

# “DANCE KOLINDA YES KOLINDA YES KOLINDA DANCE”: HUMOROUS REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CROATIAN PRESIDENT<sup>1</sup>

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The aim of this paper is to combine an analysis of performative and Internet genres where traditional humor genres (jokes, irony, satire) at the expense of the Croatia's first woman president, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, are semiotically transformed in novel ways. Although several women in Croatia held high political offices since 1991, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović's campaign and later victory caused an avalanche of derisive weblore that calls for an interdisciplinary approach. A special challenge for folklorists is to grasp the transgressive nature of humor and satire, i.e., the transgression of cultural, moral and political norms in different discourses – from humorous political activism to satirical “provocation”. The author analyzes the terms “non-offensive” and “offensive” humor (from practical to rough jokes and “stupid clips”), the public and counterpublics, popular and vernacular culture in the digital age, as well as folklore attributes that characterize humorous genres: esthetic nature, transgressive quality and the element of play. The folklorist approach is complemented by a feminist analysis of the sociocultural, political and gender characteristics of selected humorous genres (particularly stand-up performance), based in the undermining of the binary gender categories. The abundance of weblore which targets the public persona and the physical appearance of Croatia's woman president can thus be interpreted as signaling: a) the end of authoritarian regimes and politicians; b) a rise in the digital counterpublics which ideologically undermines the matrifocal nationalist and conservative worldview and c) a neoliberal contradiction whereby the feminization of a (devalued) political sphere goes hand in hand with a strengthening of conservative, racist and homophobic forces in society.

Keywords: humor and politics, digital folklore (weblore), female politicians and faux feminism, counterpublics, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Marijana Perinić

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In this paper, I will analyze humorous and satirical representations of Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, which marked her presidential campaign as well as her work as Croatian president, in order to examine several hypothesis: a) whether the inauguration of the first woman president marked the end of political transition in Croatia characterized by authoritarianism, clientelism and a patriarchal worldview; b) whether the digital counterpublic has the power to ideologically undermine the matrifocal nationalist and conservative worldview and c) whether Croatia is witnessing the neoliberal populist contradiction where the feminization of politics is accompanied by a strengthening of conservative, racist and homophobic trends in society. Feminist analyses of the gender regime in post-socialist Croatia (Gal and Klingman 2000; Iveković 2013; Kašić and Prlenda 2013; Schäuble 2014; Malenica 2015) show a dominance of the pseudopolitical concept of “national regeneration”,<sup>2</sup> which is based on ethnonationalism, Catholicism and patriarchal recoding of gender roles. According to Rada Iveković, the political elites turn to the nation because it offers “a solution for consumed legitimacy of the forms of governance or sovereignty from the preceding period” (2013: 28), and the purpose of the symbolic image of woman-as-nation is to uproot “social antagonisms by ‘flowing into’ a higher instance – the nation” (2013: 27). The mythological practice of presenting the supreme values of a virile and militarized society as imaginary women and maidens was typical of patriarchal culture from classical antiquity, robbing women of equal civic status, just like contemporary politics uses descriptive representation to mask substantive (non-) representation of women’s interests in parliamentary democracies (cf. Campbell, Childs and Lovenduski 2009).<sup>3</sup> The visual rhetoric of female figures in the political propaganda of the transition period, in its entire range of ideological orientations, was analyzed by Reana Senjković (2002: 144–179), who found persistent patriarchal patterns of manhood and womanhood, as well as parallels between modernist and nationalist figurations of women as the bearers of the future (of society and/or the nation). Senjković claims that it is impossible to designate political advertising unambiguously as “information”, “entertainment” or indeed “popular culture”, in other words, that it is impossible to overlook the fact that promotional material represents a summary of “a party’s political program, its outlook on the political or social modernity or a summary description of the personality that a politician wishes to exude before the electorate” (2002: 145). Recent analyses of women’s political participation in Croatia examine the attitudes of women voters and the role of women in political parties (Šinko 2008, 2015; Siročić and Sutlović 2013), confirming the potency of gendered symbols in political messages, although they do not have a decisive influence on voter

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<sup>2</sup> According to historian of Fascism, Roger Griffin, every call for “national revival”, based on an exclusive notion of the nation, sends a disturbing message. From Mussolini’s Italy to contemporary ethno-nationalisms, the Fascist-like ideology is characterized by a fusion of “an organic, illiberal conception of the nation which celebrates the collective energies of the ‘people’” and what Griffin “terms the myth of ‘paligenesis’, that is, ‘rebirth’ or ‘renewal’” (Baker 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Political scientist Hannah Pitkin distinguishes four types of representation (formal, descriptive, substantive and symbolic), where descriptive representation means that representatives represent the female electorate merely by their gender affiliation, whereas substantive representation refers to conscious political action in the interest of women (cf. Campbell et al. 2009: 172).

behavior, just like an increased number of women politicians in the parliament or the government does not lead to higher quality of social changes.

Starting with the feminist assumption that “the domestic is political, the political is gendered” (McClintock 1995: 32), and that the inversion of the “natural” gender hierarchy and asymmetry has been a generator of humorous discourse in civil society, particularly in newspaper cartoons at least since the beginning of the twentieth century (cf. Ograjšek Gorenjak 2014), I will try to show how gendered humorous representations of Croatia’s first woman president, contest the democratic political culture and gender egalitarianism. The main thesis of the article is that humor, as a significant cultural and political element of everyday communication, “can be both emancipatory and disciplinary, unifying as well as exclusive and divisive” (M. C. Dagtas as cited in Swinkles and de Koning 2016: 9), and that “in times of darkness, confusion and social anxiety” humor is a significant indicator of understanding “everyday immoralities, social taboos and the political unconscious of the nation” (Blank 2013: 12). As noted by A. Jolles, simple forms like the joke, which are the basis of most internet humor, are preoccupied with solving a complex situation, at “disentangling what is entangled” (Endstrasser 2012: 411) and unknowable at first glance. Dealing with death, misfortune, sex and contentious events is typical of humor genres, digital communication including (Blank 2013; Swinkles and de Koning 2016), with the help of which the (post)modern person is attempting to grasp the complexity of human existence and resist societal norms. The same happens in jokes, where “lewdness, vulgarity and the impudence of the joke solve what is prescribed by morality, good customs and decency” (Endstrasser 2012: 411). Thus, new media simply multiply communication channels, rhetorical resources and the circle of humor recipients; they are the ones which enable the spread of easily transmittable rumors, jokes and anecdotes on a global scale (cf. Marks 2001). What affects us even more is the blending of entertainment and political arena, the high and pop culture, diplomatic and vulgar language, with shaken consensus about “morality, good customs and decency”. According to Mladen Dolar constant exposure to forced enjoyment and laughter is the main tool of constructing modern subjectivity in the late capitalist society. Laughter is crucial for us to become ideological subjects because “it provides us with the distance, the very space in which ideology can take its full swing” (2014: 115).

Numerous cases where Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović’s professional competences and ethnocentric rhetoric was subject to ironic and satiric mocking revealed ideological preferences of vernacular humor stakeholders, and patriarchal resistance of Balkan cultural incongruences to the symbolic coupling of women, politics and power (*a mother / a woman hero / a queen*). The humorous potential was further broadened by the creators of the presidential campaign, who presented Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović as “authentic” in all her numerous roles – as a “girl from Grobnik”, a “woman patriot”, a “sport-loving lady”, “a responsible mother”, “a woman of the world”, “a career woman”, a “kind and decent woman” (cf. Pehar and Glavina 2015). The enviable number of roles transmuted in digital humorous folklore, once again revealing aversion to powerful women, which send the

versatile politician back into the “woman’s sphere” of fashion, corporeality and biological reproduction. The career politician was separated into individual roles of a mother, a wife, a secretary, a diplomat, i.e. a “private person” and a “public woman”.<sup>4</sup> As I will show later, anonymous digital humor stakeholders distributed and varied “porn chick” representations (McNair 2004) from tabloid photomontages and parodies, thus ideologically and (un)consciously contributing to the propaganda narrative of a new national woman hero, endowed with “female bodily attributes” and with professional competences, who should be nothing but the envy of the neighboring nations. Folklorists, as eclectic analysts of culture, identify the element of play and the esthetically-challenging confrontation with personal and collective antagonisms as crucial in the understanding of humorous expressions, but also recognize the growing need for a virtual relocation from the “real world” devoid of humanity, solidarity, group cohesion and opportunities of face-to-face meetings (cf. Oring 2003; Blank 2013).

A sociological study into gender discrimination in Croatia (Kamenov and Galić 2011) identified the media image as an important factor in determining people’s awareness concerning gender (in)equality. The participants regarded sensitizing the public through the media (TV, newspapers, radio) as the most important measure to improve gender equality (ibid.). One half of the participants were not willing to be personally involved in activities strengthening the position of women in society, but settled for digital political participation (signing petitions etc.) and believed that further development of democracy and an increase in the living standard would result in complete gender equality. Another study dealing with the differences between male and female management styles claims that women are the drivers behind the new “political culture” that encourages participation, new forms of communication, sharing power and information (cf. Pološki Vokić and Bulat 2013).<sup>5</sup> However, as the number of women parliament members in the European countries is around one fifth, the “critical mass” of women in politics, in representative and executive bodies, has not yet been reached so as to result in significant political and social change.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, if women have indeed only started their “political adolescence”

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<sup>4</sup> Rada Borić cautions that the contemporary meaning of the Croatian term “javna žena” (public woman) is still described in dictionaries, “including Anić’s dictionary, the dictionary published by Školska knjiga and by Leksikografski zavod” in a way that “under the entry ‘žena’ (woman) one of the subentries is ‘javna žena – prostitutka’ (public woman – prostitute), even today, in the 21st century, when women are members of parliaments, prime ministers and presidents, eminent scientists, journalists, activists, we are still perpetuated as prostitutes, whereas a man is ‘odrasla osoba muškog spola’ (an adult person of the male sex), and the woman is merely ‘za razliku od muškarca, odrasla osoba ženskog spola’ (as opposed to a man, an adult person of the female sex)” (Borić 2016).

<sup>5</sup> The paper by Nina Pološki Vokić and Ivana Bulat (2013) generalizes transcultural positive characteristics of women leaders, among which are care for others and interpersonal relations, promoting participation and equality, “which conditions their interests and perspectives in politics, i.e. the issues that they find to be of high priority (such as issues related to women, children, the family and vulnerable groups) as well as their views of politics”.

<sup>6</sup> According to the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of the EU, minimum representation of a gender in representative and executive bodies should be 40%, or at least 30%, because this is the percentage that, in nuclear physics and social sciences, is considered the minimal critical mass necessary to cause changes in an environment. Croatia is also attempting to satisfy this condition by its

in the 21st century, as is claimed by political scientists, then it is by no means unexpected that (all younger and attractive) women politicians are treated by the media as “entertainment girls”, sharing their fate with many other media stars.<sup>7</sup> Norwegian political scientist Torild Skard believes that the increase in the number of women political leaders has been caused by the communication revolution, which circulates people, ideas, and patterns of political behavior and governance around the world at incredible speed. Other reasons include turbulent changes in power, frequent parliamentary crises, the need to keep a dynasty in power and sharp confrontations within political parties, giving “reserve” women candidates a chance to assume leadership (for a short period of time) (Skard 2015).

## HUMOR CULTURES OF RESISTANCE IN DIGITAL ONLINE COMMUNICATION

The digital revolution and new forms of citizens’ direct participation in the life of a society have dramatically changed (and are still changing) the political and media culture typical of developed democratic societies. Whereas in 2005, in her seminal study “Tiranija tijela: *Feral*love fotomontaže” (The tyranny of the body: *Feral*’s photomontages), Lada Čale Feldman could claim that *Feral Tribune*, as the leading satirical weekly and the driver of critical discourse with its “anti-propaganda actions”, constantly kept subverting the “recipient’s hunger for non-problematically consuming media creations” (2005: 113), the more recent blend of advertising and information, the ritual and the ephemeral, the consumerist and the authorial in digital medium,<sup>8</sup> presents a challenge both for *cultural optimists*, as well as *cultural pessimists*. Folklorists appreciate the fact that the new media are characterized by modularity, variability and cultural transcoding (Lev Manovich as cited in Peović Vuković 2012: 81) of widely-circulated content like rumors, narratives, jokes and other community-generated humor, but they have not yet methodologically mastered this “powerful, personalized instrument of vernacular expression” (Blank 2013: 12) in virtual space. Cultural transcoding is particularly significant for the global circulation and adaptation of humorous genres, for its many-sided communication where “all the phases of production: creation, text storage and distribution, are in the hands of the users” (Peović Vuković 2012: 84) willing to face the sociopolitical and existential challenges of their time. Social networks play an increasingly important role in contemporary political communication and political

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Law on Gender Equality, which has been in force since 2009, but has only recently instituted penalties on political parties that do not respect the gender quotas.

<sup>7</sup> The best example of this new tactic of obtaining voters is the Italian Movement of 5 stars (*Movimento 5 Stelle*) or M5s, the second most represented party in the Italian parliament, led by former comedian Beppe Grillo known for his vulgar jokes at the expense of other politicians and for his fiery rhetoric, as well as for attracting a large number of young women to become politically active.

<sup>8</sup> “The term digital medium is technologically precise because it emphasizes the basic difference between the new and the old media. However, it is not sufficient to encompass the totality of change, because in addition to digitalization, the change is characterized by the online paradigm, online protocols, platforms and generally online structure” (Peović Vuković 2012: 81).

campaigns, with teams of experts, who have come of age alongside the new technologies, being employed to mold and affectively encode political messages.<sup>9</sup> However, despite the huge number of messages, the speed with which they spread across social networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc.), and their unpredictable dynamics of contributing to the popularity of some politicians, parties and political agendas and discrediting others, it seems that the new technologies are strengthening existing convictions rather than creating new ones.<sup>10</sup> Although they are a powerful weapon of attracting potential voters and donations, and a new “weapon of the disempowered”, social networks primarily reinforce ideological polarizations, and consolidate the political base into camps. On the other hand, political influence of digital media as an “ideological apparatus” depends on the likely further personalization of political actions and campaigns, which builds on the politics of identity of new social movements from the 1960s. In response to professionalized politicians, personalized politics is becoming increasingly stronger, with individually-driven and designed actions having a wider reach and bringing together a greater number of citizens than the political opposition, unions and non-governmental organizations (cf. Bennett 2012). The Croatian case at issue here also shows a wide range of value positions from which a new political figure is humorously criticized or sympathized – from sardonic satirical critics who consider the woman president a representative of professionalized and dehumanized “Euro bureaucrats” to those who recognize her as the triumph of “second-rate” women citizens and the protector of deprived social groups.

The wider context, in which the nation state is losing its importance, and sovereignty is transferred from the state to the market, is conducive to creating an atmosphere where “general desemantization, depoliticization and disorientation” (Iveković 2013: 25) takes place; a process that Ulrich Beck refers to as “de-substantialization of politics”. New old forms of humorous discourse – produced by internet users – regenerate popular stereotypes, dissolve and strengthen cultural attributes of manhood and womanhood and create new, transcultural and virtual performances of gender and gender roles. The inclusion of media and advertising experts into a nation’s political life can lead to “political musical theatre” (Baker 2015), where, for instance, women politician imitate media star in film role as other politician.<sup>11</sup> However, ceremonial staged performances of “politized gender” are

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<sup>9</sup> However, researchers stress the unpredictability of behaviors and personal preferences of the users of social networks. The fact that Facebook’s founder, Mark Zuckerberg, designed the online campaign for the presidential candidate John Kerry in 2004 did not lead to the Democrat’s win, nor was the fact that Facebook’s co-founder Chris Hughes created Barack Obama’s webpage (MyBarakObama.com) in the presidential campaign of 2008 decisive in his win.

<sup>10</sup> It often seems that world political leaders addressing the public using brief “private” twitter messages, and the moves of their PR professionals, are a new take on the rhetorical form of *serio ludere* (dating from classical antiquity and favorite in the Renaissance), the form of serious playfulness, where the border between what is serious and what is playful, what is political and what is parodied is erased.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Baker (2015) notes that Croatia’s first woman president, according to her styling, gestures, facial expressions and her entire appearance during the presidential inauguration, resembled the singer Madonna in the film version of the popular musical about Marija Eva “Evita” Perón (1919–1952) made in 1996. Evita is considered the first massively popular woman politician and the predecessor of combining politics, the media and popular culture in a way that is common today. The accusations of Evita Perón’s

good confirmation of the fact that gender identities, as claimed by Judith Butler, survive through and with the help of performances, in a series of repetitions and imitation of ideal-type models, which include humorous genres that reveal the “discursive rift” between the expected and wondrous, the accepted and unaccepted gendered patterns of behavior (Antoine 2016: 39).

In this paper, I will not be looking into the extent to which digital folklore (*weblore*) supports folklorist theories about the esthetic and cognitive nature of verbal humor (Ong 2003; Marsh 2012), i.e. to what extent its omnipresent visualization recalls the poetics of low comedy (burlesque, farce), as the initial point of sexual, gender-related, morally or politically “transgressive” humor. What can be said of successful humor is that its esthetic quality is deeply intertwined with the “cognitive and emotional processes that determine whether a person will consider a particular joke funny” (Marsh 2012: 293), whereas “low” rough and vulgar derision is characterized by transgression that “tread[s] the line between smashing taboos and correctly gauging the limits of the recipients’ tolerance” (op. cit., 303).<sup>12</sup> However, in political satire that combines ironic distance with criticism of neoliberal moral decadence, right-wing populism and conservatism, the limits of the recipient’s tolerance generally coincide with the feeling of belonging to particular communities determined by ideology, class and worldview. By inclusion or exclusion, the humorous or offensive effect of satire and parody largely depends on sharing the same beliefs, moral norms and political views. And while literary theory is an attempt to single out the formal and semantic elements of distinguishing satire from other humorous genres (Senker 2012), as folklorists and ethnologists we examine the culturally-conditioned individuality of a recipient’s response, which depends on his/her personal experience, convictions and sense of ethics. Even making a distinction between satire and a mocking form (*sfottò*), as proposed by the satirist Dario Fo, does not bring us any closer to saying that the majority of internet humor belongs to this “reactionary side of the humorous,”<sup>13</sup> which is based on imitation, mockery and low parody of someone’s physical appearance, ultimately humanizing the members of the political elite (Fo and Allegri 1990). On the contrary, a major part of ostensibly frivolous derision of the appearance and competences of Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and her political views, as seen in cartoons, photomontages and animated videos, has the ability to morally and ideologically lay bare the representatives of power, their hypocrisy, and the absurdity of their political promises. Alenka Zupančič similarly noticed that subversive comic effect is realized by “pointing out how the authority figure

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rivals according to which she turned the political life into *show business* today sound practically like a recommendation to the army of PR experts in political advertising.

<sup>12</sup> “That is, the funniest jokes are often those that are the most transgressive—those that tread the line between smashing taboos and correctly gauging the limits of the recipients’ tolerance. Thus, joke reception involves both aesthetic and ethical considerations” (Marsh 2012: 303).

<sup>13</sup> Gregor Moder (2013) summarizes key differences between “subversive” and “conservative” comedy as defined by Alenka Zupančič in her book *The Odd One In*: “The principle criterion for her is whether the comedy in question subscribes to the same symbolic or ideological constellation as the authorities it mocks from below, or truly subverts this very constellation by pointing out how the authority figure in fact already mocks itself precisely by performing its functions as an authority”.

in fact already mocks itself precisely by performing its functions as an authority” (comp. Moder 2013, fn. 1). This goes to show yet again that the primary motivation of even the “kindest” digital humorist and the “meanest” satirist remains the same – to tackle social injustices and paradoxes, the chasm between norms and everyday life, political ideals and practices, real and faux feminism. In such cases, the more balance between ethics and esthetics, the more universal the humorous effect.

As a feminist scholar, I am primarily interested in the (dis)continuity of morally “incorrect” humor that transforms political negativity into images of the fluidity of sexual markers and norms, linking the comic pleasure and relief with the discontents of (political) culture (Mitchell 1977). The inherent obscenity and transgression of humor is thus related to neuralgic points of modern society where “resistance to dominant social constructions of gender can be voiced”, as it is related to the way jokers “constitute themselves as masculine men and feminine women” (Crawford 2003: 1413). Gender distribution of political power is a significant symbolic marker of unequal division of power in society wherein gender stereotypes play a significant role in the evaluation of the qualities and competences of a person in a political arena. Our task is to examine the extent to which this rule applies in different societies and contexts. To wit, the results of a study, which the Center for Women’s Studies conducted from the period of parliamentary elections in 2003 until the parliamentary elections in 2011, show that the effect of gender stereotypes on voter attitudes was decreasing, but that prejudices towards women in positions of power and the “burden of family affairs” were recognized by voters as a reasonable justification for the underrepresentation of women in the representative and executive branches of the government (Šinko 2008, 2015; Siročić and Sutlović 2013).<sup>14</sup>

## FROM KOPRIVA’S LASCIVIOUS HUMOR TO FERAL’S VULGAR SATIRE

In any discussion of the (dis)continuity of gender stereotypes in political humor in the twentieth century in Croatia, two Croatian studies should be mentioned (Čale Feldman 2005; Ograjšek Gorenjak 2014) as well as an article (Jambrešić Kirin and Senjković 2010), referring not only to humorous discourse, but also to the public representation of women, particularly political activists, in the popular culture during and after the Second World War. In her study *Opasne iluzije: rodni stereotipi u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji* (Dangerous illusions: gender stereotypes in Yugoslavia between the two world wars), Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak (2014) looks into the period between the First and the Second World

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<sup>14</sup> A series of studies of election chances of female and male candidates in the western democracies shows that it is impossible to use election polls to measure the actual influence of gender stereotypes on the outcome of political elections because of the “hidden agenda” that is at play; at polling the respondents are mostly gender-fair, but change their opinion when they actually vote. Although the number of positive stereotypes about women politicians as being more capable, responsible and honest than their male colleagues has been on the rise since the mid-1990s, gender discrimination in political parties and resistance to political change still hinder qualified women in taking executive political positions in any larger numbers.

War. She analyzed the promotion of the idea of modern women through the editorial policies of Yugoslav women's magazines, legislature, and political programs, devoting a separate study to cartoons and satirical portrayals of the relationship between the genders in the Croatian satirical magazine *Kopriva* (1906–1939). The author concluded that the interwar advertisements regularly mocked women in public and professional roles, attacked sexual freedoms and the combativeness of socially-active women, and that their derision and criticism of the "reversed social order" contributed to the creation of new stereotypes of "successful" men and "desirable" women. The criticism that women's magazines directed at passive and dependent femininity did not simultaneously open a space for broader social and political topics, and promoted the success of women at "male jobs", thereby confirming the thesis of men as the normative segment of the society. In her systematization of cartoons from the interwar satirical magazine *Kopriva*, Ograjšek Gorenjak concluded that (gender) stereotypes influenced social processes through two systems of control: derision and marginalization. For instance, nations marginalized in The Kingdom of Yugoslavia were regularly depicted as women in political cartoons, whereas the dominant ones had a male identity.

Reana Senjković and Renata Jambrešić Kirin's study (2010) showed that gender stereotypes, as markers of the conflict between the old and the new, between tradition and revolution, conservatism and modernism, underwent ideological straining during the Second World War "propaganda wars", with the threatened nation/state being depicted as an unprotected or raped (Croatian) woman, and with women political activists and women partisans being blamed for sexual immorality and gender identity crisis ("muškarače" 'butch women'). By emphasizing the sacrificial and sublime quality of war heroines, the socialist (mediatized) culture of memory continued to "defend" the *skojevke*<sup>15</sup> and communist women against these insinuations, while the prototype of an exemplary patriotic woman was sought in the traditional culture and adapted to various contexts and cultural frameworks (monument-related, museum-related, film-related) until the new war in the 1990s. Pointing to the interrelationship between media constructions and the (at that time still evident) self-respect and dignity of former partisan women, the authors claimed that the majority of positive stereotypes about "exemplary" behavior of women in the war, as well as negative stereotypes about "immoral" behavior in the war, had their correlates in war posters, newspaper articles, and particularly cartoons aimed at discrediting the opposite ideological camp.

In her article *Tiranija tijela: Feralove fotomontaže* (The tyranny of the body: *Feral's* photomontages), Lada Čale Feldman (2005) claimed that the photomontages of leading Croatian politicians, and particularly of President Tuđman, derived their subversive potential from disrupting the advertising conventions whereby "reversed" public functions and interrelations were depicted as "normal" sexual relations with a dominant male and subordinated female characters/roles. The symbolic role of a subordinated woman (most

<sup>15</sup> Female members of the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia.

frequently with sexual connotations), was assumed, alongside President Tuđman, by an array of Croatian and foreign politicians and public personages. In addition to presenting satirical photomontages as a form of “ritualized gender or generational subordination”, Lada Čale also dealt with ideological and political subversion on the one hand, and the supra-political (esthetic and ethical) character of *Feral's* gender-incorrect humor on the other, which the bulk of readers considered vulgar. The issue of moral correctness of satire has become particularly acute after the murder of the associates of the French *Charlie Hebdo*<sup>16</sup> magazine. To wit: can esthetic categories of humor produce pleasure and understanding in those recipients who do not share the political, religious and worldview position that the humorous content presupposes, or, in other words, what is the reach of political humor and satire outside certain referent groups?

Although no satirical magazine or newspaper is published in Croatia today, and the heroic role of cartoonists as a critical voice is gradually falling into oblivion, journalists speak out against the increase of self-censorship and censorship embodied in publishing houses' editorial policies and other limitations of freedom of speech.<sup>17</sup> Extreme cases of (temporary) job loss happened to two Croatian National Television women reporters (Elizabeta Gojan and Hloverka Novak-Srzić), who were suspended for “inappropriate” reporting from the presidential inauguration on 15 February 2015. It seems that in the digital era the role of satirical newspapers has been taken over by internet portals, cable television networks and more or less anonymous YouTube products, with hand-drawn cartoons (for instance, those by Alem Ćurin, the legendary illustrator of *Feral*) being replaced by digital cartoons, digital compositions of juxtaposed bits of media, and particularly by animated clips and video-memes. Despite the speed and ease with which humor can circulate through social networks (with hundreds of thousands of views), it is difficult to say whether its reach and social impact is any larger than that of *Feral*, which, with its 10 to 30 thousand copies, was on display at all newsstands in Croatia, was regularly commented upon in the other media, public and private communication, and was internationally recognized.<sup>18</sup> All in all, today there are fewer and fewer lawsuits filed for libel and slander by politicians, and pornography – the reason of imposing a high tax on *Feral* – became regular practice in digital folklore, alongside sexism and ageism. If I were to try to identify certain schematic

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<sup>16</sup> The editorial staff of *Feral Tribune* started the cooperation with their colleagues in *Charlie Hebdo* in 1994.

<sup>17</sup> “The heroic period” of political satire in Croatia called for heroic acts and efforts by its main protagonists. In addition to serious threats and the shunning of editors and associates of the magazine, the ideological “showdown” with *Feral Tribune* started by levying a 50% sales tax intended for pornography magazines on them. Although the Croatian Constitutional Court annulled the decision in 1995, in the meantime the weekly had suffered immense financial damages, and the party in power at the time, Croatian Democratic Union, pushed a bill in 1996 according to which public criticism of the highest-ranking officials was punishable by law, so *Feral's* editors were again first in line for lawsuits.

<sup>18</sup> The magazine was awarded several internationally recognized awards: the Stefanel award in 1992, the International Press Directory award for freedom of the press in 1996, the World Association of Newspapers' *Golden Pen of Freedom* award in 1997, and the award at the *Forte dei Marmi* International fair of political satire for world's best political satire in 1998.

common features and key differences between *Feral's* iconographic humor and today's, largely animated satirical and humorous content, I would say the following:

- a) "Inappropriate" humorous representations of the presidential figure in the popular culture suggest that there is a lot of repressed content or collective unconscious related to the heritage of authoritarianism, tyranny and censorship, which still remains an important part of the Croatian contemporary political reality.
- b) Similarly to the early 1990s, today's political satire still has a primary target (the embodied personality of a politician), and is based on the incongruity between the public and the private, the "real" and the "performed" image of an exemplary (male/female) politician: humor is still generated through the opposition between the spirit and the body, between high and low content, between "normative" and "deviant" sexuality, the opposition of us vs. the other.
- c) Politicians as the objects of derision, irony and satire are given high visibility in the public space, humorous representations dislodge them from their environment, and turn them into an "iconographic type", as well as humanize them. Like *Feral's* photomontages, video memes draw "more attention to the manipulative character of strategies of media presence of the politicians, and focus less on this or that particular political attitude or decision" (Čale Feldman 2005: 120).

## FROM TABLOID TO VIRAL GENDER STEREOTYPES

Unsatisfactory, often trivial and sexist representation of women politicians in "serious" journalist discourse and political propaganda, as well as considerable emphasis in particular tabloid media on their (a)sexuality and a surplus or lack of "femininity", may not necessarily be a result of antipathy towards women in politics and in executive power, but rather a consequence of the neoliberal destruction of (local) media culture. Peripheral cultures like Croatian have easily adopted stereotypes, sensationalism and "striptease culture" (McNair 2004) imposed by media corporations, franchises of international tabloids and the related online portals which transfer the "democratization of sexual desire" to the political arena.<sup>19</sup> In order to emphasize the struggle for new cultural meanings of "politicized stereotypes" at the meeting point of mass media, social networks and vernacular communication, a struggle which is all the more present when it concerns a figure who should represent the national collective, I will reference the words of the president herself who, in her public appearance in the Vatican on 2 June 2016, during her visit to Pope Francis, quoted Marilyn Monroe: "It is hard to be a woman today: you must think like a man, act like a lady, pretend

<sup>19</sup> Although Scandinavian countries have the largest number of female politicians in parliaments and the local authorities (around 40%), and an enviable level of compliance with gender equality, their yellow press as an offshoot of liberal journalist corporations also abounds in sexist, vulgar and "gossip-like" representations of women.

you are a little girl, and work like a horse" (*Glorija* no. 1065, 2 June 2015). It is difficult not to recognize in this statement participatory consent to patriarchal codes (and imagery) determining what the family and the society require of a "successful woman", rather than clear feminist advocacy of gender equality.

In the Croatian context, it is particularly important to ask the question to what extent 21st century humor folklore, which is based on the Internet and the new social media, has been held hostage to the sexist gender stereotypes from traditional culture and the earlier pop-culture inventory (e.g. the woman politician as a sexual object dominated *Feral Tribune's* poetics), and how it regenerates the patterns of "low comedy" (burlesque, stupid jokes, rough jokes, vulgar humor) in new communicational forms and formats (memes, spam, chain emails, computer game jargon, etc.), the most influential of which are viral video-clips or "video memes". Jean Burges sees video memes "not so much as viruses but as mechanisms of mediation, by means of which cultural practices are initiated, transmitted and preserved within the social networks" (cited in Rone 2013), and communication scholar Henry Jenkins sees them as the basis of the digital "convergence culture" or "participatory culture" which requires participation by all in order to maintain cohesiveness of the community and the desired social harmony (Blank 2015: xiv). We could say that a video meme is a contemporary correlate of *Feral's* photomontages, where different transmutations of animated and documentary content, that is to say, different creations by anonymous and signed internet users, compete for our attention (*likes*) and further distribution, regardless of linguistic and national borders.<sup>20</sup> In this context, it is difficult to say which poetics of subversive "political humor" are promoted by anonymous users from below, and which cyber strategies of popularizing and humanizing politicians are pushed by well-paid political advertisers, as both are motivated by the desire to gain the greatest visibility of network locations, and, needless to say, constrained by the services, capabilities and limitations of online communication. And while the "system of capital is trying to gain control over the 'art of the folk' by channeling it, embedding it into schemes of transmedial narration parasitizing on it through ads [...], spontaneous cyberfolklore manages to evade the ever more cunning schemes of control and to transgress them" (Rone 2013). Given that a propensity for "tasteless", "sick" and "gross" humor in the oral culture is characteristic of the humor of male adolescents (cf. Blank 2013: 5), an analysis of the Croatian "humorous register" shows that this sort of infantilization is more typical of (online and print) tabloids, and even of political rhetoric in the region, then of popular viral videos, which are, rather, characterized by democratic accountability and a critical attitude towards ideological messages promoting conservative values.

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<sup>20</sup> "At the same time, in metaphorical aspect, we start understanding that we should be more cautious with the intellectual heritage of the past, for as socially constructed the nationalist ideology on folklore is, it still holds up, we are still "buying" it – both when creating folklore and when analyzing it. International video memes and email scams are inevitably altered when embedded in inherited historical, social and cultural contexts" (Rone 2013).

At this juncture, I cannot go into an in-depth discussion about the functioning of various types of “internet humor” – from cartoons to video-memes, from comics to stand-up comedy, from graphic puns to “stupid clips”. However, what should be emphasized is the blending of entertainment and informative media, and the exchange of “news” (in fact, jokes and rumors) between “serious” and tabloid or satirical portals, where I mostly focused on the satire show of the *NewsBar* portal.<sup>21</sup> According to the statements by the author of this portal, their satirical “news” items are frequently cited by other digital and e-media in the region, without questioning their truthfulness. For instance, one such piece of “news” was that Milorad Dodik prohibited jokes about Mujo and Haso, because there were a number of Serbian names that could take their place. In this context, I will also mention the “pornographic travesty” in the Serbian tabloid *Informer*,<sup>22</sup> which took a scene from an American porn film, entitling it “A Sexual Affair between Kolinda and a Serbian Guy”, and ran an invented story of a love affair, which was later varied and elaborated by the editors of numerous other portals.

## FROM POLITICAL SEXISM TO SUBVERSIVE FEMALE STAND-UP HUMOR

Frequent sexist and misogynist insults during the presidential campaign (“Barbie doll”, “picture with no sound”, “Harvard blond”), which morphed into “tabloid porn” of the yellow press, are based on morally and politically unacceptable ridicule of women as the other marked by their gender, whereas vernacular viral videos generally caricatured Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović in an affirmative way, as a pop-culture icon or “mask” (superhero, sex-symbol), confirming that it is “through the mediation of masks that the masculine and the

<sup>21</sup> I agree with Relja Dušek that the *Newsbar* portal may be the only successor worthy of *Feral's* satire, keeping in mind the poetic and communicational difference in the two media. Because of the immense popularity of the portal, their authors were asked to do a show (“Staged process”) on Croatian national television, however, in March 2016, the Croatian National Television management suddenly took the show off the air (after airing six episodes), providing an unusual explanation that the topic of the satirical show was abused to “incite religious, national and other intolerance” (Dušek 2016). The issue is, of course, “that it should be determined where the limit of satire is, who is the one setting the limit and what exactly is offensive to human dignity. As it stands, this is nothing but pure censorship” (Dušek 2016).

<sup>22</sup> “Thus, the *Informer* published the photo of a half-naked woman on the entire front page cover, that they claim to have been ‘delivered to them by Croatian intelligence’, saying that the photos ‘allegedly’ depict the newly-elected president Kolinda Grabar Kitarović. But the large headline contains her name and the claim that she ‘allegedly had a passionate love affair’ with an unnamed Serbian national. Numerous portals and tabloids expanded the story, ‘finding out’ that the ‘love affair’ lasted for several months in 2013 when Kolinda Grabar Kitarović was appointed as NATO’s Assistant General Secretary in Brussels, whereas others claimed that it was a pre-war affair ‘when KGK was a student’; others still introduced an unnamed ‘Serbian playboy’ into the story [...] Less than two days after the original story appeared, the chief editor of the *Informer* called up the press and denied the story in his own way. He admitted that the front page did not have a picture of Kolinda Grabar Kitarović but of an American porn actress, said that he would ‘take full responsibility’ and apologized to ‘the entire Serbian and Croatian public, the president of Croatia and all those who were affected by what we published’” (Halilović 2015).

feminine meet in the most acute, most intense way” (Lacan 1998: 107). Thus, although politicians as well as vernacular jokers equally adhered to social conventions which “stereotypically condition the “value” of women according to their physical appearance” (Ljubičić 2014),<sup>23</sup> the former abused their political power to provide “vertical” validation to patriarchal prejudices, whereas the latter induced horizontal symbolic interaction which “results in semiotic translations from one domain to another” (Blank 2013: 6), from the domain of high politics into the pop-culture domain of animated films and video games, pointing to the deep-seated disharmony within “conservative feminism” or, in other words, within “anti-women policies shrouded in pro-women rhetoric” (Valenti 2010)<sup>24</sup> of the presidential candidate and the spokesperson of the conservative agenda of the Croatian Democratic Union. However, what is worrying is the attempt to take both the negative and positive stereotypes of womanhood related to (political) power – in the case of Grabar-Kitarović, these were the attributes “the queen of the Balkans”, and “a mother, a woman, a queen” (Borić 2016) – and ground them in the hypertrophied images of female sex appeal, youth and beauty as legitimate sources of female power and repute. Thus, whereas prominent gender features and sex appeal were the principal reason for humorous transformations of the presidential candidate (from sexist rhetoric to cartoons and pornographic travesties), anonymous humor on YouTube more frequently ridiculed or mocked the content of her political rhetoric, professional (in)competence, i.e. her ethnocentric, militarist and authoritarian discourse. In a country where official politics constantly revives the “holy trinity” of patriotism, ethnonationalism and Catholicism, humor has an important place as a means of correcting what is imagined by contrasting with what has actually been achieved, and humorous strategies of coping with everyday difficulties, limitations and anxieties of everyday existence in a post/transition society are an important building element of the *counterpublic*. The very counterpublic which shapes and is shaped by its conflict with the norms, the cultural context and the discursive genres of the public as such (Warner 2005: 63, 67, 119), and which largely relies on social networks and the virtual space for communication.

<sup>23</sup> “When successful women are written about, their physical appearance is also frequently referenced, and they are described using terms unrelated to the public office or the topic of the text. Based on the social conventions that stereotypically condition the ‘value’ of women according to their physical appearance, these characteristics are mentioned without fail, especially if the women in question are young and beautiful. At the same time such practice does not exist when men are concerned”. Taken from the “Public statement related to the respect for the gender equality principle in the presidential election campaign”, Višnja Ljubičić, 26 November 2014, as cited in Latinović (2015).

<sup>24</sup> Sarah Palin, Republican candidate in the American 2008 presidential election, popularized this new “conservative feminist” ideology providing many conservative women with the opportunity to use the dreaded “F-word” [feminism]. Under the pretext that “matrifocal feminism” enables women to raise children as well as to lead an accomplished professional life, while fighting against the right to abortion, for a neoliberal agenda and fiscal liquidity as a guarantee of “women’s rights”, Palin threatened the core of emancipatory feminist action. As explained by Jessica Valenti – “Just as consumer culture tries to sell ‘Girls Gone Wild’-style sexism as ‘empowerment’, conservatives are trying to sell anti-women policies shrouded in pro-women rhetoric” (Valenti 2010).

Among the numerous examples of internet humor and satire prompted by the latest presidential campaign, I have singled out those examples that are characterized by some sort of semantic incongruence. These are mostly examples where the satirical edge is aimed at Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović as a party “pawn” lacking leadership experience, her own vision and clearly articulated political goals (for instance the viral YouTube clip *Barbie*), as well as a strong personality with organizational and leadership skills acquired in diplomacy and the military sector (the viral clip *Princess of Power*). The humorous effect generally causes disharmony and tension between the idea of her “feminine” subtlety, submissiveness and ideological ventriloquism, which is contrasted with supposedly masculine qualities such as natural authority and diplomatic skills. An almost equal number of online cartoons and animated video clips (published on the News-bar.hr, Eurocinik.com, Lakunoc.hr, Neprovjereno.com, Niktitanikstudio.com, Sprdex.net.hr and other portals) plays with the ambiguity of Kolinda’s role as a “transmitter” of the political ambitions of her former party and her own ambition and will for power.<sup>25</sup> They confirm that certain qualities, such as ambition and determination, desirable for male politicians, are considered unfeminine or comical in the case of women politicians. Certain jokes, for instance, suggest that Grabar-Kitarović, while working for the *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF), was nicknamed *SWMBO – She Who Must Be Obeyed* – and that her idol was Chuck Norris.

However, what is most encouraging for the researchers of the humorous mode of the Croatian counterpublic is the fact that a new generation of women graffiti artists, performers, activists and stand-up comedians<sup>26</sup> appeared, who, jointly, with much spirit, persistence and insight, fight against sexism, conservatism and the ideology of heteronormativity in the public space. One of the most popular comedians, Marijana Perinić, is touring with her “stand-up comedy show about the relations between men and women” entitled *Štiklom u glavu, loptom u dupe* (A stiletto in your head, a soccer ball in your ass) throughout the country, where she uses laughter and irony to point to many disparities of the proclaimed and lived gender egalitarianism, as well as the populism, conservatism and nationalism that dominate the political life of the nation. Her type of comedy is based on being able to imitate well-known personages, primarily politicians, and one of her most popular performances, “Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović by Marijana Perinić”, uses a satirical and humorous tone to portray and reinterpret the president’s victory speech, pointing at her artificial facial expressions and her mechanistic gestures which suggested a well-rehearsed routine, and

<sup>25</sup> Torild Skard’s (2015) study shows that, for instance in 2010, as many as 19% of women politicians obtained a high position by being substitutes, whereas 68% of them started their career as the so-called gradual climbers in a political party.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, taking only Zagreb into consideration, a number of female stand-up comedians perform there: Andrea Andrassy, Miranda Lončar, Marijana Perinić and Marina Orsag, who was declared one of top 20 worlds female comedians at the Montreux Comedy Festival recently. However, the thesis about “feminist subversiveness” of these women comedians should be taken with skepticism, because, as Lončar points out: “Stand-up comedy is interactive, and what we do is we adapt. [...] We are successful because we are funny, and we are funny because we adapt to the expectations of the audience, and we do not go against them” (cited from Starčević 2014).

exposing the vacuous populist promise that during her term citizens will no longer be divided into “mine and theirs, ours and yours”. (Of course, in the introductory greeting of the very same speech, president referred to Croatian citizens by dividing them into Croats in the country, in the diaspora, and others). Given that this is a foundational event in a new political paradigm of “matrifocal nationalism and conservatism” which has already been criticized by feminists and cultural critics (Baker 2015; Malenica 2015), the popularity of its satirical parody and Grabar-Kitarović’s benevolence towards Marijana Perinić’s show, also deserve to be analyzed. As opposed to numerous lawsuits which had been filed by politicians of the Croatian Democratic Party against the satirical weekly *Feral* for “mental suffering”, the new technocratic generation of politicians is aware that the media, and particularly digital popularity – through humorous discourse – makes for good advertising, guaranteeing greater popularity and omnipresence in the public eye.<sup>27</sup> Of course, due to the interactive, performance-based nature of stand-up comedy, the question remains what is the main reason behind “liking” Marijana Perinić as Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović in the “magnificent” historic inauguration of (Croatia’s) first woman president – whether it is Perinić’s ability to humanize the “magnified magnitude” of a person involved in a theatrical state ritual by copying her hairdo, clothes, posture and gestures, or whether it is a way to vent satirical laughter at the expense of her conservative and xenophobic rhetoric.

The performative ability to point to the gap, shift or lacuna in duplicating and exaggerating all that constitutes the public, ritual “presentation of the self” does not always lead to semantic (ideologically coded) transgression, nor does it result in affective release, willingness to be identified (or to sympathize) with the “glimpses of humanity” seen in the object of comic imitation and irony. As opposed to that, the show entitled “Kolinda i Jakov na humanitarnom showu *Štiklom u glavu, loptom u dupe*” (Kolinda and Jakov at the humanitarian show *A stiletto in your head, a soccer ball in your ass*), whose proceeds went to the victims of the flood in Gunja in 2014, turns its satirical edge to the “reversed gender order”, to Jakov Kitarović, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović’s husband, whom Perinić refers to as “the quietest and largest Croatian first lady”, alluding to his *silent* appearance and formal presence on ceremonial and diplomatic occasions. During the one-hour show, the performer playing the president’s husband stands on the stage in complete silence, smiling and occasionally waving to the audience. By ridiculing what is seen as the reversed gender order, Perinić, in a completely non-feminist way, not only flirts with populist opinions and gender stereotypes, but offensively ridicules “unmanly men”. In an environment

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<sup>27</sup> For instance, Grabar-Kitarović did not file charges against the Serbian tabloid *Informer* that made up the story about “the secret love of the Croatian president and an unnamed Serbian national”, and falsely presented her by using an image of an American porn star. The Serbian Minister of Culture and Information launched an investigation into this tabloid hoax, which numerous portals in the region and in Croatia ran, and “as the media in Serbia claim, the editor will probably be fined 400 to 1400 Euro for ‘pornography on the front page’. The problem is pornography, nothing else! The entire story is ‘ideal’ for legal action for libel and defamation, the apology, hedges (‘allegedly’) and the retraction notwithstanding. Whether there will be a lawsuit or not, I do not know. In order for there to be a lawsuit, it would have to be filed by the injured party (Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović)” (Halilović 2015).

which has only recently been introduced to fathers taking paternity leave, and has only recently encountered issues that successful women professionals face in their family life, mockery of and even contempt for “unmanly men” and loving fathers does not contribute to gender egalitarianism, but dishonors the value that feminists place on care and raising children as a social mission. We could say that, both in everyday communication and in the humor register, these men come at the very bottom of the gender hierarchy, below queer men and women. Although Perinić skillfully plays with the ironic disharmony caused by the “clash” of hypertrophied attributes of femininity and diplomatic decency of dress, and ridicules the mechanistic repetitiveness of current president’s facial expressions during speech making, she does not diminish her leadership skills nor does she present her as a “puppet on a string of party politics”. What she does notice as a problem of the contemporary political scene is the belief that sex is insignificant for the successful performance of presidential or party duties. When the main character in her show says: “I no longer know whether I am a man or a woman”, this is a humorous way of making us aware of the sociopolitical fact that sex and gender are no longer pivotal in creating a political persona and one’s charisma, no matter how much marketing experts try to make it so.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS: FROM THE CULTURE OF THE SPECTACLE TO WOMEN’S CULTURE OF COMIC RESISTANCE

In order to gain an anthropological understanding of the (dis)continuities in pop-cultural strategies of “tackling” the authoritarian heritage of Josip Broz Tito and Franjo Tuđman, it is important to understand the role of ritual elements in the construction of the presidential figure (cf. Arkhipova 2012); and these ritual elements, as it seems, are still gaining in importance in the medialized and digitally mediated culture. Some time ago, anthropologists of performance, Turner and Bruner (1986), put forward the idea that ritual and pseudo-ritual practices can channel many social contradictions, and transform tensions into a “coherent sociocultural field” (1986: 34). Don Handelman concluded that ceremonial spectacles – like inaugurations – are the other face of state bureaucracy, which can be paralyzed by a single stroke of the pen or a computer command; they are “colored spectacles” whose frozenness reflects “statehood fictions” (1990: 34). One such fiction is the belief that, as claimed by Dražen Vukov Colić (2015), Croatia has had a number of competent female leaders – from Milka Planinc, through Savka Dabčević Kučar to the current president – who are not “very loyal followers or very dangerous avengers” but politicians with a more consistent and far-reaching vision of the development of the Croatian society than that of their male colleagues. Similarly to tabloid representations, in digital humor folklore (with satirical portals such as News Bar, Eurocinik, Laku noć Hrvatska or Nik Titanik at the forefront) gender characteristics and the sex appeal of the person acting as president are the primary targets of the humorous transgression, and her political rhetoric, professional (in)competence, management style, public persona, dominant role in her marriage, etc.

are the secondary target of mocking and derision. As opposed to that, the humor offered by women stand-up comedians, despite the mentioned criticism, has a feminist charge and is a valuable political corrective not only to the noncritical culture of magnifying the “presidential charisma”, but also to the liberal, populist and socially insensitive feminism promoted by most Croatian women politicians today. By offering “a handful of tears, a bagful of laughter”, women comedians like Perinić show that in Croatia women are more educated than men, that they are equally capable of being in any public office, that a monoethnic country is not a civilizational achievement in itself, that patriotism is not and cannot be the response to the existing social and political problems, and that homophobia, xenophobia and lack of solidarity are not acceptable in this, the most recent EU member country. Only in this way, with a willingness to do more than addressing bittersweet laugh at the very same messages that we circle on our ballots, is it possible to renew the faith in the power of emancipatory politics towards women, which, not without resistance and backlash, keeps opening new areas of personal and collective affirmation.

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## **"DAJ, DAJ, DAJ KOLINDA, ZAPJEVAJ MALO S NAMA, ZAPLEŠI MALO SAMA": HUMORISTIČNE REPREZENTACIJE HRVATSKE PREDsjedNICE**

Namjera je ovog rada ponuditi analizu pojedinih performativnih i internetskih žanrova u kojima se na nov način semiotički transferiraju tradicijski humoristički žanrovi (šala, ironija, satira) na račun prve hrvatske predsjednice Kolinde Grabar-Kitarović. Unatoč činjenici da je od 1991. nekoliko žena u Hrvatskoj obnašalo odgovorne političke funkcije, izborna kampanja a potom i pobjeda Kolinde Grabar-Kitarović, izazvali su lavinu internetskog folklorista koji vabi za interdisciplinarnim pristupom. Poseban izazov za folkloriste predstavlja transgresivna priroda humora i satire, to jest transgresije kulturnih, moralnih i političkih normi u različitim diskursima – od humorističkog političkog aktivizma do satiričnih "provokacija". U radu se propituju pojmovi "uvredljivog" i "neuvredljivog" humora (od neslane šale do nedolične sprdnje), javnosti i protujavnosti, popularne i vernakularne kulture u digitalno doba, kao i folkloristička postavka da humorističke žanrove obilježuju: estetska priroda, svojstvo transgresije i element igre. Folkloristički pristup nadopunjuje feminističkom analizom sociokulturalnih, političkih i rodničkih karakteristika odabranih humorističkih žanrova (posebice *stand up* performansa) u čijem je fokusu podrivanje binarnih rodničkih kategorija. Obilježje humorističkih odgovora na javne nastupe i izgled prve hrvatske predsjednice možemo tumačiti kao a) signal kraja jedne ere obilježene autoritarnim političarima i režimima vladanja; b) osnaživanje digitalne protujavnosti koja subvertira "matrifokalnu" nacionalističku i konzervativnu agendu i c) posljedicu neoliberalnog protuslovlja u kojem feminizaciju (devalvirane) političke sfere prati jačanje konzervativnih, rasističkih i homofobnih snaga u društvu.

Ključne riječi: humor i politika, digitalni folklor, političarke i pseudofeminizam, protujavnost, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Marijana Perinić