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Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović, Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia, Belgrade: Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television

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In the long historical processes, the importance and role of culture had been changing, which seems

to be an obvious process also at the beginning of the 21st century. In a globalised, post-Cold War and multi-polarised world and a period of supranational and transnational processes, a question arises as to what the position of Serbia and role of its cultural diplomacy is in international relations. Issues related to narrative structures and reconsideration of the actual politics, a symbolic position of Serbia and the manner in which it has been presented in the world have been raised in a new manner by the book *Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia*. The book author, Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović, an expert associate for scientific research and development at the Institute for Theatre,

Film, Radio and Television of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, is also a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Master Studies for Cultural Politics and Management and at doctoral studies for Theory of Arts and Media of the University of Arts in Belgrade. The book *Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia* was printed as part of a joint publishing venture of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television and CLIO publishing company, and is a partly altered and extended result of a doctoral dissertation which the author defended in 2012 at the University of Arts in Belgrade.

The book *Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia* is divided into 4 chapters as follows: Cartography of Cultural Diplomacy; Culture, Identity and Diplomatic Tango; Serbia: Story of a Nation in the 21st Century; and Cultural Diplomacy of Serbia. In a methodological respect, the author has chosen a multi-perspective approach to the subject, through which she strives to consolidate social and political theory, international relations and cultural analysis, philosophy, political studies, culture and communication studies, as well as some of the aspects of culture management. Through both analytical and critical approach, the study is not limited only to interpreta-

tion but it also raises normative questions such as is the challenge of overcoming eurocentrism and ethnocentrism of international cultural relations and/or the issues of human rights and state sovereignty. At the same time, by intersecting different areas of research and practices of the study, *Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia* seeks to outline cartography of cultural diplomacy and to establish its precise interpretation. In a complex, theoretical research field, the author tries to point to the problems of defining the concept and dimensions of international cultural relations in line with the altered political priorities in a multi-polarised world. Particularly elaborated are the facts of equating international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy or state foreign cultural mission and international cultural politics, as well as observations of cultural diplomacy as a synonym for public diplomacy, which is redefined as a new source of the soft power for governments.

With the intention to form cartography of cultural diplomacy, Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović analyses the creation and development of the concept and practices of cultural diplomacy. An overview of developments of international relations paradigms in a historical perspective is shown through examples from the cultural his-

tory of Europe and the world, from cultural nationalism and internationalism to cultural propaganda and the Cold War „battle for hearts and minds“. The end of the Cold War and political changes (the collapse of communism and socialism, the changes in the Eastern Europe and the break-up of the Soviet Union) brought cultural relations to the fringes of national interests in certain states, and along with it, led to a variety of cultural initiatives by citizen associations and small organisations. Immigrations have influenced the changes in the culture of the Western European cities in the form of multicultural transformation, while the field of cultural cooperation has been shaped by the European Union as a supranational institution as well. With the new technologies and creation of networks, state and international bureaucracies are bypassed and new stakeholders appear who collect and distribute the information of a possible cultural cooperation, identify potential partners and potential project funds, which bring key changes into the sphere of international cultural relations, as noted by Rogač Mijatović.

The increase of public awareness on the importance of culture affects both the expression of identity and power and a degree to which relations with others are

developed. Shifts in the structure of distribution of power lead the author of Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia to detect ways in which modern questions of culture become „high-risk identity issues“ and causes for which culture became one of the „cultural battlefields“. Complexity of the context and process relating to culture and politics are considered, as well as the effects of globalisation on the existence of national state and identity. Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović observes the issue of establishing political identity based on a clearly defined attitude towards values and their structure as one of the most significant challenges facing modern societies. Together with traditional forms of diplomacy new forms are developed: economic diplomacy and nation branding, „paradiplomacy“ – regional diplomacy, urban diplomacy – the rule of metropolis and city branding, sports diplomacy, global spectacles and national heroes as well as citizen diplomacy, which is the concept of average citizens engaging (randomly or intentionally) as representatives of a country. In her study, Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović rightfully also raises the issue of digital diplomacy and its reach, the influence of fast flow of information on the internet, social networks and the use of IT technologies on cultural diplomacy.

Within the chapter of the study dedicated to building the identity of Serbia, Rogač Mijatović starts by analysing historical sources of Serbia's identity, whereby she marks the problem of collective identities as one of the key Serbia's problems during the 20th century. The position of Kosovo and Metohija, the attitude towards the legacy of Yugoslavia and the position of stereotypes imposed through the media and popular articles about the Balkans in the West are the key points in this analysis of the identity issue of Serbia. The author sees a new identity structure in abandoning the mythical pseudo-realism and bonding with the spiritual cognition and culture that unites, the elements of which, as she believes so, are possible to find in an objective historical and legendary discourse on Kosovo. Simultaneously, following a short analyses of few phases of building the Yugoslav identity, in which she paid particular attention to the period after the World War II, the author designates the term Yugo-nostalgia as a criticism of the existing post-socialist reality discourse in creating politics of memory. Following the mentioned historical frameworks of building the identity, the author recognizes the narratives of cultural affiliation to Europe („return to Europe“, „European culture“, „European iden-

tity“) and raising awareness on a shared cultural legacy as a long-term aspiration of Serbia as well as other Western Balkan countries.

Concluding that the current strategies of auto-identification (self-determination) and auto-self-representation (self-presentation) follow formerly established patterns on stereotypes about the Balkans as an undeveloped area in terms of civilization and the Serbs as an aggressive and primitive people, the author places the position of Serbia's image in the world between positive hyperbolizing and pejorative contestation. Rogač Mijatović has also dedicated her attention to the existence of division into 2 Serbias, putting it into the framework of transferring the stereotype from external to internal arena, which with the political fragmentation of the public, led to the division that has taken its part in structuring the idea about Serbia and the Serbs. In addition to the importance of the role played by the media in improving the image of Serbia in the world, she highlights the role of tradition and opposes the rejection of the past. Still, she advocates for a more objective consideration of order of values, whereby the Balkan historical and cultural and geographical legacy, as well as the Yugoslav legacy, despite all the complex and ambivalent characteristics, are seen

by the author as an advantage in accepting all phases and levels of identity. The author leaves open the issue of how Serbia would face the stereotypes about Serbia in the world, although she does express her view that it takes a critical evaluation of the image concept of Serbia itself in relation to identity, or lighting up myths and prejudices, as well as stereotypes, first internally and then externally too.

The final chapter of the study written by Ljiljana Rogać Mijatović is dedicated to Serbia's cultural diplomacy, observed through a prism of political changes taking place in Serbia in 2000, the process of transition and Euro-integrations, as well as the practice of cultural diplomacy in Serbia from 2000 to 2010. The author emphasises that Serbia ranked 108th on the list of world's "weak states" in 2008 (Index of States Weakness in the Developing World), and that an affirmative version of a scenario on the future position of Serbia would be transiting to the level of a „normal (functional) state“, that deals with the social and global challenges in an efficient and democratic manner. Reconsideration of the present institutional framework of Serbia's international cultural relations has been done through the analyses of accomplishments made by the protagonists of cultural diplomacy

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Tourist Organization of Serbia and Agency for Foreign Investments and Promotion of Export of the Republic of Serbia). At the same time, the attention has been dedicated to bilateral cooperation, agreements on cultural cooperation, Culture and Information Centre of Serbia in Paris and the language department for Serbian language and literature. Serbia's cultural politics is also observed through multilateral cultural cooperation, activities carried out within international organisations and associations (UNESCO, Council of Europe, International Organisation of La Francophonie, Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, The Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Forum of Slavic Cultures, Adriatic-Ionic Initiative and the Danube Cooperation), as well as through the content analyses of cultural practices and programmes of Serbia in the world (exhibitions, stage performance and musical entertainment programmes, film programmes, events, festivals, conferences and working meetings).

In the light of politics of discontinuity and unfinished system of cultural politics, the study *Cultural Diplomacy and Identity*

of Serbia potentiates the need to redefine the attitudes towards different social tradition, cultural matrixes, patterns and identities that would provide further social and cultural development of Serbia and its presentation in the world. A lack of inter-sectorial cooperation of the leading protagonists of Serbia's cultural diplomacy has been noticed, as well as a lack of transparent vision of goals and final „beneficiaries“ whom the activities of public and cultural diplomacy are addressed to. The author also points out insufficient visibility of the work of the so-called citizen diplomacy (civil society and individuals). As national cultural institutes and culture and information centres are an important institutional support to international cultural relations and instruments for the promotion of national cultural identity in different forms, the need is indicated to stop the discontinuity phase of the strategy of work, programme and management of the Cultural and Information Centre in Paris. At the same time, the need is intensified to prevent closing down of the language department for Serbian language in the world by forming one body to gather representatives from several national cultural, scientific and education institutions. When analysing cultural programmes that are in the focus of the cultural practices of

Serbia in Europe and worldwide, the existence of articulated narrative in relation to present cultural values and cultural patterns of identity, dichotomy of Europeanism and traditions expressed in the Christian and Byzantine legacy are being questioned, from which the author concludes that international cultural relations are not a clear priority for Serbia.

In her study *Cultural Diplomacy and Identity of Serbia*, by mapping practices of cultural diplomacy and identity crisis of Serbia, studying and interpreting ideas of Serbia in domestic and foreign public, Ljiljana Rogać Mijatović highlights the stereotypes that determine the current image of Serbia in the world. The return of Serbia to international organisations after 2000, in addition to a long-term concern of the state, and its institutional and financial support, offers new challenges for cultural diplomacy of Serbia. In this respect, the importance of UNESCO's Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, project funding by the International Fund for Cultural Diversity and participation of Serbia in the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme (Cultural routes of the Roman Emperors in Serbia, Transromanica – Cultural Route of the Roman Heritage and Fortresses on the Danube).

Simultaneously, problematizing the new frameworks of cultural diplomacy action, its factors and protagonists, the study opens up a great number of questions related to the role and reach of cultural diplomacy, and it strives to answer the question of what image of itself does Serbia build with all the different cultural forms it presents to the public in Europe and worldwide? With its efforts to give theoretical and practical solutions through research of cultural practices of Serbia in Europe and worldwide, a study by Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović is to be recommended to the academic public and state decisions makers. Written in a clear, precise and inspiring style in the form of questions and answers, it encourages critical thinking and open dialogue. As a priority in outlining cultural diplomacy of Serbia, the study lists traditional values (legacy, language, customs) and those that connect Serbia to the European civilizations circle by which it is opening new questions regarding the identification of values in the Serbian society, the way they are presented and strategy building to promote culture, cultural heritage and identity of Serbia.