

Eugenics and the "Nation" in the Writings of a Turn-of-the-Century Serbian Physician: the case of Milan Jovanović Batut

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Abstract

Eugenics discourses focus on providing medical and biological explanations for political and socio-cultural process of nation building. This means that the nation building project can be read as biopolitical project making every question related to the nation, be it political, social, economic, a question of medicine. Most of the studies that tackle the question of eugenics and nation building have been focused on the cases and examples from larger, imperialist nations in Western Europe and North America. How the eugenic discourse functioned in other parts of Europe is rather less studied. The central question that is addressed in this thesis is how did eugenics as a biopolitical project of nation building play out in emergence of “small nation states” (Eley and Suny 1996), such as turn of the century Serbia. I examine how the Serbian nation state, in its initial phase of nation building, was envisioned as organic entity. How it’s citizens were constructed as medical subject and what was the role of medicine as a science and the medical practitioner in this project? Through a close reading of the writings of the leading Serbian physician at the time, Milan Jovanović Batut, I show that because of the specific political, economic and cultural context of Serbia eugenic nation-building project played out differently than in already studied eugenics movements in Europe. Unlike eugenic movements in Western nations, the vast majority of the Serbian population at the time was rural so both the desired body of citizens was not the middle class but the rural population.

Introduction

The nation is more than just physical borders between territories; it is about determining which people belong to it and which do not. In order to have a nation-state, there needs to be a community of people who incorporate belonging to the nation into their identities as a way of distinguishing themselves from others. One of the ways this process of nation-building is done is through the eugenic lens of medicine and biology. Eugenics discourses focus on providing medical and biological explanations for political and socio-cultural processes of demarcation. It provides a way to naturalize the socio-cultural binary of Us versus Them, the desired as opposed to the undesired. At the core of eugenics is the question of reproduction - the physical reproduction of desired types of bodies and thus the reproduction of desired national population. As the nation is seen as a community, the physical body is a representation of the nation – the body of the nation. If the physical bodies of the citizens are perceived as unhealthy or undesirable then that leads to image of the degeneration of the nation. The ideas of eugenics can thus be understood as part of the “fear of the nation’s decline” (Anderson 2006, 8).

The question that appears in looking at nation-building from the prism of eugenics is how the nation itself was being viewed as a medical subject and what does this tell us about the position and the role of medicine as a science in the late 19th and early 20th century and about the role of the medical practitioner? It is plausible to state that the nation itself was also being perceived as a medical, living organism. In this sense, the individual bodies of its citizens are seen as parts of this larger organic whole and the role of the physician is to make sure that each part and the whole are healthy. This, in short, means that the nation building

project can be read as a biopolitical project making every question related to the nation, whether it political, social, economic, a question of medicine.

Most of the studies that tackle the question of eugenics and nation building have been focused on the cases and examples from larger, imperialist nations in Western Europe and North America. Within the eugenics movement in Britain and the United States emphasis was put on the ideal of the nation being embodied by intellectuals of the middle class, of which by complete chance most of the members of eugenics societies on both sides of the Atlantic happened to be part of (Kevles 2004). Eugenics is thus read as a modernist project that tries to provide suitable answers to the socio-cultural, political and demographic changes that were occurring during and after the industrial revolution.

How the eugenic discourse functioned in other parts of Europe is rather less studied, except for the works of Turda, Promitzer and Trubeta, especially in their book “Health, Hygiene and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945” (2011). Eugenics was not only used by countries like Germany, Great Britain of the United States. It was a large international movement that occurred in almost every emerging modern nation. “Eugenics should be understood not only as a scientific narrative of biological, social and cultural renewal, but also as the emblematic expression of programmatic modernism” (Turda 2010, 2). It is a part of the modernist nation project as its can be linked to the image of the nation state as a biological organism. Research into nation-building projects and their links to eugenics in so called “small nations” (Eley and Suny 1996) - nations who did not emerge as large colonial or imperialist empires but rather through independence from them – provide a pathway for understanding eugenics movements more complexly, linking them to historically contingent processes of nation building. Eugenics and its role in the nation building, even though it is possible to trace similarities between different emerging nations, did not appear in the same manner among different nations.

There has been some study on the role of eugenics in this region but as eugenics cannot be treated monolithically across different nations it also cannot be treated as unchanging temporally. Eugenics as a nation building project undergoes certain phases (Turda 2010). The writing that has been done on the Southeastern region was mostly from the interwar period when the institutional structures of the state have already been established and eugenics was firmly entrenched in them. What has not been looked at during the period that came before was the process of establishing these institutions and the labor of imaging the nation. This period should not be overlooked because it is the phase of nation-building that first defines how the nation should be imagined and who is the desired imagined community of this nation (Calhoun 1997). The ideology of eugenics is present in this phase as part of the biopolitical discourses through which new identity politics were forged.

In this thesis, the central focus will be on the forging of the Serbian nation state after its independence from the Ottoman Empire until the interwar period, which has been studied previously (Dugac 2011). In a sense, this thesis attempts to “fill the gap” in literature on this region, and about this country, Serbia, specifically. The other reason for looking at Serbia specifically is due to its different history. Dugac (2011) was looking more specifically at the establishment of eugenics in Croatia, which had a different nation building phase than Serbia as it was in most part linked with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The specificity of Serbia lies in its creation out of both the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Vojvodina) and its independence from the Ottoman Empire. The separation from the Ottoman Empire left a great impact in the way in which the Serbian nation state was imagined, as Todorova calls it its “Ottoman heritage” (Todorova 1997).

There have been historical studies on this post-independence phase of Serbian history (Stojanovic 2009), but these studies have been particularly focused on the official political history. My approach differs in that I map out how nation-building in Serbia occurred as a

biopolitical project and how the nation and its citizens were imagined as medical subjects. This approach is worth doing because the project of nation building in Serbia has not been looked at from a biopolitical perspective and also because it opens the possibility for seeing how biopolitical projects, such as eugenics, play out in the creation of other smaller nation states.

I will show how eugenics as a socio-political project of nation-building, can highlight both the international intersections and connections between different processes of modern nation building. At the same time, I will show the specific political, economic and cultural context of Serbia eugenic nation-building project played out differently than in already studied eugenics movements in Europe. Unlike eugenic movements in Western nations, the vast majority of the Serbian population at the time was rural so both the desired body of citizens was not the middle class but the rural population.

In order to understand how the nation was imagined through a biopolitical lens it is necessary to look at writing about the health of the nation. I am focusing on the written works of one particular physician in post-Ottoman Serbia. The reason for doing so is because intellectuals, especially in the first phase of nation-building (Calhoun 1997), played a key role in imagining how the nation as a community should look like (Gellner 1998). In turn of the century Serbia the most prolific and prominent physician writing about the health of the Serbian nation was Milan Jovanović Batut¹. Though little attention has been given to his work and his role in the creation of the modern Serbian state, he is a great example of how the Serbian intelligentsia was forged. He studied in Western Europe, and upon his return to Serbia, played a key role in the erection of the educational and medical infrastructure of the

¹ His bibliography consists of over 170 articles, books and readers. In his archival collection, there are also numerous manuscripts of books and lecture notes that have never been published; all of them deal with the topic of national health.

nation. More importantly, in his work on national health we can trace both the similarities of his eugenics discourse with other already studied discourses but also the differences between them. Most notably, the rural Serbian population, who were at the center of his work, were presented as both the deviant and the desirable. I argue that by looking at the works of Batut, we can trace the anxieties over two different political projects of nation-building that were occurring in Serbia: the top-down modernist project established by the political elite – and eugenics can be read as part of that project – and romanticized nationalism project, in which main focus was the rural national body.

The primary method of research in this thesis was a close reading of primary sources: Batut's publications, manuscripts, lecture notes and other data such as statistics, news clippings and correspondences with other physicians. This information was gathered through a month long archival research of Batut's personal collection in the Serbian National Archive in Belgrade during April 2013. Archival work provided the possibility not only to analyze Batut's "final product" that is his published work, but also to get greater insight into his work process, the way he gathered data and how his understandings of eugenics was associated with the betterment of Serbian nationhood.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, I present an overview on the theory and literature relating to nation building and eugenics, linking it to the specific historical background of Serbia and Batut. The aim of this chapter is to get a better understanding of how the concept of the nation as an organic entity was constructed in Serbia. From this theoretical and historical background, I move to the analysis of primary sources. Chapter two focuses on the primary sources that deal with the process of establishing Batut as a modern, scientific medical practitioner in opposition to folk and unofficial medical practices that prevailed before and the nations need to create educational and scientific establishments. The third chapter elaborates more on the constitution of the disease of tuberculosis as a social

problem as well as highlighting the specific political and historical events that shaped this construction in Serbia. In the fourth and final chapter, I explore in more detail how Batut imagined the physical bodies of male and female citizens thus dealing with the gendered aspects of eugenics and nation building. The goal of this chapter was to emphasize the project of identity biopolitics and how through the question of biological reproduction, the question of the reproduction of the nation emerges.

Chapter I – The Nation as Organic

The nation was seen as something natural and objective,
even if the hard work of the intellectuals was needed to
convince large numbers of people it was so (Eley and
Suny 1996, 17)

The nation, according to Benedict Anderson, is an “imagined political community-
imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 2006, 6). It is imagined
because it subscribes to the myth that throughout time and space there exists a thread (viewed
as biological, linguistic, political or social) that connects and binds a specific group of
together, even though its members might never meet or communicate in their lifetimes
(Anderson 2006, 9). In this sense, the nation is a fiction because the people who belong to it
subscribe to the myth that it has always existed, that the nation has always been and always
will be. This does not mean that the nation is an illusion, or that it is false, but that by using
the term “imagining” what is being highlighted is the fact that the nation is a process and a
construct, and not a pre-social entity.

Gellner views the nation as a cultural construct, and by highlighting that the
establishment of fixed national languages – vernaculars - was central to the creation of nations
(Gellner 1998). Additionally, he states that literacy was the minimal requisite for the creation
of citizens (Gellner 1998). This is why he highlights the role of education and the formation
of secular universities as crucial for the establishment of a nation state. In order to create a
nation, it was necessary to create a unified national culture, which meant choosing a particular
vernacular and regional culture and raising it up as the official national language and culture.

The underlining goal of establishing educational institutions and creating new centralized political infrastructures was the establishment of a unified national culture. The creation of state educational institutions went in line with the wider philosophy of Enlightenment, which meant that the new identities that were being created in the nation building project had to be rational and have full faith in the ideas of science and progress.

At the same time, in the 19th century, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, we can trace the establishment of a particular form of nationalism, romantic nationalism. Through the project of nation building a new form of identity politics emerged. People had hitherto associated themselves just with their immediate family, as the idea was to create a horizontal kinship system in which every citizen of the nation would feel a kinship-like connection with other member of the nation through a unified language and culture (Anderson 2006)². The romantic project enabled the mystification of this process resulting in an idea of a sense of belonging amongst citizens through a notion of shared national spirit. This national spirit was seen through the lens of biology that is as something natural and of nature. This perspective allowed for the legitimization and mythmaking of the nation-state as inherently natural and universal. At the core of this romantic project was the idealized notion of rural communities out of which it was believed that the national spirit originates. It is in this understanding of nation and nationalism that we can place the birth of the modern Serbian nation state, as well. In the following section I will present a short historical overview of turn of the century Serbia in order to show how its creation reflects the above stated theoretical model of nation building as an intellectual project and imagining the nation as an organic entity and thus needing the care of medical practitioners to maintain a healthy nation.

² The classic example of this is post-revolution France with its central theme of liberty, equality and brotherhood.

Creating the Serbian nation

In the beginning of the 19th century, an independent Serbia did not exist as it was divided amongst the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. From 1860, the part of Serbia that was under the Ottoman Empire gained some autonomy by becoming a dukedom within the Empire. It was only after the rebellion and war against the Empire that Serbia became a kingdom³ in 1882. It is in this period that the Serbian education system emerged. Prior to this there were attempts from Serbian intellectuals, most notably Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, to establish an official Serbian vernacular as opposed to the diglossy prevalent before⁴. This official language of the people was established in 1868. The same year the country was proclaimed a monarchy - in 1863 - the Serbian Great School was established in Belgrade, paving the way for the creation of the first University in 1905. All of the teachers and all of the learned individuals of Serbia before that received their education in Central and Western Europe (Budapest, Vienna and Paris). The sending of individuals to Western European Universities was executed as a planned project of the government as part of the modernizing project of Serbia. Dubravka Stojanović makes note of this endeavor and shows that unlike modernizing projects in western nations where the process of modernization arose from the civil society and the demands of civic rights, modernization was imposed top down (Stojanovic 2009). Modernization did not start through the interaction of economic, social,

³ Unlike other monarchies, Serbian monarchs did not come from a long lineage of nobility. The two competing royal families, the Obrenović and the Karađorđević, both stem from the leaders of the two rebellions against the Ottoman Empire. From the outset the Kingdom of Serbia was formed as a Parliamentary Monarchy under the rule of the Obrenović royal family, King Milan. The king is remembered as reckless, and his love of extravagance dragged the newly formed country into debt. He abdicated in favor of his underage son, Alexander in 1889. Neither of the Obrenović kings was much liked by the people, due to the impression of their living lavish lifestyles while the people of the country lived in poverty. The subsequent wars with Bulgaria during the reign of King Milan did not help either. The growing dislike of the royals culminated in the assassination of king Alexander and his wife in 1903 and the (re)instating of the other royal family, the Karađorđević.

⁴ In the beginis of the Kingdom, there was a difference between the language that the general, rural population spoke and the slaveno-serbian (a mixture of russian and serbian) and crkveno-serbski (a mixture of old church slavic and vernacular) that the secular and sacral elite used.

political and cultural factors; it started suddenly, in the time of national revolutions in the 19th century and with the creation of nation states (Stojanovic 2009). She calls this model “a reverse development model” (Stojanovic 2009) because political modernization happened before economic and social modernization, which over time created a sharp contrast between state institutions (based on models taken from the West) and an immobile, poor agrarian society (Stojanovic 2009).

Even though from the beginning of the Serbian nation-building process there was a strong emphasis on modernization and Europeanization, there also existed a strong romantic notion that the heart of the nation was in its rural communities. This was understandable as the core of the population at the time was living in rural communities (Mitrović 2007). According to statistical data the “huge majority of the population lived in rural areas, accounting for 83.6% of the population according to the 1900 census and 84.9% in 1910” (Mitrović 2007, 56). The 19th century Serbian society did not have an established aristocracy or great land owners. There was a very thin layer of merchants, bureaucrats, physicians and teachers which made up the urban citizenship, less than 10% of the population (Mitrović 2007, 57). These factors contributed to the understanding of the emerging Serbian nation state as a “small nation” (Eley and Suny 1996) leaving it no other alternative than to build its national mythology on the basis of an imagined and desired rural community. This created a disconnect between the real and the imagined perception of the nation, which led to the perception of the rural population as both the problem of modernization and the desired romanticized image of Serbia’s uniqueness. This tension regarding the image of the peasant played a central role in Batut’s medical writing, which I will elaborate on in the following chapters.

Another important aspect of the building of the Serbian nation-state was the two Balkan wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1918). These wars were important

not only because they greatly decreased the size of the population but also because of the larger international political context they produced. Most notable are the tensions that arose between Serbia and the two great empires, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian, from which the Serbian nation was carved out.

For the Serbians themselves, wartime was the natural environment for breeding nationalist myths and dramatically enhancing their national self-image (Mitrović 2007, xi). The wars played a key role in establishing the myth of a small but fierce nation fighting against great external and imperialistic threats such as the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. These threats from abroad were not only represented as physical attacks on Serbian borders but were viewed as colonizing threats through the system of education, on which I will elaborate more in the next chapter.

In light of these tensions and potential external threats to the sovereignty of the nation-state, the Enlightenment laden role of science became crucial to the creation and defense of the nation. Science was seen as the ultimate justifier of Serbianness, a pathway for establishing the legitimacy of the existence of an independent Serbian nation. The role of scientific disciplines such as geography, ethnology and medicine was, through the sponsorship of the state, to produce empiric and scientific evidence of the existence of the romantic “Serbian national spirit”. This meant that their task was, as intellectuals, to create, establish and protect the imagined Serbian community. The ultimate goal of all these scientific endeavors was to create the myth of pre-social, pre-modern organic Serbian nation. This is ultimately a biopolitical project (Foucault 1987) that centered on the control of individual and collective bodies through eugenics. The goal of scientific practices, such as medicine, statistics, biometrics, demography, was to create the norm of a healthy population.

The body of the nation as a eugenic project

The nation state depended upon the bodies of its citizens, as the nation was seen as a community; every physical body was a representation of the nation. Medicine and doctors thus were seen as caretakers of health for not only individual bodies, but the entire population. “The individual body became a synecdoche for the collective national body depicted as an organism susceptible to biological debilities that attend birth, growth, aging and dying” (Turda 2010, 6). The role of the physician was primarily to educate and take care of the body of the nation. In order to establish their authority as medical experts, medical institutions aligned themselves with the power of the state and put themselves in direct opposition to previous forms of ‘medical’ authority, such as folk medicine, midwifery, herbal and other healers. They had to represent themselves as the only knowers of Truth (Foucault 1987), and present all other rival discourses as un-true.

Medicine is a practical science whose truth and success are of interest to the whole nation; by setting up a school, one is not favoring a small handful of individuals, but, through qualified intermediaries, one is helping the people feel the benefits of the truth (Foucault 1991, 70).

The medical expert should then be understood as a key player in the spreading of the “gospel of eugenics” (Kevles 2004) as they understood their role as caretakers the health and fitness of the entire nation. In that light, it is important to look at the specific usage of eugenics notions within the formation of concrete nation state.

The eugenics framework, even though it is seen as a large international movement, is also shaped by specific nation-building processes that depended on the specific socio-historical context. Even though the general eugenic idea of “breeding good stock” and

preventing the “breeding of bad stock” might have been universal the questions of what constituted “good/healthy” and “bad/unhealthy” differed greatly from nation to nation (Turda 2010).

In Southeastern Europe confirm eugenics was ideologically diversified as it was spread geographically to other parts of the world from Western Europe (Turda 2010). The history of eugenics cannot, therefore, be written without paying attention to the political discourses and the national cultures in which those specific eugenic ideas were formulated and defined (Turda 2010). Eugenics not only played a role in the generation of medicalized metaphors of social and national body, but also in the expansion of hygiene and health technologies (without which modern societies were allegedly destined to immerse into barbarity and backwardness) (Turda 2010). Eugenics discourses present a pathway to merge the modernizing project of nation building – through the establishment of modern institutions – with romantic notions of finding and preserving the national “spirit” – the imagined cultural and biological uniqueness of the nation’s population.

Unlike Western European and North American eugenics, which focused on the enhancement of health and reproduction of already existing middle class and the disappearance of the perceived threat to this desired national body in the guise of the poor and immigrant (Kevles 2004 , Mosse 1988), as will be clearer from the analysis of primary sources in the following chapters, the desired and contested groups in the case of Serbia were the rural population. This can be explained through the need for eugenic thought to merge of the romantic nationalism which saw the nation’s cultural core in the idealized rural population and the processes of modernization that strived to create modern, European nation-states and modern European citizens out of the same rural population.

The sanitized versions of local rural life, the ideal peasant village as a repository of specific national values and traditions were not only an essential component of the new health policies but incorporated in the eugenics discourses (Promitzer, Trubeta and Turda 2011, 30).

Even though the focus on rural life in Southeastern Europe has been recognized in other works, this issue was not treated more specifically. For these reasons a focus on Milan Jovanović Batut (1847-1940) can provide the possibility to trace the early formation of eugenic thought in Serbia (before it merged into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians), and its role in the nation-building project.

Batut became the leading force of the hygiene movement in Serbia, as well as the chief organizer of health services in Montenegro (Dugac 2011, 197). He was not only keeping up with modern public health developments across Europe but was also the first to link the problems of micro-organism, lack of education and poverty with the national organization of health (Dugac 2011, 197). He was able to do these thanks to his government-sponsored study trips to Germany where he worked with Robert Koch and France where he worked with Louis Pasteur. These study trips and collaborations point to the transnational character of scientific eugenic thought and its rapid spreading across the European continent. Aside from this the collaboration also helped him gain more political influence within Serbia.

In 1892, Batut became dean of the Belgrade Great School, and he also played a crucial role in the establishment of the University of Belgrade and the university's faculty of medicine after the First World War. He was the first professor of hygiene and the first dean of the medical faculty at the University of Belgrade, as well as the founder and editor of several popular medical magazines in the country. Batut himself states that he is an admirer of the works of other eugenicists, such as Francis Galton. In one speech Batut gave, he stated that "science is international, but each scientist has to be a nationalist, who in each of his scientific

works is led by the love of his nation from which he has come and to whom he owes his strength”. For Batut eugenics was an international science and it presented itself as a good framework for viewing the nation as a biological entity.

Human society is nothing more than a product of organic evolution...Even notable historical eras are nothing more than the end product of biological law (Jovanovic-Batut 1919).

International eugenics discourse, as an emblematic representation of modernity was used by Batut to establish the credibility and expertise of medicine as a scientific project. Through aligning himself with other western scientists, Batut assured his status as part of the intellectual elite. As part of the intellectual elite he played a key role in the imagining of the nation in the initial phases of nation building (Gellner 1998). In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the process of demarcation that was necessary for the establishment of medical practitioners as modern scientists and the establishment of modern educational institutions, more specifically the establishment of the University.

Chapter II: Establishing the scientific expert and scientific institutions

This chapter is based on two publications: “*Nadrilekari: kako varaju, globe i zatiru narod. Neobaveštenom i lakovernom narodu za pouku od M.Jovanović Batuta*” [Pseudo-doctors: how they deceive, rob and destroy the nation. For the uninformed and gullible people as a lesson from Jovanović Batut] and “*Je li za Srbiju Universitet preka potreba?*” [Is a University a necessity for Serbia?]. Both books were published at the beginning of the 20th century. From a close reading of these publications, I will show how during the first phase of nation building a process of demarcation occurred. This boundary making project happened in order to establish the medical practitioner as an expert and professional of science and medicine (as a part of institutional project). This demarcation project was central to the cultural construction of a community (Anderson 2006), the Serbian nation-state, which needed to be imagined as different from its Ottoman past and different from its Western neighbors as well.

The two books will be examined separately as the first book, dealing with the issue of pseudo-medicine, presents an example of how through the creation of the internal Other (Todorova 1997), the backward peasant who trusts wisewomen, quacks and imams and not the rational men of medical science. The close reading deals more with the tensions and dilemmas of the ideology of romantic nationalism as it centers around an imagined ideal, “sanitized” rural population, becoming a problem when the reality does not meet to its ideal. The second book addresses the need for the establishment of higher education institutions in Serbia and presents an example of the modernist project of nation building, focusing on the establishment of national intellectual elite.

Educating the backward peasant – creating a medical expert

Margret Peling writes about the need of mapping out what was, in a given historical context, considered as unofficial medicine in order to better understand against what official medicine, as its opposition is being made (Peling 1997). With the birth of the nation state and its new power regime (Foucault 1987), it was important to define official medicine against unofficial medicine. As Peling (1997) points out, this process of demarcation was done in collaboration with the state.

In most Western countries, convincing definitions of official medicine, and thereby unofficial medicine, were ultimately produced not by medical corporations but by the State. Official medicine emerges particularly clearly whenever a growing and healthy population is seen to be a national asset (Peling 1997, 276).

With the industrialization and the rise of capitalism, value of life, especially a healthy workforce, increased. In order to assure an economically and politically stable state, it was important to ensure the health of the individual bodies of the state's citizens. This meant that medicine had to become institutionalized, state controlled and defined. A border had to be drawn between what was to be understood as official medical discourse, the medical Truth (Foucault 1987) and what was not.

The late 18th and the 19th century are known as the eras of rational thought and the biologization of life. It is in this period that we can trace the shift from the supernatural explanations to the calling for the scientification and naturalization of the Western world view. This means that the focus is shifting from divine explanations of events to “rational” explanations grounded in the belief that every aspect of life is based on nature and the laws of

nature. Nature becomes something that must be understood in order to understand our bodies. In this sense, the physicians assert their legitimacy as the holders of knowledge of the way nature and the body functions (Stolberg 2011). The physician is thus seen as an intermediary between the individual and the collective body of the nation (Foucault 1987). It is from nature, seen as an objective and unchanging truth, that the 19th century physician draws his legitimacy (Vidal 2004). Batut ascribed to this an understanding of life. This can be seen very clearly with his definition of what constitutes a disease.

[It] is a plain and natural occurrence, nothing more than a disorder in our body
... Diseases do not come from witches, vampires, curses, spells or other ghosts
and superstitions. None of those exist, and a reasonable man will not believe in
them or fear them (Jovanović-Batut 1892)

Batut's book on pseudo-doctors consists of a series of small narrations, monologues, dialogues, quotes and examples of ads in newspapers given by quacks and charlatans. These stories can be understood as a type of "medico-moral strategy" (Vidal 2004, 268) that has been used in these types of publications to invoke a moral judgment and repulsion of the reader towards the represented patients and reinforce the values and norms that distinguish accepted from unaccepted behavior. In this case, Batut wanted the citizens to comply with the norm that positions values of Western medical science as the only possible pathway for achieving health. In order to make his point Batut presents stories, that usually included fatal endings of people who did not put their faith in science and chose to seek help from practitioners of folk medicine such as witch doctors, wisewomen and other pseudo-doctors.

Our people do not seek out doctors right away, nor do they heed his advice. So
how can we help them?!... Oh, my friend how naïve you are! When you should
have gone to the doctor you saw a priest and now when you need a priest you
come to the doctor! (Jovanović Batut 1900)

Batut is writing this book and voicing his concerns about the disbelief in the official medical practice at the time of the formation the nation state and its boundaries. Through this we can see that Pelling's (1997) argument about the rise of official medicine coming from the state is valid, as this book on pseudo-doctors was financed and published by the Ministry for Health of the Kingdom. Despite of the fact Batut was seen as a medical expert by the governmental officials, the majority of the population, being rural and illiterate, did not subscribe to the professional authority of medicine as quickly as the state would have desired. It is in this example of establishing the scientific profession of medicine that there is a visible disconnect between top-down government enforced modernization and its slow effect on the general population (Stojanovic 2009).

The general Serbian population, living in mostly rural areas had little trust in this new Truth of science. The major difference between this new, national and official medicine and the traditional, folk and Ottoman medicine is that the former is focused on the body itself and not the soul-body connection of that is visible in the latter. Medicine did not escape suspicion in rural communities because it appeared to give priority to the body rather than the soul (Peling 1997, 226). This approach to medicine as a searching for the physical disease of the body was seen as problematic for the largely rural population of Serbia. As Pelling (1997) points out in most Western European nations at the time, rural areas were neglected areas where these alternatives to official medicine drew strength from the unresolved religious and political tensions that stemmed from previous periods (Peling 1997).

Given that the majority of the population in Serbia (over 80%) at the time was living in rural areas, we can conclude that the unresolved political and religious tensions were not confined to pockets of the nation but to the entire population. Through a close reading of Batut's critique of unofficial medicine, we can see clearly that unresolved questions lingered from the period of the Ottoman era. From the medico-moral stories that Batut shares in his

book, a central theme is present in the lack of education and rational thought amongst the rural population in Serbia. This lack of “adequate” knowledge is blamed on the dark ages of the Ottoman Empire.

Peasant, my sad brother, when you fall ill you immediately think to yourself
that someone put a spell on you, cursed you, you step on something...and you
run to these quacks, witches and imams and you pay for your gullibility
(Jovanović Batut 1900).

The peasants are presented as uneducated and naïve, and thus unable to understand medical progress due to the centuries spend under the Ottoman yolk. In this sense, Batut is using the orientalist discourse to distinguish his modern view on medicine from the one used in rural areas of Serbia. This discourse then creates a sharp demarcation between what is understood as progress – Western modern medical science - and backwardness of medical practices that stem from the Ottoman era.

Our people are very gullible. Amongst pseudo-doctors, most of them are
wisewomen who inherited their skills from the Turkish times, when there were
no doctors in villages (Jovanović Batut 1900)

This issue of wisewomen is particularly interesting because it draws attention to the gender demarcations of official medicine, as a gentlemanly practice, a realm of educated men. The necessity to demarcate official medicine from women healers was due to the paradoxical connections of health care to child care which was considered the domain of women (Peling 1997). In this case, the Ottoman healing heritage that rested on spirituality and femininity was in opposition to the rationality and biology that were seen as trademarks of a modern nation. In order to resolve this paradox, it was necessary to establish that the domain of health is not a private issue of the individual but a matter of the state.

What is made clear is the notion of disease and dying is not the will of God, as explained by the peasants in Batut's stories; it is a matter of the nation because one death that could have been prevented by official medicine means a loss to the nation as a whole. For these reason, Batut's writing against pseudo-doctors can be read as both a way of demarcating the official medical practice, but also as a way of creating desired citizens out of the rural population of Serbia by delineating clearly who its Others are.

The fact that the majority of the Serbian population is not complying with the state associated intellectuals, such as Batut, meant they were seen as problematic because it corroded their vision of how the Serbian nation should be built. This presents itself as a specific problem in Serbia's case as it has already been labeled as backward and lagging behind by other Western European nations. The problem that arises is that Serbia, being a small nation, did not have a stable pre-existing aristocracy or middle class to compare to its "inadequate" rural population. It was this population that was imagined to be the "core" of the Serbian nation and as such, it had to be re-imagined. In order to do so, it was necessary to link its backwardness to the Ottoman era and emphasize that it was not something inherent to the population itself.

In the peasant the best biotic qualities of our nation can be found. They are still fresh and untainted and are the best basis for our social organism (Jovanović Batut 1918)⁵.

The Serbian peasantry thus must be reimagined to fit within the characteristics ascribed to it by the newly formed Serbian elite. As seen from the quote above, Batut's views of the rural population of Serbia is influenced by the romantic nationalist notions coupled with a medico-biological discourse. The rural population is the "heart" of the Serbian national

⁵ This quote is not from his book on pseudo-doctors but from another publication dealing with the issues of single men in Serbia. This book will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter IV

body and it has because of its Ottoman past been neglected and underdeveloped. Batut thus puts himself and official medicine in direct opposition to the religious doctrines of Islam and Orthodox Christianity and to the authority of wisewomen in the villages, in order to demonstrate show that there is a need for changing and modernizing the peasantry. The Enlightenment was to provide the framework for the change in the existing identity politics of the peasants. The goal was to transform the uneducated, irrational peasantry to an educated, rational national body. Towards the end of his book Batut gives the following advice:

If you are literate, and literate you must be, and if you are healthy as well, and in sound mind, study this book. If you get sick, you will know how to act and what to avoid. If some illness befalls your friends, neighbors, cousins, bring them this book, and instead of advice tell them See this helped me (Jovanović Batut 1900)

This is where the merger of enlightenment and romantic discourses of the nation are visible. Batut does not want to create new middle class elite, but create a new “sanitized” rural population that, through the establishment of modern institutional frameworks, would become progressive and carry out the political modernizing project envisioned by the state rather than be viewed simply as “backwards” people.

Establishing a Serbian university – creating national intellectuals

The question of the establishment of the University in Belgrade, which history has been described in the previous chapter, is a central example for this process. Two years before the creation of the first Serbian university in Belgrade in 1905, Batut published a book that asked the question whether Serbia needed a university at all (Jovanović Batut 1903). At this time, he was a professor at the Great School of Belgrade, which was receiving more and more students each year and hosting visited public lectures. His answer to this question is that of course positive, Serbia needs a university in order to compete and be equal with other European nations and for the nation's survival in general.

Culture and education are from the ancient times a mighty weapon for survival and progress of an individual, entire tribes and entire nations. Then how is it that Serbia is the only European nation without a University? Even the Turks have one before us (Jovanović Batut 1903).

The issue of higher education becomes a demarcation necessary to establish Serbia not only as a modern European nation state, “at the heart of Europe and at the crossroad of many currents” (Jovanović Batut 1903), but more importantly as an independent one, different from other European nations. This discourse of Europeaness emerged quite prominently during the Enlightenment as a replacement to the previous domination of Christendom (Canning 2006). This explains why the focus is put on education and science as markers of European values and why Batut places great emphasis in his call for a national university on the idea that Serbia is a European nation. This places the notion of Europeaness in a paradoxical position in Serbia, which was associated with Eastern European and treated as an internal Other within Europe. This was again connected with the long rule of the Ottoman Empire in this region and its legacy of “backwardness” that is left behind. Thus, the emphasis on the Europeaness of the

Serbian nation and the call for a university and institutionalized education system was a way of delineating Serbia from its Ottoman past and protecting it from potential orientalization and colonization from Western Empires, most notably the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In this context the problem with the intellectual elite being formed outside the boundaries of the nation state is linked to the fear of (re)colonization of the newly formed nation and its submission to the larger surrounding empires, such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the same time, the other problem that arises from the fear of lagging behind the same nations is the potential colonial threats. Batut sees the only way to solidify Serbian independence is through the creation of its own, local, intellectual elite. The goal of the creation of the Serbian nation state was not only to separate Serbia from the Ottoman past, but in the same process create a sharp distinction from Western Empires as well. The mechanisms for demarcation from other European nation states rested on the notion of a homogenous national state, which was based on the ideas of a shared language, culture and a shared faith (Orthodox Christianity). These essential concepts were, in Batut's view, in potential danger from the West. A good example of Batut's fears of a potential encroachment on Serbian borders was the intellectual colonization of a University in Szeged, a border city with South of Serbia:

Szeged, a university there is like an army brigade that enters deeper and deeper into other nation's interest. Without any blood shed without any battles fought or at least in preparation for battle they already achieve victory (Jovanović Batut 1903).

War rhetoric is prominently featured in this publication by Batut, in reference to establishing the university, with the central focus of education being the creation of a modern and independent nation state. This type of rhetoric is not surprising given that in that period Serbia had just gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire, and there was severe

political pressure from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the North. A couple of years after the founding of the University, in 1912, Serbia would indeed go to war with the Ottoman Empire in order to physically secure its borders. Prior to the actual warfare, a war was already being waged on the intellectual front. There was an expressed desire from state authorities, such as Batut to convert the rural Serbian population from illiterate, pseudo-doctor trusting peasants to an educated middle class population. The creation of a national university was seen as the proper way to achieve this goal.

We must found our own schools otherwise our youth will bring from foreign lands different notions – that could be dangerous for our people. We should only send adult, mature men to foreign lands, not our children. A true intermediary between us and other nations should be a national center for Education and Science – a national University – a biological and spiritual birth mother not some foreign stepmother (Jovanović Batut 1903)

The usage of war terminology in a discussion about education stresses the need for instilling the higher education and the formation of Serbian national institutions. This means separating, once and for all, the Serbian nation from its backward Ottoman past, made visible in his attack on pseudo-medicine. It also meant creating a strong border with other European nations through the establishment of a modern national education system. This question of establishing borders and protection of the nation, not just territorially but through the protection and care of individual body's health, will be addressed in the following chapter as well.

Chapter III: Tuberculosis as a social and wartime disease

This chapter has two aims. The first is to show how Batut's writing and understanding about tuberculosis (TB) was influenced by the major shifts in the understanding of this disease in the late nineteenth century, due to Robert Koch's discovery of the tubercle bacilli in 1882. Secondly, through a close reading of his books that address TB, I will show that Batut's views on the causes and treatments of TB, were very much situated within a eugenics framework and thereby linked with the desire for the creation of a new modern nation-state. In order to establish these links, I will first present a short overview of the medicalization of tuberculosis in the western framework, relying mostly on the works of Katharine Ott and her study of tuberculosis in the turn of the century United States.

The Western European and North American Framework

*“Consumption was a disease not just of the body,
but also of mind and spirit” (Ott 1997, 1)*

“Consumption”, “phthisis”, “the white plague”, “tuberculosis” are all names ascribed to this disease in various points in time. The term “consumption” itself tells a lot about the how this disease was believed to affect the human body – it consumed the body, made it frail and sensitive. Consumption was the catchall term for any and all chronic wasting diseases, usually designated emaciation with pulmonary symptoms (Ott 1997, 13).

[A]lthough there is paleontological and textual evidence of tuberculosis early in human history; it is emphatically a disease of the 19th century, with social and

medical symptoms that typify cultures in the midst of industrialization (Dubois and Dubois 1992, 54)

At the beginning of the 19th century consumption was seen as the emblem of aristocracy and the disease of civilization, which meant that it was seen as a marker of individuality and class; a sign of privilege; in the meaning that the elite has the leisure time to spend that the rural and the working class do not. Before 1882 in most of Europe and North America it was believed that consumption was a hereditary disease. This notion was put forth by Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather, and others who saw tuberculosis or consumption as a disease to which one could be predisposed (Wilson 2002, 114) which if not treated could be passed down from one generation to another. Darwin thought that the only way to deal with the disease was by "altering one's physical constitution [that] could enhance resistance to disease" (Wilson 2002, 115). This meant that the notion of heredity was fluid and changeable and that there was a "consumptive type".

This "consumptive type" was even seen as desirable, as a marker of higher class and artistic inclinations, a disease of sensitive young artists (Sontag 1990). Tuberculosis in the mid-nineteenth century was romanticized and considered a mark of aristocracy, the desired beauty standard for both women and men of the upper classes. It was seen as an effect of urban living and a price to pay for civilization. It was understood as a disease of passion, and surfaced if the person experienced too much passion (Sontag 1990, 21). Both the consumptive patient and the treatment were highly romanticized in these narratives.

The TB sufferer was a dropout, a wanderer in endless search for the healthy place. TB became a reason for exile, for a life that was mainly traveling... There were special places thought to be good for TB - all those landscapes were themselves successfully romanticized (Sontag 1990, 33)

These ‘romanticized’ landscapes varied from desserts, to mountains, to beaches. In the middle of the nineteenth century, these places started to open sanitariums, healing places for tuberculosis, places where the sick could escape their sedentary lives. This notion of tuberculosis changed in the late nineteenth century, especially after an 1882 publication of German physician Robert Koch.

Koch, one of the founding fathers of bacteriology, is credited with the discovery of the tubercle bacilli, which shifted the previous understanding of this disease as hereditary to its current view as a bacterial disease. This meant that the perception of disease as an uncertainty in nature shifted to a molecular certainty – diseases were transmittable by germs. Koch’s discovery launched a whole new approach to understanding tuberculosis in the Western Europe and North America – germ theory – and along with it a whole new set of metaphors and meanings ascribed to the disease.

The greatest influence of germ theory on tuberculosis practice was that it raised broader questions about the nature of medicine and the proper place of instruments of precision. Germ theory and its repercussions were situated in a hidden microscopic world that was alluring both to physicians and to the mass public (Ott 1997, 54).

Before the Koch’s discovery and the flourishing of microbiology, only way the physician could tell if the patient suffered from consumption was through visible signs on the molar level, on the body of the patient. Koch’s discovery “directed attention to the microscopic world as a site of influential yet invisible activity and gave that world concrete form” (Ott 1997, 62). Medical books about tuberculosis, published towards the turn of the century, in addition to the usual images and photographs of patients suffering from this disease. For the first time there were also images of microscopic bacteria of the disease. Through the usage of the photograph, the once catch-all term consumption became fixed and

alienated from what was perceived as the natural human body. The bacillus, as seen through a microscope, provided an image of a peculiar and disembodied entity, not obviously related to a human being (Ott 1997, 64).

The romantic notions of consumption were replaced with new metaphors, ones of war, of the bodies being attacked from foreign enemies. The military metaphor in medicine first came into wide use in the 1880s with the identification of bacteria as agents of disease. Bacteria were said to ‘invade’ or ‘infiltrate’ the body (Sontag 1990, 66). Tuberculosis, towards the end of the 19th century became associated with poverty, and in the case of Great Britain and the United States of America, with the fear of immigrants. “Native-born Caucasians saw African-Americans and Eastern European immigrants as potential threats or ‘contaminants’ to Anglo-Saxon stability” (Ott 1997, 100). In the 1890s, TB became the primary site of meaning for the middle class white psyche as it objectified a racial and ethnic Other (Ott 1997, 101).

Along with the switch from hereditary to contagious, tuberculosis also switched from an internal disease to something external, which easily linked the disease with the notion of Other. The reason behind this shift from a romantic version of TB to an external threat can also be seen in the fact that the desired image of both masculinity and femininity changed in the turn of the century; both women and men of the rising middle class had to be active. Passivity and frailness, markers of the aristocracy, were frowned upon in the new bourgeoisie aesthetic ideals.

Late 19th century middle class men found the source of their masculine identity in their action - their ability to work with regularity and stamina, to transact business and provide for themselves and others. TB emasculated men by taking away their ability to act. (Ott 1997, 76)

In the following two chapters, I shall elaborate more on the turn of the century changing notions of masculinity and femininity how they were represented in the medical discourse. I will also discuss how these notions connected with the representation of desired images of healthy citizens. Here, I wish to highlight that the change of the masculine and feminine ideals from the romanticized fragility to active stamina that went hand in hand with the representation of disease. With the understanding that tuberculosis was a disease that one could “catch” due to poor living conditions (dirt and dust), a sharp distinction between rationality and irrationality emerged. It was assumed that if you got tuberculosis, it was because you did not take care of yourself, your house was not clean, you shared living space with too many people, you were not middle class, and you were poor.

Having tuberculosis was no longer just the concern of the patient and his doctor; it became the concern of the entire nation. By the end of the 19th century, individual beauty came to gain significance as an indicator of healthiness of the race (Sontag 1990, 54). It is through this change that we can trace the linking of tuberculosis with eugenics. Once it was “the physician who waged *bellum contra morbum* - the war against disease - now it was the whole society” (Sontag 1990, 98). Eugenics propagated social order; the procreation of the healthy and desired “good stock” and the eradication of the unhealthy and undesired “degeneracy”. It is within the eugenics framework that we can better understand the militant metaphors associated with TB in the Serbian case study.

The case Serbian case study: Jovanović Batut's writing on tuberculosis

In this section, I shall do a close reading of two of Jovanović Batut's publications on tuberculosis in order to show how his understandings of the disease fit and do not fit within this larger western framework elaborated above. The first book that will be examined is "*Jektika i brak*" [Tuberculosis and Marriage], which was published in 1903, and the second will be the book published in 1912, simply called "*Jektika*" [Tuberculosis]. I shall be focusing primarily on the language style he uses and situating these texts in their historical context in order to highlight two aspects. The first is that his work was greatly influenced by the works of Koch and his understandings of tuberculosis as a disease. Batut had studied and worked with Koch during his specialization in Germany in the late nineteenth century, and it is this direct collaboration that shaped Batut's views on medicine and disease prevention. Secondly, I will draw attention to the specific historical context of his writing. Batut is writing at the time when Serbia was gaining its independence from the Ottoman Empire and entering the Balkan Wars that would ensure the stability of the Kingdom's borders. These events played a key role not only in the political reshaping of the region, but also in the establishment of the Serbian nation state.

Germ theory and the consumptive type

Batut became interested in the study of tuberculosis due to his own struggles with this disease. In fact, this is the only disease to which he has devoted entire books. What is clear is that his general approach to disease is focused on not just the individual patient, but the entire population. On the book covers themselves it clearly reads "*Doctor Milan Jovanović Batut for the People*" and even the series printed in Novi Sad was entitled "*Books for the People*". On

the same topic of tuberculosis, Batut has also written at length in his periodical “Zdravlje” [Health].

As was the case in most of Europe before 1882, Batut also points out that “*jektika*” was used as a catch all term for most all pulmonary diseases. He argues that the term “*jektika*” itself is not a Serbian vernacular term and that it comes from a transcription of the Latin term of tuberculosis “*febris hectitca*”. This term was frequently used by the people, along with words such as “*sušica*” ‘[dryness], he even states that at the time he was writing it the noun “*tuberkuloza*” [tuberculosis] had also entered the vernacular (Jovanovic Batut 1912). The key term used, by Batut in both books, to describe tuberculosis is “*klica*” [germs]. Throughout the book “*Jektika*” (Jovanovic Batut 1912), he cites the findings of Robert Koch to build his understanding of the tuberculosis germ.

For a long time doctors did not know where tuberculosis came from. At first they thought it was a cold, then that it was due to an accident or troubled life, to debauchery, dark and damp apartments, too much passion, etc. – but all this was pure speculation. As of recently, it is proven that tuberculosis is caused by a contagious “*klica*” (bacil, microbe) or a specific kind – tuberculosis is an infectious disease. (Jovanovic Batut, *Jektika* (*Susica-tuberkuloza*). Kako postaje, kako se siri, kako se suzbija i leci 1912, 10-11)

He later directly cites the discoveries of Robert Koch, giving detailed explanations of his findings and also uses Koch’s images of the tubercle bacilli in the microscope. For Batut, just like Western European and North American physicians of the late 19th century, the tuberculosis germs are everywhere and in everything. He follows his contemporaries in understanding that tuberculosis is not a disease one inherits, but catches. For this reason he openly warns and gives hygienic advice on how to prevent the germs from spreading, such as regularly airing bedrooms, washing the sheets and linens and other general hygienic advice

Where Batut parts ways with his colleague Koch, is that he still considers marriage with a tuberculosis-infected individual to be dysgenic which could gravely endanger the health of the following generations. He advises that both women and men, if afflicted by tuberculosis, should not marry, or at least should wait two years after the last symptom of the disease occurs before committing to marriage or, as he puts in one example, “*their children will become orphans as both mother and father will surely die*” (Jovanović Batut 1903). Even though he acknowledges that tuberculosis is not hereditary, he still claims that it can be passed down to one’s offspring, not through “*blood, but through mothers milk*” (Jovanovic Batut 1903), through exposure of the child to the germ of tuberculosis in the womb.

Even if children of a tubercular parent do not inherit the tuberculosis germ itself, they do not leave the womb unscathed, which is only natural. From inception they are poisoned by the tubercular blood of their parent. So how could this not damage their constitution and their strength?! That is why children of a tubercular parent are usually underdeveloped, gentle, skinny, and translucent, with thin fingers and gangly legs. (Jovanovic Batut 1912, 19)

Batut, in this paragraph, is describing what other authors have called the “consumptive type”: skinny, malnourished, and frail. He does not state that the disease itself will be passed on; he talks about “predisposition”, “inherent susceptibility” to tuberculosis (Jovanovic Batut 1912). What he presents is a merger of the two understandings of tuberculosis, before and after Koch’s discovery. The major difference is that he does not romanticize the illness; on the contrary through the representation of the sickly, TB-prone individual he creates a sharp divide between the healthy and desired citizens, and the unhealthy “weaklings”, who because of their proneness to TB should not be allowed to marry and procreate. This is a clear eugenic discourse because he is clearly determining which

groups of people should reproduce, and who should not in order to maintain the health of the Serbian nation.

I will discuss at greater length Batut's perceptions of male and female patient/citizens, here, I will note that he does make a distinction between men and women when it comes to marriage and tuberculosis. He claims that for tubercular men, it might be recommendable to marry because "this will help them settle down", and would lead to a more clean and ordered life than of a single man (Jovanovic Batut 1903)). On the other hand, he claims that for tubercular women who he considered to be too young and weak, marriage would only worsen their health because of all their domestic, motherly and wifely duties that they would have to fulfill upon marriage.

A girl usually only in marital union commences her sexual life, and the ramifications of that life are far greater on women than on men. Only a fully, well developed and healthy female body can cope with this life. Too young, frail, sickly women, especially pale ones and anemic, scrofulous and tuberculosis prone, or of tubercular descent will have a hard time coping with the tasks of their nature (Jovanovic Batut 1903).

In the second book "*Jektika*", published in 1912, he reiterates his sentiments on tuberculosis and marriage by giving clear descriptions of the offspring of such a marriage as weak and unhealthy. In this book, he also presents images, photographs of these predisposed offspring. These images seek to represent the sick as ugly and unhealthy, as undesired citizens that should not have been born in the first place because their heritage of the disease is visible and marked on their bodies, making their bodies undesirable.

What is the worst is that [tuberculosis] leaves its victims scared, maimed and crippled and then they are no good to God or men (Jovanovic Batut 1912).

Thus, if you were a healthy female or a male citizen, you should live a hygienic and orderly life, whereas if you are already prone to tuberculosis you should be ostracized from the wider population so that you would not reproduce unhealthy members that would not belong to the Serbian nation.

The idealized body types are paralleled by ideal ‘moral’ types, by ‘good citizens’.

The beautiful citizen is a good citizen; the healthy citizen is a good citizen. And citizenship in this context is a reflection of the body. The good citizen cannot be ugly and there cannot be infected by, or infect, members of society with dangerous illnesses, illnesses that would be marked on their physiognomies” (Gilman 1995, 66)

It is clear that Batut is following a eugenics framework similar to the one outlined above; only those of “healthy” stock should be allowed to procreate. Disease is thus perceived as a threat not just to the individual body, but also to the entire family and ultimately the entire nation. For this reason, he calls tuberculosis a “cowardly disease” and a dangerous “enemy to the Serbian people and the happiness of families” (Jovanovic Batut 1912). The rhetoric in his second book resembles a war and combat rhetoric, urging his readership to be heroes in the face of this cowardly disease. In the last chapter of the second book he argues that the “fight” cannot and should not be fought alone by the patient and his family, because “tuberculosis is a social disease and requires unity” (Jovanovic Batut 1912).

To strengthen his argument, Batut uses statistics and photography as evidence of the hazards of tuberculosis. With the use of statistical data and images, he aims to paint a scientific picture of the “place” Serbia is in comparison to other more “advanced” Western societies (so he quotes data on London, New York, Berlin and Vienna) in order to highlight his claim that tuberculosis is even more dangerous for “small nations such as Serbia” (Jovanovic Batut 1912). He also uses statistics from other nations to highlight his claim that

they, unlike Serbia, are unified in their “fight” against tuberculosis, and that Serbia is lagging behind.

We have just begun to deal with this issue. Up till now it was *each man for himself*⁶, everyone was fighting on their own, and as best they knew how. That is why the disease spread. It is high time we unite and with joint forces strike the enemy down (Jovanovic Batut 1912)

In this “battle”, Batut argues that the greatest responsibility is on the state, the medical specialist, the women (as they are the keepers of the households) and each and every Serb (Jovanovic Batut 1912). Interestingly he devotes an entire page to describe the need for medical specialist not to trust “charlatans, witch-doctors and other quacks” (Jovanovic Batut 1912, 64). To this end, Batut argues the financial aid of the State is crucial because without it the state is in danger.

The health of the citizen is the pillar of the State. Without it there is no progress. That is why it is the key assignment of the state to take care of the health of its citizens. (Jovanovic Batut 1912)

At the institutional level, tuberculosis was one of the first diseases to come under control and definition by professional manager-bureaucrats (Ott 1997), meaning that the policing and tracking of the health of each citizen became an important task for the state. Modern disease metaphors specify the ideal of societies of well-being, analogized to physical health (Sontag 1990). As the nation was seen as a community, the physical body was a representation of the nation – the body of the nation. It was thus important to differentiate between the desired body and the undesired one, and this process of demarcation cannot be understood without referring to the wider historical context – the Balkan Wars.

⁶Original emphasis

Tuberculosis and the Balkans

The subtext for the fighting the “germ of tuberculosis” then is a call for a unified fight of the emerging Balkan nations against the Ottoman Empire. Batut talks about the tuberculosis germ not just as a problem of the individual patient but a problem of the entire society. The germ is the true enemy and tuberculosis is the disease that threatens society. In order to stop this disease from eradicating the nation, this new and small *nation* must unite in order to achieve progress and stability. Unlike the usage of the war rhetoric in North America and Western Europe, where the issue was tied to immigration, here in the case of Serbia the issue was emancipation and education. Thus, it can be stated that the “evil” and “cowardly” enemy of tuberculosis is a medical, a substitute for the need to be prepared against the “real” enemy: the Turks and other Balkan nations threatening to seize parts of Serbian newly won territories. This is as well as the weaklings in Serbia’s own ranks who do not subscribe to the modernizing, hygienic way of life that scientists, like Batut, envision for the nation

The second thing that can be inferred from this chapter is the clear demarcation of what constitutes a medical, scientific approach to tuberculosis— statistical and photographic evidence and western education being central to the distinction between the physician specialist and the “charlatan’s and quacks” that naïve peasants trust more than physicians⁷. Throughout the book Batut draws a sharp line between his “scientific” western thought (with the use of microscopes, statistics and other tools of measurement), and folk tales and witch-doctors of rural Serbia.

Our peasant knows little on this issue [tuberculosis]. He [the peasant] is misinformed and superstitious; he is grave error and is easily led astray. (Jovanovic Batut 1912).

⁷ As discussed in the previous chapter.

The issue of backwardness that I wrote about in the previous chapter links with the rural nature of Serbia's population. The fact that Batut has a paradoxical relation with rural Serbia that is worth exploring here. Batut's views on tuberculosis align with the wider understanding that this is a disease of the industrial era, the era of urbanization, as he calls the occupations related to industry as the ones most at risk. This is confirmed in several parts of his books, especially by stating statistics that confirm that the largest rate of tuberculosis was documented in the capital – Belgrade. The problems with the capital were related to its slow urbanization and to the remains of its Ottoman past. These problems were mostly related to complaints about botched urbanization of the streets, lack of infrastructure and other related issues⁸. He calls for the need of fresh air and sun, the typical remedies for TB at the time. Tuberculosis understood as a disease of the poor had a different meaning in the Serbian context, given that the majority of the population was both rural and poor. Batut saw as the main problem superstition and backwardness because, in his opinion, expensive foreign sanatoriums would not heal the Serbian sick.

Big sanatoriums are expensive and rare institutions. They are far away from the patient's homeland; it is an ordeal to reach them and an even greater one to stay in them for a year. The diseased is in a foreign world, away from his home, his family, his jobs and these aren't calming. Serbs don't have sanatoriums of their own. Our rich can seek remedy elsewhere but that seldom helps. They grow bored of the foreign land; they do not speak the language – dislike the food, yearn for home and leave treatments ahead of time. And the people and the poor suffer and die at home. It does not have to be like this, Serbia is full with wonderful landscapes that are good for our health and our

⁸ In her book "Cobble and Asphalt: Urbanization and Europeanization of Belgrade from 1890 until 1914", Dubravka Stojanović talks about the different views the citizens had on the dirty Ottoman cobble streets and the need for clean European asphalt.

tourism. Our peasant has a healing place right in his porch! (Jovanovic Batut 1912)

In his last chapter Batut's addresses the state itself, as he calls for more financial and structural support for the establishment of these new medical/scientific institutions that would enable the rural population to become enlightened and educated on the modern and scientific nature of official medicine. This education would as a consequence, ideally, have the "sanitization of the rural ideal" (Promitzer, Trubeta and Turda 2011) and produce the desired merger between modernist and romantic notions of the nation body.

For Batut science is progress, especially western medicine and Serbia needs to "catch-up" in order to protect the pillar of the nation – the health of the citizen. The disease itself is not hereditary but if left uncured it can pass on from mother to child. For this reason, it can be concluded that his approach to the curing of tuberculosis is shaped from a eugenics framework. This made clear that his main goal was, through suitable marriage and hygiene of each individual citizen, to attain the health of the entire nation. He views both the disease itself and its remedy as grounded well within the reach of medical expertise, the possibility of understanding and changing nature, the possibility of progress. This question of progress and stability of the health of each citizen throughout the generations is crucial to the larger goal, which is creating and presenting Serbia, a newly independent country, as firmly situated within the Western framework. In the following chapter, the issue of the desired body of the citizens and its role in nation building is explored through a gender lens.

Chapter IV: Reproducing the national body

This chapter will focus on the questions relating to the eugenic notions of sexuality, marriage and children. The question of gender was central to the eugenics movement, in general, as it called for a new understanding of the roles of women and men in society (Kline 2001, 5). These roles were presented as inherently and natural different from one another, but both were central to the construction of the nation (McClintock 1993, Mosse 1988). The nation was thus imagined as a biological entity, which meant that each individual citizen was presented as an organic component of this larger entity. In this sense, the nation was presented as a natural extension of the family, which is why the question of properly doing womanhood and manhood became central in the state's discussions of how the nations should look (Yuval-Davis 1997, Mosse 1988). This means that the nation is imagined not just as a community (Anderson 2006) but as a community with a specific hierarchy and structure, as patriarchal family (Mosse 1988). At the core of eugenics is therefore not just the question of procreation of "good stock", but the argument that this procreation needs to occur within the framework of stable marriage and family, which is seen as the essential component of modern progress and civilization (Kline 2001).

I will show how Batut's thoughts concerning issues of procreation, sexuality and gender roles were in line with the group of eugenicists who advocated what Kevles calls mainstream, conservative eugenics (Kevles 2004). According to Kevles, these particular eugenicists were anti-feminist, anti-birth control and depicted the ultimate role of any women as a mother, not just of her children, but of the entire nation (Kevles 2004). In sense the role of women was seen as the physical and symbolic reproducers of nation (Yuval-Davis 1997).

In this chapter I will look more closely at the representation of male and female bodies in Batut's writing in order to have a clearer sense of what particular types of bodies were seen as desirable, which means subscribing to the norms of morality and respectability (Mosse 1988), from the Serbian eugenic perspective. Along with the official published material that I have analyzed thus far, here, I will also take into account some of his manuscripts and lecture notes, most notably on two lectures that he gave at the Great School in Belgrade and later again at the Belgrade University titled "The Woman Question" and "Bachelors". Aside from his notes and lectures as important sources of information for this part of my analysis, his own research and data materials on these topics, newspaper clippings that he collected, statistical data on fertility and marriage, and a letter that was written as a response to his book dealing with marriage are also important sources that I will also include in analysis.

Batut and the "Woman Question"

The issue of what the "proper" role of women was came after the Great War when women stepped out of the private sphere and took up the jobs previously occupied by men. The "woman question" was gaining attention as contemporaries sought to come to terms with these changes, engaged in and dispensed with projects of reordering society, politics and culture (Canning 2006, 194). The "woman question" was significant because through the discussion of the role of women in society, what was actually being put into question was the general structure of social life (Kline 2001). This means that the "women question" signaled other crises – about moral and biological integrity of families, illegitimacy or depopulation, or the perils of industrial growth – with women figuring as the most visible and most vulnerable or volatile within these constellations (Canning 2006, 193). In this period of social

reconstruction, after the war and within the process of the creation of a new, fully independent nation state, conservative eugenics thinkers needed to emphasize even more that the “proper” role of women was as procreators: as mothers (McClintock 1993, Yuval-Davis 1997, Mosse 1988). Mosse’s term “respectability” is applicable because at the core of this issue of “proper” and “improper” female behavior was the reconstitution of the previous approaches to sexuality and the human body, respectability became prominent in the 19th century and was linked with nationalism (Mosse 1988, 4).

The central duty and role of women in the process of nation building through the eugenic lens was motherhood (Yuval-Davis 1997). The notion of womanhood being equated with motherhood must be understood within the socio-historical context of the women’s suffrage movement in turn of the century Europe and the growing number of working women (Kline 2001). It is not surprising then to see that this “woman question” figured prominently in eugenic ideologies. Women were represented by eugenicists as both the ones responsible for the progress and the ones who could be blamed for the current degeneration and possible destruction of the nation (Kline 2001). These “new women” presented a threat to the mainline eugenics ideology.

The question of the “proper” place of women was being addressed in post-World War One Serbia, as well. Even though women did not get the right to vote until 1945, the emergence of the women’s movement can be traced back to the turn of the century (Stojkovic 2011). The women’s movement at the time was mostly visible through the emergence of newspapers and other publications. But, as was the case in other countries, this movement was usually acknowledged when it suited the needs of the state (Stojkovic 2011). For example, in 1918, seven women from Vojvodina were temporarily granted the right to vote in the Parliament of Banat, Backa and Baranja. The reason for this move was because the Serbian government needed to secure more votes in the Parliament for the joining of Vojvodina, then

part of Austro-Hungary, to the Kingdom Serbia (Stojkovic 2011)⁹. This example shows the anxieties over the role of women in the new Serbian nation. The question of what the “proper” place for them was in the nation state became problematic because even though Serbia wanted to present itself as a modern and progressive nation, it also wanted to sustain romantic and patriarchal notions of gender roles (Mosse 1988). In Batut’s view, the proper place of women was by the hearth educating children, raising the next generation of citizens and providing for their husbands so that the men could prosper intellectually.

For the survival of the nation this might be the most important thing: a healthy, normal, unspoiled woman who is at her core first and foremost a mother. This means she is the embodiment of love, loyalty and sacrifice for her children and family...Experience and statistics show us that a woman who is economically independent from a man is a serious threat to marriage, and thus to children. She is usually intolerant and pretentious towards her husband and children...and exhibits whims and desires that are against the basic principles of marriage (Jovanović Batut 1918).

Batut was firmly against women’s suffrage and feminism. In his view, feminism was an anomaly and parasitic in the same sense as bachelorhood was for men because it stopped women from carrying out their “holy duty of motherhood” (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). This peculiar action made sense upon reading in his lecture notes that from photographic evidence it is clear that “feminists suffer from physical anomalies and that they are closer to the masculine body type than the ‘feminine’” (Jovanović Batut 1918/1930). Kline writes about similar portrayals of “new women” – the urban working women - in eugenic circles in the United States.

⁹ Although it is not clear why they chose women and not seven more men, it might be because this move was perceived as a progressive and modern move on the part of Serbia.

Because they challenged the conventional standards of womanhood, these women were attacked as „unsexed“ or „mannish“. Their demand for equal rights called into question the sanctity of gender roles. Women were becoming masculine just as men were becoming weak and effeminate (Kline 2001, 11).

Batut firmly subscribed to the notion of the biological division of gender roles based on biological sex. In his view, men and women played different roles in society precisely due to their biological differences. For him, if women started taking over predominantly male roles, beginning with entering the public sphere, it would lead to the destruction of society, which for him was also a biological entity.

Human society is nothing more than a product of organic evolution: biotic evolution created whole and organized societies that consist of individual social cells and each cell is biologically made to comply with certain functions. Males and females complement each other but they do not have the same functions within the social organism (Jovanovic-Batut 1919).

Batut's biologization of gender roles allowed for a fixed characterization of duties prescribed to men and women. It was the woman's duty to the nation to bear and raise children, while the man's duty was to work and protect the nation:

This progressive stance of women – them taking male duties will inevitably lead to the forgetting of their holy duties – the duties of motherhood (Jovanović Batut 1918)

Women are seen not only as the biological reproducers of the nation; their bodies represent symbolically the nation itself (Yuval-Davis 1997). From this we can infer that Batut saw the Serbian nation-state as patriarchal because women did not need an education in order to teach their offspring how to be proper Serbian citizens. As with the fear of external

education of men at foreign universities, educated women presented a threat to the perceived constant stability of the nation.

Respect your elders, protect your virginity and honor. Do not run after men, this will only drive them away, do not play with fire, as in do not tempt men. The woman's pride is her weakest link. The true calling for any women is to be a mother and housewife. Mother means the source of life for her people, isn't that glory enough for your female pride? (Jovanovic-Batut 1919)

Pride was a women's downfall, not because pride was bad, but because it was individualistic rather than a pride for the collective Serbian nation. In Batut's view, feminism and the emancipation of women fostered this individual pride and degrade the collective national honor. In his biological view of the nation, individuality is a problem as it centers on the personal achievements that do not contribute to the organic whole of the nation.

In his book "Rebirth", he describes women as docile and patient, in lines with the mainline conservative eugenic thought of women being the opposite of men. Mainline eugenics held that contraceptive methods would permit the separation of passion from the responsibility of procreation, and thus foster licentiousness; women should remain at home (Turda 2010, 56). Mainline eugenicists were alarmed by the higher education of women. Education, so the reasoning went, diverted women's biological energy from the task of reproduction to the burdens of intellectual and worldly activities, similar to individualist pride (Turda 2010, 78). As with the bachelors the questions of intercourse, even within marriage, for Batut, were seen as perversion.

Should we transform the holy unity of marriage to a whore house?! Those who love their nation, who respect themselves and their spouses, who seek to find true happiness and pleasure in marriage will not forsake the natural laws and prevent reproduction... Abortion is dangerous not just for the woman but for

the nation...Marriage is not just a question of personal pleasure, comfort or material gain; it is a social necessity and obligation. Marriage exists for procreation. It is the spine of the nation and the pillar of society. Where families are in decline, there is no salvation for the nation or the state (Jovanovic-Batut 1919).

Batut's views on contraception and free love were not shared by the entire eugenics community in Serbia. Even though most of the newspaper reviews of his book "Rebirth" claimed that he had written a new eugenic Bible for the nation, a manual of how the citizens should behave, in a letter addressed to Batut from a provincial male gynecologist has some harsher words for the book. The gynecologist, Pejic-Mikic, who wrote to Batut was also in favor of eugenic regeneration of the Serbian nation but he found issue with Batut's conservative stance on the "woman question". From his letter it is clear that, in the early 20th century Serbia, both camps of eugenic thought on the "woman question" were represented. The difference being that Batut and the conservative view held more political sway and authority, than the more progressive social-radical wing that was for the women's sexual liberation¹⁰.

Rebirth! Rebirth! This is what medicine leads us to! Degeneration!
Prostitution! Sexual perversion, masturbation and homosexuality! Young sisters, women chase after men! Save our men from prostitution. Save yourselves from perversion, and female homosexuality (lesbian love). Save humanity from its down fall. Women should be acknowledged, their initiatives in the matters of sex. We should be open about this, not closed. Free love will birth free people! (Pejic-Mikic 1919)

¹⁰ The reason for this may lie in the fact that even though the Serbian state wanted to present itself to the international audience as progressive and modern, the central ideology for its imagining of the nation still rested in romantic notions of rural communities, which were patriarchal.

This physician takes a more progressive stance on the role of women and their sexuality. Even though he does not clarify his standing on women's education, it is clear that, unlike Batut, he sees the need for acknowledging women as sexually active partners in their relations to men. If this sexuality is not recognized played down or silenced, it ultimately leads to the same sexual deviancy that Batut also warns against. Ultimately, it would lead to the deterioration of the nation.

Batut's understanding and treatment of the "woman question" show us that he was not only paying attention to the larger social and political changes that were happening across Europe after the First World War, he is also creating an ideal of how the female citizen of the Serbian nation should look like and how she should act. This ideal is presented not only as a political aspiration but more importantly through medical discourse it is seen as the only natural and thus true way a women should be - a mother of the family and thus a mother of the nation. The fact that he writes about women as mothers of the nation, and sees the nations survival or demise in the female body is something that has been noticed and written about by feminist scholars of nationalism (Kline 2001, Yuval-Davis 1997, McClintock 1993).

Although the symbolism of women's bodies is often emphasized, it is also important to consider how male bodies were constructed and what roles were ascribed to them in the nation building project. For that reason, I turn now to a closer analysis on Batut's writing on single men and bachelors who present the male counterpart to the sexual deviancy of progressive women described in this section. Another reason for looking at how the male body, as a medical subject, was linked to the project of nation building lies in the understanding that "nationalist politics is itself a masculinist enterprise" (Nagel 1998, Mosse 1988). This means that the question of the male body is also central to the way the national body is perceived (Mosse 1988).

The Male Body/Single men as dangers to the nation

At the turn of the century the biggest threat to the health of the male body was seen in the presumed uncontrollable sexual urges of men, which could lead them down the wrong paths towards “sexual degeneration, alcoholism and prostitutes” if they were not contained (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). Unlike other less prominent Serbian physicians, Batut never explicitly wrote about masturbation, but nor does he ever quite explain what he means exactly when he uses terms such as “early love” and “sexual urges”, but what can be inferred is that these behaviors constitute deviant forms of sexuality. For him, the norm and sole purpose of sexual behavior is procreation: “Do not waste your seed! The joy of marital life is in having children” (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). This view supports the understanding that intercourse, which does not result in pregnancy, or any sexual act that does not comply to the prescribed norms of sexual behavior, was shameful, abnormal, and most importantly anti-social (Vidal 2004, Mosse 1988).

Passionate sexual urges in youth burn out the body and early love, or any other form of sexual pleasuring weaken the muscles, drain the bone marrow and dry up the juices in the nerves, turn your brain into mush (Jovanovic-Batut 1919).

The point that he is making is that the male body is not the property of the individual; it belongs to the nation as a whole. “You owe a debt to your nation that you must repay” (Jovanović Batut 1918), and this debt is not financial, but biological. Men must repay the state their debt with children, and “the only way to repay [that debt] is to have at least four children” (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). So, personal sexual pleasure is seen as an obstacle to this repayment, as an anti-social and criminal act against the nation (Mosse 1988). This was

criminal not only because the individual male body was understood as owning its existence to the nation, but this was true in reverse as well – the state owed its existence to the individual bodies of its citizens. As Castronovo pointed out in his study on masturbation in post-Civil War United States:

At stake was an issue far greater than the liberties that young men were taking with their bodies: for if the physical body provided a template for the republic, did the spectacle of sexually degraded white men also suggest the collective body's lack of political virtue (Castronovo 2001, 63).

The question of sexual pleasures and the focus on the individual (white) male body in Castronovo's case can be read as a signifier of the tension in the contract theory based liberal ideology (Castronovo 2001). The problem should be solved by the individual not by the government, which is the underlining political ideology in the United States (Castronovo 2001). What is underlined in both the US and Serbian case is that the individual male body is not just the property of that individual, it belongs to the nation and thus the way he treats his bodies is symbolic to the treatment of the entire nation. Where the Serbian situation differs from Castronovo's observations about the US is in the politics of the nation state.

At the time that Batut was writing, Serbian political ideology was based on the liberal framework but not on the type that was present in the US- contract theory. The Eastern European liberal theory "recognized the collective as well as individual rights" (Funk 2004, 700). From this perspective, the personal sexual pleasures were cast in question because they went against the framework of the collective. Unlike the United States understanding of independence of the individual, the Eastern European understanding of independence was more closely related to the independence of the nation from foreign control (Funk 2004). So dependence on one's country was not seen as a weakness but a virtue. The issue was that it

was expected to be reciprocal, which is to say that the nation depended on its citizens and depended on them to behave in a certain way.

The young man should not be a weakling, only weaklings give into sexual urges. Stay clear of bad company and of alcohol; they will lead you down the path of disease and death (Jovanovic-Batut 1919).

Focusing on the bodies of young men allowed for a tighter control of sexuality by creating ideal norms of sexual behavior in opposition to socially perceived deviant expressions of sexuality (Mosse 1988). In this sense, sexuality and sexual behavior can be seen as a crucial identity marker of those who could be considered desired citizens and those who would not. By creating a definite opposite to desired sexual behavior as a form of deviancy from the norm, biopower is asserted on and through the body of the individual creating disciplined and docile bodies of citizens (Foucault 1987).

Remember your duties as a citizen; you are obligated to settle down and start a family, to return the debt to your nation. From you new generations have to sprout. How can you fulfill this sacred duty if you are poisoned and sick?! Should you, in that condition, even think about the marital bed? Should you, being sickly, even contemplate having children? (Jovanovic-Batut 1919))

Sexual deviancy is, then, not just the problem of the individual but the problem of the nation and the population in general (Mosse 1988) - as sexual deviancy is, in Batut's view, a heritable trait that is passed down from one generation to another. The major deviations that Batut ascribes to men are prostitution and alcoholism, and he saw them as inheritable social diseases.

Run away from prostitution, when you knock on a harlot's door; be prepared to knock on the doctor's door next... Even a seemingly normal sexual life of a

single man occurs in bad company where female fertility in general is poor or stopped through contraception. Their sexual life is usually unclean and unorderly and dangerous. It is not only dangerous for the man as it exposes him to disease it is dangerous to the entire nation. It presents a danger to the core of the social organism, the family (Jovanović Batut 1918).

Here we can see that Batut's understanding of female sexual deviancy, which is also seen as an biological and thus heritable trait, is not only problematic because it corrupts the female body but because it corrupts the male body. Hence, it is clear that through deviant female sexuality what is most at stake is male and thus national honor (Nagel 1998, Mosse 1988). In the conclusions of his lecture about single men, Batut makes this connection quite clear by stating that the problem of progressive women and feminists taking male jobs is that they create male unemployment.

Fighting with this competition [working women] it is difficult for them to achieve financial stability and this in turn affects their chances and desires for getting married and having a family (Jovanović Batut 1918).

At the time Batut was writing this book, Serbia had experienced not just the Great War but had barely recovered from the two Balkan Wars that preceded it. The wars left a great toll on the nation, with severe losses to population. The Great War played a key role in the popularization and growing attention to eugenics across Europe and North America. Eugenicists became divided into two camps (Kevles 2004). One that thought the Great War was a blessing in disguise, eliminating the “weaker stock” of humans in a Malthusian perspective (Kevles 2004). The other camp saw the war in a different light, as a very dysgenic event that crippled the bravest and the fittest, leaving behind those of “weaker stock” (Kevles 2004). The war provided more than just a mythology of violence and a matrix for the sacralization of the nation; it was also a redemptive return to a biologically superior condition

(Kevles 2004 , 65). World War I gave a new momentum to the eugenics movement by calling for the need for a regeneration of the nation, but one that only included certain types of citizens (Kevles 2004). In this light, Batut stands firmly with the later camp, which saw the war as dysgenic, and with his book “*Rebirth. A Doctor’s advice to Youth and Parents*” can be read as an explicit call for the regeneration of what he already called a small nation to begin with.

The agricultural and military strength of a nation does not depend solely on its physical and mental character, but also on its masses, on the number of its population. Our nation needs to take this seriously; there is little of us to begin with and an entire sea of enemies amongst us. We have lost an entire strength in the last war (Jovanovic-Batut 1919)

Batut singles out bachelors, especially older single men, as the emblematic representatives of this deviant sexual behavior. They are deviant because they are egoistic and individualistic which contradicts the socio-cultural framework of community that he ascribes to “real” and “proper” Serbian men (Jovanović Batut 1918). He describes bachelors as only interested in self-indulgence, sexual gratification and consummation of alcohol, all traits that are seen as undesirable.

It is in man’s nature to be selfish – egoistical – in solitude they become real ingrates. They are by nature more prone to disease than married men. Statistics has shown that married men live longer and happier than those without families. They rarely live to see old age. The best way of cultivating sexual urges is through legitimate marriage. Marriage is the pillar of society. Family is the base and pinnacle of any culture. In marriage people are healthier (Jovanovic-Batut 1919)

Procreation itself is not enough though; it needs to be situated within the socially accepted structure of marriage. Children born out of wedlock were not desirable, and paradoxically even if they came from “biologically acceptable” parents they would still be seen as unhealthy (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). Batut is a strong opponent to the notions of free love that were also gaining momentum at the time. Thus, he was truly in line with the mainstream conservative thought that denied or at least disregarded female sexuality as important for procreation. For him all women who had sex outside of wedlock and not for the purpose of procreation were prostitutes. In core he understood single life as a problem because of its association to free love and advised vehemently against it.

Single men are a waste, they are not part of the organic human society, and they are its parasites. Only family men are true fighters for the greater good of the nation. They are true men, true citizens and statesmen! Single men do not truly love women. They are at their core misogynists (Jovanovic-Batut 1919)

In this sense the question of heterosexual marriage and the question of heterosexual love were not seen as personal matters of the individual. If a man did not marry, they were not “true men” and thus not true patriots. This again points to the organic understanding of the nation. Loving women and being married meant loving the nation. If one did not do so, he was perceived as anti-social and potentially dangerous to the nation (Mosse 1988).

The references to life expectancy and health of the male body in this context were crucial as they enabled a shift from the real body politic – the economic and political devastations of the wars - to the actual bodies. This shift allowed for the questions and problems concerning the everyday lives of the citizens to move from its historically and

politically situated context to the ahistorical, acontextual universal sphere of illness and health. This went in line with the eugenic perceptions of the nation as an organic body and not a political entity, meaning that the “cure” for its regeneration was not in the realm of politics but in the realm of medicine and biology.

In this sense, Batut sees marriage as not just as a social institution but as an ahistoric and acontextual “cure” or binding force for both the individual male body and thus the body of the entire nation. Marriage in Batut’s view provided social order and hygienic order in men’s lives. By viewing marriage as a medical remedy the questions of everyday politics and social institutions become questions of medicine.

He who does not marry stays indebted to his tribe. Is that a pure waste for the defense and economic power of the nation? There would be no nation if its sons did not procreate. That’s why bachelors are a great threat to the survival of the nation. Serbian educated men do not marry. This is a waste for the nation because their excellent stock dies out with them. Why don’t those men procreate instead they leave this task to lesser men (Jovanovic-Batut 1919).

In Batut’s view male bodies needed to be addressed; especially men “of intellect” especially needed to procreate as they were the carriers of desired national trait that should be passed down to the following generations. This is why Batut focuses not only on bachelors in general but on “educated men”. He regards them as the most valuable citizens and, at the same time, the most susceptible to the vices of single life, as they choose their career over procreation.

Educated men think that it is enough to leave a legacy in writing and invention. This is important but it is not lasting, they do not repay their debt to the nation fully in this manner. In order to repay the nation you must be fruitful. Having a wife and children is not an impediment to these goals it’s an advancement as

you will pass on your intellect to the following generation (Jovanovic-Batut 1919)

The best cure against sexual deviancy is marriage (Mosse 1988) for “all strong and diligent men, especially intellectuals, a modest, natural, true woman is a great gain, she is the medicine he needs” (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). This is why all great men of the nation must not take their great organic traits with them to their graves (Jovanovic-Batut 1919). Intellect being a natural trait is seen in other eugenic thinkers, like Galton and Pearson, who consider intellectual capability as an inheritable trait and not something one can acquire (Kevles 2004).

The laws of natural selection are clear. From conception the parent transmits to the offspring not just physical but mental – intellectual – traits, even exceptional ones that he possesses and that his ancestors possessed (Jovanovic-Batut 1919)

The major difference between Batut’s view of which bodies carried “intellectual traits” and the views of Galton and Pearson’s was that they ascribed these traits to the existing middle classes of Western Europe and North America. The newly formed and still recovering from the wars, Kingdom of Serbia did not have a pre-existing middle class. In fact, Batut saw the “best stock” of the Serbian national body not in urban but in rural populations.

In the peasant the best biotic qualities of our nation can be found. They are still fresh and untainted and are the best basis for our social organism...the before prominent tendency of our nation to marry was kept alive in the villages that were up until the recent years – especially now after the war. Now the best and brightest of our peasants refrain from marriage. They are mimicking the urban folk in their degenerative and sexually deviant ways (Jovanović Batut 1918).

Through the discussion of sexual deviancy and abnormality Batut is trying to establish a sharp distinction between what was seen as “normal” and thus desired masculine sexual behavior. This notion of normalcy is constructed under the larger backdrop of his eugenic ideology, which was an uneasy conflation of modernity and romanticism. Batut’s views that for the good of the nation the “intellectual good stock” (Kevles 2004 , Turda 2010) needed to procreate and at the same time he saw this intellectual potential rural population, which was potentially endangered from the deviancies ascribed to modernity and progress (Mosse 1988).

Through the understanding of the nation as a biological entity, its power shifts from the realm of everyday politics, questions of internal and external affairs, issues of urbanization and economics to the acontextual realm of nature and biology. By looking at how Batut treats male and female sexuality, male and female bodies, we can see that his writings were a way of trying to resolve global and Serbian actual political and social tensions, most notably the visibility of the women’s suffrage movements. Focusing on male and female bodies and treating them as necessary biological components of a larger national whole, the question of desired politics of the state is made not only visible but presented as natural (Yuval-Davis 1997, Mosse 1988). The overlapping political message of focusing on collective needs of the nation and presenting individualistic needs as deviant coincides not only with the political framework of collective liberalism that was prominent in Serbia but also shows the tensions that were brought to the surface after the First World War and the radical social changes that were happening across Europe.

Conclusions

From the 19th century onward, it is possible to trace and map a new forms of politics and power in Europe that were different from those that came before. As Foucault stated, this new regime was centered on the body, making every social and political issue a question of biology – of biopolitics (Foucault 1987). It is through this biopolitical lens that the “imagined”, constructed, community of the nation gained its legitimacy and its illusion of universality and naturalness. In this research, through the analysis of the Serbian case study, the central goal was to understand how this biopolitical project of nation construction played out in a “small nation” (Eley and Suny 1996) in Southeastern Europe. More specifically, how it influenced the first phase of nation building – the process of creating the discourse of what and who constitute the nation (Calhoun 1997).

Through a close reading of the writings of the Serbian medical expert, Milan Jovanović Batut, we can see that eugenics as a biopolitical project was central not only in large imperial nations, but across turn-of-the-century Europe. Eugenics, as an ideology, is present in this phase as well as part of the biopolitical discourses through which new identity politics were forged. Eugenics can thus be read as a general framework for imagining the nation as a biological entity. Through the eugenic lens the newly emerging Serbian nation, state imagined itself as a modern and progressive European nation, establishing its legitimacy as a nation in the domain of science. At the same time, the crucial difference between this eugenics project and those previously studied was on the emphasis, not on the urban middle class which at the time did not exist in Serbia, but on the rural population. It is through this emphasis on the rural population that the idea of the nation as an imagined community is most visible. This is because the rural population at the turn of the century was not living up to the

expectations of the western-educated intellectual elite of Serbia. This meant that the rural body of Serbia had to be re-shaped and imagined to fit the modernist and rationalist expectations of its intellectual elite. Eugenics, with its emphasis on hygiene, order and naturalness, was inherent to this process.

What this research has shown is that the content and the mechanisms of eugenics were contingent on the political, historical and social contexts in which they were used. In the case of Serbia, as visible, eugenics presented itself as a useful framework for mystifying and naturalizing the existing political and social tensions and conflicts which arose during Serbia's turbulent path to nationhood. Research of this nature is valuable as it shows how eugenics and general biopolitical project of nation building are complicated and nuanced. Further studies of other "small nations", with social and political histories that differ from the already established eugenic framework, can provide a greater understanding of both the transnational and specific national nature of eugenics in relation to nation building.

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