Dossier: Culture, Art, Society
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Supported by a grant from the Foundation Open Society Institute in cooperation with the OSIFE of the Open Society Foundations

Supported by a grant from the European Cultural Foundation

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In the editorial of the previous issue, we discussed a natural disaster that struck a small Balkan country. Now, we find ourselves facing another natural disaster that is striking the entire planet and has paralysed almost all spheres of life (even our online magazine has been affected and we apologise to readers for the delay in publication of this issue). The cause of the disaster is a tiny, submicroscopic thing, a virus, a coronavirus, called Covid-19, or SARS-CoV-2. It is a new, very insidious virus, highly infectious, highly contagious. Doctors and scientists find themselves facing the unknown. One says one thing, another the opposite, indeed too often specialists contradict themselves within a matter of days. The consensus that presupposes a scientific truth is missing in many aspects: We are still in the phase of trial and error, thus science has still not managed to predict nor find a quick solution. The only solution that 21st century science has proposed up to now is the Medieval response to the Black Death that plagued Europe: Enclosure, the greatest isolation possible from one another. Thus, a large number of residents of this planet have been enclosed inside four walls, for weeks on end. Science requires time in order to find, through a process of trial and error, the truth and thus to protect humanity from this evil.

Meanwhile, the consequences of this crisis extend beyond health and will be severe. First, we will be much poorer, with an economic decline unprecedented in decades: On this there is consensus among economists. Second, humanity has been conquered not only by the coronavirus epidemic, but also by an epidemic of fear about the present and future. Both poverty and fear, as well as the extraordinary empowerment of governments of nation-states at a time when they are also shutting out one another, constitute the perfect terrain for a regression toward national-populist authoritarianism, which has seen an alarming expansion in the democratic West in recent years. What will happen to democracy? Will it be able to resist the authoritarian temptations of a population which is frightened and hostile to the world? What about the European Union, which most recently opened its doors to the Western Balkans – what will it be like in the near future? The signs are not good: The richest countries are maintaining a similar position as they did in the financial crisis of 2008-2010, toward countries that are less rich, and this is harming European integration, undermining its very foundations. As Jacques Delors, one of the protagonists of the Maastricht Treaty said: “The climate that seems to hang over the heads of state and government and the lack of European solidarity pose a mortal danger to the European Union. The virus is back.” It is clear to what old European virus he was referring. Not to mention the position that the EU holds towards Syrian refugees, as it violating respective international conventions and at the same time its own declared values, not just by building walls to keep the refugees out, but also by giving prior blessing to the use of live weapons against refugees by Greece, the first Balkan state to join the EU.

From the very beginning, Jean Monnet, one of the earliest architects of united Europe, expressed concerns about the future of this project, arguing that building Europe had to begin with culture. But culture, in the dominant ideological model, is seen as entertainment or luxury, and therefore, it is the first to be sacrificed in times of economic hardship. We are far from that which Winston Churchill said in the midst of the Second World War: “If we sacrifice our Culture, then can anyone tell me why we are fighting this war?”

Translated by Alexandra Channer
IS IT BECOMING A COUNTRY OF OLD MEN?

Unemployment is a burning problem facing Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH). Young people here share in the unfortunate designation that BH has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe. Those who are, nevertheless, employed, are mostly working in the private sector, but they aspire to a secure position in public service.

For every job you need a connection or to have somebody who is politically active who can help you find a job.

Aneka Mrdić, from Sarajevo, is still looking for a job. She blames the government for the unemployment, which goes hand in hand with poverty, corruption, and the BH political system.

“For four years now I have been trying to find a job in my profession, without success. For every job you need a connection or to have somebody who is politically active who can help you find a job. Knowledge is least valued here. Although I have no experience in my profession, I am willing to work, to learn, but I am not being given the chance. I’ll probably end up going outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I think the option is Germany, and we’ll see,” says Anela.

But Aneka is not the only one who sees a better future for herself abroad. The massive departure of young people is increasingly visible in BH society. This trend has been on the rise, significantly, over the past five years, and should it continue, BH will be facing a grim future: it will become a country of the elderly. Unemployment is the reason that the American Cato Institute has ranked BH in the less than glorious eighth place on their poverty index.

According to the most recent research by dissatisfaction over the political situation, selected by under 70% of the people who were examined.

Unemployment holds only sixth place among the reasons why young people are leaving their home country, and just under 40% of the people examined said this was why they were leaving their home country.

Next to unemployment is dissatisfaction with a current job or salary level, which about 30% of the young people gave as the reason for leaving. The conclusion is that young people are not leaving primarily because of a lack of employment opportunities, but because of the entire political and social situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as they say at the KULT Institute for Youth Development.

According to a study run by the KULT Institute for Youth Development in 2017 analysing the reasons why they are leaving their home country, young people between the ages of 15 and 35 say that the main reason they are moving away is that they can’t envision a better future for themselves.

Over the last seven years, 230,000 have left the country

Unfortunately BH does not keep precise data on the number of people who have left the country in the recent period. According to data from the Union for Sustainable Return and Integrations in BH, about 230,000 people left BH between July 2013 and January 2020. Among them are people who left BH while still retaining their residency status, but also those who permanently renounced their citizenship.

According to the data of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 85,000 people had renounced their BH citizenship by halfway through 2019. “If we take into consideration that young people are the group that most often leaves BH, we conclude that the number of young people leaving BH is equal to the population of third- or fourth-level cities here,” said the Institute.

There is no state-wide law in BH about young people. The Institute is currently working on analysing the condition and needs of young people in BH in conjunction with the Ministry of Civil Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is a key step toward writing important strategic documents for young people.
Unfortunately, the education systems were not created to motivate high-school and university students to work.

“In the BH Federation, a Youth Act has been in effect for ten years, but even after ten years there has been no work done on the strategy that is required by the law. As far as the Republika Srpska entity is concerned, there the situation is somewhat better because a youth policy was adopted for 2016/2020. The Brčko district of BH has had a Youth Act on the books for the shortest time, but already they are developing a strategy for the young, which is slated to be adopted this year. An analysis of the condition and needs of the young in the Brčko district of BH has been drawn up, and currently underway is operative discussion in work groups. At the lower levels of government (cants and municipalities) the situation is somewhat more positive, while the Institute intends to offer, this year, support to six or seven communities to help them develop their strategies for young people,” the Institute said.

On the basis of experience working with the young, and following all trends and movements related to the young, young people do not generally make adequate use of the available legal options regulating employment while they are students.

An alarm no one is activating

Unfortunately, the education systems were not created to motivate high-school and university students to work, or build up their experience through practical work. Every fourth person in BH drops out of the education system, which is far higher than the average number of drop-outs found in most European countries.

“Young people have expressed satisfaction with the system of education, yet they show no interest in travel, for instance, for educational purposes, they don’t think volunteer work is worthwhile, or gaining practical experience and so forth. This gives me the impression that young people see education as a path to a diploma, but not to the knowledge, skill and competence that would make them competitive in the workforce.

The fact that they see public administration as the most desirable employer also shows that young people feel that what matters most is obtaining the ‘papers’ to open the doors of the institutions, to find a secure job and that this is what matters.

Unfortunately time and energy must be invested both in the education system and the labor market for this attitude to change among young people. In essence, we can say that a significant number of young people are aware of the serious situation and the circumstances they live in, but what worries me personally is the lack of quality solutions offered by young people, except the fact that they see leaving the country as their solution.

On the other hand, there are some young people who feel, for instance, that the BH education system is good, yet they have never traveled outside the country anywhere for educational purposes, so it is difficult to say what they have to compare our educational system with. We could therefore say that the perception of young people of the condition in society is founded on a narrow perspective of the ways in which they, themselves, live, and less on an understanding of the broader context, and an analysis of the problems and solutions,” as Dr. Lejla Turčilo explains, of the Department of Communications/Journalism at the Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science.

Unfortunately, this is an educational system which does not have a dual orientation, and it does not offer young people opportunities to acquire knowledge, competence and skills during the formal education process in keeping with the needs and competitiveness of the 21st century, so this reduces the chances for quick employment, which leads to the assumption that many young people are doing jobs they were not trained for and for which they do not have adequate education.

“Almost 50% of BH young people are doing jobs they were not trained for or have no skills or competence for, while almost every third young working person feels overqualified for the job he or she is doing,” says Amer Osmić.

An interesting but also worrisome fact is that an exceptionally small number of young people find jobs to put themselves through their tertiary schooling, which can be explained by custom in BH, but also the other countries of the region, for parents to support their children throughout their studies. “According to the available data, the number of young people who decide to volunteer is low. Only 13% have stated that over the last twelve months they were involved in volunteer work. Young people most often serve as volunteers in schools or universities, and youth organizations”, says Osmić.

According to recent research conducted by the Studija o mladima Bih [Study on Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina], under the auspices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Study on Youth in Southeastern Europe 2018/2019, an international research project that is being run simultaneously in ten southeastern European countries, has shown that almost every other young person in BH who drops out of the formal education system remains at the level of third-year secondary school or lower.

They spend their free time in cafes, they do not attend cultural events, nor do they travel. The reason for this is that young people do not perceive expertise, competence and qualifications as key to getting a job, but instead believe that what matters more is having friends, acquaintances, and connections with people in certain positions, or simply good luck.

A key problem is that there is no systematic concern for young people, and the sporadic measures and public calls aimed at young people will not contribute to significant progress. The very lack of strategic documents and concrete action plans funded by a budget are a reflection of the state’s lack of concern for young people.

For all these reasons, but also because of the vast numbers of people leaving BH, the KULT Institute for Youth Development inaugurated a campaign known as #neeucladaim [I won’t leave], with the goal of encouraging, motivating and stimulating the media and decision-makers to take more seriously the problem of the mass departures of young people.

“What matters most is that young people mustn’t lose their motivation for their personal advancement, but also for making a contribution to the community. They must not accept or be part of negative trends in society, instead they should point to all the anomalies they notice or experience. Young people are the vitality and potential of every society, and they should see themselves as such, but they should also convince society that they have the capacity for advancing and developing the community!” as the KULT Institute for Youth Development concluded.

Anela Mrđić, quoted at the beginning of this story, says she doesn’t want to go abroad, but she is afraid she may have no other options. She says that the
The contemporary culture of co-existence cannot be built on lies, wishful thinking or other baseless attitudes and ideologies, especially if they are realised through one-off, short-term and media-friendly events. The power of its authenticity should draw from a firm grasp of reality and care for long-term effects, and should be organically grounded in the everyday life of the community. Hence, it is best not to speak about resolving conflicts, but rather about an ability to live with conflicts, and instead of removing borders, to think about crossing them.

THE ALIEN – THE OTHER – ONE OF US

We brought down the Berlin wall, we opened up our borders, we popularised the Internet, and most of us live in multicultural metropolises. And yet walls remain a familiar experience to the modern European. These are no longer walls running along national borders, between political systems or languages. The contemporary wall stands in the midst of society, on the same river bank, and it serves to divide confronting cultural identities. The ever-increasing proximity of the Alien, not outside of our world, but within the intimate space reserved for the familiar and the accepted, raises a new wall in which all our fears and inadequacies are sealed. We are realising ever more clearly that identity does not mean community and that in our battles to preserve the former we have lost much of the spirit of the latter. The problem of modern Europe, which increasingly resembles an archipelago of separate cultures, is not the presence of diversity and differences, but that which Czesław Miłosz had called ‘connective tissue’ and on which he based his concept of the ‘Native Realm’. This is why contemporary Europe must focus on coexistence, which drives a current of thought and action capable of tearing down yet another wall – not in a Cold War world of enslavement but in the face of the growing proximity of the Alien. By creating a European culture of coexistence we remake the Alien into the Other. Hence, an opportunity is born for the members of our communities, who speak different languages and have various faiths and cultures, to become one of Us.

ENCOUNTERING THE OTHER

Encountering the Other means overcoming oneself. Empathy brings us into the space of moral choices and spiritual change. Most importantly, we come closer to acting on our heart’s spontaneous reaction to another person’s real

Krzysztof Czyżewski – practitioner of ideas, writer, philosopher, culture animator, theatre director, editor. Co-founder and president of the Borderland Foundation and director of the Centre “Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations” in Sejny, Poland. Teacher and lecturer, professor at the University of Bologna. Among his books of poetry and essays are: The Path of the Borderland (2001), Trust & Identity: A Handbook of Dialogue (2011), Miłosz – Dialog – Borderland (2013), Miłosz. A Connective Tissue (2014), A Small Center of the World (2017), and Toward Xenopolis (2019). In 2018, as an acknowledgment of the contribution of for intercultural dialogue has been given the Princess Margriet Award for Culture by the European Cultural Foundation. Krzysztof Czyżewski’s text we are publishing reflects meaningfully the philosophy of “Borderland”. 
Walls remain a familiar experience to the modern European. These are no longer walls running along national borders, between political systems or languages. The contemporary wall stands in the midst of society, on the same river bank, and it serves to divide confronting cultural identities.

Walls can be read separately, and even juxtaposed, as representing two conflicting realms: the rational and the irrational. Thus, the first part of the admonition speaks of treating the stranger (the alien, the wanderer, the immigrant, the exile, etc.) as a fellow countryman, which implies equality in the face of the law and the right to be different (in religion, race, nationality, etc.).

Today this legislative aspect is strongly underlined in speaking about mutual coexistence, by pointing to the constitutional guarantee of human rights, rather than tolerance and other humanitarian values which are difficult to rationally define.

Leviticus does not ignore this aspect of coexistence, but it also does not stop there. Its admonition reaches further, towards love, which is an overcoming hinted at in the phrase ‘as thyself’ – to love the Other in this way means changing oneself, crossing the boundaries of one’s own existence. This love is not given to us, like the love of the self, hence it can only be realised in the act of overcoming.

Overcoming is strongly connected with spiritual development, but also with the conflict created by the existence of borders and the guarding of those borders. Do we make laws, take oaths and outline borders only to break them and cross them? This conflict is seemingly irresolvable, as long as we treat the two sides of the encounter, the Self and the Other, separately, ascribing a different path to each one, and calling one’s truth absolute. In our story of coexistence they are both on the same road, both fellow wanderers. Recalling the language of the people from the borderlands, who are used to living with others and not prone to erasing differences, we might say: their road is their border. That which brings them together and sets them apart determines their coexistence. A border sets us free not by protecting us from something or holding something at bay, but by offering us the opportunity of crossing it.

GOOD MEMORY

While travelling to Sejny, we were approaching a place full of unresolved conflicts, issues and taboos from the past. In order to come closer to reality we constantly needed to refer to memory, which turned out to be an integral part of the contemporary world. We were not creating an open-air museum. We were working with the younger generations to shape a new future and to find our own place in Europe. And as we, the participants of this work, children, their parents and grandparents, unlocked the past of that place we were filled with a love and understanding for the people living there and the land they called their own. Of course, our work was not without pain as some grudges and tensions were still present. We were working, however, on what Czesław Miłosz in his words about the Borderland called ‘that which in our part of Europe comprises tangible, painful, yet life-giving details’. In order for these details to be life-giving we had to gain the trust of the inhabitants of Sejny without shying away from the tragic events of the past, at the same time focusing mainly on the good memories present in every person. We had to find a way, mostly through art, to excavate these memories and bring them into the light of present relationships.

Good memories and a positive language of speaking about the borderland are essential elements.
The Gaze of the Other

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in creating a culture of coexistence. Borderland narratives about the past are dominated by traumatic memories and a negative language, concentrated on conflicts, grudges, defence in the face of danger, etc. This is motivated by the tragedies of history, especially from the previous century. However, it also causes positive aspects of co-existing with others to be erased from collective memory, and leaves the community helpless in the face of expressing positive emotions and traditions. Tomas Venclova, a renowned Lithuanian poet once said about his compatriot from Vilnius, Czeslaw Milosz, that he was a man helpless in the face of expressing memory, and leaves the community others to be erased from collective positive aspects of co-existing with the modern age, with its first century. However, it also causes destructive. An imagination born of dialogue creates before our eyes a vision of the era we are entering. The challenge we must face in this era is the encounter with the Other. An encounter which unsettles us with its potential for failure and endless cultural conflicts. Such a failure would bring about the defeat of our ability to integrate with each other, and of forming authentic communities in a post-modern reality. That is why we need the culture of coexistence, forming an ethos for those involved in its creation, and expressing itself in practical ways in our everyday relations. If this is to be possible, we need new cultural practices and new tools for constructing bridges of understanding.

THE BRIDGE OF COEXISTENCE

I understand the culture of coexistence as a process opening up the perspective of longue durée. Any attempt to narrow this perspective, to limit it to short-term expectations and effects can prove destructive. An imagination born of dialogue creates before our eyes a vision of the era we are entering. The challenge we must face in this era is the encounter with the Other. Philosophers claim that we are passing into an age which will complete the threefold cycle of the spiritual development of mankind. The new paradigm of this age will be the second person – ‘you are’. It is shaped after the two previous ages: the ancient, based on the paradigm of the third person – ‘this is’, championed by Aristotle and valuing the mind and objectivity; and the modern age, with its first person paradigm ‘I am’, associated with Descartes, subjectivity and human will. Of course, these two philosophies of are not yet gone – they are still present, permanently wrought into human consciousness. The upcoming age of the second person paradigm, however, stands a chance of completing subjectivity, objectivity, truth and freedom with the culture of coexistence, empathy and responsibility.

One way or another, by naming the upcoming age we acquire an understanding that our future will be largely decided by the problem of our encounter with the Other. An encounter which unsettles us with its potential for failure and endless cultural conflicts. Such a failure would bring about the defeat of our ability to integrate with each other, and of forming authentic communities in a post-modern reality. That is why we need the culture of coexistence, forming an ethos for those involved in its creation, and expressing itself in practical ways in our everyday relations. If this is to be possible, we need new cultural practices and new tools for constructing bridges of understanding.

The encounter with the Other is an act of construction. It is not given to us, and does not happen on its own. Such an encounter is a craft. Those who practised this craft throughout the ages were frequently compared to builders of bridges. In the Balkans these people were called neimar, and accorded with the respect usually given to an architect who knew the secrets of nature and could impose order upon chaos. With time this name was forgotten, and along with it the secrets of the craft. Constructing a bridge became a technological issue. Old tools were misplaced, and the new tools which replaced them could not fulfil all the functions the neimar could utilise.

For too long we have lived in communities lacking the craft, where no schools of the philosophy of dialogue exist, and the art of constructing bridges is absent. This is not the time to consider what might have been if such schools existed in any significant number in the past, when we were trained, using increasingly more advanced tools, in the ways of destroying bridges. One might doubt the sense of the existence of Martin Buber’s workshop for dialogue in Nazi Germany. Brought up in Lvov, Buber knew the alternative to living together in a multicultural city - there was no option of living separately in a modern society, so the only alternative was conflict with the Other. One might say that it was too late for his impractical philosophy, seemingly out of place in that time. Armies of journeymen already filled the workshops of ideologies which craved murder upon the Other, in order to entrench an endangered identity in its position as a binding element of the community. And although the number of deaths among people branded as class or racial enemies proved to be the highest in history, even more important was the number of guilty witnesses, participants of the binding rituals, who have formed lasting covenants. Such covenants, created in the murderous 20th century, have proven to be so enduring that we still feel them beneath the surface of our lives, usually unconscious of how easily they may re-emerge.

And yet, despite the resilience of the forms cast in the workshops of 20th century totalitarianism, it is these workshops that now lay broken, compromised by their inhumanity and temporary usefulness. That which seemed pragmatic and consistent with the spirit of the times was unmasked as but a foible, which might even prove grotesquely amusing if not for the extent of suffering and destruction it had caused. On the other hand, the workshop of dialogue, established by such people as Martin Buber, which always bore the odium of utopian idealism, now shows us its amazing vitality and wisdom, realised by contemporary man as the art of life’s praxis, expressed by such endeavours as the ethics of solidarity.

For the connection established by the bridge to truly realise the possibility of coexistence, there also needs to exist a real chance for breaking that connection. Separation and differentiation create the need for communication and the effort of establishing a connection. In the case of a bridge there is always the possibility of destroying it – we are aware of its vulnerability, and our helplessness in the face of the destructive powers that nature and man can use against it. This may not be apparent in the physical image of a bridge. Georg Simmel wrote that “a bridge in a landscape is usually perceived as a scenic element”. Which is why he ascribed to it only the meaning of unification, and he completed its symbolism for the truth about humanity with the symbol of a door, which “demonstrates that separation and unification are but two aspects of the same act … Doors can be opened, and because of this, when they are closed, they embody the sense of separation from whatever is behind them much more strongly than a wall.”

A bridge raised in accordance with the craft includes within it Simmel’s door. We must remember, that the bridge might as well not exist, and that it may cease to exist at any given moment. That it exists at all is the work, and the work of the living element he used to hold it together – its human caretaker. It is that caretaker who opens and closes the bridge, which on its own offers simply the possibility of a connection. It requires the attention of the caretaker for opening and closing its gates. This caretaker and warden once again stands at the border in the history of civilization. And once again so much depends on him...

One way or another, by naming the upcoming age we acquire an understanding that our future will be largely decided by the problem of our encounter with the Other.
Zharko Basheski, born 1957 in Prilep, is a Macedonian sculptor and professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje. His point of view in his work is turned towards the human, hence the interest in hyper realistic approach in shaping the concept of the work, which in the theoretical projection exceeds hyper realism, talks about life and the world in which we live.

In his work there are several elements which are new to the world of sculpture and that makes his latest work different: the concept, contemporary views of human condition through self-observation, technical production and use of new materials (resin polyester, poly marble, silicone, natural hair), the hyper-realistic treatment, size of the work, the philosophical approach – all of which, when combined in one, offer a multi-layered reading of the artwork.

Currently he is a member of National Board for Accreditation and Evaluation, Senate of UKIM and Inter-University conference. From 1999 to 2009 he was head of the Department of Sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts. His work has been presented at several international exhibitions. He has been the recipient of numerous awards. Much of his work is part of private collections all around the world.

ASPHYXIA

Asphyxia (silicon, nylon, natural hair; 200 x 180 x 160 cm), is a powerful symbol of man’s existential condition in the modern world. ‘ASPHYXIA’ is an artistic reaction to the modern society – the everyday attacks and pressures on the individual. We are all suffocated with the impossibility of living in some sense - not literally narrative, but metaphorically, of the overall social situation as the reason behind. In a way, the artwork is a critique of society, especially the pressures of the “stronger” and “bigger” to the “weaker” and “smaller”, in every way - social, political, economic. The sculpture embodies the moment between life and death, and it can be understood as a desperate cry of the mankind, dying in a suicidal agony.

What the observers see is a terror-stricken, suffocating face of a man’s head, fighting for breath in a transparent plastic bag, while images of beautiful and pleasant memories of his life run inside his mind (by way of a video projection, adding a multimedia element in the artwork). The sculpture is created in a way that is simulating human flesh and skin - by using silicon, artificial paints and hairs, so as to highlight man’s intrinsic carnal character, his physical presence in the world, amidst the emptiness, the void, in which only images of memories float. The projection of this deluge of recollections at the moment of death emphasizes the presence of death in this work even more. This work is at the same time a symbol of a world where Eros (the life instinct) is subordinated to Thanatos (the death instinct).

ORDINARY MAN

Ordinary man (polyester resin, fiberglass, silicone, hair; 220x180x85 cm) is the epitome of the desire and the effort of the ordinary man as an individual to rise above himself and thus overcome himself. It is an embodiment of the everyday strive towards self-surpassing.

The story told by each individual figure starts with the resilience of man emerging from the ground (defined as mother-earth or environment) which, through/with the collective subconscious (a metaphor contained in the historic imaginary figure), come together in the tension and uncertainty reflected in the “small” character (the author, the creator). In all of them together, as in every individual portrait, in different ways there is a strong reflection (even poetic) of dramatic tension which suggests anticipation, and the psychological moment is underlined in relation to the usual hyper-realistic process of strict photographic, unemotional depiction and interpretation.

Zharko Basheski
Professor and sculptor

« My art - a mirror of the personal experience in the outer world. »
In collaboration with Anri Sala and Ari Benjamin Meyers
Starring Maribel Verdú and Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra

A woman makes her way through an empty city. At every crossing she stops, looks and listens. Should she wait or should she run? Should she wait for others or take the risk on her own?

The city is Sarajevo, and the route the woman takes became known as Sniper Alley during the siege of the city endured by its citizens for 1395 days between 1992 and 1996. The woman, played by Spanish actress Maribel Verdú, is reliving the experience of the trauma of the siege. It is her individual journey in the collective memory of the city.

1395 Days without Red draws on the experience of the siege of Sarajevo...
between 1992 and 1996 and the trauma of the besieged citizens as they made their way through the city. The title refers to the fact that, during the siege, the Sarajevans were advised not to wear bright colours that might alert the snipers in the hills above to their movements.

Throughout the siege, the Sarajevo Symphony Orchestra continued to play. In the film 1395 Days Without Red the orchestra rehearses Tchaikovsky's 6th symphony, the Pathetique. The musicians stop and start, repeating different sections of the symphony, just as the woman stops and starts in the city. Hearing the music in her head, she finds the courage to carry on.
1. Culture is a commodity of first necessity. It contributes to people’s well-being, as it provides a variety of instruments for the human adventure. It is a complicating factor, which enriches experience, a moment that, from Montaigne, we know constitutes us as human beings. But culture is no guarantee of anything: neither of goodness, truth, happiness, or success. The worst atrocities have been committed in the name of culture.

2. The human being is a relational being who communicates by signs. Culture is information. It is the ability to acquire and transmit knowledge and experience. To appropriate them and to transform them. That is, to advance the creation of meaning. Life has no meaning, but meaning is necessary for life. The precariousness of the foundations of culture is its essence. And the expression of its humanity […]

3. The passion for culture is the assumption of its fragility. This is why culture has a tragic dimension. Which means it is the recognition of the contingent nature of the human experience and is an expression of the will to overcome the vertigo that it generates. With culture we confront the absurdity of life. In the denial of the tragic sense of life is the germ of barbarism.

4. Faced with its tragic character, culture can provide an ironic dimension: the serene assumption of contingency. Irony is the scalpel that highlights the precariousness of generalized beliefs, of shared prejudices, of ready-made ideas. Of all those things acquired in the name of which, as Voltaire warned, humans can commit any atrocity. […]

5. Many cultures, one humanity. In this sense, culture is the basis of any humanist proposal. Of any discourse that assumes the centrality of human beings as subjects and objects of knowledge and experience.

6. […] Every system of domination generates an effective cultural system: ours and the others.

7. Cultural policies of governments tend to enhance heritage and industry. Heritage as an exaltation of tradition and confirmation of roots and continuities. Industry because culture generates distrust of political power (especially the conservatives of the right and the left who see it as an outsider and subversive, fearing that it will escape), and linking culture to business is the best way to neutralize it. […]

8. However, the spontaneous philosophy of cultural actors implies a will for autonomy and a critical attitude. A country that is not capable of generating spaces for denial by way of culture is a stiff society that bears the seal of decay. […]

9. Promiscuity among cultural industries, investors and artistic programmers creates a superstructure subjecting creators to a lattice of fashion and evidently impoverishing styles. […] The quality control mechanisms of the cultural republic are broken. The media dominates the cult of the consecrated figure and the love of noise. […]

10. The archive and the virtual experience. What will become of culture in the world of social networks? A large archive favours memory and exchange, but does infinite information encourage creativity or stimulate revival? […] The framework of culture is in full mutation.

From “11 Thesis on culture”

By Josep Ramoneda

Josep Ramoneda was born in Cervera, Spain, in 1949. He is a political philosopher and is very active in the Spanish intellectual debate about current politics. After his academic career of teaching contemporary philosophy (1975-1990), in 1994 he founded the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona, an important institution in European scale, which he directed until 2011. Presently he publishes La Maleta de Portbou, a journal of humanities and economics, and he is director of the European School of Humanities in Barcelona, founded also by him. He is also director of one of the main editorial groups in Spain.
Aleksandar Prokopiev, born in 1953 in Skopje, is one of the most well-known Macedonian writers. He graduated in 1977 at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Philology, General and Comparative Literature department, and finished postgraduate education in 1982 also in Belgrade and in Sorbonne, France. He worked in several domestic and foreign magazines, for example as a member of the editorial board of Orient Express (Oxford, UK) and World Haikus (Kyoto, Japan) and wrote books of fiction, poetry, essays, screenplays for film, theatre, TV shows, radio dramas and comic books. His works are translated in English, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and other languages. Aleksandar Prokopiev is one of the founding members of Academia Balkanica Europaea.

CHRONYSTERIC, TRIBUNE, CLOWN

By Aleksandar Prokopiev

The writer and the governing structures. Freedom and fear. Unlike the conspicuous, openly or clandestinely, vanity surplus common for them, the writers are different human beings, and therefore in their relation toward the authorities they use a range of tactics, nuances, meandering. Yet, despite all obvious mistakes and roughness typical of generalizations, we can distinguish between three main types of behavior between the writer and the governing structures. I have named them as Chronysteric, Tribune, Clown. Without great difficulties, these three types of roles and behaviors that the writer exhibits towards the governing structures may also be noticed in Macedonian literature, and I myself have been inspired by them in some of my past stories and anti-guidelines.

1. Chronysteric

The term chronysteric is borrowed from the compound-subtitle of the novel “Dannunziad” – Chronysteria – by the Croatian prose writer Viktor Car Emin, inspired by the story of the Italian Regency of Carnaro set up by Gabriele D’Annunzio, that strange short-lived polis (1919-21). During my recent visit to Rijeka, at the writers festival vRIsak, I was going out for a smoke and for a talk on the terrace of the magnificent Governor’s Palace, where D’Annunzio had held his impassioned speeches, those repetitive, but for the audience of that time probably the most famous lovers of his time (who, just like Caesar and Picasso, sustained the myth of the potent bald men) – in fact, the erotic hyperactivity is sometimes vitally connected to political ambition – we can point out the example of the Kennedys. Except as a compound of “chronicle” and “hysteria”, the term “chronysteria” can include Chronos, the swallower of his own children and the merciless god of time, Saturn in the Roman and astrological version. In the newly coined term by Emin, the mythological and the historical are intertwined: in the hysterical times, the “children” – products of such times, are often swallowed “overnight”. D’Annunzio in military trance, commanding his brigades, at first resembling those encountered in the speech of the most fervent party representatives. Sometimes we are surprised at how a lyrical, even gentle poet can use speech so filled with curses and insults. One of the most noble human emotions, patriotism, is twisted into xenophobia, from constant tension and anxiety to hatred towards people with different opinions, towards the outsider.

One of the most noble human emotions, patriotism, is twisted into xenophobia, from constant tension and anxiety to hatred towards people with different opinions, towards the outsider.

somewhat resembles the author of the subtle verses of Aleyone or the decadent-erotic researcher in “Pleasure” and “Innocent”, although the Dionysian ecstasy of Nietzsche’s superman among his followers, which include D’Annunzio, may also be expressed (in some quasi-power of life over reason) as fascist-adventurous product.

How is it, I wonder, that the passionate lover and decadent got carried away or plummeted (depending on the point of view) into a military commander and radical spokesperson of the crowd? In the case of D’Annunzio the aristocratic decadence and fascist rhetoric merged. Seemingly extremist, such transformation is not so rare among writers, although the starting social position of the chronysteric can be very different, from a vagabond to a wealthy gentleman. Hamsun, Ezra Pound, Mayakovsky, and many others are examples of great writers who put their literary authority in the service of either fascism or communism.

Such obvious examples of a writer-chronysteric are also frequent in the dim, chaotic Balkan reality. The Balkan chronysteric allows himself an increased dose of violence in his/her statements; the roughness and insults in his speech resemble those encountered in the speech of the most fervent party representatives. Sometimes we are surprised at how a lyrical, even gentle poet can use speech so filled with curses and insults. One of the most noble human emotions, patriotism, is twisted into xenophobia, from constant tension and anxiety to hatred towards people with different opinions, towards the outsider. Putting him/herself in the “service of people”, the writer gives up not only his immanent “service” to literature, but also narrows...
It is understandable that the role of the tribunal in the cultural identity of his/her nation is exceptional. However, in regard to literature and art, there are some more universal, more comprehensive norms in these areas, in which we can see the spirit of the time, but which aesthetically fill the spirit of the timeless, surpassing the moment when the work was created.

2. Tribune

Unlike the Chronysteric, the Tribune has a longer-lasting, better established influence on the public, sometimes for life, sometimes even after his death. Instead of anxiety – dignity. Instead of overreaction – wisdom. The tribune is necessary for any national literature, for any national culture. Not only for the small ones, but also for the big ones, the ones who are proud of their rich and long tradition. Goethe, Hugo, Tolstoy... whatever power they had on their contemporaries, not only social and moral, but also a natural, intrinsic power that makes them figures of extraordinary importance.

Although I used to think that the tribunes in literature are typical of some former times, when important phases of consciousness and awareness of the nation were being transcended, it seems that even in this chaotic, confusing, porous world, the tribune still feels capable of acting, accepting and playing the role (duty) that compels. For this, he is adequately awarded as academic, honorable citizen, respected representative of his nation.

The establishing of the tribunal requires corresponding audience, corresponding space. His/her power feeds on what is great: important ideas, generally accepted wisdom. In accordance with the etymological root (tribus=tribe), the tribunal undertakes the function of protector and advisor of the plebs. The tribunal sets as a task to incite as many readers (listeners) as possible, so his topics are grand, important, supported by oratory skills. It can’t be denied that he has certain political influence, although officially he builds his image above party interests. Aware of his/her exceptionality, he/she announces his/her attitude on important dilemmas in society, and knows that such personal investment has adequate reception.

The relations of the tribunal with politics and authorities are intertwined with numerous visible, and even more invisible, threads because, on the one hand, he remembers and uses the past, but, also, carefully enough, acts in the present.

Macedonian literature and culture needs a tribunal. Racin, because of his tragic destiny, remained “a tribunal in the making”. Koneski had the tribune’s persuasiveness and wisdom, although his thought had the nuance of a moderately pessimistic tone of an introvert. Gane Todorkovski acted as a recognized mage, with mastery rhetoric, and his patriotic (social) awareness was filled with an interesting, essentially experimenting habit. Racin, Koneski, Todorkovski. How different, even contrary in their human natures, but I can’t help connecting them with the role that was given to them (and accepted) – to be tribunes! Their literary output will inspire further interpretations for a long time, and their tribunal place in Macedonian culture, despite all possible rebuttal, is secured.

It is interesting that in regard to gender distribution, especially on the Balkans, there is still a strong patriarchal logic among the tribunes, among the chronysteries there are a few women writers, while among the clowns there is equal distribution of men and women.

It is understandable that the role of the tribune in the cultural identity of his/her nation is exceptional. However, in regard to literature and art, there are some more universal, more comprehensive norms in these areas, in which we can see the spirit of the time, but which aesthetically fill the spirit of the timeless, surpassing the moment when the work was created.

3. Clown

In this case, I struggled with the terminology. The clown is linked to the circus, he/she makes people laugh, but also makes them think, and, additionally, the film mages, such as Chaplin, Tati, Woody Allen, Benigni..., through characters with clownish characteristics and a clownish relation toward the world, convey, to millions of viewers, their joyful excitement and human resistance.

Still, although sometimes he/she resembles a court jester or a comedian, the clown must not be confused with either of them. The court jester has his ruler, master, and is obliged, despite all bold jokes, to obey him. The comedian, on the other hand, wastes his charm effortlessly for the purpose of making people laugh. The clown has greater ambitions for his own success, especially if he is a writer.

The clown-writer mimics, and therefore sometimes will have to tolerate being considered unserious, immature, false, gossiped, mocked.

The clown is not dignified, honored and famed as the tribune, nor supported, liked and paid (occasionally, depending on who is in the government) like the chronysteric, and probably, with his/her inconstant place in the national literary pyramid, is exposed to changeable moods and uncertainties. In genre terms, this may mean that he is prone to hybridization and experimentation in writing, and depending on his talent, may be before his time. If the clown is a talented writer, he will be able to spontaneously throw in a few traces of humor even when he writes of difficult, sad experiences.

About thirty five years ago, I tried, in the micro-fiction “Comedian” to encourage the clown within me: He put on the clown face and went around the world. The clown-writer makes people laugh, but also makes them think.

Alongside the tribune is the marginal writer, the inadequate, the outsider who also creates masterpieces! Makes people laugh, but also makes them think.

The court jester has his ruler, master, and is obliged, despite all bold jokes, to obey him. The comedian, on the other hand, wastes his charm effortlessly for the purpose of making people laugh. The clown has greater ambitions for his own success, especially if he is a writer.

The comic prose writer does. He doesn’t have the monistic and classical wisdom of the Tribune. Unlike all the shades in the Tribe and the Chronysteric, the subtypes in the Clown have a wider scope than the Joker to the Comedian, which means that sometimes they may not recognize each other. And the clown prose writer turns into a marginal figure that has lost the compass.

How will each of these three types of writers who does not support or openly defying the governing policy be accepted? The chronysteric will quickly be transferred from the list of the privileged to the black list.

The tribunal, we said, is experienced, skilled long-term player, and can measure and analyze politics. And the clown? He has already gotten used to them.
ON ART: Draft for a pocket aesthetic tractatus

By Thomas Symeonidis

I. The Introduction

I often think of Wittgenstein’s aphorism that the work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for a particular purpose. Seemingly simple, this aphorism is in fact an intractable equation. On the one hand the reminders. On the other, the purpose. We can argue, and it would not be an exaggeration, that our whole life is an endless process that involves many individual processes of assembling reminders. We are constantly assembling, and at the same time accumulating reminders, notes, images, objects, files. We are assemblers. We are unique, singular, constantly oscillating between the awareness of our inconsequentiality (we are infinitesimal compared to the infinity of nature and reality) and the awareness of our infinity (we are products of nature, without being exhaustively mapped, participating in an open and non-prescribed manner in society and reality). It can be easily understood that this process of assembling reminders, leaving aside the question of content, needs necessarily to be organized.

II. The Draft

1. Begin with the necessary clarifications such as: When you are talking about art, are you talking about a particular genre of art? In which genres are you referring to?
2. Speaking of art, ask also: Who is talking about art? What is the age or period. What is the field it belongs to.
3. The field I feel most familiar with is that of philosophical aesthetics. My favorite thinkers are Jacques Rancière, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Why not?
4. I was led to these thinkers by people I met or other thinkers or artists I love.
5. Enough about me.
6. Back to the questions, a key question now: Are you a Platonist or an anti-Platonist? Do you think that artworks are manifestations of the Platonic idea? Do you think they express the absolute? Alain Badiou, for example, believes that artworks are events of the Platonic idea.
7. Another issue, that of the boundaries between art and everyday life. Begin with the question: What belongs to art and what to everyday life? If we are to follow some past and actual perspectives on that matter, we will come across with the view that art and everyday life could end up being the same thing, that is, an exemplary way of life, the art of living, the culture of life. See for that matter, Aristotle, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Why not Arendt or Agamben.
8. In your thinking about the boundaries between art and everyday life, add the thought of the difference between the objects of art and the objects of everyday life. An object of art, a painting for example, enters your everyday life, when it is placed on a wall of your room: a surface upon another surface. Is that enough, though? Consider the differences between the aesthetic function of this object (the painting) and the decorative function. A classic reference here is Adolf Loos in Ornament and Crime (1908).

The displacement of an object from the context of everyday life to that of art. Start by disconnecting the everyday object from its function. Objects with unprecedented or unexpected properties, force you to see the world differently.

9. The reverse now: The displacement of an object from the context of everyday life to that of art. Start by disconnecting the everyday object from its function. Then, neutralize it or attribute to it another function, while being in an artistic composition now. Objects with unprecedented or unexpected properties, embedded in exceptional formations. They force you to see the world differently.

10. In the role of art you can add the education of the senses. I am thinking of Schiller here. You see in a new way or you see something that you were unaware of its existence heretofore or you haven’t seen before. You get to know incidents that encompass their own senses. One such example, the sounds a child produce when playing, the image of a child playing. Hegel in his Lectures on Aesthetics (1835) refers to children’s gestures as an attempt to control the manifestation of nature. This is a thought that Ranciére reproduces in the introduction of Aesthetics and its discontent (2004). Correspondingly, Adorno in his Aesthetic Theory (1969) states that the relation to the new is modelled on a child at the piano searching for a chord never previously heard. Music, thanks to its proper abstraction, can be more easily perceived as an inventory of such incidents. Here I am thinking of Igor Strawinsky’s excellent lectures delivered in 1939-1940, grouped under the Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons (1970).
11. Today, we have moved away from thinking about the rules. There is a lot of discussion on technique but not on poetics. Somewhere between these two, in some areas, the concept of creative. There are no rules for creation, only exercises and techniques that could release it. So, when approaching art today, don’t think if there are rules available for appreciations. The pleasure offered by the beautiful is not subjected to rules (see on that, Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, 1790). But if the concept of beautiful belongs to traditional aesthetics, in contemporary aesthetics the artistic practices and an outcome of what this place is. It is very likely that you backtrack your own moves under the suspicion that it might be you that moved the mug, but you were so absent-minded that you do not remember. B. You are in the same place (in the same room), in the same situation (sitting in front of your desk). Suppose you are leaving the room for a while. Once back in the room, you realize that a very large opening has been created on the ceiling, and for the first time you can see inside it (say above it a roof sloped on both sides). From this point on, fiction and directing is yours, you can model on Gregory Crewdson, Jeff Wall, Steven Spielberg or even the classic Hitchcock and Bergman or on the other side, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, *Fuyubuki*, is the movie coming to mind.

12. But how are these paradoxical sensory experiences being produced? To begin with, I will try to define the two ends of the spectrum. A. Say you are in a room, say you are seated in front of your desk. There you have various objects, mainly souvenirs. On the right side, you have two mugs, filled with pencils and other writing tools, one of them is from the Wimbledon tournament, it has the logo printed on it along with the year 2005, you remember right, it is the year when Roger (Federer) won the trophy for the third time in a row, beating Andy (Roddick) for the second time in a row. In women’s, winner Venus Williams. That’s for the mug. So, let’s suppose that you step out of the room for a while and once back in the room you realize (immediately or later) that the Wimbledon mug is missing or has changed place. Let’s also assume that no one else came into the room while you were out, or even better, let’s assume no one is in the house at the moment. So, in this case, focusing solely on what happening to the senses, imagine, you, in a state of perceptual alertness. The displacement of the mug (whether in a place you can spot or not) leads you to an inspection of the place (where is the mug), of the objects in this place (what else may have changed in terms of disposition or disappeared), of sounds in that place and outside of it (in search of signs regarding who might have moved the objects, but also in a questioning of the nature of the place (what happens in this place as a state of undecidedness. You need a state of undecidedness. You need to perceive or re-establish new relationships between things. Art affects you: you are in a state of aesthetic effect. 20. The aesthetic effect is not the same as the moral effect (see Plato) or the pedagogical effect (see Aristotle). The aesthetic effect invalidates any determined relationship between the artist’s intention and the production of a specified effect to the spectator. In our example, the moral effect would have been: The mug has been lost or the mug changed position because you left the room. So, the subsequent ethical rule is: do not leave the room again to avoid the same thing happening again to some more objects. Similarly, the subsequent pedagogical effect: The mug has been lost or the mug changed position and large-scale common space). In this instance of the aesthetic effect, we could identify the notion of the aesthetic play in the form of a cognitive function in Kant and Schiller, but also in the form of a condition that is widespread in contemporary art (the suspension of meaning of the artistic phenomena). In fact, art no longer claims to have the power to transform the world nor art intent to do it. It produces resemblances of reality but not large-scale propositions for what should be reality. It produces resemblance, paradoxical sensory formations, that suspend the usual perception of reality and upset its diagram. That in turn raises (critical) questions: What could be in place of what already exists? And how?

13. At one end, the displacement of the mug. At the other, the sudden appearance of an opening in the ceiling. In the first case, your relation to place is adjusted through the rearrangement of relations that objects have or could have in space. In the latter case, your relation to place is not merely adjusted. You are invited to exist in a new space and think about what this space is. 14. At one end and the other, forces are implied. However, this is not an exercise in science fiction or metaphysical quest. The two examples (the two ends of the spectrum) have been fashioned in a way to understand the logic under which the art of today and the contemporary art operate. At one end, then, there exist artistic practices structured in the rearrangement of objects and images, the redefinition of relations and the creation of new ones. We are talking about objects, images and relations that are inseparable from our daily lives. At the other end, there is the pursuit of expression or even causing an unusually strong sensory experience. Here, we can give prominence to the radicality of art, to the uniqueness of the artistic objects that are being produced. Summing up, at one end, we are in the field of *relational art*, at the other, in the field of *sublime art*.

15. Basic references for *relational art*: Nicolas Bourriaud, Jacques Rancière.

16. Basic References for *sublime art*: Immanuel Kant, Jean-François Lyotard.

You might think that art is the production of resemblances of reality. It does not copy reality, it does not reproduce it. Art creates resemblances of reality in such a way that there is a distance or difference from reality itself. Art redefines materially and symbolically the reality. It produces resemblances, that suspend the usual perception of reality and upset its diagram. That in turn raises (critical) questions: What could be in place of what already exists? And how?
Andro Martinović: When everything else is put aside, culture remains

Interviewed by Amila Kahrović-Posavljak

Communication is the foundation of art, with oneself and with the Other.

Andro Martinović, film director from Montenegro. Graduated World Literature and Film and TV Directing. Director of the Montenegrin Cinematheque. Professor at the UDG and Faculty of Visual Arts. Author of several award-winning short films, which are screened in the competition selection at more than twenty prestigious international film festivals. Coauthor of the documentary “Montenegro and the Great War”. He published articles in newspapers and professional journals. “Neverending Past” is his first feature film, supported by the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro and Film Center Serbia. The project was developed in cooperation with CineLink Industry Days – Sarajevo Film Festival.

- Festivals: Belgrade (Golden Plaque of Belgrade, 2002), Huesca (Spain, official selection), Montpellet (France, official selection), Tangier (Morocco, official selection), Drama (Greece, official selection), Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina, official selection), Film on Wheels (Turkey, official selection), Motovun (Croatia, official selection), Reykjavik (Iceland, special screening), European Short Film Festival (Berlin), Warsaw (International Historical and Military Film Festival – Special Award, 2016), Montreal (First Fiction Film Competition), FEST (Belgrade, Competition), CineDays (Skopje, CineIndustry Film Market), South East Europe Film Festival (Paris – Best Feature Film, 2019), Alexandria Film Festival (Competition), Rheuno Sco (Best First Fiction Film, 2019), Green Montenegro IFF (Zabljak – Special Mention, 2019) etc.

In the Balkans there are currently two opposite concepts of culture, the nationalist and the one that represents itself as anti-nationalist. What could be their prospective, generally, in the role of culture in the society?

A. Martinović: You are right on the money. I am going to use the medical terminology, because I truly do see nationalism as an incurable illness. Let me remind you that Kiki had described it as a collective and individual paranoia. The apotheosis of the national in culture is not unfamiliar to our people, although, as a rule, resulting from that notion there are often works considered to be rather irrelevant in aesthetic terms. I am inclined to believe that this model of culture is based on temporal effect intended to happen right here and now. The purpose of nationalistic products in culture is simply to strengthen the homogenization in the political context. On the other hand there are platforms with reference systems which can be limiting to a certain extent. If you ever had style guidelines as a set of certain rules which one needs to follow in order to be accepted, today this dictate originates from ideological reasoning. Do you think that this kind of opposed cultural concepts deepens the division? If so, what would be a solution?

In the sociology of culture this issue has been subject to scrutiny, as well as the idea of bridging cultural distances. I believe, above all, that we should stick to the principles of modern, civil society. The path to reach a higher level of social cohesion is set through the educational system and culture in the broadest sense, which also implies modern hospitals, parks and playgrounds; through the sense of justice and solidarity.

How do you see the incompatibility between Aristotle’s idea that the art is the most precious value because it is a value in itself, and the fact that there are artists who commit horrible crimes and embrace fascist ideologies, such as it happened in World War Two, or for example the writers who were shooting on Sarajevo under the siege?

In his “defence” of art, Aristotle started with the assumption that the art sublimates the empirical human being. The question, of course, is whether the work of art can be exempted from the shadow cast by its author. Sometimes the controversy about the author may contribute to his fame, although the justification of tragic crimes by him is denounced. If manuscripts do not burn (Bulgakov), people do.

From your personal experience, as a filmmaker, what is the prospective of culture in the countries of former Yugoslavia and, after all, Balkans?

Culture depends on the situation in the society. If we take a look to the past, we can see that the traces from distant times are the closest in what is really our cultural heritage. In order to have the appropriate development we need continuity, because time lost is a permanent handicap. Let us alter what needs to be altered, which is similar in all of former Yugoslav countries. I do strongly believe in common cultural space and in our joint struggle. It seems that in the global context of art we are associated with only a few kinds of subjects. Before the war it was the sort of image given by socialist realism in the movies, now it seems that our whole artistic experience must fit into anti-war poetics. How do you see this issue? Are there any expected subjects we must write about in order to be recognized abroad?

I touched that issue briefly before. There are, of course, subjects often revisited by art. Cioran had opined that we experience two climaxes:
When reconsidering, one should start features reminding us of ourselves. Are bothered with another person’s instrumentalization of art. It is a consciously or not, it leads to the More often than not, whether government, various anachronisms…

There is a belief that art must be engaged, meaning that it should be critical towards the establishment, the government, various anachronisms… More often than not, it leads to the instrumentalization of art.

Regarding discussions on religious freedom in Montenegro and the laws related to that, are there any artists who raised their voices, and in what way? Voices related to this could seldom be heard. There are, however, social developments which are calling for unequivocal expression. The phenomenon of church protests, I feel, is such an example.

These protests have essentially a political character. Many a time, due to actions of a certain church outside of the legal framework, the country is facing serious challenges. Other than religious, there are civil laws to be followed and respected. This is why the resistance to changes which are bound to happen is expected.

Those many in such events that look like processions are influenced by Advisor and his dangerous sermons blindly.

Are young people and their culture related to art now as they used to be for decades of the twentieth century? If not, what do you think is the reason? The answer to this question lies in adequate research. Based on my experience working with younger generations, I can voice my opinion contrary. And indeed, if we have lost something, it is the status that the art should have in the society, that feeling for which the artistic event is something of essential importance.

In the end, what do you see as the basic role of an artist nowadays? Never give up, even if it is the only way to keep one’s peace.

Your movie is (was) nominated for Oscar and gained great success. What are your further plans? I am working on preparation for two movies. One is documentary, about Montenegrins participating in creating the Turkish football club with the most trophies, “Galatasaray”, and the unlikely friendship of two sovereigns, Montenegrin and Turkish. The other is about the Montenegrin prince Danilo I, which in a certain sense can be a film about present Montenegro.

When reconsidering, one should start with oneself; one should discard the sense of self-exclusivity; and only then could reconsider the collective or national.

If we have lost something, it is the status that the art should have in the society, that feeling for which the artistic event is something of essential importance.

It is not so much about delusive historical analogies, but about the crucial importance of heritage of a person dedicating his life to the idea of creating a modern country. In the background of that struggle there are the intrigues, conflicts, resistance. Danilo dealt with them the only way he could, in the spirit of times he had lived in, musing on a different fate of the nation whose prince he was, with the iron will to subordinate everything to the highest political cause… And that is what it has always been freedom of will.
When I was a child, in a small village in the middle of a steppe, my mother would tell us fairy tales, under the dim light of a gas lamp. In a tale, she would say, there was a palace between Black Sea and White Sea where lived a prince and princess. For us, little kids, it was magical to imagine places beyond our village, how could we know how far was a sea. And we did not know that White Sea meant Mediterranean Sea in some other language.

Anatolia, the main land of current Turkey, is a peninsula situated between Black Sea in the north and White Sea in the south. My village is right in the middle of that vast land. Many Kurdish tribes, along side Turkish tribes, ran into Anatolia coming from eastern lands hundred years ago. The tribe of my village presumably came here about three centuries ago. Who were here then? When we ask this question to elderly people they easily answer: there was no one here, apparently this open lands were empty and good for the flocks and herds of our ancestors.

Reading and studying in big cities have given my generation opportunity to search and understand the memory and fate of the land where our grand-grandparents were born and buried. Now I know that this place was not an empty land. There were Greeks and Armenians. Before them were Galatians, Phrygians and others. They all have now been forgotten by local people. Forgetting is an epidemic disease that runs within human cultures. Anatolia has become home to many civilisations from the Hittites in the second millennium BC to the Ottomans in the second millennium AD. The longest rulers were Romans who had occupied Anatolia for nearly two-thousand-years until Ottomans captured Constantinople in 1453. The modern name Anatolia was coined by the people who lived on the western coast of Aegean Sea. It means “east” or “where the sun rises”, Ottoman Turks came from the east and headed for Constantinople the capital of Eastern Roman Empire that was ruled by Caesars traditionally. When Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II captured the city he claimed to become the inheritor of Roman Caesars and began to use the official title of “Kaiser-i Rum” (“Caesar of the Romans”). His authority was celebrated by Orthodox Christian subjects too and they called him “Sultan Basileus” as protector of Orthodoxy.

Sultan Mehmet II desired to spread his power across old Roman territories and sent his army to invade Italy, an attempt that ended up in failure. Before long his proud title of “Caesar of the Romans” was forgotten and overpowered by other, newly obtained, title that was the Caliph. His grandson Selim I invaded Arabia in 1516 and Ottoman sultans had become the Caliph of Muslims until twentieth century.

Of the history of Caesars and Caliphs another kind of culture might have developed in Anatolia.

By Burhan Sönmez

Burhan Sönmez is the author of four novels, which have been translated into forty languages. He was born in Turkey and grew up speaking Turkish and Kurdish. He worked as a lawyer in Istanbul before going to Britain as a political exile. His writing has appeared in newspapers including The Guardian, Der Spiegel, Die Zeit, and La Repubblica. He translated the poetry book of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell by William Blake into Turkish. He lectured in Literature at the university of METU. He received Vaclav Havel Library Award in 2017 and the EBRD Literature Prize in 2018. A board member of PEN International, he divides his time between Istanbul and Cambridge.
and across White Sea. Mixing of races, migration of nations, and interaction of cultures are feeding a new, and hopefully positive, way of understanding each other. If we have not lost our neighbours of different nations and religions everything could have been different.

The idea of nation states created opportunity to flee the oppression of old empires while it paid a high price by leaving other nations and cultures on the other side of the fence. We ended Ottoman Empire one hundred years ago as around the same time we lost the people of other nations on these lands. Elderly people in my village do not have knowledge that once there were other nations here.

In the olden times cardinal points were described by colours. South was red (e.g. the Red Sea); north was black (Black Sea), and west was white (White Sea / Mediterranean). The east was yellow (or sometimes blue). Despite three seas of colours there is not a sea of the east-colour like Yellow Sea. In the east was Anatolia, that’s how old Greeks named it, “east-land”. It is an inland, a pastoral country between seas, while Mediterranean is a sea between lands. Ancient people named Mediterranean “the Great Sea” or “Our Sea” or more properly “Internal Sea” (Mare Internum). The name Mediterranean refers similar connotations as “in the middle of lands”.

Since we have captured the whole picture of the earth and assumed the knowledge of it from primary school onwards we do not need to look in maps any more. Maps are everywhere and so we do not see them. We forget how powerful is the connections of lands, rivers, mountains and seas. We do not perceive how important the history of maps that reflect the universal development from migrating primates between continents to moving armies of destitute people towards rich countries.

Maps were created by people to broaden our view of the world beyond geographical lines by seeing that the earth had no borderline at all. The language of colours and the reference of names helped to communicate with in a different symbolisation of human contact. Caravans that travelled Silk Road to east and west, and ships that crossed White Sea to south and north were not carrying only fine fabric or good wine but also art, desire, fear and hope for another kind of world. Maps store these diverse worlds in their memory with colourful shades. Maps have a memory that we created ages ago and now we are about to lose it.

White Sea was the first sea that I saw when I was at high school at the age of seventeen. After realising how enormous was it I believed that it was a world on its own. White Sea was a single, closed up entity. By consisting countries, continents, and islands, it did not need anything else. It was self-sufficient. There was a world of White Sea and the other parts of the planet were the rest. Maybe that is why during ancient times it was also named as “the centre of the world.”

After developments of ages we now like to believe that nations should have left many of prejudices behind. That is why it is strange to see that still there are national-cultural rivalries in our times. Is Turkish coffee in fact Greek coffee? Is Greek yogurt that I buy in Italy qahwah, kaffa, koffie, kafe, café? It is good enough to show how immense is the transforming power of culture. It can break any wall and cross any border. Of course it is not always innocent and self-regulate. When you visit today’s Istanbul you will witness that the whole city has been captured by American coffee companies. It will not be surprising to come a Starbucks on every corner. Global trade has always influenced countries in the past but it has never seized the whole world as much as it does today.

Then we feel to ask: what is the meaning of east or west any more? Does east still mean the place where the sun rises? Or, is the White Sea still the centre of the world?

The White Sea of Mediterranean used to be like a universe, closed upon itself. It had a black hole, named Gibraltar, through that it could swallow anything. The only thing it swallowed today is the weak boats of immigrants who are facing death to cross the giant waves of this great sea towards north. They carry their culture with them, their fear and their hope. But none of these merits has a market value in world trade and they end up disappearing in the deep water. Still we can ask another question: is it possible to stop the current of nations from one land to another? Has not that current formed the existence of human kind on the planet since the travels of primates and first tribes?

When I went to school I realised that both Black Sea and White Sea were a long way from my village in the countryside. Then I noticed that my little village was right in the middle of the land between those two seas. The palace my mum told in her tale was located in our village. Like the prince and princess, who got cursed and lost their palace, before long we got cursed too and left our home for cities. That is the destiny of mankind to leave home, to change, to be changed, and to create a new home. We are not any more destined to die in the same land where we were born. We are strolling around to find a new soil to be buried in. As everything changes maybe fairy tales should change too with one exception. Fairy tales are for happy endings, and we want our lives to have happy endings too.
two most important bridges, at least in literature, in all of Bosnia – this the hills near Banja, an hour’s walk from the town”. What is more, the “transportation of stones from the quarries that were opened in the beginnings of the bridge’s construction – on its very essence – on masterpieces with real life: too flippantly had I passed over his notes on again; during my literature studies I was not yet able to connect his taught me to wait – in reading him I was, actually even unhappy, that I had to share this magnificent attractions of his hometown. He could not even imagine how selfish a pleasure, for that occasion, so that he did not even show me the other from 1571 – the bridge Andrićć the bridge of Mehmed-pasha Sokollu (as it is written in Turkish) Višegrad began in April, 1977, on approaching the town, before I ever saw the famed bridge on the Drina, which certainly fixed the town’s place in history forever. In my little haiku notebook, which I still have, I noted down a geo poetic commentary “on the gravel of Višegrad” with place in history forever. In my little haiku notebook, which I still have, saw the famed bridge on the Drina, which certainly fixed the town’s it also has its own abstract life. My experience with the metaphysics of Višegrad, like any other place, has its own real life. Yet, like few others, it also has its own abstract life. My experience with the metaphysics of Višegrad began in April, 1977, on approaching the town, before I ever saw the famed bridge on the Drina, which certainly fixed the town’s place in history forever. In my little haiku notebook, which I still have, I noted down a geo poetic commentary “on the gravel of Višegrad” with the poem that I saw through the window of the bus.

A stone between them two sunbathed firs, a parting made in the forest.

My host and friend from my university days, Žarko Cigeja, thought that the bridge of Mehmed-pasha Sokollu (as it is written in Turkish) from 1571 – the bridge Andrić wrote about – was enough of a prize and a pleasure, for that occasion, so that he did not even show me the other attractions of his hometown. He could not even imagine how selfish I was, actually even unhappy, that I had to share this magnificent bridge with others. However, how could I have imagined that deeper knowledge of the secrets of the environs of Višegrad would have to be earned by future experience, on the basis of which I would be able to actually enjoy what was being offered to me? Once again, a secret brotherhood was in question. I had to wait twenty-six whole years to enter that brotherhood! It was worth it. It was actually Ivo Andrić who taught me to wait – in reading him again; during my literature studies I was not yet able to connect his masterpiece with real life too flippantly had I passed over his notes on the beginnings of the bridge’s construction – on its very essence – on the “transportation of stones from the quarries that were opened in the hills near Banja, an hour’s walk from the town”. What is more, the two most important bridges, at least in literature, in all of Bosnia – this one on the River Drina and the other on the River Žepa – were built of the very same white stone mentioned in my haiku poem: with the love and money of (the Turkified or Islamized Serbs) Mehmedpasha Sokolović and Jusuf Ibrahim, made eternal in the humble and wise words of Andrić, the man who attributed his own life’s motto to his literary hero: there is safety in silence.

When I complained to a friend that I had perhaps dried up in my writing, he told me not to worry in the slightest. He had a certain cure for that illness. He was, actually, expecting the arrival of the Turkish writer, Orhan Pamuk, with the same diagnosis, so that the two of us could be cured at the same time with his prescription.

The only thing I knew about Banja, about Sokollu’s Spa, the Spa of Višegrad, as everyone called it, besides being the source of crystalline calcium carbonate used to build the bridge in Višegrad, was that there was a medicinal spring in this place three miles from the town. It was here that Mehmed-pasha Sokollu, in his waning years in 1575, built a domed Turkish bath, wanting to give something (more) to his birthplace. In a brochure from 1934, I read that the radioactive waters (at an altitude of more than 1200 feet) treated rheumatism, neuralgia and women’s disorders. The brochure further claimed that the spa waters have an especially beneficial effect on barren women. “When a barren wife hails at the spa, and then begets a child, the village round doth shake its head, saying: By God, if she hadn’t hailed at the spa and her incantations said, she never ever would have bred...”

So it was that I also traveled through the thick forest to the spa, which I nicknamed “the Maidenhair” after the magical looking rare grass that grows only there. I was happy to meet up with my old acquaintance, Orhan Pamuk, the most famous Turkish writer, a native of Istanbul. I was mildly surprised that he, too, was suffering from a dry spell, because he was known to be a prolific writer. If perchance in some period of his writing life he did not publish a book for a long while, the one that followed was sure to be a hefty baby.

I gave birth to my children less often, and most often they were of medium weight. Such was my rhythm. However, in the last couple
of years I had not conceived a single one, and I was getting seriously worried. That was why I went to visit the stone where he gave birth to water: such fertility revived my faith. The stone on which I stepped had been polished for more than four centuries! A stone the color of grass and moss! The water, hot but not boiling, just next to being of heavenly warmth. And my body was turning into a ghost! Alive, but dead! Pamuk and our hosts tried to talk through the water vapor; but the words disappeared in the glass windows of the dome and lost all their meaning. We turned into the horses (monkeys) in the film with the Sufi title Banaka by director Ron Fiscke standing in place we float across the surface that turns into mist and takes on another aggregate state, taking all forms of intellectualism with it. Our eyelids close, but our eyes do not go to sleep. When this threatens to happen, I push my way through the powerful water, to be under the heavy stream that rushes from the mountain into this small pool, now across my back. I am beaten as I never have been before. And I am happy to the point of silliness. This is the meeting point of the Cabala, Zen, Sufism, Orthodox Estheticism, the Catholic terror of the fear of sin, artistic Islam... Just as the maidens remark can grow nowhere else but here, only here does the water arrive from a depth of 500 feet and from a more important historical depth of thirty thousand years. An age sufficient so that no one doubts its reason for existence or for speaking to the world.

It is also the reason for my relationship with the past. The antiquity that is inhaled here is completely authentic and cannot be resisted. The spirit first loses its orientation, and then the concept of time, and then the body also loses its orientation, and then its concept of space. This peculiar nirvana transformed me into a large question mark: Was the barren woman at this bath, perhaps, serviced by a man who was renowned for his healthy seed? Was this bath perhaps a male haven for desperate barren women? What kind of pleasure this tucked-away pool must have been for beys, pashas, viziers or sultans, whether they were the hosts or guests here, regardless! Whichever of the genders served these active waters and their bathers - they say, it is noted in text gone lost, that making love under this mountain stream (at a temperature of 95 degrees) is on par with the pleasure in the beauties of the heavenly gardens, Valhalla and Jannah. This hamam could have been an ideal place for a caravansary. How much money would travelers leave behind here! However, nature (and perhaps fate) wished to hide it from the busy highways, and so placed it at an altitude that discouraged the weary traveler from the very thought of climbing up to it. That is why the stones of the hamam were polished by decades and centuries, and largely not by the hand of man. Although, it must be admitted, that hand got involved wherever and whenever it could: thus it is possible to find quotations in old manuscripts (recognizing them by their language but without the need to cite their source and date) that overlap with the present: "Next to the spa stands a building where a popular investor maintains a restaurant and has rooms for overnight. In front of that building there is a large veranda in front of which spread magnificent panoramas of nature."

And I don’t know who the popular investor is nowadays, whether a private businessman or not, but he has not deprived himself either of the "restaurant" nor of the "veranda". For, it is true, the satisfaction of bathing in the tiny heavenly pool would not be complete if one does not go to the restaurant veranda afterwards, over a sort of small bridge. It is, in fact, a large hanging balcony without doors, above a deep mountain ravine that expands your thoughts with its marvelous view, thoughts that do not seem, reflecting off the Bosnian hills and vales that stand shoulder to shoulder with you, to return to you infertile. And the food! Along with the domestic appetizers, you will be served royal young trout, just pulled from the nearby rapids, ordered by telephone via Zlatibor only an hour before. This is trout that has gone all winter without eating, and has just begun to feed on pristine food. However, the modern structure of this restaurant should not be confused today with the caravansary in the 16th century. That, it is not. Today, for those who wish to enjoy these marvels for a while longer, there is a hotel - a rehabilitation center called "Maidenhair", with all the necessary comforts and also a modern pool which, of course, is also filled with the thermal waters. The source of their radioactivity is radon, and where there is radon there will also be doctors and physiotherapists. Clearly, you do not have to be ill or concerned about your health to come to this place. In fact, by going there healthy, you prove to yourself that you have not yet rid yourself of hedonism.

Even Mehmed-Pasha himself did not make a caravansary of the hamam, of "the beautiful spa with its dome", he built it a bit lower down, "next to the river Drina as Sokolović's stone inn or caravansary, which could take about ten thousand horses and camels under its roof". Do you think the numbers are exaggerated? I wouldn’t say so. If they are, then they are not far from true. Just imagine what a task it was to build a bridge like the one in Višegrad in the 1570s! In Mehmed-Pasha's time Višegrad had about seven hundred homes, a mosque named Selimiye, a fountain, about three hundred stores, an inn (hostelry) that fed the village's poor, and a Dervish monastery - a tekerja. In the village of Sokolovci (which got its name after the pasha, or the pasha got his name after the village, it makes no difference), there was a mosque called Sokolovac, but there was also a place for a Christian church where, according to legend, the pasha built a church dedicated to his Orthodox mother. This, of course, should not surprise anyone, if it is generally known that it was actually Mehmed-Pasha Sokollu who, as a vizier of the Turkish Dervish's) bath. Among other things, there is never enough cleanliness and purification. Nor is there enough enjoyment, or relationships of the Turkish system - the conquering rule and the vanishing of new territories for art within the Empire, about something of which I knew almost nothing. For all that effort, and for the benefit of others, Pamuk deserved a virtual (perhaps for him Dervish's) bath. Among other things, there is never enough cleanliness and purification. Nor is there enough enjoyment, or "abshamlok" the Bosnian custom of sitting on the grass in the evening, usually by a body of water, drinking brandy, singing and talking. What kind of writers would we be if we did not, sometimes, next to the hamam, enjoy a bit of "abshamlok" ourselves? Under the condition that we understand this word simultaneously and equally as being hedonistic and philosophical.

The writers’ problem, one of countless others, is that they often confuse reality and imagination. That is the source of the famous loss of the boundary between what happened and what was experienced. That is how I began to temporally mix my encounters with people close to me. I wanted to say, I brought those who lived five centuries before me closer to my own time, and transferred my time (and perhaps my friends and characters, it makes no difference) with ease into lives centuries older than we are. That is how it could happen that our encounters, real and unreal, became more frequent. It was one of the ways of fulfilling the writer’s dream about the temporal omnipotence of words. Because of that dream, among other things, books come into being.

Translated by Randall A. Major
"Populism is a buzzword, and it is loosely applied to a wide and motley range of political phenomena: The only thing they share is their divergence to mainstream politics and status quo"

In 1971, the corporate lawyer Lewis Powell Jr. addressed a confidential memorandum to the Director of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. It was, indeed, a call to arms for a political cultural battle, and the enemies were identified as follows: "the college campus, the pulpit, the media, the intellectual and literary journals, the arts and sciences". Further on: “Social science faculties (the political scientists, economists, sociologists, and many historians) tend to be liberally oriented”. What Lewis Powell Jr. strategically proposed was, among other things, an ideological purge of the universities and a surveillance of the textbooks by corporate business appointed committees. His confidential memorandum was discovered by the Washington Post columnist and Pulitzer Prize winner Jack Anderson, who denounced it as an attempt to undermine the democratic system. However, it is considered as the blueprint of a cultural campaign that gave rise to a powerful network of conservative think-tanks. It looks like the conservatives have learned better than anyone the lesson of Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist thinker, on cultural hegemony. Meanwhile, the liberals, or the progressive, or the left, or whatever we may call them, adopted a defensive attitude, stuck in a triumphalistic orthodoxy and the newspeak of the “politically correct”, leaving thus to their conservative opponents the attitude of anti-conformism and anti-taboo. And the conservatives have won the Kulturkampf. One of the consequences of this turn of the tide is significantly the loss of prestige of the humanities in our societies. This anti-Enlightenment tendency is complemented by leftist intellectuals with their post-modern relativism and a discourse no less identitarian than the conservative: for instance, Enlightenment is said to be Eurocentric, chauvinistic, related to slavery and colonialism and imperialism, and it is also said to be patriarchal and antifeminist. On the other hand, according to Michel Foucault, there is no knowledge, but something like power-knowledge, a kind of centaur image. And Richard Rorty has banned the word “truth”, by replacing it with the word...
Term “populism” is quite often a post-truth product, by virtue of the usage of this term: quite often it is pronounced with the intention of stigmatizing all those who question or challenge the ruling ideological gadget dressed up like economic science.

At a certain moment, the author goes to the future, to 1979, when communism has been established all over the world, and there is a scene of the world parliament, where there is nobody: the seats are empty. But, instead of a microphone, each seat has a loudspeaker, through which the voices of the non-present members of the parliament can be heard: thus, the empty parliament is made of by all the people of the world. This is at least what I remember: I was very young when I read it, sometime around 1979. This leads me now to another term of the unholy trinity: the term “populism”, although, except for despine towards democratic representation, it does not have much in common with communism.

“Populism” is a buzzword, and it is loosely applied to a wide and motley range of political phenomena: from Donald Trump to Syriza, from Bernie Sanders to the United Kingdom Independence Party, from Jeremy Corbyn to Marine le Pen, from Carles Puigdemont to Beppe Grillo, from Podemos to Alternativ für Deutschland. The only thing they share is their divergence to mainstream politics and status quo. For a clearer notion of populism, I would, first of all, refer to a definition by the incisive political scientist Ivan Krastev, drawing a distinction between populism and socialism in the broadest sense of the term, be it social-democratic or authoritarian, radical or moderate, libertarian or totalitarian. While populists identify themselves with the people and pretend that they are the people, socialists are an elite or a vanguard that pretends to go to the people, to enlighten the people and be the leadership of the people. I would even say that socialists almost do not speak of “people”, but of “working class”, although nowadays not so much, alternating it rather frequently with the idea of
I don’t know whether this outline of populism is sufficiently clear and distinct, insofar as things can be clear and distinct when we talk about politics. Moreover, I am not an expert. It is an attempt, a reaction to the prevailing conceptual chaos. In any case, before using a term, we have to know what it means. Well, according to one of the most current definitions, a politician who addresses to the emotions of people is a populist. I wonder whether politicians had ever not addressed to emotions. Or is it that, when speaking to the public they are emotional and when they do it among themselves they are purely rational? If so, should they abstain from speaking to the public and should they become verbally endogamic and collectively autistic and do everything indoors? As I said, there is nowadays a disconnection between the political class and the citizens, as many of them do not feel represented. Populism is of course a political disease, but at the same time it is a symptom of another disease: a crisis of representation. When the machinery of democratic representation does not work properly, when the usual channels of connection are blocked somewhere, then populism appears and tends to produce a dangerous short-circuit between the citizens and the political power. It is the other side of popular sovereignty, the dark one. It is like Mr Hide to Dr Jekyll. Besides, not only populism itself, but also the term “populism” is quite often a post-truth product, by virtue of the usage of this term: quite often it is pronounced with the intention of stigmatizing all those who question or challenge the ruling ideological gadget dressed up like economic science. Now, it is a common belief that the disconnection of the voters from the legislative body, and therefore the rise of populism, happens because people are ill-informed. I think this is a mistaken diagnosis. According to Princeton Professor Jan Werner-Müller: “Voters do not need detailed knowledge and preferences on every policy question; broad orientations and the capacity to take cues from trusted authorities... can be enough... The problem starts when citizens view every issue purely as a matter of partisan identity, so that the credibility of climate science, for example, depends on whether one is a Republican or a Democrat”. The first and important step in this direction was taken when, in 1987, the government of the United States was able to revoke the so-called fairness doctrine, which forced television and radio to expose different points of view on controversial issues. And it became, according to some experts, the catalyst for the first information bubbles. It was a step towards trench journalism. A further step, much more important, was taken with the appearance of Internet. Evgeny Morozov, an outstanding scholar in this domain, considers that diversity in the web is smaller than in traditional media, and that people tend to go to the website where they can read the information and the opinion that would confirm their own opinion. Evgeny Morozov, an outstanding scholar in this domain, considers that diversity in the web is smaller than in traditional media, and that people tend to go to the website where they can read the information and the opinion that would confirm their own opinion. Evgeny Morozov, an outstanding scholar in this domain, considers that diversity in the web is smaller than in traditional media, and that people tend to go to the website where they can read the information and the opinion that would confirm their own opinion. Evgeny Morozov, an outstanding scholar in this domain, considers that diversity in the web is smaller than in traditional media, and that people tend to go to the website where they can read the information and the opinion that would confirm their own opinion. And it is getting worse with the thrust of new media. I am not saying that technology is the cause of populism and post-truth. Technology in itself is neutral. It only empowers people, and it depends on people whether such an empowerment will be positive or negative: it depends on our predisposals. So far, in terms of freedom, the balance is negative rather than positive.
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