajevan victim(s) on 28th June 1914, continue to evade focus.

The Role of Mythology, the Challenge for a New Century

28th June 2014 – just as in 1389 and 1914 – is Vidov-dan, the very important Orthodox Slavic Holy day which serves as a unifying symbol. The tragic epic poem, “Kneževa Večera” or “The Supper (sovra) of Kruševac,” which recalls 28 June 1389, transports one to feel the power of scapegoating and the importance of the sacrificial in the words, tempo, and reality which arise out of deprivation and pain. Miloš Obilić is the “chosen” one, i.e. the victim and the scapegoat. He “voluntarily” accepts the challenge of the toast presented by Tsar Lazar. Holy sacrifice is evoked, and the challenge of self-sacrifice petitioned. In this symbolic rite of passage for the Orthodox Slav, and all of Christianity, the deeply rooted pain and need in the culture for kenosis, are released through Miloš Obilić’s words: “We’ll see right there at the bloody Kosovo who is faithful to you and who is not!” It seems in 2014 that through the imagined original rite of passage of scapegoating the mortal corpses shall be resurrected. The imagined violence is staged as a sacrificial passage from the death to resurrection where it all began in 1914. The victim(s), as they cannot be murdered again, become the sacred and immortal. The ritual potentially invigorates the life, especially political life, of the new Europe, which has fallen on its knees after 1914. Thus the challenge for the new century is to overcome the inadequacy of the concluding 100 years through the sacrificial ritual in 2014.

Some cases part from the perceived “norm” of rational identity, and suggest the need to consider the existence of an “irrational” and sacrificial element in IR. How else can one describe the horrors of world war(s), events of 1989, and the current situations in liminal entities including B&H and Ukraine? The revolutions and wars, accompanied by additional irrationalities of blood sacrifice and fascism, leave a terra incognita where liminality persists under the suasion of “mad” authorities who captured the ordinarily “rational” politics. The liminal moment then presents an end point where the notion of rational and cognitive in the political sense has dispersed, or remains suspended, amidst the void of the prevailing madness.

Trickster-sophistry lives in the social void where human identity or “I will” in a nation-state is the highest human “sacrifice” representing an entrapped metaphysical condition for free will or, in Horvath’s words: “the sacralisation of individual rights, but only insofar as these were basic and merited through suffering; and the sacralisation of an abstract ideal of society, where concrete human relations and sociability were replaced by the community of sufferers imposed through moral terror” (Horvath 2013: 14). Thus, Enlightenment’s philosophy – rational choice theory – in such liminal conditions of communism, fascism and extraordinary existential threats is of no use precisely because it is a logical scandal.

An illusion (*Fata Morgana*) of charming freedom in an almost Hobbesian society permits any action, but that is only a mirage, or better a solid proof of Szakolczai’s reflection on Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2007). This dangerous human condition demands movement away from the realism of Hobbes and the liberalism of Kant, as these philosophies lack the appropriate conceptualization for such extraordinary events. In the Europe of the post-world wars, especially in Eastern Europe, deception and lawlessness prevailed, leaving real representation suspended and in a state of free-fall of which the trickery and magic take advantage, the boundary between private and public ceases to exist, and obscene violence and hybrid communities emerge as a part of accumulative desires.

Hence we align with reflexive historical sociology and political anthropology, and argue that the wars in Europe and revolutions of 1989 represent liminal moments and above all “axial” moments in world politics (Mälksoo, 2012). Specifically focusing on the micro level, this was what the century longed for and desired as a “calling,” the critical moment representing the modern and “axial” age of transition: the possible self-sacrifices of Mehmedbašić and Princip of Young Bosna. On the macro level Archduke Ferdinand, already by marrying the semi-Bohemian noble Lady Sophie, sentenced himself as a potential victim and in that seemingly trivial symbol for IR, he indirectly abdicated from the Austro-Hungarian dual Empire throne. In 2014 this intentional self-sacrifice turns him into an almost god-like figure from Hellenic tragedy. This significant symbol of intentional or unintentional dual sacrifice, on micro and macro levels, proves Girard’s theory on conflictual mimesis and Gabriel Tarde’s (2010) “repetitions” as a means to manage human fear, sacrifice and its relationship to the sacred. Looking through the anthropological lens of symbolism and sacrifice, the sacred event in 2014 offers the resurrection of the victim(s), provides pride to the mortally injured, removes fear from humans, and ultimately leads to peace. Best explained in Mälksoo’s language, worth quoting in full:

Liminality allows for the deeper understanding of what happens during the ‘constitutive’ or ‘axial’ moments in politics, national and international, and enables the specification of the effects of these critical experiences. It embraces both a spatial and temporal dynamic of international life, and captures the ultimate unresolvability of the agent-structure problem in International Relations (2012: 486).

Stated differently, during critical junctures open to the rejection and ejection of communism from the inside, the symbols of the past memory and mythology (e.g., Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia) played a crucial role in embracing and above all imagining embryotic democracy (Wydra 2009). By contrast, the rejection in the B&H case seems to have come from the “irrational” because the communist leadership of the former Yugoslavia blocked reforms, “dictated imagination” and blinded the people (Đinđić, 2000: 265-75; 2007: 15-27).

In 1914, based upon historical events, the Austro-Hungarian Empire had no other choice but to sacrifice the old balance of power system due to the growing democratic imagination in the Balkans, Hungary and the rest of the Eastern Europe. Equally the collapse of the Cold War and the implosion of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were only the initial or “axial” events that unveiled the power of political imagination of Eastern European dissidence against the “dictated,” irrational communist ideology. But what about those places that went into mimetic violence and genocide? What kind of irrationality is that? Is it the trickster hijacking the transition?

Conclusion

A benevolent and self-effacing master, or true Charisma, must emerge to lead individuals from the malignant trickster logic and liminality. Perhaps the EU can assume the role of Charisma. Other people of Eastern Europe who exited the liminal environment of the 20th century found in the values of Europe a comfortable reintegration characterized by the EU’s rights, equality, subsidiarity, and solidarity. Tolerance and freedom of movement highlight the possible which offers an alternative to the mimetic violence. Mälksoo suggests that liminality relates to a “politics of belonging, becoming and recognition in Europe” (2012: 483). Yet, to be clear, the EU is a necessary but not sufficient condition to transition and reaggregation. The EU can serve as a placenta, providing warmth, blood, and nutrition to the yet to be born. The liminal organism, however, must *will to live* in order to exit the liminal condition.

For liminal entities like B&H, perhaps differentiated citizenship also offers an alternative because it reconciles ethno-religious identity and security with individual identity and liberalism (Kymlicka, 1995). Differentiated citizenship overcomes the problems associated with power-sharing elitism which allows trickster elites to maintain the liminal status quo. The appeal of differentiated citizenship to a bottom-up approach prioritizes civic education and social services. The focus on social trust supports the movement of individuals out of the liminal state and toward an identity and environment which they choose.

Still, European policies and differentiated citizenship, like any solution to the problem of B&H, and other liminal entities, encounter difficulties while people within the chaos and void of liminality feel fearful or perceive others as antagonists. A passage from death is impossible, if tricksters maintain an ethnic nationalism based upon a sense of superiority and mimesis, and therefore rejection of basic humanity. As this argument contends, the work of a political anthropology of transformative experiences and reflexive historical sociology enhances socio-political understanding as it highlights

traumatic experiences associated with the eruption of liminality and mimetic violence, thereby liberating the emergence of democratic imagination on an ontological level regardless of cultural milieu.

Some contend all of high politics or IR is exceptionally unpredictable. Yet, looking into the symbols of IR, if Princip and Mehmedbašić attest as scapegoats of “I will”, can we apply the same reasoning to Archduke Ferdinand’s mad-like persistence to ride through Sarajevo in an open carriage? Was he merely the scapegoat of “I or me willed” because he already injured the Royal Family’s pride and honor, and mortally sinned by marrying a semi-royal? In these gestures of dual scapegoating exist symbols of the character in gestation of “I” or free will. Nietzsche is after that character, the noble, which itself is in perpetual gestation and double in nature. Myths and symbols provide a way to comprehend this gestation and link it to politics. The myth is reality and at once a synthesis (expression) of both the mental state, i.e. consciousness, and that which becomes. With symbols, myth presents a gnosis of a particular culture that cannot be ignored in politics. The symbol constitutes part of a greater symbolic meaning – itself liminal – which conveys the relationship between seemingly disjointed phenomena in the realm outside of time.

At last, in 2014, one can almost hear the echoes of the approaching Royal carriage. On 28th of June 2014, the new European century seems to approach the stage where the mimetic violence of the past century is centered. Yet, did a past of moral suffering ennoble the “proper” knowledge, or does the same nihilistic “deus ex machina” operate? Is the 28th of June 2014 symbolic commemoration sufficiently worthy to restart the guidance of a transition to reaggregation and new status? Can entities of B&H reaggregate to Europe, and Europe’s new values then belong to B&H?

Appendix 1

Supper in Kruševac

The Serbian Tsar [Lazar] will celebrate his Slava
Here in Kruševac, a well-protected fortress.
All the high nobility and all
The lesser lords he seats around the table-
All will honor now his holy patron saint.
On his right he places old YugBogdan
And next to him the nine brave Yugovići.
On his left VukBranković sits down,
And then the other lords according to their rank.

Across from Lazar is Captain Miloš;
And next to him are these two noble knights:
The first: Ivan Kosančić,
And the second: Lord Milan Toplica.
Now the Tsar lifts up the golden goblet,
Lazar thus questions all his lords:
“To whom, I ask you, shall make this toast?”

If I must toast old age - to old YugBogdan then,
If I must honor eminence - to Branković;
If I must trust emotion - to the nine brave Yugovići,
Sons of old YugBogdan, brothers of my queen;
If I must bow to beauty - to Ivan Kosačić;
If I decide by height - to tall Milan Toplica;
But if heroic courage must decide me
I shall drink to noble Captain Miloš.

Yes! To Miloš- to nobody else at all.
I'll only toast the health of MilošObilić.
Hail, Cousin! friend of mine and traitor!
First of all my friend- but finally my betrayer.
Tomorrow you'll betray me on the field of Kosovo,
Escaping to the Turkish Sultan, Murad!
So to your health, dear Miloš, drink it up,
And keep the golden goblet to remember Lazar.”
Then up on nimble legs springs MilošObilić
And to the dark earth bows himself and says:
“My thanks to you Oh glorious Lazar, My thanks for
that fine toast and for your handsome gift,

But I can't thank you for those words you spoke.
Let me die if I should lie to you!
I have never been unfaithful to my Tsar-
Never have I been and never shall I be-
And I am sworn to die for you at Kosovo,
For you and for the Christian faith.

But Treason, Lazar, sits beside you now-
The traitor sips his wine right up your sleeve.
It's Branković, VukBranković I say!
And when on Vitus-day tomorrow morning
We make our dawn attack upon the Blackbirds' Field
We'll see right there at bloody Kosovo
Who is loyal to you and who is not!
I swear to you in God Almighty's Name
That I shall go at dawn to Kosovo
And slaughter like a pig the Turkish Sultan,
Put my foot upon his throat.
And then if God & good luck aid me I'll return
For Branković& bind him to my lance,
Bind him like the wool around a distaff.
I'll drag him like that back as far as Kosovo!

Notes

¹ On two levels Vidov-dan or St Vitus Day is related to the Orthodox Church, in particular the Slavic population and Serbs in the territory of the Balkans and the “holy land” of Kosovo and Metohija. 28 June (Gregorian Calendar) is a sacred date which commemorates the Holy Battle of 1389 in Kosovo. On another level, the date is the celebration of the pagan god Svetovid, the god of fertility and life-strength. Both events are sacred myths which focus upon life and strength. Additionally the symbol of June 28 is extensive. On this date in 1881, a secret treaty was signed between the Dual Monarchy (Austro-Hungarian) and Serbia surrendering its independence. The Versailles Treaty was signed on this date in 1919. Finally on 28 June 2001, Slobodan Milošević was extradited to Den Haag, enabling him to identify as a “victim” and “scapegoat” and to call for the redemption of his injured nation’s honor and status.

² Sarajevo is the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, in this study we do not focus on institutional or ethno-cum linguistic “differences” in this entity or why and how violence and war(s) broke out. More importantly we suggest new language, whilst emphasizing the role of “dead body” as important symbol, and consistent with Mälksoo who argues that liminality breaks down the barrier between international and domestic politics. Indeed, as our study highlights: The Dual-Empire’s relation with Sarajevo in 1914 can be understand as foreign and/or domestic as too the 1992-1995 conflict in the former Yugoslavia can be related to as international or domestic. This analysis occurs in the blurred spaces of global politics above distinctions between international and domestic politics.

³ B&H or Bosnia will be interchangeably used for the full name: Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁴ The element of “faithful (loyal) and unfaithful (unloyal)” are the key utterances – and words are important – from the Serbs’ epic poem “Kneževa Večera” in which Tsar Lazar challenges via a “simple” toast – a rite – to Miloš Obilić as “faithful and unfaithful” shortly before the start of the Holy Battle in Kosovo. The epic poem is worth quoting in full (see appendix 1).

⁵ Olga Sučić and Suada Dilberović are the first victims shot in Sarajevo in 1992.

⁶ On the destruction of the Yugoslav Federation see Glenny (1992), Hayden (1999) and Silber and Little (1996). In addition, see also Simms (1995, and in particular 2001).

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