

NEW PARADIGMS, NEW MODELS – CULTURE IN THE EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS

LJUBLJANA, 13-14 May 2008

PARALLEL WORKSHOPS PROGRAMME

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Slovenska predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
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Parallel workshops programme

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EDITORS' NOTE

This publication is a joint project of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (in Slovenian abridged as ZRC SAZU) and the Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies. Its main rationale is, on the one hand, to collect the papers and notes of the speakers at two pre-conference workshops organized by our institutions and, on the other, to initiate and stimulate lively discussion as an important part of the workshops. These pre-conference events should raise key questions and shape the context for further elaboration of topics related to the Western Balkans region at the international conference *New Paradigms, New Models – Culture in the EU External Relations*, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and its partner institutions.

The topics of our workshops have much in common, for instance, the long-lasting and perpetual “nomadism” of both artists and scientists from the Balkans. Sometimes artists and scientists from the Western Balkans are marginalized within their own societies; in other words, they are pushed into the position of an intellectual and cultural “diaspora” even within their own countries. Of course, these two topics are also specific in many of their elements and deserve more focused, in-depth discussion. The structure of the publication mirrors that fact. It consists of two main chapters, each bearing the same title as the respective workshops: *At the Crossroads of Cultural Politics: The Western Balkans* (organized by the Peace Institute) and *Intellectual Diaspora from the Western Balkans* (organized by ZRC SAZU).

Both events are generously supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and its partner institutions. The editors especially thank Ms. Helena Drnovšek Zorko, Ambassador and Head of Division for International Cultural Relations of the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, for her personal support and enthusiasm, as well as all members of her team. We are also grateful to all authors for giving us the opportunity to publish their papers and notes prior to their presentations at the workshops.

Aldo Milohnić and Lucija Mulej

**AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURAL POLITICS:
THE WESTERN BALKANS**

International conference

NEW PARADIGMS, NEW MODELS – CULTURE IN THE EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS

INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF THE WORKSHOP “AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURAL POLITICS: THE WESTERN BALKANS”

LEV KREFT

Dear colleagues and friends,¹

The Peace Institute’s workshop “At the Crossroads of Cultural Politics: The Western Balkans” will take place on May 12, as a *prelude* and at the same time as an *overture* to the conference “New Paradigms, New Models: Culture in the EU External Relations”. The conference’s idea is to address an internal problem of the European Union’s cultural politics:

- how to manage the EU’s foreign cultural politics in the absence of “domestic” cultural politics of the EU itself,

and at the same time to address an external problem of the EU’s cultural politics:

- how to make visible the EU’s difference from other global stakeholders as that kind of global power which gives cultural relations and cultural dialogue priority in its external relations, while at the same time overcoming its paternalistic cultural attitude of a former colonial power.

Two conferences on the EU’s foreign cultural politics (in The Hague and in Berlin) preceded the Ljubljana conference. On the proposal of the Slovenian side, the Ljubljana conference will focus on the EU’s neighbouring countries in the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean, in the context of the politics of enlargement and of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

¹ What follows is a letter to Aida Kalender, Suzana Milevska, Svetlana Racanović, Miško Šuvaković and Emina Višnić inviting them to prepare their presentations and contextualizing the topic of the workshop.

As already mentioned, in relation to the conference, our workshop is at the same time a *prelude* and an *overture*. A *prelude* is something standing before the major work, independent and even improvisatory; an *overture* is the opening part of a larger dramatic narrative. Participants of the workshop will have the opportunity to establish analytical and critical discourse on cultural politics in the Western Balkans, which include

- the ever-changing and meandering national cultural politics and their conflicts, competing cultural politics concepts within and among political parties, and cultural ideologies within civil society; and
- the involvement of the EU's cultural politics or politics-to-be *vis-à-vis* national and other components of the Western Balkans cultures.

A discussion on the possibility of joint research and engagement in these field(s) is one of the purposes of the workshop.

After the workshop, all the participants will join the conference in order to take part in the discussions and to bring some of the important topics and positions presented and developed at the workshop into the EU's debate. At the same time, you will have the opportunity to follow the EU's discussions on cultural politics, and to meet other people engaged in cultural politics, or cultural policy studies.

Your papers may go into any direction of your personal expertise in the field of Western Balkans cultural politics and their crossroads, taking into account the EU's cultural politics, and the cultural politics of its member countries.

You may want to think in a more "*practical*" direction using one of the following starting points:

- lessons learned so far regarding instruments used for the support of contemporary art producers and cultural operators active in the Western Balkans (WB) countries;
- supporting instruments and the most urgent needs of cultural producers and operators in the region;
- positioning and re-positioning of the WB independent cultural production along old and new divisions (national / European, national / international, traditional / contemporary etc.) as a consequence of the transition and accession processes;

- existing relations between these art / cultural practices and national cultural policies (of the WB countries) as well as with possible EU foreign cultural politics;
- proposals / recommendations on how to achieve more ambitious presentations of EU contemporary art practices in the WB, and vice versa, how to support a stronger presence and visibility for WB contemporary art in EU;
- examples of events and networks of independent cultural producers from various WB countries which are themselves producers of trans-national culture etc.

Or you may prefer a more “*theoretical*” approach. What follows is only one of many possible theoretical starting-points, which can be (and already have been) the target of critical discussion:

Criticism of the “West and the Rest” post-colonial concept of cultural politics triggered well-known polemics between Fredric Jameson and Aijaz Ahmad in the 1980s, when Jameson, in his article “Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital”, claimed that even within post-modern global cultural pluralism, third world art and literature cannot but develop into a “national allegory”. Aijaz Ahmad refuted his argument as a typical Western construction of “an internally coherent object” using the Western concept of a national framework as a necessary part of hegemonic global binarity. This framework excludes all those cultural positions that cannot find their place under such a construction, i.e., those third-world cultures that do not fit into the category of “national allegory”.

Under a hegemonic concept of culture, relationships become even more complex and exclusive where distinctions between hegemonic subject and colonial object happen on the borders, margins, limits and edges between empire and the third world. This situation was studied by Madina Tlostanova, who claims that in such in-between spaces on the border, there emerges a kind of trans-cultural aesthetics with de-colonizing tendency that “connects people throughout the world who have suffered, one way or another, the colonial wound”. Her studies include marginal spaces of Russian/Soviet and Ottoman Empire.

When we start to use the label “Western Balkans”, instead of previous notions (post-socialist or transitional ex-Yugoslavia, South-

East Europe, etc.), we accept what at first sounds like a paradox, even a contradiction. This contradiction, however, is a combination of pre-supposed double aspirations: on the one hand, the European cultural and civilising project of unfinished Westernization of the Balkans, and on the other, the Balkans' new nation-states' aspiration to become a part of the European Union. This combination enables production of European (cultural) identity, because it equalizes the European Union with Europe and thus presents the Balkans as Europe's neighbourhood in the heart of Europe itself, and opens a way for the EU's foreign cultural politics with a mission. This framework is a confirmation of the historically established fact that European cultural identity is not produced from a general meeting of the continent's national cultural identities sharing their common "European" characteristics: "European cultural identity" is produced on the borders, margins, edges and limits established between "Europe" and the "not-yet-Europe" as a process of permanent production of "Europe" and its "Europe-to-be" object.

As a consequence of such an elaboration, we can ask ourselves if it is possible to make visible and expose to criticism:

- the project of the EU's foreign cultural politics, from the point of view of those aspects of the Western Balkans' culture which do not fit smoothly either under the concept of "national allegory" or under the concept of production of the European cultural identity; and
- the concept of respective "national allegory" cultural politics, both in the region and in the European Union's strategy of "cultural diversity".

I hope that some ideas and topics presented in this letter might be of interest when preparing your papers, and I look forward to meeting you at our workshop on May 12, 2008 in Ljubljana.

Ljubljana, February 27, 2008

THE CIVIL SECTOR IN CULTURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: BETWEEN THE AMBIGUITY OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTORATE AND THE NATIONALISM OF LOCAL POLITICS

AIDA KALENDER

If one wants to learn about European values, he should find himself in Sarajevo basements in May 1992, at the beginning of its almost 4-year siege. A plea for solidarity among antifascist comrades, a quest for respect for human rights, a mantra about the victory of civilisation over barbarism, the practical geographical fact that 'we are only two hours flight away from almost every European capital city' – all these thoughts about the foundations of civilised Europe, a place that would not allow destruction and killing, concentration camps and genocide on its soil at the end of bloodiest century – these were what kept hope alive. Soon, after a few months, citizens of Sarajevo realized that Europe would not intervene to stop the war. Europe left them to die; they buried hope in Europe.

These days, when we are marking the 16 years since the beginning of the war, public and political discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina is again dominated by a single vision that could help in overcoming the complexity of a socially, ethically, culturally and economically destroyed and divided country: the hope of entering the European Union.

A cynical viewer will use these two examples to conclude that hope in Europe appears only in deeply desperate situations. Indeed, the present state of life in Bosnia differs from that during war time, as another (or the same) cynical observer would say, only in the fact that 'there is no shooting right now', but the state of despair is almost identical.

More than twelve years since the war in Bosnia was ended by the Dayton peace agreement, this country is living under conditions that

Svjetlana Nedimović calls a ‘happy marriage between neo-liberalism and nationalism’,¹ ethnically divided and destroyed.

In a country where ethnic principles became the safest way for nationalistic elites to stay in power, where the nouveau riche – war criminals and the kings of privatization – dictate new value systems and inverted ethical norms, there has emerged a new culture system that imposes a ‘monopoly on cultural and historical authenticity’,² while never actually leaving the discourse of cultural racism, high or low cultures aiming for ethnically clean territories and cultures – what Ivan Čolović calls, ‘the terror of culture’.³

Projects and programs that are based in the culture of spectacle and the tradition of myths of ethnic greatness are usually supported by 13 (+1) ministries of culture in B&H⁴, whereas non-institutionalized emancipatory initiatives – internationally oriented projects, programs that insist on re-establishing the broken ties among artists and cultural operators from different ethnic and national backgrounds, initiatives that pose difficult questions about social and political taboos, dominant myths, a culture of witnessing, trauma and victimization – remained weakly supported or completely ignored.

The neo-liberal agenda of the international governors, along with their ambivalent strategy in the field of culture, which they did not consider as a legitimate field for positive social transformation (Paddy Ashdown, the former High Representative, labelled culture simply as a ‘luxury’) and later suggestions about the potential of ‘creative industries’ and ‘culture tourism’, combined with nationalistic strategies

¹ Nedimović, Svjetlana. “Sretni brak neoliberalizma i nacionalizma”. In: *Puls of Democracy*, internet portal. See: <http://pulsdemokratije.net/index.php?id=301&l=bs>.

² Arsenijević, Damir and Šehabović, Šejla. “Emancipatory policies in contemporary Bosnian poetry”. See: http://www.komunikacija.org.yu/komunikacija/casopisi/TreciTrg/II_3/24/download_ser_lat.

³ Luketić, Katarina. “Teror kulture na Balkanu”, an interview with Ivan Čolović, *Zarez*, no. 224, 07.02.2008.

⁴ Two entity Ministries (Federation B&H and Republic of Serbska), 10 cantonal ministries (within Federation B&H) and the Ministry for Culture of the Brčko district + the cultural programme within the state Ministry of Civil Affairs.

already described, failed to create much provision for the emergence of a strong civil society in the field of culture.

Although international foundations like the Open Society Institute and Pro Helvetia invested substantial resources in independent cultural projects and organisations, artists and art initiatives, it is clear that this support has not succeeded in creating the necessary critical mass of organisations and individuals that would have the capacity to initiate real changes in the cultural policy. Instead, they created an artificial body completely dependent on their financial and other resources, a parallel system that has been falsely labelled as ‘alternative’, where this notion didn’t have the same meaning as in the Western tradition. The programme of this new scene came from, as Ana Dević explains, ‘the hybrid ‘progressive international mainstream’, which discusses the open local issues that emerge around specific infrastructural, locational and relational coordinates.’⁵ Unfortunately, Bosnian independent cultural operators have not managed to establish strong collaborative networks that could act as platforms for innovative and participatory cultural policies, as has happened in neighbouring Croatia. The policy of ‘political neutrality’ was strongly characteristic of the majority of independent cultural players in Bosnia; as Šejla Šehabović explains, ‘freedom of choice of the critical position is conditional – it is shaped by the donation policy of different international foundations’.⁶

At the same time, the traditional aversion of artists and cultural operators towards practical politics, combined with the absence of a culture of dialogue and mutual trust, has created a situation where there are almost no civil initiatives in the field of culture that are concerned with the improvement of the cultural policy system and its infrastructure in the country. Several debates about the transformation of the cultural policy system in accordance with new realities have been sceptically critiqued by the rare cultural operators who agreed to participate. The very notion of a ‘network’ has a negative implication due to the profaning of the term in the post-war years by numerous internationally supported fake-networks that were estab-

⁵ Dević, Ana. “To criticize, charge for services rendered, and be thanked”. See: <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0208/devic/en>.

⁶ Arsenijević and Šehabović, *ibid*.

lished only with the goal of attracting available international funds, and remained empty of content, strategy and members. For others, network organisation in the field of culture is also negatively associated with professional associations from the socialist era that have survived in the new system, owing to strong links with the governments and the fact that their leadership is corrupt and not representative of the particular art discipline or the cultural scene as a whole.

Today, the independent cultural scene in B&H is fragmented, disconnected and usually internally antagonistic; the majority of cultural players voluntarily chose their isolated positions in the environment of un-loyal concurrence, intellectual crime, terror of the sensationalist tabloids and the race for brutal accumulation of the capital. This state of low trust and weak social capital could be better labelled as mild paranoia, where a majority of the independent cultural players insist on the uniqueness of their way, their approach, without leaving open doors for other opinions, collaborations and dialogue.⁷ Independent cultural operators are tired of and disinclined towards communitarian projects where they cannot have total control, but simultaneously they are not able to invest even a small part of their time in working for potential network organisation. They are occupied with a permanent struggle for survival under the uncertainty of a weakly funded project culture and the complete ignorance of local governments.

The fact that numerous independent cultural projects, initiatives and NGOs that emerged after the war supported by international foundations no longer exist, because local governments haven't been ready (or simply didn't want) to continue their support after the massive withdrawal of the international funds for culture in the year 2000, warns that this trend could continue. Despite the fact that many independent artists and art initiatives have decided individually to create 'socially and politically engaged art', almost nothing is done in connecting their efforts and creating a synergy in formulating and advocating new cultural policy proposals that would trigger essential reform in the retrograde system of culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁷ Here we need to mention the rare exceptions to this rule – the projects of the Sarajevo Centre for Contemporary Arts (SCCA), OKC 'Abrašević' Mostar, NGO 'City' Tuzla, NGO 'Protok' Banja Luka, AKCIJA Sarajevo, etc...

IS THERE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE?

In my opinion, the only way to induce positive transformation within the system of culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina is by creating a strong civil society that will be not only concerned with the production and/or (re)presentation of projects and programmes of the highest artistic quality, but also ready to take and articulate a clear critical position on local political issues, no matter how embarrassing this could be. These could include issues such as the following: initiatives by cultural workers for participative cultural strategies on the cantonal, entity or state level; putting cultural issues on the public agenda; insisting on the transparency of ministries when distributing the public budgets for culture; opening the debate about redefinition of the public interest in culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina; seeking structural, not occasional and ad-hoc support for independent cultural organisations, re-articulation of the position of cultural critics, etc.

The traditional position of political 'neutrality' that has characterised the majority of independent cultural organisations, should be replaced by active participation in the political processes and decisions that relate to the field of culture. The prevailing opinion that sporadic, brilliant art projects would automatically trigger positive changes in the Bosnian system of culture should be transformed into persistent and direct articulated action of the new cultural community towards governments.

Institutionalisation of these efforts by the establishment of new cultural network organisation(s) to lobby for a better position for culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be a concrete instrument in this regard, and future funding schemes should address these issues.

CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND AGENCY IN SEE CULTURAL POLICY

SUZANA MILEVSKA

The potential translatability of EU cultural policy in the context of transitional societies in SEE can be extrapolated only through questioning whether cultural translation and translation of EU cultural policy are really reciprocal, mutually determined and compatible processes in this region. Any account of the main focus of the European Commission and most of the other European foundations and financial supporters of culture in SEE tells us that cultural translation projects are generously supported, but it also shows that such support comes with new cultural policies that serve as a general political instrument, providing the toolbox for cultural policy makers.

However, certain fundamental contradictions can be recognised between local cultural policies and the guidelines of the calls for project proposals of the foreign foundations' programmes. There is also a certain gap between the guidelines themselves and the completed, funded projects. Cultural managers and producers are thus forced to embark on reconciling the conceptual/theoretical and political contradictions in these agendas. Such creative "slaloms" affect the projects' contents and formats. This is what I call "cultural translation in cultural policy", wherein I see the role of the cultural producers as being similar to the role of the translator of certain rules about the cultural policy of EU into the local "languages" of cultural policy in each of the countries of SEE.

Most of the dilemmas regarding cultural translation derive from an unease with the enormous quantity (but questionable quality) of the recent projects produced under slogans such as "intercultural dialogue," "cultural diversity," "living together," "community," "belong-

ing” etc. The unease comes from the fact that most of these phrases sound so familiar, since they circulate through postcolonial critique of Western democracy. Even though the main premise of the projects based on these concepts (mainly undertaken by non-governmental organizations) is that they should serve ethically relevant purposes, facilitate democracy building and introduce civil society values into the Western Balkans and other SEE countries, my question here is of a more theoretical character. It features one main dilemma: whether the assumption that democracy can really be built and transformed via art and culture is viable.

One way to clarify the main source of this dilemma is to address the increasingly frequent use of the term “agency” that has recently become apparent in academic departments and on bookshelves. It started to be used not only in anthropology and in other theories and disciplines such as cultural studies, psychology, sociology, political sciences, etc., but it became a buzzword among cultural policy makers.

“Agency” is not the first term to migrate from cultural theory into cultural policy. Postcolonial critique and Orientalism turned out to be very productive in SEE, especially when it came to the lack of methodology for interpreting and critiquing the large scale exhibitions, conferences and books that were produced in the region during recent years. For example, “Other”, “hybrid,” “self-colonisation”, “master-slave” dialectics, “imagined communities,” to mention only a few of the theoretical concepts borrowed from postcolonial theory. These were used as a kind of discursive instrument the better to explain and deconstruct the reasoning of the Western curators in conceptualising and realising recent international exhibitions and conferences with a focus on Balkan contemporary art and culture.¹

¹ The first substantial attempt to apply postcolonial theory in the Balkan cultural and historic contexts was Maria Todorova’s *Imagining the Balkans*. 1997. New York: Oxford University Press, which was followed by several books and readers such as: *Balkan as a Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*. 2002. Bjelić, Dušan I. and Savić, Obrad (eds.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, published on the occasion of the exhibition *In Search of Balkania*, curated by Peter Veibel, Eda Čufer and Richard Canover, Neue Galerie, Graz, 2002.

However, it is important to state that while postcolonial discourse is marked by a kind of critique of the concrete colonial and post-empire situation, many of the questions that were raised by its theory are condemned to remain unanswered, since its own initiators have denied the political impact of the project from the start. The problematic political ethics of the post-colonial discourse of “hybridity” has been targeted by Terry Eagleton as ‘a drastically impoverished kind of political ethic in contrast to affirmation of human solidarity and reciprocity’.² Such severe criticism and indication of the limits of postcolonial critique, though, were not so much present as was the expurgation of all available postcolonial concepts during these projects. Even when criticism was inevitable, it was still addressed from the postcolonial perspective.

The term agency similarly entered cultural policy without a clear cut background explanation and thus, I want to argue, it is often used in a manipulative fashion. Often entertained in contexts that do not always coincide with the initial theoretical complexity of the original concept, that actually offer much more, it ends up as a kind of preemptive support for art understood as a kind of *magic that will do the trick* (for example of “conflict management”) instead of substantial political action. Or, perhaps one could argue that this happened precisely because of the original concept of “art and agency” taken from anthropology?³

The concept of agency first became available in art and cultural theory through the anthropological texts of Alfred Gell, specifically when he coined this term in his book *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, which was posthumously published in 1998.⁴ According to Whitney Davis, Gell’s anthropology of art aimed to ‘identify the beliefs sustained by agents, typically the users or what Gell calls the

² Eagleton, Terry. 1998-1999. ‘Postcolonialism and “Postcolonialism”’. *Interventions*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 26. Quoted from Hallward, Peter. 2001. *Absolutely Postcolonial. Writing between the Singular and the Specific*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, p. 338, n. 34.

³ Such ‘agents,’ at least in anthropology of art, were not only humans but were often believed to be supernatural entities or natural or inorganic processes.

⁴ Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

‘recipients’ of works of art, when they infer or ‘abduct’ the identity, actions, or motivations and intentions of the agents supposed to have constituted the work of art.⁵ Such abductive reception enables the recipients of the ‘agency of art’ ‘to identify who or what has caused the work of art, as they believe, to have the formal, semantic, and social properties and effects it seems to them to possess or to display or to produce.’⁶

“Abductive knowledge” according to Whitney Davis, is the understanding of indexes, so the work of art is understood as an ‘art-index’ that has the power, the “agency” to “do” something and to organise and move its recipients to beliefs about its origins and its efficacy.⁷ Gell’s anthropology of art investigated the very potentiality of symbolic function – namely, the way that the artifact is believed to ‘do’ something, to have agency and to organise the recipient’s actions in using it.

In the context of my paper, I find the most relevant point to be when Davis addresses a certain criticism to Gell’s anthropology and writes: ‘But it remains unclear, I think, to what degree the more proximate agencies of patrons, artists, and viewers interfered with – even destabilized – this axis of ultimate agency in the entire nexus.’⁸

To go back to the question of art as agency in the context of our debate about actual cultural policy in SEE, it is urgent to question why art is expected to be the agency to offer solutions where the state and society failed and to do the dirty business of “gentrification”, “regeneration”, “diversification” etc. One way to understand such urgent need for agency staging independence from the state would be if we relate this to the desperate need of contemporary society to free itself from too much governance and from a democracy overloaded with power that is distributed through judicial consensus but with no place for voices of dissent.⁹

It comes as no surprise that various of Bhabha’s passages, such

⁵ Davis, Whitney. 2008. ‘Abducting the Agency of Art’. March 20, 2008, p. 2. See <ls.berkeley.edu/dept/arhistory/davis/Gell.pdf>.

⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

⁹ Mouffe, Chantal. 2000. *The Democratic Paradox*. New York: Verso, pp. 113–116.

as ‘to that end we should remember that it is the “inter” – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture’¹⁰, inevitably provoked severe criticism for not tackling the political burden, or for being ‘dangerously close to dismissing all searches for communitarian origins’.¹¹ Any attempt to translate the specificity of the postsocialist condition by applying post-colonial theory and its emphasis on the hidden cultural mechanisms of power inevitably faces the problems pinpointed by the criticism that has already been launched at the post-colonial discourse, precisely because of its political ambiguity and privileging of culture. What I am trying to point out here is that, surprisingly, although the notions of hybridity, creolisation, translation, de-territorialisation, etc. have already been put under a magnifying glass, and although their shortcomings and inconsistencies have, more or less successfully, been tackled by these unflattering critics of the postcolonial project, many intellectuals from Eastern Europe and the Balkans have hastened to adopt the post-colonial vocabulary. Moreover a similar vocabulary is adopted by the calls for art and cultural projects such as exhibitions, conferences, workshops, festivals, etc.

An important stance to take on board here could be to address the intertwining of regional and universal values in culture, and the difference between cultural specificity and the notion of singularity.¹² Despite the common denominators shared by post-colonialism and post-communism, such as globalisation, transition, nation-state, hegemonic power, bio power, etc., (it should not be forgotten how deeply post-colonial theory is indebted to Marxism), the danger still remains of overlooking possible homonymic misunderstandings. This

¹⁰ Bhabha, Homi K. 1998. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 38.

¹¹ Shohat, Ella. 1996. ‘Notes on the Post-Colonial’. In: Mongia, Padmini (ed.). *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. London: Arnold, p. 330. Quoted from Hallward, Peter. *Absolutely Postcolonial*, p.36, n. 94.

¹² In *Absolutely Postcolonial*, Peter Hallward offered a profound insight into the recent critical debates on the shortcomings of the post-colonial discourse from a post-Marxist position. His demand for re-evaluation of the distinction made in these texts between the specific and the singular emphasised the danger of being entrapped in the realm of the specified.

is mainly because the transformations that ensued after the collapse of the USSR and SFRY, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and more or less dramatic system changes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania are being discussed within merely political and economic frameworks, while the transition from colonial to postcolonial has actually been 'localised' within the cultural critique of narratives and discourses, that is the postcolonial critique.

This questioning of the relations between theory and cultural policy – bearing in mind one relevant interpretation that the cultural has been favoured and privileged over the political as a form of escapism from more relevant political actions in contemporary liberal democracies – makes space for emphasising the complexity of the intertwined and mutually reciprocal narratives of post-colonial and post-socialist discourse through the "great expectations" of integration within the EU.

The cultural policy in Macedonia is strongly marked by such expectations, but a certain duality within the conceptual framework of the projects is inevitably determined by the local political framework. While, on the one hand, the local government supports most of the projects that deal with cultural and historic national heritage, whatever this means in such a multilayered and multicultural context, emphasizing the feeling that the national interests are endangered, on the other hand, the international foundations insist ever more on multicultural themes and problems. Such a schizophrenic situation between the various and often contradictory theoretical models of democracy (antagonistic, participatory, communitarian, deliberative, agonistic, radical, etc) that stand behind EU cultural policy and local conservative, or nationalist-centered cultural policies inevitably diverges from contemporary cultural practices. This long-lasting condition of division often forces cultural producers to create 'double agenda' labyrinths between the presentation of the projects to local officials and to foreign supporters.

To clarify further, the urgent political and societal issues that were systematically circumvented by the local museum and gallery projects – such as the questioning of the ethnic, gender, cultural and other differences and of exclusion based thereon, make the artists, curators

and cultural producers think in terms of promoting art as agency of social change. This model sounds as if it follows the distinction that Chantal Mouffe makes between “deliberative” and “agonistic” models of democracy. According to her “democratic paradox”, while “deliberative democracy” would call for eliminating the ‘passions from the sphere of the public, in order to render a rational consensus possible,’ “agonistic democracy” would imply ‘to mobiliz[ing] those passions towards democratic designs’.¹³

All this sounds like a “mission impossible” in the context of local governmental policy in Macedonia, which at the moment is focused on re-building old and long destroyed buildings of theatres, churches or cultural institutions from before WWII (mainly destroyed in the catastrophic earthquake of 1963), or building new historic museums, such the most absurd investment in the Historic Museum of Wax Figures (to cost more than 3 million euros). The bizarre and contradictory concept of national heritage preservation, whereby the front entrance to the Government building is decorated by genuine antique sculptures (imagined as a kind of visual culture battle with the Greek government’s contestation of the use of the name Macedonia) only confirms that even programmes such as Culture 2007, officially promoted and endorsed by the Government and the Ministry of Culture, are neither genuinely accepted nor fully understood.

The huge gap and tension between the populist governmental concept of preservation of cultural heritage as a symbol of the currently problematized issue of Macedonian national identity that is so favoured by the state supported cultural policy, and EU cultural policy promoting cultural diversification and dialogue between cultures and ethnicities is an outcome of the recent inter-ethnic conflicts in Macedonia. Such fights, which closely resemble the long forgotten historic territorial fights in this part of the world, particularly the various Great power treaties for dividing these territories (e.g. the San Stefano Treaty of 1878, the Bucharest Treaty of 1913), result in increasingly conservative cultural policy in Macedonia.

In order to overcome the specters from the past, we become

¹³ Mouffe 2000, p. 103.

prisoners of the strategic situation dictated by our own 'desire to be agents of the developed society'.¹⁴ As Zygmunt Bauman states in his essay on the historical and political implications of the collapse of communism, 'The world without an alternative needs self-criticism as a condition of survival and decency'.¹⁵

However, one can learn from the mistakes of postcolonial theory, as one could learn from the mistakes of the past. It is important to become aware that the importance accorded within postcolonial theory to cultural translation and cultural discourse in general, as a kind of indicator of inner societal controversies, is overrated. Such translation cannot prove or clarify anything on its own unless the political background of the phenomenon is tackled in order to understand the reasons for successful or unsuccessful performative actions and cultural agency.

This text, therefore, cannot advocate any new and better application of postcolonial language to the postsocialist cultural policies that have yet to adopt EU standards. This could lead to postcolonial discourse's becoming another example of an increasingly hegemonic and colonising discourse that focuses only on culture. This said, one should also be aware that the links between these two phenomena already exist and cannot be denied.

¹⁴ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1999. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason – Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, p. 357.

¹⁵ Bauman, Zygmunt. 1998. 'Living without Alternative'. In: Sim, Stuart (ed.). *Post-Marxism. A reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 100.

“THE SPECTRE (OF THE BALKANS) IS STILL ROAMING AROUND!”

SVETLANA RACANOVIĆ

In an inspiring public lecture organized last year in Munich under the title “Aesthetic Codes and Vital Stress”, two *significant European figures*, Peter Sloterdijk and Rem Koolhaas discussed narratives, depressive tendencies and influences from both West and East. Sloterdijk described Europe as a “semi-depressive paradigm”, a space in a “relief depression”, similar to the kind into which it is possible to fall through doing absolutely nothing in the first week of the holidays – only this particular one, the European one, has been going on since the 1970s or 80s. Rem Koolhaas pointed out that there is, in fact, more than one Europe, and that the “new Europe” of accession states was most certainly not on holiday. The people there are working hard and brimming with energy, said Koolhaas.

Truly, in the present world and in cultural terms, certain centrifugal forces have started to move waves of creativity from the center towards the periphery. We are witnessing a great rising of marginalized and neglected cultures and arts in our contemporary world. Why have peripheral cultures arisen and taken the initiative? In his book *A Philosophy of Boredom*, Norwegian author Lars Svendsen claimed boredom as the dominant feeling of the contemporary world. Referring to David Cronenberg’s film *Crash*, he claims that extremism becomes a source of joy, of a new sense of life. “The whole West became quite colorless, anemic. There is no subversion there. The future belongs to the Balkans.” These are the words of Harald Szeemann regarding the exhibition he curated in 2003, *Honey & Blood*. That was one on a long list of art exhibitions organized during the last decade expressing complete obsession with the Balkans. The West began to re-invent

the Balkans for its own sake as its dark but potent reverse.¹ As Boris Buden remarked, the subversive energy of Balkan art and its potential for breaking down social and cultural taboos of its local communities, have become projections of Western nostalgia for a time when art had something to say and when its impact was not reduced to an expression of market laws, the interest of the capital and political power. Szeemann denies this saying: “It is not the case here to show the exoticism but to *integrate one cultural milieu with Western sensibility*”. The voice of reality and of sobriety came from Erhard Busek, an Austrian politician and, until June 2008, coordinator of the Stability Pact of Southeastern Europe. He said about this exhibition: “Any one who wants to integrate into Europe should reject the word ‘Balkans’ and replace it with the notion of South-East Europe. The ‘Balkans’ represents all that has been twisted and turned upside down, so why should we continue to use insults?”

We can therefore ask ourselves why we are called (again) the Balkans, or the Western Balkans? The previous identification – South-East Europe – included both the affirmative notion of Europe and its idea of progress, and on the other side the notion of the East, which is often connected to a mixture of Oriental, Byzantine, Orthodox, Muslim, despotic, barbarian and Balkan “ingredients”. The re-naming of our region as the Western Balkans becomes questionable or problematic, producing many political, cultural, even psychological implications and incompletely-clear projections, even without the obvious intent of making more than a simple terminological maneuver. In reality, it opens a fluid space for so many different formulations and explanations that, at the moment of reaching a complete *pregnancy of meanings*, it might re-structure itself as a McGuffin-point that “drives the plot”, while itself remaining empty.

The phrase ‘Western Balkans’ itself contains certain perversion. It

¹ In South of Italy, it is popular that during sexual intercourse, a woman tells her lover her “dirty” fantasies. So, the sexual act, *doing*, the central part of the whole game becomes not enough, but a certain phantasmal, virtual additive comes into focus, needed for achieving complete enjoyment. In this sense, the “dirty” Balkans functions as a “missing part” needed to pump up the life energy of the “exhausted” Western world.

seems to promise the Balkans Europeanized, as if offering a vision of all Europe as healthy community, prosperous and tolerant. It apparently indicates and approves a halfway point on the "path of the righteous", the half fulfilled dream of the East (Europe) to be perceived as and called the West, to become an idealized West, the positive pole of the trans-historical conjunction: West – East (Europe). It might mean bringing back the "rejected" (i.e. the name of the Balkans), the return of the "prodigal son", enticed by the promise of its Western perspective but also the return of the "guilty" one to the place of his crimes. Ultimately, calling the region the 'Western Balkans' might mean being stuck somewhere in between, where each side restricts/obstructs the other in reaching its full expression and complete expansion.

In the 19th century, during the Balkan war against the Turks, the West experienced the Balkans as a European domain. However, at the moment when the new independent Balkan states, especially the ex-Yugoslavian countries, require inclusion into the European family, their difference, their "otherness" becomes symbolically emphasized, and a new Balkan "Other" becomes re-invented.

The Balkans have always been insufficiently different to be perceived as the exotic Oriental "Other" but nevertheless too different to be comprehended and accepted as completely European. Dracula is one of the best metaphors for the Balkans, for the Evil that must be destroyed. At the same time, Dracula, like the Balkan itself, adopts the mask of the Westerner, trying to adapt, to be accepted (as Vesna Goldsworthy noted in her book *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of Imagination*, Dracula resembles the archetype of the European decadent, from the *fin-de-siècle*, gentle, skinny Oscar Wilde type"; in preparing to go to England, he is reading books from his library, a surprisingly good selection, which one would rather expect "in the library of some gentlemen's club on Pall Mall"). As Dracula himself said in Bram Stoker's novel, "he introduced great England; and to introduce it, means to love it". That is why, in some new readings of this novel, it is perceived as a story about an attempt at *inverse colonization*, an attempt which must be punished. Truly, Dracula and what he represents are finally conquered and eliminated by joint Western forces (white, Anglo-Saxon and protestant forces) strengthened by

Western rationality and superior technology. Balkan “Europeanism” will be, if not eliminated, always kept at a distance as “impure” and not yet completed. The Balkans (then, consequently, the Western Balkans) has been perceived as space of violence, nationalistic obsession, pathological phantasms and, nowadays, as a space of corruption, organized crime and at the same time as an exotic space of primordial wildness that the West have lost long ago; they are the image of Europe from the time of its childhood. All these perceptions represent instruments in a strategy for keeping it at a safe distance from the supposed enlightened, civilized West, the fortress of pluralism, democracy and human rights protection.

There is a very efficient metaphor or pattern of ambivalent relations between Europe (center) and its borders (including the Balkans). Famous European cosmetic corporations make their products with the same name, in the same package, apparently the same brands, but of better quality for EU citizens and of lower quality for non EU citizens.

Making lower quality copies is piracy. Piracy in the entertainment and cultural industry is treated in the EU as a criminal act which requires adequate legal sanctions. Countries on the margins, on the borders of the EU need to exterminate this practice and, in so doing, send a message of good, improved behavior and show that they accept EU regulations and standards. Making a copy of lower quality in the EU itself, falsifying their own products and distributing them beyond the borders means, in a way, legitimizing piracy, because it is expelled by the “persecutors” themselves and returned to the place of its origin – on the borders.

It is not just that the Countries outside the EU, beyond its laws, order and standards, are not good enough to be offered products of sufficient quality and that they still do not deserve better. It is not just that we are only apparently sharing the same values, the same, European name, the same products, which are actually not the same or not the same for all of us. What is important is that we are all part of this power play, this operation of double standards, of this silent consensus in what is actually a perfidious game: a *beauty treatment of the cosmetic surgery type*, for falsifying reality. Therefore, it only appears to be about cosmetics, about taking care of the look, “keeping

up appearances". It means, actually, hiding the inner, deeper, behind the (sur)face processes that go in opposite directions, which hide (or dismantle) the fundamental gap existing between two systems, two sides or poles "condemned" to mutual co-existence.

This schism existing in West-East relations (the EU and the Western Balkans) is reflected in the very specific and illustrative case of EU foreign cultural policy. In a European Parliament proposal, the European Commission declared 2008 as the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue". A series of specific cultural projects to be implemented during 2008 and other community actions will be supported with a budget of € 10 million.

When presenting this proposal, Ján Figel', European Commissioner with responsibility for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, stated: "Over the past few years, *Europe* has seen major changes resulting from successive enlargements of the Union, greater mobility in the Single Market, and increased travel to and trade with the rest of the world. This has resulted in *interaction between Europeans and the different cultures, languages, ethnic groups and religions on the continent and elsewhere*. **Dialogue between cultures** would therefore appear to be an essential tool in forging closer links both *between European peoples themselves and between their respective cultures*." And, just when we started to enjoy the ride and imagine ourselves invited to the "party" just by living in Europe, and specially inspired by Mr. Figel's romantic exclamations ("*We need to create the conditions so that the peoples and countries of Europe fall in love again with our process of integration*"), a short but crucial clarification comes immediately: "*to renew our wedding vows*". This huge, ambitious and expensive European project, this "togetherness in diversity", this strengthening of the commitment to "solidarity, social justice and reinforced cohesion", is not really European or for the whole European project, but a privilege of the Member states, those who are "already married". It is designed for them, reserved for them individually and for their mutual, joint actions. The Western Balkans is not intended to be a participant but just an observer, not included in the "family reunion" but kept at the position of "prodigal son". Any project which promotes interaction between Europeans, dialogue between cultures, thus presuming

transgression of various borderlines, by keeping exclusivity just for Member states reflects its genuine *systemic failure*.

A similar kind of *constructive error* can be registered in the initiation and conceptualization of many cultural projects organized throughout the region in the last decade. Promoting regional reconciliation and cooperation and/or East-West cooperation, those projects did not grow genuinely from the shared wish and defined plan to (re)establish broken ties, to exchange existing values of all sides included, to build new partnerships and jointly create new goods. Such projects came from the very pragmatic approach of fulfilling the criteria of (Western) donors' grant policy. That is why many of these projects did not leave deeper traces and longer lasting positive influences on the cultural life of the respective countries.

One of the main goals of the Ljubljana workshop is to identify and discuss "instruments used for supporting contemporary art producers and cultural operators". In the case of Montenegro, those are not so much measures of a defined, developed and implemented cultural policy, state run and/or well coordinated and carefully planned actions on the institutional level. Positive, productive and multiply beneficial actions and efficient tools for supporting the development of national arts & culture are more the "creation" of individuals, acts that finally gain the status of very private initiatives for the personal satisfaction of a couple of enthusiasts. My impression is that when we are talking about positive achievements in regional or West-East cultural cooperation, or successful presentations of Eastern art in the West and vice versa, we are more thinking about individual breakthroughs than about this kind of "massive mobilization".

Montenegro provides an example of a country with a still unfinished process of redefining national and cultural identity, with no existing measures of cultural policy, with a marginal status of culture within the society and limited or symbolic presence and inclusion of this (national) culture into streams of regional and international cultural cooperation and exchange and with a basic antagonism between the contemporary, on the one hand, and, on the other, a mixture of traditionalism and provincialism on the *inner* plane and autism and closeness on the *outer* plane.

Therefore, what is of utmost importance and of urgent need for WB culture(s) are projects and initiatives that invite many interlocutors, many actors on the national and international stage. Those projects create favorable conditions, if not for *competition*, then for the necessary *comparison* of values and achievements and after that for *comprehension* of the optimal positioning and role of respective (national) culture(s) within their local context and in the international context, for discovering the difference, the otherness, as the efficient measure for curing closed cultures and closed societies.²

At the end, we should not lose our sense of reality, of clear understanding of the nature of cultural relations nowadays, which is deeply influenced by many external factors and different decisive powers. For example, the abovementioned exhibition *Honey & Blood* is organized by the Austrian Gallery Essl. It belongs to a business group specializing in the building and construction trade. Representatives of the firm openly wrote in the exhibition catalogue that South-East Europe is the most interesting area for their trading expansion, so this was the motive for organizing this exhibition! We should look at this fact not as a limitation but as a new and challenging opportunity for arts and culture in our region, as the creation of contexts for and the provision of conditions on which WB cultural policies can count.

² The evidence that this is not just an abstract proposal or demagogical story exists in Montenegro, in the form of the well known Biennial of Contemporary Art organized five times during the '90s in Cetinje. During the terrible decade of the '90, it provided on Montenegrin soil the presence of and cooperation from distinguished artists and curators from the international art scene; in circumstances of limited or even no mobility of local artists, the Biennial gave them direct insight into relevant contemporary art production on an international plane and also provided direct inclusion of local artists into this production through their participation in Biennial exhibitions. Therefore, the Biennial has become an efficient lever for the internationalization of our art scene and an efficient platform for its internal development, as decisively *catching the spirit of contemporaneity*.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POLITICAL, POLITICS, AND THE POLITICIZATION OF CULTURE BECOMING EUROPE, OR HOW TO IDENTIFY ONESELF BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ

I would like to get out of the bottle, like the fly that Ludwig Wittgenstein taught to do so in his *Philosophical Investigations*, but I am afraid that in escaping from ‘my’ bottle, I will find myself in another, even smaller bottle, which will once again be mine and for me, for us and for the other possible ‘lives’.

I will start from the ‘hard’ theorization of certain relevant concepts of “politics”.¹ Politics is a set of practices and their pertinent institutions, by means of which human coexistence, usually called “society”, is realized. By the political we mean that multiplicity of antagonisms by which, I assume, human society is played out and defined. Through politicization, various theoretical-analytical-critical-practices are identified. These practices explain and interpret entirely different, often incompatible, historical or geographical socialities or culturalities as functions of antagonisms by which human society is played out and defined. *Cultural politics*, in this context of thought about politics, the political, and politicization, denotes three different – although not also incongruous – social practices of performing culture.²

- 1) *Cultural politics* is a set of practices, together with the pertinent institutions, by means of which human development or harmoniza-

¹ Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; Mouffe, Chantal. 2005. *On the Political*. London: Routledge.

² Williams, Raymond. 1965. “Analysis of Culture”, in: *The Long Revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 57–88.

tion in relation to absolute or universal values and symbolization of a society and its traditions are made possible.

- 2) *Cultural politics* is a set of practices, together with the pertinent institutions, by means of which regulations or the shaping of everyday, actual human life within a society or social relations are made possible. In other words, cultural politics touches questions of shaping “life” within *everyday life*. And
- 3) *Cultural politics* is a set of practices, together with the pertinent institutions, by means of which presentations/representations of ideal or actual regulations or the shaping of exceptional or everyday human life in dominant and marginal media of communication and identification are made possible.

Cultural politics is commonly described as a certain/uncertain autonomous sphere within “politics”, as a set of practices and the pertinent institutions, by means of which human coexistence, often called “everyday life within a society”, is realized. The autonomy of *cultural politics* appears either as the “metaphysical autonomy” of social superstructure in relation to basic social production, or as the “technical autonomy” of performing culture as a separate realm within social antagonisms. The task of politicization, i.e. theoretical analysis and critique of culture, is to prove that “culture” is a necessary, autonomous realm within society or sociality, which in order to be positioned as autonomous in a metaphysical or technical sense, must be performed by the political act (decision, event, structural realization of certain *powers*).

* * *

We now approach case studies envisaged through opposition: being Europe and becoming Europe. Where, actually, lies the difference between Europe as Europe and the Western Balkans or, more narrowly, Serbia as *not yet Europe*? And what is the role of politics and cultural politics in this?

European contemporaneity after the eclectic, plural, and posthis-

torical postmodernism at the end of the Cold War reveals itself as an epoch of amplification of aestheticizations of everyday liberal living in a *complex empire* without “imperial characteristics”.³ European postmodernism was *Eurocentric* in the sense that European history was fetishized and centered as the dominant order of codes and, then, as a meta-code, not only of European *historical fictional and narrative formations*, but also of any other – geographic or historical – potential narrative formation and the legitimacy of its establishment. This post-modern constraint of European space by means of *cultural politics* has, after the end of the Cold War, become a politics of performing a “meta” or “mega” state: loose imperialization – i.e. conceptual mapping – of national identities into multinational or mega-state, then the society, and culture of one European “multiple I”. As a political act, as a consequence, this involved an ontological-phenomenological difference and, further, a division of the world into what is, in a social-cultural sense, Europe, and what is in the social-cultural sense outside of Europe. Thus, this “outside of” is not a spatial, but a political, and also cultural position. In this way, Europe’s geography is entirely politicized to a closure or an opening of inclined/discordant states and cultural space. Becoming Europe no longer means populating European space, i.e. occupying certain geographical spaces, but entering into event – a sort of initiation, identification, and interpellation – and this is what becoming Europe means.

Is there an alternative in regard to such a conception of Europe? One possibility, certainly, is the one *bashfully* and in *broad outlines* promised by Jacques Derrida.⁴ And, this is *how* to respond to the call of *European memory*, how to index what is promised by the name *Europe*, and invested under the value of Europe. Does that mean renouncing the *common denominator* of European phantasms, fictionalizations, ideologies, and narrations in the name of the Other? “I am European, I am doubtlessly a European intellectual, I like to recall that, I like to remind *myself* of that, and why should I defend myself from it? In the

³ Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio. 2001. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁴ Derrida, Jacques. 1992. *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today’s Europe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

name of what? But I am not of Europe, and I do not feel that I belong to Europe with each part of myself. By this I want to say, I care, or I should say: I do not want to and should not be European in the *whole*. Parts should not be identified with the whole. My cultural identity, the one in whose name I speak, is not only European; it is not identical to itself, and all my parts are not *cultural*".

In other words, not geography but politics has changed through performing a metaphysics of identity. The relation between the margin and the centre is not defined, not recognizable; it is no longer the criterion (metropolis versus province, metropolis versus colony or the binary relationship between superpowers). As the I is being opened to instable and open hypotheses of hybrid identities, culture, which no longer can state what a centered or dominant identity in synchrony or diachrony (tradition, history, or geography, that is, state or mega/meta state), opens as well. In other words, can one say that "Europe's unity" as a metaphysical project that has its social and cultural consequences oriented towards unity of "origins" or towards unity of "abysses", that is, what about those hybrid and heterogeneous potentialities between *origin* and *abyss*? How does the actuality which is somewhere – really – between the fiction of *origin* and the fiction of *abyss* take place? Is it about the universalization of industry, of the aesthetization of everyday life as a political imperative, on the basis of which "we" and "them" differ? If this is the case, what then is European universality given at least as a mass production cultural industry directed towards the aesthetization of the everyday life itself of the Europeans and for Europeans? Initiated Europeans' hybrid singularities take part in production, material production and universality, which is, above all, given as a relation between cultures and then as an order of cultures, then also as a hegemony of what singularities realize for all of us transforming "me" into "us" on a mega – or meta – level of the shaping of everyday life.

Let us take a look at this story from another perspective – from the perspective of the Northern Balkans, or more precisely, from my speaking position. I speak from the perspective of cultural politics within Serbia; I speak from the center of a permanent state of exception.

Postsocialism and transition, i.e. the other world in postcommunist Europe, is directed to transition, and this means to transformation. Transition takes place through the production of everyday life in *restored* or *finally realized* nation-states and, then, national cultures, everyday lives, and certainly, arts. The postsocialist nation-state in the 1990s and 2000s looks like an ‘unexpected’ simulational and collage *monster* of effects and affects of national bourgeois capitalism and hidden global liberal capitalism. The relation between national and global is shown through euphoric and dramatic facades through an initial transformation of “social property” into “private property”, then the placing of *private property* between national entrepreneurship and global corporational networking. This *monster* in the neoliberal world, by means of neoliberal politics, economics, and expansive capitalistically oriented globalism establishes a local, very folklorized ‘narrative’ and integrative matrix of the collective identificational ethnic, national, or even, racial *self*. This becoming collective, often ‘hellish’ *self* appears to evoke and renew the traumatized and misplaced past, i.e. nineteenth-century national-bourgeoisie, that is, dreams about an organic and integrative nation: one for one in one.

The contemporary transitional state, therefore, often and simultaneously does the following: (a) above all, it declares itself a nation-state of finally realized and reified transformations of kin relationship and tribal roots into a ‘modern’ nation; (b) it declares itself, in an almost hesitant way as a global neoliberal state, congruent with the world of new imperial presuppositions by the EU and the USA; and (c) it declares itself as necessarily being a state of the other or third world, which is paradoxically a nation-state on the *inside* and a neoliberal state on the *outside*. In reality, it is about a hybrid form of façade in the modern state, with family-tribal tycoons, and often, ex-secret police, organizations that facilitate the initial accumulation of capital under conditions of controlled and criminalized transformation of social into private property.

Transitional national cultures present and show themselves though reification of suppressed, censured, manipulated, nullified, or controlled-regulated – in the era of communism – collective ethnic and national identities. Therefore, the dominant cultural politics sees

itself as a national, cultural politics that is above the *concrete* and *real* material conditions of sociality and all other cultural politics. It is about the social and political realization of one of *collective identificational freedoms*, which were suppressed in the revolutionary period of realcommunism, that is, punished, surveilled, regulated, and often used in social and political struggles in developed and late bureaucratic real socialism through the processes of creating 'socialist peoples'. In postsocialism, collective identification, i.e. national identification, as a political program, and the pragmatic biotechnology of everyday life performance is superior to techniques of shaping 'individual life' or *individual freedom*, i.e. individual human rights as the *collective self*. Paradoxically, a certain para-liberalism is established in the economy, and a national bourgeois – organizational – fetishized collectivism in the articulation of public and private social everyday life. The newly established relationship between collective and individual is given in a contradictory way: symbolic and imaginary models or representations of the organic concept of the 'nation' as a liberated collectivity, in the name of which the 'appearance' of the "blocked" individual is derived. This happens, paradoxically, in the economic and political macro- and micro-infrastructures of para-liberal organization of economics (*capital*) and politics (*vita activa*), i.e. the shaping of what is never entirely *bare life* in the everyday life of postsocialism. Under postsocialism, the vertical, bourgeois, national and class structure of the nineteenth-century West, and the actual, horizontal, neoliberal, and technocratic production of the actual life of late capitalism at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century are simultaneously reconstructed. This contradiction is politically and culturally conservative in its political prefiguration, and this means also in its sensually aesthetical-artistic prefiguration. 'Conservative' indicates whatever actual ideals of contemporary struggle for power in shaping life situate and retrospectively interpret as universal or traditional social truths. A concept of "progress" is offered as a concept of prefigured organic development, or a continuity of fictions and phantasms about tradition and identities from tradition. Consequently, it is brutally concealed that behind this lies *real biopower*, involving rapid redistribution of social capital, the privileging of property over

the means of production/exchange, and the establishment of class or caste, inner class, centers of social, political, cultural, epistemological, and ultimately, artistic power. This acts as if 'national narrative' hides a real reorganization of property in a society, together with the relevant effect of this reorganization, and this is a recycling of class society characteristic of the economic wars of the original accumulation of capital. Instead of the 'vanguard of the working class' leading revolutionary transformation, there appears a new *capitalist elite*, which conducts the transition and recycling of liberal capitalism with pseudo-tokens of national-bourgeois society. And one more paradox – although expected – often – too often – the *new capitalist national elite* consists of 'former' people from the operative bureaucratic, technocratic, or military-police-political services of the 'vanguard working class', i.e. the communist party. The centralized operative services of the 'vanguards of the working class' are today decentralized and fragmented into local 'enterprises' or 'bureaus' or 'entrepreneurial communities', with a tendency to include local national-bourgeois industry in the transfer of global capital. If, in the era of communism, one could speak about 'central surveillance', today one can speak about operative services as 'frenzied' organs, without a central or integrative institutional body in place of the recycling of capitalism.

Translation: Nada Jacimović

INDEPENDENT CULTURE IN CROATIA BETWEEN NATIONAL IDENTITY CULTURE AND EUROPEAN DIVERSITY CULTURE, THERE IS TACTICAL NETWORKING

EMINA VIŠNIĆ

FRAMEWORK FOR THE GENERAL PICTURE

As in most of the post-socialist countries of South East Europe, the general cultural landscape in Croatia is dominated by the so-called “official” culture created by an unwieldy system of cultural bodies under the ownership and direct control of the state administration (central, regional and local). The public cultural sector, in spite of rapid, deep changes at the political and economic levels as well as in everyday life, has not yet experienced a significant structural transition. Even today, it functions, more or less, in accordance with outdated and inadequate principles inherited from a previous era.

However, it should not be forgotten that the policy of preservation and conservation has some positive aspects. As Dragojević points out, that unwillingness to make deep interventions, was what suppressed a possible crisis in the cultural field.¹ The most significant result of such a policy is the protection of the cultural infrastructure.² Furthermore, cultural legislation and administrative practice in Croatia still keep culture in most of its aspects out of the dominion of market logic.

One could argue that current and recent Croatian cultural policy

¹ Dragojević in *The Arts, Politics and the Change* 2005.

² “The legislation in force prescribes that every decision to close an institution must be approved by the Ministry of Culture. This is an important provision to ensure the preservation of existing cultural infrastructure.” Dragojević in *The Arts, Politics and the Change* 2005, p. 140.

is more or less still exercised according to the old, socialist model, which was also highly appropriate in the 1990s when cultural policy was completely subjected to national ideology. On the other hand, one can recognize at least a general tendency to “westernize” the economy, society and then (even) the culture. In terms of cultural policy, this means heading towards the “liberal” model, which is justified by “[t]he underlying explanation that liberalization alone would provide basis for the pluralization of cultural offer and for better adjustment of cultural products to the actual needs of people.”³ However, as is widely known, the “almighty invisible hand of the market” is not able to guarantee equal participation in cultural life for all citizens, especially if we have in mind so-called vulnerable groups and proactive involvement. Although it would be unreasonable to completely deny the economic aspects of some cultural production, it is important to note that different market driven strategies and policies tend to neglect various social functions of culture. We could presume (or at least hope) that similar considerations lie behind the actions of decision-makers in Croatia when they keep protecting the existing system. Yet, it is more likely that this is a matter of inertia, on the one hand, and an ideology of culture as most important representative and guardian of national identity, on the other.

Since the old model is not sustainable in the long-term, we can expect that sooner or later there will be some effort to change it in accordance with overrated western exemplars. We certainly hope (and should oppose any such development) that Croatian cultural policy won’t take the same directions as, for instance, our European neighbour Slovenia did. In the Slovene official definition of cultural policy, for instance, (or to be more precise, definition of “public cultural assets”), there is a dangerous presumption “that the natural state of existence of artistic and cultural production is production of the ‘market’.”⁴

This policy of preservation and isolation of culture from current social and economic flows does, of course, have several crucial negative aspects. “(...) The state, in association with professional organisations, is the only guardian of public cultural goods. The cost of this arrange-

³ Breznik 2004, p. 54.

⁴ Ibid., p. 65.

ment is that it perpetuates traditional meanings and functions of culture that are mainly associated with national cohesion, identity and distinctiveness. (...) Culture serves, as far as the cultural mainstream is concerned, as a symbolic reservoir for ethno-national mobilisation and other reactive tendencies, rather than to create responses that could facilitate solutions to developmental problems and stimulate proactive tendencies.”⁵

In other words, such a policy has resulted in an institutional framework that is still not development-oriented, i.e. that effectively prevents any attempt at stepping out towards proactive cultural strategies and policies, which could support diversity, dynamism and cultural development instead of continually reinforcing national identity through tradition and traditionalism. It is not based on programme logic, nor is it significantly determined by the evaluation of a programme. It is service-oriented, based on the closed logic of providing for existing institutions. As such, it is located in a vacuum far removed from the sphere of social dynamics. Such a policy cannot significantly advance the development of cultural and social capital. Its only rationale can be to maintain the functions of the public cultural sector, i.e. to maintain the status quo.

THE POSITION OF INDEPENDENT CULTURE

National and local cultural and other relevant public policies have become increasingly important for the survival and further development of the independent cultural scene, since previously neither the necessary conditions for the sustainable development of an independent culture nor the basic resources for the stability of individual organisations were in place. Their importance grew with a sudden increase in and

⁵ Katunarić in *The Arts, Politics and the Change* 2005, p. 37. Although the ethno-national element is not as visible as it was in 1990s, current cultural policy is still primarily oriented towards building national identity but now to a more “modern” design. For example, in the presentation of the accomplishments of the Ministry of Culture in the period 2004–2007, traditional, and above all heritage maintenance projects prevail (the presentation is available in Croatian at www.min-kulture.hr).

then withdrawal of international funds at the end of the first phase of transition (at the beginning of the 2000s).

In spite of the relatively recently created programme funding instruments, at both the national and the local levels, the independent cultural scene still lacks recognition and support for its new models of cultural production and collaboration. It is still seen as “alternative” to the institutions of the so-called “dominant” culture and remains in a subservient relationship whereby public authorities “provide for” the realization of the programmes and “support” individual actors. The independent scene is often seen as an amateur, voluntary and hobby-oriented sector, and not as a professional one. Its transformative potential cannot be recognized by the current cultural system, since it follows a service – sanctioned logic and not a development logic. Primarily geared to meet the ongoing and unmitigating infrastructural needs of the public cultural institutions and social and economic security for their employees, programme development of the public sector is also not supported as a priority and crucial objective of cultural policies. On the other hand, public support provided for the independent scene solely at the level of the limited financing of programmes cannot have a significant positive influence on its stability, sustainability and long-term development. The inability of the central and local governments institutions responsible for public financing in culture to provide multi-annual funding for projects and programmes, particularly in this field, closes the door to strategic programme planning and development. In almost all cities the limited availability of space resources – unsolved problems of existing (or recently existing) independent spaces and the lack of adequate venues for the activities of a number of other organisations, forced to work in private apartments or in premises acquired at market prices (using up a substantial part of their programme budgets), or temporarily using space with limited access owned by other institutions – causes a specific form of instability and can lead to the disappearance of these organisations. This situation makes impossible not only the long-term stability of the organisations but also the development of any long-term programming or peer participation in international cultural exchange.⁶

⁶ For instance, Croatian organizations are only occasionally included in

Despite all these obstacles, an independent cultural scene in Croatia operates alongside the established or dominant system, promoting new cultural and artistic content together with innovative work practices. On the other hand, by establishing new models of cooperation in the form of collaborative platforms (tactical networks), independent organizations have started various advocacy processes in an effort to affect cultural policies, at both the national and the local level.

EU ACCESSION PROCESS IMPACTS

In general, we can freely claim that the EU accession process has no significant influence or effect on the independent cultural sector in Croatia. Moreover, according to a survey conducted by Nina Obuljen⁷, it is not exclusively the case of an independent sector, nor of Croatia. This is because “[p]reliminary assessment of the impact of the enlargement on cultural policies in countries on transition confirms that the EU did not have any specific enlargement policy referring to culture. The long-established policy of excluding culture from harmonization and leaving it in under the aegis of individual member states, meant that the specific needs of future member states in the cultural field were not addressed during enlargement. (...) The process of enlargement really did not bring any significant improvements, guidelines or directions for cultural policies of new member states. This left coordination of cultural policies mostly on the level of informal discussions among politicians, or cultural operators and researchers, as it was before.”⁸

As was the case in most of so-called “transition countries”, the cultural sector in Croatia, and particularly the independent one, awaited the accession process with optimism, enthusiasm and, as was shown later, unrealistic expectations. In their emergence and first

artist-in-residence exchange programmes. The simple and very effective reason for that is that there is none of the adequate infrastructure those programmes demand, such as: working studios, apartments for artists in residence, adequate and available exhibition or performing venues, etc.

⁷ Obuljen 2005.

⁸ Obuljen 2005, pp. 66–67.

development phase organisations were not only completely ignored by the state, but even accused of being “foreign-money mercenaries and state enemies”; they had expected a lot more than the process eventually brought. Besides new possibilities for project funding, they tended to imagine, obviously based on inadequate information, that EU policies and practices would influence Croatian ones on many levels, such as the following: a real impact on cultural democracy⁹ development issues, cultural decentralization¹⁰ and democratization measures, a greater transparency and civil participation in generating, implementing and monitoring all public and hence also cultural policies¹¹, clearer programme evaluation criteria, and finally, at least partial suppression of the monopoly and unfair privilege of the public cultural sector.

The reality showed that these were seriously misguided aspirations. Legislative changes implemented as a direct result of the accession process are of little or no importance for the types of cultural actions and practices that are being developed in the independent

⁹ “In many European countries the strength of the cultural sector is measured by the number and diversity of cultural initiatives, especially those which are local, and which help to raise the overall standard of cultural life. This approach can be called cultural democracy. Cultural democracy has taken over from a previous emphasis on the democratisation of culture, which called for increased accessibility of cultural production, to a wider target group, but still emanating from elite institutions of culture. The legitimizing function of culture has been replaced by a pluralist view, whereby cultural democracy allows for the expression of all local, group, non-mainstream and even individual cultural identities. The emphasis, therefore, is on stimulating initiatives by local groups and organizations, geographically wide networks involved in producing and participating in culture.” Dragičević Šešić/Dragojević 2005, p. 25.

¹⁰ In both possible meanings of the term used in practice: (a) decentralization as the transfer of competences from the central state towards local authorities (that should be, but is not always or not on a relevant level followed by financial decentralization); (b) decentralization as a concept of opening old and solid boundaries defining of art and culture from the state perspective and its financing, i.e. at long last placing new, innovative cultural and art practices in the focus of cultural policy. See Breznik 2004.

¹¹ “European cultural policies are important so long as they can assist the implementation of democratic standards on a European scale and can establish the criteria of new governance logic.” Corina Şuteu in *The Arts, Politics and the Change* 2005, p. 31.

sector. The mammoth-sized, expensive and too often unproductive public institutions sector has received almost no interrogation, while the expected new golden opportunities for programme financing have been reduced to the chance to participate in the Culture 2007 programme. Matters of cultural governance stayed almost exclusively on the level of potential good-practice transfers.

In the general view, no matter if there is an issue of regulation that is in direct or indirect relation to culture (including the audio-visual sector, which is in most European countries still considered a cultural activity and is under the jurisdiction of ministries of culture¹²), or those that affect the cultural sector in a more indirect manner¹³, and beyond the question of whether we need a common European cultural policy, European influence in the field of culture is more or less reduced to issues of the “cultural industries” market in the globalized world. In other words, one of the main considerations behind the somewhat ambiguous European debates on culture (issues such as cultural diversity, building European identity, intercultural dialogue, etc.), could be posed in the following question: How does one become a competitive global player on the entertainment industry market, or overcome the dominance of the United States? At the same time, local and national cultural policies are almost exclusively defined by the question: How can we, with our respective cultural tourism industry, become competitive, primarily on the European but also on the global market?

¹² In spite of that, EU institutions, practices and policies, separate this sector from the field of culture by transferring it to the Directorate for Information Society and Media, implying that there should be some essential difference between culture that is produced and distributed in the “old-fashioned” way and that which is digital (see Obuljen 2005). But, of course, this distinction in practice actually means that there are European policies in the audio-visual sector, because that is the field in which most of the entertainment industry is produced and where the EU is faced with the dominance of US production (the film and music industries, above all).

¹³ In her research, Obuljen analysed changes concerning the audio-visual sector and intellectual property rights (IPR), taxation policies, the issue of mobility for artists and cultural workers, which is tackled by funding incentives at the EU level, tax policy and social security regulations and competition rules and legislation regarding free movement of goods and services. See Obuljen 2005.

In her analysis of trends in cultural policies in the context of globalization, Maja Breznik casts a new critical light on current European concepts of culture. She argues that the replacement of the term “l’exception culturelle” with “cultural diversity”, which has been made by EU institutions and international organizations is much more than a simple translation of the French term. The first “express requirement that when negotiating within the WTO and other organizations, culture, including the audio-visual field and publishing, should be considered an exception, because it does not belong in the economic sphere and should therefore be exempted from negotiations.”¹⁴ Quite the contrary, “the concept of cultural diversity (...) envisages the preservation of national or ethnic cultural traits through the promotion of local ‘cultural industries’ that should become distinct and competitive on the international scale. (...) The European Union and UNESCO, which both claim to be the opponents of the liberalization of culture, in reality advocate standpoints similar to those in campaigners, i.e. that the cultural industry is the basis of every cultural policy. (...) The main goal of national cultural policies has become the promotion of international competitiveness of local industries. (...) It contradicts the creation of creativity, because the cultural industry produces works that are homogeneous, predictable and, most of all, undemanding (...).”¹⁵

Besides the obvious notion that the nature of arts and culture is definitely not economic, it is necessary to note one of the most convincing arguments against the commodification of culture. Milohnić points out “that particular practices underpinning cultural and artistic creativity are not compatible with the competitive principle of the market”.¹⁶ Moreover, he presents Radich’s¹⁷ opinion “that the logic behind the economic (i.e. market) success of culture is devastating for the principle of collaboration characterizing many actors in the field of arts and culture. The ideology of economic rationality and market success encourages competition rather than collaboration

¹⁴ Breznik in Milohnić et al. 2005, p. 30.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 33–34.

¹⁶ Milohnić et al. 2005, p. 12.

¹⁷ Radich, Anthony J. 1992. *Twenty Years of Economic Studies of the Arts: A Review*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

and the atomization of individuals and organizations rather than linking (...).¹⁸

CONCLUSIONS

Instead of copying European cultural practices, instead of entering into competition with the cultural capitals of Western Europe, “[h]opefully the new democracies may develop meanings and function of culture, above all a ‘living culture’ enmeshed in the tissue of everyday life and communication, which will give them a new equality that will be appealing to people both at home and abroad. (...) In general, a truly post-imperial, post-colonial and post-national culture will give way to new expressions of creativity, identity, tolerance, work, cooperation, interdependence and solidarity, ones that the old (metropolitan) cultures have either suppressed or dismantled in favour of hierarchies, centrality, supremacy, exclusion, friction, cleansing, or even extermination of others...”¹⁹

If European cultural policies – both national policies and the actions of EU institutions – are more and more directed towards the logic of the market, while attempting to keep to some extent the old functions of culture in representing national identities, we have to find new models through which culture could re-enable its proactive, dynamic and critical function in society. Therefore, the still dominant traditional definition of culture as art and heritage (and hence cultural policies) on the one hand, and as the production of “added value” through trade in goods and services, on the other, must be abandoned. The domain of culture should be extended and defined in a more flexible manner as an area of direct interaction between various social, technological and artistic levels.

Furthermore, to be able to confront these tendencies, which undermine the important social function of culture, we must find new models of cultural production. The “potential world”²⁰ of still disor-

¹⁸ Radich in Milohnić et al. 2005, p. 12.

¹⁹ Katunarić in *The Arts, Politics and the Change* 2005, p. 38.

²⁰ Corina Şuteu, in her report on cultural policies in Central and Eastern

dered Balkan societies could provide some solutions. Organizations in Croatia have tried to find them in new forms of collaboration, which they describe as intensive collaborative platforms or tactical networks, which “represent a new form of emerging socio-cultural practice with two main purposes: expanding the definition of cultural action and developing new collaborative practices and models”²¹. As “complex socio-cultural endeavours”, they effectively deal with complex problems. To be able to do that, they “require four basic prerequisites:

- 1) Aims and goals need to be set up that are suitable for the type of project, including a socially relevant agenda and a strong policy of intent;
- 2) Themes and material need to be oriented towards genuine collaboration;
- 3) Transdisciplinary activities are required to bring together participants from different artistic, cultural and social fields to collaborate and work together;
- 4) Multi-level, modular and complex structures with defined protocols and procedures need to serve (a) as a method of building informative and communicative governing formats, and (b) as a transformative approach towards achieving targeted aims and goals.”

In their concept and their practice, those “collaborative platforms” need to differ from the membership networks, the agencies that provide programme content, the grant-giving or operational foundations, the simple collaborative projects, projects that provide touring packages, distributive touring models, the wide platforms with no clear agenda and only a suggestion of a common ground behind similar types of activities, etc. A more basic distinction needs to be drawn

Europe, besides the huge, complex obstacles that arise from underdeveloped cultural systems, stress one simple, but extremely important comparative advantage that our societies could use: “Romanian philosopher Gabriel Liiceanu explained that post communist societies have the luck to still live in a ‘potential’ world, so different from the ‘saturated’ Western reality.” Şuteu 2005, p. 17.

²¹ This description of the concept of collaborative platforms is taken from the documents of the collaborative platform: Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000, available at <www.culturalkapital.org>.

between intensive collaborative platforms and the current membership based networks. These networks are based on the representative logic of identity – they produce a demagogy of decentralization while at the same time creating a new level of centralized, non-effective bureaucracy that fails to produce effective programmes or projects.”

This concept was developed and tested in practice, i.e. in concrete cultural collaboration projects and platforms, that is, at the local (platform Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000²²), national (Clulture network²³) and regional – Western Balkans (Clulture’s Regional Initiative) levels. Moreover, this practice, as Sanjin Dragojević concludes while placing these new networking formats within the larger European context, since it is transferable, is a relevant European cultural practice.²⁴

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²² See <www.culturalkapital.org>.

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²⁴ Dragojević in *Cultural Policymaking Bottom-Up* 2008.

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**INTELLECTUAL DIASPORA
FROM THE WESTERN BALKANS**

International conference

NEW PARADIGMS, NEW MODELS – CULTURE IN THE EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The workshop approaches questions of mobility and financing from the position of acknowledged scholars in humanities and social sciences, who come from the Western Balkans (WB) but now work outside the region. They are significant in number and their research on political, social, anthropological and historical issues in the WB societies significantly shapes dominant academic discourses on international level.

Despite the increasing mobility in the globalizing world, it seems that expert knowledge and potentials of this academic elite are insufficiently employed in the societies of their origin and the region as a whole, both in decision making processes and policies, and in efforts for improving teaching and research practices. The workshop will emphasize a need of a structured strategy of coordination of these scholars and their systematic integration into educational, research and networking activities in the WB societies. Their international experience and expertise will help the cultural and social values promoted by EU and the highest academic standards to enter the national (and quite often nationalistic) spaces of the WB societies. The workshop participants will propose concrete actions for exploitation of potentials of “academic diaspora” in the WB countries.

The following abstracts are contributions of four scholars who at present work and study outside their respective homelands. They are well integrated members of international academic community and at the same time maintain and develop communication and cooperation with their “original” academic environments. This personal experience makes them competent speakers on the topic.

Although this publication is conceived as an edited volume of elaborated texts, we nevertheless decided to include only abstracts. The idea behind the workshop is to launch a practical initiative to establish a network involving researchers from “diaspora” and those from Slovenia and the Western Balkans, rather than to discuss the issue theoretically.

“WE” AND “THEY” – COMMUNICATION THROUGH INSTITUTIONALIZATION BETWEEN SCHOLARS IN DIASPORA AND SCHOLARS WITHIN THE COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

RIGELS HALILI

The direct impulse for this talk comes from an experience I went through two years ago, while trying to initiate an international Polish-Albanian project, which in the end failed. I interpret the opposition I faced while trying to put my project into motion in the context of the conflict of generations. But as much as it is personal it is also a clash of different methodologies, epistemologies and didactics in scientific and academic work. I am leaving aside the discussion on what makes me a member of Diaspora, since I still do have an Albanian passport and I work on Albanian related issues, conduct fieldwork in Albania, and make use of the archives there. The main question is how to improve things? How to make possible communication as a means for benefiting all of us, scholars inside and outside the country? It seems to me that the answer lies in institutionalization, or as I call it “institutional return”. I do not understand this in the sense the Open Society Institute is supporting the returning scholars, but as involvement in cooperation between institutions in the Balkan countries (where “they” work) and those in the European Union (where “we” work). To put it metaphorically: the role of scholars from the WB working abroad is to build, or help bringing up bridges, which could either facilitate their crossing over to the other side of the river, or on the *kapijas* of which they could follow their work.

How to achieve this? Joint European Projects and Tempus are good mechanisms. Other means could be: bilateral agreements and projects, establishing networks, organizing joint conferences, inten-

sification of exchange of students and scholars, and sometimes (in Albania even often) involvement of political agents.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: DIASPORA AS ADVANTAGE OR OBSTACLE?

MARKO ŽIVKOVIĆ

The presentation will reflect on my personal experience and the experiences of my colleagues coming from the Balkan countries who now teach at US and Canadian Universities. The focus will be on educational practices in the region and on highlighting the ways in which we can participate in and contribute to improvement of these practices. Drawing from personal experience, I will provide concrete examples of successful cooperation with educational institutions in the field of anthropology studies in Serbia.

Additionally, I will point to the advantages and obstacles that arise in communication and cooperation between scholars in the region and their colleagues working at universities and institutes abroad. I will try to explain why these interactions are necessary for both groups.

BRAIN DRAIN: AN EXAMPLE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

DEJAN DJOKIĆ

The presentation will consist of three main parts. In the first part, I will address briefly the problem of 'brain drain' in the post-Cold War Southeastern Europe, stressing that in addition to the human (above all the loss of life) and material loss that accompanied the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession (as they are now known), the problem of a large number of young and educated people who left the region in the 1990s tends to be unacknowledged. The ramifications of this phenomenon are hard to assess at this point, but they are likely to be significant. I will also argue that war was not the only factor behind the 'brain drain' – Slovenia, for example, did not suffer much in this respect, but Bulgaria, where there was no war or collapse of state in the 1990s, did. In the second part I will discuss the creation of what has been called 'intellectual diaspora' by some scholars: i.e. a large number of those who left the region in their late teens, early twenties, continued or began anew university education in those countries where they settled. Many of them now occupy teaching and research positions at some of the most prestigious 'western' academic institutions and have published books and articles in languages of their adopted countries. I will pose the following questions: 1) To what extent are these individuals part of the 'brain drain' phenomenon, considering that many of them became academics only once they moved abroad? 2) In what ways can this 'intellectual diaspora' contribute to academic debates in their home countries? In the third part of my presentation I will reflect on my own, personal experience as a member of the imagined community of former-Yugoslav academic diaspora, and on the experience

of several of my friends, offering some possible, if personal, answers to questions raised above.

TRESPASSING BOUNDARIES: INSTITUTIONAL DEADLOCKS AND PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

ROZITA DIMOVA

The fifteen-year quest for academic and intellectual goals in Western Europe and the US prevented me from engaging in academic projects with colleagues from the republic of Macedonia. Although I was present in the country as a researcher and native anthropologist doing fieldwork over these years, it is only with my position at the Institute for Eastern European Studies at the Free University in Berlin as a coordinator of a project on nation building in Southeastern Europe that I have had an opportunity to be engaged in the academic circles of the country. This presentation addresses the valuable opportunities but also the devastating limitations affecting the process of exchange and circulation of knowledge that have emerged in this year between colleagues from similar disciplinary and academic, but vastly different institutional backgrounds (institutes attached to the university, different ministries, the Academy of Arts and Sciences or the NGO sector). The epistemological/conceptual and methodological differences although strong, have proven stimulating and productive for our project. What remains as the main obstacle is the rigid institutional structure embedded in the Academia and education in the country that stems from the previously inherited socialist structures, stubbornly regulating the researchers' affiliation, funding, and possibilities for career advancement. How to trespass the institutional boundaries remains the main challenge for researchers. From our experience so far, it is evident that the opportunity to participate in a project funded by an external source and coordinated by an independent institution is the most effective way of allowing academic freedom, not only in terms

of politics of knowledge production, but also in terms of flexibility to do work not regulated by the institution where the researcher belongs, collaborate with colleagues from different backgrounds, and forge alliances that otherwise remain unsupported or even sabotaged.

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Appendix

HOW SOON IS NOW? – AN EXERCISE TO IMAGINE OUR PROVISIONAL FUTURE

“How soon is now?” envisions possible futures of cultural practices in the Western Balkans. It is specifically focused on a group of cultural practitioners and founders of medium- or smaller-scale cultural organisations that were challenged and triggered by the 1990s institutional breakdown and became (often inadvertently) the forerunners of alternative models of cultural production.

Initiated by the Centrala Foundation for Future Cities and the Škuc Gallery, “How soon is now?” brings together 10 practitioners from 10 organisations across the region for a speculative imagining of the context and practices of her/his organisation ten years from now.

IMAGINE THE YEAR 2018. YOU ARE STILL A CULTURAL PRACTITIONER, OR MAYBE NOT.

What are you working on? Where are you located, and does your organisation still have the same address as in 2008? What is your network? Where does your funding come from (what is your economy) and what is the cultural climate of your country/city? How local is your scene and with whom are you (not) cooperating? Are you concerned with these issues at all?

“How soon is now?” might appear to be a highly speculative exercise, and at the time of the current political instabilities in a region where even tomorrow is uncertain, why would one dwell upon the future? The idea behind this is that all the invited individuals and organisations have developed specific skills and qualities over the last decade that stretch the possibilities of their present situation. The times are unstable, conditions are changing and roles are shifting. Where will we all be when/if the transition is over?

The results and contributions from “How soon is now?” will be published/issued in the upcoming publication entitled *Lexicon for Provisional Futures*, a collaborative work-in-progress towards a collection of terms and (re)definitions that envisage the Western Balkans as a vital and significant trigger for the possible futures of Europe.

From the 1960s onwards, the impact of future visions on our societies, urban environments and even personal lives has been changing. While the 1960s era was characterised by radical social experiments, the 1980s brought what some people see as mere dystopias. From the 1990s onward, thinking about the future has gradually disappeared from the general public discourse or has become – in Europe – connected to implementation of the EU’s unification standards. The

Lexicon for Provisional Futures raises the question: how else can we imagine the future today?

The search for indicators of these futures – and the related practices – starts in the Western Balkans, given the fact that the collapse of the institutional framework in the late 1980s and 1990s introduced numerous innovative cultural, spatial and economic practices. Evolving in difficult geo-political contexts, these often-networked, temporary or self-organised practices were urged to redirect the prospect of their context based on necessity.

The *Lexicon for Provisional Futures* seeks to encompass terms and concepts that might redefine the European city and its urban culture, with emphasis on thinking about the future “provisionally” and with less utopian grandiloquence. With its workshops and collectively edited publication, it follows the “Lost Highway Expedition”, an exploration of the cultural and urban landscapes of the Western Balkans and is part of the larger framework project entitled “Europe Lost and Found”.

The key result of the project is publication of the *Lexicon for Provisional Futures*. Each lexicon entry represents a notion/concept proposing alternative models for the urban territory (city) and for ways of practicing culture. The publication will gather 40 entries by as many commissioned participants and contributors throughout the Western Balkans region, including cultural practitioners, architects, artists and fiction writers. It will include an introductory text by the editors, responding essays and an exhaustive collection of references.

Publication of the *Lexicon for Provisional Futures* is supported by the European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam; the Division for International Cultural Relations – Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ljubljana; and the Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam.

ABOUT EUROPE LOST AND FOUND

EUROPE LOST AND FOUND (ELF) is a large-scale project initiated in 2005 by the Centrala Foundation for Future Cities (Azra Akšamija, Katherine Carl, Ana Džokić, Ivan Kucina, Marc Neelen, Kyong Park and Marjetica Potrč), encompassing research on the future of new and transforming borders and territories of Europe and comprising a number of events, travels, exhibitions and publications. The **“Lost Highway Expedition” (LHE)** was the initial event of ELF. During August 2006, through this 27-day exploration of cultural and urban landscapes in nine emerging capital cities of the Western Balkans, an experimental temporary society of over 200 artists, architects, cultural workers, curators, etc. was formed.

Until now, this activity has resulted in the *Lost Highway Photobook* (co-published by the Centrala Foundation for Future Cities, School of Missing Studies and Škuc Gallery), “Lost Highway Exhibition” (Škuc Gallery, Ljubljana), “A Night of Provisional Futures” (Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam) and numerous presentations, workshops and seminars.

For more info about the project, visit <http://europelostandfound.net>

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CONTRIBUTORS

The Centrala Foundation for Future Cities is an international, interdisciplinary, non-profit organisation of artists and curators, registered in the Netherlands in 2005. Centrala aims at initiating projects for future cultural and urban development in response to the increasing uncertainty of political, economic and social landscapes. It is a process-driven, research-based, intellectually engaged, critically minded, and socially destined cultural platform. The *Lexicon for Provisional Futures* is a part of the second stage of the Europe Lost and Found project, initiated through the Centrala Foundation for Future Cities.

The lexicon is collectively navigated by
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