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The “Unbearable Lightness” (of the Subversion) of Nationalism: Bodies on Estrada in Postsocialist Serbia*

This paper analyzes the cult of the nation and Orthodoxy in popular music of postsocialist Serbia in gender perspective. First I present historical revisionism regarding gender roles and the construction of gender identities in the nationalist discourses of postsocialist Serbia. I locate this issue into the register of neofolk music, i.e. the so called estrada (music show business). Following a diachronic recapitulation of a female singer's role in popular folk music, through a case study of the icon of Saint Ceca, but also referring to other examples, I analyze the interconnection of national, religious and class factors in the construction of gender identities of body in estrada. The purpose of this analysis is to indicate how these bodies assert discourses of nationalism and Orthodox religiousness as its core, but also to map the points of their potential subversiveness in relation to these discourses.

Keywords:

gender identities,
body on estrada,
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tionalism, Ortho-
doxy, icon, spectacle

The issue of continuity and discontinuity is one of the most relevant in both scientific and social discourses of postsocialist countries. Popular culture is one of the registers of these changes. It is often believed that female performers are emblematic of popular music and that their personas, i.e. how they present themselves to the audience, are an index of social changes, particularly changes in gender relations and construction of gender identities (Blagojevic 2000). First I will reflect on the general situation regarding participation and representation of women in society and then I will delve into the analysis of “estrada” sphere.

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Postsocialist Historical Revisionism in Serbia

Historical revisionism in postsocialist Serbia “sweeps under the carpet” almost five decades of Yugoslav socialism and traces of women’s political participation and emancipation in socialism and the first stage of postsocialism (Slapsak 2004).¹ Paradoxically or not, many of the “new histories” encourage historical amnesia. Their thriving coincides with the uprising of rightist politics, strengthening of religion and also the rise of neoliberal market economy. These factors radically reduced the rights of students, workers and pensioners, leading at the same time to a systematic discrimination of the poor, the elderly, refugees, migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled, non-Orthodox confessions, particularly women belonging to these groups. In the revisionist historical discourse there are no imaginable alternatives to present-day *status quo*, and “the present is a deaf echo of past cataclysms” (Mocnik 2008, 52 in Hvala 2010, 61). Further implications of this idea would be that a social utopia of the past cannot be revitalized, and consequently an alternative to the (dominant discourse of the) present cannot be construed.²

From the late 1980s onwards ethnic nationalism with Orthodoxy as its “core” has become one of the main ideological mechanisms that distinguish postsocialist Serbia from the mainstream socio-political climate in socialist Yugoslavia. Orthodoxy becomes an element of the “cult of nation (...) i.e. political religion of Serbian nationalism” (Čolović 2008, 191–192). In fact, the identity of a nation is reduced to a single dimension, religion, and national identity is equated with religious affiliation (Malešević 2010, 99). Combination of nationalism and Orthodoxy is a prominent factor also in the construction of gender roles in post-communist Serbia. However, the approach to this issue is often dualistic. I will reflect upon this matter in the following section.

¹ According to them, it appears that there never was any feminism and/or feminists organizing in Yugoslavia (Slapsak 2004). When talking about Serbia as a newly-formed nation-state in the first phase of transition (1989–2000), a common hypothesis of many authors, even those who do not “suffer” from historical amnesia, is that Serbia was at the time dominated by a tendency of turning to patriarchal gender roles, in which the female body in particular stood for a means of reproducing ethnic borders and constructing an ethnically clean nation (Ivekovic and Mostov 2000) and also that popular music was the bearer of essentialist gender structures of that type in public (Blagojevic 2000; Papic 2002). Although this is a sound argument, some authors think that it often excludes alternative reading of women’s activities discussed (Dimitrijevic 2002; Dimitrijevic 2009). In addition to that, one rarely has a chance to read about women’s activities of the order subversion, which leads to their harsh dispute or negation (Slapsak 2004).

² Utopia can only be remembered, as in the title of a collection of essays about everyday life in socialist period *Remembering Utopia: the Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Of course, the question remains who decides which aspects of the past will be delegated into the domain of utopia and which will be kept as socially and politically relevant.

Postsocialism, Nationalism and Gender Roles

Many have written about the material and symbolic instrumentalization of women in nationalist discourses. In a symbolic order, women are presented as the core of the nation, a guarantee that the nation's biological and symbolic reproduction will be "fruitful" (Enloe 2000; Mertus 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997). According to Stasa Zajovic, nationalism created a categorization into „women as mothers“ and „men as warriors“ in countries of former Yugoslavia (1998, 169). This structure implies a binary opposition of possible subject positions for women: either they comply with this symbolic order and agree to such a position, or they affront it.

However, the situation is far more complex and diverse than this dual solution offered.³ An analytical focus on binary opposition of complying with the dominant discourse and its rejection would limit the possibility of exploring a variety of methods of constituting gender roles and life narratives, including changes, disagreements and contradictory elements within the same narrative. What is required is a nuanced position sensitive to the heterogeneity within offered categories, and their correlation with class, age, religious and other factors. Also, nationalism in Serbia is different in the two phases of postsocialist transformation, before and after 2000. In this paper I will concentrate more on the latter period, although I will also attempt to draw general conclusions regarding the overall postsocialist period. The material used in this analysis comprises newspaper articles from the dailies *Blic* and *Kurir*, comments from the social network *Facebook* (in particular the pages *St. Ceca* and *Džabe se pališ na mene kad nisi pravoslavna/ It's no use going crazy about me if you're not Orthodox*), *Blejac* web site, neofolk lyrics and *Youtube* videoclips.

Class, Race, Finance – How to Approach the Criticism of Neofolk?

Different types of approach to neofolk can be divided into exclusivist (Dragicevic-Sesic 1994; Gordy 1999; Kronja 2001) and inclusivist (Dimitrijevic 2002, Djurkovic 2002, 2010)⁴ depending on whether they imply an axiological gap between what is culturally desirable and undesirable, or, more precisely, oppositions urban : rural, original : media-produced, kitsch : art etc.. Personally I prefer a „third line“ which does not adopt such oppositions (much like the second one), but also does not pass judgement on neofolk, which the other two approaches tend to do (Malesevic 2003; Visnjic 2010; Dimitrijevic 2009).⁵

³ For a thorough criticism of this binary coding of gender roles in nationalist discourses, see Jovanovic 2009.

⁴ A great deal of gay theoretical literature that is not part of the academic opus follows this line.

⁵ Ana Vujanovic and Tatjana Markovic divided the neofolk perspective into the emancipatory-enlightening (Dragicevic-Sesic 1994; Gordy 1999; Kronja 2011) and democratic-populist approach (Dimitrijevic 2002; Djurkovic 2002; 2010), depending on affirmative or negative attitude towards neofolk. These studies were created in different periods and the discursive ruptures between them are also the result of a diachronic change in the context. Neofolk is a changing and

To avoid the trap of repeating a class-determined opposition high : low culture, the analysis of neofolk⁶ should consider a class dimension (or, as some authors suggest, rely on the criticism of neoliberal capitalism). In the words of Olga Dimitrijevic, „The body of the female folk singer is equated through public, academic and common discourses with the whole neofolk genre, via that with the whole Serbian popular culture and via that with ‘wide masses of people’” (Dimitrijevic 2009, 16). Thus it becomes the major crossing point of the flows of capital, problems of ethnicity, nationality, religion, class and sexuality. This issue becomes even more important having in mind the postsocialist context of transition that ruthlessly cancels all benefits of the socialist era. The “wide masses” are in fact transitional losers and a threat to the political, financial, but also intellectual elite (Ibid.). On the other hand, in spite the fact that these female singers are often, to paraphrase a line from a popular comedy show from the 80s, *Audition*, “someone from the masses” as regards their social background, they belong to the estrada elite, relatively closely connected to the political elite and firmly bound to the financial elite. Class position often depends on “bank account” (*kasa*) as an indicator of financial achievement. Precisely for that reason it is important to take a look at the identities produced by the neofolk estrada and to investigate them in more detail, in order to deconstruct the equating of neofolk consumers and the lower class, and their classification as people of less value.⁷ This classification has dangerous consequences because it creates a social and political climate that not only turns abolishment of free education, health care and layoffs into a normal thing, but also presents it as inevitable stage of the postsocialist “evolution.” On the other hand, social conditions enable discrimination based on national origin, race and religious affiliations, as well as homosexual orientations. They determine the objects of discrimination as the “internal others” within Serbian society.⁸ The question remains how these factors of (dis)identification function on the estrada scene. I start from a hypothesis that identities in neofolk music are produced and performed on a scale from strengthening of Orthodox nationalism to its subversion.

fluctuating phenomenon, so much that in fact it is questionable if all that is implied under neofolk can be treated as a unique problem. Still, that cannot be taken as the only factor in the different positioning of these approaches. Class, political and other factors are as important as the historical ones.

⁶ I will use this term for the purpose of the work, since it is more inclusive than turbo-folk, folk-pop etc. with regard to diachronical and genre changes.

⁷ The term cultural fascism (*kultur-fašizam*) is sometimes used to signify discreditation of social groups based on their taste (most often musical taste). But I find this term inadequate because it too easily equates *specific* historical context and the effects of fascism with the *potential* consequences of insulting somebody’s pop-cultural preferences.

⁸“(Potentially) uncontrollable masses” can be object of this kind of discrimination, but they also often actively participate in discrimination. Let’s just remember riots during Gay Pride Parade in Belgrade 2010, and that is not the only example. Their political uncontrollability is also questionable. Such actions can often be connected to pop-cultural affiliations, but mainly when it comes to sport, not music affiliations. It is not analytically fertile to equate consumers of certain musical genre with any social group.

Orthodox Paradox of Bodies in Estrada

Comparison of the status of neofolk singers and their “vanguard”, kafana (traditional local bistro) singers, shows a certain continuity of divinization and inferiorization.⁹ Ana Hofman’s article on the status of newly-composed folk music, or kafana music female singers in socialism states that they “were neither visibly sanctioned nor openly promoted by the official politics and [were] both marginalized and glorified” (Hofman 2010, 142). Abovementioned authors (Dimitrijivic 2009, Visnjic 2010) dealt with a similar topic in the articles regarding turbo-folk female singers in postsocialism. Somewhat following them, I argue that gender roles of female singers are characterized by ambivalence, which is in my opinion often no more than a politically correct expression for contradiction.

When discussing neofolk stars in postsocialism, one of the key contradictions is at the same time a significant difference from the period of socialism, and that is the emphasis on symbols of Orthodoxy and loyalty to the Serbian nation, usually a combination of both. Contradiction is reflected in a common discrepancy between the offered on-stage persona of estrada who candidates for the national symbol status, and his or her presumed “latent nature”. Or, to quote Miroslava Malesevic, (their) “words should erase the image we see, explain that what we know about them and what they are popular for is not who they *really* are” (2010, 98): not the pretentious silicone sex bombs, but caring mothers, devoted wives and humble Orthodox followers. There is ideological contradiction not only between what we see on stage and what is “behind the scenes” (yet offered to the public with equal intensity), but also between various elements of stage performance itself: the most emblematic example is the much-criticized image of an Orthodox cross on silicone-enhanced and almost bare bosom of a female singer, displaying the equally famous three-finger salute.¹⁰ This is a kind of an orthodox paradox, so to speak, since *What*

⁹ Pursuing a professional career in music was perceived in many societies as unsuitable for women. As for female performers of popular music, they were often the subject of debates on negative moral values. In many cultures, they were considered to be immoral, lustful women, equated with prostitutes or concubines. Even if they achieved a certain degree of social recognition as independent women, and won social freedom unavailable to other women, they were mostly socially marginalized (Hofman 2010, 142).

¹⁰ This image almost automatically triggers religious discussions from academic circles to internet forums. In February 2011, *Facebook* page *Džabe se pališ na mene kad nisi pravoslavna/ It's no use going crazy about me if you're not Orthodox* recorded a high number of visitors, both supporters and opponents of this Appendix of a sort to “What every Orthodox girl should know” guidebook. A user named Branislava SNS was particularly active in defending “Serbianhood and Orthodoxy”. On her profile picture, she was wearing a cross over her artificially tanned breasts, almost spilling out. The most popular (or, in *Facebook* terminology, the most liked) comment on the photo was “Branislava, you don’t seem like a humble Orthodox girl to me.”

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=195560997130014&id=19432960391982, accessed on February 27, 2011.

*every Orthodox girl (and woman) should know*¹¹ guidebook is not very benevolent toward silicone modifications and public exposure of the body. Orthodox ideals with regard to women's public engagement and exposure seem to be quite minimalistic.

However, much as this cross-shaped three-finger Serbianhood proved to be a prominent legitimacy of success on estrada from the 1990s onwards, lately it seems that estrada itself has adopted its own negation and criticism, its actors intentionally pointing out how the cross has become a "floating signifier", a symbol banalized through over-use, a convention of representation rather than proof of powerful affective relation to the ideological apparatus. Some celebrities have now become decreasingly insistent on the declarative prioritization of "Orthodox minimalism" standard in relation to their identity registers of successful business women, class or spatially mobile subjects, or openly sexual persons (Seka Aleksic is a good example of this). New estrada "winks" suggest a different paradox, or rather a reverse of the first one: success should not be justified to or with the cross, but instead, the cross is a concession to success. In other words: bare Balkan breasts have to wear a cross to be bare in the first place, and three fingers have turned into fingers crossed behind one's back. Still, this does not mean that these female performers renounce Orthodox and national values.¹²

Even so, there are more and more examples of harsh criticism of the Orthodox and national model by estrada stars themselves, such as the open confrontation of Jelena Karleusa with the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC), over some photos of the singer crucified, or her condemnation of SPC role in the demonization of the Pride Parade held in Belgrade in 2010. Another estrada paradox is that these white, heterosexual, ethnically clean and Orthodox Serbian bodies are becoming both national and gay icons, but also stars in former Yugoslav republics, Serbian enemies in the 90s.¹³ In this way, the paradoxes of parallel affirmation and overthrow of orthodox nationalism multiply.¹⁴

There are several examples of this in the recent past. One caused particular stir in the public in June 2010. It was an icon called *Saint Ceca*, the work of Vladislava Djuric, a student at the Department for Applied Arts and Design at the Faculty

¹¹ The guidebook for Orthodox girls was issued by Svetigora, with the blessing of Amfilohije Radovic in 2000. In addition to that, *What every Orthodox boy should know* and *What every Orthodox mother should know* were also published.

¹² Publicly-private declarations of Orthodoxy are displayed through an estrada-house-home celebration of slava (Saint Patron's day) and Orthodox Christian holidays (Christmas and Easter) – such statements and photos of celebrities next to the slava cake, surrounded by family members, often appear in the press.

¹³ Some of them were stars in those republics "back then", but in "silent underground".

¹⁴ When nationalism becomes an attractive good appropriate for media use, paradoxes occur, for they are suitable for best sensations (I thank Miroslava Lukic-Krstanovic for this insight). However, they do not occur in this way and for this reason only. Over-identification with a certain model can be paradoxical even if it is not sensationalized, for it indicates the problematic areas of the model itself. The only question is who will notice that even if it is not sensationalized.

of Arts in Nis. Her work was part of a student exhibition of graphics with a common topic *Serbian brand souvenirs*. Folk diva was presented on the icon holding a microphone and with her cleavage revealed. The icon was displayed on June 5, 2010, and the author said her aim was to criticize Serbian reality: “The idea was to place a folk icon in the context of an icon of a saint, as a way of communication and branding of the current quality and level of culture in Serbia” (Blic, June 6, 2010). When asked why she chose Ceca and the church, she replied that she basically did not have to choose, but that “the people chose her, by calling her the “Serbian ‘mother’, as a synonym for someone who is a victim, a widow, a hero, a single mother...” The author underlined that Ceca’s influence on a number of young people in the country is significant, and distanced herself from any implications regarding the relation between Ceca and Serbian Orthodox Church. Even before the exhibition, folk diva stated that “she does not like this idea at all”, for she was just a woman “with both virtues and flaws”. However, this is not the first time that the female singer has presented herself in that light, and she had been called a saint and Serbian mother before, especially during the 2001 concert dedicated to her late husband, paramilitary commander Zeljko Raznatovic Arkan, and also in 2003 Operation *Saber*, when she was arrested and spent three months in jail, following the assassination of the Prime Minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjic. Canonization of “a worldly woman and a singer”, as the then Patriarch called her, caused a harsh reaction of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In the meantime, she became a gay icon as well, and this ironization of canonization, through its literal performance, symptomatically revealed the problem of model of success and exemplarity of gender models for women in Serbia. Although Ceca has surpassed her role of a “warrior’s companion” from the period of her marriage with Arkan, she still owes much of her popularity to investing in the national element – the Orthodox cult, symbolized in the roles of a faithful wife (widow) and a loving mother. In April 2011 she was in the spotlight again after striking a plea bargain with state prosecutors by pleading guilty in a sale of soccer players. At the same time, a photo-montage appeared on internet of a typical close-up of Ceca revealing her bosom – wearing a statue of Justice, instead of a cross. We have yet to see how much all this has damaged her status of a national favorite.¹⁵ Still, the icon of Ceca as a saint finally named the problem and made both apologetic and ironic reading of her body visible.

The body of a folk singer can therefore function at the same time as a pillar of Orthodoxy and nationalism and their stumbling block. What are the results of these seemingly paradoxical and contradictory functions? I will analyze them one at a time, through the prism of discursive and affective performance of spectacle.

The very nature of a spectacle renders visual presentation the power to affect the subconscious mind, outside the strictly defined discursive reference system. This can be called the *affective influence* of visual representation (Kenneth and Massumi 1992). The affective element is derived from direct physical impact of the

¹⁵ Although her retreat from estrada was announced on April 1, 2011, her new album showed up in June 2011 despite Ceca’s sentence to house detention. Meanwhile, bracelet Ceca (narukvica or nanogvica *Ceca*), symbol of her house detention, became very popular and well sold on internet.

visual “even though its precise meaning remains undetermined” (Hall 1999, 13). Thus a spectacle acts both discursively *and* affectively. On the other hand, Laurence Grossberg describes affect as a possibility of creating social relations (Grossberg 1993, 80); at the same time, this means creating a relation between subjects and the ideological apparatus. That is how participants in the spectacle, in addition to *signifying*, also *embody* the ideology. For instance, when sitting in front of the TV, or watching a live concert at a stadium – we are all to a certain degree part of the affective function of a social system.

In this way, every social identity, even national identity, is constructed through a powerful physical experience. The cross-shaped bare-bosom three-finger Serbianhood is most effective at concerts when the audience (members of a nation), with three fingers lifted and with Ceca’s voice “from the depth” of her cross-ornamented bosom, sings the nationalized *Djurdjevdan* as if in “a trance”, or sings *Balkan* together with Seka, glorifying “our ever-mythical naturalness, spontaneity and pure feelings (Čolović 2008, 191–2).”¹⁶ In this case, the process of marking social space as one’s “own” influences the creation of relation between the subject and the national ideological apparatus. The female singer becomes a symbolic pivot that attracts specific bodies.¹⁷ Her very body and dedicated performance become mediators between other bodies of the nation and territory. The “spirit” and the “body” (territory) of a nation are connected; under *Blut und Boden* aura, she becomes a symbolic axis around which the imagined Serbian community revolves and constantly grows stronger, through ritual celebrations of its mythical specificity (Dimitrijevic 2009, 30). A powerful connection with the ground depicts Serbian national being as authentic and primal, placing it in a nationalist frame where “it belongs” (to paraphrase Seka’s lyrics) and in a time frame that refers to a deep rooted connection with the past. By this ritual, the nation is constituted as united, self-sufficient and self-satisfied in its isolation (cf. Dimitrijevic 2009). Or, as Stoja’s song goes – “Who cares about Europe?!”¹⁸ It is not surprising then that the artist Vladislava Djuric has *literally* framed her icon of *St. Ceca (Nacionale)* and shown it as a Serbian brand – what Serbia has to offer to the world.¹⁹ The icon is a summary and sublimation of the effect of spectacle.

Yet the paradox of estrada bodies lies in the fact that they can also act as a “crack” in the smooth nationalist discourse based on patriarchy. According to Zarana Papic, the key element in the construction of Serbian nationalism was the rein-

¹⁶ See the lyrics of Seka’s song *Balkan* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YT3V2-adEts>, accessed on June 3, 2011.

¹⁷ For a great analysis of the constitution of national identities through musical performance see Dimitrijevic 2009.

¹⁸ It is Stoja’s song *Europe*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvPjBeRvST0>, accessed on June 3, 2011. I thank Olga Dimitrijevic for this example.

¹⁹ I have to observe that the selected brand and souvenir would function quite effectively if she had chosen an “outside” perception of Serbia. Hedonistic and jovial perceptions of night life and women in Serbia and on the Balkans, symbolized by Balkan music and Ceca in particular, are quite common.

forcement of patriarchal polarization of gender roles and their “naturalization.” Hence is it not surprising that gay and lesbian activist groups accept neofolk and its potential to act subversively with regard to patriarchal moral. For example, this potential is reflected in modifications of the “natural” body and open sexualization of the body of middle-aged (even elderly) women. This rocks the foundations of a symbolic order which makes a taboo out of any manifestations of sexuality of women who are “past their prime”. At the same time it questions the “naturalness” of the body and predetermination of gender identities. The next step in destabilization of gender as an “original” that is constantly (unsuccessfully) carried out and at the same time imitated and mocked is *drag* performance. *Drag* as a figure of a man dressed as a woman – estrada star hits the very symbolic nuclear reactor of nationalism – homophobia.²⁰ Only a few years ago, drags were no more than extras in music videos (for instance, *Sweet little thing* by Jelena Karleusa), where as now they appear as independent actors on estrada (Boki 13). A *drag* is subversive precisely because of over-identification with patriarchal ideals of femininity. It offers excess, a plenitude of enjoyment – but enjoyment in a masculinist “uneasiness in culture”, a hyperbolic, inadequate answer to the demands of patriarchy. Stars of estrada become gay icons, and some of them surpass the Serbian public horizon of expectations by openly supporting the fight for gay rights. The most notable example is Jelena Karleusa’s column written in October 2010, when she expressed her support to the Pride Parade and attacked its opponents using excessive, lascivious language, *unbecoming to a lady* and at the same time, very convincing argumentation, *unbecoming to a ‘folk singer’*. All of these processes overcome the dimension defined by what I previously called Orthodox minimalism. Their subversiveness in relation to Serbian-Orthodox-nationalist discourse lies in reassessing the hegemony of masculinity, or rather the limits it imposes. If certain aspects of a female singer’s body overcome the limits of masculinist imagination, in a sense that the body has been shaped in accordance with such imagination, but transcends its limits, if the body communicates with gay audience and makes it visible, then it additionally undermines the hegemony of masculinity (cf. Dimitrijevic 2009).

Through those various mechanisms, estrada is offered to a large scale of consumers and its definition of market is wider than the nationalist and the national definition. The main imperative is not “national unity”, but success on the market. But how is this success achieved and reflected on the body, “natural Serbian” body? An analysis of *Grand Stars*, the process of “recruiting” new estrada performers via a TV show, would provide a good example. Whereas in the first phase of *Grand Stars* emphasis is placed on their genuineness, symbolized in their bodies, in the next stage, when they record an album – or, when they reach a higher level of estrada and social rise - their bodies become increasingly modified. In parallel with this, their biographies, i.e. their discursive representation in the media no longer insist on

²⁰ There have been several papers and articles on drag’s influence in undermining traditional gender roles, theoretically related to the ideas of Judith Butler. Olga Dimitrijevic dedicated part of her master thesis to this topic (2008, 45–47), and other works were mostly published outside the institutionalized academic discourse: Maljkovic 2008; Stojanovic 2008; Visnjic 2010. My approach differs because it analyzes the role of over-identification with the norm.

their “low” background and laborious process of moving upward on the class ladder, turning more and more to the signs of social prestige (kafana as the topos of “tempering” estrada “steel” is replaced in this stage of media narrativization by a luxurious apartment or a car and other “tacky” material indicators of estrada nobility and (vertical) social mobility). With each change, this process erases history of pain (Bordo 1993), and emphasizes history of happiness (Ahmed 2010). In that way, it is yet another “strong”, indisputable evidence of the “unbearable lightness” of climbing up the social ladder.

Estrada, therefore, does not disturb the social structure in Serbia. Even though it reflects, and occasionally even problematizes, class, gender and religious inequality, it still reinforces them. The potential for social transformation that occurs from time to time is used discursively, especially in activist and academic circles, but does not have any serious material results. On the polygon of estrada “everything is possible” and “anything goes/everything flows” – particularly capital – and what remains (and survives) is the “unbearable heaviness” of social changes.

Conclusion

I believe that the above analysis of neofolk gender identities indicates that this is not the case of music industry mediation in imposing the official ideology, or a state national and nationalist project for the purpose of establishing cultural and ideological homogeneity in society by excluding all who do not fit into the model, but still, it can be noted that there are certain dominant ideological, Orthodox-national patterns. I also consider that the above analyzed examples, in the light of postsocialist gender relations as described in the first part of the paper, show that the space of media construction of popular music is becoming increasingly gender-inclusive, inducing new gender models that could not be called crypto-feministic, for example, but that certainly serve to break the matrix of the negation of homosexuality, and political engagement for its acceptance. But the potential for any significant social changes remain unrealized. It seems that the potentially “uncontrollable masses” – in fact, the lower class – do not stir (except in the rhythm of music).

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