
THE VISION OF ANDRIĆ OF OTHERNESS: THE JEWS AS "IMAGINED COMMUNITY"*¹

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Abstract

Through Anderson's concept of "imagined community", we interpret Andrić's romantic understanding of Jews in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Namely, in their prose texts, the dichotomy "we" and "they" is appreciated, that is, the Jewish community is presented as separate and substantially different from the others in the complex Bosnian-ethnic-religious environment. Despite the fact that the writer feels the Jews, especially the native Sephardim, as members of an exotic "otherness", he writes about them with great empathy while continuing to reaffirm diversity. Their feelings culminate in passages related to the Holocaust, in which the "otherness" is erased and they become "our destroyed and annihilated Sephardi".

Keywords: Ivo Andrić, Sephardic Jews in Bosnia, modernity, nationalism, otherness, imagined community

1.- Introduction: socio-historical and cultural context.

The multicultural history of multi-ethnic relations in the Balkans is replete with contacts between different religions, languages, traditions and cultures. In their constant entanglement, there was a dense network of identities, which in different times and in different ways merged and clashed. At the confluence of conflicts and cultural, religious and political fusions, the Balkan Peninsula, until the mid-nineteenth century, oscillates between the pre-modern and eastern ideology of the Ottoman Empire and the modernity of Western and Central Europe. "Modernity is

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[...] a set of ideas and aspirations formulated by the Enlightenment at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century" (Žunjić 2009: 107), and for that reason it represents a broad civilizational construct that is reflected in the political, social, scientific and artistic sphere of public and private life of the Eurocentric universe (Habermas, 1981, Bauman and Briggs, 2003, Atkinson, 2008; Filipović, 2015). The Enlightenment brings confirmation of civil status, the emancipatory idea of general literacy, or the right to education for all, imbued in the romantic spirit of individualism, and later in the identification with the cultural characteristics and traditions of the people themselves (according to Žunjić, 2009), giving rise to the development of the romantic ideas of nationalism on one hand, and an idealized evaluation of ethnicity and national identity, on the other, which is reflected in the thinking of Balkan intellectuals: "In these times of awakening, the consciousness of the cultural nations of the peoples of Europe, the Austro-Hungarian Empire is a living anachronism", says Aleksandar Belić (1915/1991:9) at the beginning of the First World War, stating that "in the past [...] the privileged classes took the country and governed what was convenient to their interests, thoughts and feelings: today the people are the rulers of the state [...]" (Belić, 1915/1991:94).

The nationalism of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as one of the key currents of modernity in the Balkans, according to the specificities of the historical social and political context of this region, is interpreted through the elites of the ethnic and religious groups that populated it, as a "national awakening" and a "liberation from the yoke" of two great empires (Kitromilides, 1989). This understanding of nationalism, along with "Eurocentric (academic) provincialism" leads to the creation of "imagined communities," based on "cultural artifacts of a particular type" (Anderson, 1983/1991/2003:xiii). In this way, ethnic markers have become the main characteristics of both conflicts and cooperation, and based on them some groups have been included or excluded from the "we", that is to say "they".

Aesthetically, the early modernity is based on the opposition between tradition and the present (Habermas, 1981:4), or on the revelation of the impossibility of a reconciliation between the aesthetic world and the social world (Habermas, 1981:10). In this sense, Ivo Andrić writes about the Jews in Bosnia. From its oldest texts, such as the doctoral thesis, defended at the University of Graz, in 1924, or through prose texts: novels, short stories, essays and occasional articles reprinted several times in separate or periodic publications until after his death, there are repeated observations about Bosnian Jews in which the romantic dichotomy of "we" and "they" is observed, in which the Jewish community is seen as separate and very different from other religious and ethnic communities in

Bosnia, but united with them in coexistence and common misfortunes. It is precisely because of this aspect of the notion of the Jewish community in Bosnia that we use the term "imagined community", fully aware of the fact that is not used as the authentic interpretation imposed by Benedict Anderson. We do not look at the political characteristics of the term that it includes (sovereignty), but at the cultural implications (diversity and delimitation in relation to other ethnic communities), which are observed from the perspective of the "project of modernity" (Habermas, 1981), and provide the context for the "ecstasy of religious-aesthetic tone to find its spectators mainly in the circle of intellectuals who seem willing to consummate the *sacrificium intellectus* on the altar of their own need for guidance" (Habermas, 1987:310).

Turning to the past, Andrić pays more attention to the native Sephardim than to the Ashkenazi, who came in large numbers to Bosnian territory after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of 1878. He emphasizes the fact that these are the direct descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain, who, from the middle of the sixteenth century, led a traditional life isolated in the complex ethnic and religious space of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore, the Sephardic identity and the Jewish-Spanish language, together with the Hebrew alphabet in which they write, for him, are essential elements of an exotic "other".

However, Andrić wrote about this otherness with a lot of empathy and affirming the diversity to which he constantly refers, in a continuous dialectic relationship between acceptance and evaluation of otherness, on one hand, and complete identification with the perspective of the otherness, on the other. The identification and empathy culminate with Andrić's observation of the suffering of the Yugoslav Jews in World War II. Noting these bitter experiences that the Jews share with the Serbs, the writer finally erases the boundaries between "us" and "them" and proclaims the Bosnian Jews as "our Jews". In this way, those who were "few and totally isolated, without blood, nor religious and linguistic connection with other groups" (Andrić, 1955:257) become "our destroyed and annihilated Sephardim".

We believe that this type of dichotomy in the evaluation and interpretation of the other and the different is still a feature of the space in which we live. Consequently, it is postulated that any consideration of variable attitudes towards ethnicities in Southeast Europe, both in the diachronic and in the synchronic perspective, should be established as a transdisciplinary effort that seeks to shed light on the complexity of the underlying factors in interactions both within these

same groups and between groups in the multicultural context of the Balkans, which has long ceased to be a purely geographical concept.²

In a methodological sense, we rely on critical sociolinguistics and critical analysis of discourses, which in a complex and committed way address oral and written discourse. In the context of constructivist linguistic analysis, it should be considered "analyzes social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show up their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon the system." (Fairclough, 2001: 5). Thus, language is treated as one of the key factors in the construction of cognitive cultural³ models and ideology⁴ that also define the conditions of our attitudes, beliefs, interpretations, sensations and reactions, both individual and collective (Filipović, 2015:23). The general objective of this analysis, which is presented in terms of Andrić's vision of the otherness and understanding of the Bosnian Jews as an "imagined community", is to highlight the fact that the interpretation of a text written in the field of fiction and essay is also a fertile ground for the dissemination of cognition that is at the center of all our understanding of the world where we were born and live.

In order to better understand these changes, it is necessary to establish interdisciplinary cooperation and constructive dialogue between researchers and interested communities that cross ethnic, religious and linguistic boundaries and, in true transdisciplinary terms, link "solutions based on scientific work to the problems of the real world, whose high degree of complexity is reflected in the fluctuations of events, value systems and social actors" (Wiesmann et al., 2008:6).

In fact, we try to study the "imagined communities" through a complex approach (in opposition to the positivist scientific method created from modernity, which considers all phenomena as homogenous and hierarchically organized systems), placing us in the creation of a contextualized and non-linear knowledge (Filipović, 2015:29). From theoretical abstractions, we proceed to the analysis of interpersonal interaction, which we consider as a set of complex systems (unlike linear and established): [...] consisting of components which cannot be analyzed or

² For more detailed information on the transdisciplinary and complex approach to linguistic analysis, v. Filipovic (2015).

³ The cognitive cultural model is a term taken from cognitive anthropology and is related to the idea that our understanding of the world and its successful development is the result of the construction of a social knowledge system (Hudson, 2001). These are theoretical constructs, representative hierarchical structures that are (often implicitly and unconsciously) transgenerational, transmitted by members of a particular cultural community (D'Andrade, 1992, 1995).

⁴ The term ideology is defined in this text as a social phenomenon, which refers to collective attitudes and beliefs, that is, to conventional cognitive structures that help us understand the facts that we face daily in the context in which we live (Cameron, 2003; Frieden, 2003).

understood independently or in simple one-on-one relationship. Constituents of any complex system interact with other constituents within that same system (as well as with members of other systems) in a number of ways, thus producing novel and unpredictable results which are beyond the simple objectivist paradigm. Complex systems are open and sensitive to feedback (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), non-linear, accommodating, self-organized and adaptive" (Filipović, 2015:30).

2.- The Jews from the vision of Andrić.

a) Andrić and the Jews: introductory remarks. From the biography of Andrić, it is clear that he came from a space in which the Jews were an integral part for centuries⁵. The considerable continuity of interest in the Jewish characters by Andrić, which can be observed from 1930 to the present⁶, and as well as the observations of the authors who have studied it, not only testify to the desire to better illuminate some of the literary and cultural aspects of the work of a great writer, but also, at the same time, to pay tribute to the Bosnian Jews and known and unknown Yugoslavian who died tragically during World War II⁷.

At the beginning of her analysis of Andrić's Jewish characters and their functions in literary works, Krinka Vidakovic-Petrovic points out an important fact for his understanding: that "Andrić's intention was not to write specifically about the Jews, but about them as a an integral part of multi-cultural and multi-religious Bosnia "since" its [...] basic theme was the Bosnian environment" (Vidaković-

⁵ The Sephardic Jews arrived in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the territory of the Ottoman Empire, where they found refuge after their expulsion at the end of the 15th century. The scarce data preserved indicate that, following the Ottoman advance towards the west, they settled in Sarajevo in the sixties of the 16th century. During the first half of the century, they are concentrated in the great inn built in 1581, and in the middle of the XVII century, and especially since the beginning of the XVIII century, they inhabit another mahalla in this city. In the first half of the 19th century, the Jewish population lived in the old Jewish quarter and in six more mixed mahalla, mostly Muslim (Vučina-Simović, 2012:42-43). The Sephardim lived in an oriental way (which included a strict patriarchal order in the family and society and life was subordinated to religion and traditions) until the occupation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1878), when almost from day to night they become part of Western European civilization. His active participation in modernization processes was further encouraged by the arrival of Ashkenazi Jews, who after the occupation began arriving in large numbers in Bosnia-Herzegovina from various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Different from native Jews because of their customs, mentality and language, the Ashkenazi founded private schools and religious and lay associations in areas where they were in sufficient numbers. The social and linguistic gap between the two groups began to emerge from the beginning of the 20th century when they brought together common Zionist ideas and activities. Their union occurred after the misfortunes that occurred during the Second World War (Vučina-Simović, 2012:44-46,58)

⁶ We would establish separately Finč (1930); Strunjas (1967); Puvačić (1986); Kontantinović (1991), Đukić Perišić (2005); Gorup (2006); Inđić (2006); Vidaković-Petrov (2012, 2015).

⁷ And in his first novel *The aroma of the Rain in the Balkans* (1986), Gordana Kuic decided to insert a fragment of Andrić's essay in the Jewish cemetery.

Petrov, 2012:192). In this question, "Andrić approached Judaism from different perspectives, in a complex manner and in the context of more general issues" (Vidaković-Petrov, 2012:200), addressing important problems of individuals and communities:

"His approach is manifested through Jewish characters and the different functions they have in various works, so they can be classified into six categories or types. The first is a psychologically deeper archetypal figure taken from Old Testament sources ("The winner") The second type occurs mainly in writings with a dominant historical plot (*The Days of the Consuls* and *The bridge on the Drina*): where the characters are incarnations of the Jewish community, as interactive components of the space of a multicultural Bosnia, and reflect certain aspects of the collective mentality. The third type occurs in the works, in which Andrić deals with the genesis of evil, its specific manifestations (anti-Semitism) and the analysis of the psychology of the executors and of the victims ("Children" and "Buffet Titanic"). The fourth type are Jewish characters that appear within the themes of identity ("intervening" people), the mediation, the transformation of reality into fiction, speech and narration (*The Dammed Yard*, "Words", "A letter of 1920"). The fifth type are two female characters (Rifka from the tale "Love in the city" and Lotka from the novel "The bridge on the Drina"), with which Andrić in his understanding of the Jewish theme introduces with a gender perspective. The sixth type are secondary characters in several works by Andrić (*The young lady* and "Under the hornbeam"), who mainly develop a foundation function of the profile of the main characters" (Vidaković-Petrov, 2012:200).

For our analysis of Andrić's vision of the Jews as an "imagined community" and "the others", we have been served by the works in which the second type of categorization appears: the individuals who are the personification of their community in the historical view of the writer's Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to them, we also analyze other prose genres in which he covers Jews and Judaism. In particular, Andrić illustrates the same community and its traditions also as an expert on the cultural history of Bosnia-Herzegovina in his doctoral thesis "The development of the spiritual life in Bosnia under the influence of Turkish domination (Graz, 1924), and as neighbor, acquaintance and friend of the Jews in the essay "In the Jewish Cemetery" (1954) and in his memorable and occasional texts that he wrote in homage to Kalmi Baruch ("Recalling Kalmi Baruch", 1952, "Commemoration to Kalmi Baruch", 1961) and Isaac Samokovlija ("Isak

Samokovlija", 1954; "Summer day - a brief memory of the youth of Isak Samokovlija", 1955)⁸.

b) "Imagined communities" in Andrić's historical vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We start from Anderson's assertions that in modern times nationalism became the backbone of ethnic identification and evolved through "imagined communities" based on national ideologies conceived as "cultural artifacts of a special kind" (Anderson, 1983/1991/2003:xiii). However, in the context of our analysis, "imagined communities" are considered primarily as separate, or different, but not sovereign (which is the second part of Anderson's famous definition)⁹.

The concept of "imagined communities" of the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the vision of Andrić, seems to be one of the essential constants of his extensive work. Analyzing the degree to which his work reflects the vision of Yugoslavia as an "imagined community", Wachtel (1995:83-84) showed that this writer, through his literary work, like other great national ideologues, created an "imagined Yugoslav nation", based on "the specificities of its historical experience". The same author indicates that Andrić's dedication to history through a variety of prose forms and through the use of various "archaeological" methods has not only served to imagine the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also for the interpretation of its present and future. An illustration of this phenomenon, Wachtel finds it precisely in the essay "In the Jewish cemetery", in which Andrić says that "the history of cemeteries makes sense and justification if it sheds light on the future of current or future generations."

The understanding of the ideas of Bosnia on the interaction of different ethnic and religious groups in a synchronic and diachronic perspective, among them the Jews, is expressed through the "imagined community", which is characterized by a constant romanticism, and idealization and characterization abstract of the group. Interestingly, the preference for the romantic vision of Bosnia's national

⁸ These texts have been published on various occasions in literary publications (*Život: mjesečni časopis za književnost i kulturu*, *Savremenik*, *Glas Odeljenja literature i jezika SANU*) and in Yugoslav Jewish editions (*Jevrejski almanah 1955-1956, 1959-1960, Spomenica 400 godina od Dolaska Jevreja u Bosnu i Hercegovinu: 1566-1966*).

⁹ While we use Anderson's concept for the analysis of Andrić's understanding of interpersonal and interethnic interaction in the modern era, in recent literature, we find a different view of "imagined communities" in the context of the Sephardim. Namely, the editors of the *Sepharad* as an imagined community: language, history and religion from the eve of the Modern Age to the 21st century), M. Şaul y J. I. Hualde (2017) use the term to indicate more or less changing forms in which the Eastern Sephardim, within the framework of their "translocal Mediterranean community", perceived their own identity and language from early modernity to the present.

identities permeates his texts regardless of gender¹⁰ and despite the fact that it is a medium that he knows well and is actively present in his personal life.

Although Andrić values the cultural and historical heritage of Bosnia, it is precisely in the insurmountable differences of its inhabitants, where he finds the causes of secular and reciprocal hatred that, as a kind of curse, follows the lives of its inhabitants: "Whoever lies awake at night in Sarajevo hears the voices of the Sarajevo night. The clock on the Catholic cathedral strikes the hour with weighty confidence: 2 am. More than a minute passes (to be exact, seventy-five seconds - I counted) and only then with a rather weaker, but piercing sound does the Orthodox church announce the hour, and chime its own 2 am. A moment after it the tower clock on the Bey's mosque strikes the hour in a hoarse, faraway voice, and that strikes 11, the ghostly Turkish hour, by the strange calculation of distant and alien parts of the world. The Jews have no clock to sound their hour, so God alone knows what time it is for them by the Sephardic reckoning or the Ashkenazi. Thus at night, while everyone is sleeping, division keeps vigil in the counting of the late, small hours, and separates these sleeping people who, awake, rejoice and mourn, feast and fast by four different and antagonistic calendars, and send all their prayers and wishes to one heaven in four different ecclesiastical languages. And this difference, sometimes visible and open, sometimes invisible and hidden, is always similar to hatred, and often completely identical with it" (Andrić, "A letter from 1920"/1946, online document).

c) The "we" and the "them" imagined. In Andrić's historical vision of the country of great complexity, the differences between the different groups are often insisted on through the dichotomy "we" and "them"; in which both sides become relatively abstract phenomena and generalized with a positive or negative sign.

Wahtel (1995) points out that the author, within the narrative perspective, presents himself as an "inclusive narrator in the first person plural" that eliminates the limits between the narration "from within" and "from the outside". He is an "insider" who skillfully avoids identifying with any of the groups he refers to, but is still "a part of the land and people he describes, the sum total of the Yugoslav historical process, even when he is outside of their lives" (Wahtel, 1995:91).

Our corpus shows that in Andrić's understanding of the Jews in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a differentiated line between "us" and "them" is clearly visible,

¹⁰ In the "Prologue" of his dissertation, it is said that in terms of content and conceptually it is "related to other works that [he] prepared in another form and on another occasion" (Andrić, 2017:11).

although accompanied by a positive evaluation of the differences, in particular the roots, language, religion and Iberian traditions of the Sephardic Jews.

Krinka Vidakovic-Petrov (2015) has observed the author's opinion about the Jews as the "other" within the framework of a broader typology of otherness based on "The Days of the Consuls". Their results show that Jews as "the others" are fundamentally different from the other "others" who "are constituted [...] in the field of reality and transferred to the domain of narrative", and these are the "another Western European", temporarily entering the Bosnian world at the beginning of the 19th century, and the "other" whose representatives are "on the edge", and at the same time, in both worlds, and outside both" (Vidaković-Petrov, 2015:252-253). This are the Jews, who are ethnically, religiously, culturally and linguistically different from other communities, and who lived for centuries closed in on themselves and "in a relationship parallel, without any substantive communication" with neighboring towns (Vidaković-Petrov, 2015:254,257)¹¹.

In the essay "In the Jewish cemetery", although the Sephardim are portrayed as outsiders, the writer does not disguise their empathy towards them: "To survive under such conditions, these expelled old Jews had to be wise and obey even more than the Christian community" (Andrić, 1956:257).

The same source indicates that the Hebrew-Spanish language and the Hebrew alphabet with which they wrote are essential elements of "otherness", as well as "factors of isolation" (Vidaković-Petrov, 2012).

"Behind all these Hebrew letters incomprehensible to *us*, as behind the thinnest curtains, but of each more hard wall, that part of the Sephardic life that *they* maintained through many centuries is hidden. The other curtain is *their* Spanish language. For more than four centuries, *they* kept and took care of this wonderful mother tongue, although *they* could not develop it or preserve it, so that it would not be petrified or damaged. In this language there were weddings and love songs and romance from *their* native Andalusia, and *they* used it in private and business.

Those two distant sides of the writing system and two foreign languages were for them *their* means of conservation and necessary separation, as two codes in the long struggle of *their* lives" (Andrić, 1956:259, italics is ours).

The writer especially highlights the fact that the Sephardim are direct descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain. Taking the romantic enthusiasm, it

¹¹ The ethnic, religious and linguistic identity of the Sephardim remained unchanged in the Eastern period, thanks to the specific autonomy and isolation of their communities, which, like the others at that time, were strictly patriarchal and deeply religious. In addition, the Sephardim maintained close social, cultural and economic relations with other Sephardic communities throughout the East within the common "cultural zone", while maintaining very superficial contact with members of other religious and ethnic communities in their immediate surroundings (Vučina-Simović, 2012:43).

transmits and spreads beliefs that arose in the modern era in which all the Sephardic Jews came from the "sunny Andalusia" and that for centuries felt nostalgia for the lost "homeland". In this spirit, the narrator of "The Days of the Consuls" tells the "exotic" story of the Sephardic Atiyas family: "As far as their family is known, even when they were old, while living in Spain, they were doctors and pharmacists. The skills of the Atiyas continued as the expelled and the refugees, first in Thessaloniki, and then in Travnik. [...] In the family, the books and notes of famous Arab and Spanish doctors were kept, taken by the Atiyasi as exiles when they left Andalusia and carried objects of a secret value from one generation to another" (Andrić, 1991:19).

In the essay "In the Jewish Cemetery", Sephardic names and female names are listed to convey the "exotic otherness" of the Sephardic tradition with more precision: "Basting my steps among the narrow rows of tombs, I decipher the banal words and the known names, always the same: Abinun, Albahari, Altaraz, Atias, Baruch, Cabillo, Calderon, Camhi, Catan, Cayon, Conforti, Cunorti, Daniti, Danon, Eshkenazi, Finzi, Gaon, Levi, Maestro, Montillo, Ovadia, Ozmo, Pardo, Pesah, Pinto, Salom. The names of their wives contain a bit of music and poetry from distant sunny countries: Anula, Gentila, Gioia, Rika, Masaita, Luna, Buena, Palomba, Simha, Oro" (Andrić, 1956:260).

Although often described as different and significantly different from other religious and ethnic communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Sephardic community, however, for Andrić they have joined them in terms of coexistence and common misfortunes. For this reason, it is not surprising that he pays less attention to the Ashkenazi, who in large numbers reach the Bosnian environment only with the Austro-Hungarian occupation. In the following paragraph, the writer presents the previous idea through the variants of the dichotomy "we" and "they": "*Their* story, which will need to be written ... will show not only the fate of the Sephardim but also the all variety and complexity of *our* social life in the past, because, however much *they* presented the world to themselves, *they* were, in the same way, a living part of *our* common community" (Andrić, 1956:258, the italics is ours).

Although the Sephardim represent an exotic world for Andrić, this is a world he knows well since childhood: "Behind those words and letters, I can see the small and alive Sephardic world of *our* childhood. Merchants with big feces in *their* heads, bent bearers, minor sellers, artisans in *their* shops, *their* old women still in Sephardic Oriental costumes, *their* children, well dressed, rich and careless, skinny, of the poor. I feel the smell of *their* courtyards and hear their Spanish exclamations, alive and guttural mixed with *our* words. A world that no longer exists. And that

does not exist, this also says this cemetery with the alive signs and the visible traces of the great drama of people" (Andrić, 1956:261, italics are ours)

Finci (1930), indicating that the Hebrew characters with non-Jewish writers of the time seem very "decorative", criticizes Andrić wrote "Love in the Kasaba" (1923) "without aiming at Judaism". However, just before Finci made this evaluation (although with the praise that it represents the "best artistic story about the Jews") Andrić was related in Spain with the Bosnian Sephardi Kalmi Baruh, thanks to which he deepened his knowledge about the Jewish environment. Baruch was one of the few Sephardic Jews who dedicated themselves professionally to the Spanish language and to the spread of modern literature and Spanish culture in the East and in particular the former Yugoslavia. He was a guide for Andrić of the Sephardic and Spanish otherness during a joint stay in Madrid and during some visits to important Spanish cities (1928-1929). The impressions of Andrić after his meeting with a Spanish boy in the streets of Segovia, with whom they spoke about the exiled Jews, illustrate the degree to which the writer moves by the fate of the Sephardic Jews: "We were both there for a while, in that place. Somewhere, from an invisible church, a bell rang monotonously and untiringly like a hammer from a dull and ruthless time. I did not know what to say. But I felt, and this is not a romantic figure that I am using, as if the wings of history whisper over our heads and the centuries will come and miraculously face each other. I felt like a witness and a silent face in that socio-historical drama that began in that country three and a half centuries ago, and that, as it seems, does not have an end and one of its tragicomic acts is being played at this moment, in this stone pavement, under a white street sign with blue letters" (Andrić, 1959:215).

In the preface to the Slovenian edition of Isak Samokovlija's stories, Andrić wants to bring readers closer to the Sephardic setting from which his school friend and Sephardic colleague came, and explain how the Sephardim fused with the Bosnian environment: "But, of course, this community could not resist the influence of those with whom it had lived for centuries. The common life and the necessities of the daily behavior inevitably brought the infiltration of elements of language and Slavic and Turkish customs in the life of our Sephardic Jews. Because if they used Hebrew in the synagogue and the Spanish language at home, they were forced to speak Turkish with the "Bosnian" people and with the representatives of the authorities. Life required of them all of this. Newcomers and different from us, they became a unit with us" (Andrić, 1976:209).

Andrić's feelings culminate in passages that refer to the Holocaust, in which the "otherness" is erased and they simply become "our destroyed and annihilated Sephardim".

"They are the trace of the occupants or ustachas, of their sickly hatred and dark stupidity and their butts or boots.

Standing, with the palm of the hand on the stone, as many others will be, I lose myself in a lively duel and I think of a common defense that humanity, if it deserves this name, must organize against all international crimes to erect thus a safe dock and retaliation for all the murderers of persons and peoples" (Andrić, 1956:261).

"Because, as we know, the tragic, constant and inexorable flow of the historical process, whose vapor I think I felt at the corner of the dark "Jewish street" in Segovia, caught K. Baruh in his best years [...] Together with thousands and millions of people, was also the victim of a bestial racism, was ruined like many others, without their own fault and without the possibility of defending themselves. We have lost a true hispanist (I say it objectively, leaving aside personal repentance and the loss of a truly wonderful man and friend of men)" (Andrić, 1959:215)

"This short note remains, in the jubilee edition of our magazine Glas, as a small reminder of the tragic destiny of a true man and scientist, our friend and compatriot K. Baruch" (Andrić, 1976:219).

3.- Why is Andrić's vision of the Sephardim "imagined"?

Despite the interpretation generally accepted by political scientists, sociologists and culturologist that the term "imagined community" refers mainly to politically well-defined nationally determined entities, we believe that Benedict Anderson's frequently cited term offers a comprehensive and detailed explanation of Andrić's understanding of the ethnic group that is an integral part of the ethnic and cultural environment of a multi-faith Bosnia where he grew and matured. For him, the Sephardic community is imagined, since he observes vital and academic modernity as a monolithic, clearly differentiated and highly exotic whole (although viewed from the perspective of "otherness" in reality it is not unique, it is not monolithic, like no ethnic group in this region). In an essay dealing with the Jews in Bosnia, Ivo Andrić wrote about his neighbors without trying to approach their "otherness" and without pretensions to fully understand or identify with them. In other words, Andrić's texts, in a profound and substantial way, illustrate the ideology of a modern man and the markers of an epoch in which they appear and in which they are read for the first time. We conclude that, despite the positive evaluation of the specificity of the centenary Sephardic existence in the Balkans and in Bosnia, Andrić, in fact, in his vision of this ethnic group makes a clear frontier, although in a first reading invisible, between "us", modern Europeans, and "them", exotic and

oriental Jews. We believe that for us this clear and precise identification of the conceptual apparatus of modernity that conditions such epistemological positioning of the author, opens the door for a deeper analysis of the reasons for the historical and current demarcation along the ethnic and religious lines in the Balkans, for a kind of re-deconstruction of the "modern" versus the "traditional" and for the re-reading of its role in the construction of collective identities in this part of Europe.

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