

Marijana Mitrović

Institute of Ethnography SASA
eisanu@ei.sanu.ac.rs

Colours of the New Face of Serbia: National Symbols and Popular Music*

In this paper I address nationalist iconography in Serbian popular music, especially the role of women as the symbols of nation building. Case in point is the victory of Serbian representative Marija Serifovic in Eurovision Song Contest in 2007. I analyze the way power struggle and strategic use of the differences are embodied and embedded through a media figure of Marija Serifovic in the process of showing the “new face of Serbia”.

Key words:
nationalism, popular music, new face of
Serbia, female media figure, subaltern,
mediated selves

This paper is concerned with addressing nationalist iconography in Serbian popular music conveyed through female media figures. Case in point is the victory of Serbian representative Marija Serifovic (Marija Šerifović) in Eurovision Song Contest in 2007. This victory got a special attention in European media because a winner was from (another) postsocialist country,¹ because she is Roma (therefore, belonging to an ethnic group that is often a target of racism in Serbia) and because her performance was characterized as queer (or lesbian), which automatically lead to labelling her sexual orientation the same way. It has had a special symbolic weight in a Serbian society where nationalist and homophobic discourses are very strong. My starting premise is that in this context, Marija Serifovic can be viewed as a subaltern, or as a representative of inner Other(s) in Serbian society. At the

* This paper is the result of Project no.147020 “In between traditionalism and modernization – ethnological/anthropological studies of cultural processes in Serbia”, granted by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

¹ I say “another” because majority of the winners in recent years come from the postsocialist countries.

same time, she becomes a symbol of a “new face of Serbia”, that is, a national symbol, who is at the same time supposed to indicate changes in international image of Serbia and a distance from the militaristic and nationalistic outset that marked the imagery of the first phase of the postsocialist transition of Serbia in the nineties. Precisely, I offer a discursive “reading” of cultural-political narration that surrounded Marija’s performance and victory in Serbia.

Research questions that guide this reading will be: how is a figure of acceptable inner Other created in Serbian media? How does it relate to the creation of national symbols? In which space and under which conditions subaltern get an opportunity to “speak” in Serbian postsocialist and (post)nationalist society? Furthermore, I will try to answer how a foreign gaze (in this case, international Eurovision audience) prompts an exoticizing differences in national (self)representation, especially for the postsocialist countries in the context of EU integrations (with this victory of Serbian representative as a case in point).

This analysis draws on recent work of anthropologists working on mass media. Here, mass media is understood as representing and shaping cultural values of society. This approach attempts to see media “not so much as definers of reality but as dynamic sites over struggles for representation, and complex space in which subjectivities are constructed and identities are contested.”² Therefore, aim of the paper is to show how “benign” musical contest becomes a polygon for power struggle and strategic use of the differences, embodied and embedded through a media figure of Marija Serifovic.

After overview of theoretical apparatus I use, I will situate this case in the network of discursive practices that constituted (around) it. Then I will point to the different signifying systems shaping those practices, and identify political interests involved in this “collective national celebration”.³ Through an analysis of the figure of Marija Serifovic and the cultural-political narration surrounding her victory, I will try to analyze staging of the subaltern as mediated selves in and through international media spectacle such as Eurovision Song Contest.

Mediated Selves in International Media Spectacle

From the very beginning, Eurovision Song Contest (from here on referred to as ESC) has been the spectacle orchestrated by political strategies: creation of European Union by six leading western states, then strengthening of western dominance through increasing number of participating states and finally, the presence of newly formed states of former USSR and former Yugoslavia.⁴ In the

² Debra Spitulnik, *Anthropology and Mass Media*, Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 22, 1993, 296.

³ Nikola Tošić, *Marija Šerifović pobedila za sve nas*, Blagostanje, Beograd, May 13, 2007. <http://www.blagostanje.com/marija-serifovic-pobedila-za-sve-nas/>, accessed April 12, 2009.

⁴ Number of participants grew from 7 at the first ESC in Lugano in 1956 to 43 in Belgrade in 2008.

current constellation of power relations among the European states, Eurovision is supposed to dramatize and symbolically resolve conflicts such as the accommodation of eastern, postsocialist states in an enlarged Europe or the capacity of smaller states to compete on equal terms with large European powers.

As Miroslava Lukic-Krstanovic (Miroslava Lukić-Krstanović) argues, on the level of state and international spectacle, ideological order is established in the positioning of a song and complete performance as a *national cause*, i.e., musical fabrication of the nation.⁵ There could be said to have evolved two attitudes towards the event. The Western, more ironic stance towards the competition, with its camp ideology etc. can be seen as opposed to more strategic attitude of the participating nations from Eastern Europe.⁶ However, despite observed differences in approaches and announced withdrawals of some of western participants, each nation-state still invests desire, expectation and, of course, money into representation on multinational display. There is a strong tendency towards simulation in such representations, and a foreign gaze which exoticizes difference compels a pressure to such a simulation. According to Lukic-Krstanovic, enjoyment and seductiveness of ESC has turned into national exaltation and patriotism, thus estranging from music mission and competition. Anthony Shay extends Arjun Appadurai's claim that the state exerts "taxonomic control over difference" into a case that state sponsorship of a performance implies that the nation as a whole is being represented.⁷ This logic could be applied to Eurovision, which similarly takes place under the sponsorship of states. However, Appadurai goes on to argue that "taxonomic control over difference" is only one way in which nation-states exploit transnational media flows. They also create "international spectacle[s] to domesticate difference", and hold out "the fantasy of self-display on some sort of global or cosmopolitan stage" to small groups.⁸ This should be taken into account in the case of Eurovision. Problem of representation of these small groups, of national and different social minorities, becomes of special relevance.

Problem of representability of margins - precisely subaltern, and especially subaltern women – is addressed by Gayatri Spivak in her seminal article "Can the Subaltern Speak?".⁹ She argues that these categories are the effects of discourse,

⁵ Мирослава Лукић-Крстановић, *Музички спектакл у излогу политике и производња опчињености*, Зборник радова са бугарско-српске конференције Сlike културе некад и сад: Свакодневна култура у постсоцијалистичком периоду, Београд 2008, 121.

⁶ Göran Bolin, *Visions of Europe: Cultural Technologies of Nation-states*, International Journal of Cultural Studies, Vol. 9, 2006, 195.

⁷ Anthony Shay, *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Companies, Representation and Power*, CT: Wesleyan University Press, Middleton, 2002, 28-9; Arjun Appadurai, Disjuncture and Difference. Global Cultural Economy, Chapter 2 in: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 1996, 39.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the subaltern speak?*, in: C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Illinois 1988, reprinted in: P. Williams & L. Chrisman

rather than identifiable realities. Following this argument, I analyze a position of the subaltern in media spectacle as an effect of media discourses.

Departing from Carl Marx's *Eighteen Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Spivak analyses the problem of "representation" of the oppressed as the subject of knowledge, who "cannot represent themselves: [but] must be represented".¹⁰ She refers to the double meaning of representation as it is distinguished in German, where it signifies both *vertreten* or representation as "speaking for" (as in politics) and *darstellen* or re-presentation as portrayal, as in art or philosophy.¹¹ As Sandra Ponzanesi explains, the two senses of representation – referring on the one hand to state formation and the law, and on the other to the theory of the subject – are related, according to Spivak, but also irreducibly discontinuous. They should never be conflated.¹² Spivak points out that critical theorists cannot afford to overlook these two senses in the category of representation:

They must note how the staging of the world in representation – its scene of writing, its *Darstellung* – dissimulates the choice of and need for "heroes", paternal proxies, agents of power – *Vertretung*.¹³

Although Spivak concludes that in the current constellation of power relations subaltern cannot speak, she at the same time makes an intervention into the representation of the subaltern, calling for taking into account an aesthetic dimension of political representation.

To analyze this way of the representation of the inner Other/subaltern in the international media spectacle through the figure of Marija Serifovic, I will use the concept of mediated selves developed by Sonia Van Wichelen and Marc De Leew.¹⁴ They argue that effectiveness of the phenomena such as popularity of the symbolic representatives of the margins in media depend on a complex construction of a coming together of what they describe as mediated selves. These selves reflect strategic selves in a stable and static way that is instrumentalized both by the media as by these celebrities themselves. These include the mediated self as "other" and the mediated self as "one of us".¹⁵

(eds.), *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, Harvester/Wheatsheaf, New York 1994, 66-111.

¹⁰ Op. cit., 71. Her work is actually informed by feminism, psychoanalysis, Marxism and deconstructionism.

¹¹ Ibid., 70.

¹² Sandra Ponzanesi, *The Arena of the Colony. Phoolan Devi and the Postcolonial Critique*, in: Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuins (eds), *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture.*, Routledge, London 2009.

¹³ Ibid., 74.

¹⁴ Sonia Van Wichelen and Marc De Leeuw, "Please, Go Wake Up!" *Submission, Hirsi Ali, and the "War on Terror" in the Netherlands*, *Feminist Media Studies*, Volume 5(3), November 2005, 325-340.

¹⁵ S. Van Wichelen and M. De Leew, op. cit., 329.

Applying these concepts to the case of Marija Serifovic, I examine the way that representation of subaltern and building of national symbols are simultaneously conveyed in these mediated selves.

Victory of the “New face of Serbia”

In 2007 Serbian representative Marija Serifovic won Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) in Helsinki, singing a song *Molitva (Prayer)*. That inspired numerous manifestations of national euphoria in Serbia. Symbolic value of her victory gained special weight by association of her performance and her sexuality as lesbian and her origin with Roma communities in Serbia.¹⁶ It was argued that this was a victory of Serbian sexual and ethnic minorities as well.¹⁷ In order to illustrate importance and attention it acquired in social imagination, I will describe briefly the events that surrounded this victory, as well as the ways in which this victory was appropriated and represented by different interest groups in Serbia.

Since in May 2006 state union of Serbia and Montenegro ceased to exist, Marija Serifovic sang at ESC 2007 as a representative of “independent Serbia”, as Serbian media baptized it.¹⁸ Right before she sang in semi-finals Serbia was going through maybe the hardest parliamentary crisis in its recent history. Prime minister, Vojislav Kostunica’s (Vojislav Koštunica) party supported a radical nationalist right-wing leader Tomislav Nikolic as a President of Parliament.¹⁹ The world and a part of Serbian public reacted sharply, and there was an atmosphere of total suspense in respect of the possible course that future government, Serbia was waiting for from late January, could take. Then there came a victorious weekend and the national euphoria started.²⁰ Serbian media and officials reported about

¹⁶ Marija Serifovic never explicitly clarified or proclaimed her sexual orientation until May 2008 when she “revealed” that she has a boyfriend. It was rumored for years that she was lesbian, but she never confirmed that. Preparing her ESC performance, her creative team reached the solution intentionally offered to be read as queer or lesbian (with five female back vocals dressed in male suits the same as leading singer’s one, one of them locking hands with Marija to connect two halves of the heart tattooed on their hands). <http://illyriangazette.blogspot.com/search/label/serbia>, June 6, 2007.

¹⁷ Nikola Tošić, *Marija Šerifović pobedila za sve nas*, Blagostanje, Beograd., May 13, 2007. <http://www.blagostanje.com/marija-serifovic-pobedila-za-sve-nas/>, accessed April 12, 2009.

¹⁸ Basically, union stopped to exist when the Montenegrins voted their independency. One of the examples of referring to a victory of independent Serbia can be found here: <http://www.pressonline.co.yu/vest.jsp?id=9605>

¹⁹ His party, Serbian Radical Party, was at power during the nineties, at the time of wars, social crisis and isolation from international institutions.

²⁰ Marija Serifovic won on Saturday, tennis player Ana Ivanović won Berlin tournament on Sunday, the same day a glorious welcome meeting for Marija Serifovic took place in Belgrade. On Monday, the 14th of May, Marija Serifovic visited Parliament (a visit that aroused serious Parliamentary discussion on possible political option Marija, and not only her but her parents, grandparents and the rest of the family, are favoring). On the same day Tomislav Nikolic resigned from his post since during the weekend different democratic options reached the agreement on

Helsinki events as Serbian, rather than Marija Serifovic and her team's victory. It was marked as a "triumph of the nation", "victory of all of us", "our glorious come back to international scene".²¹ Consistence of establishing of participation in ESC as a national cause was once again confirmed. At the same time, almost all political agents/parties in Serbian Parliament, and even some that did not enter it, as Serbian Roma Union to whom Marija's family is affiliated, tried to appropriate her success as a triumph of their political option. "Our Marija" and "our victory" were main topics of many excited speeches. On one of the photographs disseminated by Internet in those days, in the place of Marija and her back vocals we can see Prime Minister and other ministers from the newly formed Government. At the same time, however, as Reuters dispatch said, Serifovic's win "gave hope to Serbia's tiny and harassed gay community".²² The wire service quoted a partygoer leaving "Belgrade's only gay-friendly club" as saying, "A big win for Serbia, a small step for gay rights!".²³

Thus, *Molitva (The Prayer)* in Serbia got different meanings depending on political interests invested in it. Rhetoric of appropriation dominated in all the discourses. Marija Serifovic kept on saying that she hoped her victory is a sign of the "new Serbia" beginning. Last months of 2007 and during 2008, however, she engaged in Serb nationalist propaganda, supporting abovementioned politician Tomislav Nikolic at rallies during his unsuccessful presidential campaign, which led to the heated public debate about her status of EU cultural ambassador.

As the examples above show, Marija and her victory occupied important place in signifying systems of different, even confronted political streams in Serbia. Namely, political struggles in Serbia are often understood in terms of binary oppositions, and one of popular divisions is on so called First and Second Serbia.²⁴ The first notion is supposed to refer to nationalist and conservative tendencies and groups in Serbia, while the other one is perceived as pro-European, democratic, multicultural option. Though it can be argued that such a structural model is not

future government that Serbia finally got on Wednesday. Second program of Serbian Television that transmitted the Parliamentary Session after which Tomislav Nikolic became a President, had the highest ratings in its history. The transmission of the Eurovision Song Contest final was the first ranking in Serbia (43%), although the same evening there was also the transmission of the important Parliamentary Session (36, 8% of spectators). So, that week Serbia constantly watched one of the national television programs, and majority of viewers watched both of them.

²¹ <http://illyriangazette.blogspot.com/search/label/serbia>, accessed June 6 2007; <http://valeriu.tihai.md/serbia-marija-serifovic-molitva-eurovision-2007-244.html>, accessed October 13, 2008; <http://www.kurir-info.rs/clanak/kurir-26-01-2008/dinkicu-se-fucka>, October 12, 2008.

²² <http://valeriu.tihai.md/serbia-marija-serifovic-molitva-eurovision-2007-244.html>, accessed October 13, 2008.

²³ Rex Wockner, *World Round Up*, <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=14975>, May 23 2007, accessed June 6, 2007.

²⁴ Jovan Pešić, *Persistence of Traditionalist Value Orientations in Serbia*, In: Sociologija, Vol. XLVIII, N° 4, 2006, 289-307.

relevant for Serbian society, it is often taken by political analysts as a good illustration of two directions usually perceived as main streams in cultural cognition of people in Serbia. “Both Serbias” found in Marija’s victory screen for their own cultural and political projections.

That way, politics of new Serbian identity at the same time challenge and strengthen stereotypes. New, “independent” Serbia is, among other things, an outcome of strong nationalist tendencies and a consequence of wars. Dream of ethnically “clean and pure” nation still occupies significant place in Serbian cultural imaginary. Symbolic place of Marija, as well as ESC itself – (dis)position of the difference and of the models for treating the difference – provokes different reactions and among representatives of different social groups in Serbia. On one hand, socially marginalized groups like Roma (true subaltern of Serbian society), but also the part of so called pro-European Serbia, appropriate Marija as their own, as desirable political body, as a symbolic place of *difference* that promises their social visibility. On the other hand, those social groups that identify themselves with nationalistic, “traditional” and even homophobic values appropriate Marija and her success also, at the same time suppressing ethnic and sexual differences that she marks and that are the threats for their ascription and description of clear, uniform national identity.

Another type of discourse, discourse offered by Serbian state policies and media insists on the “new face of Serbia”,²⁵ which encompasses majority of the traits displayed in different, abovementioned cultural narratives in Serbia. The notion of “new face of Serbia” is an attempt to move from bipolarization to multiplicity, and through that, paradoxically or not, to produce new form of (national) unity. Participation at ESC, especially Marija’s victory, is supposed to index cultural changes that come up in the light of this “new face of Serbia”, “pacified”, “diverse” and “friendly”, face that should be shown to the international audience and that meets both European and local values. That way, post-socialist Serbia inscribe always-already present multiplicity of the voices into the public discourse.

Marija’s presence in media and Serbian politics – literally materialized in her visit to Parliament – can be considered as one of the efforts in that direction. Her popularity in media and political struggles might look like a breakthrough of the voice of the subaltern/Other into the dominant cultural discourse. However, I argue that this voice is “allowed” to speak only within certain limits of determined framework of national symbolism. Whether or not Marija has sometimes pledged allegiance to her Roma roots, she seemed much more eager to claim her victory for Serbia. She delayed her appearance on the post-show winner’s podium in Helsinki until she was handed a Serbian flag, which she draped in front of her so it would be in every camera angle; and she performed winning song wrapped up in a national flag on a collective celebration in Belgrade a few days after that. She also

²⁵ First who used this rhetorical formula was the director of Serbian national broadcaster RTS, Aleksandar Tijanic. Soon it became a commonplace of this kind of discourse.

underlined in speeches that she was “proud to be Serbian” and that this was a victory for “all Serbia”.²⁶ Such statements go down well with governments, national broadcasters, and national publics; they also, by aligning herself with the nation, give credibility to the conflation of her two mediated selves, of being the ultimate “other” to becoming “one of us”, becoming a national symbol, an embodiment of the “new face of Serbia”.

As Anne McClintock argues, “[a]ll nationalisms are gendered”, which means that all nationalisms have a specific way of addressing women and men.²⁷ Paraphrasing Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, McClintock argues that there are five major ways in which women have been implicated in nationalism:

1. As biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities
2. As reproducers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual or marital relations)
3. As active transmitters and producers of the national culture
4. As symbolic signifiers of national difference
5. As active participants in national struggles.²⁸

In terms of representation, Cynthia Enloe argues that the (symbolic) woman and her (symbolic) body come to stand for:

the community’s – or the nation’s – most valuable *possessions*; 2) the principal *vehicles* for transmitting the whole nation’s values from one generation to the next; 3) *bearers* of the community’s future generations – crudely, nationalist wombs; 4) the members of the community most *vulnerable* to defilement and exploitation by oppressive alien rulers; and 5) most susceptible to *assimilation* and co-option by insidious outsiders.²⁹

Relying on these concepts, I argue that figure of Marija Serifovic is firmly positioned within this paradigm, as a reproducer of the boundaries of national groups (although supposedly questioning their sexual and national restrictions, as active transmitter of the national culture and as a symbolic signifier of national difference. Although some foreign media reported about Marija’s popularity in Serbia as a chance and “a sign of a small progress” for women, gay and ethnic minorities in Serbia,³⁰ I argue that Marija’s agency and its effects are not directed that way, but towards the strengthening of national unity of Serbia. As is argued by

²⁶ Author unknown. May 13 2007. “Ponosni smo na tebe.” *Večernje Novosti*, Beograd, 7, <http://www.novosti.rs/code/navigate.php?Id=15&status=jedna&vest=103658&datum=2007-05-13>, accessed April 12, 2009.

²⁷ Anne McClintock, ‘No longer in a Future Heaven’: *Gender, Race, and Nationalism*, in: Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, eds., *Dangerous Liaisons. Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1997, 89.

²⁸ A. McClintock, 90.

²⁹ Cynthia Enloe, *Nationalism and Masculinity*, in: Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kapla (eds.) *An Introduction to Women’s Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, McGraw-Hill, 2006, 231.

³⁰ Warn 16.

Catherine McClintock, women are often the symbols of nation building – think of the figure of Marianne for France or the *Volksmoeder* in the case of the Afrikaner myth of the South African nation – but never the subject of this process.³¹ I think that this is the point which Marija's political performance eventually reaches, and does not overcome. Supporting radical nationalist right-wing party and manipulating with queer and Roma symbols without developing potent politics through them, using them as a marketing strategy, she and her team (organized and sponsored by the state) non-problematically reproduce power structures.³² She brings a dimension of “ethnic drag” into contemporary media picture of Serbia, offering phantasm that is grounded on self-exotization and auto-orientalization, a symbolic figure through which different groups within Serbian society are supposed to participate in national cause.

However, something is omitted in this hyperbolic economy of participation. “Glorious victory” remains one of a few fields in which the minorities are supposed to participate. For example, access of Roma kids to education or of gay communities to any kind of legal recognition is still limited, and the level of symbolic and material violence performed on them is mainly non-transparent.³³ These issues are black holes of public discourse in Serbia. That is why Marija exists – to cover these holes. Marija as a particular woman, as a potential lesbian, as a concrete Roma girl has ceased to be important. She has come to stand for many different things according to the interests at stake in representing her. This is a case of the collapse between representation (*Vertretung*) in political terms and representation (*Darstellung*) as in portraying the subject-construction. The other actors – state team and media which organized her performance, “led her to the victory and celebrated with her” – have been entrusted with a level of control over the aesthetic re-presentation (*darstellen*) of Marija, but also with political proxy (*vertreten*) to act on behalf of others (subaltern and different minorities), and to point out Marija as their representative. And that is why her status of national symbol was a short-term – she did not fit the model of ethnically and racially pure and sexually straight oriented (sex bomb, preferably) singer “nacionale”, established during the first phase of transition in the nineties. I argue that it is exactly in the conflation of *darstellen* and *vertreten*, but also her two mediated selves (as “one of us” and as “other”) that the problematic nature of this media figure lies. The apparent logic that evolves out these mediated selves, namely, is the linearity of being the ultimate “other” to becoming “one of us”. This is reflected and projected in so many ways; in her narrative of being Roma and (potential) lesbian to Serbian national symbol; in her narrative of being EU cultural ambassador to right-wing supporter; in her declaration as heterosexual and ultimately in her losing a

³¹ A. McClintock, 90.

³² While she barely addressed any Roma issues in her public performances and short-term political engagement (mainly conducted through public support to the leader of Serbian Radical Party), she explicitly avoided or denied any association with the politics of organizations for gay and lesbian rights, or declaring herself as lesbian.

³³ Mind recent ruining of Roma's houses at the place where new shopping mall is supposed to be built.

status of national symbol. The apparent linear story of her success has become part of political programs in which there is no place for hybrid identities, double cultural loyalties, or blurry/messy life stories.

Marija Serifovic might look far away from everyday experience of Serbian citizens – not to mention subaltern – as a phenomenon of the entertainment scene that should not be taken seriously. But, her mediated self is a symptom of Serbian society that stages its problematic social restructuration and the danger is exactly that in this process media become “as if” “transparent” and “as if” understandingly true. Normalization of conflation of mediated selves as Other and as “one of us” through media system integrates any occasional, and even confronted social and cultural meanings. That is how Marija’s mediated selves may at the same time spread ethnic stereotypes *and* allegedly represent new face of the multicultural and democratic Serbia.

Marija Serifovic’s identity fragmentariness and refraction in the web of different discursive practices and (un)stable positions that mutually cross produce the “zone of possibility” for the subaltern, a space that is always related to the feeling of potentials that are not yet completely articulated. However, this is a case in which politics of recognition and symbolic politics coincide and balancing between them, Marija is not entering the process of self-determination that is independent from approved social norms of marginalization and centralization.

Conclusion

This participation in ESC and all discursive strategies that follow it are the symbols of Serbia’s relation to Europe. Serbia is rehearsing its own multiplicity, trying to move on from totalitarian and nationalist agenda, but also from the First Serbia/Second Serbia polarizations. These processes are not always successful. Thus, Serbia lives in two parallel realities, in the process of endless transition. In that sense, for Serbia and its (re)presentation on international scene, it is absolutely possible to accept both rhetoric of ethnic stereotypes and antinationalist declaration, as well as values associated with that and perceived as European.

Popular culture events like ESC have the power and ability to reshape the geopolitical map of Europe and are also used in this way by the new, and potential new member states of the European Union. Those are mostly countries that undergo postsocialist transition. Participation in ESC and potential victory is a chance for them to invert social and economic order, on symbolic level. But paradoxically or not, with that inversion, they also integrate into Europe and inscribe themselves into its symbolic map. Thus this rite de passage becomes (post-socialist) transition ritual indeed.

In the case of Serbia, this process frequently indicates interiorisation of once rejected Balkanist/Orientalist perceptions of the region and/or Serbia, but also awareness of the postsocialist and post-war stigma. Identity strategies, sometimes explicated as rejection of “others” notion about one’s identity, often display clear awareness of the “Western” gaze. “Periphery-turned-Center” strategy, present in

this self-representation at ESC, uses means and notions that are perceived and offered as “authentic, traditional and native”, but essentially adopts “others” expectations and colonial discursive strategies – or what is perceived as “others” expectations, though does not necessarily have any substantial relation with them. Media figures such as Marija are used in this strategic marginalization and centralization.

In conclusion, I argue that it is necessary to always take into account possible discrepancies between discourse and power, between those who perform discourse (like Marija) and those who wield real political power to use it in their agendas (like state media and political parties). In an age of globalisation and multiculturalism, the mere fact that certain voices can be heard can mask the fact that securing a space for a certain type of discourse – or voice – is only the *first step* towards its legitimization and institutionalization. It is not enough for these voices just to be heard while they speak; or like in this case, while they (just) sing. And still, many subjects are only warming up their voices in Serbia.

(Translated by the author)

Маријана Митровић

Боје „новог лица Србије“: национални симболи у популарној музици

Кључне речи:

национализам, популарна музика, ново лице Србије, женска медијска фигура, субалтерн, медијско сопство

У овом раду анализирано је представљање нације женском фигуром у иконографији србијанске популарне музике. Посебна пажња посвећена је победи Марије Шерифовић на Еуросонгу 2007, што је у србијанским медијима адресирано као „победа новог лица Србије“, а дато је и поређење са другим случајевима поистовећивања певачица србијанске популарне музике са националним симболима. Анализа показује како је идеална слика нације у србијанској популарној музици креирана кроз позицију православног фамилијализма као позиције моћи искључења – етничких, верских, сексуалних мањина и читавих друштвених група које се не уклапају у модел етнички чистог православно-породичног патриотизма. У том светлу, случај Ромкиње Марије Шерифовић, припаднице геј мањине, као новог лица Србије, постаје посебно проблематичан.