

SARAJEVO AND THE WORLD

Pandemic Perspectives

FORUM BOSNAE

Edited by
Mile✳*Babić*
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CONTENTS

ON THIS ISSUE 7

PLURALITY AND SOLIDARITY IN A TIME OF EMERGENCY

Paul Ballanfat
CONFINÉS AVEC LE VIRUS 13

Yazid Said
GLOBAL CRISIS AND GLOBAL JUSTICE: SOME THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS 26

Mohammed Rustom
ON LISTENING: HEARING GOD’S VOICE IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING..... 35

Adis Lukač
PANDEMIC MISFORTUNE AS OPPORTUNITY FOR REFORM OF BEING 43

Desmond Maurer
CRACKS IN THE COSMODICY: CORONAVIRUS, LISBON, AND THE SUBLIME AS SEEN FROM SARAJEVO..... 46

Miloš Lazin
NOTES SUR LE MONDE À L'ARRÊT 65

Emir Habul
GLOBAL SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL PROBLEMS..... 75

Senadin Lavić
SCIENCE, NEOLIBERALISM, AND EDUCATION IN A PANDEMIC AGE 84

THE CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Almir Bašović

STAND-UP TRAGEDY: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE
PANDEMIC FROM ISOLATION IN SARAJEVO 97

Amra Hadžimuhamedović

ON THE KUMRA DOVE, SARAJEVO TOWN HALL,
AND SEEKING THE SIMURGH: CULTURAL
HERITAGE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS
PANDEMIC..... 106

Ivo Marković

SARAJEVO AND THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN
SOCIAL CHANGE CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC 121

Mirsad Kunić

THE EXPERIENCE OF PAIN AND DEATH IN
BOSNIAK ORAL POETRY 133

Mehmed Agović

USING CORONAVIRUS AGAINST CIVIL RIGHTS
AND MEDIA FREEDOM. 139

Mustafa Sefo and Fahira Fejzić Čengić

COMMUNICATION AND THE CORONA VIRUS 147

REIMAGINING UNIVERSAL POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC PARADIGMS LOCALLY

Žarko Papić

THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID
19 PANDEMIC VIEWED FROM THE SARAJEVO
LOCKDOWN 155

Fikret Čaušević

THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA DURING THE COVID 19 GLOBAL
CRISIS 162

Kadrija Hodžić and Izudin Kešetović

THE AGE OF THE CORONA ECONOMY IN BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA..... 178

Fatima Mahmutćehajić	
Integrity of Governance: Legal Perspectives	188
Hamdija Hadžihasanović	
THE PANDEMIC AND BOSNIAN DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES	200
Rasim Gačanović	
ON TWO SIEGES OF SARAJEVO	204
Vahid Tanović	
FUTURE ENERGY SOURCES FOR HEATING BUILDINGS IN B&H AND AROUND THE WORLD GIVEN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE . . .	215
Anes Podić	
MINI HYDROPOWER PLANTS – DANGEROUS SCAMS WITH LONG-TERM DAMAGE	225
Keith Doubt	
THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM IN THE FACE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC	237

CITY AND STATE UNDER CRISIS CONDITIONS

Neven Anđelić	
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: STATE-POWER AND SOCIETY	247
Suada Kapić	
THEN-NOW-TOMORROW	261
Gojko Berić	
TWO SIEGES, TWO EXPERIENCES	267
Jovan Divjak	
WHITE IMAGE OF THE SARAJEVO PANDEMIC	274
Azra Dobardžić	
SENIORS AS A RISK GROUP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – A CASE STUDY OF A CITY IN THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA, USA	281
Marko-Antonio Brkić	
SARAJEVO – FROM BIRTHPLACE OF INTEGRAL HUMANISM TO UNIVERSALIST DESERT OF MIND .	287

Asim Zubčević	
SARAJEVO AND NEW DELHI DURING PANDEMIC: SOME REFLECTIONS.	301
Safet HadžiMuhamedović	
LOCATING PANDEMIC GRIEF IN SARAJEVO: <i>GEORGIC NOTES AGAINST SELF-ISOLATING REGIMES.</i>	308

HEALTH, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Elizabeth Alexandrin	
MEDICINAL GARDENS, HEALING TRAILS, AND OUR PANDEMIC BODIES	329
Mile Babić	
JURAJ DRAGIŠIĆ: DEFENDER OF REFUGEES AND EXILES	336
M. Ali Lakhani	
IN QUARANTINE	345
Rusmir Mahmutćehajić	
THE SELF AND THE WORLD: ON VIOLATING BAT RIGHTS	348
Nerin Dizdar	
RESTRICTIONS AND REPRESSION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC APPROACH TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL MEASURES IN THE TIME OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ..	360
Midhat Jašić	
NUTRITION AND THE CORONAVIRUS	368
Taner Aličehić	
THE PANDEMIC, THE NATION, AND FREEDOM	376
Samir Beglerović and Kerim Sušić	
THE GLOBAL WORLD AFTER THE PANDEMIC: THE NOTION OF A POST-VIRUS WORLD AS CONCEIVED BY IMRAN HOSEIN AND ALEKSANDR DUGIN	381
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	397

ON THIS ISSUE

This volume contains 38 of the 46 papers presented at the *Sixth International Conference on Sarajevo and the World: Pandemic Perspectives*, held in Sarajevo, in a virtual format, during April and May of 2020. These are the papers either submitted originally in English or French or submitted in another language and translated into English for the conference and publication.

The Editorial Board has been very favourably impressed by the process and considers that the experience gained in organising the conference and publishing the papers represents a significant new departure for International Forum Bosnia. We have subsequently held a further three international conferences and an international summer school via online mechanisms with considerable success.

At the International Forum Bosnia AGM, held on December 14, 2020, members approved an annual plan that included the following elements, (1) Activities to mark the *Eighth Sarajevo UN World Interfaith Harmony Week*; (2) The *Sixth International Conference on Sarajevo and the World*; (3) The *Fifteenth International Stolac Youth and Heritage Summer School*; (4) The *Fifteenth International Conference on Unity and Diversity in Europe* in Mostar; and (5) The *Third International Colloquium on Bosnian Oral Tradition and World Culture*. A number of public lectures and discussions were also planned, along with the publication of four issues of the *Forum Bosnae* journal.

The plan was made without foreknowledge of the exceptional circumstances that would affect us all in 2020. Before the advent of Zoom, the pandemic would have made it impossible to carry the plan out or to realise any of the activities envisaged. Thanks to the dedicated work of our team of volunteers and organisers and to the willingness of all the various participants to take a risk on new technologies, however, we have managed to carry out all the planned activities and meet our plan for our 22nd year in existence, bringing together our members and friends from all around the country and the world.

The *Eighth Sarajevo World Interfaith Harmony Week* took place between February 3–7, 2020, at the International Forum Bosnia offices in Sarajevo, in a relatively traditional form, given that the pandemic had not reached its peak, there were as yet no restrictive measures, and we were still innocent of the state of siege to come. Traditional meetings were still possible. At a series of meetings and seminars over four days, a diverse group of Bosnian theologians, philosophers of religion, theorists, and academics from various backgrounds discussed the scope for open discussion of religious pluralism and the need for an appropriate political theology that grounds the inviolability of individual rights, distributive justice, social justice, and the democratic legitimization of power and ensures their widespread acceptance as an undisputed public good.

By March, the pandemic threat and the state of global siege was in the forefront of all our minds. As always, such a situation may seem more dangerous, hopeless, lasting, or, indeed, transient than the official discourse suggests. The pessimists and optimists at International Forum Bosnia were equally unsure of how to proceed with our plans. Most Sarajevans still live with their experience of the 1444 day siege of the 1990s, the hunger and the killing, the destruction and the injury, and many of us supposed that this experience would stand us in good stead with the new threat. No wonder then that the leading members of International Forum Bosnia decided to organise the Sixth International Conference on Sarajevo and the World online, inviting participants all around the world to offer their perspectives on the pandemic along with their reflections on the situation in Sarajevo nearly 30 years ago.

International Forum Bosnia was founded in exceptional circumstances, when it seemed as though the very idea of Bosnian social pluralism would succumb to the internal and external forces that were ranging themselves against it. This courageous vision, which has seemed so far from realisation at times, today receives ample confirmation of its importance from all sides, not just for Bosnia, but for the world and every form of political order in it. The essays in this volume confirm this understanding.

The International Conference on Sarajevo and the World: Pandemic Perspectives unfolded as follows:

1. The invitation to potential participants to submit papers was issued in April.

2. 45 papers were received by May 15. They were presented in five thematic panels, in Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Montenegrin, English or French, with some made available in more than one version.
3. The papers were then circulated to the registered participants, who gave their written comments by June 15.
4. These were then passed on to the authors for any response by June 25.
5. The final version of the conference proceedings, papers, comments, and responses were then circulated to participants one last time on August 9.
6. Authors were invited to make any final changes and to submit final versions in of their papers in the language(s) of their choice.
7. Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Montenegrin papers were published in the previous issue of *Forum Bosnae*.
8. The English and French papers are published in this issue.

We hope you enjoy reading them.

The editors have the sad duty of recognising the passing of one of the contributors in the period while this volume was being prepared for the press. Professor Samir Beglerović of the Faculty of Islamic Studies of the University of Sarajevo was a long-time and valued friend and member of *International Forum Bosnia* and a significant figure in Bosnian public and intellectual life, Samir tragically succumbed to the coronavirus on November 9, 2020. He will be missed greatly. Our thoughts are with his family and colleagues. IFB will be holding a commemorative session to mark his passing in June 2020.

The Editorial Board

PLURALITY AND SOLIDARITY IN A TIME OF EMERGENCY

CONFINÉS AVEC LE VIRUS

Paul Ballanfat

Nous nous sommes épris d'un virus, comme d'un fantôme contre lequel nous nous enfermons derrière des frontières non politiques, les murs de l'espace privé, la solitude de la famille, en isolement. Nous voilà contraints de dire nous, nous unis à une communauté, à notre corps défendant, au moment où le virus pulvérise toute communauté, mais peut-être pas la communion d'un nous contraint qui ne se com-monétarise plus. L'espace privé paraît le lieu de repli dont le virus vient marquer invisiblement la ligne de démarcation qui l'isole du politique qu'il envahit et affole, autant qu'il affole les défenses immunitaires, où nous nous préparons au grand jour où nous nous reverrons, davantage comme travailleur sans doute que comme citoyen, lorsque l'espace public sera lavé de son effacement, de son invisibilité et de sa pulvérisation. Nous tâchons de nous prémunir contre ce que nous ne voyons pas, invisible intrus, hôte non invité, contrebande du secret, l'infection du secret, mais dont nous imaginons qu'il peut entrer par les fenêtres, depuis les rues où nous nous transportons, les parcs où nous respirons, ou importé par quelque cheval de Troie, un membre de la famille, un frère ou un ami, ou le pire, l'enfant de la famille, l'avenir de la collectivité qu'engendre l'intimité privée, qu'il menace soudain toutes deux.

Un cheval qui, parlant au nom de l'otage, au nom de la libération, dissimulerait sa compulsion mortelle d'anéantissement, sa cruauté. Cruauté candide et innocence toujours pathologique. Aléatoire révélation de la peur que les sociétés européennes entretiennent depuis longtemps déjà, défiance de la société à l'abord de la vieillesse vis-à-vis des jeunes, et en particulier des jeunes issus de ce que l'on appelle l'immigration venue des confins pour être reléguée, dont la dynamique démographique fait craindre "le

grand remplacement”. Les enfants auront été d’emblée soupçonnés de porter la mort, de porter la mort en toute innocence, innocents coupables tout de suite désignés par la décision politique de confinement qui les aura confinés en les désignant comme la menace la plus immédiate pour les vieillards. Rappel de l’impossibilité d’une culpabilité absolue, à moins de sa mort qui lui rendrait son innocence, et d’une innocence introuvable spéculaire qui autoriserait une incrimination pure non pathologique. Avant de faire savoir, de nous faire savoir, qu’ils seraient sans doute moins porteurs que leurs parents. Les vieillards regroupés et isolés eux, la vieillesse rassemblée dans les limbes, en particulier dans les Ehpad où le virus aura provoqué une hécatombe silencieuse et invisible dans la plus extrême solitude où la mort sera passée sans passer, où la protection par le confinement aura favorisé le travail du virus dans la plus grande discrétion. Mort marginale qui n’est plus la mort définie par la possibilité constitutive de la politique de mettre à mort, de laisser mourir ou encore de sauver de la mort. Le souci moderne de la protection de la vie n’est guère que l’affirmation perverse du droit qui fonde la souveraineté de mettre à mort, de condamner à la mort. Le sacré n’est pas d’abord religieux, pas rituel, mais toujours déjà la fabrication de la souveraineté. Le sacré n’est pas l’ambivalence du nuisible et du sain, mais de la mort et de la survie, c’est-à-dire du droit souverain de la mort. Le sacré : le droit, le schibboleth qui sépare l’ami de l’ennemi, comme l’affirme Hegel dans *La philosophie du droit*, qui gouverne le profane par le mystère de son mot de passe qui maintient la frontière et convertit la monnaie de la souveraineté dans la monnaie de l’autorité qui est le commun de toute communauté politique. Pour empêcher la mort d’atteindre les vieillards les plus vulnérables, dont un grand nombre avait déjà vécu la privation de liberté et la pénurie pendant l’occupation, regroupés dans les Ehpad, pour rendre leur mort impossible on aura rendu leur mort inéluctable, nécessaire. On les aura rassemblés dans une collectivité destinée à être frappée par la fatalité d’une mort que l’on aura tenue invisible. Leur mort est comptabilisée à part dans les statistiques virales. Cette mort, hécatombe sans massacre, est mise à l’écart dans le cimetière statistique, le seul que connaisse l’administration, la machinerie de la politique que l’on voit aussi à l’œuvre dans tout conflit et qui confie aux statistiques des morts et des blessés les victimes de la guerre qu’elle prive ainsi de toute

sépulture. Les Européens, ce que l'on nomme l'Occident, qui craint de mourir depuis si longtemps, sont pris du virus de se prendre pour les victimes exemplaires, l'exemplarité de la victime, personnage sans cesse rejoué et davantage encore depuis le 11 septembre. La hiérarchie des victimes rejoue sans cesse la hiérarchie anthropologique que l'Europe construit depuis au moins le dix-neuvième siècle et qui gouverne l'histoire. Nous sommes pris d'un virus qui parasite l'organisme, le corps et le psychisme, pour une fois tout un, par l'affection virale qui le colonise, venant exploiter ses ressources, ses capacités à se reproduire en le condamnant à une mort étrange et aléatoire. Il rend fou le système immunitaire, ce virus, au point de le pousser à s'autodétruire au lieu de le détruire d'entrée de jeu, de même qu'il rend folles les décisions collectives au point que la politique, son économie même sous tous ses modes, semble s'auto-détruire en sur-réagissant prise d'un délire qui unit la relégation la plus archaïque à la performance de la recherche biologique et informatique qui s'accélèrent de la plus contemporaine modernité. Autre réplique de la vidéo-criminalité islamiste dont la criminalité aura meurtri les français à plusieurs reprises et toujours plus, après bien d'autres, de morts tout aussi aléatoires, mais spectaculaires. On s'assiege dans l'ascèse de multitudes de cellules virales qui parient sur une autre viralité à venir, pour se protéger de l'affection censée venir du dehors, moines éventuels sommés de méditer une politique à venir. Mais où nous confiner ? Reste-t-il quelque lieu qui se rétracte, quelque lieu privé ? Privé de politique ? Ou gros de politique ? Où se confiner ? Quelque lieu qui désorienterait le virus, en lui opposant un *dead-end*, un *çıkamaz*, comme l'on dit en turc, soit le lieu du lieu, celui d'où l'on ne sort pas, là où l'on ne s'en sort pas. L'auto-enfermement, la rétractation de soi, comme une sensitive, solitude morale avec soi-même d'un souverain bien délirant, dans le for intérieur de l'intimité présumée sans danger où l'on est seul avec soi-même, seul affrontant ses cent-mille âmes comme le dirait le poète turc Yûnus Emre, en terrain censément plus que connu, opposerait une barrière infranchissable. S'enfermer dans une myriade d'alvéoles, comme les abris anti-atomiques de la guerre froide et les bunkers de l'Albanie d'Enver Hodja, désorienterait le virus, cette plaie d'Egypte, ne tournant plus d'adresse où frapper. La dissémination des cibles aléatoires opposerait une grande muraille de Chine, la grande

muraille qu'aurait bâtie le prophète à deux cornes, *Dhû 'l-qarnayn*, pour contenir Gog et Magog, et le renverrait ainsi dans les confins d'où il est venu, le confinerait en retour. Notre confinement confinerait le virus d'un seul et même coup. L'univers où nous avons conceptuels, comme le laboureur d'avenir de Heidegger, tracent des sillons de peu d'importance qui importent tout de tous les bouts du monde n'a t-il pas si bien été investi, en s'universalisant, qu'il ne se trouvera peut-être aucun lieu qui puisse servir de cellule saine immunisée contre tout parasitage et toute exploitation. Nous nous rétractons, pris de remords, dans ces cellules déjà filmées dans nombre de films américains, jouant *ad nauseam* la fin du monde ou la pandémie universelle qui aura déjà été répétée, où nous mourrons d'être si bien enfermés, qu'on n'en sortira plus, enfermés avec la mort, confinés avec le virus. On se trouverait confinés sains et condamnés à ne pas pouvoir sortir sous peine d'être contaminés ou verbalisés, ou confinés malades embarqués sur la nef des fous pour un voyage qui confine aux confins. Nous nous confinions avec le virus, la proie du remords. Le virus semble une sorte d'expiation. Confinés sous la camisole du virus, comme des archipels sous le vent, nous sommes tentés de marmonner l'imprécation de la mère de Baudelaire : « *Maudite soit la nuit aux plaisirs éphémères où mon ventre a conçu mon expiation* ».

L'affolement nous rétracte dans une myriade de retraites, comme une foule d'impasses alvéolaires, où nous serions de vagues moines délirants qui pourraient générer de nouvelles formes politiques, inventer un monde à venir qui dépasserait les impasses du capitalisme contemporain responsable de l'hécatombe de ses très anciennes travailleuses, les abeilles. L'infection se répandrait depuis la Chine qu'elle aurait finalement désertée et dont elle relancerait l'ambition politique en injectant une fois encore à l'Europe cet autre virus, la mélancolie européenne de se penser fatiguée, dégénérée, ayant perdu, d'une double perte, cette force vitale qui se donne un destin. La Chine, dit un propos du corpus des dits de Mahomet, est le lieu jusqu'où il faut aller chercher le savoir, si vraiment c'est le savoir que l'on cherche. La Chine serait l'impératif qui pèse sur tout désir de savoir. De la Chine nous reviendrait le virus du savoir qui répondrait à l'appétit, à l'ambition, à la plénoxie, à la machinerie confinée du désir. Venu des confins, où nous nous confinions pour nous en préserver, du dehors le plus dehors par son éloignement, il loge le dehors au

dedans, dans le for intérieur, dans l'intimité de l'unité différenciée et dialectisée du corps et de l'esprit, du privé et du politique, dans l'unité la plus virulente et la plus messianique, la plus spirituelle de l'Occident, au coeur de ses ténèbres africaines de l'Occident qui avaient fait le motif de la méditation de Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe sur l'Europe.

Le virus nous prendrait comme un reflux, une aliénation armée au loin et ramenée compulsivement à soi, un fort/da infectant le principe de plaisir, ou comme la pensée qui, chez Descartes, se révèle purement sans objet dans l'acte même de l'anéantissement total dans ce somnambulisme où elle extravague plus que tous les fous qui veillent. Socrate pris de délire, ne fait-il pas parler ces interlocuteurs qu'il fait accoucher en leur inoculant son venin, philosophe naturel dont la pensée virale n'est possible qu'à condition que son ouvre la bouche pour y recevoir le virus du *logos*, le virus socratique, dont les discours, les écrits philosophiques sont les symptômes ? La puissance de la pensée n'a-t-elle pas toujours tenu à sa virulence et à sa viralité ? A relancer donc machinalement la sidération dont nous transit le virus, à s'auto-détruire, à délirer jusqu'à se prendre pour la victime exemplaire, l'extravagance du discours général sur la chance que le virus offre d'un changement total de civilisation autoriserait donc un calcul. Le virus serait ce dieu inattendu, non théologique, enfin non théologico-politique, et providentiel initiant la ruse de la restauration d'une économie messianique du sacrifice de soi. On serait tenté de se rappeler le mot de Heidegger, selon lequel "Seul un dieu peut nous sauver". Sauf que ce divin virus, qui revient sous diverses formes, comme le Saoshyant du mazdéisme dont Zarathoustra est un avatar, permet de capitaliser sur sa virulence, la puissance folle de cette chauve souris, une sorte de rat volant, qui, par le risque calculé de la surréaction délirante, autoriserait un sursaut politique, une relance de la politique rétractée. La surréaction des défenses immunitaires qui s'enflamment ouvrirait au calcul, plutôt qu'au pari, d'un sursaut moral qui ferait consentir à l'auto-incarcération et à la surveillance globale par tout le monde, plutôt que par l'état disparu avec le privé dans la confusion que génère le virus venu du dehors exploiter le dedans pour le parceliser. La soumission automatique et maussade, sans héroïsme, avec son flot de dénonciations anonymes, semble restaurer, dit-on, la politique, cette grande malade miraculeusement guérie par

un virus, sous la figure de l'Etat rétablie dans sa souveraineté par la grâce qui fait communier l'ensemble de sa population dans son auto-relégation volontaire. Le virus rendant sa souveraineté à l'Etat le relancerait machinalement par l'enfermement volontaire de chaque corps dans sa propre cellule de confinement, corps disparu, comme les morts des Ehpad, invisible dans la camisole de son isolement. Le corps devient la cellule qui l'enveloppe. Le corps qui doit se protéger se confond avec son enveloppe protectrice, l'alvéole hospitalière des soins médicaux, pharmaceutiques et mécaniques. Il est absorbé par son double offert au soin qui se substitue à lui. Il est le soin qui le soumet à la double institution tutellaire de l'administration de l'Etat et de la médecine administrée. Se soumettant au soin qui l'efface il semble restaurer et rendre son souffle à la politique conspirant avec la médecine. L'administration du soin du vivant dans la conspiration secrète de l'Etat et de la science est le respirateur artificiel de la politique. Le virus aggrave encore la disparition du corps dans tous les dispositifs qui l'intègrent, les hôpitaux et leurs étapes jusqu'au saint des saints : les salles de soins intensifs, les Ehpad et la mort collective sans sépulture, les divers dispositifs organes d'assistance économique, sociale, avec leur hiérarchie qui va des municipalités jusqu'à tous les organismes de l'union européenne, l'embranchement informatique du travail à domicile, la réorganisation de tous les enseignements et de tous les médias tenus à distance hygiénique. Organisation immunologique de la sainteté du vivant d'une médecine qui sauve l'immunité du vivant et de l'Etat qui assure la sécurité de ses citoyens incarcérés et démunis de droit. On offre l'immunité aux démunis que sont les vivants dont la conspiration de l'institution a subtilisé le corps. L'immunité médicale dissimule la conspiration de sa polysémie institutionnelle, im-munité du vivant qui intègre dans l'espèce en le protégeant du virus étranger, im-munité politique accordée par l'Etat qui protège de la violence de la communauté, im-munité du *munus* de la monnaie sur laquelle repose la fiduciarité de la fidélité commune à la communauté du devoir et du don en retour. Ces dispositifs imposent à ce "nous" qu'ils agglomèrent l'acquiescement automatique qu'impose la disposition de la loi qui a toujours anticipé la constitution d'un sujet dont elle historicise et com-monétarise la temporalité. Ils jouent de la soumission automatique qu'implique l'antécédence de la loi qui confine le sujet

pour pouvoir s'énoncer, ayant forcé son corps avant tout contrat, enfermant ainsi le refus dans une négativité d'emblée déniée, annulant par son avance toute résistance. Au lieu de convoquer le corps, toutes ses fragilités et sa vulnérabilité qui ne se laissent pas distinguer du psychisme, le virus fantasmagorique, lui-même invisible usurpateur, sort d'antéchrist, tient tout entier et uniquement dans tous les dispositifs ordonnés à la guérison de l'Etat et nourri de toutes les fantasmagories où se loge le virus. Il renforce l'effacement du corps dont nous portons le deuil depuis longtemps, dans l'oubli, à travers tout ce qui nous dispose à un confinement plus ancien déjà que le virus. La soumission somnambulique à l'auto-enfermement, à l'isolement, ne me semble pas traduire le souci du corps, mais au contraire, parce qu'il s'agit d'une rétractation collective dans le sein protecteur de l'Etat, de l'exhibition pathologique de l'impuissance perverse de la machinerie politique où la décision administre le mystère dans le secret où officient le chef de l'Etat et son comité scientifique. L'auto-relégation n'est peut-être pas toutefois la guérison espérée. La recherche d'un protecteur qu'implique le morcellement de la communauté est le mécanisme qui aggrave la maladie qui infecte le politique, dont le dedans se retourne en son dehors, son essence en symptôme, et qui le fait virer en tyrannie du symptôme. La guérison supposée de l'Etat pourrait être le coup fatal porté aussi bien au corps propre des hommes qu'au corps politique, pourrait être la disparition de la mort qui aggraverait encore le désir de faire de la mort un impossible sans pour autant être un désir de vivre. Le virus aura produit une multitude de fantasmagories où il se loge en se rendant invisible. Ces fantasmagories aveugles auront non seulement rendu invisible le corps et la mort mais aussi toutes les autres maladies, dues aux déficiences du corps, aux microbes, bactéries, et auront même détrôné le cancer de sa précellence dans la hiérarchie de nos maux. A l'hécatombe invisible des Ehpad qui dissimule la mort et ses rituels tout en aggravant la dissimulation du vieillissement dans lequel le corps insiste, correspondent les morts dans les alvéoles du confinement dont on ne saura jamais de quoi ils sont morts, le virus dissimulant aussi de toute sa souveraineté, le fantasme de la mort, toutes les autres affections du corps, toutes les autres maladies et faiblesses possibles du corps reléguées dans la morne plaine du fleuve *amèlès* où nous communions dans l'anxiété de notre inat-

tention. Cette mort factuelle sans sépulture, qui faisait se révolter Antigone, la voix de la mort, n'affecte pas seulement les corps dès lors sans destin sous la prise du dispositif médical, mais la mort elle-même que l'immunisation prive de sa duplicité. Le dispositif médical efface le corps en faisant de la vie un fait pur sans destin, selon le mot d'Imre Kertész. Le vivant usurpe le corps. Il ignore et anéantit tout mode de vie au nom de la protection qui en dispose. L'effacement du corps est aggravé par le dispositif médical qui règne souverainement sur le gouvernement politique, dispositif qui installe à demeure la vie comme un pur fait affranchi de toute essence, de tout mode de vie, le vivant sur lequel le dispositif médical prétend avoir prise malgré la pauvreté dérisoire de ses moyens, et qui ignore et anéantit tout mode de vie au nom de la protection des vivants. S'impose une interprétation univoque préemptée par la technicité médicale, non-technologique, de l'immunité du vivant qui efface et le corps et la mort dans le vivant. La politique qui est l'organisation de la reproduction est confinée par le dévoilement médical du vivant dont l'impuissance à s'auto-conserver substitue la fonction au destin, la corporéité au désir du corps propre. On dispose du corps par l'investissement du vivant comme disposition à recevoir des branchements. Le vivant est la disposition aux branchements. Le corps social devenu vivant vit d'une sorte de coma artificiel où il doit apprendre une nouvelle corporéité qui se ramifie en une inextricable prolifération de branchages informationnels. Il est vivant, conatus subsistant, persévérant ou persistant, tenu à la vitalité de la neutralité immunisée de tout désir.

Nous sommes saisis du virus de l'héroïsme de la catastrophe, une fois de plus, nous singularisant complaisamment de cette troisième personne christique que nous rejouons sans cesse au moins depuis le Saint Augustin du *De Trinitate*, qui a lié la divinisation à l'intensification hyperbolique de la victime que radicalise le mal qui la sublime. Une fois de plus nous faisons de la catastrophe le mécanisme par lequel l'Europe aurait la chance de restaurer sa figure, sa personnalité, une dignité bafouée et dite en train de décliner et de dégénérer jusqu'à en perdre la foi et la puissance de la génération. Le tohu-bohu de la contamination générale, un virus chinois s'étant emparé de l'universel en l'envahissant, réveille la compulsion anesthésiée de l'Europe à se périodiser en érigeant en événements historiques, en fins de l'histoire ses

aléas, compulsion théologique d'une apocalypse comptable, archiviste, administrative coupant et creusant la monotonie de la superficialité aléatoire par une reddition des comptes, une confession qui ouvrirait une redemption. La rétractation du confinement prend valeur de remords et d'expiation. Un pardon général demandé, mais adressé à qui ? En tout cas pas aux indiens des Amériques décimés par le virus des empires européens, indiens dont on apprend que certains disparaissent de nouveau dans cette forêt amazonienne, ce non-lieu de confins où l'on peut encore disparaître sans y être incarcéré, de confins qui ne sont pas des ban-lieux. L'Europe, l'occident soudain accidenté, semble demander pardon à soi-même, infiniment, par un calcul et une ruse suprêmes. Heureux virus qui tout à coup rétablit une universalité, la vocation européenne de l'Europe, la vocation de l'Europe à se nommer l'Europe. Voilà que le virus de la mondialisation européenne, de la création européenne de son monde comme globalisation de ses universaux, ce virus qui fait le caractère propre de l'Europe s'appropriant à soi-même en s'appropriant le monde s'en revient comme s'il n'était jamais parti et contraint l'Europe à se demander compulsivement pardon, comme un automate, ou comme un mort-vivant, pour le virus qui revient la hanter. L'on voudrait demander pardon de prendre la parole en ces temps. Mais le pardon est déjà engagé globalement, déjà universalisé au nom de l'Europe qui survit en entonnant le *melos* écologique de ses remords dont elle attend un autre commencement, ce commencement qui nécessite comme toujours l'exposition de la culpabilité absolue, de la désolation infinie pour que la justice vienne justifier cette auto-crucifixion en lançant comme automatiquement un autre nouveau commencement. Etrange poison, détestable potion de la contamination qui a viré en un virus qui rassemble la viralité biologique, si tant est que le virus relève de la vie et de la mort, et la vitalité morale, union non pas bio-politique mais bio-morale, contre laquelle la politique serait depuis toujours censée nous immuniser, puisque l'essence du politique, depuis Platon, devrait prémunir contre la maladie dont elle est affectée, devrait faire obstacle, devrait dresser des murs contre toute contamination, biologique et morale. La morale qui fut naguère intégrée à l'ouvrage politique, s'est de nouveau émancipée de toute politique, profitant de l'émancipation de la politique de toute morale, pour se présenter comme un automate auto-régu-

lé qui fait souffler dans la masse l'air de sujets moraux qui, comme des drones dans le ciel où brillerait la justice, défendent chacun l'universelle dignité de l'homme. Massification universelle de la loi, viralité de l'homme européen, dont nombre d'hommes durant au moins cinq siècles ont pu mesurer qu'il était le virus irrésistible et inéluctable contre lequel même s'enfermer était illusoire puisqu'il était précisément la puissance de l'universalité, invoquée par Fichte, à abolir les particularités des savoirs, des croyances, des habitudes, et des langues. La viralité européenne, colonialisme impérial, aura été l'essence de l'universel, la puissance de la *causa sui* à la fois pouvoir et passivité, qui automatise sa virulence dans cette métalangue qu'est l'empire technique de l'Europe. La viralité ne jouerait-elle pas dans la puissance de l'universel à s'universaliser et à ne consentir aucune protection en illimitant ses propres limites ? Puissance de l'incarnation que nomme le *Geschlecht*, tout à la fois différence sexuelle, reproduction, génération, souche, race, communauté, puissance de l'alliance, le cercle du *Bund*, qui est la foi performative en la possibilité de convertir la monnaie particulière de la communauté qui entend l'appel spirituel de la liberté en une seule humanité universelle et du même mouvement de conversion fonde l'autorité souveraine de la communauté qui s'étend ainsi à l'univers cosmopolites de sa loi sur l'ensemble de cette humanité qui est rassemblée dans une histoire globale du progrès. Le quatrième discours à la nation allemande de Fichte aura dégagé les fondements de la virulence coloniale européenne, le projet de la projection virale de l'Europe et la viralité spirituelle de ce destin qui accomplirait l'universelle conversion chrétienne des hommes à l'humanité sauvée, immunisée par la contamination que lui aura imposé le virus de l'Esprit, en mettant en oeuvre le Schibboleth de la loi, le *logos*, la machinerie de l'incarnation qui particularise le dieu universel pour universaliser les particularismes des corps autrement éparpillés sans cette unité unifiante, qu'est la mort destinée à la résurrection, sans l'un du monothéisme européen.

Nous sommes saisis du virus que le remords de l'Europe, mordue en retour par son propre virus, s'avoue. Elle confesse que ce virus, celui de la globalisation du monde, elle l'a lancée depuis longtemps. Il revient vieilli, défiguré par le succès de la civilisation, et presque méconnaissable, comme Ulysse, reprendre son existence comme si de rien n'était, comme s'il n'avait pas voyagé

jusque peut-être même en Chine. Le virus qui semble nouveau est au moins aussi vieux que l'Europe qui se sait être cette auto-institution politico-morale s'universalisant. Elle aura envoyé son virus jusqu'en Chine, révolutionnant la culture, se reproduisant en utilisant les ressources des confins renommés et baptisés d'un geste éminemment politique : cultures, civilisations. L'Europe se sera contée au moins mille et une fois les récits de son exploration méthodique rassemblant les confins d'un univers pour en développer l'universalité de sa civilisation. Le lancer européen dans les confins, le projet européen se sera pendu aux arbres en chemin, se sera dispersé dans les fins croisées, jusqu'à se fondre dans tous les confins qui assument désormais les fins de l'Europe, économiques, politiques, morales, scientifiques, tout l'humanisme européen sur tous ses modes. Le futur que la fin aura programmé, qu'elle aura rendu décidable semble s'être perdu dans sa lancée qui aura mécaniquement propagé ses aléas, puisque toute répétition finit par se saturer en une luxuriance de fins. La fin de l'Europe se sera disséminée en une multitude de fins dont elle n'aura pas soupçonné que leur unité tenait au miroitement théologico-politique du messianisme spirituel du concept. Les confins auront pulvérisé la fin qui aura fait l'unité de l'Europe, et avant tout, dans la fin, la mort qu'elle aura toujours supposée rassemblée avec elle-même, une comme la fin, principe secret automatisé dans la pratique, rassemblant une humanité unique, universelle, fin de toutes les fins capable d'unir tous les confins dans une temporalité extatique horizontale qui se périodise en une histoire totale de la fin de l'être-à-mort. La pulvérisation de la fin dans toutes ses fins qui ne se laissent plus rassembler aura aussi disséminé le virus qui nous intime de nous confiner dans la rétractation de l'immunité. Le confinement ne serait-il pas un euphémisme, et un symptôme à la fois, pour nommer plutôt la relégation, l'auto-incarcération qui ne préjuge pas de la perte de droits mais qui est prête à les abandonner au bannissement à travers tous les dispositifs techniques qui portent l'espoir d'un déconfinement ? Après avoir été relégués au musée du passé au moment de la énième guerre du golfe, la vieille Europe se relègue, s'isole dans ses cellules espérant qu'elles ne seront pas infectées. Disséminée dans les confins qui refluent sur elle, l'Europe se confine machinalement, se rétracte comme une sensitive, dans le confinement qui masque, tout en la masquant, que cette auto-relégation est la

réplique compulsive de l'enfermement autoritaire des Chinois par un système qui généralise le dispositif technico-moral de l'incarcération de populations entières hétérogènes à l'ordre d'intégration et d'homogénéisation. Le confinement masque les confins où, à la fois, la fin est disséminée et ne peut plus se ressembler avec elle-même et en même temps prolifère sous la forme, qui n'en est pas une, d'un auto-contrôle social, de la société comme puissance immanente de contrôle qui n'a plus besoin désormais d'Etat, ou de politique, au moment où celui-ci est censé le guérir sous quelque chêne immémorial où officie le mystère du chef héroïque fondateur d'avenir.

Nous sommes saisis d'un virus, encore une fois et toujours plus à l'avenir, saisis d'une fin, la mort, sans fin. La mort privée de politique et la politique privée de la mort qui en fait la fin. D'un geste théâtral, en nous confinant, nous espérons une fois encore en l'exemplarité de la mort de la victime pour rassembler une fin par l'unité de la mort. Mais peut-être devrions-nous entendre dans les confins où l'Europe se sera risquée, et dont elle ne sera sans doute pas revenue, Ulysse qu'aura emporté sa *métis*, qui aura quitté la Méditerranée et qui aura fait naufrage quelques soirs à la surface d'un océan quelconque. Océan noir. Il faudra entendre et attendre non pas l'unité rassemblée des fins, la mort comme la promesse qui ne ment pas sur l'avenant de l'avenir, mais la croisée des fins, la croisée des morts et des horizons, la disparition de la mort qui aura fait l'unité de l'Europe, le prince ou le maître de l'Europe, la mort de la mort, de la politique, de l'idéalité. Les confins auront aléatoirement reflué en confinant l'Europe. Le confinement aura aggravé la relégation de la politique en disséminant viralement les confins qui pulvérisent la totalité de la communauté politique en une pluralité impossible, la pulvérisation de l'être qu'implique qui confine l'un dans l'impossible non-être démuné de toute part, de la huitième hypothèse du malicieux *Parménide* de Platon. Le confinement aura fait lever l'espoir d'une restauration de l'unité de la fin dans la fatalité d'une mort qu'elle unifie. Mais il aura libéré la pluralité des confins dans l'espace de jeu du temps qui joue du loin et du proche sans qu'un retour à soi puisse se rapporter quoi que ce soit, sans qu'un possible vienne animer le soi désarticulé entre sa dispersion infinie et la pluralité de sa reproduction. L'éloignement des

confins reflue dans le sanctuaire du confinement qui sanctifie le corps vivant alvéolaire.

La circulation des confins et du confinement affecte toute frontière, les rivages inhospitaliers où échouent tous les trafics, toute limite qui fonde à sa bordure tous les appropriations. On est tenté de rapatrier la mort, dont l'exportation dans les confins a fait prospérer la démocratie, pour restaurer la politique qui ne régule plus son auto-immunité. L'enchevêtrement des fins confinées avec le virus affecte la duplicité de la mort, mort effective de la charogne et agonie promise à la sépulture. Nous ne pouvons plus dès lors nous libérer de la mort parce que la mort ne rassemble plus en soi son équivoque. Le corps est à la fois pulvérisé sans fin dans tous ses branchements, et confiné dans ce vivant qu'envahit le dispositif viral de la médecine au-delà de tout contrôle institutionnel. On a accepté avec une facilité déconcertante un abandon des libertés, plus radical encore que face au terrorisme, précédent inquiétant. Le confinement n'est peut-être pas un état d'exception, qui relève encore de la définition de la politique, mais un état de siège, en même temps que se diffuse une sorte de drôle de guerre avec la Chine. Il ne s'agit pas de provoquer simplement la peur qui permettrait encore de gouverner en identifiant un ennemi, mais on intensifie la panique qui prend tout ensemble la société et l'Etat qui ne se laissent plus distinguer. On est pris par le virus de la panique face à un ennemi qui n'en est pas un, à une menace dont on ne connaît ni tous les passages ni tous les effets, un ennemi dont l'ubiquité retourne l'immunité, dont la régulation assurait la machinerie politique, en une auto-destruction dont l'état de siège, qui n'est que l'aveu d'une pure impuissance, est le symptôme le plus évident. La panique aura eu raison de la vulnérabilité qui permettait à la politique d'entretenir l'immunité parce qu'elle lui désignait par avance la victime dont la viralité menaçait la communauté. Panique, drôle de guerre, menace dont l'ubiquité, plus terrible que le terrorisme, retourne la puissance de la politique à accorder l'immunité en l'impuissance de l'auto-immunité. La panique efface la vulnérabilité, le corps vulnérable, dans le vivant assiégé, ni vulnérable ni invulnérable, mais impuissant, démuné des promesses qui ouvrent l'avenir à la vie.

GLOBAL CRISIS AND GLOBAL JUSTICE: SOME THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Yazid Said

On 1 April of this year, the philosopher John Gray wrote in the *New Statesman* that the current health crisis will be a “turning point in history.”¹ He went on to diagnose how “the virus has exposed fatal weaknesses in the economic systems that was patched up after the 2008 financial crisis.” We can’t have just one country like China producing all the protective equipment we need anymore. Cheap air travel has been instrumental in the spread of the virus. Chinese wet markets may have to be reconsidered. “Liberal Capitalism is bust,” he added. Therefore, the fall of what he calls “hyper-globalisation” is clear; the future is also clear as far as he can predict: “when the economy restarts, it will be in a world where governments act to curb the global market.” But the economically liberal eye in the world does not seem to want to see the effect of this crisis. The liberal, he reminded us, aims at raising material living standards instead of fostering community cohesion and asking questions about social and political legitimacy.

However, the economy remains important. Given that the crisis has triggered questions about both livelihoods and lives, Gray notes that talking about the economy means discussing livelihoods. Being concerned about lives necessitates aiming for some kind of economic growth as well. On the other hand, indefinite growth will have to be curbed for its detrimental effects on the environment and the lessons arising from this crisis with

1 <https://www.newstatesman.com/international/2020/04/why-crisis-turning-point-history> (last accessed on 16 May 2020).

regard to the long-term protection of societies. If the protection of citizens overrides economic growth, he concludes, both democratic and authoritarian states, will have to “meet this Hobbesian test” or “will fail.”

Gray continues to outline his thought about the effects of the crisis on world geo-politics as well. Yet, what this interesting passionate analysis does not do is present a judgement on what would be considered “healthy” action in the circumstances. Rational philosophical argument alone about the state of the world does not address what Gray’s important reading sees. In another argument that is no less passionate and to a certain extent anxious about the current situation, James Noyes and Adrian Pabst share Gray’s diagnosis of the limitations of our liberal economic and political models but insist that “resilience against the pandemics of the future” lies in “strengthening the civil bonds,”² insofar as “the relations that make us human also nurture our resilience.”

What the current pandemic has revealed, therefore, is that our human mind and our human will cannot be independent of the material world in such a way that mind and will dictate their needs upon the world in which we live. We are part of a web of relationships. What are the relations that make us human? Like John Gray, Noyes and Pabst explain that it cannot be the political and economic model, where “profit is privatised, debt is nationalised, and risk is socialized.” Unlike Gray, they point to practical actions concerned with the health and wellbeing of civic society. They also point out that the UK government “had already provided a blueprint for this...in its Civil Society Strategy of 2018,” which they are concerned might be sidestepped.

We do have to reconsider, it seems, habits of traditional social cohesion, around our various communities, our families, and our understanding of ourselves as part of these larger social units. Such actions are based on habits that are not dependent on individual reasoning by means of a reductive cost-effective analysis that might interest those worried about economic realities alone. These discussions are important as we contemplate the future in the light of the present. Gray’s article lays bare the alarming philosophical foundations of our current reductive habits. Noyes’ and Pabst’s article adds the urgent need for a different

2 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2020/03/only-lasting-antidote-pandemics-stronger-civic-society> (last accessed on 17 May 2020).

kind of foundation that helps us organize our world. In Noyes' and Pabst's words, we need to rediscover the meaning of "the human and natural substance of society." If we are to find any realism in this renewal, we need more than an abstract understanding of individual reason or will, as the neutral definition of modernity tends to understand such terms.

Does the interest to learn from traditional habits of cohesion presume a need for religiously informed policy? Can religious faith inform these debates? John Gray is a type of mystical atheist who proposes that "a godless world is as mysterious as one suffused with divinity, and the difference between the two may be less than you think."³ He may not be too positive about what Christianity has to offer, since he believes that "modern liberalism," of which he is critical, is "a late flower of Jewish and Christian religion."⁴ James Noyes and Adrian Pabst, on the other hand, are Christian thinkers, who regard the answer to the current crisis as mainly a question of justice for the human and the non-human world. They diagnose the pressing problems facing the contemporary political system and propose the need for actual choices British society has to make; in their other works, it is clear that this is important if we are to have a human future compatible with the character of God as perceived in Christian terms.⁵

Pabst has argued in his co-authored book with John Milbank, *The Politics of Virtue*, that the alternative to the liberal anthropology of our times,

is the specifically Christian idea of the uniqueness and universal value of the person (not an individual, atomic example of a general norm) inherently realised through constitutive relations to other persons and to things through a dynamic, essence-exceeding participation in an infinite, ordered and transcendent *Logos*.⁶

Theology appears to be an important foundation for the discussion. This view of the shape and purpose of society seems to reflect Eastern Christian theology of creation, where every existent being is a *logos* that reflects the divine *Logos* by whom all things

3 John Gray, *Seven Types of Atheism*. Allen Lane, Milton Keynes, 2018, p. 158.

4 Ibid, p. 1.

5 John Milbank and Adrian Pabst, *The Politics of Virtue: Post-Liberalism and the Human Future*. Rowman and Littlefield, London, 2016, p. 3.

6 Ibid.

come to be as the first chapter of John's Gospel spells out.⁷ The main point in this view is that everything in the world is gift, which we as human beings are called to name in order to reflect their right order. To refuse to respond to this calling by taking the consumer individualist attitude of modern economics that has helped Corona virus spread is in fact the very meaning of Original Sin.⁸

Can one turn this into concrete policies? This is a tricky business for two reasons. First, various people might think that their religious tradition offers the best possible scenario for weathering a pandemic crisis such as this one. But, if this is the case, it risks reducing "religion" to a "theory" with a function, just as various psychologists have suggested "religion" to be. Once you have explained the "theory" and its function, then you have explained God's will too. Why not choose something else then? Second, Christians, like Muslims and others in their history, have behaved as though they were the owners of a system they alone are capable of managing. Human beings have always been good at using God to support managing their ideologies, especially at times of crisis. Such ideologies are often exclusive in their interest – whether liberal, conservative or nationalist. Part of the trouble of a religious intervention has been that religious people can be defensive and therefore anxious about their ideas. They don't want their tradition to be "corrupted" but nonetheless manage to corrupt it themselves by being protectionist about it.

The current pandemic should at least force us, including the religious "us," to rediscover silence. Here we are faced with death – the death of all our "systems." Our anxieties about our religious conservatism are as challenged as our liberal assumptions are. This does not mean that we sit unable to articulate any ideas about God, in the way that John Gray's mystical atheism might direct us. It means rather drawing on that dimension of the faith that challenges our claims to have arrived at the final stage of illumination or learning. If religious faith has anything to say to the current situation, it has to begin with the call to a common repent-

7 E. Theokritof, "Embodied Word and New Creation," in J. Behr, A. Louth, D. Conomos, (eds): *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West*. New York, 2003.

8 Alexander Schmemmann, *Of Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism*. New York, 1974, p. 96.

ance and common self-reflection that allows words to be stripped of self-made fantasies.

This theme is an important common feature in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thought across the centuries. When the Lutheran martyr of the twentieth century Dietrich Bonhoeffer was in prison under the Nazis and facing death, he wrote a letter to his godson on the occasion of his baptism in 1944. He reminds his godson of how our use of religious words has become so common that we have forgotten their real meaning. Therefore, Bonhoeffer's advice to him was to prepare for the "silence of prayer and righteous action among humanity," hoping again that we will be able to use our words anew in order to change the world.⁹ This was also the emphasis of the Church Fathers' so-called "negative theology": All we know about God is not what God can be but what God cannot be. This warning against possible corruption of our religious language is the most famous command of the Hebrew Bible. It is also a prevalent strategy in the text of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111). In his *al-Maqsad al-Asna*, Ghazali says that God is called king in a way no temporal ruler could ever lay claim to be.¹⁰ In his *Ihya ulum al-din*, Ghazali quotes a saying attributed to Abu Bakr: "God did not make a way for men to know him except through 'infirmity' to attain knowledge of him."¹¹

For the liberal capitalist, this experience of the inability to use clear language that makes sense in the face of death and a crisis such as this one appears when both human beings as well as other ideas we took for granted prove hard to control. Theories about "justice" or "freedom" and "rights" may fall off before the destructiveness that is to be seen all around. There is a breakdown of the order that we have mapped out. For the religious person a similar experience might arise around all the system of religious practice and order or law. Everything is suspended. For some religious believers, this experience can still be explained in religious terms: God is angry. In our Secular Age, it is often expressed in terms of the lack of any meaning behind religion. It is more a reflection of the arbitrary nature of the world.

9 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: The Enlarged Edition*. London 1971, pp. 294-300.

10 *Maqsad*, p. 28.

11 *Ihya* I: 89.

In the context of academic and religious exchange of perspectives such as for this conference, it is important to bring to the surface some of our varied doctrinal foundations that shape the kind of communities we envisage. From the perspective of Christian theology, we have before us a different possible way of responding to the current crisis when the total transcendence of God is revealed at a moment of death itself. Christian theology is primarily focused on events in history rather than on texts alone. Therefore, the Christian definition of community is also developed in light of the historical events surrounding the life of Jesus. Jesus' intimacy with God leads him not to worldly successes but to facing the truth of the world's unfaithfulness in his death. In that moment of desertion, God is revealed. "My God my God why hast thou forsaken me" becomes the moment where God is in fact to be found. To use Rowan Williams' words, "God transcends his transcendence."¹² So, facing the collapse of our "systems," and all the schemes that we might have devised around us does not mean the breaking of our communion with God, however tempting it might feel like it.

New Testament research about the judicial execution of Jesus of Nazareth reflects a context in which the Judeans and the Romans were afraid of each other and were concerned that there would be an explosion of violence that would be destructive for all.¹³ The leaders looked for ways to avoid this and Jesus would have been a perfect scapegoat; they eliminated one common enemy. This strategy is not far, sadly, from our modern liberal capitalist ways of living as described by both articles cited at the beginning. We manage our fears with short-term solutions and "toleration" of others at best. The questions raised by James Noyes and Adrian Pabst above suggest that this has made no real difference in the world today. The failure of human beings to accept their responsibility in naming and shaping the created world in relationship to God's image and *Logos*, seen above as the very definition of Original Sin in Eastern Orthodoxy, comes to a point of crisis in the death of Jesus of Nazareth. His cross shows our inability to accept truth when it appears among us, our fear and anxiety in facing it. "He died because of our sin" is literally the sin of refusing his goodness and putting him to death.

12 Rowan Williams, *Open to Judgment*, p. 52.

13 Cf. Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology*.

The significance, therefore, of the cross of Christ is that it becomes the symbol where the contradiction of God's faithfulness and human unfaithfulness meet. Though our refusal is judged in Jesus' death, it is also reversed in his God-sized Resurrection, showing how God remains faithful to humanity. If the Christian community is born out of the shocking fact that this Jesus is risen, not to revenge his killers but to be their hope, changing the terms of reference, and healing our unreasonable hearts in that divine act, then this suggests that there is a different way of doing business together. The story of Jesus' death and resurrection is, therefore, a condemnation of both politics and religion; but it also defines the political mission of the Christian community – to challenge and help transform both politics and "religion."

The historic pessimism of Christian thought with regard to political power defined the first three centuries of Christianity and remained formative of later Christian thought, although Christians as noted earlier have often got themselves intertwined with political power. This pessimism is implicitly based on acknowledging that there is a deadly deficit of truthfulness about us human beings. Islamic theology does not deny this deficit as such. But it does suggest that God may forgive us with an immediate word (Q. 2: 37). In Christian thought, it does not matter if God can say "never mind." The problem is not with God. It is with our human predicament. We can't be changed simply because of a perceived word. As St. Anselm of Canterbury famously argued, we, by ourselves, are unable to live a life that truly reflects back to God his own glory and image. Our health rather depends on a divine action that is not just morally right, but precious, reflecting divine freedom and gift.¹⁴

Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, has in various contexts reflected on the implications of this understanding of divine freedom and gift for the shaping of a community that embodies what Noyes and Pabst called a strong civic society. He resorts to the language developed by St. Paul of the Body of Christ as the place where all are given gifts by the Spirit of God to share with the entire community. This becomes the basis of "a politics, national and international, of local co-opera-

14 Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo*.

tion and ‘mutualism’, rooted in a sense of political virtue and appealing to human empathy.”¹⁵

Much can be further developed in this regard. For lack of space and time, and in conclusion, we may have here three central points of a theological Christian contribution to the debate, some of which will require further reflection when one has time:

First, religious faith depends on the action of God who is faithful to his promise. This is a central theme in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The idea is also present in a different way in Islam. This means we, as created human beings, need to keep promise in all that we do, in a way that is faithful to God and one another. This is a bedrock of a strong civic society.

Second, we are rediscovering from the virus crisis again that we are part of the created order. We cannot be wholly in control of our world, though the Christian vision gives us gifts to name and order the world in relationship to God’s *Logos*. To have faith means to have an awareness of our createdness and therefore of our limitations, without fantasies of being self-made.

Third, political “distancing” between parties, communities, and nations may have been in fact the norm thus far. There are deep chasms of separation between those who have the resources to manage their lives with a degree of freedom and control and those who don’t. Being part of the creation brings knowledge of our common destiny and predicament. The vision of St. Paul, as explained by Rowan Williams, of an ideal human community, in which the welfare of each and the giftedness of every person are inseparable, becomes a relevant corrective. What is good for human beings in the UK can’t be different from what is good for those living in Africa or China. The good of the one depends on the good of all others; for as the gospel message states, “God so loved the world,” not one nation over the others. Despite Gray’s warning that “localism” may grow at such a time as the present, Rowan Williams reminded us last week that:

One thing we should have worked out in the light of the crisis in our tightly interconnected and mobile world, no problem is only local. Disaster and disruption anywhere become a problem on our doorsteps. As many have said, our best hope as a global community to avoid another lethal pandemic, perhaps even worse than

15 Rowan Williams, *Faith in the Public Square*, p. 265

this one, is to urge the creation of effective health care in every country and rapid efficient international vehicles for response to medical emergencies.¹⁶

So, trustworthiness, patience, and humility are the virtues that can show the type of happiness and health that is spiritual and relational rather than “legalistic”; these go above and beyond capitalism, socialism, and all the other secular “isms” of political division; as such, they may function in the face of a pandemic as the sure foundation of a strong civic society.

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ON LISTENING: HEARING GOD'S VOICE IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING

Mohammed Rustom

Nearly a decade ago, I delivered a lecture which was part of a monthly philosophy colloquium series hosted by the philosophy department at my University. Unlike most of if not every other paper delivered in the series, my topic had to do with a non-European philosophical tradition—Islamic philosophy. The title of the lecture was on death and dreaming in Islamic philosophy, and this I suspect was the reason so many people had attended, professors and students alike. After all, we all dream, and we all experience death in one way or another, so the title would quite naturally speak to diverse kinds of people.

One of the main points made in the paper was that we cannot view Islamic philosophy as simply an extension of the Western philosophical tradition. We have to see it on its own terms, and in conversation not just with Late Antiquity, but also as representative of a philosophical tradition that addresses its own theoretical problems through its own perspectives and worldviews. My task would have been made a lot easier if Peter Adamson's *Philosophy in the Islamic World*¹ had been published at that time. At any rate, I simply stated the position just mentioned as I moved along in the lecture.

By the end of the talk, I was surprised to see how many people in the audience, including the colloquium organizers, were pleased and perhaps even relieved to hear of something so familiar and yet so different. Most of the questions and comments were well thought-out and incisive. But then a philosophy professor put up his hand and proceeded with voicing his “main objection”

1 *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A History of Philosophy without any Gaps, Volume 3* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

to the points presented: “You said that for the Islamic philosophers, God is a so-called ‘best of plotters.’ But ‘plotting’ implies deceit and deception, and these can hardly be qualities of a benevolent and omniscient God. If God plots, then He schemes, and if He schemes, then this implies some kind of badness, which means He cannot be God.”

Flabbergasted, I offered the following response: “Firstly, it is not the Muslim philosophers who call God ‘the best of plotters.’ That phrase goes back to the Quran 3:54 and 8:30, which say that God is *khayr al-makirin*. It is true that plotting implies some kind of scheming, but what is wrong with that? In the Quran, God’s scheming is juxtaposed with human scheming, which is of course fraught with folly.

I then presented a proposition and an example, both of which most people can understand and perhaps with which they can even identify. The proposition: “plotting” can be motivated by love and a fundamental care for people. The example: in order to make it on time for the lecture, I literally had to come up with a plot with my wife of how we would divert our one year-old son’s attention to another part of the house in order for me to make my escape. Simply making the attempt to walk out of the house was not an option, since it would have saddened the child, which would have meant I had to console him, which would in turn have meant I would likely be late for the lecture. Or, worse, I would have had to drive faster than usual to work, putting myself and others in danger on the road. I continued: “So, you can see how ‘plotting’ need not always be ‘evil’ and ‘bad’ even on the human scale; this applies, *a fortiori*, on the Divine scale.”

My interlocutor was silenced. A whole other way of thinking about God had been presented to him through the example of human “plotting,” and one which I hope would have challenged the very categories with which he would henceforth approach issues in the so-called discipline of “the philosophy of religion.” Then I concluded: “Allow me to zero in on your question: saying that God ‘plots’ or ‘schemes’ may be troublesome for a certain kind of thinker whose focus is traditional Western ‘philosophy of religion,’ which has always been dictated by Christian and largely Eurocentric problem sets and categories (i.e. analytic philosophy). If we look outside of that perspective, we will see that, apart from one particular worldview, other philosophical worldviews,

like the Islamic, have their own ways of conceiving of their indigenous problems. And if God's plotting means something in that worldview, which it certainly does, then let it stand on its own and let us hear what Muslims have to say about it. We can then evaluate the position's coherence, value, and the like."

Divine Silence?

Had another book been published at that time, namely Timothy Knepper's *The Ends of Philosophy of Religion*,² I would have certainly drawn my questioner's attention to it. In this work, Knepper argues that the so-called discipline of the philosophy of religion has to move far beyond the traditional confines and issues that have animated this tradition in the modern Western academy. It is a much more global phenomenon, and this because other major philosophical and religious traditions have also been concerned with what we would call the "philosophy of religion." It is just that the problems posed by these other traditions' worldviews have often been quite different from, but no less important than, the fundamental philosophical and religious problems identified by Christianity. Indeed, viewing philosophy of religion from a global perspective can, at a minimum, help enliven and reshape the narrow and ill-defined but still quite dominant field of the "philosophy of religion."

One issue that can fall within the purview of the philosophy of religion on the one hand, and the domain of theology on the other, is that of the "silence of God." This can refer to God's being "silent" today as juxtaposed to His having spoken at some point in the past. Framed in context, this has to do with the manner in which God spoke to Jews and Christians in the past, but does not appear to do so anymore, at least not through the medium of revelation.

Related to the Judeo-Christian problem of God no longer communicating to human beings is the more universal fact of God's perceived silence in the face of human suffering. For many theologians today, this does not mean that God is somehow unaware of or oblivious to the plight of humans. Rather, in spite of His omniscience and benevolence, God seems to allow certain

2 *The Ends of Philosophy of Religion: Terminus and Telos* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

kinds of wrongs to happen to people. Making sense of why this is the case and what this might mean in the long run all pertain to reflections on what can perhaps be referred to as “silence of God theology.”

One may argue that silence of God theology is marked by a fundamental humility, since believers can accept the fact of human suffering and the very real possibility that God is not doing something about this suffering *in real time*, but that there is a profound wisdom behind this divine silence which will be made known at some point in the future, if not in the Afterlife. Some who delve into this question are certainly led to opposing conclusions: God is more like a clock maker as posited by Deism rather than being a real actor in and through human affairs; or, since there is no God, speaking of the silence of God is tantamount to saying that if there were a God, there would not be human suffering, especially on such grandiose scales as we have seen over the past century.

Taking Knepper’s insights on the importance of conceiving of the philosophy of religion through a global lens, what kind of problem, if at all, is the so-called silence of God in the Islamic metaphysical universe? As William Chittick puts it, if the Islamic metaphysicians of the past had been presented with this idea, their response would likely have been, “Try listening for once.”³ After all, one of God’s fundamental attributes in Islamic thought is that of “speech” (*kalam*). God is thus the Speaking, which is taken to mean that God speaks eternally, without ceasing speech at any point. The great thinkers of the Islamic tradition have delved deeply into what this divine speech entails, and how it relates to God’s self-reflexivity and to the created order.

I will not attempt to engage these points here since they would take us too far afield. What it is essential to keep in mind is that in Islamic metaphysics God’s being a speaking agent entails a cosmic picture in which all things are not only addressees of divine speech but themselves acts and embodiments of this speech. That is to say that God’s speech in Islamic metaphysics has a self-reflexive aspect as well as a generative or ontologically productive aspect. For the Muslim sages in particular, all things in the cosmic order form so many individual parts of God’s speech.

3 “The Sound of Silence”: <https://renovatio.zaytuna.edu/article/the-sound-of-silence> (accessed February 13th, 2020).

They each arise within the divine creative breath (*nafas*) that brought the cosmos into existence. Or, framed differently, we can say that each thing in the cosmos constitutes a reverberation of the divine command (*amr*) which itself brought the cosmos into being. Thus, human beings are themselves living proof that God is always speaking, since they exist as so many words which collectively account for one aspect of God's speech.⁴

God is therefore never silent, cosmologically speaking. Nor is He silent, anthropologically speaking. But what about the actual problem of God's seeming silence in the face of human suffering? In order to do justice to this problem, some comments are in order concerning the existence of "evil."

Evil

The attempt to reconcile divine goodness with the existence of evil in the world is known as the problem of "theodicy," a term which ultimately goes back to Leibniz. Well before him, however, the basic issue fundamental to theodicy was dealt with in many different civilizations and in a variety of ways. In the Islamic tradition, one of the earliest attempts at presenting a robust defence of divine goodness in the face of evil is to be found in the writings of Avicenna, which had a long life in the Islamic intellectual tradition. The basic features of his defence of divine goodness take us to the question of the presence of evil in the world. By "evil" is meant anything that is bad, and which displays an absence, to some degree, of what is good.

The answer to the question, "does evil exist?", is given in the affirmative. It is clear that all kinds of evils exist in the cosmos, both on grandiose and miniscule scales. Avicenna distinguishes between accidental and essential evils in the *Metaphysics* section of his *Book of Healing*.⁵ Accidental evils arise as a natural consequence of the created order. That is to say that bad things occur in the world by virtue of the world being what it is.

On an elemental level, this means things like fire, which contain much benefit for people by virtue of their intrinsic properties,

4 This and several related points are masterfully presented in Chittick, "The Sound of Silence."

5 *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), IX.6.

can and do exercise much harm. Fire can thus warm a home but can also burn a person. If fire could not warm a home, it could not burn a person. But by force of nature, it will necessarily do both. Essential evils are rather different. They amount to a thing's not being realized in a particular substrate which by nature ought to have that thing in question realized in it. Avicenna gives us the well-known case of blindness. It is an instance of essential evil because it entails the lack or privation of sight in a receptacle—the ocular faculty—which itself exists in order for the end of sight to be realized with in.

“Evils” are therefore an inherent feature of our universe. Asking why evil exists if God is all-good is tantamount to asking why the world exists if God is all-good. Given what the world and the order of nature are, there will naturally be all kinds of disparities, variations, and even evils amongst the things in them, which is to say nothing of human freedom, which itself is the cause of much evil in the world. To seek a world where such features are not present is to ask for another kind of world than the present one, and if we could do that, then the very question of theodicy—which likely only has meaning in our current cosmic configuration—would be meaningless.⁶

Having come away with a basic picture of how the Islamic metaphysical tradition *thinks* about the presence of evils in the world, we can now turn our attention to how the tradition *deals* with them, practically speaking.

Human Silence

Since it has already been established that, from an Islamic metaphysical perspective, God is never silent, and that evils are a real and necessary feature of the cosmic order, what can be said about human suffering and the divine response to it? In other words, when humans suffer, especially in the worst of possible ways, where is God's voice amid all of it? Part of the problem, as I see it, with speaking of the so-called “silence” of God is that it assumes that the presence and even persistence of human suffering *require* God to respond *in a certain way* and perhaps even *at*

6 For an approach to evil that emphasizes its illusory (but not unreal) nature, see the penetrating remarks in Ali Lakhani, “Editorial: The Problem of Evil,” *Sacred Web* 18 (2006): 7–12.

a certain time. This is quite a natural human tendency, evinced by both the Bible (i.e. Job 30:20, Psalms 22:1-2) and the Quran (2:214).

But in a person's weakest and darkest moments, does God really abandon him, or is something else at work? Does He not always respond, even if we do not "hear" Him? One can do no better here than call to mind the beloved twentieth century poem, *Footprints*: during our most downtrodden and awful times, the poem teaches us, we drag ourselves along thinking that we are alone in suffering our plight only to realize that it was God who was carrying us all the while.

This also calls to mind a story in Jalal al-Din Rumi's famous *Masnawi*. He tells a tale of a man who calls out to God in earnest all night in prayer. But the man hears no divine response. It is then that Satan comes upon the scene and tries to convince the dejected person that there is no God to hear him, and that he should thus give up hope in the divine all together. At this point, the broken-hearted servant falls asleep and has a dream in which he comes to learn that God had in fact been answering his call all along:

The fear and love you express are what tie you to My bounty—

Under every "O Lord!" from you are many *labbayks* from Me.⁷

"*Labbayk*" or "Here I am!" is the well-known phrase that Muslims utter during the rites of the pilgrimage to Mecca. For Rumi, it is not man who says "Here I am!" Rather, it is God who says it to man, and this not only in some circumstances but always and forever. In other words, God's presence and aid are always there, however imperceptible they may be to our limited human understanding and experience of the world. On a more subtle level, Rumi is also driving home the point that our very calling out to God is itself the divine response to our prayers.

For the Muslim metaphysicians, being able to hear God's call "Here I am!" goes back to the fundamental importance of cultivating the right kind of hearing. How can this be done? The answer lies in *human silence*. By bringing the soul to rest and eliminating what the Islamic psychologists call "internal chatter" (*hadith al-nafs*), our souls become more prone to attentively hear-

7 Rumi, *Masnawi-yi ma'navi*, ed. and trans. R. A. Nicholson as *The Mathnawi of Jalal'uddin Rumi* (London: Luzac 1925–1940), book 3, line 197 (the translation is my own).

ing God's voice within us. In our world, filled as it is with all kinds of cacophonous sounds and alarming images, cultivating this kind of inwardness is difficult indeed. But the more engrossed we remain in these sounds and images, the less will we be able to hear God's voice and see His signs.

Teaching ourselves to be silent not only takes away the internal noises within; it also can drown out the noises without, one of which are our own voices. This is not to say that one should be silent in the world, or in the face of oppression and the like. Rather, the silence in question is an attitude of the soul: it is something of a fundamental spiritual orientation in the world that allows man's own "voice" to recede to the background. By becoming silent in this way, man therefore ceases to be deaf to God's eternal audition.

Hearing God's voice in the face of terrible suffering will certainly not help explain the suffering away or somehow relativize or trivialize it. By the same token, cultivating the ability to hear God's voice is not preconditioned on man's being able to figure out the *why* and the *how* of suffering. What is certain is that for those not spiritually tone-deaf to God's speech, the very sound of the divine voice amidst all of the pain in the world can serve as a soothing balm for the soul, healing even the deepest of wounds.

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PANDEMIC MISFORTUNE AS OPPORTUNITY FOR REFORM OF BEING

Adis Lukač

Given God's word that everything moves to its own time-frame, one might conclude that whatsoever moves, and everything moves, must inevitably undergo change that bears witness against the doubters, who rely on the continuity of the unchanging and so bear witness against themselves, because they themselves also change. The period of the pandemic has called forth quaking and change that have shaken the prevailing image of the world, built as it is of puzzles, to its foundations. This quaking has put us in a position to sort those puzzles into a new order in the hope of gaining a better world image.

A tsunami of information is changing the shores of thought on a daily basis, now keeping pace with the pandemic, affecting our human right to hope for a better tomorrow. As the recipients of such information, human beings are becoming increasingly aware of lacking the necessary capacities to separate important from unimportant news and so avoid becoming too easily entangled in a net of hysteria, uncertainty, fear, and all the rest. Changes are needed here too: in our approach to and analysis of information on the online platforms that have taken over the dominant role in communication and in this time of pandemic form almost our only means of interpersonal contact.

Observing and experiencing the timbre of the times, can we avoid asking not whether but how and what change is coming? We already know there will be changes across society on the global level, as well as changes on the local level that will be more visible because they affect our everyday life. The most flex-

ible link in any crisis situation is politics, which has a chameleon-like ability to self-transform and so preserve its essence in social battle. One of the cogs that power society in all its aspects, it must be given space vis-à-vis culture and economics, as a factor of influence.

One often hears talk of *re-balancing the budget* and of taking some or even all the funding for culture away. Memory-sparks recall Churchill's questioning response to a proposal to transfer funds from culture to the war effort, "Then, what would we be fighting for?" I do hope there will be no "remake" of this issue. The city of Sarajevo reminds one of a well, decorated in mosaic, whose clean water reflects the stained glass of the dome. The scene derives its richness from the interaction of the visible mosaic shapes, the stained glass reflections, and the reflection of the person leaning over the well, with an important differentiating factor being whether it is their purpose to stir up the water or to remove dirt from the surface.

Such a well derives its value from many sources. It requires safekeeping, and, fortunately, through even the toughest of times, when many have stirred up the water, the one constant has been that the well has been kept safe and its keeper's strength preserved. A period of pandemic offers an opportunity to reveal, confess and at least attempt to remove weaknesses, so as to repair the microworld of the individual. By interconnecting the better microworlds, change on the local level can be something in which human beings glimpse a chance for good. Unlike movement, drowsiness of being can induce a state of absolute lethargy which does not require a general state of distress, like our pandemic, to triumph, as it is like a weed that spreads to all the fields, locking the individual into a state of mind that makes change impossible to reach.

In post-pandemic times, we have no option on either the global or the local level but to adapt to change. The closed galleries, museums, theatres and other institutions of culture have not hindered artists who have spent the pandemic more or less maximising their use of online platforms so as not to interrupt the continuity of creative expression, and we are therefore witnesses to a number of online exhibitions, plays, performances, concerts and so on. Of course, multimedia approaches and online access, in our case to artistic expression, appeared much earlier, and at

times we seem to have all passed through an overture, unconsciously preparing for a scenario like the pandemic that has embraced the whole world.

As an artist I can vouch for art's possessing a strength to awaken us, direct us towards the better. Perhaps the best definition is Andrei Tarkovsky's, "The allotted function of art is not, as is often assumed, to put across ideas, to propagate thoughts, to serve as an example. The aim of art is to prepare a person for death, to plough and harrow his soul, rendering it capable of turning to good." Political and economic whims will be fulfilled as well as basic human needs. What must be preserved is the spiritual dimension of being. Consumerism has turned man into a slave to the material, which he either does not need or takes too much of, so the pandemic, that has caused the entire world to pause for a little while, may perhaps be considered a warning.

Cleansing oneself, one's relations with others, towards nature, to one's homeland and so on will certainly promote balance between the material and spiritual, so obviously out of kilter, and in that case the impact of the global changes announced may be eased. Our hunger for the material sometimes casts a shadow over the spirit of Sarajevo and a sated belly can weaken the senses that pick up the scents of the city, a symphony of the muezzin's call and church bells, an inspiration that flows through the city, until it finds at least a little space in someone's breast to crawl into...

I am aware that I am not a politician or an economist, but as an artist in this time of pandemic I have taken up this topic as I would a piece of clay, and, rolling it in my hands, I observe and know that by changing its form I will at least try for a shape that may satisfy me in the end. Change, reassessment, and the search for significance are essential to society if we are to arrive at the understanding that meaning may be found in good and bad fortune alike and so learn our lesson.

Eyes become accustomed to blurred windowpanes,
assume that is what life behind the glass is like.
Breaking the window may surprise the eyes
into seeing that's not what the world is like.

CRACKS IN THE COSMODICY: CORONAVIRUS, LISBON, AND THE SUBLIME AS SEEN FROM SARAJEVO

Desmond Maurer

The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me.
Pascal, *Pensées*, 206

Plague is nothing new to human history. What is new is the simultaneous expectation of immunity¹ and the panicky realisation that this expectation is dangerously unfounded in anything but our hubris. The hubris lies in our fundamental assumption that absolute control, rather than damage limitation, remains not merely possible but our best course, even a form of categorical imperative, because it is the quintessence of our autonomy. It coexists with the suspicion that this autonomy is an illusion and that the plague is not merely a blow from outside, but the expression of an ultimately heteronomous position – the reality that we are subject to external determination, and that this determination may actually be by nothing, by chance, and so by chaos, that the principle of our existence is a form of crumbling towards the entropy-inducing Abyss.²

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- 1 Or, if not that, then that plague can be beaten, that it will not ultimately win, that there will be no inevitable mourning of the dead followed by equally inevitable moving on along the cycle of life-and-death.
 - 2 Anticipating our discussion below, we may call this the contemporary Fall from the Sublime towards Horror. Our residual negentropic urge seeks to re-establish some solid footing for ourselves and, given our current inability to imagine a principle beyond the Abyss, the only purchase available to us lies in ourselves as our own order-establishing principle before it. This is the bootstrapping of our own autonomy, its self-founding in the face of the Abyss. It is the ultra-Kantianism of the exhausted (the ultra-Montan-

One contemporary image of this complex is the zombie – initially a figure of Voodoo ritual related to the raising of the dead in heteronomous form (under the will of the priest or sorcerer, but mediated by occult forces), this has become in the modern imaginary an instance of plague, a contagion that, as Žižek points out, takes the form of a return of the repressed, the Uncanny or the Thing within the familiar, and so of the death drive turned against us and our civilisation.³

In the contemporary imagination, pandemic and plague thus almost always turn the afflicted into the Enemy Thing rather than victims and they do so by a colonisation of the mind that renders

ism of Protestantism). And we are exhausted precisely because we can no longer trust our Kantian autonomy – we suspect the categorical imperative of somehow being a trap, of being something that infects us with no more than the appearance of autonomy (Descartes' demon transformed into the very principle of the Cogito – I appear to think, so what exactly is the Thing that is through me? Not even Ryle's Ghost in the machine). In the end, the antinomy of autonomy is that autonomy still involves the Law. The true antinomian recognises no law, only decision, ultimately only whim, but then, that too raises the spectre of overdetermination by a heteronomous source...

- 3 The zombie is what we all actually are, under the illusion of our autonomous action within the capitalist order: *heteronomata* (as opposed to *automata*) of consumption, programmed habit imposed on mere life. But capitalism at least provides a principle. It is both entropic and negentropic at once – Schumpeter's creative destruction. The point of zombie contagiousness is thus that we, human beings, are the bearers of a disease that lives in and through us – which is the anti-civilisational impulse of modern civilisation, its tendency to destroy itself, its need to be another Rome, whose self-induced collapse will usher in a new barbarian age or, increasingly, the End Times (in the contemporary view, the zombie plague is generally a man-made virus that has escaped our control, just like the current fantasy of the Wuhan lab – as always, that it may be true does not stop it being a formation of the imaginary; in fact it can only be true if it is already a formation of the imaginary. How else could it hit its mark?). It is therefore worth noting that not merely were we warned of the supposed "Black Swan" of the pandemic by any number of commentators, including Nassim Taib in his book of the same name (he considers the Covid-19 event a very white swan, by the way), but it has been the major premise of any number of television series and novels and films over the past several decades, and in almost all cases we see not an empathy-inducing image of death and suffering, but a representation of how the infected turn against those who have not yet joined them and the reduction of our residual autonomy to heteronomic mere life (or a form of quasi-life). The night is dark and full of terrors.

them monomaniac in their will to assault those whom they must infect and reduce, until none are left outside the collective It.⁴

How is this relevant to our present situation? The rush to decisive over-action to the coronavirus pandemic that this imaginary complex has helped to underwrite is fundamentally a shorting up of our ideologically guaranteed but beleaguered autonomy, which is itself the final result of nearly three millennia of progressive human self-divinisation. It has had and will continue to have massive social and economic consequences, without even the most rudimentary cost-benefit analysis or consideration of the ways our remedies may end up being worse than a more humbly managerial approach to the disease itself.⁵

There have been voices asking whether the actions taken to shut down so many branches of social activity, employment, and production, and the now certain consequences of depression, mass unemployment, lost growth, mounting public debt, and of having ignored other areas of need and vulnerability (including the early diagnosis of various conditions, failure to continue necessary treatments, psychosocial consequences, increased mental health issues, increases in alcoholism and dependency, intrafamilial violence, etc) may not entail a human cost as great or even greater than that supposedly avoided by the restrictive measures imposed.⁶

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- 4 That this generally leads to the simultaneous dissolution of the body, its falling apart, is not a coincidence. The integrity of the body depends on the self-directedness of the mind. The main alternative to dissolution is cyborgisation, which creates rigid heteronomy, rather than the dissolute heteronomy of raving and rage. *I Zombie* or *Borg* would appear to be our choices.
 - 5 I am, of course, not talking about the response of scientists, many of whom have conducted scientific discourses in a responsible fashion and with an admirable respect for what is not known, though not always an adequate understanding of the limitations of their own field of science and its implications for any general management of the problem and the issue (for example, many have prioritised their technical area of intervention over the exceptionally important area of global and so political judgement, which weighs the relative claims, without claiming the expertise to judge in each area). The rush to control, or rather an appearance of control, has been at the level of social and political discourse, the authorities and the police, the schools and media, the apparatuses of the state and the disciplinary society.
 - 6 For context, it is worth pointing out the studies that showed without a doubt how both the Eastern European processes of post-Communist transition and the financial crisis of 2008, while economic in essence, nonetheless had major health consequences that led to significant reductions in life ex-

Surely, then, it is fair to ask not just why we shut everything down, but why did we suppose we could prevent death and suffering without causing other death and suffering by the very actions we took to exorcise them? Why did we indulge in the fantasy of absolute control? Has it all been a sort of bureaucratic Malinowskian magic? We have stood against the void and busied ourselves, hoping that scientific ritual will hold back the dark. For what?

Between us and heaven or hell there is only life,
which is the frailest thing in the world.
Pascal, *Pensées*, 212

Perhaps because the plague has exposed the fear at the heart of our inauthentic relationship to our social and political worlds and so to what should be our cosmic contexts. The general human pattern is for such worlds to be redeemable by a narrative of cosmody, which is the justification and reestablishment of social and political order as rooted in a eu-cosmic ground. A society that does not posit a eu-cosmic ground does not tend to survive.

The plague has exposed our fear that our context is not in fact benign, and that this is true not just of the natural world, which may turn against us and prove a less than welcoming home, but of our political and social worlds, from which we have become equally estranged. Even more than this, it exposes our fear that the reason the natural world has turned inhospitable is because we have transgressed against it, not least by the creation of corrupt communities and unjust social and political orders that exploit

pectancy amongst the population groups worst hit by the crisis, particularly men – which may help explain why these countries have apparently fared better in the current crisis: they have fewer living members of the most vulnerable categories in the first place, thanks to prior attrition. The same appears to be true of the African path through the crisis. Similarly, the human cost of the Bosnian war of 1991 to 1995 is most inadequately represented by the numbers of those directly killed in conflict during it. The cumulative impact is better viewed through the prism of the country's pre-war population and per capita GDP, morbidity figures, life expectancy, and so forth, and the figures now, 25 years after its end. The epidemic's human cost and even its cost in lives will not be measurable only in terms of the excess deaths during the period of its reign. To this we shall have to add the cost in suffering and lives of the economic and social measures taken to combat it.

both us and it mercilessly and soullessly. The world has turned vengeful and we face its wrath, whose justification is our nullity, the littleness within us that prompts us to grandiose overreach and at the same time makes us imagine ourselves as a uniquely destabilising factor in the cosmos. Somehow or other, even in our nullity, it is still all about us, a structure that is familiar from the phenomenology of the soteriological religions.

And this, like plague, is nothing new in human history. It is the oldest, most venerable, and most universal response to plague – to treat it as an affliction that allows us to reinterpret our relationship to the cosmic order and to each other, whether it comes as a result of transgression, hubris, sin, or innate evil (ours or the world's). Plague invites, in fact it invokes theodicy.

The question then becomes, what theodicy is possible after the death of God and of Man? As we have mentioned, cosmodicy suggests sociodicy. Theodicy often does the opposite. As we justify to ourselves the ways of God, we create a transcendent critique of our society and of our political order, which is why the universal response to plague is to find the pressure points within society, to explore its structures of injustice, and to allocate blame (or responsibility). Once we could no longer do this in terms of God or in terms of Man (which are essentially the same idea - ask Nietzsche), we found ourselves doing it in terms of Nature, but now Nature too is dead, which, as our Zombies warn us, is not the same as gone. It has become, like God and like Man, an evil revenant and a source of harm. What remains to be determined is whether we deserve that harm or it is an unjust persecution.

This is revealing of the contradiction at the heart of our current self-understanding. We live in the age of the Triple Death, of God, of Man, and of Nature, and we just about still manage to do so as a self-divinised being (*Dasein*) to whom the world presents itself. There, thanks to that triple death, we were supposed finally to be at home, a home to be appointed as we see fit, but we increasingly discover that it really is not our home. We, it turns out, are the home invaders and the body snatchers.

Our self-divinisation is thus brought to breaking point by a situation in which we are not ultimately responsible and cannot fix things, yet we somehow remain contingently responsible for the crisis and disaster threatening to overwhelm us. We live in an age of catastrophism, where the catastrophe is caused by acci-

dent, the unintended consequence of inadvertence or obliviousness. This is a world in which we have to accept and get over misfortune, without the possibility of redeeming it through an economy of meaning (of glory, of salvation, of mystical apprehension). It is as though we, as *Dasein*, were being-towards-the-world, but the world looked us up and down, turned round, looked past us, and yelled *Next!*

This creates major problems for any political or social order. The question of the legitimacy or justification of the social and political order is always a cosmic matter and so a matter of the divine and the self, which are linked through the concept of nature. The cosmos is the order of all things and the divine is the principle of value. That the cosmos is an order is a matter of ontological phenomenology (of the simple fact that we, as *Dasein*, intuit a world), but that it is grounded in the divine and consequently beneficent is a matter of ontic preference or judgement, albeit one that is implicit in the original concept of cosmos, which is the Greek for beautiful order and bears a connotation of being right and best. A cosmodicy is inherently a justification of the cosmic order as beautiful, as eu-cosmic, and so of the political and social order as rooted in a *positive* ground (in Greek a dys-cosmic or kako-cosmic order would be an oxymoron). For us, however, to conceive of the current political and social order as so rooted is a difficult ask. Even that it could be so rooted seems an increasingly remote possibility. How well we reconcile ourselves to the shortcomings of our cosmic context (social, political, and natural) and the narratives we weave around them determines how at home we feel in this world.

This rightness of the world is intimately linked to the aesthetic judgement.

According to Kant, the judgement of the beautiful recognises the inherence of an apparently (but not actually) teleological pattern, an order suggesting created origin and purpose within natural phenomena (things are slightly different with regard to works of art). It involves a situation whereby there is pleasure without interest. That corresponds to feeling at home in the world.

The judgement of the sublime involves a different intuition: that faced with something that defies rational understanding and where there is no evident pattern we nonetheless sense an over-arching meaningfulness or order, which is subject to or structured

by a lack, but transcends and redeems not just that lack but the whole and consequently us too. Experience of the sublime is characterised by terror or awe or a similar emotion in the absence of pain. It is the overarching framework of imputed purposiveness or meaningfulness that removes the immediacy of threat and so allows the experience to be sublime rather than terrifying.

Beauty thus involves immanence and the sublime transcendence.⁷ The alternatives of the beautiful and the sublime and the secret links between them inform our stance towards nature, or the world, and they provoke responses of humility and pride, acceptance and anxiety, adjustment or the need for control.⁸

As noted, the sublime is that which we regard with an intuition of some grand reason or plan or teleology behind it, but which our understanding cannot quite comprehend or reduce to that. Our intuition tells us that there is something that could perhaps be comprehended but that it transcends *our* understanding, and so the terror that it represents is both infinite and brought within limits. God is a symbol of the sublime (or vice versa) and theod-

7 For St Anselm, theology was faith seeking understanding, which is the structure of the sublime seeking to become the beautiful, seeking a form of transcendent immanence. The greatest contest of the Western mediaeval soul raged on this question, as Abelard was pitted against St Bernard, the vision of knowledge against the vision of love, the claim to restore the perfect knowledge of Adam which underlies the concepts of the University (the Scholastic idea of the restoration of Universal Knowledge) and of Baconian science (the growth of knowledge through experience was expected by his epigones to allow in the Royal Society the creation of an analogue to his New Atlantis, which preserved Man's universal knowledge from before the Fall), against God's sublimity and the counsel of surrender and submission to His love. The Reformation further undermined the bounds to Man's self-estimation as it swept away the structures of mediation, all in the name of submission to His love. Our direct insight into the beauty of the world combined with our supposedly direct relationship to God, unmediated by ritual or learning. Knowledge of God came from our direct experience of Him in the self. Humility before God became pride before the world.

8 If all human societies up to modernity have grounded themselves in some form of theodicy and cosmody, so that pain, what could not be borne or understood, disaster (which literally means the unfortunate conjunction of stars) and catastrophe (the sudden overturning of things) were all made bearable because placed within a framework of the sublime (or in periods of greater self-satisfaction of the beautiful: the beautiful we know, the sublime knows us), what then of modernity and of the post-modern annex we now inhabit?

icy is the understanding not that all things are justified because one can go out and justify them oneself but because there is a principle beyond, which we may not understand, but which we intuit and accept no matter how terrifying the gap between our acceptance and that ungraspable principle.

Gnosticism is when we do not accept that principle as good but at best as indifferent and more likely as evil. We may then posit a good Other behind that Evil one, so that our alienation in this world may be ended by transcending it for another beyond or by transforming it against the Lord of this World. This is in effect a reduction of Gnosticism to theodicy or what we might term a dark theodicy that rejects cosmodicy.

Dualism is the positing of equal parallel principles, where there is partial theodicy, but no cosmodicy, except one contingent upon some ultimate but uncertain victory of light over dark. There is good in the world, but the world is not finally good in itself.

All three are structures of the sublime, but only the first is both a theodicy and a cosmodicy, as only it posits a justification of the ways of God and this cosmic order to man.

True theodicy is thus not Leibnizian and of the beautiful, but Pascalian and tends towards the sublime, as it posits that there are things greater than us and somehow that is okay. Cosmodicy tends towards the beautiful, as for it the order of the visible cosmos is justified and in principle beautiful.⁹

9 When both combine, there is a creative tension between the two principles, which is termed the analogy of being in Catholic theology. The cosmos is justified from above and below, as God and his legitimation of the Cosmos approach from both directions, through the innately beautiful natural order and the transcendence of God as the justifying principle above an order that always falls short, that intimates something beyond, that is terrifying and love at once, and for which human beings, the beings that are *there* and through which the *thereness* of it all comes, are the point of connection, the linchpin. This combined model, which is analogous to the Muslim one, allows for the possibility that the beauty of the cosmos may at times disappear from our view or our understanding of it implode in the face of terrible events, but that the sublime structure of the transcendent divine nonetheless allows it to be redeemed.

Atheism shows strength of mind, but only to a certain degree.
Pascal, *Pensées*, 225

Modernity undermined all honest theodicy, because it took the traditional doctrine of Man and turned it inside out. Decentred man became a contradictory nothing-and-all, thanks to the pragmatic adequacy of his knowledge (or knowing faculty) to the world and its principles. In the 17th century, this was conceived of as our growing into Adam's legacy and so as a gift from God. By the 18th, it was grounded in human nature. The myth of the Fall and subsequent Rise of Man had become the narrative of progress, from the lower to the higher, of the emergence of Man. The theodiceal moment became an anthropodiceal one, in which all things were justified by Man's unique relationship to Nature. This natural anthropodicy was thus dependent upon the cosmodicy of Nature and so on beauty. Our knowledge, our science, or rather the possibility of it, became the principle that bound the sublime, so, now that it has run up against its own limits, all hell threatens literally to break loose.

It may be useful to consider the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. The destruction was immense, but its impact upon the European mind was not determined by that, just as the impact of the coronavirus is not determined by the number of deaths but by their happening in the West rather than elsewhere. Who at that time would have known whether the earthquake's impact was unprecedented? How could they have known? And yet it shattered the European mind, which can only be because the European mind had already been prepared for shattering, just as the mind of the West has been waiting the moment of its own vulnerability in our own time.¹⁰

10 The world was good. And man was good. And man could rely on himself, draw on the resources within himself, and so long as he sloughed off the corruption of the past, produce a good social and political order within a world that was fundamentally good, albeit, to misquote St Augustine, in some particulars not yet. This theodicy was this-worldly. This, and precisely this, was the best of all possible worlds.

The traditional *cosmion*, that brought together the cosmic, political and social order and the human being as individual in the fundamental quaternion of human existence, grounded them in a relationship to the transcendental, which was the location of the *eschaton*, the end or *summum bonum* of the individual. By the Enlightenment, the *cosmion* had been brought down to earth, and the *eschaton* was in the process of being immanentized and

Prior to Lisbon, the European experience of God-in-the-world was essentially one of beauty and there was a prevailing view that Truth, Beauty, and the Good were one. The proof of God lay in the order and beauty of the world, which was evident to all, and was uniquely true. This was the view parodied famously by Voltaire in his *Candide*, precisely because of the Lisbon Earthquake. And it was the Lisbon Earthquake that shook the young Goethe to his very foundations, becoming the overturned ground on which he built his new understanding of the world, God, and the self, as examined so thoroughly by Hans Blumenberg. Prometheus arises from the rubble of Lisbon, his shackles shattered, God absent or ill-intentioned.¹¹ If there was no stable ground

socialised through the doctrine of progress and the development of this-worldly projects to achieve the New Jerusalem on Earth. The *eschaton* or *summum bonum* was on its way to becoming identified with the *eschata*, the final things of the End Days. The soteriological narrative which had been experienced in terms of the individual lifetime and a certain historical narrative (because Christianity gave birth to History) now became focused upon a this-worldly context, within which it was to be played out, as a fundamentally social drama.

As a result, the thinkers of the mid-18th century were pre-prepared for a cataclysmic event to undermine their faith in God, or rather their faith that this world was the manifestation of God's will and therefore the best of all possible worlds. At best, it was the place from which one had to start in order to attain the best of all feasible worlds. This was a major religious change, comparable to the contest between Christianity and Gnosticism in late antiquity, precisely because each was over the issue of whether the world is good, rational, and a manifestation of God's will, and therefore whether or not our lives within it are struggle and hardship or as good as it gets, and finally whether or not our action in this world can have any impact upon it as the arena for our attainment of happiness, or should be oriented towards attaining happiness outside of it, but nonetheless at least partially earned within it. These are major differences in outlook and produce very different patterns of behaviour. The position of the individual within them is key because it is the robustness or fragility of individual life within its perceived cosmic context that gives its flavour to any particular epoch.

- 11 This has been diagnosed as a new Gnosticism, but the situation is not quite so simple. As the *Spinozastreit* initiated by Jacobi when he revealed Lessing's covertly pantheist views, which he had discovered on showing him Goethe's *Prometheus* fragment, made clear, this was the view that underlay Lessing's reoccupation of the Spinozist position in his *Education of the Human Race* and it involved contradictory tendencies to pantheism and to the Gnostic this-worldly divinisation of man in revolt less against the transcendent God than against the false or glib or self-serving theodiceal uses made of Him. The 19th century would work out this view through the narra-

in the world or in God, he would find ground in himself and in others like him (Napoleon), ultimately in what Nietzsche, thinking of Goethe, would call the Superman.¹²

tive of alienation and the myth of the unfolding of the hidden intentions of God through Nature.

- 12 The concept of beauty as developed in German classicism by Winckelmann and Lessing contains within itself the yearning for the sublime. At its highest expression it is already headed towards self-dissolution. Winckelmann expressed the ideal of beauty as the motor of art in his masterpiece *The History of Art in Antiquity*, which was published in 1764. For him, the beautiful is the result of abstraction and idealisation from the natural so that the human imagination or faculty of fantasy composes a non-existent ideal that brings out the potential in nature and expresses the order within it. This ideal is thus super-human or all too human, rather than supra or beyond human. He found this most especially in the male form, his focus on which was at least partly to do with his homosexuality, but not entirely (Nietzsche was not gay, only his science). And here we see the entry of the sublime. The attractiveness of female beauty to the male gaze has a clear purpose to the 18th-century mind, if not to the 21st-century one. This is clearly expressed in Kant's views on beauty. The question of the beauty of the male form was less obvious, not least because female lust for the male was socially disorienting, while male lust for the male was considered unnatural. Yet one of Winckelmann's examples of perfect execution is the fact that a sheet of paper could be passed between the buttocks of the Belvedere Torso, while his other examples included the perfect expression of the youthful human form in the Apollo Belvedere and the Antinous, the human form at the point of flowering into autonomy. This is not a merely technical observation. It is of course related to the way in which philosophers from the Renaissance on had had to confront the existence of the Greek vice at the heart of Plato's philosophy and allegorise it away, not as a flaw, but a secret that threatened the coherence of the system whose truth they required. An ideal of man was needed and that meant that man not woman was identified with the sublime. The ideal of man became the ideal of mimesis rather than physical reproduction, reflecting the homoerotic moment at the heart of social and spiritual reproduction (*Eros* here refers to the de-sexualised erotic love that was invented as Platonic and that is different from the socially all-embracing *agape*, or love of one's fellow). The Lisbon earthquake had shaken the rule of *agape* and made room for the reign of a supposedly de-sexualised *eros* – the passionate friendship, the meeting of minds, the merging of souls, the introjection of the sublime where previously the beautiful had held sway. In its absence, there was solitude, whose function was the building up of the self through interaction with the best the world had brought forth, in the form of art and writings that we now call culture. And that self would be the object of the *Eros* of others in a way entirely unlike the standard Greek relationship of elder lover and younger beloved, whose role was to be formed through the relationship with his mentor (through mimesis). The love has become the superior beloved, the

Goethe's *Prometheus* seemed at first to be a revolt but was actually a deicide. As with Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (always Kant), God had become a postulate, no longer a reality, and the anger felt was not at God *per se* but at the theodiceal uses of Him. The death of God is thus followed by the elevation of Nature (Hegel/Schelling) and the final divinization of Man (Feuerbach), whose natural child was Marx (and Comte and even Kierkegaard). Then came the immanentisation of not just the eschaton but of the apocalypse, ushering in the reign of the political religions, which ended only in 1945 and strangely enough was actually followed by the millennium, though it only lasted to 1990. (In spite of what people felt at the time, the continuation of Soviet Communism from 1945 to 1990 was not a survival, except in the Tylorian sense. It was already Zombie Communism that simply did not yet know that it was dead). There is a progression from the collapse of theodicy and the death of God to the establishment of a cosmodicy and the reign of Man, whose destiny was supposedly to reconcile Nature and Society in the form of the Human through History. This too failed with the implosion of the political religions and the end of Man, but the cosmodiceal frame survived for a while at least and provided the context for the sociodicy of the Beautiful rather than of the Sublime (the millennium referred to above, or the Golden Age of Keynesian welfare capitalism). Until it no longer could.

Which is where Sarajevo finally comes in.

True fear is joined to hope, because it is born of faith, and because men hope in the God in whom they believe. False fear is joined to despair, because men fear the God in whom they have no belief. The former fear to lose Him; the latter fear to find Him.

Pascal, *Pensées*, 262

The significance of the Sarajevo siege is that it did thirty years ago what the coronavirus has done now. Or rather, it initi-

object of admiration on account of that superiority. In a way, the ancient exemplar for this is still Platonic, as it is the fascination which Socrates held for Alcibiades, the secret treasure or *agalma* the ugly man contained within. Present beauty is thus transformed by an engine of sublimity, the new word for which was *Bildung*, whose goal is the autonomy of the self, its divinization in the here and now.

ated the process we are now seeing the fruit of. It has had a slow burning but highly corrosive impact upon the idea of justification in the political order in the West. Russia's Putin has spent the thirty years since capitalising on it, widening the constitutive fissure in the cosmodicy of late modernity, just as the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 shattered the Leibnizian theodicy of classical modernity but it took a further 30 years or so for the last king actually to be strangled with the guts of the last priest.

The key intermediate points in the progression were 9/11, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the bungled response to the 2008 financial crisis, and the duplicitous response to the Arab Spring and its Syrian aftermath. They are all connected in a chain of progressive delegitimation which has seen precious few counter-moves by those who represent the vested power structures of the West to restore their fundamental legitimacy. And what has been delegitimated is progressively our concept of not just the goodness of the existing political and social order but of the potential goodness of any political and social order and of its relationship to the natural order as based upon harmony and rightness. The key connecting signifier here is oil, as the commodity that is at the heart of corruption in both the natural and the sociopolitical orders, but the forms of this discourse can be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*.

Such a thesis makes it natural to ask whether I have not overlooked a great and obvious event, an event to overlook which is a modern form of blasphemy. I am of course referring to the Holocaust, or to Auschwitz, after which there is no art or poetry, because the meaning of Man and the grand narratives are banished: not just in abeyance, but not quite impossible either. Surely, Auschwitz was the constitutive crack in the cosmodicy of modernity, the usherer-in of post-modernity, wasn't it?

Art was impossible after Auschwitz in the same way as God was dead for Nietzsche, which is to say renewed through its/His impossibility as the point of departure for the understanding of human being in the world. Without the death of God there could be no self-overcoming of Man, and Art was, of course, the vehicle for the self-overcoming of Man.

Before Auschwitz, this self-overcoming was into something greater than mere men or even mere man: Promethean Man, the maker of History, of whom men were mere instances, to be gath-

ered and rendered actual in the Leader or the Great Man, the Man of Genius. After Auschwitz, the greatness had to lie outside of newly chastened man and the vehicles of his fantasy (the locomotives of History), whose gaze had been fixed on the Future and on the transformations and sacrifices required to reach it. Into the frame created by their absences stepped, for a time, Nature, which is also the Present. History could no longer be the machine for the simultaneous accomplishment and deferral of the End Times on Earth, for which all would be sacrificed and transformed. History was the immanent frame of human life in the Present, under the laws of Nature, which require the fulfilment of our individual telologies in the here and now, rather than our subordination to a temporal teleological chain that transcends us. Auschwitz thus ushered in a third age of Nature (the first was the Hellenistic and Augustan period of antiquity, the second was the Augustan and Enlightenment period of modernity). And the mediator of this age was the natural or this-worldly post-ideological polity, the enabling frame of the consumer society.¹³

13 This has been the negative theology of the *Deus Absconditus* taken to its extreme and is why Auschwitz is, as Lyotard argues in his book, *The Differend*, the emblematic name of an event and not the definition of a class of crimes. Genocide requires an entire political, legal, institutional and conceptual apparatus to facilitate the conversion of an event into a fact or a recognised instance of a constituted class, with all the power relations that supposes for the emergence of “Truth”. When caught under the “emblematic name” or under its own “proper name”, an event of this sort partakes of an entirely different phenomenological structure, one which refers to an entirely other set of institutional and intersubjective grounds. It is an intervention rather than an attempted resolution and it provokes the relations of power rather than functioning as their operation. As such, it issues from trauma rather than attempting its suture. Of course, it may become, as a name, a displaced signifier and so a symptom, but it will continue to act through its displacement simultaneously to disrupt the power game (think of it as a ramped-up Wittgensteinian language game) of the dominant international structures and as an alibi of the local structures of dominance. As such, the event is converted through its subsumption under an emblematic name into an essentially contested signifier, a point at which incompatible discourses meet and generate structures of difference, of opposition, and of escalating fission.

As Lyotard has explained, the Holocaust is the “proper name” of a series of events in their totality, events which took place in the run-up to and during the Second World War, and which relate to the mass killing of the Jews of Europe by a variety of perpetrator groups in a variety of ways, under the impulse given by the Nazis and their Final Solution. Precisely because it is

Man is neither angel nor brute, and the unfortunate thing is
that he who would act the angel acts the brute.
Pascal, *Pensées*, 358

As an event, rather than an instance of the genocide concept, Auschwitz and the Holocaust shattered a certain world and rendered impossible faith in certain types of legitimization narrative, but faith subsisted in the cosmodicy and the sociodicy that remained. This was the age of Keynes. Man was dead, but man survived, increasingly as a decentred point within the frame of Nature, which had replaced History. A fissure had thus opened up, but procedures of reclamation still appeared to exist, as evidenced by 1968, amongst other events (including the entire series that make up the history of the European Union). The structure of the Sublime remained effective. In the end, and no matter how harsh this sounds, those who had survived the trauma of witnessing the Holocaust found that one could nonetheless build on it, and it soon emerged there was no lack of moral entrepreneurs willing to

a proper name, it cannot be transferred to anything else and it is incomparable. Auschwitz, however, is both the “proper name” for the most murderous and most notorious death camp of that process and the “emblematic name” for phenomena of that sort, which it does not name, but stands as emblem for. It intimates them and structures the field of such phenomena, as the master signifier. As such, it mediates between the incomparable nature of the Holocaust and the existence of the equivalising concept of Genocide. Genocide is a legal concept formed around the incomparable event of the Holocaust for use in particular legal, political, and institutional discourses, and it bears within itself this contradictory and double origin. It was developed prior to the Holocaust, but redeveloped in response to it, precisely in order to allow it to be thought, but also to bring it into connection with and under the same concept as “similar” events. It was thus a response to the special nature and uniqueness of the Holocaust, and an attempt to render it through a universal concept. Which has led to the absurd situation that its application to the very event that originally gave rise to it or, more precisely, to the discourse of creating and establishing it as a functioning juridical concept (the Armenian genocide) has been increasingly denied by those concerned to maintain the uniqueness of the paradigm case (specialists in genocide, but particularly specialists in the Holocaust).

As again Lyotard has suggested, this relationship of the Holocaust to genocide bears more than an intimation of the sublime. The Holocaust and Auschwitz are the structuring event of the post-war order, that from which it derived its “inner greatness”. That order was built around the impossibility of genocide, an impossibility that has since been preserved by denying that any particular instance actually comes under the rule.

do so, so long as it was understood that chastened man, facing the Abyss, would have to put his faith in structures and processes that transcended him, but which were themselves not guaranteed by God, because He was dead, and which man had not himself created and was not the driver of, because Man too was dead. All Man-made structures were in crisis, and what was required was a return to redemptive Nature to provide a framework, a fertile womb for the gestation of man-friendly structures.

In the 1970s, Juergen Habermas declared the legitimization crisis, which was not a matter of catastrophism, but a narrative of reclamation through cognitive and social humility, as is every post-World War II ideology in the West. Somehow or other, you could still be a socialist after Auschwitz, and you could certainly be an ecologist, and you could be a Keynesian, but the ultimate in cognitive humility came with the triumph of the Popper-Hayek synthesis of *laissez-faire* and piece-meal tinkering with a state apparatus whose only ambition was to let a thousand capitalist flowers bloom.

A decade later, it was Lyotard who declared the end of Grand Narratives and provided a foundation myth for post-modernism which is the nursery rhyme version of the Sublime.

And another decade later, Francis Fukuyama declared the end of History, which was less the end of grand narratives, than their somewhat deflated and anticlimactic fulfilment in what we may term the late capitalist state of “good-enough” government. This was as good as it got – the best, if not of all possible worlds, at least of any that might be possible here, given the material we have to work with. We had reached the Pareto equilibrium of historical development. Because no one “serious” had ever doubted you could still be a capitalist after Auschwitz. Strangely, the Holocaust (and the Gulag and the coup against Allende in Chile and Vietnam/Cambodia and any number of other events, which were not Terror because they were not in the mainstream of History) meant Hegel had been right. This was the sublimity of the present and we may call it really existing Hegelianism, the return of pragmatic Idealism.

To return to Sarajevo, in what way then was it a difference that made a difference? Certainly not because of Sarajevo.¹⁴ The

14 Generally speaking, individual instances of human fragility in the face of the Absolute do count, just not in their own particularity. They count in the

immediate response to the Yugoslav wars in much of the West was ignorance and indifference. In time, it turned to disgust and distrust. This shift played out over 10 years, from that initial “hour of Europe” and disgust at its failure to act to the “hour of America” and disgust at its final willingness to act in Kosovo. The debacles of the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars were a follow on from the hubris that the Yugoslav wars had engendered in the foreign policy establishments of the UK and the US and the reactions against it by left-oriented intelligentsia and publics, primarily of those two countries. Milošević’s final but pyrrhic victory may ultimately have been to undermine public trust in the Western democracies as thoroughly as he prevented the emergence of democratic communities and processes in the Balkans. The fact that intervention in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and in the subsequent Arab spring would have been fully legitimate in the eyes of History, if sincere and properly followed through, does not absolve those of us who supported it of naïveté. Those who planned it can seem sometimes like chocolate soldiers, their incompetence matched only by their hubris (shades of the present), but there is always the possibility that they achieved more or less what they wanted, the continued disabling of large and important parts of the globe, their subordination to external geopolitical interests, and the extension of a state of the exception over large parts of the globe, including, more or less, the leading democracies themselves. This is democracy legitimated by its functional negation and a real concentration of power. It is democracy exposed as its opposite. Or so it has seemed to many.

So, what has changed? After all, anyone who supposes that the coronavirus crisis is any more likely than Sarajevo to change the world economic and social order fundamentally should be on medication, if they are not already. The coronavirus will end globalisation? Except, globalisation was already consolidating and, from that perspective, the coronavirus response is just clearing house. To suppose anything else is to indulge in wish fulfilment, which is not a crime, but not a valid research methodology either.

process of forming the opinion that matters of those who matter, and only subsequently the opinion that does not matter of those who don’t matter, but whose acquiescence nonetheless adds weight – the chattering classes (*la clase discutidora*, as Donoso Cortes called it) and, the rubber stamp of last resort, the people.

It is the same with the environment and with Eurocentrism. These were changes already underway. The most the crisis can do is provide a point of supersaturation for a solution that was already past the tipping point but had not realised the change. As with Lisbon, the public mood has long been pre-prepared for the “event that changes everything”.

So, what has changed? Ultimately, it is that Nature too is dead, and the prophecy of the triple death, like the hero an essential part of every Indo-European narrative of the long durée, is finally fulfilled. And with the death of Nature has come the death of the natural frame of politics. On the other hand, as the reference to Indo-European narrative should suggest, even within the framework of the post-modern we remain within the long durée narratives of our culture, which is to say of the cultural mechanisms through which thought arrives in us to consciousness. If God, Man, and Nature are dead, precisely that it is a *triple* death should give us pause. We remain, as always, within the grip of mythic narrative, even when we claim to have overcome narrative. Perhaps then most of all. The coronavirus threatened to enfold us within a narrative that was too strong. The nature of plague as symbol had to exert itself and function as a way for the primacy of the political and the social over the economic to be expressed, but there will be consequences. We have expressed our sociopolitical nature, or rather the fact that we are sociopolitical by nature, but we have done so in a way that profoundly impacts upon the consciousness of everyone. We have been made to feel radically social by social distancing. We have engaged in rituals of social renewal, without knowing that’s what we’ve been doing, and we have put the symbolism of *homo economicus* at a little bit of a distance, in favour of *homo solidarius*. This has necessarily involved a communal act of sacrifice. We consciously looked and said, what is of questionable value we shall value, in the face of economic efficiency, and regardless of the sacrifices that this will bring outside the realm of economic efficiency. We choose to believe at the moment that our choice is positive. Well we would, wouldn’t we? But the price we have paid for it is our belief in the goodness or the effectiveness of either the political system or its cosmic frame. If the bloom of beauty is long gone, the guarantee that sublimity once offered has also dissolved into air. The frame has sundered and the cracks in the cosmodicy are widening. The

Abyss is impatiently making its presence known through them. Our choice seems to be between another Gnosticism and a dualism. Neither makes for a comfortable feeling of being at home in the world or even in our own skins.

NOTES SUR LE MONDE À L'ARRÊT

Miloš Lazin

Tandis que j'écris ces empreintes pandémiques noircissant progressivement le blanc de l'écran, je ne suis pas sûr que je pourrais à la fin les signer avec confiance et aussi qu'au moment de les lire vous serez dans la possibilité de reconnaître ce qui aura été noté. Tout est ébranlé! Les anciennes certitudes se sont évaporées en pures chimères. L'inconnaissabilité est universelle!

Nous nous défendons de la vacuité par la peur, personnelle et collective; l'obéissance en tant que force structurante de notre comportement confiné. Les instances de pouvoir n'ont pas eu de peine pour mettre en œuvre dans le monde des mesures drastiques de limitations d'actions et de déplacements bien que la plupart d'entre elles ait tardé à percevoir le danger croissant ; quand elles ont réagi finalement – elles l'ont fait de façon draconienne et efficace.

La soumission et la peur ont provoqué des suspicions entre les gens. Les masques dissimulent les visages des passants fortuits mais pour autant soulignent dans leurs yeux un jet d'aver-sion: la personne (assez rare) rencontrée par hasard comme incarnation potentielle du virus! Car lui, ce virus, est aussi inconnu, invisible, que péremptoirement imprévisible; lorsque la réalité nous devient méconnaissable – la peur en dispose.

Les formes élémentaires de la communication sont remises en question et les nouvelles ne sont pas encore conçues. Nous comblons le vide d'une socialisation par le biais des assistances électroniques sans fil: j'appelle et m'appellent les cousins et les amis dispersés dans le monde (mon voisin, je ne le vois pas ou ne le reconnais pas sous son masque). Nous décaméronisons le danger insondable: le cocon de chaleur plane à la recherche des coordonnées perdues. Un instant, nous nous demandons: où est la

menace quand nous pouvons avec délice reconstruire en jacasseries le monde d'hier? Nous avons contracté l'existence dans le verbiage. Mais dès que nous l'avons achevé, nous en sommes réduits à des actions basiques d'autoconservation. Les projections d'activité physique pendant la détention publique n'ont pas dépassé 24 heures et un espace d'une centaine de mètres autour du lieu de retranchement... exigü mais sécurisé! Car en dehors de notre tranchée, c'est la désolation!

Nous avons commencé à le mesurer à l'achèvement de l'assignation contrainte et acceptée à résidence. Mais c'est comme si nous étions privés du droit de reconquérir ce «no man's land» actuel par nous-mêmes; comme chez Orwell, nous sont tracés nos droits et les buts de nos déplacements (aller-retour au travail, sortie aux courses ou chez le médecin), les formes de comportement ("la distanciation sociale"), même l'habit (le masque), les formes de communication sociale (le salut réduit au seul coup de coude) et tout cela sous la menace, pas vraiment définie, de la "surveillance numérique" par téléphones intelligents. Comme si des actions contraires aux prescriptions, c'est-à-dire inappropriées, devaient continuer à être dissimulées: un jeune homme et une jeune fille à Paris confient au journal *Le Monde* que, tous deux célibataires, ont recherché un partenaire potentiel sur internet pendant le confinement et, pour "passer aux choses concrètes", se sont fixés leur premier rendez-vous dans le seul lieu autorisé de circulation humaine à ce moment-là, – un centre commercial. Le couple s'est ensuite décidé pour un espace commun de confinement; une aventure sensible et sentimentale comme un risque sanitaire mais aussi moral et policier...

Les autorités présentent le comportement limité et strictement contrôlé des citoyens comme une mesure exclusivement sanitaire. Autant elles ont minimisé le danger lorsqu'il s'est propagé en Extrême Orient l'hiver dernier, autant face à l'arrivée du printemps elles l'ont accueilli comme une justification de subordination à l'administration de l'État. De la sorte, la biologie et la protection sanitaire et hygiénique remplacent l'idéologie, la politique mais aussi les patries et les États? Une dictature bio-sanitaire ?

Mais notre monde mondialisé est habitué au mimétisme de l'ordre social: le capitalisme financier s'est au cours des dernières décennies présenté non seulement comme l'unique système pos-

sible mais comme la réalité elle-même, soi-disant privée de contraintes politiques et d'idéologies dans notre "posthistoire", liquidées, disent-ils, par la cascade des effondrements des régimes communistes à la fin des années 1980. L'invention théorique de l'École de Chicago a été proposée comme une stratégie économique et politique pour sortir de la "crise pétrolière" de 1973 et des récession et inflation qui ont suivi et a été acceptée tacitement quelques années plus tard comme la doctrine idéologique des politiques libérales de Margaret Thatcher et Ronald Reagan.

L'efficacité du mimétisme est hallucinante! Car il parvient à dissimuler sous le tapis le fait que ce capitalisme sans marchandises ni productions, fondé sur les prêts, les transactions monétaires et des prix extrêmement arbitraires et fluctuants fonctionne grâce à une énorme machinerie de production étatique, nationaliste, communiste dont les habitants représentent un quart de la population mondiale, et en plus sur l'exploitation d'une force de travail bon marché qui a été convaincue d'avoir eu le malheur d'être pillée par les régimes communistes européens alors déchus à la fin des années 80. Le capitalisme financier repose sur une dictature (post-)communiste et ses marchés appauvris et affamés.

Il est symptomatique que les deux dogmes, désormais associés dans un accord d'exploitation, jouent avec le temps, abolissant partiellement sa durée : le communisme dépouille le présent au nom d'un "avenir radieux", la finance chicogoane glorifie le présent en abrogeant le futur ("rien de mieux que l'instant présent") et en oubliant le passé (le postmodernisme en tant que produit spirituel, culturel et artistique indirect ou du moins simultané l'aide dans le processus d'oubli collectif).

Cet accord tacite a ouvert la voie à deux procès: d'une part, le renforcement de diverses formes de dictatures dans les pays encore communistes ou bien nouvellement "postcommunistes" qui assurent la production mondiale à l'aide d'une force de travail massive à bas prix; d'autre part, l'affaiblissement du pouvoir et de l'autorité des organes d'État et de leurs exécuteurs dans les pays qui s'enorgueillissent d'une tradition démocratique et de plusieurs décennies de croissance économique. Le pouvoir économique passe, même s'il est sujet à caution, dans la propriété du grand capital mondial non productif; il ne se fonde pas sur la possession ou la production mais sur les prêts bancaires bon marché

et leur manipulation. Sur le plan de la stratégie économique, le capitalisme financier renverse la formule keynésienne: au lieu d'augmenter les revenus des salariés au nom du renforcement de leur pouvoir d'achat et donc de la production, les "classiques" de l'École de Chicago ont théoriquement conçu la croissance économique sur une augmentation stratégique du chômage, un affaiblissement de la situation et du pouvoir d'achat des salariés et un affermissement du statut des débiteurs, pour les uns comme pour les autres (avec des intérêts incertains). Ainsi, les banques deviennent un facteur essentiel de la machine économique. Les monnaies, dans leur pouvoir absolu, ont perdu leur caractère étatique et leur force économique et ont acquis l'inviolabilité: quelle que soit la manière dont elles fonctionnent sur le marché, elles ne perdent pas de leur valeur. L'argent ne nécessite pas de marchandises car il se reproduit lui-même.

La distanciation de l'économie de la production, des gouvernants de la gestion de l'État et de la société, et du système démocratique de gouvernance efficace ont conduit à une dépolitisation planétaire. Les instruments de la démocratie sont atrophiés sans la capacité de contrôler les puissants de ce monde (cachés derrière les banques et le capital) qui ne sont élus par personne et de moins en moins contrôlés par qui que ce soit. Les sociétés en tant qu'espaces d'action politique sont considérablement affaiblies, sans instruments efficaces de pouvoir de régulation (des partis politiques et des syndicats dégradés). D'où une sorte de lumpen-prolétarianisation de la classe ouvrière comme des classes moyennes (le pivot social) et cela non seulement par l'insécurité financière chronique, mais essentiellement par l'affaiblissement de leur rôle et leur fonction sociale. C'est pourquoi dans les "pays développés" couvent des protestations sociales nombreuses mais dispersées, peinant à trouver une articulation politique concrète (Podemos, le mouvement Cinq étoiles, Syriza, les "Gilets jaunes"), et dans les sociétés sous-développées, les démocraties "en transition", "nouvelles" ou "futures" défont sur les pentes de privations étatique, économique et citoyenne (la Bosnie-Herzégovine n'est qu'un exemple de fiction étatique postmoderne).

De cette faille nous nous sommes engouffrés dans le trou noir de la pandémie. La globalisation, bien qu'établie sur l'injustice, a nourri l'illusion de la souveraineté individuelle ou commu-

nautaire, c'est-à-dire qu'elle a ouvert presque à chacun la possibilité théorique de survie ou de monter dans l'échelle sociale et donc la possibilité d'acquisition d'une confiance en soi ou au moins de se battre pour l'obtenir. Nous avons cru que le monde nous appartenait ou qu'il pourrait nous appartenir! L'absolutisation de l'instant présent dans les perspectives collectives a fait abstraction du temps comme durée, diminué le risque d'inespéré, créé une chimère de l'Éternel si nécessaire pour les communautés humaines, reprenant à son compte le rôle qu'ont joué et quelque part jouent encore les mythes, les religions ou les idéologies. Il faut reconnaître que notre conscience de soi mondialisée nous a plutôt bien désaccoutumés de l'incertitude sociale (il est vrai, en accroissant l'incertitude personnelle). Paradoxalement, la sécurité nous a aussi été fournie par une augmentation drastique des disparités sociales au cours des quatre dernières décennies : chacun pouvait, quel que soit le degré d'injustice sociale dans lequel il se trouvait, se consoler en se disant qu' "il y a encore pire" (la vie sous les régimes communistes était caractérisée par une dépression égalisatrice collective en raison d'un renvoi du "meilleur lendemain" à un futur improbable). La propagation de la pandémie a peut-être dans la phase de l'annonce été facilitée par la conviction qu'elle allait nous esquiver, qu'elle ne nous menace pas tous parce que "nous ne sommes pas tous les mêmes". Elle nous a stupéfaits par la révélation que nous sommes devenus invariablement égaux dans le danger!

L'efficacité de l'amnésie pandémique est démontrée par l'impuissance à déterminer la nature du virus, les raisons et la durée de sa marche conquérante. Et c'est peut-être là la reconnaissance la plus amère du vide apparu en nous et autour de nous: on ne peut pas l'expliquer! Ni y échapper. Il n'y a pas de coupable! Ni de culpabilité. Une impuissance qui anéantit même l'exaspération. Dans ma mémoire sensuelle, la tragédie de Sarajevo en 1992-95 est consignée comme une injustice insurmontable de responsabilité collective (qui ne restreint pas celle personnelle, la mienne et celle des autres). Et dans mes nuits qu'ont comme des fissures lacérées mes apaisantes journées de quarantaine, la détention pandémique m'est apparue comme un *deus ex machina* mais avec un arbitraire qui ne purge pas comme dans les tragédies antiques, mais punit. Avec ce destin absurde nous sommes privés de la consolation d'être les victimes d'une

injustice, et sommes ainsi assimilés aux héros du “théâtre de l’absurde” de Beckett. Les habitants de Sarajevo ont été les victimes d’un agresseur identifié et d’observateurs officiels passifs. Le malheur est aujourd’hui planétaire et égalitaire, mais porte un nom pour lequel nous ne trouvons ni contenu ni sens.

Et à ça, il nous semble incertain de déterminer le temps. Les idéologies du communisme et du capitalisme financier nous ont accoutumés à une temporalité mutilée. La Covid-19 fait abstraction de la durée! Les organismes d’État ont effectué une périodisation de la pandémie par des mesures sanitaires mais il s’est rapidement révélé que la longueur et le caractère de chacune de ces périodes étaient de la fabulation d’impuissance: le degré de la menace variait mais elle n’était pas refoulée. Pas de terme pour l’instant! La périodisation d’Eric J. Hobsbawm est presque généralement admise qu’après un court XXe siècle, le XXIe a commencé en 1991. On pourrait très probablement affirmer qu’il a vécu sa première cassure en 2020... ou peut-être il se prépare seulement à commencer, nous laissant dans une incertitude totale?

La pandémie a aussi révélé l’envers de la mondialisation; le virus a conquis le monde mais les États et les sociétés ne se sont pas attaqués à sa propagation de concert mais individuellement. Même dans le cadre des accords des organisations internationales, l’Union européenne par exemple ou la troïka nord-américaine, aucune mesure commune n’a été prise. Voilà pourquoi la contagion a bien été mondiale et la mise en quarantaine planétaire un frein perméable à sa propagation mais les interdictions et les restrictions proclamées ont différé d’un pays à l’autre, et même entre États frontaliers. Le renouvellement progressif des activités existentielles de base s’est également effectué de manière parcellaire. Ces deux processus menés localement ont aussi dévoilé des différences entre régions d’un pays, entre les métropoles et les zones rurales, qui couvaient sous les proclamations unificatrices d’identité culturelle nationale ou étatique qui seraient valables “pour tous”. Paradoxalement, la pandémie et la quarantaine ont affirmé les spécificités culturelles et mis à nu la mondialisation comme une puissante illusion qui les masquait. La difficulté, c’est que nous avons cru dans le cadre et à l’aide de cette illusion que nous communiquions planétairement. Nous discernons les raisons du malentendu planétaire : la mondialisation est avant tout une zone mercantile.

Dans la période du décodage mental de la pandémie, nous avons pu constater que les puissants de la finance, de la production, du commerce et de la banque se sont retirés de la scène selon un principe non écrit d'extraterritorialité. Les pouvoirs exécutifs des États ont été délaissés. Mais dans la série des révélations que la contagion en tant que situation exceptionnelle a dévoilées, il y a aussi l'impuissance des organes du pouvoir; d'un côté, les anciens leviers de l'administration étatique comme l'économie, la planification, les finances, les monnaies ont déjà été privatisées; de l'autre côté, avec la massification des communications électroniques, les détenteurs du pouvoir ont perdu leur invulnérabilité dans la parole et le contrôle de l'opinion publique. La pandémie nous révèle la politique moins comme une gestion de l'État et une direction de la société mais plutôt comme une performance en communication à faible enjeu. La sentimentalisation des comportements et le pathétisme des discours audio et vidéo des politiciens ont remplacé une stratégie de gouvernance dans laquelle chaque citoyen pourrait trouver un cadre et un rôle. Le déclin de la confiance publique dans le pouvoir de gestion des "puissants" qui a suivi a été l'une des raisons de la désorientation de leur action.

Décontenancés, nous nous sommes arrêtés à une sorte de point zéro de compréhension, non seulement concernant une maladie perverse et inconnue et l'issue à la pandémie qu'elle provoque, mais aussi de ce qu'on avait accepté comme "réel" et de ses actants. Pour autant que nous qualifions de culture les déterminants de notre comportement, de notre compréhension et notre opinion, le danger existe d'une déculturation. La crainte qu'un comportement adopté depuis l'enfance puisse conduire à une diffusion de la contagion menace en période de mascarade organisée dans l'anonymat d'actions strictement contrôlées une désaccoutumance de gestes, de mimiques, de situations reconnaissables. Un changement de comportement entraîne un changement de sa pratique et de sa lecture. Et pour autant si nous guérissons à moyen terme, les traces des blessures resteront-elles aussi bien dans l'action consciente que dans la réaction inconsciente? En question sont des mutations que nous ne serons pas en mesure de reconnaître toujours, et nous pourrons encore plus difficilement contrôler et considérer. Une période irrévocable de déstabilisation personnelle et collective se dresse devant nous, que ce collectif

soit celui de la famille, le cercle dans lequel nous évoluons et œuvrons, la communauté professionnelle, le lieu de séjour, la société, la nation, l'État, jusqu'à l'idée même du monde.

Devrons-nous inventer de nouvelles formes d'interpellation, de mouvement, de socialisation? Et même des formules langagières! L'expression "main dans la main" deviendra-t-elle sans fondement? Et même après, en tant que détermination temporelle, n'a plus de raison d'existence. Le citoyen a perdu le droit à sa planification et son organisation et donc le contrôle au moins partiel de son propre avenir. Désormais, cela ne dépend plus de nos intentions que nous forgeons par l'expérience et le vécu; un jour ou deux après notre enfouissement, nous avons compris que le temps aussi avait contracté le virus, c'est-à-dire était devenu une détermination biologique. Et que le virus lui-même s'était désincarné; il pense par nous et nous par lui. Et il existe à travers nous même lorsque nous n'en sommes pas les porteurs. Or peut-être que nous le sommes? Au figuré aussi? Combien de temps durera cette situation?

Dans les inévitables tentatives de projections sur le monde d'après le coronavirus, nous nous rassurons actuellement en nous servant des analogies intellectualistes du passé: que le virus pourrait être le commencement de la fin du monde causée par la destruction humaine inconsciemment systématique et qu'il faudrait que nous l'utilisions comme le seuil d'une "renaissance écologique"; que l'abolition pendant la quarantaine des habitudes, des réflexes, des conventions du comportement nous permettra "un nouveau départ", "plus humain", "plus frais", "plus sain", que le virus parviendra à mettre fin, ou au moins à atténuer, la "réalité" instituée par le capitalisme financier et nous conduire à une réalité "meilleure", "vraie" (une rétro-utopie). C'est ainsi que nous élevons le virus au niveau de phénomène surnaturel.

La vie post-pandémique est d'une grande incertitude et elle sera conditionnée par le mode, la forme et la durée de la "normalisation". La récession virale aura inévitablement des conséquences psychologiques et sociales sur les vivants et construira certainement une riche mémoire commune pour nos descendants. Combien ces dépôts successifs et indésirables demeureront dans l'inconscient collectif, avec d'imprévisibles conséquences sociales, et combien contribueront à une nouvelle lecture et une compréhension de représentations, de comportements et d'ac-

tions communes jusque-là, cela dépend de la conjoncture économique et politique. En concluant ces lignes, il semble que les autorités politiques et gouvernementales sortiront de cette phase d'une vie de danger maximal encore plus affaiblies qu'elles n'y sont entrées en raison de la méfiance qu'elles ont provoquée chez les citoyens par leur maladresse et leur incompétence dans l'organisation des mesures sanitaires.

Il faudrait aussi prendre en compte dans les projections actuelles des contours incertains du monde après le virus des conséquences des pertes économiques incommensurables ainsi que des modalités et des spécificités de leur soutenabilité. Les crises de détresse des secteurs économiques et des métiers occupent en ce moment une bonne part de l'espace médiatique. On pourrait avoir l'impression que prévaut une recette fragmentaire d'assainissement des dommages qui néglige le fait les dégâts sont généraux et presque irrémédiables. Seul un programme de relance économique systémique pourrait contribuer au dépassement de sentiments collectifs de ravage. Qui va le mettre en place et l'organiser? Qui va savoir stimuler les citoyens pour contribuer par leur travail au redressement commun, de donner un sens à cet effort et d'y trouver une satisfaction?

Dans ce processus, le comportement de la puissance principale actuelle, le capital bancaire et commercial, est extrêmement incertain. Vu de côté, il se tient momentanément en "observateur", attendant que d'autres préparent les conditions d'une "normalisation". Les valeurs sur les bourses mondiales, après des taux négatifs en mars et avril, ont déjà augmenté en mai, en partie grâce à l'industrie numérique qui a travaillé à plein régime pendant le "vide économique" (et ouvert des espaces de nouvelles pratiques de masse, ses futurs services potentiels), mais aussi la spéculation des actionnaires qui misent sur une reprise économique relativement rapide à cause du besoin des gens de travailler et gagner de l'argent et celui des autorités d'une "normalisation" de notre quotidien. Les analystes experts constatent cependant que "l'écart entre la bourse et l'économie se renforce" (Wall Street Journal du 8 mai 2020) car il y a déjà "une décennie que la bourse s'écarte de la vie réelle" ("Repeat After Me: The Markets Are Not the Economy", New York Times, 10 mai 2020)! Cela pourrait par conséquent mener après la "reconstruction" à une amélioration de la situation financière (les banques, les cor-

porations) et une détérioration de l'économie (les secteurs de la production et des services aux opportunités d'investissement réduites), et à une augmentation du nombre de chômeurs et une aggravation des conditions de travail des salariés par rapport à la période pré-pandémique.

L'image du monde que nous avons et partageons est titubante et non renouvelable. Qui est prêt, et dans quelle mesure, à prendre une part dans la construction d'une "nouvelle" image ou dans le recollage des restes de l' "ancienne" et selon quelles motivations? Existe-t-il dans la situation actuelle un terrain pour l'effort créatif humain ou est-il plus fertile pour le désespoir mélancolique? La reconstruction entraînera-t-elle un émiettement de la vision du monde et le renforcement des particularismes ou les forces unificatrices imposeront-elles le vide de leurs intérêts? Quelles formes gagneront l'écoute et l'échange si nécessaires entre les différences et les cultures? Est-ce que la réflexion et l'introduction d'un "nouvel" ordre sanitaire, hygiénique, écologique, économique, social, genré, planétaire... sont possibles face au "rapport de forces" dans la constellation antérieure et actuelle? Qui en fondera une nouvelle et sur quelles bases?

Le monde post-pandémique s'offre à nous comme un espace enchanté d'observation anthropologique.

Traduit du serbo-croate par Nicolas Raljević

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Emir Habul

My experience of the restrictive measures introduced by the government in the second half of March in response to the pandemic has not been as punishment. I have used the opportunity of working *online* to make frequent visits to Fojnica, a spa resort some 50 km west of Sarajevo.

The blossoming fruit trees, the murmuring of the water in the channels that cut through the garden, the springtime greening of the surrounding hills and countryside, and the season of springtime garden tasks have made time in the country a balm to soul and body alike. In my youth, I had no time for talk of working in the garden. In my teenage and student days, nothing bored me more thoroughly than my uncle Asif's stories of gardening, choosing seedlings, and caring for plants. I told everyone at home that it was the most boring work in the world and that I would never have anything to do with it. Not merely did I break this "promise of my youth" long ago, but I have also become the most assiduous continuer of my late uncle's garden tasks: as soon as I sense that I'm talking to some with even the slightest interest, I corner them and discuss my garden with the passion of an addict, complaining of my quest for the tomatoes of my youth (today's have neither the taste nor the fragrance of the old varieties) and sharing my wisdom on the topic of organic growing.

In the age of the coronavirus and mandatory physical distancing, there is nothing finer than the delicious fatigue that comes after work in the garden, as one relaxes with a good book. The peak of satisfaction, however, is inspecting the garden and the plants' progress in the early morning hours. With the coronavirus far off somewhere!

Many Sarajevans have been following a similar prescription, returning to long abandoned villages or withdrawing to weekend cottages, and inspiring spiteful commentary on social networks:

- Why is the city so empty?
- Because the peasants have gone back to their villages!

An historical reflex – flight from the cities

Retiring to the country is hardly an invention of modernity. Since the 13th century, fear of plague epidemics has forced the rich to flee the towns. The countryside has thus long been recognised as a safe refuge from contagious disease. On the other hand, country life in itself also provided an important motive for leaving central European towns. One sees this clearly with Boccaccio's ladies and gentlemen in the *Decameron*. Lewis Mumford, in his classic *The City in History*, describes people fleeing Florence "because of corpses of the dead and the stink of the living for country villas on Mt. Fiesole, whose location is proof of how much the Etruscans appreciated healthy terrain."

In one of the better books about the city under Mt. Srđ, *Veliki vek Dubrovnika/Dubrovnik's Great Age*, Radovan Samardžić recounts how a plague epidemic during the second half of the 17th century caused the nobility and sea captains to flee the packed town, which the plague had entered, for their summer palaces in Slano, Zaton, on Pelješac, and on the surrounding islands, to wait for the contagion to pass. During the second half of the 17th century, the Republic of Dubrovnik built its Lazarette, where travelers had to spend 40 days before being allowed into the town. The archives provide evidence of how it was possible, with adequate payment, to avoid or shorten that period of residence, which was often enough precisely how the contagion managed to pass inside the walls of Dubrovnik.

The practice of escaping to the countryside during periods of epidemic was not unknown in Bosnia and Herzegovina either. In his autobiography, *My Generation*, a leading organiser of the 1941 uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Avdo Humo, wrote of his grandfather, starting with the year "of Bonaparte's march on Moscow" (1812), and describes the appearance of plague, brought by a Turkish soldier, which managed within a very short period of time to kill a third of the inhabitants of Mostar, who lived in tight-

ly packed neighbourhoods or *mahalas*. The Humo family (Avdo's grandfather was only three months old) took to its village in the region of Western Herzegovina to wait for the contagion to pass. That same century, plague harrowed the towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina on two more occasions, affecting the Muslim population, which lived tightly packed in the city mahalas, disproportionately.

Leafing through the book, I was reminded of something an older colleague used to say: One should only read the best books. And it is in such books that one finds, amongst other matter, descriptions of how people behaved as epidemics ravaged the country in waves and decimated the population, of their fatal consequences, of withdrawal into the countryside "until the evil passes", and of many other situations, with which to compare our own experiences avoiding the coronavirus in 2020.

Mula Mustafa Bašeskija's *Chronicle* is another such book that provides evidence of life in Sarajevo during the second half of the 18th century. He talks of plagues and epidemics in some 20 places. There was a major epidemic in Sarajevo in 1762/63. Interestingly, the chronicler did not approve of flight to the countryside. He left us his record of the epidemic in verse condemning the behaviour of his fellow townsfolk:

Only the ignorant take flight
from plague and our city;
while the truly devout stay patiently
and peacefully where they belong.

Agreeing with the devout view, Bašeskija [p. 61] concludes:

[...] he who believes, knows that there is no escaping destiny.

Most likely, it was the wealthier who could withdraw in this way to "vacation homes" around Sarajevo (the term he uses is more or less equivalent to "country houses") and wait for the epidemic to exhaust itself.

Reading Bašeskija and other good books (the Franciscan Nikola Lašvanin of Fojnica describing the plague in 1732; Bono Bonić and Jako Baltić, friars from Kraljeva Sutjeska, writing on the plague in 1783), helps one understand human powerlessness in the face of contagion and the scale of suffering in this country of ours. To form some sort of image for yourselves, try to imagine what Bosnia must have looked like in those days, with no trained

doctors or hospitals (Sarajevo got its first hospital only a hundred years later) or organised preventive measures.

Friar Nikola tells us that during the plague in his time, which lasted a decade, with interruptions, “there was not a city, town, or village in all of Bosnia that it did not decimate...” [p. 296]. At the beginning of 1732, the good annalist tells us, “all Bosnia fell ill” [p.205] and that “In large towns, like Sarajevo, Mostar, and Banjaluka, they buried around 300 people each day.” [p. 206] Lašvanin lived in the Franciscan monastery of the Holy Ghost in Fojnica, where he tell us that a single episode took “57 Christians and 1200 Turkish inhabitants,” though this seems a somewhat inflated number, given the population of Fojnica.

There are various sources for this plague. A letter to the Sultan, seeking help after a series of setbacks on the Ruso-Turkish and Austrian borders, in which Bosniaks had been killed, mentions the epidemic plague of 1732/3 that decimated Bosnia. The chief men of Bosnia stated that “it has put around 20,000 fighting men below ground.” [Imamović, 1995]

From the ancient chronicles, it is quite clear that plague appears in the wake of wars, migration, and famine, as Bogumil Hrabuk has treated in some detail in his writings. The Muslim population was the worst affected because it was so concentrated in towns. The best example is Sarajevo, which was both the largest town and the major commercial centre.

Bašeskija provides a more precise account of the approximately 15,000 people killed in the epidemic of 1762/63 by totting up the figures of dead for the 100 wards or *mahalas* that then existed in the town. This figure must be taken with more than a pinch of salt. If a mahala numbered at most forty households (and most were smaller), and a household had an average of seven members (given the high infant mortality of the age), then Sarajevo could hardly have had more than 28,000 inhabitants. We only begin to get more precise population numbers in the 19th century.

That would have been approximately half the population of the city at the time! Ten years later, the chronicler writes that plague appeared again. “After St. George’s day (an ancient Slavic holiday celebrated by members of all religious groups on 6 May), there were between 20 and 30 funerals a day celebrated at the

Imperial Mosque and the same number at the Bay's mosque." This wave, Bašeskija tells us, took some 8,000 souls!

But misery loves company. The chronicler also talks of years of drought, and of plagues of insects that devoured the leaves and shoots, of famine scourging Sarajevo, so that they "ground the dried fruit to use for flour." Friar Bono Bonić wrote in his *Annals* of the Monastery at Sutjeska that another plague raged in 1783.

The happiest part of history

With what we have learned about the epidemics of the past and their consequences and taking personal stock of the current pandemic, most of us would no doubt agree how lucky we are to live in the 21st-century! As Yuval Noah Harari has pointed out (*Homo Deus*, 2017), we are privileged inhabitants of Earth, precisely because we are living through the best period of human history: "in the last few decades we have managed to rein in famine, plague, and war.... For the first time in history, more people die today from eating too much than from eating too little."

The coronavirus pandemic and the epidemics of history are not really analogous or indeed comparable in any respect. Compared to past times, this pandemic has been a breeze. The infamous Spanish Flu, which followed the First World War, "killed between 50 million and 100 million people in less than a year." [*ibid.*] As of mid-May 2020, only around 2000 individuals had tested positive with Covid 19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the dead numbered just over 100. There are, of course, concrete personal destinies and the pain of the survivors behind each of these statistics. The good news is that by the second half of May the contagion was waning in Bosnia and Herzegovina, though epidemiologists were warning of a possible second wave in the autumn.

These statistics are rather better than for most other European countries, largely thanks to the measures taken, the population's social (self)discipline and awareness of the risk of contagion, but also to a large dose of luck. Fear too has contributed, as restrictive measures have been largely implemented without any need for coercion, as the population has avoided physical contact.

What lasting trace has the pandemic left behind it, what consequences, what shall we remember it by, and what compare it with?

The pandemic has been a major experience. Many have found their lifestyle changed, freedom of movement limited, and life reduced to their family circle, in ways that recall the wartime siege of Sarajevo from 1992 to 95. Perhaps it is comparable in certain ways, but there are many differences too. The crucial thing is that Sarajevo has not been at the centre of world attention during the pandemic. Nobody is particularly interested.

Twenty-eight years ago, Sarajevo was the main news on all television screens and in all the leading newspapers. Just a reminder: the city was besieged and shelled by the Bosnian Serb army, its population starved and slaughtered. Despite all of which, it fought on grimly to preserve its multi-ethnic paradigm.

But let us return to the coronavirus. What has the pandemic shown us?

We may mourn the now significantly undermined myth of friends in the Islamic world (princes from the Emirates and Turkey did send significant assistance to neighbouring countries), but it would seem material interests have won out.

Also undermined is the myth of solidarity.

One often hears cited Ivo Andrić's observation "that nothing binds people together so much as misfortune shared and happily survived", to which the Nobel prize winner dedicated a whole chapter in his novel, *The Bridge on the Drina*. During the time of siege and surviving on humanitarian aid, there was a widespread perception of equality and justice (there's not much but it's the same for everyone). Now, thanks to a ramshackle government and pervasive corruption, the plague time will be remembered for medical equipment procured at multiples of the real price.

The delegates and officers of the people do not share the people's destiny.

While more than 30,000 workers have been laid off and a still unconfirmed number of companies have experienced massive losses (entire sectors of the economy – transport, tourism, the hospitality sector, all closed as a result of preventive measures), the economic and financial crisis caused by the pandemic has barely touched those on the public payroll. HDZ delegates slashed to ribbons a proposal by the vice president of the Federation that members of Parliament should forego a payment of around €500.

The prime minister of Sarajevo Canton explained that they couldn't cut government employees' salaries, because "they are protected by the collective contract." Nor did the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Administrative Committee accept a call to withhold deputies' salaries when Parliament was not in session.

This lack of solidarity is not, however, a local specialty.

Abdelaali el-Badaoui, the founder of a Paris cooperative whose mission is to make healthcare accessible to all, has thundered over the social networks: "The coronavirus didn't create the social crisis. The virus simply showed the degree of misery so many people already live in today. In society's struggle with the virus, not everyone is equal, but they should be."

What else have we learned in the pandemic?

The fundamental lesson is that the world is so connected that both good and bad easily cross borders (particularly the latter); it's just a question of time. The pandemic crisscrossed the planet in less than two months. During the 15th century, according to Prof Fikret Karčić (*Oslobođenje*, April/May 2020), it took a virus that started in the steppes of Asia three years to reach Europe. The virus from Wuhan had already reached our country by mid-March.

International context

Our country has multiple connections with the world.

History teaches us that Bosnia and Herzegovina has survived within the framework of broader integrative structures – the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, not one but two Yugoslavias (the kingdom of the Karađorđević dynasty and Tito's) – and international agreements – the peace of Sremski Karlovci, when the country's borders were established, the Berlin Congress of 1878, when it was decided that the country would be entrusted to the dual monarchy to be administered, the Treaty of Versailles, which gave birth to the first Yugoslavia, and finally, the Dayton peace agreement of 1995. This agreement, still in force, was imposed by the great powers as an international solution, mechanically dividing the country on ethnic lines, deepening the nationalist projects, and rendering the institutions of government ineffective. As a state, Bosnia and Herzegovina has since then

been “hanging by a thread”, as separatist forces of varying degrees of intensity, overt and covert, do their systematic best to bury it.

Paradoxically, the argument offered by the advocates of separatism is the ineffectiveness of institutions (which they are busy undermining themselves). This was on full display during the time of emergency, when each entity made its decisions by and for itself. This was a direct consequence of the Dayton agreement, which created a weak state with two strong, albeit asymmetric entities – a centralised Republika Srpska and a fragmented Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, itself organised into 10 cantons. Because the war ended without a clear winner, leaving all the major wartime protagonists still on the political stage, a Frankenstein state bereft of internal sovereignty was produced and organised around three separate interests: the Bosniaks want an integrated state, the Croats want absolute autonomy and full authority in Croat majority areas, as well as full equality in the allocation of pooled functions at entity and state level, while the Serbs want to convert the Republika Srpska from an entity into a state. “At the appropriate international moment, the Republika Srpska will leave Bosnia and Herzegovina,” is the guiding political idea of the Bosnian Serb leader, Milorad Dodik.

Both corona and the constitutional structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina are results of broader global processes. And it is only within the framework of such global processes that a solution will be found. The world is so interconnected that global solutions are needed for global problems. Dayton cannot be changed or repealed by local actors alone, any more than the virus can be stopped by nationalist isolationism.

The opposite is in fact true. The search for and presumably the discovery of the vaccine will increase our mutual and global interdependence. History teaches that the campaign to vaccinate against smallpox was so successful that the World Health Organisation declared it eradicated in 1979. To finish, let us recall another point made by Harari, “Quarrels and conflicts will not isolate us from each other. To the contrary. They will only increase our interdependence. Even if humanity is very far from forming a harmonious community, we all belong to the one and only one civilisation.” (*21 Lessons for the 21st Century*).

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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SCIENCE, NEOLIBERALISM, AND EDUCATION IN A PANDEMIC AGE

Senadin Lavić

Science and the world of neoliberal fundamentalism

The globalisation process and the coronavirus pandemic have unmasked Neoliberalism's destructive relationship to science, education, and healthcare. Society's critical condition makes clear how the dominant politics of populism undermine science and subordinate it to questionable ideological models. We see fully revealed Bosnian society's lack of convincing social scientific analysis of these phenomena and processes or, indeed, of any generally humanist orientation in education or everyday life. Sociological analysis and the economic picture inform how the millions who make up a given population are oriented, both in peace and under conditions of crisis. Science is a necessity under both sets of conditions, as a pillar supporting society. Nothing can replace it – no ideology can substitute for what science alone can do. No serious politics can ignore or substitute for the rational conduct of human life through knowledge institutions, particularly not during a crisis. Faith in science flows from humanist assumptions about humanity, not from the neoliberal imperative of the rule of market capitalism. Global economic collapse always reveals how fundamentally anti-humanist market doctrines are, but the central problems of human life cannot be resolved through war! Man should be the measure of things – *homo mensura*!¹

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- 1 Henry A. Giroux, in his book *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, shows us how neoliberal politics, practice, and forms of material and symbolic violence have radically reshaped the mission and practice of higher education, profoundly and strategically changing generations of young people in their search for knowledge. Giroux believes that the neoliberal system of education is transforming the role of the universities in society

Scientific and technological progress and human progress are not the same thing.

The modern age's view of knowledge places it at the very heart of human life. But how should we define knowledge? Put simply, knowledge is a set of views or opinions on a given phenomenon or process in society or nature that can be expressed within a coherent scientific theory. Any such view or theory can be checked, analysed, and tested to the point of total falsification or rejection by those who are interested in scientific results, so long as they keep actively in mind that knowledge is always rooted in particular contexts.² Scientific knowledge grounds its views on the investigations and communication community of researchers, who "produce" views or expressions about things that we know in advance cannot be definitive but nonetheless have a certain degree of backup, precisely because they have been checked, tested, described, understood, and discussed by the members of a scientific communication community. Scientific knowledge is fragile and subject to constant verification. It can of course be caught up in "the global politics of education" under the aegis of neoliberalism, whose premises are unfortunately not humanist ones.

Under the life-threatening conditions called forth by the coronavirus pandemic, the myths of human omnipotence, natural-scientific rationality, and the technological supremacy associated with them have collapsed. This image developed in European history as part of the grand narrative of never-ending progress. Now, sceptical objections are suddenly popping up everywhere, as are viewpoints that testify to science's powerlessness in the face of the pandemic threat. It is disappointing, perhaps, but ultimately healing to realise that worldwide natural-scientific and technological progress do not of themselves entail human progress or promote the freedom, security, dignity, and moral capacity of human beings and their generosity towards other members of the human community. Such healing disappointment opens up the possibility that the market mechanism's collapse and that of the

and pleads for the university as a place of critical thought and study. (Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, Chicago: Haymarket Book, 2014)

2 Hans Jörg Sandkühler (Hrsg.), *Wissen. Wissenskulturen und die Kontextualität des Wissens*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2014.

ideology of infinite profit may actually allow some idea to be developed of different interpersonal relations and new economic and business relations.

Where constant insistence on the system as all and the individual as carried along by it is most prevalent one also finds interpersonal disappointment to be most common. People only learn after the fact that the system does not care about them, no matter that they have worked and paid all their lives to sustain its elements! The system spends people and has become its own purpose. At a certain point, it becomes a one-dimensional box in which nothing new can appear or speak! A totalitarian hegemonic order seeks the reduction of all voices to a single exclamation of the frightened. This is why media cynicism and irresponsible pit-bulls leap to dismember the different, non-identical, or heterodox thought that questions control, domination, subordination, or slavery.³

Crisis conditions, like the pandemic threat, have revealed to us how Homo Sapiens is caught in a *Gestell*, set in a framework that acts as a cage constructed by the capitalist form of rationality, which today prefers to be called neoliberal capitalism and is based upon the absolute measure of the market! The question that motivates us is “*what is it that, in the ‘neoliberal conception of freedom’, stands at the centre, man or capital?*”, and it rings out across the contemporary world. Neoliberalism may accuse the poor and unsuccessful of being insufficiently committed to the market or ready for market competition. In the same way, the neoliberal epidemiological model can always accuse the old and feeble, the sick, of failing to keep the isolation measures and being responsible for having been “caught” by the coronavirus and the Covid-19 plague. The system of neoliberal capitalism imposes information through controlled media, monitors the activity of individuals, guides our perceptions, prevents disavowal of the grand illusions and myths, tacitly supports the lies about human history that religious institutions have promoted, establishes rul-

3 Which is why one can, temporarily, send up a test balloon on “territories for religious groups”, in order to relativise the importance of the idea of a whole Bosnia. In this way, one can demonise everyone who has been trying to preserve and develop a discourse of Bosnian citizenship-based identity! Ethnic politics always claim that is the Others who reject a normal state.

ers to serve it, and ensures the domination of Big Pharma and the management of disease in humans...

Neoliberal capitalism subordinates to itself the entirety of human social life. It long ago scaled the factory walls to permeate every pore of life. It marched on the field of science, converting it into a tool of big capital and multinational corporations in an age of neoliberal capitalist fundamentalism for which the *market* is the measuring criterion of all human knowledge and activity. There is an associated *pedagogy* that persuades us that what we have is the best of all possible “education systems”. In Europe, an idea has surfaced of *open access to knowledge*. The principles of neoliberal capitalism have penetrated the University and scientific and academic work, so that the University is now subject to the same measure of performance as any other enterprise or facility in the capitalist constellation.

The University is “caught” in a bureaucratic network that imposes a set of procedures and rules on science that have nothing to do with it, but everything to do with covert control and administration of the University itself. The University has lost its autonomy and is no longer a place of free thought, of creative and critical intellect, or of the Enlightenment aspiration of a quest for knowledge. Controlled by bureaucracies, themselves informed by concrete political ideology and under orders from neoliberal capitalism that the market is to be the measure of knowledge and science, we have finally entered a cul-de-sac and lost all orientation. Which is why the question looms in front of us: what is the national university for, today? When science stagnates or treads water in a given society it is a sure sign that that society is no longer on the path towards civilisation and is in fact in great risk of falling victim to a colonial venture on the part of hegemonic projects. The loss of love for knowledge and truth is the beginning of the captivity of the mind.

The noticeable stagnation of scientific research is accompanied by a falling off of scientific rationality within society, which makes way for spontaneous ideological representations of things and events. Prejudices and cultural myths take the stage, reenchanting the world in superstition and irrationality. There is an obvious abuse of religion, which attempts to exclude science from social life. Religion seeks its own place and finds it in politics, together with power and authority – Agamben has noted how

it is migrating into science. Social ontology has remarked an onslaught of common-sense representations of matters related to humanity's social being. In poor societies, science, unfortunately, appears to be a place where religion confirms its dominance and ruthlessly excludes scholarship from any description of social and historical phenomena or bio-medical processes, reducing everything to a simple quasi-theological explanation for the superstitious and uneducated. Scholarship (and science) are forced into a relationship of vassaldom and thoroughly undermined in comparison to the "guardians of the sacred mysteries" and the hand-kissers of prominent priests.

In addition to its destructive effect on scientific rationality, the worldwide coronavirus pandemic has shown that the neoliberal attack on healthcare has placed dozens of states in great uncertainty (at great risk), and their citizens in danger. A clear need has arisen for the nation state and the international community to become more concerned about public health and seriously increase investment in social services. The health of millions of people depends upon having good doctors and the necessary equipment for them to do their jobs. The healthcare system in Bosnia has proven fragile and highly sensitive, but medical interventions themselves have been extremely effective, so that the overall picture in health is more a result of the efforts of individual doctors than of a well-functioning system of care.

In this process of major transformations in knowledge and of the associated societal forms, an awareness has been emerging that today's world finds itself at an epochal turning point and must seek a new path towards the future. There will certainly be change regarding the neoliberal capitalist leviathan, which has used the world as its playground, thanks to globalisation, and established an unimaginable hegemony, unprecedented in history. Alex Demirović has seen in neoliberalism a pragmatic ideology of destruction!⁴ In his book *The Neoliberal Hegemony/*

4 In his text on "Neoliberalismus und Hegemonie" Alex Demirović develops the idea of neoliberalism as a pragmatic ideology of destruction. He says: "I propose that neoliberalism be thought of as a practical ideology of the agent of capital. As such, it is above all (contra)revolutionary and destructive; it organises the transformation of social relations under capitalist conditions. Neoliberalism, even when it wants to organise a total way of life, is not a dependent ideology, in the sense of a comprehensive conceptual world-view for the Bourgeoisie; rather it formulates the economic

Neoliberalna hegemonija, Braco Kovačević points out: “very powerful processes of globalisation have led to a major reinforcement of the neoliberal project for organising society and so to erosion of the welfare state. Instead of government-provided social protection and social funding for culture, science, health-care, and education, neoliberalism has imposed a hegemony that minimises the role of the state and society and, under the strong influence of transnational capital, has introduced the market principle of social organisation, resulting in extreme increases in unemployment, misery, and poverty, falling living standards, and the creation of enormous differences in prosperity between the rich and poor at both the global and the local levels. And so we find that globalisation is at the same time glocalisation.”⁵

The question of humanity’s future in the age of the coronavirus pandemic or the question of humanism

Crude ethnic politics and populism have exploited the coronavirus pandemic crisis to pursue their own goals – revealing themselves as a result to be absolutely immoral forms of political action. Some populist leaders have used the state of emergency to monopolise every form of authority, and so made clear their lack of responsibility towards their fellow citizens.

and corporate interests of the bourgeoisie and reduces a way of life to just a few economic aspects. At the level of mass democracy in the welfare state, despite the crisis of state-level governance as a result of democratisation and concessions to a political and cultural situation one may consider subversive, late-bourgeois, and postmodern and to social forces that have engaged in the struggle over imposed knowledge, for new identities, and against colonialism, racism, and nationalism, to open up to social change and a different future requires witness to and reestablishment of the foundations of bourgeois government with a return to the rule of the market itself: the protection of private ownership over the means of production, legal regulations to create a stable horizon of entrepreneurial expectations, a generally high level of expectations of state protection of the market, and finally social development determined by the contingency of the market, viz. the denial of reason as conscious collective control over and direction of coexistence and freedom of competition as the principle of evolution itself.” (Alex Demirović, “Neoliberalismus und Hegemonie”, in: Christoph Butterwegge, Bettina Lösch, Ralf Ptak (Hrsg.) *Neoliberalismus. Analysen und Alternativen*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2008, 19)

5 Braco Kovačević, *Neoliberalna hegemonija*, Banjaluka: EDC, 2019, p. 11.

The Latin word *humanitas* means humanity, that which makes a human being a person, human dignity, philanthropy, love for one's neighbour, et cetera. During the 20th century, philosophical anthropology reached the insight that human beings are defined by our deficiency, by what we lack, full of faults, highly fragile, and powerless to compete with other species in open physical conflict, because we are so vulnerable, et cetera.⁶ This is why we have developed so many extensions to our being over the course of history as well as such confidence in our own rationality and methodical behaviour, which is what distinguishes us from most other species in nature. We call these creations of ours culture or human constructs within nature that allow us to survive. Within this culture of ours, we have created a number of images of ourselves through which we define ourselves. According to one cultural or civilisational pattern, we may be defined as beings of spirit, while in another we are beings of matter or earth, in a third beings of time, and in a fourth beings of obliviousness, et cetera. Behind such definitions there is always a single thought about or understanding of human beings, which corresponds to the form of the culture, to the level of knowledge attained, and the general development of human communities. This is always an expression of a profound metaphysics that stands behind the self-exposure of being in history! There is, however, no eternally given essence of human being that is self-identical across all cultures and peoples and times!

At this time of the coronavirus pandemic and Covid 19 plague, new questions are opening up regarding the true meaning of neoliberal capitalism's functioning, of the ideal of human freedom, humanism, and of future goals. The world as envisaged by neoliberal capitalism is a world without *homo humanus*. It appears, unfortunately, that our worth to neoliberal values lies in our being a being that satisfies its needs through the market and so acts as a consumer. This image of consumer man/*homo consumens* places us in front of a narrow circle of possible choices within the consumerist frame and extinguishes any need for liberation of our human potential or development of the *ideal of human freedom/autonomy* as the point of human living. Have we irretrievably lost the ideal of humanity as noble, merciful, benev-

6 See especially works by such authors as Max Scheler, Arnold Gehlen, Helmut Plessner, et cetera.

olent? If those characteristics disappear, will the human species die out, as happened with some of our near kin? How shall we in future determine our *humanitas* and what it is to be human?

Perspectives – the need to develop a Bosnian nation state

The age of the coronavirus pandemic has once again shown *the importance of the nation-state*. In recent decades, the heralds of neoliberal capitalism and the handlers of the many currents of globalisation have tendered the view that the end of the national state has come and that various forms of supranational association will very soon take the stage of history. Some have already sung the nation-state off the stage. We have, however, seen how quickly, overnight, national boundaries have come to the fore once again within Europe and across the world in attempts to provide protection from the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Once again it seems that the nation-state is the best operating system for political organisation for most citizens. Of course, this does not sit well with the requirements of new capitalist greed for a “free market” and profit. Nonetheless, the importance of the border has been revealed once again as a form of protection of space from misfortune and the enemy.

The coronavirus pandemic has not halted the epidemic virus of fascism in the Balkans, however, introduced into the post Yugoslav space in the 1990s, which has inflicted untold human suffering and misery. Which is what makes the question of the preservation of Bosnia and its continued development within the framework of the European cultural and historical context so crucial! The attack on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s and the associated genocide were government projects of the Milošević regime. But one should always remember that *Milošević was not alone*, and that in fact all the indications are of a state-organised Serbian course of action that extended both vertically and horizontally. He was, in fact, at the head of a legal and political aggressive and predatory organisation! This criminal regime organised, promoted, and carried out an attack on the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina that resulted in the creation of the so-called “Serb territory on the soil of Bosnia”, which, thanks to various machinations of the international community

and a series of staged negotiations, was in 1995 turned into an entity, in an attempt to legalise that criminal and genocidal territory publicly. It is not, however, *nota bene*, possible ever to normalise an act of genocide and crime, despite all the local and international deluders of the public and the staging of large-scale spectacular scenes of “peace achieved”. As human beings, we can never accept that the interpersonal order is created through crime and genocide! Nor can we ever forget that the Greater Serbian act of genocide continues to stand on a foundation of mass graves!

Under conditions where our neighbours’ anti-Bosnian politics continue, it is clear that half of Bosnia remains under occupation by the Greater Serbian wartime project of the 1990s, insofar as the peace agreement has not been honoured and there has been no turn away from the destruction of Bosnia. It is exceptionally important therefore to remember Bosnia’s borders and reject any attempts to decompose the fabric of Bosnia from within, through cross-border borrowings of identity from Serbia. It is clear that Bosnia and Herzegovina must change the current political system if the state is to be freed of neofascist ideologies and her citizens afforded the proper enjoyment of all their human rights and freedoms. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can only all experience equality within the framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a European nation-state that promotes the equality of all its citizens throughout the state. Current ethnic and religious advocacy of a consociational federalisation of the state are essentially replaying the wars of conquest and tribal ideologies of the 19th century. Consociational federalism and the narrative of so-called “constitutive peoples” represent an immoral and irresponsible attempt to have the situation created in Bosnia by genocide and war crimes recognised as reality on the ground and so create the hegemony of specific political groups and their political interests.

In such a political swamp, stirred up by various forms of neofascism, chauvinism, and primitive populism, one may begin to understand the fundamental importance of the idea that a Bosnian identity based on a Bosnian nation-state offers a political concept that teaches us that the state is more than a community of tribes. Bosnia must seek its measure of existence in the expanses opened up between the disappeared socialist model of life and that of capitalist economic activity, with all its new knowledge

and technologies. The citizens of Bosnia must be ceaselessly reminded that there are no “legitimate representatives of the constitutive peoples”, and those who claim to be are certainly incapable of guaranteeing anybody freedom, dignity, or their human rights. This is the crucial deception of ethnic politics and anti-Bosnian political activity. In European history, they hit upon the model of the nation-state as the only one that ensures these values. Bosnia needs a clear path to the future. In addition to the political model of the nation-state, today we also need to find a new model of the economic order capable of moving us past unrealistic representations of “socialist” or “capitalist” forms of economic life. The intention here is clear: to build on prior achievements and seek something new that can provide a qualitative move beyond the dogmas of socialist and capitalist economic and social forms of human life. Both these projects have proven to be impossible eschatological constructs that lead only to dystopian landscapes.

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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THE CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY AND CULTURE

STAND-UP TRAGEDY: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PANDEMIC FROM ISOLATION IN SARAJEVO

Almir Bašović

CAMILLE: (...) At some point we must remove our masks. Then, we shall see all around us, like in a room of mirrors, countless indestructible ancient sheepsheads, nothing more and nothing less.

George Büchner, *Danton's death*

The crown pandemic and the royal plague

Over the past few months, we have seen and heard our fill in the media of various “tragedies” associated with the coronavirus pandemic that has beset us. Given its propensity for doling out tragedy by the spadeful, there is a bitter irony in the corona or crown pandemic having received that name for the viral particles whose spikes suggest a crown. The very word pandemic suggests, etymologically, that this is an event of relevance to all the peoples of the planet, just as the events in tragedy take place in royal families but always have a relevance to the broadest social communities and are connected with cosmic principles. That bitter irony lies in this “crowned” virus having passed to human beings from animals, beings without a role in classical tragedy, but who were important enough to Aristophanes’ comedies for him to have created choruses of birds, frogs, and wasps... Unlike her sublime sister, tragedy, which posited the cosmos as her frame and celebrated order, old Attic comedy celebrated chaos as the life-giving principle, as a reminder that the harmony the *polis* celebrates in tragedy has little to do with realism, representing rather an ideal towards which society aspires. The last period in European culture capable of tragedy as a form ended when Jean Racine closed his dra-

matic oeuvre, in which the tragic hero confronts an indifferent God, and it would seem that the pandemic, an event of concern to our entire world, was also started by a fairly indifferent bat in a condition of hibernation, from whom the virus passed directly to human beings. Viruses had not been discovered in ancient Greece, and such sicknesses were still geographically limited, still epidemics, so that phenomena like the plague were associated with punishments sent by God to a city, like Apollo in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, that most famous of Greek tragedies.

In his *Histoire du théâtre*, Robert Pignarre writes: "Tragedy evokes the painful birth of order in both its forms: in the religious form (of the conflict of man and heaven) and in the political (the conflict of the individual and authority). At both levels, the discussion centres on the idea of the law."¹ In the case of our pandemic, it would appear that the conflict between man and heaven has been replaced by "conflict" between human beings and some far-off dark cave in China, so that what we are left with today of the idea of law in tragedy, as Pignarre defines it, is the political vision, the conflict between the individual and authority. This tragic vision is already set up in the introductory scene to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, in which the priest addresses Oedipus in front of the Palace, in the presence of the chorus, and talks of the plague that has attacked Thebes:

For the city, as you yourself see, is now sorely
vexed, and can no longer lift her head
from beneath the angry waves of death.
A blight has fallen on the fruitful blossoms of the land,
the herds among the pastures,
the barren pangs of women.
And the flaming god, the malign plague,
has swooped upon us, and ravages the town.²

Reminding Oedipus of the city's gratitude to him for having saved it from the terrifying Sphinx, the priest begs him to save it once more, reducing as he does so human life to the political aspect of authority:

1 R. Pignarre, *Povijest kazališta*, trans. Alka Škiljan, Zagreb, 1970, p. 22.

2 *Oedipus Rex*, lines 22-28, Storr translation, available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/oedipus.html>

With good omen you provided us that past happiness:
 show yourself the same now too,
 since if you are to rule this land just as you do now,
 it is better to be lord of men than of a wasteland.
 Neither walled town nor ship is anything,
 if it is empty and no men dwell within.³

It is a feature of dramatic characters in the closed form of drama, as Volker Klotz defines it, that they are at once individuals and functions, reacting as people but also always reflecting their role as fixed representatives of a particular world-view, so that they see not just themselves but their partners in terms of their roles.⁴ Sophocles' Oedipus accepts the role to which he is interpellated in the introduction and, more or less to the end of the tragedy, he views all the other dramatic personae very much through the role his position of authority imposes upon him. The *anagnorisis* or dramatic moment of recognition in this play has to do with revealing the culprit for the murder of Laius the son of Labdacus, on whose account Apollo has sent the plague to Thebes. It also has to do with Oedipus' awful discovery of his origin and the fact that he has in ignorance killed his own father and married his own mother. This recognition also has to do with the realisation that Oedipus is in fact not just a ruler but also and above all a human being, who are not to be called happy until they have seen their end...

In his text, *Pozorište ili o k(r)uženju otrova. Epidemijski apokrif*,⁵ Svetislav Jovanov draws attention to certain important things about the plague in Sophocles' tragedy, noting that Sophocles introduced significant changes to the original myth of Oedipus, including the motif of the epidemic, which corresponds to historical events and in particular the typhus epidemic in Athens at the time. By using the language of taboo for the plague to underline the misfortune of fictional Thebes, Sophocles was, according to Jovanov, clearly alluding within the tragedy to the depth of the crisis affecting his Athens, insofar as "the miasma of the crime" is not limited to Oedipus and his kin alone but is infect-

3 Ibid., lines 52-57.

4 V. Klotz, *Zatvorena i otvorena forma u drami*, trans. Drinka Gojković, Belgrade, 1995, p. 48-49.

5 S. Jovanov, *Pozorište ili o k(r)uženju otrova. Epidemijski apokrif*, Manuscript.

ing the entire area. This suggests that the tragedy confronts us not only with a tragic crisis in fictional Thebes but with the general dissolution of family and social values in Sophocles' Athens. (Today, one might say, in tune with the pandemic mode, that Sophocles was subtly warning, at the symbolic level, that his Athens was also a major cluster.)

Insofar as our situation with the coronavirus resembles that of Oedipus, for example by leading us to cover up the death of a close relative in veils of ignorance, this pandemic may also provide an opportunity for a certain degree of dramatic recognition (anagnorisis). Or, perhaps, we may give thought to why our situation seems so much more akin to comedy than tragedy. In his *Very Short Introduction to Tragedy*, Adrian Poole says the word tragedy affirms that *this* death is exceptional.⁶ So, it may make sense to ask whether any such form of exceptional death exists in *this* time of pandemic, when everything is converted into the terror of statistics and graphs, presented on a daily basis by journalists and analysts taking over the role of the Herald, and all too often taking an apparently perverse delight in that role?

Perhaps the comparison with tragedy is no longer possible because one crucial element is not possible. From Aristotle to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing to Emile Steiger, pathos has been considered the most important element of tragedy. Pathos is connected with how events are presented in drama, as it facilitates fellow-feeling with the existential situation of the tragic hero. Francis Fergusson points out that "The Sophoclean pathos can only be conveyed by the chorus and its existence, with its less than individual mode of being."⁷ Perhaps we should be looking at all these events associated with the pandemic from the outside, as was customary for most of the commediographic tradition, for the simple reason that the choir has had to fall silent. It is no longer permitted to go out in front of the Royal Palace, because, as we know, today the choir is in isolation.

Isolation and utopia

There is a certain irony in isolation having become one of the sacred words of our pandemic, since it is derived etymologically

6 A. Poole, *Tragedija. Sasvim kratak uvod*, preveo Nebojša Marić, Belgrade, 2011, p. 7.

7 F. Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater*, Princeton, 1949, p. 52.

from the Latin for island, which in turn suggests the phenomenon of utopia. Thomas More, creator of the genre (or more precisely, the individual whose book gave the genre its name) places his Utopia on an island, and geographical isolation has been a fundamental structural element of all later utopias. It is not without interest that at much the same time as More was dreaming of an ideal social order without private property or money, a society in which even the rulers could be replaced for bad behaviour, *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare's last play, also appeared, with its similar theme of the relationship between the individual and authority on an island setting.

The Tempest is built around Prospero's "direction" of events on a desert island to recover his usurped authority, but the "show" he puts on has the rhythm of a mediaeval miracle play. Nearly all the characters are led through the central theme of power via thematic segments whose shared pattern is: test-transgression-repentance-salvation. In his famous book, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, Jan Kott made a major contribution to undermining the tradition that considers the *Tempest* a sort of romantic utopia and a comedy with a happy end. He demonstrates convincingly that Prospero's final monologue, in which the ruler renounces his magical wand of power, can be read as an expression of despair by an individual who, in spite of having recovered his title successfully, has realised he cannot change history. Prospero's relinquishing of the magical wand, restores him fully to humanity and makes him a programmatic character for the modern drama, as defined by Peter Szondi:

The Drama of modernity came into being in the Renaissance. It was the result of a bold intellectual effort made by a newly self-conscious being, who after the collapse of the medieval world views sought to create an artistic reality within which he could fix and mirror himself on the basis of interpersonal relationships alone. Man entered the drama only as a fellow human being, so to speak. The sphere of the "between" seemed to be the essential part of his being, freedom and obligation, will and decision the most important of his attributes.⁸

It is strange how the pandemic has sensitized us to these characteristics of modern man, as set out in Szondi's definition of

8 P. Szondi, "Theory of the Modern Drama, parts I-II," *boundary*, 2, 11.3, *The Criticism of Peter Szondi*, Spring 1983, p. 194.

the modern drama. Because of physical distancing, which for some reason we call social, and in spite of the simultaneous multiplication of tools and ways of communicating through so-called social networks, we seem to have become suddenly aware that each of us is just such an *individual-amongst-others* and it seems to have become crucially important to us. Moreover, the coronavirus has suddenly taken away our trust in all our magical wands of technological progress, making the initial verses of Prospero's epilogue resonate that bit more clearly with us now:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint now, 'tis true.⁹

Indeed, this human frailty, which the pandemic has disclosed or reminded us of, may yet provide a reason for solidarity or some new utopia. Referring to the careful and persistent preservation of the tradition of utopian thought, in his political essay, *All Roads Lead to Utopia*, Ilija Trojanow writes:

Despite a system that rewards avarice and greed, we meet with acts of solidarity, mutual assistance, and shared solutions, every day. These small and great acts of generosity contribute more to the harmony of society than the profitable functioning of all the quantifiable processes that serve to secure power and wealth for a narrow stratum of people.¹⁰

Shakespeare's last play offers a form of commentary on the cynical optimism of those whose main concern during the pandemic has been to attain or hold onto power. At the beginning of *The Tempest*, characters who have just survived a shipwreck are busy conspiring against the king, preparing to kill him and take power in Milan, a place they may never see again, for all they know. It would seem that those who concern themselves with power during the pandemic are certain that enough people will survive for the towers and ships Sophocles' priest mentions to Oedipus to retain their value. In his essay on *The Tempest*, Kott writes that the attempted putsch in the desert island is in fact a

9 W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, available at <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/tempest/full.html>

10 I. Trojanow, "Svi putevi vode u Utopiju", trans. Vahidin Preljević, in *Život*, no. 3-4/2019, p. 56.

selfless act, one of pure madness, which he compares to the theft of bag of gold in the desert, amongst men condemned to die of thirst, adding: "The history of humankind is madness, but to show that madness, one must stage it on a desert isle."¹¹

Have not certain important forms of madness become visible in our world precisely during our time of isolation, and have not questions of social injustice taken on a rare currency? In his essay, Trojanow concludes that material inequality overdetermines political inequality and that the intimidated stratum compensates for its condition by viewing and reading dystopias and visions of the end of the world, because flight into imaginary fears makes it easier to avoid the real fight. Will the real fears of pandemic change this state of affairs? Because, as Trojanow says, it is those who have the privilege not to fight for their survival who allow the dystopias to creep over them.

White plague, black health

The great Sarajevo chronicler Mula Mustafa Bašeskija noted that the plague that scourged Sarajevo in the 18th century first appeared in the poorer *mahalas* or town wards, leading the citizens of quality to suppose it would pass them by. Reading the media reports that literally inundate us with information on this actor or that footballer having tested positive for the coronavirus, we could have been forgiven, at the beginning of the pandemic, for supposing that only the very rich were falling sick of this virus. In his play, *The White Plague*, Karel Čapek touches upon this relationship interestingly.

The basic dramatic situation in the play has to do with a pandemic caused by a virus, the titular white disease, which comes from China, just like ours today. Čapek's doctor, Galen, has found a cure but only wants to cure the poor and refuses to help the rich, calling on the rulers to renounce war first if they want him to help them against the disease. At the centre of the drama, which today we would term a near dystopian one, Čapek places a character who dreams of a world without war and so of a sort of utopia. In his preface, more timely now than when it was written, Čapek

11 J. Kott, *Šekspir naš savremenik*, trans. Petar Vujičić, Belgrade, 1963, pp. 192-193.

practically describes the situation today in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Amongst other things, he writes:

One of the most distinctive features of post-war mankind is a retreat from humanity. This word implies a pious respect for life and for human rights, a love for freedom and peace, the striving for truth and justice, and other ethical postulates which have been considered until now in the mentality of the European tradition as the purpose of human evolution. As is well known, in other countries and nations quite different traditions grew up. It is not a human being, but a class, a nation, a state, or a race that is the conveyer of all rights and is the sole object of respect, is sovereign: nothing is above it, and nothing can morally restrict its will or prerogatives. The state, the nation, and the regime is compressed within an all-powerful authority. The individual, with his freedom of spirit and conscience, with the right to live, with human self-determination, is completely subordinated, physically and morally, to the so-called group. In other words, the individual is dependent on an autocratic and imposed system.¹²

New wave, old questions

At the end of Sophocles tragedy, the *Oedipus Rex*, the chorus suggest a new beginning. Shakespeare ended his play, *The Tempest*, with Prospero's plea for forgiveness. At the end of *The White Plague*, Čapek offers us a glimmer of hope, through the characters of a pair of sincere and reasonable young men, representatives of the coming generation. When our pandemic subsides, we shall, it would seem, be left with only a few questions: Will there be a new wave of the pandemic? Will, in an inversion of Marx's famous formulation, farce repeat itself this time as tragedy? At the beginning of Sophocles tragedy, Oedipus tells the gathered citizenry of Thebes:

My piteous children, I know quite well
the desires with which you have come:
I know well that you all are sick, and though you are sick
I know well that there is not one of you who is as sick as I.
Your pain comes on each of you for himself alone,

12 Karel Čapek, Renata Flint, and Robert M. Philmus, "Preface to 'Bila Nemoc'," *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, March 2001, pp. 1-6.

and for no other, but my soul is in pain
at once for the city, for myself, and for you.¹³

If there is a new wave of the pandemic, will we find ourselves looking again at the same faces in the media, that made us laugh, so unintentionally, with their statements and their behaviour, a sort of improv, as it were? Will we find ourselves surprised once again by this mob of “stand-up tragedians” with their parodies of Oedipus, whose words seem not to bind them in any way? Shall we believe them if they start persuading us again how much they care for us all and that everything they do they do for our welfare? Shall we start wearing masks again to cover our faces, the sites of our uniqueness, and will those new masks succeed in hiding the fact that we long ago lost any sense not just of the tragic idea of the law but of good old-fashioned shame?

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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ON THE KUMRA DOVE, SARAJEVO TOWN HALL, AND SEEKING THE SIMURGH: CULTURAL HERITAGE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Amra Hadžimuhamedović

It was in China, late one moonless night,
the Simurgh first appeared to mortal sight.
He let a feather float down through the air
And rumours of his fame spread everywhere.
Throughout the world men separately conceived
An image of its shape, and all believed
Their private fantasies uniquely true!
(In China still this feather is on view,
Whence comes the saying you have heard, no doubt,
“Seek Knowledge, unto China seek it out.”)
Attar, 1984.

In the history of the reception of cultural heritage, one notes a systematic shift in the focus of attention from material to intangible bearers of value at the beginning of the 21st century. The roots of this change in approach lay in the deconstruction of modernist doctrine and the aspiration to base our dealings with heritage on an understanding of traditional value systems and the maintenance of social continuity. Over the past two decades, the theory of cultural heritage protection and conservation has undergone a revolution, based upon geographic, historical, and cultural contextualisation and on placing people at its heart. William Logan presents this shift, which runs through theory, doctrine, and practice, as due to our having realised that heritage is incarnated in people and not in inanimate objects (Logan 2007).

Since the UNESCO General Assembly adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003, far more weight has been given to the decisive importance of intangible components for material heritage, whether movable or not, and its influence over how we envisage, recreate, and protect living heritage in people-centred ways. Protecting and more particularly restoring and reconstructing cultural heritage in ways that focus on people, their destiny, and their welfare stem from the undeniable need we have for proof of continuity and community when recovering from social trauma, whether caused by wars or natural disasters. A diagram of heritage's dependence on heritage communities would show two overlapping circles, with heritage and the heritage community in irrefragable and constant relations of mutual constitution, development, and maintenance.¹

The perpetrators of war crimes in Bosnia, Mali, Kosovo, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, and other places noted for human suffering caused by armed conflict have clearly understood that destroying heritage helps destroy communities, just as destroying communities deprives heritage of its intangible carriers of value, causing it to disappear. The Bosnian experience of re-establishing destroyed heritage and its contribution to healing social trauma and progress towards a natural condition of justice and security has contributed significantly to an ongoing revolution in the global reception of cultural heritage and people-centred approaches to conservation.² Two concepts have dominated the discourse on cultural heritage at the global level: *living heritage* and the *people-centred approach to heritage*.

Living heritage entails thinking about cultural heritage in terms of the community directly identified with it, which sustains

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- 1 The concept of the *heritage community* was introduced and defined in article 2, point b of the Council of Europe *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, adopted in the Portuguese town of Faro in 2005, and so known as the *Faro Convention* – “a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.”
 - 2 The concept of a *people-centred approach to heritage*, is set out in ICROM's *People-Centred Approaches to the Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Living Heritage* and in various documents of the World Bank, UNESCO, and CURE. See bibliography.

and gradually adapts its functioning to changes in context, and so as a contribution to that community's sustainability. Heritage belongs to people, and people have an obligation to protect it but also the right to adapt it functionally and symbolically to their needs, so long as how the circles in the above mentioned diagram of the interdependence of heritage and the community are connected to each other allows them both to turn continuously. One can also define it in terms of a modified version of John Ruskin's well-known view on monuments, taking his first two sentences not as a prohibition but as a confirmation: "We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us." (1859, p. 187) Living heritage secures the connection with past and future generations, but we retain the full right to adapt them to our present needs, because they are ours, within limits set by the need to ensure continuity.

The original definition of living heritage, given by UNESCO in relation to the 2003 convention, only mentions intangible heritage, as borne, preserved, represented, and reinterpreted by people. The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) has broadened the definition to cover material heritage, in its programme on *People-centred approaches to the conservation of cultural heritage: living heritage*, stressing certain key characteristics: continuity of cultural expression, care for heritage, and immediate connection with the associated community (Court & Wijesuriya, 2015).

As soon as the pandemic was declared, ICCROM experts presented documents outlining the skills available to assess the impact of pandemic-caused conditions on museum, gallery, archive, library, and other similar collections, and on the communities that are the bearers and guardians of intangible heritage, as well as on the local economies that receive direct and indirect gains from managing heritage. A series of lectures and discussions was organised and made available to the professional public, presenting experiences from various parts of the world and on issues of significance for the future custody of heritage both during and after the pandemic.

ICCROM and UNESCO are the two most important international and intergovernmental organisations for developing cultural heritage protection strategy during the Covid 19 pandemic and

their activities have been grounded in the people-centred approach. Built and natural heritage and cultural landscapes remain somewhat on the margins of these activities, for the simple reason that there is no way to assess Covid 19's direct impact on them except through the management of protected areas. Reports that heritage vulnerability levels may in some cases have reduced, compared to pre-pandemic, reflects the fact that heritage, cultural landscapes, and natural heritage do not showcase in equally dramatic fashion the fate of the people and communities they are bound to and whose lives are just as much at risk from disease and income drying up as during natural disasters and armed conflict. There is certainly no reason to suppose that there will be no long-term negative fallout from the pandemic's dramatic impact on people and incomes in the cultural heritage protection sector.

The general view that the Covid 19 pandemic is different from better understood disasters, whose impact on heritage is more direct, generally considered proportional to the impact on human lives and social patterns, suggests we need to look at our approaches, concepts, and ways of acting again.

Have built cultural heritage, natural heritage, or cultural landscapes been included in any way in institutional action plans in Sarajevo during the Covid 19 crisis? Have tools been developed to assess their condition or set out ways of doing something? Have resources been developed for remote monitoring and threat warnings? Have inter-institutional protocols been established that include decision-making and implementation processes for measures for the protection, use, and interpretation of cultural heritage under conditions of limited physical contact? Has there been any assessment of the direct long-term impact of changes to the cultural heritage budget? Have unsupervised building works, illegal archaeological digs, or the unauthorised demolition of built heritage taken place while institutions have been working under changed circumstances? Has a list been drawn up of the most sensitive material and intangible heritage or of the needs of institutions that care for heritage with a view to mitigating the consequences of suspending their work? Has Sarajevo's cultural and natural heritage protection strategy anything to learn from post-pandemic solutions being sought in other parts of the world and collected and made publicly available by international organisations through modern media? What role has heritage to play in

managing a crisis that is directly affecting human beings? Does Sarajevo's heritage offer any internal basis for an approach that supports social stability and urban sustainability? Does the pandemic situation offer us a chance to rethink the role of cultural heritage? These questions form a basic framework for developing a cultural heritage management strategy for Sarajevo both during and after the Covid 19 crisis.

We will now look at some possible responses to questions of how to approach Sarajevo's cultural heritage and contribute to the worldwide discourse on protection with reference to two vignettes – the *kumra* or collared dove and Vijećnica (Sarajevo's Town Hall).

The first vignette is related to the quote given at the beginning of the text, which is from *The Conference of the Birds*, an epic composed by the Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar in the 12th century. Events that happened at the same time during the spring of 2020 refer us back to the allegory contained in this work. The birds, searching for a ruler, decide to journey across seven valleys – each of which is a metaphor for liberation from the causes of alienation and so for defragmentation – to the place where the mysterious Simurgh lives.

The hoopoe leads the other birds, one by one, on their journey through a story about people and their past. This bird, which used to inhabit the gardens and orchards of Sarajevo's houses, is known in Bosnia as Solomon's hoopoe. The stories from Attar's epic have penetrated Bosnian heritage deeply, in a variety of adapted forms, but generally without any direct knowledge of where they come from, just as there is a deep-rooted belief here that Solomon's hoopoe was the bird that conversed with God's prophet, Solomon, as reported in the Qur'an: "And Solomon was David's heir, and he said, 'Men, we have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given of everything; surely this is indeed the manifest bounty.'" (27:16)

In March 2020, as people shut themselves up in their houses, thanks to the Sarajevo Canton government's measures against the Covid 19 virus, the collared dove or *kumra* once again made itself heard in the Sarajevo neighbourhood of Koševo, after many years of silence. In Bosnian folk tradition, this bird is thought to be warning people, "Kupuj kruh!"/"Buy bread!", with its incessant three-syllable call that once filled the historical urban landscapes of Bosnia. The call of the *kumra* was once part of the cultural

idiom of Bosnian towns. Ornithological studies have shown that it is selective about which cities to build its nest in and that Sarajevo was, in the mid-20th century, its most northerly habitat in Bosnia (Rucner, 1952). Both the dove and Solomon's hoopoe historically nest close to people in our towns - the *kumra* in minarets, towers, roofs and tall cypresses, the hoopoe in gardens and orchards. This spring, as the leaves and blossoms were just appearing on the branches and people were confined to their homes, the silence was filled with the warbling not just of the *kumra* but of various birds whose song had for years been drowned out by the regular sounds of the human dominance of urban space.

I could not write this text on interpreting Bosnian cultural heritage in Sarajevo, at a time when professional discussions have been marked by an unprecedented global threat to human lives, incomes, and cultural and social patterns (ICCROM, 2020), without wondering whether those self-same social and cultural patterns themselves involve a certain betrayal of cultural heritage.

Sarajevo's historic core, which we may conditionally designate as the area bounded to the east by Bentbaša, to the west by Marin-dvor, to the north by Koševo and Sedrenik, and to the south by the slopes of Trebević, has retained certain characteristics of a garden city in its physical structure, with both individual and collective units of housing surrounded by greenery.

During the 17th century, Evlija Čelebija described Sarajevo as follows:

The northern, northeastern, and western sides of this high town, located on terrain crisscrossed by hills and valleys, with gentle slopes on both banks of the Miljacka, are covered by clusters of handsome and attractive houses of one or two storeys, with chimneys, and kitchen and pleasure gardens, spread out in the natural amphitheatres. (Čelebi 1967, 103)

The oldest part of Sarajevo's historic urban landscape came into being as a group of residential clusters, comprising a multiplicity of functionally, communicational, and visually separate areas, which correspond to Michel Foucault's definition of the fifth principle of heterotopia: each individual historical residential unit is physically separate from everything outside it and represents a world within a world (1984). While this typology of space, composed of heterotopias that are not mutually exclusive, has been lost in the period of modernity, green spaces that are

neither gardens nor parks have to some degree managed to preserve the character of a garden city.

That separate world of the Sarajevo residential unit provided all the necessary conditions for attaining harmony between people, buildings, and nature. Birds, bees, ants, different forms of fruit, trees, and plants populated Bosnian stories and Bosnian space and were invested with symbolic meanings and roles as the heralds of events and phenomena. Such traditions provided the backbone for the traditional Bosnian culture of rights, which has been maintained over the centuries by Bosnian heritage. It provides the basis for the strict social rule that forbids the killing of Solomon's hoopoe or driving away or harming the collared dove, that says certain trees should not be cut down or birds nests are not to be destroyed, et cetera. Husaga Čišić bears witness to cultural heritage on the relationship of the kumra dove and people in the Bosnian towns the dove chose for its home, using an example from Mostar: "Here, she enjoyed absolute immunity, because in the old days no one from Mostar would have held back from clipping you around the ear if you threw a stone or anything at her." (1991, 51)

This social law also held with regard to details in the built environment, of which I will only mention a few: one finds half-globe shaped indentations at the top of gravestones made to collect rainwater for the birds and bees to drink, just as one finds stones with similar indentations for the same reason placed in front of houses and mosques, and holes left in the gable walls or under the eaves to allow doves and bats into the attic space.

As people withdrew from Sarajevo's historic urban landscape into their homes in March 2020, it allowed the communities of animals and plants that make up, maintain, use, and contribute to that landscape and culture to revive quickly and spontaneously. The disproportionate and often contradictory impact of the Covid 19 crisis on people and their environment raises the question of how justified the people-centred approach to protecting cultural heritage really is.

The misconception that people can manage the planet has never found itself so globally dispersed over so short a period. The lesson to be learned from the pandemic situation is that putting people at the centre of our post-pandemic approach to heritage will suppress and put at risk any holism of action, as it shatters the unity of heritage and contributes to its depreciation.

Should we view the Covid 19 virus in symbolic terms as “the Simurgh’s feather, released into the moonless night in China”? In Attar’s epic, thirty birds set off on an allegorical journey based on the map of China, across valleys that symbolize overcoming the weaknesses leaderless communities and individuals face, until they reached their destination, where they recognised their king, the Simurgh, in their combined reflection on the surface of the lake. *Simurgh* is a compound Persian word, made up of *si* – thirty and *murgh* – bird.

An approach that replaced anthropocentricity with holism and balance, achieving a unity of people, nature, and cultural heritage, could help give cultural heritage a significant role in the post-pandemic reconciliation of human beings and nature. The need for such an approach has already been intimated in academic discussions, most often in the fields of cultural geography and cultural anthropology. For example, Amos Rapoport referred to his holistic studies as based on a Man-Environment approach (1976).

Possible plans for future action, conceptualisation and doctrinal formalisation based on the lessons and experiences of the Covid 19 pandemic could take the form of building upon research into climate change’s impact on cultural heritage and heritage’s inherent potential to reduce the risk such change represents for people and their surroundings. Such research and publications often refer to the holistic approach as the ecology of cultural heritage (Brabec & Chilton, 2015, and Rana, 1955). Ecology is formed from the Greek words *oikos* – house and *logos* – discourse or science, and it has the potential semantic reach to define heritage in a way that includes human beings while excluding anthropocentricity towards our built and natural habitats.

Experience in other parts of the world suggests that the need for new approaches comes directly from heritage communities themselves. In the complicated discussions over Maori rights to rivers and freshwater in New Zealand, two ontologies have faced off over the legal determination of the role of heritage communities in heritage – the modern approach, which posits the formal and legal possibility of ownership or usufruct of cultural goods, and the traditional Maori approach, which considers the community to be custodian of what our ancestors have left in our care. Denial of human superiority to the river within the traditional approach forms part of the Maori cultural universe and is evident

in the Maori refusal to seek rights over the river in court. The Whanganui River received the status of a legal person, to which people lent their voices for the process in court. This conceptual opposition of possession to care and the instrumental to the intrinsic value of cultural and natural heritage still does not allow a sufficiently reconciling interpenetration of the different ontologies to avoid the subordination of one to the other, even in this case from New Zealand (Salmond, 2014).

The kumra in our text is not presented as such a case, but as a signifier of something that points to the need for a revolution in how we think about heritage and the heritage community and the individual's place and role. As I write this, the kumra dove is making its voice heard, along with at least four other types of bird, below the window of my study – which has been my office and place of virtual professional meetings for the more than 60 days that global measures of physical distancing and isolation have been in implementation. The garden is the only area available to me for fieldwork, but changes in it have allowed me to draw conclusions with implications for the global situation. I don't know what the other birds that have exercised their right to return to my Sarajevo garden are, because before the pandemic I had not heard their warbling for so many years that I don't recognise it.

The Bosnian culture of rights recognises an obligation towards the kumra dove. Its right to be protected is inherent in Bosnian cultural tradition. Not one of the folktales that refer to its presence in the urban cultural landscape mentions any benefit to people as the reason for looking after and not hurting the bird.

The second vignette I want to use to show the place of Sarajevo's built heritage in public discourse during the time of the Covid 19 pandemic is Sarajevo's town hall, Vijećnica. The entirety of Sarajevo's cultural heritage has been reduced to Vijećnica's usefulness as a political tool. It is the only unit of our built heritage that has been included in public discourse during the period of the pandemic, and its interpretation has been the only heritage-related activity made in Sarajevo between 16 March and 16 May 2020.

Vijećnica is located at the heart of Sarajevo, in that part where the city's development began in the 15th century. It was built between 1892 and 1895 and its stylised Mamluk façade is a record of the Austro-Hungarian authorities' Orientalist fantasies of Bosnia and her people, which were physically close, but social-

ly distant. The various interpretations of it in works by Bosnian historians provide a record of years of academic confusion. Its destruction in August 1992 by incendiary rockets launched from weapons belonging to the Serb army, when books, manuscripts and documents of incalculable value from the National and University Library's collections burned, only serves to confirm that army and its ideologized leaders' Orientalist obsession with all traces of the dangerous "Turkish race", as they described the Muslims in Bosnia in their racial theories.

The spontaneous transformation of Vijećnica's ruins during and after the war into a stage for concerts, exhibitions, and encounters by artists from all round the world read a new meaning onto them and documented Sarajevo's cultural resistance to the siege and the power of fragmented heritage to keep the town alive. The reconstruction of Sarajevo's Vijećnica, which hid away all traces of its destruction, is blinding and documents the policy of the European Union, which financed the reconstruction, and the Bosnian government, which is to conceal and instrumentalise memory.

The completion of reconstruction works was marked on May 9 2014 with a 3D mapping projection onto the main façade, whose authors were seven artists from the Knapp studio. This covering over of the recently re-built walls with light, images, film, and documents was a symbolic reminder of the ephemeral nature of the material and the durability of memory. At no point in its history has Vijećnica not been at the heart of Sarajevo or a space where the city's strength is sublimated, as in this brief pixelization of its stone and demonstration of the durability of memory. How the content was presented and its interaction with the architecture meant the projection usurped the story of the building, its significance, destruction, and rebuilding, which has been silenced by reconstruction.

Vijećnica's monumental geographic, historical, and symbolic significance within Sarajevo's historic urban landscape was underlined by this overlapping of the physical façade by the projection, a palimpsest in which the projection nonetheless fades in the end and Vijećnica becomes a place of symbolisation of the destiny of the town, its people, and the triumph of its re-establishment out of dissolution.

The use of heritage as a background for projections is a well-known technique for interpreting and instrumentalizing cultural her-

itage. It has been applied to cathedrals in Rheims, Chartres, Amiens, Strasbourg, Notre Dame de Paris, Santiago di Compostela, the Duomo in Milan, as well as on the great Wall of China, the Opera House in Sydney, the Taj Mahal, and many others (Schmitt et al., 2020). Such projections may have artistic, educational, cultural, social, commercial, or political aspects. The content may be related to the building and contribute to its interpretation or may be totally unrelated and simply be using its significance and recognition factor to seal the message the projection contains (Nofal, et al., 2018).

During the Covid 19 crisis, 3D mapping of cultural heritage has become a tool of symbolic social connection in various parts of the world, as the obligation of physical distancing has become mandatory, but also of pointing out that concern for cultural heritage and cultural institutions must not be marginalised in the public sphere. Sarajevo's Vijećnica has only apparently become part of this global phenomenon through the mediation of 3D mapping.



Figure 1. The Italian flag projected onto Vijećnica, author Davorin Sekulić / Klix.ba

During the Covid 19 disaster, the town hall has shared the destiny of other cultural buildings and institutions, closed to visitors and denied income from ticket sales. Its front façade has become a canvas for political mapping. The building is once again fragmented, functionally, symbolically, and aesthetically. What benefit does heritage in Sarajevo draw from such projections onto

the façade of Vijećnica? As a monumental, well-positioned, and recognisable screen, during the time of Covid 19, Vijećnica has in reality been closed off in isolation and hidden behind a mask of diplomatic and political messaging. Showing the solidarity of the administration of the city of Sarajevo with countries where the virus has been most fatally active, Italy, Iran, Spain, and the US, by projections onto Vijećnica is a grotesque continuation of the reduction of its value to its economic and political usefulness.

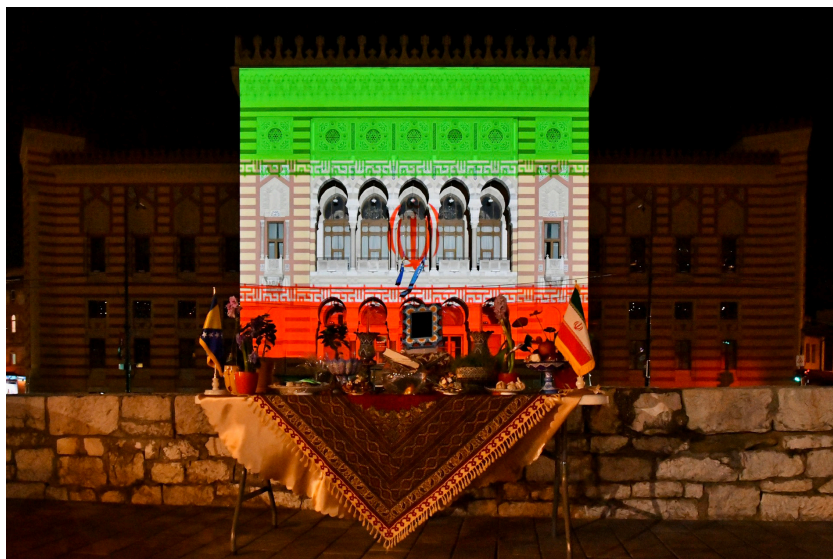


Figure 2. The Iranian national flag projected onto the façade of Vijećnica to show solidarity with Iranian victims of the coronavirus pandemic, author Ivan Šebalj, courtesy of Klix.ba



Figure 3. The Turkish national flag projected onto Vijećnica to show gratitude for donations of medical materials, courtesy of Klix.ba



Figure 4. The US flag projected onto Vijećnica to show solidarity for the victims of COVID-19, courtesy of Klix.ba



Figure 5. Projection of the Haggadah, author Ivan Šebalj, courtesy of Klix.ba

On the day that the Archbishop of Vrhbosnia Vinko Puljić served mass in Sarajevo cathedral in memory of killed members and supporters of the fascist Second World War Independent State Of Croatia and that the citizens of Sarajevo, still living the trauma of the siege at the end of the 20th century, took their protest against his act to the streets of the town, a photograph of the Sarajevo Haggadah, a priceless mediaeval Jewish codex from Spain, housed at the National Museum, was projected onto Vijećnica, in memory of the victims of fascism. The Sarajevo Haggadah was

saved during the Second World War, bearing witness to the supreme value of Bosnian heritage and culture, its inclusivity.

The National Museum, all its collections, and its employees have been left with neither income nor budget during the entire period of the Covid 19 pandemic. Political instrumentalisation of the Haggadah has here joined forces with the instrumentalisation of Vijećnica. Instead of an integrated holistic approach, instead of an ecology of cultural heritage, heritage, institutions, experts, and knowledge-bearers have been left outside of public politics' sphere of interest or responsibility. The intangible film of media sliding into kitsch over the main façade of Vijećnica is more indicative of the threat of cultural obliviousness than of any connection with the world. The pixelisation of the façade no longer symbolises the capacity of fragments to take on the meaning of the whole and facilitate recomposition and renewal so much as the suspicion that Bosnian heritage has been deprived of its custodians. The time for a conference of the birds and the journey to the Simurgh arrived long ago.

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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SARAJEVO AND THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SOCIAL CHANGE CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC

Ivo Marković

The coronavirus-Covid 19 pandemic of 2020 is an epoch-making turning point that intimates a new future in many areas of life. The human temptation to follow the line of least resistance can be problematic, because in times of peace and prosperity people relax and do not conduct their lives or the business of the world at the necessary level of responsibility. And so our world has begun to teeter towards increasing inequality that provokes social unrest, political conflict, environmental destruction, and irresponsible unpreparedness for catastrophe. Any number of scientists have predicted that humanity would face the threat of a pandemic of precisely the sort that has happened and that it could well be more dangerous than that of an atomic or any other form of weapon of mass destruction, but the individuals responsible, at the level of individual states and global institutions, have failed to react appropriately by preparing for such a threat, which is what has made this coronavirus pandemic such a destructive shock for our world. This lethargy and flight to where resistance is least is so powerful as to stifle all practical resistance, from individuals, peoples, and even civilisations, which then end in catastrophe and fail. The holy books are full of warnings, such as *Perditio tua ex te* (Hos 13.9) – *your damnation comes from you yourself*, of catastrophes caused by human fault and then conversion after the catastrophe. The corona crisis will also almost certainly shake humanity awake and initiate life changes that would have been unthinkable before the crisis.

Fundamental features of the world before the pandemic

1. Pervasive globalisation controlled by US-led liberal capitalism. Liberal capitalism's fundamental characteristic is greed. For all its greed, it remains the most efficient economic model, but it is nonetheless a terrible thing for humanity to be led by greed. It can be effective at enriching individuals and oligarchies, but deepens the gap between rich and poor, creating social conflict, and irresponsibly exploiting natural resources and destroying the environment.

2. Major international companies paying for politicians' campaigns, who in return listen to them, in practice ceding political control over the entire world and allowing them to alienate the sovereignty of states and enrich themselves by looting the state and disenfranchising the middle classes. This has provoked revolt amongst the impoverished middle classes against rich political elites around the world, prompting distrust in globalisation and democracy, and enclosure within collectivist ideological frameworks like nationalism, movements for national sovereignty, religious exclusivism, racism, and elitism. Such disturbed social relations have put disturbed politicians in power, from Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Orban in Hungary, Erdogan in Turkey, Putin in Russia, Vučić in Serbia, to Johnson in Britain, et cetera.

3. All the achievements of civilisation and landmarks of social democracy, human rights, personal liberties, freedom of religion and opinion, freedom of speech, political correctness, environmental protection programs and moves to protect life more generally, et cetera, began suddenly to look to the disenfranchised masses like tools of seduction for the political elites to manipulate with and use to keep them in subordination... As a result, irrational ideologies, conspiracy theories, fear, and distrust have welled up, to be taken comprehensive advantage of by right-wing populist parties, which then take power under idealised leaders with a tendency towards totalitarianism.

4. Globalisation, controlled by liberal capitalism, has created conflicts around the globe, started so-called proxy wars, whose outcomes have allowed it to impose its own interests, supported dictatorships that suited it, and so prevented progress in any number of states. An impoverished world gives birth to lots of children – the word proletarian comes from the Latin *proles* = progeny, and it literally means a man with many children. It is a sociological fact that the poorer strata in society tend to be less well-educated and that the less well-educated are less well-equipped for responsible parenthood, i.e. family planning, so that children are born on the basis of marital consensus rather than as instinctual impulse dictates. The Catholic church advocates responsible parenthood, but there is some controversy over the birth control methods to be applied (*Humanae vitae* 16). Right-wing nationalist and religious ideologies which are reproduced by natality are against any form of birth control or responsible parenting and advocate primitive and literal fertility programmes of uncontrolled birth-giving better suited to animal than human societies. Responsible parenting is a cultural achievement that requires a level of civilisation that is not present in countries with poorly educated populations. Such countries haven't the capacity to support such numbers, giving rise to a need for population movement.

There are around 70 million refugees from armed conflict and probably even more economic migrants in the world today, seeking better life chances in richer countries, particularly those where the birth rate is too low for the population to reproduce itself. The political manipulation of the issue of refugees and migrants within a context of people shutting themselves behind narrowly defined boundaries of sovereignty has turned our world into one of fear and distrust, with a loss of solidarity and compassion.

5. The feminist movement, the movement for gender partnership instead of patriarchal authority, has long been one of the more positive trends for humanity. It has inspired the LBTQI movement to pluck various forms of homosexual out of their despised position and integrate them as accepted members of humanity. The movement has gone from strength to strength, is well organised, and has achieved great social power, initiating a transformation of society, in which homosexuals can realise their

human rights and be integrated into society on an equal basis. It has, however, also come into conflict with the traditional patriarchal religions and ideologies, which are generally homophobic and cannot accept the rational arguments of the LGBTQI movement, which they see as an assault on the foundations of patriarchal society and against which they have responded with a plethora of conspiracy theories, such as that their goal is to destroy the family, impose homosexual culture, etc. It became a particular problem once the LGBTQI movement moved the previously accepted social boundaries and succeeded in its fight for the recognition of homosexual marriage, which has, from the perspective of the traditionalists, had a negative impact on the family's status as the central reproductive unit of society and on adoption without fully weighing what is best for the child, so that they now see them as having formed their own culture and moulding various aspects of social life to accord with it. This rapid penetration of conservative societies and more particularly of the traditional religions by homosexual culture has provoked a defensive reaction and a powerful counterpunch of stigmatisation of the LGBTQI movement as a form of civilisational decline and decadence. Closed populist ideologies have embraced this reaction enthusiastically, indulging in the demonisation of all forms of homosexuality and reinforcing social divisions and distrust.

6. Unprecedented progress in electronic and digital technologies has fostered the development of artificial intelligence and the stirrings of a fourth Industrial Revolution that will be able not just to create robots to replace manual human labour but co-bots – machines that communicate with people and can independently carry out the most complex of tasks. Like every revolution, this fourth Industrial Revolution is likely to create complex social conflicts, if these machines remain in the ownership of only a small group of the wealthy, with no participation by the majority of humankind. The first real effect of this fourth Industrial Revolution is, however, the unprecedented power it provides for the information-based manipulation of people. Previously, information-based manipulation has been economic and ideological, and humanity has developed feedback mechanisms against it and an increase in awareness that has reduced its impact. The new power of manipulation is based upon the analysis of enormous

quantities of data and mass media promotion whose goals and impact the masses of humankind have no way of discovering, so they fall victim to it. This new manipulation is already producing lack of confidence in democracy and in the media and is creating spiritual insecurity and distrust and even mental illness.

7. In the areas of spirituality, culture, and religion, globalisation has facilitated a pervasive interpenetration of cultures and dialogue between religions and confessions. In the encounter of cultures, it has become practically impossible for one culture to assimilate and destroy a less developed one, but cultures quite regularly interpenetrate, producing new forms.¹ The traditional religions have shifted from relations of exclusivity to mutual acceptance, in the form of an inclusivity that posits one's own religion as universal, while incorporating others as lower forms. From this untenable position, the religions struggle with their own dogmatic traditions to get to positions of equal mutual plural respect for all religions and worldviews. On the social and political terrain, there is an exceptionally conflictual relationship between the society-state complex and religion. In Islamic countries, social theocracy dominates, more or less equating the state and the religious authorities, which places other religions and worldviews in a subordinate, unequal, and not infrequently persecuted status. In democratic countries, there is an ongoing trend towards the political manipulation of the religions, particularly from the perspective of the ideologies of populist closure.

8. The greatest evil done by modern technical civilisation has been the catastrophic destruction of the environment and of life more generally. Many scientists believe that the coronavirus is a consequence of having disturbed the balance of nature. Nature does not like to be played with and can respond cruelly in areas where human beings interfere with her rhythms. The present technological basis of the world rests predominantly on burning fossil fuels, like coal and oil, and the rain forest, creating enormous quantities of carbon dioxide and other similar gases and giving rise to the greenhouse effect, endangering all life on earth, and representing a particular threat to certain animal and plant spe-

1 John Naisbitt, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*, Grand Central Publishing, 1988.

cies. A lack of human awareness and of limits to our power, that not everything that is possible is permissible, contribute to this threat to life. Humankind is not mature enough for the power it wields over the genetic manipulation of the bases of life, a power capable of producing such monstrous phenomena as the coronavirus. And so, euthanasia, birth control that does not respect the value of life, the slaughter of animals and the destruction of the plant world in disregard of animal and plant rights – these are all phenomena that indicate humanity's immaturity. Global agreements to protect life show clearly that the world at present lacks mechanisms for establishing a responsible and effective approach to protecting life.

9. Humankind lacks the institutions needed to deal with and manage all these major problems and conflicts created by liberal capitalism. Global institutions like the United Nations have been too much under the control of political power and subject to political influence and conflict, and have not even come close to facing up to the growing needs for coordination in a globalised world.

The world after the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

In his novel *La Peste*, Albert Camus wrote that people “thought that everything was still possible for them; which presupposed that pestilences were impossible. They went on doing business, arranged for journeys, and formed views. How should they have given a thought to anything like plague, which rules out any future?” The experience of the pandemic, which is causing people to die helplessly in mass numbers, has caused all of life to contract: “At first they told us, ‘We are closing the skies’ (what a term!). Afterward the beloved cafés were shut down, the theaters, the sports fields, the museums. The kindergartens, the schools, the universities. One after the other, humanity is extinguishing its lanterns.”² More than anything, the Covid 19 crisis may cause humanity to sober up, wise up a little, gain some self-awareness,

2 David Grossman, The plague is a formative event. When it fades, new possibilities will emerge, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-the-plague-is-a-formative-event-when-it-fades-new-possibilities-will-emerge-1.8687842> (24.3.2020).

and get people to understand, at least to some degree, that we can no longer live as we have, that we have to show solidarity, be fairer, more responsible towards all life. From stirrings which are already appearing it is possible at least to guess at and perhaps even partially predict what the future after the pandemic may hold.

1. All these predictions may be stymied if the corona crisis deepens or humanity does not overcome the pandemic but ends up forced to live with it as a way of life. In that case, one may really talk of a dark future for humanity, an increase in widespread poverty and a loss of orientation and self-awareness. Plagues are archetypal, deeply imprinted in our subconscious, and their very appearance has associations of a danger stronger than us, a sense that humanity has lost its limitless power and the autonomy it attained in the modern age. Should it prove impossible to open up social meeting places, like bars, cafés, and restaurants, and should digital shopping and the online marketplace increase significantly, and larger gatherings continue to be banned, this will create not just mass unemployment but personal dissatisfaction that will grow with the continued lack of social interaction, integration, and a general lack of socialisation. The mental disorders that the modern rhythm of life has created, like anxiety, loss of meaning, and a sense of individualistic loneliness, may find themselves deepening even further, though it is, honestly speaking, difficult to predict how an extension of the crisis may negatively affect the treatment of mental health.

2. We may legitimately expect the results of any turning point after the pandemic to manifest quickly in such phenomena as mass unemployment, hunger, and poverty, so that the small number of extremely rich individuals will not be able to hold onto their wealth. Insofar as every great fortune is a result of unjust relations and so of injustice, it would not be good for them to hold onto their wealth out of pure selfishness, as it could provoke social explosions. The multitude of the impoverished will certainly push for better protection of workers' rights, whether by greater participation in the ownership of digital apparatuses and for a more just division of profits. Rich countries have already shown responsibility by distributing substantial economic assistance to undeveloped countries for economic renewal and in

humanitarian aid. Solidarity is a natural human phenomenon which grows the more we encounter suffering, and we may legitimately expect it to outgrow the panic that leads to closure within the human herd.

3. The most powerful effect the corona crisis has created has been the wholesale transfer of many aspects of life onto the Internet. The Internet is certainly a superb technological achievement which humanity has not yet taken anything like as far as the potential it offers. Many offices have already been replaced by house offices and workplaces transferred to people's homes. Zoom conferences, online classes, schools, faculties, and projects, like the one for which this paper has been written, online stores, transition to digital payment and the withdrawal of cash from circulation, medicine, Internet communications, religious practice, all these areas and more have taken an irreversible step into the world of digital communications.

4. An equally impactful change caused by the corona crisis has been the reduction in the burning of fossil fuels and just a few months have been enough for nature to show signs of recovery: the ozone hole is closing, the production of carbon gases has been reduced, the destruction of the rainforests has paused, and animals have had living space returned to them. One may legitimately expect humankind to invest far more heavily in renewable sources of energy and conservation. One may also legitimately expect humanity to adopt ethical and legal norms and set proper boundaries to its scientific power, particularly in the area of genetic manipulation and of the protection of all life, more generally.

5. We may certainly expect the world order to be largely reconstituted and for humankind to create new global institutions that will be able to respond to the challenges of globalisation. Naturally, there is always a threat that some other power will assume lordship over globalisation in place of liberal capitalism, China perhaps, so that the world is once again exposed to selfish diktat rather than a balance of interests. The fact that liberal capitalism, which used greed as the motor of the economy, was born in the Anglo-Saxon world reflects poorly on that civilisation. It is

fair to ask which civilisation will take over global leadership. The collectivist culture of China does not have sufficient understanding for the scope of human rights and liberties or for individual human dignity, for which European civilisation has always fought. It is therefore important that European civilisation not lose its necessary influence on shaping our world if we are to avoid a repeat of such catastrophic experiences as fascism and communism.

6. Information-based cyber manipulation is a major threat to humanity that the corona crisis may well reinforce. The current return of totalitarian regimes around the world has enabled new despots to turn digital data into a tool for ruling over people. For example, testing for the virus can also be used to gather enormous quantities of genetic data about people. Similarly, creating a vaccine could provide an opportunity to inject people with reagents that would allow their movements to be monitored, along with their health, and so forth. Even just possession of the bare minimum of technical tools, like mobile phones, computers, the Internet, or inserting chips into the human body, can be of great service to unethical forms of rule over people.

7. Our individualistic civilisation has largely forgotten that human beings are necessarily social and relational beings, whose centre does not lie within themselves, but in relation to those they love. As our civilisation has developed in this direction, it has brought about a forgetting of this closeness to people without whom the individual cannot come into being or develop and grow or live. The present trend of retreat to our homes may help restore our awareness of the importance of other people, and increase our ability as human beings to be higher beings of love, improve the quality of our family relations, and create a better environment for our children to grow up in.

The fate of culture, religion, and sport after the corona crisis

There is one thing that links culture, religion, and sport, and that is our leaving everyday life for an environment in which our forgotten and suppressed powers, abilities, and needs literally

explode. In his book *Homo Ludens*,³ Johan Huizinga discovered for us the importance of the playground for play, an insight developed by H.G. Gadamer. In play, the player steps outside the self, “loses himself in the game,”⁴ ... “In the game, all the meaningful relations which render human life active and secure are not so much excluded as curiously suspended.”⁵ This deviation may be seen in the fact that “human play seeks its own playgrounds... which position that play in a world that is closed off from the world of interests.”⁶ So, just as play seeks a playground, art seeks galleries, museums, theatres, concert halls, while for religion places dedicated to our relations with God are equally important. During the corona crisis, sport and religion have largely transferred onto the Internet, and culture even more so. It is possible that in the long-term the stadiums may remain empty and sport lovers learn to watch competitions on screen. While churches, mosques, synagogues, pagodas, and other similar sacred places have been closed, religious rituals and services have largely migrated to the Internet and people have learned to live their intimate faith within themselves and in an ever-closer community of believers within their family circle and among friends. After the coronavirus, culture will probably display the following characteristics:

1. Culture will move wholesale to the Internet. Just as the pandemic has strengthened the presence of the Internet in our lives, it fosters the integration of culture into global life and the world will surely be more powerfully enriched by culture. Even before the corona crisis, museums, galleries, and particularly video culture, theatre, and music had an extensive presence on the Internet. Art will no longer be able to survive or carry out its mission without the Internet, and all exhibitions, shows, and concerts will simply have to be available on the Internet to survive and be effective.

3 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens, A study of the play element in culture*, Beacon Press, Boston 1955. He established the use of the concept with reference to a fundamental feature of human beings.

4 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, J.C.B. Mohr Tübingen 1965, 97.

5 Gadamer, 97-98.

6 Gadamer, 102.

2. While the entire world will enjoy the fruits of culture and culture will become profitable on the Internet, because on the Internet anything that circulates is profitable to somebody, the artists and creatives will be short-changed, robbed in the allocation of profits from culture. The owners of Internet content will literally loot culture, as they do now.
3. Consequently, impoverished and disenfranchised cultural workers face a battle to ensure that cultural policy manages to at least some degree to reclaim part of the profit from the trade in culture on the Internet. It is to be expected that social support for culture will also be measured in terms of cultural content present on the Internet.

The cultural politics of Sarajevo after the pandemic

The city of Sarajevo has taken up residence in world memory as the European Jerusalem, because religions, cultures, and civilisations meet there, and as a town under siege that defended itself through culture and to which leading artists came to defend civilisation with culture rather than with weapons. Because of its multicultural nature, Sarajevo has proven itself through its strong artistic and creative power. This is all reflected in the tourism that has become a major economic lifeline for the city. If Sarajevo wants to retain and promote its unique identity, built up through bloody struggle over the centuries and developed through a spiritually interwoven life, it must take due account of art and of spiritual diversity as the most important aspects of life here. Sarajevo's task in this regard should be based on the following programmes:

1. Sarajevo must have excellent research and teaching university centres – and it is important to stress that teaching centres cannot be excellent if they are not also centres of scientific and academic research. In practice that means a Faculty of Arts or Philosophy with all the necessary constituent disciplines, an excellent Academy of music, an Academy of performing arts, an excellent theatre, a Philharmonic with its own concert hall, a film studio, and all the appropriate more popular forms of the less sophisticated arts of entertainment.
2. Not just Sarajevo but Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole must give sufficient weight to the fact that they lite-

rally are naturally creative areas because they are areas of encounter between different forms of spirituality and interests. This means that Bosnia and Herzegovina has a solid basis for scientific and academic research where art, science, and more generally spirituality can influence each other. Such creative initiatives and cooperation could have a powerful impact on reconciliation and on building a dynamic democratic society. All educational fields should have their own research centres with concrete academic and scientific programmes.

3. It is important that the city of Sarajevo support artistic creativity, and not just copycat reproduction. It should incentivise artists to create works of art, to compose, write, and film.
4. To maintain such a high and dynamic level of cultural creativity, the city must develop its artistic links with other cities and states and build up the appropriate infrastructure.
5. Appropriate weight must also be given to the fact that the religions have strong links through their spirituality to art and that cooperation between urban artistic categories and religious centres of spirituality can be a powerful stimulus to artistic creation and religious spirituality.
6. Sarajevo should develop the understanding that art is not as expensive as it may seem at first, because its impact is reflected in multiple ways on the economy of the town.
7. All artistic life in the town should be represented in multiple languages on the Internet. The accessibility of art on the Internet should be one of the criteria for social evaluation and support to particular branches of art.

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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THE EXPERIENCE OF PAIN AND DEATH IN BOSNIAK ORAL POETRY

Mirsad Kunić

Bosniak oral poetry, like that of other traditions, has treated almost every possible topic – joy and sorrow, fortune and misfortune, pain and wellbeing, love and hate, life and death, the family and all manner of relations within it, being born and growing up, dying and passing on to the next world, heroism and the overcoming of obstacles, facing oneself and others, and gender relations – leaving little new for written literature to offer. Still, written forms did appear and spread and came to dominate cultural space, finding reasons for their existence in the various ways in which they affect the readers' awareness. When we juxtapose the oral and the written in this way and examine their effectiveness, we find that oral literature found its *raison d'être* in the need to put the world into language, to describe events and experiences in words, and to reproduce to the listener, while also producing. Its mission was to win over the listener, not with an idea or ideology but with skill of formulation. In general, written literature was initially fated to be uninventive but paradoxically developed, like the rest of modern civilisation, on the principle of invention and innovation, striving to make up for its initial handicap by involving the reader in an endless process of individual and collective identification. On the other hand, it compensated for its original inability to encompass reality by focusing on its relationship to that coverage and indeed built entire strategies upon it. Within this system of relations, the position of the writer was and remains crucial, but that is not the topic of this article.

The oral poet of either gender had the ambition of encompassing within language the world around and the world within. The external is, by its very nature, tied to space and time and, as

such, reducible to events. It finds its formulation in epic poetry, gendered as masculine. Encounter with the external led to the creation of a no less complex internal world, however, freed from spatial and temporal limitations, which found its oral poetic formulation in lyric and lyric-epic poetry, gendered as feminine. When we turn to attempts to treat the all-encompassing external as something that elicits a feeling of pain or what we might call the experience of pain, the absence of such elements in epic and their presence in lyrical and lyrical-epic poetry become immediately apparent. The cultural context has deprived the hero of the epic tradition – and the oral poet and the listeners to his performance – of the possibility of such an encounter with reality, while, conversely, endowing the heroine – the oral poetess, her heroine and the female listener of her performance – with this experience and the possibility of escaping spatial and temporal limitations.

The experience of pain, and so of death, is thus relegated to female oral poetry, lyrical and lyrical-epic, for, while death also features in the male agonal vision of the world, it is only as death, without the experience of pain, since pain does not fit into the agonal world-view. Much, though not enough, has been written about the male encounter with death in Bosniak and South Slavic epic poetry.

Out of the wealth of highly diverse oral poetry that touches on the experience of pain, we will now focus on three motif variations we consider paradigmatic – pain as longing, pain caused by incantation or curse, and incurable pain.

Incurable Pain

The oral poetess dealt with what one might term a wide range of life experiences. This was simply inevitable insofar as her mission was to encompass the world and everything in it within language. And that was indeed the mission of oral literature and the reason it has been able to provide us with such precious poetry. This meant that situations involving facing the severest of and even incurable diseases had to be dealt with in the songs, where they are generally referred to as *moria*, plague, or blight (anthrax)¹. Probably of Italian origin, the word *moria* was meant to invoke

1 In Kurtagić's collection, song 90, *Death of the Ajkuna Maiden*, is about the death of a maiden by anthrax.

by both sound and meaning all diseases, known and unknown, with a fatal outcome². Regardless of how it was termed, one thing is certain about this class of misfortune – the incontestability of their origin and the tragedy of their outcome, which put them in stark contrast to the vulnerability and transience of the human, compared at least to the inviolability and absolute power of the divine. The inexorability of this truth is told with painful simplicity in the following decasyllabic couplets – *Bog naredi od Boga moriju / Pa pomori devet sokolova* [God ordered God's moria / To strike down ten hawks] (Kurtagić, Book I, song 95)³ and *Pomoli se od Boga morija / Da umori Hasanaginicu* [God's moria appeared / To strike down Hasanaginica] (song 118). The truth thus told necessarily correlates with denotative precision. Vulnerable and transient humanity is allowed to repeat the truth within its existence between the beginning and the end and within language, which is open to all rhythmic and stylistic repetition. The truth of the *moria* remains indisputable even when a different scenario is attempted or achieved: *Nemoj mene, od Boga morijo / Nemoj mene mlade umoriti / Ven umori moga Hasanagu* [Not me, God's moria / Do not strike me down young / Strike down my Hasanaga] (song 118).

Pain Caused by a Curse

The curse is a human act deriving from the human desire to conjure evil upon the recipient. It rests on the firm belief of the speaker in the ability to achieve a settling of accounts in this world. According to its encyclopaedia definition, it relies on faith in the magical power of language and, we would add, on faith in the divine power of language. Its absolute satisfiability is achieved thanks to an unmistakable sense of justice, which may be correlated with the fact that this is wholly orally expressed being. By contrast, the being of the letter, which we have all become, cannot achieve such justice, and the culture of literacy, to which the being of orality has irrevocably transferred, is to “blame”.

2 Most probably from the Italian *morte* meaning *death*.

3 All examples cited in the article are from Muharem Kurtagić's collection, *Muslim Folk Songs I-VI*, which is kept in the archives of the *Matica Hrvatska* in Zagreb.

So, whether we call it language's magical or its divine power, the philosophers would say it is language's transcendental origin and, at the same time, its ability to provide insight into the transcendent. The ancient man of orality found a pragmatic solution to further materialise this faith magically/divinely through acts of repetition. The man of letters, such as Muharem Kurtagić, the collector who noted down these songs, achieved this by writing the words in rhythmic units, verses, available for all manner of stylisations. Kurtagić wrote down these songs from oral poetesses, whose names he duly noted beneath each song, thereby expressing respect towards those who knew the truth of language that justice can be achieved by sending out a curse. We hear about it from nine brothers upon whom God has sent the *moria* and who explain to their mother the real reason for their dying:

*Nije nama crna zemlja teška
Nisu teške daske šimširove
Selam kaži našim jaranima
Što gledaju neka uzimaju
Teška j', majko, divojačka kletva*

[It is not the black earth that lies heavy
It is not the boxwood planks that lie heavy
Send our greetings to our friends
Let them take what they will
It is the maiden's curse, mother, that is heavy]
(Kurtagić, Book I, song 95)

In this example, the curse is not understood only as the cause of death, but also of further suffering in the afterlife.

Pain as Longing

As we move through the examples from Kurtagić's collection, we move from the purely divine and the divine-human to the purely human. This path moves us along a vertical axis that descends, and the channel within which this journey takes place is language, whose origin and power we must not lose sight of. Delving into language, as an evolutionary, but also an everyday ritual, necessarily focuses all our attention on its (stylistic) pos-

sibilities, which are not small, and one of them is multiplication and conveyance of meaning. Focusing on language creates the precondition to activate the stylistic and semantic possibilities of language, thereby allowing us to escape the difficult reality into a relaxed space before the fall – which is upwards.

In his collection, Kurtagić notes two variants of the song *Čudna jada od Mostara grada* [Mostar Town, Woe of Mine], better known for their musical iterations, primarily by Himzo Polovina, but also in more contemporary arrangements by younger performers. Both songs, numbers 91 and 143 in Book I, are imagined as conversations between a worried mother and her daughter “pining” for an absent sweetheart. In the first song, the only remedy for Biba’s love ache is to be found in their final encounter and bodily union, while in the other, the love ache develops into a state of illness from which there is no escape. The noun “bol” [pain], which in our usage takes the non-standard feminine gender, in the first case takes on connotatively the meaning usually associated with the phrase for amorous longing or yearning, while in the second song this meaning is abandoned and it reverts to its literal meaning.

With these three syntagms – incurable pain, pain caused by a curse, and pain as longing – we have endeavoured to cover some of the points at which world/reality and oral poetry meet, using examples from Muharem Kurtagić’s collection of *Muslim Folk Songs*. Thus ordered, the syntagms reveal the paradigmatic vertical axis of God-language-man, where language appears at the point of intersection between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic. Man has intensified his being in language and through language by striving to rise up again, using the stylising possibilities of language, including the rhythmic effects of repeating, among other things, divine truths, and the possibility of escaping denotational restrictions into a space of multiplication and conveyance of meaning. By focusing on three variations of the experience of pain and the simultaneous awareness of how man may be derived from divine being and his complete situation in language, we have tried to recognise man’s propensity for ascent. While seemingly moving away from the Origin through language, as we have shown in our examples, the movement upwards becomes a return to the Origin. Pain as metaphor offers a salvation for that escape.

If we wish to further stylise the description of pain in oral Bosniak poetry, then we find the following solutions:

1. The cruel and tragic truth of incurable pain is accepted through initial and final repetitions of the truth about man's transience/mortality, which can stylistically be marked by the syntagma of pain as anaphora and epiphora, or as epanalepsis.
2. Finding itself with one foot on the ground and the other in the air, the being of orality is in a position to test its sense of justice by invoking God's punishment on the perpetrator of the injustice and, having received a positive answer, this is then manifested as pain caused by a curse, as the truth of congruence between man's wish and God's command. There is nothing left but to repeat consequential truths and for us to recall that repetition pain as epiphora.
3. Escaping from unequivocal demarcation into a space of contextual adoption of new meaning, the noun "pain" becomes able to encompass an experience that is not literally painful, but, on the contrary, completely open to the joy of giving oneself to the world and taking the world into oneself, which leads us to associate that type of pain with metaphor – pain as metaphor.

Anaphoric-epiphoric and epiphoric rituals of repetition and metaphoric ascents to a previous state have, in addition to their own innate recognisability, found a certain grace of formulation in literary tropes: pain as anaphora and epiphora (epanalepsis), as one moves from ballad towards tragedy, and pain as metaphor in the more melodramatic forms of the romance and the *sevdalinka*. In conclusion, the three variations of pain in our oral tradition cover both poles of man's overall being and further support our thesis of the comprehensive coverage of reality.

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

Source

Kurtagić, Muharem, *Muslimanske narodne pjesme I-VI* [Muslim Folk Songs I-VI], manuscript collection.

USING CORONAVIRUS AGAINST CIVIL RIGHTS AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Mehmed Agović

A characteristic of all major crises that cause a state of emergency in a country or community, such as coups, wars, natural disasters, or the current COVID-19 pandemic, is their impact on the role and behavior of the authorities and how they treat their citizens. That is when officials display their true nature and their tendencies towards autocratic decision-making “in the interest of the public” and for their own good. The first step consists of declaring a state of emergency or, in a milder form, a state of crisis, which entails suspension of democracy and the functioning of state institutions and a concentration of uncontrolled power in the hands of one or a very small number of people, who then translate their decisions into laws. Apart from suspending democracy, which is usually done for undefined periods of time, human rights and liberties suffer, and there are limitations to media freedom. For authorities with an autocratic approach, it is imperative that the public not know what they are doing during the state of emergency and that their procedures and regulations are not exposed to public scrutiny.

Freedom of Speech as the First Victim

There have been many examples around the globe of the (mis)use of the pandemic as an alibi for autocrats to implement their programs and strengthen their power. The Russian government has introduced various measures of censorship and surveillance, and President Vladimir Putin has happily used the situation to carry out a set of constitutional amendments that allow him to

extend his reign until 2036.¹ When he requested this from parliament, anti-corruption activists called for protests, but a few hours later all public gatherings were banned, to counter the threat of spreading the coronavirus. In Turkey, around 400 people were arrested for alleged provocative and alarming posts on social media about Covid-19. The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán suspended democratic institutions without hesitation, and the ruling party, Fidesz, under the auspices of the pandemic, passed a bill in parliament that suspended citizens' human rights, including to freedom of speech. Media were placed under complete control of the government, including the public broadcaster and social media. Prime Minister Orbán legally received unlimited authority. As a result, he was able to issue executive orders and, for example, imprison the authors of articles he deemed not in the interest of the ruling party's politics for up to five years. Many countries around the world have taken measures that have been seen as "normal" in crisis situations. The most widespread has been isolating citizens in their homes as a precaution against the spread of the virus; mandatory quarantine for people coming from abroad labelled as potentially infected with Coronavirus; selective bans on movement for certain age groups; and curfew. Due to potential breaches of privacy and misuse of personal data, much public attention has been given to geographical surveillance measures that track people's movements via electronic devices such as smartphones, watches, etc.

In the Balkans, the Serbian President, Aleksandar Vučić, has been the leader whose tendencies towards autocratic governance have been most visibly on display. Invoking the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic and introducing a state of emergency, his government promptly suspended freedom of the media and passed a decree that gave the authorities complete control. This decision allowed prison sentences for journalists the government believed were "spreading panic among the public through their writing and information". The day after this decree was issued, a journalist from the private television station N1 was arrested for reporting on infections and claims regarding poor conditions in a Novi Sad hospital, despite these claims being true. Under pressure and condemnation from international media organizations, the Serbian

1 "The Pandemic Serves Putin's Purposes Very Nicely", *Vice*, 30.03.2020. <https://bit.ly/2WgqAJN> (05.05.2020).

government had to pull back their decision to suspend media freedom. Interestingly, the media under attack through these government decrees were ones that are not close to the ruling Serbian Progressive Party and their allies and try to carry out their work professionally and in the interests of the nation. Vučić took over the role of communicating with the public regarding the pandemic. His addresses and statements caused confusion with viewers, as he first claimed the virus was “silly” and not dangerous, but later threatened that “there will not be enough space in cemeteries” if the public don’t respect his repressive measures. Nor did he forego the opportunity during the state of emergency to campaign for the upcoming parliamentary elections, which has triggered protests in the form of knocking on pots and pans from balconies, due to the curfew and bans on movement. A group of Serbian intellectuals has called for a boycott of the elections due to the suppression of all individual freedoms and freedom of media, stating that the “unconstitutionally declared state of emergency, which represents a coup d’état, has been instrumentalized by Aleksandar Vučić to favor his campaign, clashing with freethinking people, rebelling citizens, independent journalists and members of the opposition”.²

In the Bosnian and Herzegovinian entity of the Republika Srpska, the local government, following the Serbian model, enacted similar regulations, curtailing human rights and freedom of the press. After suspending parliament, the government adopted a statute which that banned causing panic and disorder during the state of emergency, which primarily targeted the media, but also the public on social media. A doctor from Prijedor, Maja Dragojević Stojić, was fined 1,000 KM, because the authorities assessed a statement she made to the press as fake news and spreading panic, when she claimed hospitals in the Republika Srpska were ill-equipped to work effectively during the pandemic and that they do not have enough respirators or adequate staff.

The Truth and/or fake news

International human rights organizations have warned that limiting freedom of speech and expression is particularly worry-

2 “U diktaturi nema uslova za izbore”, *Danas*, 07.05.2020. <https://bit.ly/3fwHzPt> (08.05.2020).

ing and unacceptable in cases of people reporting corruption in government management of the recovery from the pandemic.³ By law, such persons are guaranteed protection as whistleblowers who are not to be punished for their activities. The importance of this right to freedom of media and speech has been affirmed in the other Bosnian and Herzegovinian entity, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Local journalists uncovered suspicious dealings worth millions related to purchases of medical equipment and respirators to treat patients and stop the spread of the pandemic, conducted without the mandatory public tender process by the entity authorities in charge during the emergency. Journalists reporting on this were accused of spreading panic and disinformation and told not to meddle in affairs not within their remit. The reports nonetheless have resulted in an investigation which has confirmed the journalists' claims, while the man in charge of the entity crisis management board has been suspended from duty pending its completion.⁴ In the Federation, no law has been passed to control media or against spreading panic, in contrast to the other entity, but their role has been reduced to an absurd degree. The authorities in control of living conditions during the pandemic have decided to hold press conferences without journalists, which they justified by the threat of spreading the virus. This has significantly reduced the scope for questioning procedures and decision making, especially on spending taxpayer money and international donations. The authorities decide which questions, submitted via email, are answered, and reduce communication with the public to daily press releases. Interestingly, the temptation to control information in pandemic times has proven irresistible to the crisis

- 3 Transparency International BiH has called on all public officials in BiH, especially the government of the Republika Srpska (RS), not to use repression against the public, including regulations forbidding and punishing incitement to panic and public unrest. Instead, the organization recommends the government invite citizens to share irregularities, misuse, and threats to public health they observe. <https://bit.ly/2Wjkubl> (07.05.2020.) The OSCE representative for the freedom of the media sent a request to the government of the RS to withdraw the regulation forbidding incitement to panic, after which it was revoked.
- 4 As part of the investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor of BiH into the purchase of respirators for 10.5 million KM in the Federation, experts found that the equipment purchased does not meet the minimum basic requirements to treat patients in intensive care units, including those infected with Covid-19.

management board of Sarajevo Old Town municipality. Even if local government has no jurisdiction, they issued an order “forbid[ding] disturbance of the public peace and order by spreading fake news”. The determination of what is fake news and implementation of the order were delegated to the “relevant authorities”, while offenders were to get hefty monetary fines. Following pushback from the media and the public, the decision was not enforced, but not rescinded either.

In these times of emergency, citizens have been knowingly denied the rights to relevant information and freedom of speech that allow them access to and the exchange of information. This has, for example, rendered it impossible to question the management of public funds, the circumstances under which contracts are signed, whether particular purchases are useful and appropriate or not, or what will happen to medical equipment in the future ... The inevitable question is whether the public interest in declaring a state of emergency justifies depriving the public of relevant information about the government’s public activities. The answer is no. In fact, extraordinary circumstances are an additional reason for the authorities to display transparency and allow the public access to information, if they wish to achieve trust and interact with citizens in their attempt to deal with the pandemic and operate in the interest of public health and safety. Without a free flow of timely information, decisions are made behind the public’s back, while the state of emergency becomes fertile terrain for various forms of abuse and organized crime. The accumulation of power, in this specific case under cover of the coronavirus threat, entails the suspension of civil rights and freedoms. This is why government decisions during extraordinary circumstances need to be public and subject to public scrutiny. It is a common denominator of all governments that decisions to implement a state of emergency are made without prescribing conditions for their implementation or an expiration date. It seems as though autocrats have welcomed the coronavirus threat as heaven-sent to help them legally trample on human rights and freedoms and further strengthen their power. It is concerning that many governments across the world and their officials display how much more interested they are in preserving their own reputations than saving human lives.

The Corona Pandemic is not a War

In times of crisis, it is extremely important for the public that the media can inform them freely, without any external pressures, about major events, including information on health measures imposed by the government, which are vital for the population. Amnesty International announced that suppression of the freedom of the media and attacks on journalists, as well as others who criticize how governments are dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, are slowing down efforts to fight the virus. The same organization has also warned that censoring key information about the pandemic has become a global phenomenon. "If one of the basic rights to health is the right to timely and accurate information, in the case of Covid-19 it means that everyone has the right to access all available information about the ways in which the virus spreads, as well as the measures they could take to protect themselves."⁵ However, Amnesty International data suggests that governments worldwide have been arresting and imprisoning journalists and other media personnel for sharing exactly that kind of basic information, claiming they were spreading fake news. The problem is that, in most cases, it is the governments distinguishing between fake news and accurate information. Undoubtedly, a well-informed population is usually much more powerful and effective than a police "expert" on the dangers of being informed. Instead of criminalizing false expression, states should strengthen their efforts to ensure the spread of reliable, easily available fact-based information. For instance, the government of Finland has proven that a different stance towards the interests of the public is possible by treating freedom of the media as a political priority, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead of practicing control and limiting information about the pandemic, this Scandinavian government, led largely by young people,⁶ has decided to engage over a thousand influential and reputable authors active on social media. They have been asked to

5 *Amnesty International*, "Global crackdown on journalists weakens efforts to tackle Covid-19", 02.05.2020. <https://bit.ly/3dBqO3K> (03.05.2020).

6 The Prime Minister of Finland, Sanna Marin from the Social Democratic Party, is 34 years old and thus the world's youngest Prime Minister. Katri Kulmuni, the Minister of Finance, is two years younger. Of the 19 ministers in the government of Finland, 12 are women.

contribute to informing the public by spreading information about government measures to curb the consequences of the pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to public health. However, recent practice suggests that some emergency measures established by governments to remedy and prevent the consequences of infection may also have discriminatory and detrimental consequences for the credibility of democratic institutions, human rights and freedom of the media. Besides, one can justifiably suspect that the duration of some of those measures may be extended even after the end of the crisis. It is therefore imperative that governments protect civil and political rights during and after the pandemic, led by the principle that all restrictions necessary to serve legitimate purpose in times of emergency have to be proportional to the threat, transparent, clearly presented to the public, and based on law. Freedom House, an international organization for the protection of human rights and promotion of democracy, has set out several basic principles for the protection of civil and political rights during the Covid-19 pandemic. Among others, they warn governments that “emergency restrictions that affect citizens’ basic rights, including freedom of assembly or movement, have to be limited in duration, subject to independent monitoring, imposed and extended based on transparent criteria. Individuals should have the possibility to seek legal remedy and compensation for all unnecessary or disproportionate infringements of their rights during the crisis.”⁷ Freedom of the media is highlighted as an especially important governmental duty in times of crisis and danger. State censorship and other unnecessary restrictions of the free flow of information must not be imposed. It is essential that citizens have access to the internet and other communication platforms as well as timely reports on all relevant government activities.

Recent experience with the coronavirus pandemic has confirmed the practice of absolute state control over the public. Another (un)expected feature, which has manifested itself in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkan region, is that people are actually quite prone to accept dictatorship. Afraid of illness, and ultimately death, they are easily manipulated by a state that presents itself as their saviour. Demanding that people

7 Freedom House, “Principles for protecting civil and political rights in the fight against Covid-19”, 24.03.2020. <https://bit.ly/3boe6Ur> (06.05.2020).

choose between privacy and health is not useful and results in a false choice because it is possible to align both. It is possible to protect one's health and stop the Covid-19 pandemic without establishing totalitarian supervisory regimes, but by strengthening people's knowledge through information about the problem and their inclusion in solving it. The coronavirus pandemic is not a war, it is a health disaster, where the public is not an enemy that warrants threats of grave problems for not abiding by the orders of local crisis boards. As the President of Germany, Frank Walter Steinmeier, said recently, the coronavirus pandemic is "a test of our humanity in which each one of us has to show our best side. After the end of this crisis we should not be a society of fear and distrust, but a society with more trust and respect."⁸

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8 "Germany's president calls for patience, solidarity in face of pandemic", *Deutsche Welle*, <https://bit.ly/3ea5HWA> (15.05.20).

COMMUNICATION AND THE CORONA VIRUS

Mustafa Sefo and Fahira Fejzić Čengić

Introduction

Modern society's main characteristic is that is an IT society. This is obvious at all levels, from the local and regional to the global. The modern human is a being of communication. Social psychological definitions say human beings are social by nature and so *need other human beings*, allowing the conclusion that communication is a basic and constant need. One definition of communication says it has no beginning and no end, that it lasts, uninterrupted, constant, in various ways, direct and indirect, in line with our needs and environment. The main goal is for us to satisfy our communication needs, in a particular way and to a particular degree, so as to ensure our survival by informing ourselves about people, events, phenomena, problems, achievements, danger, in a word, everything going on around us. Can machines and technology do this for us? The ongoing pandemic has allowed us to test this, in part.

Society gets the media it deserves

A break in communication can represent an unnatural environment for human beings and have a negative impact on us as individuals and on society as a whole. Since communication is a dynamic phenomenon that changes and adapts constantly, it is important to realize that all social change is reflected in it. Following and researching historical currents and events and economic and political change in society and the world mean we can also monitor and explore the changes they give rise to in communication. How we communicate at a given time helps us understand the condition of that society.

The main change in methods of communication took place together with the industrial revolution and industrialization, i.e., increases in production, trade, and transport. Each of these factors left a powerful impact and modified methods of communication. With the emergence and development of mass production came mass society and therefore the first mass media and mass communication, which evolved over time into what we know and are used to today. Every age has its characteristic form of communication. The development of technology has certainly contributed to the development of mass communication and long-distance communication. In short, print media as a form of mass communication appeared with the invention of the printing machine, while mass print, newspapers and magazines, leaflets, and advertisements have been a feature of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Radio emerged as an experiment before World War II, gaining momentum in the 1930s, television in the 1950s, and Internet communication emerged as a comprehensive network in the 1980s. First this was *analogue*, using wires, cables and “physical” connections, but in recent decades it has been exclusively in *digital* or wireless form.

The most important current concern of media philosophy is to identify technology’s consequences for human beings, of technopoly (society’s surrender to technology), excessive use of media, and dependence on screens in the production of a *narcissistic society*. More on these subjects on another occasion.

This is where the most important positive and negative trends associated with success in communications during periods of crisis. Which always remind one of the war. And all mass media were famously first used in war and pacified only later.

Media on the Pandemic

Early 2020 saw the emergence of the corona virus, first in China, then Iran, and then it spread around the world, including to Europe, starting with Italy, affecting every single aspect of human life globally. The pandemic transformed everyday life and human activities across the whole world within a very short time span. The human race has been forced to adapt to a new lifestyle with no alternative. This is the time we are living in. Communication whose main task is to make things accessible and universal has

from the very beginning helped citizens around the globe protect themselves from the virus. Mass communication via the media, that is. The media, as intermediaries in communications, have found themselves on the front line of the fight in several ways. Mandatory isolation, distancing, or creating distance between people as individuals, and other preventive measures, not being able to meet, chat, socialize, or go to work or any public place have made the media the only source of news and information for the public. Media consumption has peaked. Online communication has gained in importance and very quickly become the only way to exchange information worldwide, making it a crucial instrument of communication. Email and various computer programs, smartphones and social networking applications, standard social networks, and online portals have reached unprecedented levels of use. Applications have even been developed just to report on the corona virus. People have become heavily dependent on this information and these methods of communication, as they represent their only way of keeping informed.

Here we should mention that during these three to four months of quarantine and restricted movement, the only businesses to see 100% increase in income have been the mass media cartels and corporations like Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. From the very first reports of their increased profits, it has been apparent that their business approach is benefiting from the loss of “offline life”, on which human civilization has been based for thousands of years.

This form of communication has spread over many social sectors, but particularly education. People have never found themselves in such a situation. Due to our totally changed social circumstances, the media have been given additional tasks. They have adapted their programming, especially television, to the current communication needs of their audiences. This refers primarily to children as an audience of television, especially public interest broadcasting, which has expanded its educational programs and programs for children by introducing additional educational content for primary school age children, so that they do not lose out. The pandemic has also caused all public places, including places of worship, to be closed, with television now broadcasting Friday prayers, Easter Mass and Chinese New Year live,

indirectly helping to “maintain” continuity through the mediation of these religious rituals.

Technique, Technology, and Technopoly

Technology, with all its positive and negative features, is an integral part of modern society and has greatly helped continuity of life during the pandemic in many social fields: university lectures and exams continue to be held with the help of appropriate computer programs that students can follow from wherever they have to; sessions and meetings of a political, economic, cultural and religious nature continue to be held online; as are scientific conferences and business fora. All sorts of media, whether print, electronic, or new, have adapted their activities and content.

Communication’s main goal is to ensure matters of public interest are public, general, and accessible to everyone in society without exception, discrimination, or privilege, and we can illustrate the importance of that goal using the example of the pandemic. What would happen if only privileged social groups had access to current information on the pandemic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the rest of us didn’t? We would all be at risk of contracting the virus, as we would transmit the virus to each other. A very important special form of communication applies under such circumstances, namely crisis communication. It is very important to meet the communication needs of all social groups, especially vulnerable ones, which can be difficult even in normal circumstances. Disseminating good news and tracking information with accuracy and traceable sources is also of great importance. This includes information provided by epidemiologists, psychologists, sociologists, and economists. Understandably, not everyone has been up to the task, but it has been important that they turned up.

A major characteristic of information is timeliness, which is very important at present. Timely dissemination to the public through media of information on changes happening from hour to hour is crucial. The values of togetherness, solidarity and responsibility are currently showing their crucial role in society. In a consumerist and globalized world, in the era of the corona virus pandemic, it can be very difficult to select out the vital information, because we are exposed not just to aggressive advertising of

goods and products but also to a large surplus of information that can confuse and mislead us. Different media cope differently with this challenge, from better to worse, from professional to sensational. The importance of preserving the continuity of life activities during the pandemic deserves separate treatment on the media, because isolation does not automatically entail communicational and psycho-social isolation from our environment or the world. In a word, we have been living a life of *experiential and media minimalism*.

We surveyed a small sample of students at the Faculty of Political Studies in Sarajevo, from the IV year and Master's programs, on how they have coped with pandemic living conditions. Few had anything positive to say, whether about online teaching or how the media have covered the pandemic. The offline world, the "world of life" as Foucault would say, represents an immediate and real form of life that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina find more important, comfortable, and more human. The complete isolation and lockdown of the elderly and children under 18 is unprecedented, as is the restriction to freedom, the most important category of the human mode of being. Only with time will we be able to assess the inevitable psychological and social consequences. Only with time's distance will it be possible to assess the real effects of the global cessation of life as the race has known it for at least five thousand years. This will certainly have to be closely monitored and analyzed in various areas of human activity, from health to education, work, business, making do, travel, trade, and so on.

**REIMAGINING UNIVERSAL
POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND
ECONOMIC PARADIGMS
LOCALLY**

THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC VIEWED FROM THE SARAJEVO LOCKDOWN

Žarko Papić

1. The following assessment should be taken with considerable reserve. It is still impossible to estimate with any precision how long the causes of the pandemic in crisis will last or the likelihood of their “transferring” to the southern hemisphere or of a second wave. The pandemic will certainly cause enormous economic and social losses and provoke global crisis. The magnitude of economic and social welfare losses will depend on how long the isolation measures last and borders are closed, social distancing is continued, and restarting economic activities is delayed. The situation will not normalise within just a couple of months, and some measures, dependent on country, will doubtless remain in force until vaccination with a new vaccine is over, which is a minimum of 12 months. This is why the economic and social consequences of Covid 19 will be lasting, as it will take years to restore normal economic activities even after “normalisation” by vaccination.

2. The annualised economic and developmental losses projected by the relevant international agencies have been hyper-optimistic from the start (-6% of GDP in 2020 for France and Germany), but are gradually becoming less so. Fitch’s estimates for the US and the Eurozone countries (10.04.2020) were for GDP to fall 20-30% at the annual level in 2020. The OECD’s estimates (07.04.2020) for 47 developed and growing economies, after the initial impact, were 20-25% of GDP (Germany -30%, France -25%, Italy -25%, US -25%). If strict measures are maintained, the OECD expects a 2% fall in GDP per month at the annual level. So, if measures are maintained for eight months, then

annual GDP will be down 16%, on top of the fall caused by the initial impact. Such a fall in global GDP would have enormous social consequences. According to the most recent estimates, a further 500 million people will find themselves in poverty around the world (around 0.7% of world population). A tanking economy and rising poverty will put exceptional strain on existing social welfare systems and safety nets, adding further to poverty.

3. Over the past five years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced sluggish GDP growth for a developing country, averaging 3%. At this rate and assuming the average EU rate remains stable at 2%, it will take Bosnia and Herzegovina 105 years to catch up with average EU living standards (World Bank 2019). And the Covid 19 crisis is coming on top of that.

The official statistics institutes in Bosnia and Herzegovina assess poverty using a relative poverty line. In the EU, it looks at differences in income and not just poverty. The wrong methodology provides the wrong results. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 16.9% of the population placed below the relative poverty line in 2017, compared to 24% in the EU. Clearly, the European Union is not poorer than Bosnia and Herzegovina, but greater development brings greater differences in income, and a quarter of the population in the EU has less than 60% of the median average income. These people are not poor in pure material terms, they are just “poorer” than the rest, because they only have one car or go on summer holiday only in their own country, while others have 2 to 3 cars and holiday in Hawaii.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the wrong methodology reduces the scope for determining real conditions and is an immediate obstacle to effective social policy. The authorities present the situation as better than it is and are not focused in any real sense on dealing with problems. If you can't see the problem, there's nothing to solve.

4. The social and economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was bad even before Covid 19. The general focus on political tensions, ethnic and national relations, gridlock, failure to form institutions, and patriotism versus separatism has been going on for years, but social conditions only become news when workers strike and veterans demonstrate.

There is no relevant preliminary estimate of economic losses in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of the crisis prompted by the pandemic. **The World Bank estimates for Bosnia and Herzegovina (23.03.2020) make clear the irrelevance of earlier estimates.** They are based on conditions in 2019 and GDP growth of around 2.8% and project a fall of 2% in 2020 as a result of Covid 19. No matter how “long ago” the last week in March was in terms of the crisis’ dynamic, the estimates for the GDP drop in the major EU economies was at that point already 6%. This comparison **conceals** the mistaken assumption in general estimates that (because it is undeveloped) Bosnia and Herzegovina will weather any crisis better than the developed countries. This misconception dominated responses in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the crisis in 2008. In fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina did worse than the EU and it was five years (2013) before the GDP level was back at 2007 levels.

In April, the World Bank corrected its less optimistic estimates, forecasting a 3% fall in GDP for Bosnia and Herzegovina at the annual level because of the losses from the initial shock, on the assumption that restrictive measures are lifted in June 2020. So, it’s already down 3% and we can’t estimate the further drop but can be sure there will be one. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina projects, again optimistically, a decline of 3-10% of GDP. Never mind that it’s going to take Germany eight years to reach its GDP level from 2019 again.

The IMF’s estimates for the other countries in the region are equally misguided, with Croatia losing 9% and Serbia 3% of GDP. Even the IMF director recognised the unserious nature of their estimates when he announced a week later that these “catastrophic estimates were nonetheless overly optimistic.” So, we must ask where these differences in their estimates between the OECD on the one hand and the World Bank and IMF on the other come from. Up to the beginning of this century, the OECD was considered the “software” of the global economy, while the World Bank and IMF were the “hardware”, and they generally followed OECD estimates/projections. The World Bank and the IMF’s minimalist projections of losses presumably stem from their estimation that their financial capacities couldn’t stand up to realistic recognition of the real depth of the crisis, as it might lead to developed countries formally requesting financial assistance from the organisations.

Generally speaking, we should be prepared to expect GDP to decline more and there to be greater social consequences from the losses in Bosnia and Herzegovina than in the developed countries or the EU.

5. Why?

Bosnia and Herzegovina's dependence on the condition of the EU economy is very considerable, so that crisis in the EU will cause both exports and imports of reproduction materials to fall enormously, and indeed industry generally. There will certainly be a major fall in tourism, hospitality, and other service industries. Domestic consumption will fall, and its composition will also change, causing additional grief across various economic sectors. Unemployment will rise significantly, while state assistance to maintain employment (covering minimum wages and social welfare contributions in the short-term) will eventually lead to reduced wages. This will produce a sharp and major increase in poverty.

Poverty has been becoming a "hot" social topic everywhere in the world, and particularly so in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the absence of new anti-poverty policies, we may expect to see fundamental political change. Social instability and poverty provide fertile ground for strengthening the right and authoritarian regimes. The current emergency measures (introduced because of Covid 19) have provided an initial impulse and poverty may cement them in place. The fight against poverty is not just a matter of social development, human rights, and social justice. It also has direct historical and political significance. It is a part of the struggle against rising authoritarianism on the right and nationalist isolationism.

6. Poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina measured using the absolute poverty line method (level of income required to meet basic material needs) is far higher than official statistics suggest. Analyses of absolute poverty are rare and only carried out within a few international agency projects. There has been no systematic monitoring of absolute poverty and there are no consolidated data. A realistic estimate, however, is that the absolute poverty line in Bosnia and Herzegovina may be 5 to 6 percentage points higher than relative poverty. This means between 175,000 and 210,000 more people than the 591,000 recorded as in relative

poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2017, which gives a total of around 800,000, or approximately 23% of the population. UN and World Bank estimates, made using alternative methodologies, are in line with these larger numbers.

7. The Covid 19-provoked crisis will undoubtedly lead, we repeat, to steep and major increases in poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to rising unemployment and falling wages, the following processes will have an impact:

- The return of Bosnian citizens, currently in EU countries as economic migrants, because of job loss and social insecurity. The problem of the youth drain from Bosnia and Herzegovina will now be reversed. Young people will be returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where there will be no work for them, causing unemployment and poverty to rise.
- Major reductions in remittances from the diaspora, an important source of income since the war. In recent years, they have accounted for as much as 10% of GDP and provided “a great social security net”. For example, a son or daughter employed in Germany sends money to parents on a small pension to ensure they can get by. As these remittances fall, they will not be officially recorded anywhere, but they will have a major impact on increasing poverty.
- Falling economic activity will drastically reduce public revenue, and the budgetary crisis will spill over objectively to pensions and social transfers, which will be cut. Most likely, the instrument for cutting them will be inflation rather than direct cuts. So, existing beneficiaries will be “pushed” deeper into poverty, while there will be no room for new ones in the social security systems.

Given the projected major deterioration of the social situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fight against poverty and new social policies will have to be a priority for the government and its partners. Anyone who doesn't get it yet, will be forced to understand it sooner as the conditions get worse and more urgent.

8. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian authorities' response to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic have only provided concrete illustration of how bad reality is. The measures they have taken and their estimates of the magnitude of the con-

sequences reveal complete ignorance, institutional dysfunctionality, the lack of any form of coordination, and the catastrophic consequences of “ethnicised political economies” whose corruption acts as the motor of general collapse.

Even before the crisis situation, the consolidated debt of public companies (taxes and social contributions owed) was 8 billion KM, up to 2018. That year, those companies received around 200 million KM in public subsidies, but their total profit was just 80 million KM. The practices of finding jobs for party members, packing management with incompetent party loyalists, and diverting capital to favoured tycoons had caught up with them.

The final elimination of expertise from the process of dealing with epidemiological measures is an expression of the general affirmation of ignorance and political cronyism, whose end goal is to literally cover up, for example, conditions in healthcare and facilitate “Srebrena malina/Silver raspberry” type situations, purchasing respirators through agribusiness and tests through travel agencies.

The Federation and the Republika Srpska have taken different measures to tackle the consequences of the pandemic and have not coordinated them, which is naturally a problem in itself. The centralised structure in the Republika Srpska “copied” Serbian measures, which allowed them, on the one hand, to react quickly, but, on the other, significantly reinforced authoritarian processes. It is right to be concerned that temporary emergency measures may enjoy some afterlife in so-called normalisation. **Moreover, they have proved epidemiologically effective in undesired ways, particularly during the “second-half”.** A month later, the rapid passage of decisions or measures to support the economy has not been followed through on (beyond a once-off payment to healthcare workers, the police, et cetera), raising questions about their effectiveness. Disputes in the Federation over how to divide up the IMF money at the entity and canton levels show clearly that the political and institutional situation in the “better” entity is also a vector of crisis for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Federation has reacted with massive delay and incomprehensibly weak measures in its “corona law”, and this is not just because of the complex constitutional structure. Ignorance is to be expected from nepotism and political cronyism and we are now paying the price. The Federation is in budgetary deficit and offering at best meagre short-term financial support to the econo-

my on the basis of IMF and EU funds. Two weeks ago, the US pumped financial support into their economy at about 20% of annual GDP (which is around 3% of global GDP). Germany has done something similar, et cetera. For the Federation, the equivalent would be not 1 but 4 billion KM, which is 20% of its GDP. Not to mention that the economies of the US and Germany are in far better condition. Delays getting support online during the first 50 days of the emergency has produced around 30,000 new unemployed, which is around 5% of employment as it stood.

The proposed changes to the labour law run entirely contrary to the globally recognised need to support workers. Inability to work because of the epidemic has halted production, and the financial support is there to “bridge the gap” and activate and stabilise labour. The changes proposed to the labour law aim at the final “tycoonisation” of labour relations instead, with additional disenfranchisement of workers. The most important core measures are reducing direct taxes and contributions, without which the economies in the Federation and the RS simply will not recover. They will wither. Because it contradicts the logic of ethnicised political economies: budgets controlled by the dominant ethnic parties, “good party soldiers” manning the bureaucracies, and budgetary support to partisan public companies, et cetera, are the pillars of the current system of government. Which makes them untouchable, “let it cost what it may.” This is how the 8 billion in public companies’ “political debts” can be forgotten about in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or rather continues to grow and no one asks if it wouldn’t be better not to have lost 25% of Bosnia’s annual GDP in this way. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s people have suffered greater harm from these ethnicised political economies and their **maestros** than anything corona has done.

Will the permanently depressed economic and social situation, additionally impacted by Corona, finally become sufficiently visible to rouse the citizenry to energetic action for change? Experience says no. The same experience says that any nascent awareness by the people will be smothered by authoritarian processes in the Republika Srpska and turbo-patriotism in the Federation.

Amongst the many definitions of “truth”, the best may be that which points out “truth is what no one wants to hear”.

Translated by Desmond Maurer

THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA DURING THE COVID 19 GLOBAL CRISIS

Fikret Čaušević

A brief overview of the current situation

According to data published in the most recent European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) report, real economic growth rates have been falling in the countries in transition over the past two years: the average was on a downward trajectory from 3.8% in 2017 to 3.4% in 2018 and 2.6% in 2019.¹ These trends reflected growing economic problems in the world economy, European Union countries, and the Western Balkans. External economic shocks, which necessarily have a major impact on the economic performance and development perspectives of small open economies like those of the Western Balkans, have been crucial in determining their positions and potential for economic growth. This is a necessary consequence of their high degree of dependence on changes in aggregate demand in European Union countries, their largest trading partners and most significant export markets.

Falling growth rates around the world, in the EU, and in the countries in transition are also at least partly due to the “trade war” that has opened up between the two major world economies, the US and China, and its consequences for the economic standing of European Union countries pursuing export-led strategies for economic growth. This is particularly true of the strongest of them, Germany. The BH economy and its export sector recorded

1 European Bank for Reconstruction and Recovery (2020) *Regional Economic Prospects - Covid-19: From Shock to Recovery*, London (April).

very positive results with exports after the Great Recession of 2008/9, especially between 2012 and 2018. According to data from the BH Statistics Agency, the BH Chamber of Foreign Trade, and the BH Indirect Taxation Administration, the country's export results were above the average for the Western Balkan region. Germany was the most important export market, the lion's share of exports being goods of mid-to-high added value, with the ratio of imports to exports at more than three quarters. Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina was the only country in the Western Balkans with trade surpluses for six continuous years with Austria, one of the most stable and most developed countries in Western Europe.

Based upon actual levels of exports, as measured by the Economic Complexity Index, which is derived by relating comparative advantages shown in the production of goods of mid-level, higher, and high added value to the size of the economy itself, Bosnia and Herzegovina ranked number 44 out of the 125 countries in the last available ranking. Bulgaria was two places below Bosnia and Herzegovina (46th place), Greece 11 places below (55th place), and North Macedonia and Albania respectively 26 and 48 places below.² The only Western Balkan country to rank better than Bosnia was Serbia, four places higher. The Economic Complexity Index is regularly published by the MIT Media Lab.³

The global Covid 19 economic crisis and the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The global economic shock and major crisis caused by the Covid 19 pandemic are direct consequences of uncertainty: the series of unknowns facing scientists, healthcare workers, and politicians as a result of the health problems caused by appearance of the virus and the swiftness with which it spread, as the epidemic outgrew its roots in China and other Far Eastern countries to transfer to the rest of the world and became a pandemic. The degree of globalisation already achieved in practically all areas of life, including international economic and financial flows, has resulted in exponential growth in direct interpersonal contact, which has been basic to globalisation's intensity as a process.

2 See: Economic Complexity Index - <https://oec.world/en/rankings/country/neci/> (accessed 23.04.2020)

3 See: OEC: <https://oec.world/en/rankings/country/eci/> ; OEC: <https://oec.world/en/>

This environment provided fertile ground for spreading not just business connections and contacts but also for the accelerated transfer of unknown contagious infections from one part of the world to all continents. Without a vaccine against Covid 19, the only available recourse to prevent accelerated spread of the disease has been radical social distancing during the periods or seasons of the year that provide the most conducive environment for passing it on. Radical social distancing measures were introduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the surrounding countries in mid-March this year, while gradual relaxation has been taking place since late April and through May.

One immediate consequence of radical social distancing was a sharp drop in economic activity. To measure the real fall in economic activity under the circumstances one needs to look at the steep drop in effective hours worked and not formal employment and unemployment numbers. On the other hand, the economic measures taken by the entity governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina have resulted in a relatively slow growth in the official number of the unemployed, given the scale of the economic shock and the radical halt in economic activities. The large number of individuals still formally included on the lists of the employed but who in reality have no employment has required sizeable financial packages on the part of both entity governments and Brčko District, with a concomitant increase in public borrowing.

The aforementioned EBRD report (April 2020) presents assessments by its experts of the resilience of countries in transition to the Covid 19 crisis, according to the following criteria:

- 1) resilience of the healthcare system;
- 2) resilience to domestic disruption;
- 3) resilience to external shocks; and
- 4) room for anti-cyclical economic policy.⁴

The first group of factors relates to resilience of the healthcare system and ranks countries in terms of two sub-criteria: public sector health spending as a percentage of GDP and the number of beds per 100,000 inhabitants. On both counts, Bosnia and

4 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2020) *Regional Economic Prospects - Covid-19: From Shock to Recovery*, London (April), p.3.

Herzegovina belongs to the group of countries in transition with high resilience. Other former Yugoslav countries with a similarly high level of estimated resilience to healthcare shocks are Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and North Macedonia, while Montenegro and Kosovo have only a moderate level of resilience. By contrast, Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Egypt, Jordan, and Tunis have low levels of resilience to healthcare shocks, given their combined public spending on healthcare as a percentage of GDP and the number of beds per 100,000 inhabitants, which are well below international standards and most former Yugoslav countries.

The second group of factors relate to resilience to domestic disturbance (shocks on domestic markets) and also comprises two variables: local retail sector shocks and labour market shocks. Here, the EBRD places Bosnia and Herzegovina amongst the moderate risk countries, together with Serbia and Croatia. Slovenia is also a moderate risk country with regard to the first factor (like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia), but places amongst the low risk or high resilience countries when it comes to potential labour market shocks.

The third set of factors relates to external shocks. It comprises four variables: changing commodity prices, position in global supply chains, tourism, and remittances. Here, the EBRD assigns Bosnia and Herzegovina high resilience for the first three but only moderate resilience for the fourth criterion, remittances from abroad. Croatia and Montenegro are the most vulnerable former Yugoslav countries when it comes to tourism related external shocks, while Serbia and North Macedonia are seen as having only moderate resilience to shocks related to global supply chains, given that foreign direct investment in these two countries has in recent years been highly concentrated in precisely this area.

The final group of factors relates to capacity for countercyclical economic policy. Here the EBRD analyses three variables: the fiscal space for carrying out countercyclical economic policy, resilience to shocks arising from external borrowing, and the strength of the financial sector. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the best ranked of the Western Balkan countries for this group, as with high levels of resilience on all three criteria. In other words, the EBRD considers Bosnia and Herzegovina to have sufficient room for countercyclical action.

The EBRD estimates and public debt levels before Covid 19

This final group of EBRD criteria makes it important to consider Bosnia and Herzegovina's debt levels along those of the other countries of Southeast Europe and the former Yugoslavia. Analysis of changes in per capita GDP and per capita debt over the first 18 years of the century indicates that Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved better results not just than the other countries of the Western Balkans but than the rest of Southeast Europe. This aspect of economic policy, public borrowing levels, has an important role to play in the Covid 19 crisis and may be useful for anticyclical action, as suggested by the EBRD's own assessment in its April 2020 report.

Tables 1 and 2 below present major or significant changes in actual economic standing as measured by GDP per capita for the countries of Southeast Europe. Looking at actual GDP averages for 2018, Slovenia's per capita GDP was higher not just than for any other former Yugoslav country but for any other former socialist country (countries in transition). Slovenia's average GDP was approximately 2.3 times the figure for Romania or Bulgaria and 1.7 times Croatia's. It was 4.5 times Bosnia and Herzegovina's. Analysis of economic results based exclusively on differences in average GDP levels does not, however, give anything like enough information on how efficient or inefficient such fast-growing or high average GDP economies are. For example, Slovenia's cumulative per capita public borrowing over the same period was 4.2 times Romania's and 9.3 times Bosnia and Herzegovina's. Croatia has achieved average GDP that is 2.6 times Bosnia and Herzegovina's, with per capita borrowing levels 5.7 times Bosnia and Herzegovina's. Serbia's per capita GDP is 28% higher than Bosnia and Herzegovina's, but its per capita public borrowing levels for 2018 were 101% greater.⁵

5 The sources for the data on per capita GDP and per capita public debt are given under tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 – Cumulative per capita public debt and per capita GDP for the countries of Southeast Europe – 2018

	Per capita public borrowing - in USD	Per capita GDP - in USD
Albania	3,677	5,239
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,977	5,755
Bulgaria	2,107	9,314
Croatia	11,183	14,870
Montenegro	6,363	8,763
North Macedonia	2,467	6,100
Romania	4,311	12,270
Serbia	3,955	7,223
Slovenia	18,288	25,979

Source of data: <https://countryeconomy.com/countries/compare/> (accessed 15.05.2020)

Table 2 – Changes in public borrowing by Southeast European countries 2008-2018

Country	Public debt/GDP in %			Capita public borrowing (in USD)		
	2008	2012	2018	2008	2012	2018
Albania	55.1	62.1	69.9	2,421	2,641	3,677
Bosnia and Herzegovina	30.9	43.5	34.3	1,502	1,948	1,977
Bulgaria	13.0	16.7	20.4	955	1,235	2,107
Croatia	39.0	69.4	73.2	6,286	9,164	11,183
Montenegro	34.2	56.9	72.3	2,529	3,743	6,363
North Macedonia	20.6	33.7	40.5	998	1,591	2,467
Romania	12.4	36.9	35.2	1,195	3,173	4,311
Serbia	32.4	57.9	54.6	2,169	3,280	3,955
Slovenia	21.8	53.8	66.1	5,988	12,109	18,288

Sources of data: <https://countryeconomy.com/national-debt/> (accessed 15.05.2020)

Between 2008 and 2018, per capita public borrowing rose most strongly in Romania and Slovenia (by factors of 3.6 and 3.1 respectively), followed by Bulgaria (2.2), and then Serbia and Montenegro (82% and 70% respectively). It rose least in Bosnia and Herzegovina (31%). Slovenia's per capita public borrowing levels in 2018 were 828% greater than Bosnia's (or 9.3 times), while neighbouring Croatia and Serbia's per capita borrowing levels were 468% and 101% greater than Bosnia's, respectively.

To ensure the objectivity of our analysis of how available resources relate to the sources available for financing anticyclical activities in crisis and postcrisis periods, we should point out that higher public borrowing, which is a typical Keynesian measure of anticyclical economic policy, is hardly a feature specific to the Southeast European region. In fact, the countries of the West were streets ahead in the application of anticyclical measures based upon sharply expanding public borrowing. The United States increased its per capita public borrowing levels from 35,700 (2008) to 65,545 USD (2018), while Italy's was 46,573 USD and Japan's 90,134 USD that same year (2018).⁶ Between 2008 and 2018, the Republic of Ireland practically doubled its per capita borrowing levels (from 25,900 to 49,602 USD).⁷ The data analysed above indicate that, between 2008 and 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina was in fact one of the most successful countries in this part of the world (Southeast Europe) in terms of the percentage increase in per capita GDP secured in comparison to the percentage increase in per capita borrowing required to finance it.

The EBRD published revised estimates for the countries of the Western Balkans and the other countries in transition in mid-May 2020 (13.05.2020), which indicate that the Western Balkan country likely to suffer most from the current crisis is Albania, whose economy it expects to contract by 9% in the current year, followed by Montenegro, with a projected contraction of 8%. The EBRD expects the Covid 19 crisis to cause a contraction of 4.5% in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2020, with a recovery in 2021 and a projected positive growth rate of 6.5%.⁸ This projected 4.5% fall in Bosnia and Herzegovina's GDP is equivalent to 17 days of production in 2019. In its revised report, however, the World Bank Group projects a fall in GDP of just 1.9% for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2020, followed by growth of 3.4% and 3.6% in 2021 and 2022, respectively.⁹ This estimate assumes a reduction in GDP during 2020 equivalent to losing just seven days of

6 See: Countryeconomy.com - <https://countryeconomy.com/countries/compare/usa/japan> (accessed 15.05.2020)

7 Source: <https://countryeconomy.com/national-debt/ireland> (accessed 15.5.2020)

8 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2020) *Regional Economic Prospects - Covid-19: From Shock to Recovery*, London (May), p. 2.

9 World Bank Group (2020) *Fighting COVID-19: Europe and Central Asia Economic Update*, Washington (Spring), p. 45-46.

production, which seems highly optimistic and indeed frankly unrealistic, given what has been happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Europe, and the rest of the world.¹⁰ The radical social distancing measures and the hiatus imposed on more than half of all business activity for 2 to 3 months mean that the annualised reduction in GDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina is much more likely to be somewhere between 8% and 10% and even this estimate may prove too moderate, if social distancing turns out to be necessary for longer than three months.

Even with the gradual “relaxation” of the measures already announced, we should not expect the economy or most branches of industry to recover and return to levels even approximately similar to last year’s before the final quarter, even with the best case scenario and optimistic assumptions that measures limiting international travel are lifted over the next 2 to 3 months and there is no new wave of infections during the third or fourth quarters of the year. In other words, action plans drawn up by the highest levels of government should be based on scenarios that assume GDP will fall between 15 and 20%. Such a drop may seem excessively pessimistic, compared to the World Bank and EBRD’s projections but would not be particularly surprising, given the radically changed conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region, Europe, and the world, the intensity of the ongoing global and regional shocks, and the very pessimistic forecasts they have evoked from leading members of the business community.

On the intensity and dimensions of global economic disruption and (un)realistic projections of global economic recovery

At this point in our text, it is important we review the intensity of actual economic shocks around the world. In early May 2020, the US Bureau of Labor published official unemployment

10 The author's preliminary reaction to the Covid-19 crisis was published on the web page of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an “opinion piece” in both English and Bosnian: https://www.anubih.ba/images/COVID/20200422_causevic_EN.pdf; https://www.anubih.ba/images/COVID/20200422_causevic_BHS.pdf

data for the US that put official unemployment there at 14.7%.¹¹ The scale of this disruption to the US labour market (“tectonic dimensions”) is best viewed through the prism of the two largest shocks it has experienced over the past 70 years. The first followed the about change in the Fed’s monetary policy that took place in late 1980 and then through 1981 and 1982. This exceptionally restrictive policy (under the leadership of its then chair, Paul Volcker) sent unemployment soaring from 5% in early 1980 to 10.8% by the end of 1982.¹² The second greatest shock to the US labour market came after the global financial crisis of 2008 to 2009 (generated in the US), when the unemployment rate rose from 4.5% in July 2007 to 10% in October 2009.¹³ Comparing these rates suggests certain conclusions about the depth and dimensions of the current economic shock affecting the world’s largest economy. It is a direct consequence of the “public health shock”, compounded by associated demand, supply, and financial shocks.

We have not seen economic disturbance of this intensity and seriousness since the Great Depression of 1929-1933. The economic shocks affecting European Union and particularly Eurozone countries are not yet (mid-May) of the same intensity, at least judging by data from the first quarter, but the real problems and the dimensions of the crisis in EU countries will only become clear when the second quarter data are published. This is particularly true of the countries of the southern Eurozone and France. Certainly, estimates of rising unemployment in Great Britain suggest the unemployment rate is up from 4% in mid-March to 9% in early May.¹⁴ On the other side of the world, China has made public that it has experienced economic contraction in a single quar-

11 US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) “Economic News Release – Employment Situation Summary” (May 8), available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

12 Michael A. Urquhart, Marilyn A. Newson (1983) “Unemployment continued to rise in 1982 as recession deepened”, available at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1983/02/art1full.pdf>

13 See: Linda Levine (2013) “The Increase in Unemployment Since 2007: Is It Cyclical or Structural”, Congressional Research Service, Washington (January 24), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41785.pdf>

14 Harry Kretchmer (2020) “How coronavirus has hit employment in G-7 countries”, World Economic Forum (13 May), available at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/coronavirus-unemployment-jobs-work-impact-g7-pandemic/>

ter for the first time since opening up in 1978. According to the official data, GDP in China fell 6.8% in the first quarter of the current year against the same period last year.¹⁵ While economic intervention packages in the US, Japan, the EU, China, and Great Britain have been very considerable in size (between them totaling more than US\$5.5 trillion), they will not solve the deep and growing problems quickly. Their highly positive and in some cases excellent reception on key financial markets, reflected in the major percentual gains seen in April and May compared to the major falls in March, do not offer a realistic picture of the dimensions of the economic disruption in the US and across the world.

It is worth remembering that the most important share indices in the US and in other parts of the world also started growing during the last crisis (2008/2009) as early as the second quarter of 2009 and continued to grow all through the second half of that year. Rising securities' prices in the US did not, however, signify swift recovery of the real economy. The entire first mandate of former US president Barack Obama was marked by major interventions with a relatively modest recovery (the unemployment rate only fell from a record 10% in October 2009 to around 8% in the second half of 2012).¹⁶ During the current Covid 19 crisis, there can be little doubt that even just highly optimistic prospects of finding a vaccine, never mind actually finding one, will cause sharp spikes in optimism from financial investors. We therefore must not lose sight of John Maynard Keynes very precise description of the psychology of financial investors in terms of "herd behaviour", "animal spirits" and "beauty contests." Economic projections of global and regional economic recovery "based on" the optimism of financial investors may be "seductive", to the extent that they "lead us down the garden path," but the psychology of financial investors and particularly of globally active and powerful ones is not stabilising. It is inherently destabilising.¹⁷

15 Jane Li & John Detrixhe (2020) "The coronavirus outbreak might be nearly over in China, but economic hardship is not", Quartz (17 April), available at <https://qz.com/1839062/china-gdp-contracts-6-8-percent-in-first-quarter-due-to-coronavirus/>

16 See: NCSL - <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/national-employment-monthly-update.aspx>

17 See: Hyman P. Minsky (2008) *Stabilizing an Unstable Economy*, The McGraw Hill Companies, New York. Part 4: "Institutional Dynamics".

More precisely, the belief/projection that recovery is going to be V-shaped in the major economies is hardly convincing, not least because it relies on a form of economic thinking about recovery that assumes all market relevant actors, from companies through to households, specialised agencies to financial institutions, will “return” to “business or life as usual” quickly. Most people around the world would love that to be so, including the author of this text, but it is not our purpose to provide an analysis of what we want. It is to attempt a realistic overview of the intensity and scale of the real economic disruption caused by the Covid 19 crisis. This crisis is not purely a matter of health and economics. It is a crisis in the fundamental principles on which the global economic order of the last 30 years has been based, a crisis in ethical principles, in solidarity, and, finally, in our fundamental values as human beings assumed to be both reasonable and rational. But we know from Herbert Simon’s texts (so from the 1950s and before) that we are not rational. We operate within “bounded rationality”. Similarly, we know that “mainstream” economic models are dominated by utilitarian economics, whose major, indeed core assumptions are of economic man and the “first me” rule (taken over from the economic schools dominant in the mid-to-late 19th century).

Such assumptions about life and business as usual in projections for next year and after fail to take adequate account of the time lags involved in economic disruption, which are of fundamental importance for understanding the real dimensions of the problems we are now facing across the world, the EU, and the Western Balkan region, and so in Bosnia and Herzegovina too. A “quadruple shock” of two months, followed by a gradual normalisation that by definition takes time, almost certainly means total production around the world this year is very unlikely to be above 90-92% of last year’s. This may seem very pessimistic as an estimate for the global economy, but the ILO’s projects that 1.2 billion workers around the world will be affected by some form of layoff or reduced employment.¹⁸ This suggests that any projections of a rapid recovery in 2021 are also likely to prove illusory and that the deep recession of 2020 is almost certain to be con-

18 International Labour Organization (2020) “ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the world of work” (7 April), available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740877.pdf

verted into a global crisis of far greater dimensions (an economic depression), with extremely severe consequences, unless the global mechanisms of economic governance and economic crisis managed in the developed economies, but even more so in the less moderately developed countries, are redefined significantly, with coordination at the global and regional levels.

The potential and limits of anticyclical action in Bosnia and Herzegovina

While the institutional position and real political power of the Presidency and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina are significantly limited by the current post-war structure and distribution of authorities within Bosnia and Herzegovina, these two institutions could nonetheless take a leading role during the current major crisis in proposing and implementing joint strategic action to reduce the negative impact of the Covid 19 crisis on the country's economy. As we move forward, there is no doubt that major fiscal intervention will be required. In fact, such fiscal intervention is already partly in play. The taxpayer amnesty required by falling revenues thanks to the business shutdown that followed the necessary radical restrictions of movement, work, and production and by plummeting personal income because of being let go or working less necessarily entails a sharp rise in fiscal liabilities on the part of both entity governments, with a concomitant inevitable increase in public borrowing. These needs are due to current financing requirements and inherently related to short-term financing (with a timeframe of 2 to 3 years).

What is actually needed, both to combat the threats to our health and our safety, including effective control of national borders, and for the effective and efficient conduct of anticyclical economic policy, is a basket of financial resources with a maturity of at least 10 years and other instruments with a maturity of between 15 and 20. These sources of financing would have to be agreed on the basis of credits from the major international (global and European) financial institutions, viz. the IBRD, the EBRD, and the EIB, though one should not ignore potential sources available from the Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank (AIIB) based in Beijing. One should keep in mind, of course, that exclusive

recourse to credit agreements, even with financial institutions whose rates are favourable and involve grace periods and good payment timetables nonetheless entails larger cash outgoings as long as the loans are being paid down, i.e. so long as monthly payments are being made on an annualised basis, than financing through bond issues. Such arrangements will certainly be very welcome as a source of financing in the coming period, as they were during the post-war reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the period immediately after, when the World Bank Group, and more particularly the IBRD, its core mechanism for financing development projects, extended funds on favourable terms.

Long-term financing for strategic development projects, like a new long-term healthcare strategy, financing a new “green energy” strategy, developing contemporary soft infrastructure based on the knowledge economy and IT, and projects to modernise state border services and significantly upgrade their technical outfitting and increase the number of highly educated employees, so as to improve control of the borders and prevent illegal border-crossings, which represent a potential security and health threat to everyone in the country, would mean starting to issue long-term state securities (bonds). This would put in place the preconditions for meeting the following three highly important goals: financing and co-financing the aforementioned strategically important projects, improved management of money flows at the state and entity levels, and increased financial stability. We can only achieve these goals if reputable international institutions guarantee government bond issues. Such government bond issues could become a first-class financial asset if backed up by guarantees from a specially-created EU Guarantee Fund for BiH (or the Western Balkans), on the one hand, and a EU Stabilisation and Investment Fund for BiH (or the Western Balkans), on the other. Providing guarantees for government bond issues nominated in local currency would give the EU Guarantee Fund the right to monitor the targeted use of any funds raised for in-country strategic projects at the inter-entity level, like those already mentioned, while the EU Stabilisation and Investment Fund would participate actively both through the purchase of some part (up to 50%) of the government bond issues and on the secondary market for government bond issues. The remaining part of said issues, between 50 and

70%, would be purchased by domestic investors, including commercial banks.

This mention of commercial banks as major investors in government securities raises the need for analysis of this sector in relation to overall national financial stability. The Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina has introduced a negative interest rate on surplus reserves commercial banks hold with it (i.e. reserves over and above the level of the mandatory reserves). This negative rate is itself a consequence of the negative rate the European Central Bank has imposed in practice on deposits. As a result, last year and during the first quarter 2020, commercial banks have been paying the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina a 0.5% charge on surplus reserves. Total commercial bank reserves (mandatory and surplus) plus cash in circulation represent the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina's total liabilities. Under the currency board conditions, they have to have 100% coverage (in practice 105%) by foreign currency reserves. These foreign currency reserves are made up of short and longer-term government securities bought from major EU economies and deposits with leading central and commercial banks in EU countries. This high coverage of monetary liabilities exclusively by foreign financial assets means that the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot influence the business cycle on the domestic market. This is a direct consequence of the *Law on the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina* enacted in 1997, which has never been changed. This arrangement ensures full stability of the local currency but renders anticyclical action during periods of crisis impossible.

Under current circumstances, this arrangement cannot be changed, nor should it be without first creating financial assets issued by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Finance Ministry and Treasury (under the international standards adopted at Basel, entity-issued bonds cannot stand in for state-level bonds here). This does not however mean that no changes can be made to this arrangement, on the crucial condition that any government securities issued by the Finance Ministry and Treasury be guaranteed by the EU and key Eurozone countries. This would ensure their first-class status and, perhaps later during the mid-term, even open up the possibility that such triple-A rated financial assets start being bought not just by commercial banks and other institutional investors, the primary customers, but even by the Central

Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, naturally subject to IMF agreement and approval. The interest rate for such securities, given the high level of security of investment provided by the EU guarantee, would not need to exceed 0.75%-1%. In other words, issuing high quality domestic securities, in effect government bonds backed by exclusive EU guarantees, is more or less the only way to increase the options for successfully structuring financial institutions' financial portfolios and so increasing financial stability.

Returning to the commercial banks and their position under the current crisis, it is important to understand that these institutions, which make up the Bosnian and Herzegovinian financial system and on which the prospects and speed of any recovery largely depend, currently have no way of compensating for costs arising from the charges levied on surplus reserves held with the Central Bank, as there are no secure financial assets of reasonable quality in which to place surplus funds and receive even a modestly positive interest rate, other than entity bonds. This will be particularly important in the weeks and months to come, as banks have accepted a moratorium on loan repayments for clients whose income has dried up, both in the business sector and households. This moratorium on repayments of part of their credit portfolios necessarily increases financial risk and will have an important impact on prospects for restarting the credit cycle, which business sector recovery largely depends on. This means that the financial resources available at the deposit insurance agencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to be increased, not by increasing commercial banks' payments in, but by securing additional financial resources from state-level government.

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THE AGE OF THE CORONA ECONOMY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Kadrija Hodzić and Izudin Kešetović

Approaching the problem

The economic consequences of the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic are at the centre of attention for all countries in the world today. There is theoretical agreement on three things. First, given the uncertainty over how long the pandemic will last, economists can only be sure of its short-term direct consequences, the most severe of which is loss of liquidity, while the long-term indirect consequences remain unknown. Second, we are experiencing a major recession, considerably deeper than that of 2008, and, regardless of how intense the pandemic itself becomes, the ongoing economic corona crisis may be deeper than the collapse of the world economy in 1929. Third, globalisation is now on trial and nothing will be the same, as the corona crisis will certainly bring about a new order or “new normal” of an entirely unexpected sort in politics, the economy, and in welfare culture (Peter Jaegeul Song, 2020). In this regard, many leading economists, like Stiglitz, Milanović, Rodrigo, and Fournier (Financial Times, 2020) even expect the crisis to produce a recoil from neo-liberalism and a consequent redefinition of the rules of market competition, which may even bring about a return to earlier models of (state) capitalism and society, with a particular stress on strengthening the state in the areas of healthcare and infrastructure.

There is, thus, a real possibility for the corona crisis to be one of the most destructive economic crises the world has ever seen. The International Monetary Fund expects worldwide economic

growth to fall around 3% over the year, while the figure for Bosnia and Herzegovina is 5%, which is already more than during the global recession in 2008. The EBRD has modestly adjusted its forecast fall in economic growth for BiH to -4.5%. These are optimistic forecasts¹ and depend on an accelerated recovery, insofar as they already assume growth of 6% for BiH in 2021.

Two dimensions that transcend the current crisis are indicative of its depth. On the one hand, this is an economic and not just a financial crisis, because it involves not just disturbances on the demand side and in financial markets but supply-side reductions as well, thanks to the closing down of countries and the cutting of supply chains, similar only to conditions in wartime economies. Economists are agreed that the speed with which countries return to pre-crisis levels will depend on their exposure to global markets and the capacity of national governments to manage the situation.

Small open economies, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, are somewhat hostages of the larger states on which global economic flows depend and which have been worst affected by the crisis. In other words, no small open economy can recover on its own. To what degree solutions (plans, models, lending) will come from outside or have to be developed by relying on domestic economic policy remains an open question.

Most countries around the world have based their fight against the corona crisis on short-term measures to stimulate consumption and the belief that the pandemic will gradually fade over the third and fourth quarters of this year, but there are evident differences between them in their capacity for fiscal or monetary policy. Developed countries (the US, China, and countries not in a liquidity trap) are applying expansionary monetary policy, reducing interest rates and using helicopter money as targeted cash transfers that won't increase public borrowing (Cota 2020).

The less-developed open economies have no such monetary policy capacity. As a result, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the countries of the Western Balkans have generally focused on short-term fiscal measures to preserve liquidity and stimulate consump-

1 Given that no-one knows how the crises will play out in Latin America, Africa, or India, Branko Milanović (2020) warns that if it does engulf those countries the fall in world GDP may well exceed even current IMF forecasts.

tion (guaranteeing jobs and salary support). These measures require financing for deepening budget deficits and “additional money” (generally from credits) to maintain business sector liquidity. They are trying to support consumption by 1) reallocating resources by rebalancing the budget; 2) creating “additional money” in cash funds to deal with job losses; and 3) forming guarantee funds to secure bank loans to business. A second set of interventions only now being announced is already being implemented in some neighbouring countries, like Croatia. It includes cutting taxes and deferring public transfers, with direct government intervention envisaged in the last fiscal resort. In essence, we are dealing with fixed sets of measures that have been either generally accepted (the first set of financial interventions) or announced (the second and third sets).

The major shortcomings of this approach to dealing with the corona crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina relate to the limited fiscal capacity available with its relatively short-term reach. Salaries can't be guaranteed forever, particularly if the corona crisis proves a lasting one, and even if successful will depend on how the measures are implemented in practice and the government's political capacity. Even if “additional money” can be secured (and we still don't know the limits to the artificial creation of money), over the medium-term the quantity of goods produced will play the decisive role and structural reforms will be required to stimulate domestic supply chains.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first signs of risk have appeared in the suspension of regular procedures for public procurement. The risk of job losses has been passed on to the private sector, while those on the public payroll are protected by their established employment rights. The state guarantees the payment of pensions, but pensioners, already collateral victims of the run-down state pension fund, are likely to be first in line when budgetary belts have to be tightened. Programmatic ideas of guarantee funds and development banks are rendered proverbially impractical by the “capacities” of entrenched and widespread corruption.

Given its vulnerability to crises (remember that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a less developed open economy) and lack of any monetary capacity for dealing with the corona crisis, the key for the country will be to weather the crisis and spread out fiscal capacity over however long it lasts. Reliance on once-off meas-

ures of short-term fiscal policy will likely be quickly exhausted, if the pandemic continues into the final two quarters of the year with the same intensity as the first two, not to mention further into 2021. This is why, we have to review which forms of monetary and credit policy can realistically be applied, while critiquing unrealistic proposals for using monetary policy to bridge the corona crisis that have surfaced in public, and also point to room for strengthening fiscal policy capacity that has opened up or may do so.

The prospects for monetary and credit policy and the limits to applying helicopter money

The key question for monetary and credit policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is how to maintain the stability of the local currency and the banking system by maintaining the commercial banks' capital adequacy ratio. The solution lies in an effective and independent system of supervision and oversight for the entire banking sector, which is at constant risk of objective destabilisation by political voluntarism on the part of the political oligarchies.

Danger lies in two problematic political demands – one is for expansion of the primary money supply through so-called manipulation of the foreign currency reserves that provide cover for the KM's convertibility, and the second is for a cut in the level of the mandatory reserves from 10 to 5% to free up 2.5 billion KM in liquidity. Not merely would meeting these demands have no positive economic impact, it would be both politically and economically harmful. In the first case, political demands for higher foreign exchange reserves to allow more convertible marks to be issued are not institutionally feasible. In the second case, cutting the level of the mandatory reserves is not in line with commercial banks' interests and would jeopardise the country's monetary stability. The banks are already too liquid and have been managing liquidity risk with great success for years. Even under such conditions, lending growth was poor. Increasing the size of deposits under current domestic conditions of supply and demand for credit would only increase the costs of hanging on to unallocated cash. Which makes this concern for commercial bank liquidity somewhat strange, given that not merely are they not experiencing liquidity risk but they actually have significant surplus

reserves at the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the tune of 2.8 billion KM over and above the mandatory level. It would be enough to draw on that amount to put any political concerns over bank liquidity or lending to industry to rest. Banks will do this themselves once personal savings fall, as will inevitably happen, first as the public, prompted by fear of the corona crisis itself, redirects free cash to stockpile provisions, and, then, as the expectation grows that mechanisms will kick in sooner or later and end tolerance for continued deferral of repayments on personal and business bank loans. To protect themselves, the banks will inevitably begin to withdraw their resources and naturally secure themselves against liquidity threat. If the growth rate continues to fall to the end of the year, of course, and the economy enters a condition of deep recession, then it would be quite natural for the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina to activate cuts in the mandatory reserve levels, as this is its only monetary policy mechanism for stimulating economic activity (Hodžić 2020).

The helicopter money model is equally inapplicable to Bosnia and Herzegovina, given the character of the country's monetary and fiscal policy options. The monetary system is based upon a strict currency board, which preserves the convertibility of the local currency through a hard peg to the euro and prevents any expansion in the primary money supply. Consequently, helicopter money is not available as an instrument of monetary policy. What can be done through fiscal policy is to rebalance the budget on similar lines, so as to give all adult residents remittances of 2×250 KM. The funds could be secured from revenues paid into the joint account on the basis of indirect taxation and be paid out to all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina via the central or state-level budget. The funds would be at least partially recouped through consumption, via the so-called filter system. This model would not entail any additional limitations to established legal rights to pensions, disability payments, and social benefits. This would protect the most income-at risk categories of the population and attain social and political goals. The basic goal of such non-standard monetary and financial policy measures is to restore confidence in the state and the institutions of the system. The private sector's other problems could be addressed by systematic government measures in the area of strengthening fiscal and financial discipline (Kešetović 2020).

Anything connected with changing how monetary policy instruments are applied would have to be pursued using a rather different instrument of monetary credit policy that is rarely dusted off. This is a selective credit policy to be implemented through the Central Bank based upon opportunities to finance the production of goods and services. There would be room in the monetary system for mechanisms to “destroy” money at the end of the reproduction cycle when goods are created on the supply side. The National Bank of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia used such a mechanism to finance specific sectors and branches of production. For example, the production of agricultural produce in reproduction cycles of up to a year. The practice was also applied to investment to kickstart rapid growth in the production of goods and services. Using this approach to financing presupposes a development bank or specialised banks for the particular sectors. For it to work there would have to be state-level sectoral policies. It could also help guarantee monetary stability and economic growth, which are amongst economic policy’s priority goals.

Strengthening fiscal policy capacity

In the medium term, the current approach to allocating public monies will have to be abandoned, because it’s neither fair nor economically efficient. Instead, we will have to strengthen the state’s fiscal capacity using the principles of allocation policy and stabilisation policy and applying key measures: efficiency in public revenue collection, reducing the fiscal burden on industry and the general population, financial and fiscal discipline, and strengthening the tax administration. This would get us out of the current system where tax is subject to the “law of the jungle” and provide legal security for all business entities within the system, while at the same time strengthening the functions of the state and of public investment in the public sector and its services (public healthcare and education, economic infrastructure: agriculture and power, policing and the security forces, and the judiciary and legal system, and of course in tax administration).

It would also mean root and branch reform of public administration by cutting employee numbers, cutting or changing how institutions are financed, including agencies, directorates, insti-

tutes, services, et cetera, changing the approach to the allocation of public revenues and defining authorities and responsibilities at various levels of government differently, strengthening local administration and semiautonomous bodies and increasing the role of civil society.

In the end, there remains a need for effective mechanisms to manage public debt. The issue of public borrowing is not treated in the same way at the level of the entities and Brčko district. This is particularly true of internal debt used to maintain liquidity. The preference for low levels of borrowing should be looked at using the “good or bad debt” principle. Even if Bosnia and Herzegovina can be classified as a country with only moderate debt, its borrowing has not produced positive macroeconomic trends. The golden rule of borrowing is that the state should only borrow money during the business cycle to invest and not to finance current spending. Talk of expanding the money supply without coverage is just another way of taking on debt to fund current spending. Investment and development should be the priority. The country’s fiscal policy has to address the issue of how to allocate resources, that is how to distinguish private and public activities and put insufficiently exploited resources to work, including resources that are unemployed, underemployed, or wrongly employed, as well as how to make proper use of natural resources and socially created wealth.

There is room in fiscal policy for tax optimisation and reduction of the “tax wedge”. The profession already considers the tax wedge in Bosnia and Herzegovina excessive, with negative consequences for economic growth and demand for labour and a tendency to favour the informal labour market. A more economically efficient and fairer model requires change, first in the general VAT rates on goods and services and second of the (pension and healthcare insurance) contributions levied on income.

An additional levy on the VAT rate would have the character of a special tax on the existing rate of 17%. This would prevent distortion of the tax’s impact. The regressive effect of increasing the rate can be countered by boosting personal income by cutting the contribution rate and increasing tax credits applied to income tax and linking them to average income from the immediately preceding period. This could mean an increase from the current 300 KM to 70% of the average income, while retaining existing

tax relief and applying a proportional rate of 10% on income up to 3 times the average gross salary, 15% on income four times the average salary and 20% on income five or more times it. Based on statistical data and scenarios projecting indirect taxation for 2016 to 2019 from the Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rise in the VAT rate would be somewhere in the region of 3.4%.²

Complementary changes would also have to be made to the system of contributions on the Beveridge model, which would involve getting rid of contributions for healthcare and for the unemployed. This has been done in many countries (Great Britain, Ireland, Iceland, the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). The proposal to do away with contributions for healthcare insurance (the Beverage model finances healthcare directly from the tax take) is based on an aggregate rate of 36.06% of net salary or 23% of gross salary, while retaining contributions levied on income (income tax) and increasing the tax credit to 70% of the average salary and introducing progressive rates of 10, 15, and 20%. Moving to a system of financing based on taxation presupposes that reform would make healthcare accessible to all citizens. An indirect consequence would be doing away with so-called “fictive unemployment” the aim of which is to establish rights to healthcare.

The drawbacks of this model are increased risk of insufficient investment of monetary resources in particular areas of healthcare and “competition” for the same budgetary resources between healthcare and other social or welfare sectors, like edu-

2 In support of our proposal, we have used 2017 as the base year for calculating fiscal capacity, given the changes that year to the system for calculating VAT and social insurance (Kešetović 2020). The standard rate of VAT since it was introduced in BiH is 17%. There is a zero rate for exports, introduced to allow companies exporting their goods and services to write off tax on components. It represents the amount of tax payable on every 100 cash units of taxable trade and is levied on the before-VAT price. A tax base of 20.52 billion KM in 2017 would have raised the following amounts, at projected rates of 23%, 24%, and 25%, respectively:

1. VAT at 23% would bring in tax revenues of 4.72 billion KM (up 1.23 billion KM on revenue at the current rate of 17%).
2. VAT at 24% would bring in 4.92 billion KM (up 1.43 billion KM).
3. VAT at 25% would bring in 5.712 billion KM (up 1.64 billion KM).

cation, culture, and sport. Such drawbacks can be marked even in periods when there are no particular problems with financing public consumption. Under disordered conditions, as today with the corona crisis, such drawbacks can become decisive. When problems with financing the healthcare sector begin, the advantages of this model come to the fore, however – easier to control spending, lower administrative costs, and more efficient healthcare financing.

Conclusion

It is necessary to stress one more time here that there is a real possibility that the corona crisis will become one of the most destructive economic crises the world has ever seen. As a less developed small and open economy with limited scope for economic policy, Bosnia and Herzegovina is particularly vulnerable to the impact of the corona crisis. So far, the fiscal measures taken have been short-term with a view to saving jobs and maintaining minimum salary levels to support personal consumption and business liquidity. These measures are of limited applicability because they can only be applied in the short-term.

Liquidity and salaries cannot be guaranteed forever, and there's a real question as to how much debt the country can take on, because the currency board regime makes monetary expansion impossible. Nonetheless, even within the framework of the limited capacities of fiscal and monetary policy, not all possibilities have been exhausted. There are unutilised possibilities of monetary and lending policy and approaches to taxation within the system of fiscal policy. In the medium term, the quantity of goods produced and not the quantity of money will play the decisive role, but structural reforms are required to stimulate domestic supply chains.

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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INTEGRITY OF GOVERNANCE: LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

Fatima Mahmutćehajić

1. Introduction

Integrity of governance is a frequent topic in discussions of legal theory.¹ The key terms of such discussions tend to be drawn from and applied within what Uwe Poerksen has called modular language, which he considers to be characteristic of most of the theoretical fields that are of interest to both the academic community and a more general public. These terms are ascribed meanings that are not, strictly speaking, related solely to legal theory.² The area of legal theory is emphasised here because of the topic of this paper, but the same situation is to be found in almost all the scientific and academic disciplines. Theoretical terms or paradigms are reified and their meanings kept unclear, which in turn obscures their role in theoretical considerations. This paper will discuss “integrity of governance”, “ethics of governance”, “good governance”, and “legal perspectives” as such phrases within legal theory and practice, with a particular focus on their use and interpretation in the contemporary business environment.

As is well known, words and terms from various areas of theory do not function independently of their semantic fields. Their dictionary definitions, which are necessarily situated outside the semantic fields of the various theoretical disciplines in

1 Leo W. J. C. Huberts, “Integrity: What it is and Why it is Important”, *Public Integrity*, 20:sup1, pp. 18-32.

2 For more on what Poerksen calls modular language, see Uwe Poerksen (1995) *Plastic words: The Tyranny of a Modular Language*, translated by Jutta Mason and David Cayley, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania.

which they operate, tend nonetheless to be uncritically adopted, leading to unclear meanings in theoretical and practical discussions. This has significantly hampered the theoretical structuring of disciplinary perspectives. All scientific disciplines, including legal theory, are in constant flux, as are their paradigms. Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos are just some of those who have written about these shifts in scientific paradigms. Today, this is the key precondition for understanding and building upon scientific achievement in line with constantly changing social, political and economic circumstances.³

Current understandings of terms and phrases within legal theory are themselves related to the development of political ideas. For legal terms and phrases to be understood within the context of developmental change in policy, culture and the economy, we need insight not only into dominant attitudes towards legal theories but also into various other related fields. If, for example, we consider Jeremy Shearmour's discussion of political ideas⁴, we can see that terms and paradigms such as liberalism, with its individual autonomy and ethical neutrality of public governance, on the one hand, and conservatism, with its focus on the collectivity and on ethical commitment, on the other, as well as their ties to the free market and its self-regulating mechanisms, have undergone dramatic changes over the past two centuries, with an impact that has been felt in legal theory.

Five elements will be used to highlight these changes. Today, it is impossible to imagine engaging with legal theory without taking into account categories that hardly existed even seventy years ago. First, the affirmation of industrialisation and calls to increase its efficiency left little room for environmental issues. Today, one cannot speak of almost any aspect of law, policy, or economics without giving due consideration to the increasingly complex environmental requirements. Second, the issue of human rights seems to have been around forever, but it acquired its theoretical relevance for legal theory only after the Second World War, since which it has played a major role in the dynamic of

3 The seminal works for understanding this claim are T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, and Imre Lakatos "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes", available at <http://www.inf.fu-berlin.de/lehre/pmo/eng/Lakatos-Falsification.pdf>.

4 Jeremy Shearmur, *Ideas in Politics*, Teaching Co. (2001).

internationalisation. Third, the notion of gender equality as playing a politically, legally, and economically decisive role simply did not exist, in its contemporary sense, until the second half of the twentieth century. There is practically no legal area from which it can be excluded today. Fourth, cyberspace, into which contemporary life has extended, is an even more recent phenomenon. Its effects on changes and developments within legal theory and practice have been dramatic and inescapable. And fifth, in the context of unforeseeable social, economic and natural crises, relations between law and policy necessarily now involve aspects that were not and could not be there before globalisation had gained its current strength. There is almost no social, political or economic issue that can be completely cut off from the global context.

These five areas of contemporary life are taken merely as examples of the changes enveloping legal theory and practice. There are many more such examples, but these five should suffice to illustrate the argument of this paper.

2. Integrity of governance

The integrity of governance is a characteristic paradigm of every theoretical discussion that touches upon the regulation of legal and political frameworks. When this paradigm is confined to legal theory, it is important to note that integrity refers to public governance. This means that it designates an ideal goal, as, in practice, public governance often lacks integrity. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary gives the following definition of integrity: "an unimpaired condition, soundness, firm adherence to a code of esp. moral or artistic values, incorruptibility, the quality or state of being complete or undivided, completeness". It is clear that in our case the terms should refer to "public governance", "legal systems", and "political systems" rather than to the example given of "moral" or "artistic values". The integrity of public governance is thus an ideal towards which the implementation of political and legal programmes and actions is directed. Whenever sight of that ideal is lost in such actions, integrity becomes its opposite and public governance becomes unsound, disconnected from moral values, permeated with corruption, and divided and incomplete. This state of flawed integrity of public governance

can and should be understood and subsequently changed within legal theory and practice.

Improving the legal and political order requires a strengthening of the integrity of public governance. This is important in all forms of social life but particularly in developing democracies and in social crises. Leo Huberts notes that “integrity is a crucial concept for an understanding of governance. Not as alternative for many challenging ‘ethics theories and approaches’ in the field, but to be embedded in the existent ‘approaches’ and theory development.”⁵

The concept of governance as currently understood incorporates power, authority, policy, administration, government, management, and organisation. Leo Huberts defines governance as “authoritative policy-making on collective problems and interests and implementation of these policies”⁶. Reducing the concept of integrity to defining governance within the legal framework requires its regulation or, in other words, the affirmation of rules and procedures to allow the paradigm’s real application in legal theory and practice to be assessed. Stains Bisschop warns against confusing the terms “integrity” and “governance” from the point of view of legal theory and practice and notes, “Establishing whether or not the norm of integrity is observed is conditional on making behaviour transparent. The same is true in respect of other provisions contained in corporate governance codes. Transparency, in the sense of disclosure about behaviour, is therefore a key element for the overall practical relevance and functioning of these codes and especially required when addressing integrity.”⁷

3. The relationship between legal and ethical conduct

The political and legal ideal is for all aspects of governance integrity to be framed by laws, norms and rules, and procedures related to them. Actualisation of that ideal in political programmes is, however, never more than partial. One can construct a typology of the various aspects of governance integrity. Some of these

5 For more, see Leo W. J. C. Huberts, “Integrity...”

6 For more, see Gjalte de Graaf and Hester Paanakker “A Legacy of Integrity: A Tribute to Leo Huberts”, *Public Integrity*, 22:3, 221-226.

7 B. Steins Bisschop, “The norm of integrity in corporate governance codes: Could it be made enforceable?”, *Dovens Schmidt Quarterly*, 2, 64-78.

possibilities are pointed out by Leo Huberts (2018). The typology can then allow us to derive the most important elements of that concept. Accordingly, integrity of governance cannot be reduced just to the procedures in applying laws, norms, and rules. Although based on moral principles and values, laws, norms, and rules can never cover all the situations in which decision makers find themselves. There are also situations where applying laws, norms and rules to the letter goes against ethical requirements. It may be that what is morally is not legally correct and vice versa.

Decisionmakers often find themselves in a position to choose options that fit the circumstances but are not covered by laws, norms, and roles, as well as those that fit their needs but are not moral. Violations of the integrity of governance arise from these contradictions and are manifested as corruption and the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of decisions. Decision makers, such as ministers and other officials, cannot objectively judge their own decisions. They are always legally and morally responsible for the decisions they make, but whether these decisions are in line with the law and with moral principles is judged by others – by judicial institutions and by the public. This is precisely why transparency in governance is of crucial importance. Decision makers are thus obliged to present and justify their decisions before competent government institutions, but also before the public at large.

Stains Bisschop also points out that resolving the dichotomy of the moral and legal justification of decisions is a continuous issue, “[T]he rule makers assume the integrity is an obligation that can be imposed. How to enforce such an obligation is another matter, though [...] the existing legal strategies appear to be incapable of doing so. [...] If there were an overarching legal norm of ultimate justice and the obligation of integrity would form part of such norm, then conformity to such a norm could be seen as a legal obligation.”⁸ The impossibility that available legal strategies include integrity within the legal norm is a challenge that must be continuously resolved. Circumstances brought about by changes in living conditions and conditions of doing business and especially in situations of crisis such as the current pandemic and similar crises reaffirm the necessity of resolving the above-described challenge.

8 Ibid.

The relation between what is right and what is wrong, or, in other words, between good and evil, is a category of ethics, but since it cannot be excluded from legal theory, it also forms part of complex considerations of the integrity of governance. It is up to the decision makers in governance to distinguish these two poles in all situations, but they must also always do so in line with their responsibility for the integrity of governance, which is to say in line with their legal and ethical accountability. Therein lie the numerous possibilities for abuse that go against that obligation and threaten the integrity of governance. In times of crisis, such as the current pandemic, responsibility for the integrity of governance is particularly important precisely because it is susceptible to seemingly simpler abuses of the law and of ethics and to the judgement of a distressed public.

4. National and international context

It is only in modern times that the issue of international law has come to include aspects that were previously not of interest to law or policy theorists. The *Lex mercatoria* belongs to premodern times but retains important implications today. It is not possible to fully determine activity within ecosystems, within universally and inextricably present environments, or in response to unpredictable geological and biological change, or a host of other unresolved issues related to the regulation of cyberspace, and all this requires completely new ways of understanding the relationship between the national and the international and the particular and the universal. The current pandemic caused by the spread of COVID-19 imposes a requirement to connect the integrity of governance with governments on both the national and international level. Both components are required for an effective response to the crisis caused by the pandemic, which has impacted all areas of life, including law and policy, as well as culture and the economy.

The state of emergency caused by the pandemic, whose development it remains difficult to foresee, which in turn makes it difficult to formulate a response, means that all decisions, legal and political, are situated somewhere on the spectrum between individual responsibility and the responsibility of others for the individual. This responsibility has reference to all levels of social

organisation, from the local and national to the international. Responsibilities across that broad range of decision-maker can be neither separated nor relativised. This is a hierarchical chain where both law and ethics take on new aspects. Neglecting any of the levels in the hierarchy, from the individual and civil society organisations and businesses to the various levels of political government and other countries, international organisations, and transnational companies has the potential to lead to loss of life, which is why responsibility must be clearly assigned to those who violate the hierarchy. The concept of integrity is particularly significant for the totality of legal and moral responsibility.

It is reasonable to assume that the structures of governance, and by extension the structures of governments and their laws, norms, and rules in decision making, are not calibrated to align with the outbreak of the pandemic. Not even the most developed and efficient democracies can reform all aspects of integrity of governance based on such a short-term experience. Naturally, this does not mean that circumstances absolve individuals or institutions of governance or governments from making and applying decisions that uphold the integrity of governance to the highest degree, with respect to the demands for efficiency, transparency and legal certainty, in addition to their own heightened moral responsibility.

There is no doubt that individuals who are prepared to abuse the emergency conditions imposed because of the pandemic to act contrary to their own legal and moral obligations regarding the integrity of governance and the integrity of governments can all the more intensively foster and spread corruption and destruction in the political and legal system. This does not mean that the inadequacy of existing laws, norms, and rules for the pandemic state of emergency implies a diminished ethical responsibility. The hierarchy of ethical responsibilities in the integrity of governance is clear. Human lives, the equality of all people in dignity and opportunities, the preservation of peace and security, and the fair distribution of goods and fiscal means can under no circumstances be subjugated to procedures that threaten these values. In this distribution of responsibility for the integrity of governance, any indecision and postponing of decisions mean putting lives at risk. The protagonists and participants of governance and governments are therefore responsible for the decisive and public align-

ment of the legal and the moral in the service of protecting human lives and other related values.

5. Challenges of the pandemic

The pandemic threatens the lives of individuals but it does so in such a way that, in principle, no one is free of the danger. Hence, all of humanity is under threat. It should be noted that the response must be in all respects holistic. The main burden of the present circumstances lies on the healthcare system, from its lowest levels to the national and indeed global level. The healthcare system is a part of every politically and legally well-organised society and inseparable from issues of the integrity of governance.

The issue of vaccination lies at the heart of current discussions over the response to the pandemic. It is not a matter of vaccinating a group of people within a limited geographic area. It is a matter of vaccinating all of humanity. Producing billions of vaccine doses and distributing them to practically everyone in every part of the world is an enormous scientific, industrial and medical endeavours, but it is also inseparable from national and international political and legal orders. Though vaccinating all of humanity is a goal with no alternative and is logically clear, its implementation is primarily related to what one means by the integrity of governance. Some decisions related to this concept may be re-examined, postponed, and subjected to usual procedures in so-called normal times. Making decisions under pandemic conditions, and re-examining them, is, however, unlike anything the academic community has been previously familiar with in legal and political theory. Every individual death caused by the pandemic that could have been prevented by vaccination is the responsibility of everyone given integrity of governance and governments.

Companies in general, and particularly those whose business is related to finding and implementing responses to the pandemic, are not notably ethical associations. They are determined by the often-repeated phrase that “the business of business is business”.⁹

9 Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits”, *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970. For more on Friedman’s doctrine about society and the ethics of corporate social re-

This fact must be kept in mind by all those responsible for the integrity of governance. It is no good trying to shift their legal and moral responsibilities onto companies from which they must urgently procure, in line with the relevant laws, norms and rules, whatever that can contribute to an effective response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. All companies have a clear aim – to make a profit. It is up to political decision-makers to align that aim with their own aim of ensuring the integrity of governance. Ingeborg Schwenzer and Benjamin Leisinger speak clearly about this when they say that “first and foremost it was - and still is today - the duty of the states and the community of states to legislate and then enforce such regulations in order to prevent unethical behaviour by any actor of society, inclusive of business enterprises.”¹⁰ Even when those responsible for protecting human lives act in conditions of *vis major*, this does not invalidate the requirements inherent in the concept of the integrity of governance.

The concept of the integrity of governance is inseparable from the concept of social trust. In emergency situations, such as this pandemic, trust in the government and in companies usually deteriorates, but in different ways. The interests of business enterprises and of governments must be put in the service of strengthening trust. The government must always act in the best interests of its citizens and has the positive obligation of maintaining and strengthening trust as social capital. Business enterprises whose fundamental credo is “the business of business is business” may also add philanthropic aspects or pronounced ethical responsibilities to that credo in times of crisis. In this way, they contribute to maintaining trust as their capital. When it comes to the principle of corporate social responsibility in states of emergency, Timothy Manuel and Terri L. Herron note,

While it is impossible to state the motives for many of the business actions taken to support public welfare during the crisis, many actions appear to be motivated by deontological principles

sponsibility, see Benjamin Arah “Society, Friedman’s Business Doctrine and the Ethics of CSR”, *International Journal of Business Management and Commerce* Vol. 3 No. 5, September 2018.

10 Ingeborg Schwenzer and Benjamin Leisinger, “Ethical values and international sales contracts” in *Commercial law challenges in the 21st century: Jan Hellner in memoriam*. Stockholm, pp. 124-148.

rather than a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis. Business responses appear to involve placing community well-being over short-term firm financial goals. Customers and employees seem to appreciate and expect this and believe that firms should do more. It will be vitally important for firms to maintain the trust of their employees and respond with empathy and wisdom if the pandemic continues. This is especially true given the low levels of trust people seem to have in the government's and the media's ability to credibly communicate information about and respond effectively to the crisis.¹¹

The individual's right to life is above anything that can be considered a political or legal order. It is, therefore, impossible for someone responsible for the integrity of governance and governments to find legal, normative, or procedural justification for actions that do not protect the individual from the pandemic to the greatest possible degree. That is why political and legal theory contain all the reasons for clearly determining responsibility for failure to act in line with the highest ethical and legal standards. When this is not done in practice, it means that the integrity of governance and the integrity of governments has been violated and that those involved bear the highest-order legal and moral responsibility.

It may seem that the strictly corporate principle of maximising profit can be separated from the above ethical responsibilities. Harmonising these seemingly contradictory demands is an important aspect of current tendencies that we can justifiably call moralising business. Ingeborg Schwenzer and Benjamin Leisinger (2007) give a host of examples to illustrate the negative effects of strictly applying business efficiency while neglecting ethical responsibilities.¹² Referring to the work of Klaus Leissing and Karin Schmitt,¹³ Schwenzer and Leisinger conclude that contemporary business activities cannot be separated from ethical demand and note that "there is also more subtle benefit from ethical behaviour: the rule of law is promoted. This can have positive

11 Timothy Manuel and Terri L. Herron, "An ethical perspective on business CSR and the COVID-19 pandemic", *Society and Business Review*, Emerald Publishing Limited.

12 See Ingeborg Schwenzer and Benjamin Leisinger, "Ethical values and..."

13 Klaus Leissing and Karin Schmitt (2003) *Corporate Ethics in a Time of Globalization*, 2nd ed, Basel/Colombo, p. 78.

effects on the development of legal systems in which contracts are enforced fairly, bribery and corruption are less prevalent, and all business entities have equal access to legal process and equal protection under the law.”¹⁴ David Kinley and Junko Tadaki (2004) derive a related conclusion,

Economic interests and human rights have been long ‘locked up in separate compartments’ without any necessary interrelationship between them. Consequently, TNC’s [transnational corporations] have been able to treat profit maximization as a preeminent value and human rights as peripheral. The greater exposure of human rights abuses by TNC’s clearly signals that a pluralistic approach to international law is necessary to defend the fundamental value of human dignity.¹⁵

6. Instead of a Conclusion

The “integrity of governance” and the “integrity of governments” include an ideal against which the efficiency of all political and legal functions at the national and international level is measured and assessed. During the pandemic, meaning, in extraordinary political and legal circumstances, nothing of the meaning of the above phrase can be diminished or sacrificed. On the contrary, its affirmation can help achieve efficiency in executing the legal and ethical responsibilities to protect the lives of individual and society as a whole. The importance of this legal challenge is not diminished by the state of emergency caused by the pandemic. Indeed, the emergency situation makes it both theoretically and practically more urgent. Upholding the hierarchy of responsibility from the individual to the national and international level is the precondition for political efficiency and legal certainty in achieving the common goal, which is the responsibility of every international institution, every country, and as noted in the *Preamble* to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, “every individual and every organ of society”. They all have the irrevocable responsibility and duty to connect their areas of activ-

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David Kinley, and Junko Tadaki (2004) “From Talk to Walk: The Emergence of Human Rights Responsibilities for Corporations at International Law”, *Virginia Journal of International Law*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 931-1023.

ity in the interest of collectively ensuring universal respect for human rights and their protection.

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THE PANDEMIC AND BOSNIAN DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Hamdija Hadžihasanović

Under pressure from the threat of the pandemic, we are losing sight of the dangers of further erosion to our freedoms, impoverishment, and debt bondage. The few but powerful owners of capital have been increasing controls over the majority of the population, over armies, and as far across the planet as they can reach. But they cannot stop us thinking. The coronavirus helps us see that further investment in atomic and conventional weapons is senseless, that happiness lies not in villas, pools, yachts, jets, or stockpiles of electronic currency. Like death, the virus is a great equaliser.

Human thought is the highest form of material organisation, and matter has both mass and energy. How much energy have the citizens of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina accumulated through their suffering, the injustices, indignities, and death in the period from 1992 to 1995 and afterwards? That energy will not just disappear into thin air. How can we prevent that energy from being transformed under certain social conditions into criminal actions against the descendants of criminals? By producing energy of opposite valence: remorse, contrition, sincere apology – atonement for sins and constant struggle to not retaliate against evil with more evil.

We, the citizens of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, should atone for our sins, too, for the crimes committed in our name (for example, Kazani). This is not a matter of metaphysics, it is physics. We should find the level where hatred disappears completely and where one stands above nation and experiences the fortune or misfortune of a neighbouring country as though it had happened to one's own (Goethe).

Instead of continuing with the constant renewed regulation of life through laws, increasing the gap between the real and the regulated and exacerbating the crisis, we should stop and turn towards ethics – the philosophical study of morality. There is no task more urgent for families, schools, or religious communities.

Not all relations in society can be regulated solely by moral norms – customary law. It is high time to set firm norms to define:

- peace,
- attitudes towards nature – ecology,
- conduct in space,
- restricting individual wealth and power, as a ratio of the average material state of society,
- access to knowledge for all.

This must not be relegated to a “world government”. It is a job for the United Nations. But the United Nations would first have to be reformed: how the Security Council is financed (paying more for influence), composed, and its powers would need to be changed, etc.

Contemporary experiences with democracy are discouraging. People have been enslaved, and there can be no free elections for slaves. Elections have turned into fraud and robbery. Instead of electing representatives in legislative government – general practitioners – we could elect representatives for each session – the best informed and most trusted people for the topic of each session. We could elect representatives in executive government in the same way – competent and respected negotiators. Today, we do not have a single representative elected by the whole constituency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The army, police, judiciary, prosecutors, and educators should be depoliticised professionals.

We know beforehand that the powerful, locally and globally, will mount strong opposition to these reforms. But, in our humble knowledge, we are more powerful if we unite our knowledge and actions. The vast wealth of the powerful is losing value on the stock markets, but our knowledge is not on the stock market and cannot lose value. If we believe in ourselves, we can make the post-pandemic world better for all. To the powerful belong the food, seeds, medicines, vaccines, weapons... All that's left is for us to be implanted with microchips, remote-controlled, and switched off at will.

Resist!

We have our land, water, forests. Take up the hoe and the plough and let us live off the land. Now is the time to stop taking loans from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank...

Change the Constitution

Under the Dayton Agreement, the High Representative, the Peace Implementation Council can help us:

- impose an actual protectorate for an interim period;
- dissolve all executive governments and parliaments at state and entity level;
- form teams of international and domestic experts from the diaspora financed by Bosnia and Herzegovina with funds saved by dissolving the parasitic government bodies to replace those dissolved bodies, which do no work anyway, during a protectorate period (2–4 years) and design a new constitution and state organisation;
- organise a referendum at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and adopt a new constitution, the best Dayton 2;
- organise elections and establish bodies at all levels in line with the new organisational shema.

If the Office of the High Representative refuses to help, citizens should take matters into their own hands.

Balkan Treaty Organization

Our lives are ruled by clero-chauvinists and foreign and domestic intelligence and para-intelligence services. In the Balkans, we should organise so as to eliminate mutual fears and build trust. This can be achieved by organising a joint intelligence service for all Balkan countries.

For the purposes of a Balkan Treaty Organisation, the following would need to be secured:

- people,
- facilities,
- computers,
- vehicles, and
- drones.

Every founding country should contribute equal founding shares, irrespective of size and economic might. The Treaty Organisation would collect, process, and distribute information

significant for defence and security in the territories of all founding members, without limitation, in the same scope and content, and submit it to all founding members.

Seat of the Treaty Organisation: in the capitals of all founding members based on an agreed order.

The Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina Relying on Its Own Knowledge and Resources

Before the pandemic was declared, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina had bank savings amounting to 12 billion KM. At the same time, there are many domestic patents and innovations lying in bunkers. Interest on savings has fallen to 0%, term deposit rates are at 1.1%.

We have enough people with the required knowledge and trust to connect these resources and turn them into development. A fund should be established for development in Bosnia and Herzegovina that relies on the country's knowledge and resources, including the current free zones of Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, and the establishment of new ones. This endeavour is feasible under the current Constitution and laws, as demonstrated by success stories in Tešanj, Kakanj, Žepče, Gračanica. The key is to have professional and moral people at the helm who will not defraud the population or rob the fund. This concept can quickly be turned into a set of ideas and the ideas into projects. Through these projects, owners of resources could achieve greater profits than those from interest rates.

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

ON TWO SIEGES OF SARAJEVO

Rasim Gačanović

There is a phrase they say was written at the entrance to the University of Cordoba: “Four pillars hold up the world: the wisdom of the wise, the justice of the powerful, the prayers of the good, and the valour of the brave.” This is the measure of an honourable life in a fair and healthy society. The most difficult, but also the most important test of government and the state is unconditionally upholding these principles in difficult times – times of aggression, siege, crisis, epidemic, natural disaster, etc.

Ichak Adizes, a crisis management expert, says that in times of crisis, all integrated systems are at risk: the individual, the family, the company, the state: “When a system, which has subsystems, is exposed to changes, and a crisis is a big change, then the following happens: The subsystems do not change at the same rate and that’s where cracks appear.”¹

Still, the fact that Bosnia is at heart one country and one state, not a system integrated out of components or constructed by *Serbo-Croat scissors*² as some insist, is what explains its remarkable resilience under the trials of major crisis. Therein lies the hope of its people.

Bosnia and Sarajevo have survived difficult times at least twice in less than thirty years. One was the aggression, the other attack from within. Both dangerous and deadly. A matter of two sieges. The latter, the pandemic siege, is happening now, but I was a witness to the forty-four months of the siege of Sarajevo from 1992 to 1995 as well.

In this article, I will present some facts, observations, and thoughts based on my personal experiences of anti-Bosnian

1 Adizes 2020.

2 Lukić 2017.

aggression, its beginnings, the preparations for defence, and the defence of Bosnia, and some facts, observations, and thoughts on the coronavirus pandemic.

At a time when most of us were ignoring the vehemence with which campaigns of murder were being announced to realise the Greater Serbian project RAM [Frame] and found the grotesque tirades of Đujić's Chetnik leader Šešelj – *Vivovitica* – *Kavvovac* – *Kavvobag*³ – more amusing than anything, and Bosnian Muslims were increasingly being referred to as Turks, during the second half of the 1980s, I was becoming aware of the fast approaching deadly danger for Bosnia and Bosnians – the aggression – during walks through the Old Town of Osijek and along the banks of the Drava, in confidential and disturbing talks with Professor Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, who then and since I normally refer to as the Professor, because that is what he was to me and to many of my friends and acquaintances.

This may be a good point to note and deconstruct an interjection that is much-used when citing the causes of the war: “During the 1990s, nationalism and fascism returned like vampires and the hell of war followed.” The sequence of events and common sense refute this claim. Unfortunately, for 50 years, 22 million people were “fed” to the blood-thirsty criminal apparatus. One should note that there has been no break in the pursuit of anti-Bosnian activities for more than two centuries. The continuity was not interrupted even in the time of communist Yugoslavia, though it may seem to some that the genocidal Anti-Bosnian ideology was reined in during the period of the Communist Yugoslavia. Not so, as the events of the 1990s would make clear. When this totalitarian order was “liberated” from its tethers, the Yugoslav People’s Army and all its structures, the disintegrating League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and all the many other parts of that system became the means for implementing a Greater Serbian project that was anti-Bosnian to its core. In this social system and those that preceded it, ideological elites invoked liberation, unification, justice, and progress, only to betray these watchwords, each in its own way.

3 Milekić 2018.

Once I had become conscious of the deadly danger to my homeland and my people, I inevitably asked: what should our response be?

I don't know whether the Prof knew then about the inscription at the University of Cordoba, but I do remember that, as we carefully and softly walked along the yellow bricks that outlined the floor plan of the destroyed mosque in Osijek, he presented a concept for the defence of Bosnia based on principles that would ensure the survival and harmonious development of a religiously plural society. These principles were incorporated into the *Wartime Platform* of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (adopted on 22 June 1992).

By early 1991, there was a clear threat of aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, under the Prof's leadership and in cooperation with persons from public and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we agreed that the defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian people had to be organised within the framework of the country's legal institutions. By mid-1991, a defence force called the *Patriotic League of Bosnia and Herzegovina* had been formed. The *Patriotic League* was a true act of service to the endangered and attacked authorities of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, helping to preserve and uphold their legality and legitimacy and the sacred right and patriotic duty to defend the homeland.

The true facts about how Bosnia's defence was organised are not widely known or available. But the results are – Bosnia was defended. May it remain so.

As a direct participant in the events of the time and a close associate of the Professor, I can testify to his crucial role in the defence of Sarajevo and Bosnia from a position of proximity and credibility, without holding back, exaggeration, or embellishment. With a widening circle of responsible Bosnian patriots, he created a programme that brought together all the reasons for and components of Bosnia's defence: historical, humane, spiritual, ethical, legal, legislative, military, strategic, etc. Concrete plans and activities were developed on this basis, and he organised and coordinated their implementation down to the last detail. He managed the available resources in energy, materials, equipment, technology, and human and professional capital in Sarajevo and throughout Bosnia with an uncompromising wisdom, determina-

tion, and efficiency. The result was that under the worst, near unbelievable circumstances of the siege, the production of munitions was established, and that changed the nature of the war, as the aggressor, for all the abundance of arms he had acquired from the JNA, was now exposed to retaliation from the defenders and therefore vulnerable.

With his knowledge, sincere and devoted entreaties, fair-mindedness and determined courage, the Prof demonstrated that, even in the worst of times, an honourable victory is possible.

And while honourable people, loyal to Bosnia, were passing through the greatest tribulations – slaughter, wounding, torture, persecution, humiliation, rape, and death camps – the dishonourable, possessed by greed, that worst, most vulturelike, inhuman drive, embarked upon the looting of Bosnian property and resources. Even worse, they included the holy of holies in their dirty business, putting Bosnia and the Bosnian state on sale. The trend was already visible in 1993 and became more pronounced in the years following 1996.

Instead of starting to implement the Dayton Agreement to the letter immediately on signing it, resolutely and fully, without conditionality, the aggressor creations of the Republika Srpska and the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna used para-state institutions to continue their destructive assault on Bosnia. Basic rights were still denied across the country: the freedom of movement of people, goods, and ideas and the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the state were impeded and denied, and any thought of return of the exiled cruelly crushed – murder, mines, intimidations, threats – employment was exclusively along ethnic and party lines... It was apartheid of the worst sort. The state was stymied. Nothing functioned. Except smuggling, theft, and the looting of state property and resources. They blossomed unhindered.

As a member of the government at the time (Minister of transport and communications), I could not acquiesce to such a desperate cowardly state. I stood up to it in various ways:

Publicly and openly, I denounced the situation and warned of the fatal effects. At the start of every session of the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996 and 1997, I stubbornly repeated, “I propose that the first item on our agenda today should be the *issue of ensuring freedom of movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to enable the free flow of peo-*

ple, goods, ideas, and money.” Alluding to the Roman senator who kept repeating: *Carthago delenda est* (Carthage must be destroyed),⁴ I too kept insisting that *Bosnia defendenda est* (Bosnia must be defended).⁵

I prevented and opposed the inappropriate spending of funds intended for the reconstruction of Bosnia.

I directly prevented the continued construction of new or already begun anti-Bosnian strategic “salvation roads” and what not, projects that were to be funded from reconstruction funds, while at the same time, intensively advocating for the reconstruction of actually strategic roads to return Bosnian exiles and help them survive on Bosnian land.

I was convinced that I was supporting and facilitating the prime minister’s job to put his authority and powers of persuasion behind the uncompromising implementation of every article of the Dayton Agreement, and in particular to protect Bosnia without giving any more ground or rotten “compromises”. I was convinced we were on the same Bosnian team. My actions in pursuit of the public good apparently unsettled the prime minister, however, and a decision soon followed: R. Gačanović was relieved of the post of minister of transport and communications.

Later developments brought it all into clearer focus. The then prime minister was part of a team, but with Dragan Čović, to whom he seems to have remained loyal to this day. Čović had no difficulty in procuring, for the umpteenth time, concessions for the corrupt Sarajevo *nomenklatura* and “selling” them what already belonged to Bosnia, both naturally and under the Peace Agreement, as he pursued the dissolution of Bosnia and the interests of the criminal conspiracy that was the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna.

It was an idyllic time – a time of “brotherly love and understanding”, just like in fairy tales – until the main actors were caught in the act of robbery. As an epilogue to that period of rul-

4 The Roman senator Cato the Elder stubbornly repeated the expression *Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam* (Furthermore, I declare that Carthage must be destroyed) at the end of each senate session, under the rubric of *Any other business*, or *Ceterum*, calling for the destruction of Carthage, until the Senate finally agreed.

5 Transcripts of aural recordings of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina government sessions 1996-1997.

ing and “compromising”, full of “understanding” and “respect” between the prime minister and his deputy, in stepped the High Representative with his decisions, based on incontrovertible evidence, to dismiss the prime minister, while the judiciary raised serious charges against them both. As Zlatko Miletić, head of the Federal Police at the time, has noted, Čović was accused (along with Bičakčić) of a host of serious criminal offences, with incontrovertible evidence, but managed to avoid judicial sanction through various corrupt manipulations.⁶

Their treasonous practice was, unfortunately, continued by various other corrupt, dishonourable, and immoral officials, cloaked in a narrative of visionary leadership and the salvation of Bosnia and the Bosnian people. A siege, it would seem, is a fine opportunity for both good and evil to come to light.

This second siege, the coronavirus pandemic, differs in the line of attack. It is internal, insidious, invisible, unpredictable, almost unfathomable. Adižes says of the pandemic:

This corona is a *stress test* to see how much the system can bear. [...] In its wake, I expect to see a mass dissolution of families, and companies, and even states. [...] This is not just a health crisis – it will be a social crisis, an economic crisis, and later a political crisis.⁷

The effects of the pandemic are destructive and therefore similar to the effects of the aggression. The conduct of dishonourable people is also similar in both situations. Of course, such situations always offer the destroyers of Bosnia an incentive to exploit the difficulty of the moment. Exponents of Greater Serbian and Greater Croatian projects and their quasi-Bosniak allies, having caught scent of potential prey, have been speeding up and intensifying their activities. The High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s report notes: “Authorities in the Republika Srpska have intensified their rhetoric and often resorted to actions against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as state-level offices and institutions.”⁸

Dodik is intent on denying and demolishing Bosnian sovereignty, deleting the border on the Drina and dumping it all into

6 Šokantni intervju Zlatka Miletića... 2020.

7 Adižes 2020.

8 Inzko... 2020.

Serbia: he is completely and consistently copying Vučić, by *copy-paste* as it were, identifying a part of Bosnia with Serbia, and using the health scare to arrogate the state's prerogatives to the entity. Čović, as an anti-Bosnian field officer, is not far behind: "Both Dodik and Čavara have stated blatant lies. It is a lie that Bosniaks do not accept that the cantons have a constitutional mandate, as Dodik says. The truth is that they do not accept the cantons as subjects under international law, which is what Marinko Čavara's party, the HDZ, want, [...]"⁹

As in similar situations, greedy profiteers are trying to benefit from this crisis.

I remember a bizarre situation from the early days of the aggression against Bosnia. Somewhere in Alipašino Polje, a group of local criminals took advantage of heavy un-targeted shelling to rob a supermarket, while people were confined to the shelters.

What we have here is a contemporary example of the same sort of thing. Now, at a time when, thanks to the pandemic, people are confined to their residences by isolation measures, but there is also increasing awareness of the importance of Bosnia's rivers and the damage being caused by mini hydro power plants, no protests can be organised against his barefaced robbery and the tycoons are working hard to construct as many of those mini hydro power plants as possible. It is the same thieves' logic, just this is no neighbourhood supermarket heist but a large-scale looting of the waterways, a crucial Bosnian resource.

Appearing on the show *Kontekst* and referring to himself as the chair of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian CIGRE committee (in order to give an impression of "objective authority"), E. Bičakčić revealed not just his lack of morals, by failing to disclose that he is the owner of a company that runs mini hydro power plants and so has a direct financial interest in securing control over Bosnia's water resources, but, in his fervent desire to justify and promote their construction and so secure material benefit to himself and other tycoons, also demonstrated, by making unfounded claims, his sheer incompetence in the sector, on clear display in his performance:

9 "PROZIRNE..." 2020

Only 15% of the hydro potential for mini hydro power plants has been exploited... we have to understand that these plants represent our development potential, our development opportunity... the plants pose no threat to potable water. They do use the water along a certain length of river but they restore it to the riverbed, enriched with additional oxygen.¹⁰

On this matter, but informed by a sense of concern and responsibility for the future of Bosnia, environmental activist Anes Podić has said, “Private owners are being gifted whole rivers, and Bosnia and Herzegovina gets nothing. The 106 mini hydro power plants already constructed are responsible for the destruction of over 300 km of beautiful water courses that could amply support local communities in terms of livelihoods.”¹¹

Speaking of the fraud involved in this violation of our waterways and the violence concealed behind the greedy plans of individuals and groups, Ratko Ristić, dean of the Forestry Faculty at the University of Belgrade, has said,

The Forestry Faculty and the Biology Faculty at the University of Belgrade conducted research and found catastrophic environmental effects caused by mini hydro power plants on water resources and the environment. [...]The mini hydro power plant concept is practically negligible in terms of energy, but it causes incredible damage to the environment, while also causing serious social tensions locally and regionally. It does not contribute to economic development, because such plants employ few people and the only ones to benefit are the owners and equipment merchants and their cronies.¹²

Having realised in hindsight the damaging mistakes involved in building mini hydro power plants, which Bičakčić still presents as a “development opportunity”, many responsible countries are now doing the very opposite – removing existing mini hydro power plants. Professor Ristić notes:

Due to their small energy contribution and disastrous environmental effects, US authorities dismantled more than 1000 mini hydro power plants between 1993 and 2017. Similar processes are under way in France, Spain, Germany, and Sweden.¹³

10 “*Izgradnja malih hidroelektrana u regiji*” 2020.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ristić 2018, p. 311-317.

In the United States, this has freed up over 240,000 kilometres of waterways, mostly for environmental reasons. These fatal threats to Bosnia's future still look like "development opportunities" in the eyes of our impassioned ignoramuses, however. The future of Bosnia cannot be secured so long as this shower of vain and greedy ignoramuses and usurpers of public goods remain in power.

Zlatko Miletić has had this to say about the situation during the epidemic in general:

It is obvious that the executive, with its notorious crisis staffs, has failed, in its incompetence, to find an adequate response to key social issues raised by the pandemic. It remains locked in partisanship and nationalist confrontation, as its governance models are rotten with clientelism, corruption, and criminality, often through extra-institutional action.¹⁴

In addition to other issues, the pandemic has also exacerbated domestic violence.¹⁵

The writer of these lines lived through the siege of Sarajevo and the war against Bosnia, bracketed by the years 1991 and 1996. Now, in this year, in my home in Sarajevo, which I was cruelly forced to leave in 1992, I am experiencing imprisonment imposed by government as a pandemic necessity. There are similarities and differences between the two sieges, as there is also a span of intervening time, which we thought free of siege pathology. Alas, it was not! Both before the first siege and after it, and now, and probably in the future, there will be failings we must stand up against, no matter how the protagonists take refuge behind the fear they manufacture for the majority of the population.

After the experience of these two sieges, it is clear that the principles set out at the beginning of this text as maintaining the world are nowhere to be found among the powers-that-be in Bosnia. The writers and what they wrote have both been betrayed. This is clear from the condition of those of us who think themselves the inheritors of the people by whom and the times when those words were written. All that remains is memories and a euphoric emotionalism over the "golden age of al-Andalus". With

14 Open letter: "Miletić: *Od I...*" 2020.

15 "Porodično nasilje u doba korone..." 2020.

nothing to back it up. The “golden age” is at heart a realm of fiction – a sanctuary for those escaping a reality ruled by the *stupid, the injustice of the powerful, the prayers of the corrupt, and the cowardice of weaklings*. The actual “golden age of al-Andalus” cannot be ascribed anyone and especially not Muslims, except insofar as they uphold the principles of goodness.

Instead of a conclusion

Whatsoever may befall a man of dignity who defends freedom and humanity – suffering, persecution, injury, poverty, even death – is but the mercy of God, compared to the curse of advantages, health, and property dishonourably acquired by betraying oneself and one’s homeland in difficult times of siege.

To seek a cure is curative in itself!

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

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FUTURE ENERGY SOURCES FOR HEATING BUILDINGS IN B&H AND AROUND THE WORLD GIVEN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Vahid Tanović

Many cities and states have made recent decisions prohibiting the use of natural gas to heat new buildings in the near future. They also exclude any possibility of using other fossil fuels. By 2050, all buildings, new and existing, will have to use exclusively energy from renewable sources. In this paper I review the alternatives to natural gas for heating buildings and offer possible solutions. Practical action is currently limited to a few actors, but the number is growing every day, with the end of achieving a primary goal from the Paris Accords, ensuring that global medium air temperatures grow far less than 2°C, compared to the second half of the 19th century (the pre-industrial period).

Problem description

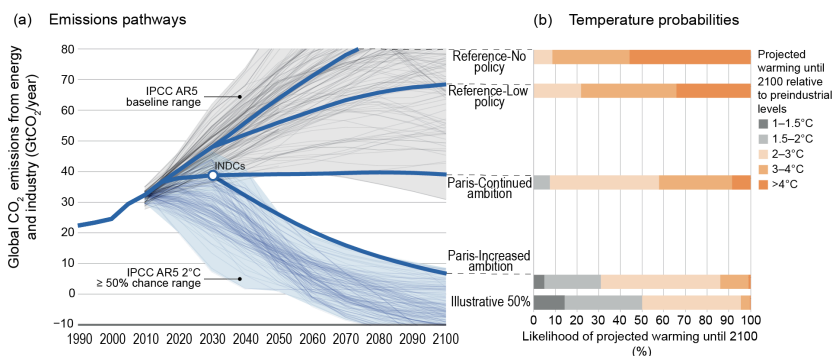
Global warming is one of the world's leading problems and, as such, is familiar to both the scientific and the professional communities, unlike the Covid-19 pandemic. Over recent decades, we have been trying to influence the main cause of global warming by reducing or mitigating so-called greenhouse gases, whose main representative is CO₂.

An important step was made in 2016 with the signing of the Paris Accords by 189 states and communities, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Accords are an agreement within the framework of the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and they are about reducing greenhouse gases. Representatives of

196 states and communities negotiated over the Accords which were passed by consensus in December 2015. By February 2020, 189 parties had become members of the UNFCCC and signed up to the Accords. The most significant ones that did not were Iran and Turkey. In the meantime, the U.S. has announced its departure from the agreement.

The Accords' long-term goal is to limit any increase in average global temperatures to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, but it also commits to additional effort to limit growth to 1.5°C , which it recognizes will significantly reduce the risk and impact of climate change. The way to do this is by reducing emissions as soon as possible and reaching a balance between emissions from human activities and reducing greenhouse gases, in the second half of the 21st century. It also aims to increase countries' ability to adapt to the negative consequences of climate change.

It is important to keep in mind that the Accords refer to the level of greenhouse gases in the second half of the 19th century as pre-industrial levels, although other views suggest human influence on climate change started long before that. We will not be addressing the notion of climate change in any detail here but possible solutions for reaching or at least getting close to the Accords' objectives. The following graph shows several possible scenarios regarding the growth of mid-temperatures. They are all based on our behaviour.



Plans in Bosnia and Herzegovina

There is a *Framework Energy Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina until 2035*. Its *Introduction* reads:

The previous global and European economic crisis, alongside its regional socio-political aspect, also negatively affected the dynamics of southeastern Europe's development and therefore Bosnia and Herzegovina's. A small, open economy, Bosnia and Herzegovina necessarily needs smart investments that stimulate economic activity significantly and in a targeted way. The energy sector plays a major role. Western EU countries are leading the implementation of clean energy policy, substantially changing energy paradigms, regulatory mechanisms, and investment needs. Pressures on wholesale electricity prices on European stock exchanges are driving major investment decisions in energy today, while, on the other hand, the EU agenda is more efficient for long-term adjustment of the production portfolio and technology towards smaller greenhouse gas emissions. The framework energy strategy gives context and direction to energy development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and seeks the right balance in the context of the "energy trilemma". Launching real investments and market and regulatory reforms in all segments of energy, supported by the firm and structured implementation by all key shareholders, are very important for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The guidelines for Bosnia and Herzegovina are based on sustainable development policies that have the three aspects of balance: a) security of supply, b) price competitiveness, and c) decarbonization or cleaner energy policy. Only targeted efficiency in the sector and the efficient use of resources will allow Bosnia and Herzegovina full parallel convergence regarding obligations accepted and EU policies and so positioning energy as the engine of economic stability and sustainable development. Secondary effects are expected to improve employment, reduce public debt and increase competitiveness.

The goal of the document is to prioritize key energy strategic guidelines for Bosnia and Herzegovina, with clearly set goals and implementation priorities for the next few years, given that a free market and free market factors by definition cannot be centrally controlled. The document's clear strategic guidelines provide a basis for applying for and drawing down IPA and WBIF energy funds in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for attracting investors into

the energy sector. The document is a revised version of the strategic guidelines from the BiH Working Group, created co-operatively by the relevant ministries, institutions, research centres, associations, social partners, and other stakeholders.

As to international obligations affecting the energy sector, the most important is the Agreement on Establishing an Energy Union (*Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina – International Contracts, number 9/06*), signed on October 25, 2005, and entered into force, July 1, 2006.

By unanimous decision of the Council of Ministers on the Energy Union of October 24, 2013, the Agreement, originally concluded for ten years, was extended for another ten. The Agreement was between the European Union and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, the Ukraine, and Georgia. On the basis of expressed interest, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Finland, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom participate in the work of the Energy Union's bodies.

The Energy Union's mission is to organize relations between the parties to the Agreement and set the rules and an economic framework for network energy, in order to:

- a) create a stable regulatory and market framework, capable of attracting investment in the gas network, electricity generation, and the transmission and distribution networks, in order to give all the parties access to stable and continuous energy supply, which is essential to economic development and social stability;
- b) create a single regulatory space for the network energy trade that suits the geographical region of the markets for these products;
- c) boost the security of supply in the single regulatory space by ensuring a stable investment environment that can develop ties with Caspian, North African and Middle Eastern gas reserves and exploit domestic energy sources, such as natural gas, oil and hydropower;
- d) improve the environmental situation related to network power and energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy and set the conditions for the energy trade on the single regulatory space; and

- e) develop market competition for network power at the broader geographic level using economies of scale.

From the document, it is also evident that everyone is expected to turn towards cleaner fuels and renewable energy sources. It is well-known that results, efforts, and plans for the future of energy in Bosnia and Herzegovina have faced strong “counter” arguments from the Energy Union and the EU, primarily regarding the development of coal electricity generation. Existing projects, like Tuzla 7, also appear to be continuing.

Planned projects for remote district heating, like heating Sarajevo from the Kakanj thermal power plant, do not fall under the targeted techniques for improving the environmental situation, unlike remote district heating based on low carbon fuels.

EU and World Plans

Some cities and countries have recently said they will prohibit the use of natural gas for heating new buildings. As shocking as this may seem, given our idea that natural gas is the fuel of the future, it is nonetheless true. At the same time, we are only now preparing studies and plans to connect to various gas pipelines being built in the region.

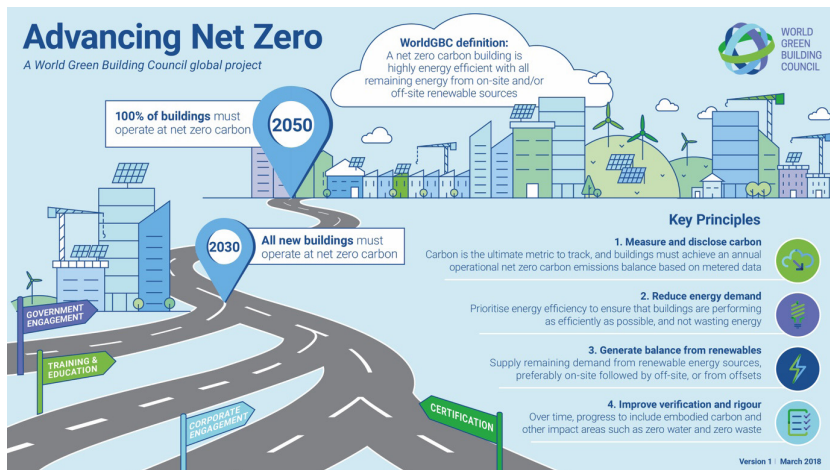
In the remaining text, we will present possible alternatives to natural gas as the main fuel for heating new and, eventually, all buildings, which is called the Net Zero project, while the buildings are called Net-Zero-carbon buildings. The definition of a net-zero-carbon building is a highly efficient building that is fully supplied from renewable energy sources.

The World Council for Green Construction, WGBC, is a global network that is spearheading transformation of the construction sector to make it healthier and more sustainable. The WGBC is present in about 70 countries, and its main task is to accelerate action to realize the ambitions set out in the Paris Accords - a total elimination of emissions from buildings and the entire construction sector by 2050.

The WGBC holds that it is not realistic in most situations for buildings to generate 100% of their energy needs, so the goal is to have energy efficient buildings provided by energy obtained from renewable sources. This is the correct setting for mass action to achieve the levels of global emissions reduction aimed at in the

Paris Accords. The WGBC believes that this challenge is only achievable on the basis of coordinated effort by governments, businesses, and NGOs – essentially everyone, led by the WGBC.

The following graph displays the activities required to achieve the goal by 2050.



Possible alternatives to natural gas

Heat Pumps

Heat pumps will certainly be the most frequent choice to replace natural gas in heating new buildings to begin with. This will push up demand for electrical energy sharply. It will therefore increase generation, but only from renewable sources. Given the enormous potential for energy generation at offshore wind-farms, this suggests a new problem, which is how to transmit and distribute electricity to shore and then to the site of consumption. The technology for heat pumps is well-known and will therefore not be considered here.

Hydrogen

Renewable energy resources from the sea (offshore) have great potential to contribute to the global energy supply chain, even if the specific price of energy generation remains higher than from conventional sources. With mounting interest in offshore resources and the (huge) capacity for renewable resources, they are likely to contribute to greater electricity use over the next

decade. The current transmission of electricity via offshore power substations and sub-marine cables increases the price of overseas electricity. Submarine cables have become very large, which hinders such work. It is much easier and simpler to use pipes to transport a gas, like hydrogen, than undersea cables. Offshore wind power can be converted into hydrogen by sea water electrolysis and the hydrogen can then be transported to shore using the existing natural gas pipeline infrastructure.

Hydrogen is the most common element in the universe. At room temperature and pressure, it is colourless and odourless. Currently, most of the hydrogen produced in the world is used to make ammonia and methanol at oil refineries. In recent years, hydrogen has been increasingly mentioned as a potential energy source for heating and transport. This has to do with the justified view that hydrogen represents the fuel of the future. Hydrogen has different physical properties than known fuels, like natural gas:

- When hydrogen reacts with oxygen, it releases energy and water, no CO₂!
- Hydrogen gas is very low density.
- Hydrogen is a very small light molecule that can flow through small holes quickly and disperse into some metal structures, rendering them more brittle. Some types of steel are therefore unsuitable for transporting hydrogen. Large parts of the gas distribution network metal pipes are being replaced with PE one that are suitable for transporting hydrogen at lower pressures.
- Hydrogen has different chemical characteristics to natural gas, so that the burners of existing natural gas appliances will have to be replaced.
- Hydrogen is more flammable than natural gas but disperses rapidly in case of leakage and so won't form explosive mixtures.

There are several methods of producing hydrogen, like:

- Decomposing methane by steam into hydrogen and carbon dioxide. Methane conversion is currently significantly cheaper than any other method. The hydrogen produced is pure enough for most applications. The problem is the CO₂, which has to be captured and stored - a technique known as CCS.

- Water electrolysis that uses electricity to separate the water into hydrogen and oxygen.

Hydrogen is used for heating in much the same way as natural gas. Heating devices fuelled by hydrogen are already showing up. There are also internal combustion engines based on hydrogen. The date of June 25, 2019, is significant because it was when the first hydrogen-fuelled water heater in the world was released in Rosenberg, Holland. The water heater was developed by the BDR Thermea Group and it is a highly efficient condensation boiler that uses pure hydrogen as fuel to produce heat for residential buildings - the first such application in practice.

The attempt is significant, because now hydrogen is being promoted as a potential natural gas substitute and fuel of the future, we can see how to reach the Net Zero building, or carbon-free building. This will certainly help in reaching the goals and obligations of the various states regarding the Paris Treaty.

The advantage of converting from natural gas to hydrogen in the household sector is that when the boiler is replaced, much of the heating system, including the radiators and the distribution network, can continue to be used.

Before we can get to the point of replacing all existing boilers with hydrogen ones, we have to work on the boilers to use hydrogen without replacement.

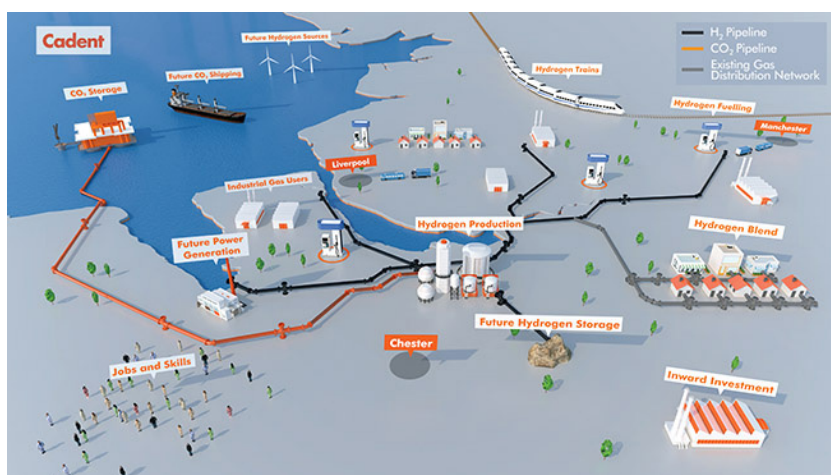
There are the projects all around the world working on total replacement of natural gas by hydrogen. It has also been worked out that injecting 20% hydrogen by volume into existing natural gas networks reduces CO₂ emissions with no need to replace the device, as the mixture represents a substitute for natural gas.

It must be stressed that the transportation and distribution of pure hydrogen through existing natural gas pipelines are still not entirely feasible in practice, firstly because natural gas is still in use and secondly because old buildings will continue to use natural gas until 2050, so there is still work to be done, not least to find solutions for regulatory and safety issues, in addition to distribution ones.

As to safety, the use of so-called synthetic gas or synthetic natural gas will certainly be a reality at some point. It is a mixture rich in hydrogen (from sea water electrolysis), with added CO and CO₂. In the end, a similar mixture can be obtained by gasification of either wood or coal. We should remember when a simi-

lar fuel was used before, in Sarajevo too. It can also be used for internal combustion engines. Automobiles in Germany during World War II used this gas as fuel.

There is a fully operational project in the UK to use the existing gas network for pure hydrogen, but also complementary possibilities. The project was built under the lead of Cadent, one of the largest natural gas distributors in the UK. The project envisages a special hydrogen network to site of use, adding hydrogen to natural gas, and using hydrogen to run trains, liquefy CO_2 .



As outlined above, there are several potential ways to reduce greenhouse gases successfully, and the schematic presents a possible combination of approaches. Hydrogen clearly offers great future scope for widespread use in substituting for natural gas as a fuel in buildings intended to be net-zero by 2050, whether as hydrogen obtained from the electrolysis of the sea water or the decarbonation of natural gas (transforming methane into hydrogen and oxygen by steam) or making hydrogen for use in so-called gas blending, where 20% hydrogen is added to natural gas.

It is important to note that any carbon dioxide created by decarbonation of natural gas is liquefied and transported to a tanker or somewhere to be injected into existing hollows in the earth at depths of about 5000 m.

The impact of coronavirus on greenhouse gas emissions

The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects CO₂ emissions to fall 7.5% in the United States, while studies say emissions in Europe have fallen 50% since Covid-19 measures were introduced. The situation is naturally expected to change again once measures are lifted.

Many people choose where to live based on proximity to their jobs, balancing convenience with lifestyle. What is going to happen after the Covid-19 pandemic, given how many have turned to work from home and what it means for cities? At the very least, it raises the issue of what type of business buildings we should have, as many will be put off by overcrowded offices and shared ventilation systems that are not maintained properly... On the other hand, working from home may significantly affect public transportation and we will have to look again at the balance of needs and current planning in cities. In any case, both phenomena can significantly contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A 5% drop in CO₂ is predicted due to reducing oil and gas demand, thanks to the major restrictions on transport and industrial processes. The Guardian's view on this is interesting, namely that there will be a record drop in CO₂ emissions, more than the total decline in all recessions over the past 50 years combined. Just because of Corona.

MINI HYDROPOWER PLANTS – DANGEROUS SCAMS WITH LONG-TERM DAMAGE

Anes Podić

So far, 106 small hydropower plants have been built in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and at least 339 more are being prepared, presently at various stages of development.¹ According to sources from investors themselves, the final number of mini-hydropower plants (MHP) could be well over 600, meaning that at least one small hydroelectric power plant would be built on almost every BiH river and stream.

Since the lockdown started and people were forced into isolation, the main SHP construction protagonists have been even louder in propagating the benefits of their business through the media that favour them. They have hastened the destruction of some river watercourses, obviously convinced that people – frightened of coronavirus – would not stop them, and that – under such conditions – no one would care about the works illegally and forcibly encroaching on our rivers.

Two important issues will be addressed here. First, the benefits of building small hydropower plants. Second, BiH's electricity needs. In 2019, a total of 16,074 GWh of electricity was generated, while 12,033 GWh were sold in BiH. Large hydropower plants generated 5,650 GWh, while coal-fired plants generated 9,613 GWh. **A total of 104 small hydropower plants generated 497.99 GWh or 3.1% of the total electricity generated in BiH.**

In 2018, the Mesihovina wind farm (with an installed capacity of 50.6 MW) was put into operation as the first facility of its kind connected to the transmission system. In 2019, the Jelovača wind farm, (with an installed capacity of 36 MW) was put into

1 See more at: voda.ekoakcija.org

operation. These two wind farms, located in the southwestern part of BiH, produced a total of 254 GWh.

As a result, renewable energy sources generated 40% of all energy produced in BiH.

Net energy exports exceed net imports by 3,743 GWh, which is 7.5 times more than the energy generated by small hydropower plants. Total BiH electricity consumption has stagnated over the last ten years.² Net revenues from electricity exports in 2019 amounted to 304 million KM (81 KM per GWh).³ The oft-repeated claim that small hydropower plants will provide new employment opportunities is not true. Depending on the plant location, small hydropower plants usually employ only one person per plant.

It is also often pointed out that by building SHPs BiH is meeting its international obligations in the context of the climate crisis. The problem of global warming arose primarily from emissions from the developed world. The USA and the 28 EU countries are responsible for over 50% of CO₂ emissions from 1850 to the present day. The top five emitters – the United States, the EU-28, China, Russia and Japan – are responsible for over 80% of historical CO₂ emissions.⁴

The three largest greenhouse gas emitters – China, the European Union and the United States – produce 14 times as much greenhouse gases as the 100 countries that produce the least greenhouse gas emissions.⁵ The entire West Balkans region emits very little of the planet's total greenhouse gas emissions; BiH's total contribution is only 0.075%. The climate crisis cannot be separated from climate justice, nor can it be solved without a

2 *Izvještaj o radu za 2019.* 2020 [online] [accessed 20/05/2020] Available at <https://www.derk.ba/DocumentsPDFs/DERK-Izvjestaj-o-radu-2019-b.pdf>

3 *BiH ponovila rekordan rezultat u izvozu električne energije.* 2020 [online] [Accessed on 20. 05. 2020] Available at <http://energetika.ba/bih-ponovila-rekordan-rezultat-u-izvozu-elektricne-energije/>

4 Rocha M, et al. *Historical Responsibility for Climate Change – from countries emissions to contribution to temperature increase*, 2015 [online] [Accessed on 21/05/2020] Available at https://climateanalytics.org/media/historical_responsibility_report_nov_2015.pdf

5 Friedrich J, et al. 2017. *This Interactive Chart Explains World's Top 10 Emitters, and How They've Changed* [online] [Accessed on 21/05/2020] Available at <https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/04/interactive-chart-explains-worlds-top-10-emitters-and-how-theyve-changed>

change in the global order: this position is well on its way to becoming ubiquitous among activists around the world.

It is possible to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in BiH, but the country has never received significant external assistance aimed at replacing, e.g., fossil fuels (coal) with renewable sources for electricity generation. When it comes to coal-fired plants in BiH – which pollute the environment in more than one way (air pollution being just one of them) – they could all be closed relatively quickly and painlessly, providing BiH receives significant international assistance for:

- construction of wind and solar power plants⁶ that compensates for the lack of electricity resulting from the shutdown of existing thermal coal-fired power plants;
- providing jobs for miners who would thus lose their jobs (total of 13,000);
- construction of replacement heating plants for the towns of Tuzla, Kakanj and Lukavac, currently heated by steam from coal-fired plants.

Of course, there is no construction of new small or large hydropower plants on this list. A hydropower plant-building moratorium has been long due, well before the environment was so terribly damaged.

A look at BiH statistics on electricity produced and consumed in 2018⁷ shows that only 4.1 TWh should be generated by replacing coal-fired plants (the total of energy generated minus the 2 TWh consumed by the now closed *Aluminij* plant, minus the export of surplus electricity generated by big and small hydro plants and wind farms). This amount of energy could be obtained by approximately 25 wind farms the size of the Mesihovina farm, which would cost about two billion euros. With the money needed for replacement jobs for the about 13,000 miners and to build

6 The total cost-competitive potential of solar and wind power plants (estimated at about 30 TWh) is about 2.5 times higher than current electricity consumption. (Cost-competitive renewable power generation: Potential across South East Europe, 2017 [online] [Accessed on 20/05/2020] Available at <https://www.irena.org/publications/2017/Jan/Cost-competitive-renewable-power-generation-Potential-across-South-East-Europe>)

7 *Izveštaj o radu za 2018, 2019* [online] [Accessed on 20/05/2020] Available at <https://www.derk.ba/DocumentsPDFs/DERK-Izvestaj-o-radu-2018-b.pdf>

replacement heating plants for Tuzla, Kakanj and Lukavac, the sum is likely to amount to four billion euros.

There is an alternative: the shutdown of thermal power plants could be financed by the BiH state itself, e.g., by raising revenue from fuel excise taxes. In 2018, an increase of 0.15 KM per litre in the levy on petroleum products raised almost 500 million KM in excises for the construction of highways and the construction and reconstruction of other roads in BiH.⁸ According to the only international study, conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency in 2001⁹ (when the projections of population and GDP growth were far higher than today), the only highway section that needed to be built in BiH was Sarajevo-Zenica. The assessment was that BiH was too poor for anything more than that one section. Instead, our entity governments have made megalomaniacal plans for hundreds and hundreds of kilometres of highways, with no economic basis, mostly to be financed by expensive loans from international development and commercial banks.

If the revenue collected from excise taxes were directed to renewable energy sources, like wind and solar power plants, enough money would be raised in eight years to construct replacement wind farms, while in sixteen years there would be enough money to open new jobs for miners and replace the Tuzla, Kakanj, Lukavac heating plants... By 2050, enough money could be raised to patch up many other holes in our society.

Another mantra regarding energy is that BiH must respond to its obligations under the Energy Community Treaty.¹⁰ The responsibility for the dramatic increase in the SHPs construction in BiH partly lies with the European Union.

The Energy Community Treaty entered into force on 1 July 2006. It enables the creation of the world largest internal market for electricity and gas, in which the European Union, as one Contracting Party and the following eight Contracting Parties: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Mo-

8 Č. I. *Prošle godine u BiH prikupljeno 1.1 milijardu KM od putarina i akciza na naftu*, 2019 [online] [Accessed on 21/05/2020] Available at <https://www.klix.ba/biznis/prosle-godine-u-bih-prikupljeno-1-1-milijardu-km-od-putarina-i-akciza-na-naftu/190208043>

9 *The Study on the Transport Master Plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2001 [online] [Accessed on 20/05/2020] Available at https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/710/710_953.html

10 See more at: <https://energy-community.org/legal/treaty.html>

Idova, Serbia and Ukraine, effectively participates. In accordance with the expressed interest, the work of the Energy Community bodies includes Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Finland, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom. These 19 so-called the participating countries from the European Union are directly involved in the work of the Energy Community bodies, and their positions in the vote are expressed by the European Commission. Armenia, Georgia, Norway and Turkey have the observer status in the Energy Community bodies. The basic objectives of the Energy Community are to create a stable and single regulatory framework and market that provides a reliable energy supply and may attract investments in the electricity and natural gas sectors. In addition, there are the development of alternative gas supply routes and improvement of the environmental situation, with energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. By concluding this Treaty, the regional Contracting Parties are obliged to establish a common electricity and gas market that will function according to the EU energy market standards to be integrated. This can be achieved by gradually transposition of the EU *acquis*, namely through the implementation of relevant EU directives and regulations in the areas of electricity, gas, environment protection, competition, renewable energy resources, energy efficiency, oil and statistics. The Treaty which was concluded for a period of 10 years was extended for another 10 years by unanimous decision of the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community on 24 October 2013.¹¹

For the Western Balkans region, which is expected to join the European Union, the EU organizes only the energy community, largely neglecting the implementation of the environmental part of the *Acquis communautaire*, which should enter the energy package. The second-largest *Acquis communautaire* chapter is the one on the environment; the largest one is the one on agriculture. The countries that have eventually become members of the EU had to invest a lot of effort, time and money to meet all the EU requirements related to the environment.

Energy production, whatever the source, inevitably has a significant impact on the environment. If the European Union has a

11 *Ugovor o uspostavljanju Energetske zajednice*, 2018 [online] [Accessed on 21/05/2020] Available at <http://www.mvteo.gov.ba/Content/Read/enertgetska-zajednica>

genuine intention of preparing the Western Balkans countries for EU membership, environmental care will have to have a prominent place in all EU activities in the Western Balkans region. Unfortunately, the EU's attitude towards the Western Balkans region is such that the environment is not even mentioned in the EU 2018 Strategy for Western Balkans.¹² The Energy Community Treaty lists many EU directives and rules in the field of energy policies, including the 2009 Directive on the Promotion and Use of Energy from Renewable Sources, which the signatory countries of the Treaty had to integrate into domestic legislation. The Treaty also enumerates part of the *Acquis communautaire* in the field of environmental protection, which, however, is mainly related to the operation of large industrial plants for the production of electricity from fossil fuels.

When it comes to nature protection, only one article is mentioned: the one on the protection of wild birds from the outdated 2012 EU Directive 79/409 / EEC. The EU *Directive on the promotion and use of energy from renewable sources* has also been accepted by the Contracting Parties to the Energy Community Treaty, which then had made their own national plans for the production of energy from renewable sources and submitted them to the Energy Community Secretariat. The most important part of the national energy plans was to commit to renewable energy targets in 2020. Bosnia and Herzegovina committed itself to produce from renewable sources 40% of total energy consumption by 2020. At the same time, EU member states have set far less ambitious and economically easier-to-bear goals for themselves: only 20% from renewable sources of total energy consumption in 2020.

Local politicians and their lobbies have used this contractual obligation to the Energy Community to focus on the construction of SHPs claiming that SHPs (of all renewable energy sources!) are what "Europe demands". Some investors have even presented the construction of SHPs as a *condition* for future membership in

12 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS *A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans*, 2018 [online] [Accessed on 21/ 05/2020] Available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf

the EU. Based on that, the SHPs owners receive considerable funds (app. 48 million KM in 2019^{13,14}) collected from “renewable energy charges,” the mandatory surcharge that all BiH citizens and businesses pay through their electricity bills.

The often-made claim that local communities will generate significant revenues from concession fees is also debatable. Small hydropower plant investors usually sign concession agreements for 30 or – recently – for 50 years. The concessions are signed with local authorities, so that fees depend on the BiH entities and FBiH cantons, but the concession fees are often symbolic in amount. They usually range from 1 to 3% of the total revenue generated by a small hydropower plant. Fojnica Municipality’s total revenue from concessions for six SHPs ranged from 44.6 to 59.6 thousand KM in the period from 2015 to 2018 (1.38% to 1.85% of the total municipal budget revenues). Central Bosnia Canton’s revenues from concessions for the 35 SHPs so far built on its territory (almost a third of all SHPs in BiH) amounts to only 0.46% of the cantonal budget.¹⁵

We now need to look at the damage caused by SHP construction and its consequences for wildlife in BiH. The climate crisis has imposed two obligations on countries around the planet – one is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the other is to protect the planet’s precious wildlife. According to the Environmental Performance Index, BiH is ranked second last of 180 countries in terms of ecosystem vitality. According to the Convention on Biodiversity, to which BiH has signed up, we are obliged to protect 17% of our territory by 2020. BiH is convincingly the worst country in Europe in this regard, with 2.2% of its area presently under some form of (mostly insufficient) legal and institutional protection.

Local communities elsewhere in Europe see protected areas as an opportunity for developing them and promoting the well-

13 *Odluka o utvrđivanju potrebnog iznosa naknade za podsticanje i jediničnog iznosa naknade za podsticanje proizvodnje električne energije iz OIEIEK za 2019. godinu, Vlada Federacije BiH, 04/03/2019.* Available at <http://op0eratoroieiek.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Odluka-naknada.pdf>

14 *Odluka o visini naknade za podsticanje proizvodnje električne energije iz obnovljivih izvora i u efikasnoj kogeneraciji Regulatorna komisija za energetiku,* Accessed on 09/11/2018. Available at https://reers.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Zakon_OIE_39_13.pdf

15 *Koncesije u Bosni i Hercegovini,* Centar za zastupanje građanskih interesa, April 2020.

being of their residents. Natura 2000, the world's largest coordinated network of protected areas, was established within the EU and covers 18% of its land area and almost 6% of its marine territory. Natura 2000 offers a haven to Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.¹⁶

Effective implementation of Natura 2000 is estimated as costing € 5.8 billion annually at the EU level. The economic benefits of Natura 2000 far outweigh its costs, however. In addition to playing a crucial role in protecting Europe's biodiversity, Natura 2000 sites provide a wide range of other ecosystem benefits and services to society. Studies estimate the benefits from Natura 2000 as between 200 to 300 billion a year.¹⁷

The construction of small hydropower plants is one of the main reasons why there are not more protected areas in BiH. SHP investors are well connected to government institutions and have prevented the establishment of new protected areas in order to reduce risks to their construction projects. Small hydropower plants on wild rivers are usually built in remote BiH areas that have been environmentally well-preserved so far. SHP construction means access roads must be built and are soon followed by timber thieves and poachers, and then the transmission lines needed to transport the electricity from there... In the end, entire precious canyons are all too often completely destroyed, together with the plant and animal communities, which survived the last Ice Age but are not likely to survive the SHP builders. In the infamously corrupt political environment of the Western Balkans, it is actually the authorities who have created the legal framework that offers SHP investors the opportunity for maximised earning, while minimizing their obligations to communities and the environment. The ongoing construction of a series of hydropower plants across BiH would not be possible without legal loopholes created deliberately by the authorities. The FBiH 2013 Law on Nature Protection provided "protection measures for strictly protected wild species and subspecies and protection measures of their habitats that shall be prescribed by the Minister in a

16 *Natura 2000* [online] [Accessed on 20/05/2020] Available at https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

17 *The Economic benefits of the Environment Natura 2000 Network*. 2013 [online] [Accessed on 21/ 05/ 2020] Available at https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/ENV-12-018_LR_Final1.pdf

Rulebook”.¹⁸ The Law prescribes severe penalties for “the activities that might lead to the destruction or some other significant or permanent damage” of strictly protected animals and plants.

No penalties have ever been imposed, as none of the additional 15 Rulebooks prescribed by the Law has ever been enacted. The deadline for adoption of the Rulebooks expired in 2016. The FBiH 2013 Law also prescribed the establishment of the a Federal Institute for Nature Protection – an extremely important institution in the nature protection system. The deadline for establishment expired in the summer of 2016. The FBiH 2013 Law also provided for the revision of a number of protected areas established before 1995, when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, which was to lead to the rapid re-establishment and protection of many of our country’s natural resources. This deadline expired in 2015. Otherwise, the defenders of the Buna, Doljanka, Neretvica, Lepenica, and many other rivers might have had a lever against the SHPs builders who now target them. Additional opportunities for river protection would be provided by the formation of protected areas, long-planned in BiH Spatial Planning, following the example of other WB and EU countries. This would open the way to development, income generation, and the survival of many neglected rural communities.

Long-established studies and plans for many protected areas have remained buried deep in the drawers of the Entity Environment Ministries – given the importance of satisfying the interests of various anti-forestry and construction lobbies.

The important question is: Who are the SHP builders in BiH? The array of owners and co-owners of SHPs in BiH is pretty colourful, ranging from foreign companies to local entrepreneurs and politicians. As many as six SHPs in Central Bosnia Canton are owned by former (multi-mandate) Cantonal Prime Minister Salko Selman’s extended family. A company co-owned by Edhem Bičakčić, former FBiH Prime Minister and former *Elektroprivreda BiH* director, is co-owner of at least two small hydropower plants. Amer Jerlagić, another former director of *Elektroprivreda* and a politician with co-ownership in at least two small hydropower plants, has had a similarly successful career. Members of the

18 *Zakon o zaštiti prirode*, Službene novine Federacije BiH 66/13

extended family of Fuad Kasumović, the current Zenica mayor, also co-own two small hydropower plants.¹⁹

Tihomir Brajković, the owner of *Tibra*, a company that has built a number of Sarajevo housing developments through dubious arrangements with local authorities, owns three small hydropower plants in BiH. He plans to build six more. Although convicted of tax evasion, Brajković received a permit to exploit natural resources and annually receives millions in subsidies for renewable energy production.²⁰ Mirza Teletović, a famous basketball player, has built one and plans to build another mini hydroelectric power plant in his native Jablanica. Out of 445 projects registered so far, foreign companies from Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Croatia, Turkey, etc. appear as full or partial owners in as many as 116 SHPs. State-owned companies are investors in only 46 projects.²¹

How to solve the problem?

- Citizens defending rivers

Citizens are the only defenders of rivers today; at least where there are residents around SHP building sites. More and more people are emigrating from BiH (and other countries of the region) because of things like this, among other reasons. Unfortunately, rivers can only be defended where there has been hue and cry, as brave hearts protect their rivers and environment – the only thing left for them. There is no organized assistance and protection from the state.

- A moratorium on the construction of mini-hydropower plants

Only a moratorium on the construction of small hydropower plants in BiH can prevent further destruction of the environment and ensure the future of many rural communities.²² Due to a lack of environmental protection and regulatory standards in BiH, partial solutions, like better environmental impact studies or increased

19 See more at voda.ekoakcija.org

20 *Subsidies for Debt and Fraud*. 2020 [online] [Accessed on 21/05/2020] Available at <https://www.cin.ba/en/poticaaj-za-dugovanja-i-prevere/>

21 See more at voda.ekoakcija.org

22 *Manifest o očuvanju vode u Bosni i Hercegovini* [online] [Accessed on 21/05/2020] Available at http://voda.ekoakcija.org/sites/default/files/dokumenti/manifest_o_ocuvanju_vode_u_bosni_i_hercegovini_0.pdf

water flow in riverbeds during summer months so that life could be preserved in rivers, will not work.

Translated by Mirjana Evtov

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THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM IN THE FACE OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Keith Doubt

The coronavirus pandemic throws a bright light on the unfair inequalities that undergird our society. In the United States, the pandemic disproportionately impacts the poor, the elderly, prisoners, native Americans, and black Americans. Workers risk their lives, their own as well as their families, without sick leave or health insurance, for the benefit of the affluent. More than twenty million Americans are now unemployed with no wages or savings to live on. The Navajo Nation has the worst coronavirus cases per capita in the United States. In the State of Georgia, eighty percent of the deaths due to the coronavirus are black Americans, when black Americans constitute less than a third of the State of Georgia's population. The coronavirus pandemic lays bare the classism and the racism that inhabits and structures the society of the United States, which privileged Americans prefer to deny. Will the pandemic's light lead to progressive actions on the part of the government that protect and respect the needs and rights of all people? Will the pandemic mean that social, educational, moral, and spiritual responsibilities take precedence vis-à-vis financial responsibilities, barbarically conceived in a capitalist economy (Banerjee and Duflo 2019)? Will the present reality in all its concreteness be persuasive in ways that moral arguments have not been?

Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber were all afraid of capitalism. The possibility that capitalism could kill society vexes their theorizing. Their sociologies reflect this fear. For Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, the promise of sociology is to ame-

literate their fear. It behooves us at this time to revisit the theorizing of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber on capitalism. Doing so could help us to redress humanely and justly the classism and racism in society that the pandemic, in such a brutal and concrete way, exposes.

Marx was the least afraid of capitalism. During the French revolution, the bourgeoisie had been a revolutionary force. After overthrowing the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie became the dominant class and the proletariat the oppressed class. The bourgeoisie killed one society and replaced it with another. Their revolution brought with it a principle of legal equality, an end to feudal laws, and a philosophy of individual human rights. Marx anticipated that a proletarian revolution would next overthrow the bourgeoisie much as the bourgeoisie had overthrown the aristocracy.

Bourgeoisie society's unconditional dependence upon capitalism could mean its demise. As capitalism grows, it sows the seeds of its own destruction. Marx (1977, 48) is poignant on this point.

And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

When capitalism assumes its most pure form, it cannot sustain itself as a social entity. The pandemic brings to the forefront the reckless and irresponsible failures of capitalistically motivated leaders. Without a viable and equitable health system for all (which American culture pejoratively refers to as social medicine), many are dying and will continue to die due to the pandemic. Governments want to end stay-at-home orders in order to open up the economy and sacrificing lives to do so. The coronavirus will likely return. Millions have become unemployed with no income to pay for food or to support families. Many are dying because they had to go to work, especially in public sector and health care jobs. The inequality between those working in the public domain and those working safely at home will reach a

breaking point. Capitalist society is torturous, causing profound resentments within the society.

Durkheim was also afraid of capitalism, perhaps more afraid of capitalism than Marx. Durkheim saw capitalism, not leading to a different society, but altogether destroying society. This fear is found in the concept of anomie. No norm governs human conduct other than the rule of the strongest. Durkheim saw capitalism degrading society to a society-less jungle. Education, government, science, public services, prisons, and even religious institutions become as normless as the economic life of the free-market capitalism. Economic life plays not only a primary but an exclusive role, and social life is “only feebly ruled by morality” (Durkheim 1933, 2). Society lacks the moderating action of regulation. The result that Durkheim feared is juridical and moral anomie. Judicial anomie is what the United States is witnessing more and more frequently.

Society is not simply a means to an end, say, to protect private property or promote free markets, as neoliberalism tells us. Society is an end-in-itself. Durkheim explains how it is that society is an end-in-itself. “That such anarchy is an unhealthy phenomenon is quite evident, since it runs counter to the aim of society, which is to suppress, or at least to moderate, war among men, subordinating the law of the strongest to a higher law” (Durkheim 1933, 3). What is the law of the strongest? One way to express the law of the strongest is that it is better to do wrong than suffer wrong. Because one is stronger, one can do wrong rather than suffer wrong. At this point, society is invisible. Its aim is not realized. It becomes hard to recognize a higher law utilitarianism for which society becomes nothing more than an efficient means to serve a personal end.

What is the aim of society? What is this higher law that suppresses or at least moderates the law of the strongest? Let us turn to Plato. A higher law would be that it is better to suffer wrong than do wrong. The argument is carefully developed in Plato’s *Gorgias*. We, of course, do not want to suffer wrong. We want to protect ourselves from suffering wrong. We, though, do not protect ourselves from suffering wrong by doing wrong. Doing wrong, in fact, leads to a greater suffering, a suffering of the soul. To protect ourselves from suffering such a wrong, we choose not to do wrong. Here, in Platonic terms, is a higher law that sup-

presses or at least moderates the rule of the strongest. This higher law establishes a sense of social order, a moral one not based on force alone. For Durkheim, this higher law than the law of the strongest is the *raison d'être* of society.

Weber was also afraid of capitalism. Weber expresses his fear of capitalism indirectly and less polemically. Weber's fear is found in his account of charismatic legitimacy. Charismatic authority contrasts with bureaucratic authority.

In contrast with all forms of bureaucratic administrative systems, the charismatic structure recognizes no forms or orderly procedures for appointment or dismissal, no 'career,' no 'advancement,' no 'salary'; there is no organized training either for the bearer of charisma or his aides, no arrangements for supervision or appeal, no allocation of local areas of control or exclusive areas of competence, and finally no standing institutions comparable to bureaucratic 'governing bodies' independent of persons and of their purely personal charisma. Rather, charisma recognizes only those stipulations and limitations which come from within itself. (Weber 1978, 227)

When an efficient, rational bureaucracy controls capitalism, capitalism flourishes. Rational, effective bureaucratic leadership promises to sustain a stable and (perhaps) healthy capitalism. When charismatic legitimacy controls capitalism, it becomes dangerous and unstable. The spirit of capitalism goes mad. Capitalism becomes demented and perverse.

Robert Reich (2016) makes an astute observation: President Donald Trump's supporters support him precisely for the qualities he is criticized for, namely, his bigotry, megalomania, narcissism, xenophobia, and so on. The more rational pundits criticize Trump, the more their criticism empowers him. The more moral pundits critique Trump, the more it emboldens him. Here is the rhetorical difficulty with the endless critiques of Trump's presidency in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

To his supporters, Trump looks like a natural leader in a time of spiritual, economic, and ethical decay. To his supporters, Trump embodies the spirit of capitalism. He is not appointed, nor trained. He is neither a specialist nor a professional. He appears, simply appears, to possess a certain gift, a knack, that his supporters regard as supernatural. This gift is special because it is not available, as his fallen opponents demonstrate, to others. The national

media provides Trump with his followers' recognition, giving proofs of his greatness and invincibility, no matter how irrational or duplicitous these proofs are.

Fox TV and radio shows with Rush Limbaugh empower Trump. To maintain the loyalty of his following, Trump must prove himself every day, and he can do so in whatever way imaginable. The more outrageous, the more spectacular, the more irrational, the more amoral, the better this is for strengthening charismatic authority. Recommending disinfectants as a cure for the corona virus is surreal and unintelligible, but it is real and intelligible from the viewpoint of the magical powers of a charismatic leader. The charismatic leader acquires the right to dominate only by proving his powers in real life, powers superior to science and reason.

Trump's charisma may fail to overcome the pandemic. He may fall, not because an opponent defeats him, but because the reality of the corona pandemic dooms him. The nihilism and toxicity in Trump's charismatic legitimacy are exposed by the pandemic. Charisma thrives in a consequenceless world. Charisma sees itself as the only thing of consequence. The pandemic represents the consequential force of nature. The force of nature will moderate the spirit of capitalism in ways that humanity cannot. Humanity will be grateful. Trump's followers do not see and do not accept what the light of the pandemic reveals, which is a testimony to the powerfulness of Trump's charismatic legitimacy.

Charismatic authority mocks science. It silences bureaucratic authority, as witnessed by Trump's dismantling of the federal agencies that had the foresight to anticipate and plan for a possible pandemic. Trump insults Congress, the State Department, and the press. He weakened the World Health Organization by cutting funding from the United States. The rationality and formal organization of these institutions (attributes needed to address the pandemic intelligently and humanely) are threats to Trump. Weber (1978, 230) explains where Trump is coming from.

Genuinely charismatic justice is always rule-free in this sense: in its pure form it is completely opposed to all the bonds of formalism and tradition and is as free in its attitude to the sanctity of tradition as to rationalistic deductions from abstract concepts.

Weber's fear of the spirit of capitalism is more prophetic than Marx or Durkheim's.

Wall Street has done well under the charismatic leadership of Trump. Trump has served Wall Street better than the bureaucratic leadership of Hillary Clinton would have. The stock market has been profitable for the bourgeoisie, and the stock market serves as Trump's grateful bodyguard. Charismatic rule "rejects as dishonorable all rational planning in the acquisition of money, and in general all rational forms of economy" (Weber 1978, 231)

It will be a challenge now for the government of the United States to switch from charismatic authority to bureaucratic authority, something the Democratic National Party and moderate Democrats, given their loyalty to Wall Street and nostalgia for Barack Obama, do not adequately grasp. Leftist and socialist critiques of capitalism are direct and polemical. They assume the legitimacy of capitalism is surely in doubt, and they have compelling moral principles with which to make this assumption. The working class is disenfranchised. The masses are depoliticized. These critiques, however, have remained largely inconsequential in the United States, as witnessed in the strong resistance to Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign. Sanders' campaign was based not on charismatic or bureaucratic legitimacy but on traditional legitimacy grounded in a political heritage that respects the human rights of all, as reflected in the Civil Rights Movement. Capitalism's hegemony goes unchallenged whether under bureaucratic or charismatic leadership.

The legitimacy of capitalism persists, and it is this phenomenon that Weber explains as the spirit of capitalism. Charisma sustains predatory capitalism. Charisma permits booty capitalism, where the government bails out banks and oil companies at the start of the pandemic. These bail outs, when so many are destitute and unable to survive, supply the material needs of wealthy corporations, not for exchange or economic reasons, but simply to obtain material goods. For this reason, charismatic authority is an anti-economic force. Charisma allows gangster capitalism where the health care industry and pharmaceutical companies use the bank robber's line, "Your money or your life." Weber identifies that spirit holding capitalism together, giving it legitimacy. It is necessary to unravel the two forms of authority that sustain today's capitalism, charismatic and bureaucratic.

One can only understand the double nature of what one might call “the spirit of capitalism,” and equally the specific features of the modern professionalized, bureaucratic form of everyday capitalism if one learns to make the conceptual distinction between these two structural elements, which are thoroughly entangled with one another, but are in the last analysis distinct. (Weber 1978, 231)

Marx, Durkheim, and Weber fear that capitalism will prove fatal to society. For Marx, capitalism is a tidal wave in the ocean of world history. For Durkheim, capitalism is a shattering earthquake at the epicenter of society. For Weber, capitalism, when ruled charismatically, is an insidious and invisible virus. The way in which Weber expresses his fear of capitalism may be more helpful at this time.

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CITY AND STATE UNDER CRISIS CONDITIONS

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: STATE-POWER AND SOCIETY

Neven Anđelić

Introduction

Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis (Fukuyama, 1989) has attracted considerable global attention and provoked passionate debate, in both academic and political circles, ever since its initial appearance in 1989. The numerous subsequent academic debates on it and the original article have proven the significance of an idea that corresponds in normative terms to the fall of the Berlin Wall in empirical analysis. Support for the theory has waned, but it is inevitable that a study of the liberal democratic order that now dominates Europe give it due consideration. That order has been challenged through this period by forms of illiberal democracy, hybrid regime, and autocracy, often supported by nationalist ideology. Some of the countries that initially set off on transition towards a liberal form of democracy have since re-routed their political and social development trajectory.

The values of liberal democracy include the separation of powers and a system of governance that promotes and secures individual freedom, an inclusive and free society, tolerance, a strong civil society, a free press, and the rule of law. Fukuyama's original idea was challenged by Huntington's "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1991). Nowhere were the two theories more contested than in the Bosnia and Herzegovina of the 1990s. Rightly or wrongly, Sarajevo became a symbol of the cultural, societal, and political values that the liberal democratic world stands for.

For many engaged intellectuals, "the Bosnian war was the 'Spanish Civil War of our generation.'" (Berman, 2012: 243) This held for the city too. Many authors played with the comparison: "as one journalist friend said, Bosnia was our generation's Spanish

Civil War.” (Jones, 2017: 125) Bernard-Henry Levy drew up a list of candidates for the European elections in 1994 called “Europe Begins in Sarajevo”. It was supported by thirty-five French intellectuals. Not everyone, however, agreed with “Les Intellos,” as they became known in a somewhat pejorative reference. There were those who opposed the idea, like Guy Sorman, who sarcastically commented of Levy’s engagement, “Of course, what Levy is really saying is, ‘This is the Spanish Civil War and I am Andre Malraux.’”¹

Such an understanding was quite widespread among intellectuals at the time. “For those journalists who took it up, the Bosnian cause, like *La Causa* of the Spanish civil war, became all-encompassing,”² a reviewer argued. Some politicians also described the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as “Spanish,” adding that it “was not a hangover from the past, but a predictor of what was to come.” (Ashdown, 2009: 267). Above all, it was Susan Sontag, who contextualised the case and the values, referencing “the Spanish Civil War because it was a stand against the Fascist menace,” and “the Bosnian war because it was the stand of a small, fledgling European country wishing to remain multicultural.”³

This paper is not going to discuss the wartime but the current state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the values of liberal democracy, and society twenty-five years after the establishment of a specific post-conflict configuration of state-power. Academic curiosity led me to the question of how this society, once a *cause célèbre* for liberal western intellectuals and politicians, has performed? What kind of society is to be found in Bosnia and Herzegovina today, given how state-power has developed there during the post-conflict period?

- 1 Riding, A. 26 May 1994. “Paris Journal; For the Bosnian Cause, Some French Brainpower”, *The New York Times*, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/26/world/paris-journal-for-the-bosnian-cause-some-french-brainpower.html>
- 2 Simpson, J. 22 April 2012. “The War is Dead, Long Live the War: Bosnia – The Reckoning by Ed Vulliamy – review”, *The Guardian*, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/apr/22/vulliamy-war-dead-bosnia-review>
- 3 Sontag, S. 9th December 2002. “Looking at War”, *The New Yorker*, available at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/12/09/looking-at-war>

Regime, Freedoms, The Rule of Law, Human Rights and Corruption

Of the forty-five states in Europe with more than half a million inhabitants, twenty-four went through a process of transition from a communist system towards some form of democracy. The challenging process proved more complex for some, whose societies and states had to pass through parallel processes of transition and post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation. The conflicts in several post-Soviet and post-Yugoslav countries have all been tragic, but none of these states suffered the same levels of material devastation or of destruction of the social and political fabric as Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This paper will present a study of state-power and society in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a broader European context. The methodology is based upon a study of sixteen global indices of democracy, human, economic and media freedoms, the rule of law, corruption, and human rights.⁴ International nongovernmental organizations, academic research centres, and thinktanks provide a broad range of indices in this field. Unfortunately, not all of them are sufficiently inclusive to provide a reliable sample of entries for comparative analysis. While their specific methods of data collection may differ, however, there are several indices that do provide a solid basis for drawing valid conclusions about the relationship of state-power to society. As the indices use different methodologies and descriptions, they have been given numerical values in this study, so that they can be considered in combination and final results measured.

4 Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2019*; Center for Systemic Peace, *Global Report 2017*; V-Net Institute, University of Gothenburg, *Annual Democracy Report 2020*; Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2020*; Friedrich Neumann Stiftung, 2019, *Freedom Barometer Index*; Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty, 2019, *World Electoral Freedom Index*; Cato Institute, 2019, *Human Freedom Index*; The Heritage Foundation, 2020, *Index of Economic Freedom*; Fraser Institute, 2017, *Economic Freedom Index*; Transparency International, 2019, *Corruption Perceptions Index*; V-Net Institute, University of Gothenburg, *Annual Democracy Report 2019*; World Justice Project, 2020, *Rule of Law Index*; Friedrich Neumann Stiftung, 2019, *Human rights Index*; V-Net Institute, University of Gothenburg, *Freedom of Expression Index 2019*; Reporters Without Borders, *World Press Freedom Index 2020*; Freedom House, *Freedom and the Media 2019*.

Once the findings are in place, the kind of state-power that has developed and the kind of society to be found in the country will be clear. Each group of indices, viz. regime form, human freedoms, economic freedoms, the rule of law with corruption and human rights, and media freedoms, is measured separately, by putting all the indices from that group together. The lower the resulting index, the better the country's score. In the concluding part of the paper, Bosnia and Herzegovina's results will be put in the broader European context.

REGIME							
Democracy Index		Global Report Index		Annual Democracy Report		FINAL	
Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index 3-12
Full Democracy	1	Full Democracy	1	Liberal Democracy	1	Liberal Democracy	3-4
Flawed Democracy	2	Democracy	2	Electoral Democracy	2	Liberalised Democracy	5-6
Hybrid Regime	3	Open Anocracy	3	Electoral Autocracy	3	Populist Democracy	7-8
Authoritarian	4	Closed Anocracy	3	Closed Autocracy	4	Populist Autocracy	9-10
		Autocracy	4			Full Autocracy	11-12
		Occupied/ Failed*	5				

*: Bosnia-Herzegovina is the only country with the status of "occupied" country although the justification is wrong. Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, and Ukraine were not given the same status.

The regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina is described as hybrid⁵ in one list, while another institution sees the country as an electoral democracy.⁶ Different barometers name groups differ-

5 Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2019*, available at https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=democracyindex2019

6 V-Net Institute, University of Gothenburg, *Annual Democracy Report 2020*, available at https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/f0/5d/f05d46d8-626f-4b20-8e4e-53d4b134bfcf/democracy_report_2020_low.pdf

ently. The important point is that a country that places in either the second or third quality group in two barometers is not a liberal-democracy. The only issue is therefore how distant from these values Bosnia and Herzegovina is. A third study describes Bosnia and Herzegovina as “occupied”,⁷ which is puzzling. None of the other countries with recent experience of violent conflict is so described. Cyprus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kosovo all lack control over some parts of their sovereign territory, but Bosnia and Herzegovina may have a consociational regime but does control all its own territory. There are international organizations present in the country and it has a form of supervised sovereignty, but it does have full control over its territory.

This study has to rely on the findings of the different indices, regardless of whether some of them may have misinterpreted the facts. This puts the country in the same category as Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Armenia, which are all termed “populist autocracies”. In fact, while there is no single all-powerful leader in Bosnia and Herzegovina, around whom the system is organized, the consociational political model provides for the existence of three such leaders, who run their sub-national territories almost independently. This fact justifies calling Bosnia and Herzegovina a “populist autocracy”. If the index had not characterized it as “occupied” but as a form of anocracy, Bosnia and Herzegovina would have joined Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Georgia, and Moldova in the group of populist democracies, which studying the country’s regime suggests might be a more realistic description.

There are four different indices collected in the research into human freedoms. According to them, the country is described as “partly free”⁸, “moderately free”⁹, as enjoying “high freedom”,¹⁰ placing it in the third out of six groups in the barometer. According to the final index, Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to the “sec-

7 Center for Systemic Peace, *Global Report 2017*, available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/vlibrary/GlobalReport2017.pdf>

8 Freedom House, 9th April 2020, available at <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>

9 Index: 54.68/100, Friedrich Neumann Stiftung, 2019, *Freedom Barometer Index*, available at <http://freedombarometer.org/>

10 Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty, 2019, *World Electoral Freedom Index*, available at <http://www.fundalib.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/WEFI-2019-web.pdf>

ond-tier” of four, with an index of 7.37 out of 10.¹¹ Combining all four indices helps to create a barometer with four categories in which Bosnia and Herzegovina is described as moderately free and belonging to the third out of four groups.

HUMAN FREEDOM									
Freedom House Index		Freedom Barometer Index		World Electoral Freedom Index		Human Freedom Index		FINAL	
Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index 4-16
Free	1	Free	1	Out-standing	1	Most Free	1	Free	4-6
Partly Free	3	Mostly Free*	2	Very High	2	II	2	Mostly Free	7-9
Not Free	4	Mod-erately Free	3	High	2	III	3	Mod-erately Free	10-12
		Mostly Unfree	4	Ac-ceptable	3	Least Free	4	Not Free	13-16
		Unfree	4	Insuf-ficient	4				
				Low	4				

*: Countries indexed 70 and above have “mostly free” status and are allocated 2 index points, while those indexed below 70 have “moderately free” status and are allocated 3 index points in this study.

Two organizations measure economic freedoms, and both of them place Bosnia and Herzegovina in the third quality group. This category is described as “moderately free”¹² and “III Quartile”¹³ in another barometer. Therefore, one may safely conclude that the country enjoys moderate economic freedoms, as reflected by the third out of the four groups in this study.

11 Cato Institute, 2019, *Human Freedom Index*, available at <https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/human-freedom-index-files/cato-human-freedom-index-update-3.pdf>

12 The Heritage Foundation, 2020, *Index of Economic Freedom*, available at <https://www.heritage.org/index/ranking>

13 Fraser Institute, 2017, *Economic Freedom Index*, available at <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/economic-freedom/map>

ECONOMIC FREEDOM					
Index of Economic Freedom		Economic Freedom Index		FINAL	
Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index 2-8
Free	1	Most Free	1	Free	2-3
Mostly Free	2	II Quartile	2	Mostly Free	4-5
Moderately Free	3	III Quartile	3	Moderately Free	6-7
Mostly Unfree	4	Least Free	4	Least Free	8
Repressed	4				

Indices in the field of rule of law, corruption and human rights are combined in the same group, as they often reflect similar categories in societies. Public perceptions of corruption suggest Bosnia and Herzegovina is very corrupt, with an “index of 36”,¹⁴ while for political corruption it finds itself amongst the “top 40-50%”¹⁵. Adherence to rule of law is described as “weak”.¹⁶ Human rights standards are low, “within four points of the frontier”¹⁷. The resulting index categorizes Bosnia and Herzegovina as having “weak standards” and places it in the third of four categories.

14 Transparency International, 2019, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, available at <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019>

15 V-Net Institute, University of Gothenburg, *Annual Democracy Report 2019*, available at https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/99/de/99dedd73-f8bc-484c-8b91-44ba601b6e6b/v-dem_democracy_report_2019.pdf

16 World Justice Project, 2020, *Rule of Law Index*, available at <https://worldjusticeproject.org/>

17 Friedrich Neumann Stiftung, 2019, *Human rights Index*, available at <https://esee.fnst.org/content/human-rights-index-2019-out>

RULE OF LAW, CORRUPTION & HUMAN RIGHTS									
Corruption Perceptions Index		Political Corruption Annual Democracy Report 2019		Rule of Law Index		Human Rights Index		FINAL	
Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index 4-16
Very Clean	1	1/4	1	Very Strong	1	Highest	1	Very Strong	4-6
Clean	2	2/4	2	Strong	2	Good	2	Strong	7-10
Corrupt	3	3/4	3	Intermediate	2	Moderate	3	Weak	11-14
Very Corrupt	4	4/4	4	Weak	3	Low	4	Very Weak	15-16
				Very Weak	4	Lowest	4		

Media freedom results are based on three indices. The country is in the second highest group, with an index of 0.67¹⁸ in one study and “2 points on a 0-4 scale” in another.¹⁹ The third survey found “noticeable problems”.²⁰ These results place the country in the category of problematic media freedoms.

MEDIA FREEDOM							
Freedom of Expression Index 2019		Freedom of the Press Worldwide 2020		Freedom and the Media 2019		FINAL	
Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index 3-14
0.8 - 1.0	1	Good	1	4 – Best	1	Good	3-4
0.51 - 0.79	2	Satisfactory	2	Index 3	2	Satisfactory	5-6
0.30 - 0.50	3	Noticeable Problems	3	Index 2	3	Problematic	7, 8, 9

18 V-Net Institute, University of Gothenburg, *Freedom of Expression Index 2019*, available at <https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/MapGraph/>

19 Freedom House, *Freedom and the Media 2019*, available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-and-media/2019/media-freedom-downward-spiral>

20 Reporters Without Borders, 2020, available at https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/carte_2020_en.pdf

MEDIA FREEDOM							
Freedom of Ex- pression Index 2019		Freedom of the Press Worldwide 2020		Freedom and the Media 2019		FINAL	
Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index	Status	Index 3-14
0 - 0.29	4	Difficult Situation	4	Index 1	4	Difficult	10, 11, 12
		Very Seri- ous Situa- tion	5	0 - Worst	5	Sup- pressed	13-14

This research suggests that the country’s regime is a populist autocracy, though there is strong evidence to dismiss one index and describe Bosnia and Herzegovina as a populist democracy with moderate human and economic freedoms, weak rule of law and human rights standards, affected by corruption and problematic media freedom. The result of this configuration of state-power is a suppressed society. The scales of this research create five different categories using sixteen indices. The Bosnian and Herzegovinian category of “suppressed society” is above the category of “closed society”, but below the other categories of “opening society”, “fairly open society”, and “open society”.

The country ranks fortieth out of forty-five in this comparative study. All five countries placed below Bosnia-Herzegovina have a “closed society”. Except for Turkey, they all share a history of recent transition from a communist society. Ukraine, Turkey, Russia, Belarus, and Azerbaijan are at the bottom of the table. Bosnia and Herzegovina also shares the characteristics of a suppressed society with other states positioned just above her in the same quality group. They are all post-communist countries, and some of them have recent experience of violent conflict: Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Armenia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Moldova.

STATE POWER AND SOCIETY										
Posi tion	Country	Ind- ex	Society	Total Point	Re- game	Hu- man Free- dom	Eco- nom- ic Free- dom	Rule of Law Cor- ruption Human Rights	Me- dia free- dom	Avg. score across indi- ces
1	Switzerland	1	Open	5	3	4	2	3*	3	3.00
2	Ireland	1	Open	5	3	4	2	4*	3	3.46
3	Denmark	1	Open	5	3	5	3	4	3	3.60
3	Finland	1	Open	5	3	5	3	4	3	3.60
3	Netherlands	1	Open	5	3	5	3	4	3	3.60
3	Norway	1	Open	5	3	5	3	4	3	3.60
3	Sweden	1	Open	5	3	5	3	4	3	3.60
8	Germany	1	Open	5	3	6	3	4	3	3.80
9	Luxembourg	1	Open	5	3	6	3	3*	4	4.00
10	UK	1	Open	5	3	6	3	6	4	4.40
11	Iceland	1.2	Fairly Open	6	2*	5	3	4*	4*	4.38
12	Austria	1.2	Fairly Open	6	3	6	3	5	5	4.40
12	Estonia	1.2	Fairly Open	6	5	6	3	5	3	4.40
12	Portugal	1.2	Fairly Open	6	3	6	4	6	3	4.40
15	Lithuania	1.2	Fairly Open	6	5	6	3	4.5*	4	4.81
16	Cyprus	1.2	Fairly Open	6	4	6	3	6*	4	5.00
17	France	1.4	Fairly Open	7	4	6	5	7	4	5.20
17	Slovenia	1.4	Fairly Open	7	4	6	5	6	5	5.20
19	Belgium	1.6	Fairly Open	8	5	7	4	5	3	4.80
20	Spain	1.6	Fairly Open	8	3	6	4	7	5	5.00
21	Latvia	1.6	Fairly Open	8	5	6	3	6*	5	5.40
22	Czechia	1.6	Fairly Open	8	6	6	3	8	5	5.60
23	Italy	1.8	Fairly Open	9	4	7	5	7	5	5.60
24	Slovakia	2.0	Open- ing	10	5	7	4	7*	6	6.27
25	Malta	2.0	Open- ing	10	4*	7	4	7*	7	6.67

26	Romania	2.0	Open- ing	10	6	7	4	11	6	6.80
27	Poland	2.2	Open- ing	11	5	7	5	8	7	6.40
28	Croatia	2.2	Open- ing	11	5	7	5	9	7	6.60
29	Bulgaria	2.2	Open- ing	11	5	7	3	12	8	7.00
30	Greece	2.2	Open- ing	11	5	9	7	10	6	7.40
31	Georgia	2.4	Open- ing	12	7	10	3	9	7	7.20
32	Hungary	2.4	Open- ing	12	6	10	5	10	8	7.80
33	Kosovo	2.6	Sup- pressed	13	4*	5*	4	10*	7	8.06
34	Albania	2.8	Sup- pressed	14	8	10	4	14	8	8.80
34	N. Macedonia	2.8	Sup- pressed	14	7	10	5	14	8	8.80
36	Armenia	2.8	Sup- pressed	14	9	12	3	10*	8	9.06
36	Serbia	2.8	Sup- pressed	14	7	11	5	10*	9	9.06
38	Montenegro	3.0	Sup- pressed	15	8	11	6	10*	8	9.26
39	Moldova	3.2	Sup- pressed	16	7	10	6	15	8	9.20
40	B & H	3.2	Sup- pressed	16	9**	10	6	14	8	9.40
41	Ukraine	3.6	Closed	18	9	12	8	15	8	10.40
42	Turkey	3.8	Closed	19	9.5	15	6	16	12	11.70
42	Russia	3.8	Closed	19	10	15	6	16	12	11.80
44	Belarus	3.8	Closed	19	11	11*	6	8*	12	11.93
45	Azerbaijan	4.2	Closed	21	11	15	6	12*	13	12.20

*: Some countries have been omitted from some data and an average score calculated for the particular feature, i.e., Freedoms or Rule of Law, etc.

** : Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only country classified as “occupied” by the Centre for Systemic Peace. Cyprus, Kosovo, Ukraine, Georgia or Azerbaijan are not. It would be an arbitrary correction of the data to ignore their description of the country.

Conclusion

Political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not lived up to the task of preserving and developing the values that were symbolic of the multicultural idea during the war of the 1990s. Multiple findings prove that a populist form of politics dominates

the country. Populism lacks specific ideological determination and serves as a tool for political elites to promote their policies. The form of populism that has been firmly established in Bosnia and Herzegovina is nationalist.

The consociational political model means that nationalist oligarchies practice the dictatorship of majorities in their territories. National minority members and members of the constituent peoples who live in territories their own group does not dominate often find themselves discriminated against. All other forms of minority, whether political, ideological, by sexual orientation, gender, or other criterion, suffer under the same conditions.

Moderate human and economic freedoms do not suggest an average level. It means there is plenty of room for improvement. There are clear examples of countries with an even worse track record of freedoms. The weak rule of law and a sub-standard human rights record are both affected by levels of corruption. The vision of a society that is not open is thus reinforced.

Media freedoms are problematic. The nationalist autocracies are in control of all public services, while independent media generally lack revenues, which are profoundly affected by the restricted advertising market. The political elites do not directly curb freedom of expression but do manipulate it via the commercial aspects of media, buying advertising space in the media supportive of their policies and urging businesses to ignore persistently independent media. As a result, only a few media remain open to dissenting opinion.

The designation “suppressed society” thus characterises best all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The levels of suppression may differ, but generally speaking, they all belong to the same category. The idea of an open society is more alien to contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina than it was during the war, when many perceived its values as being at stake. This might lead one to conclude that the concept of an open society and multi-culturalism have been defeated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, if not during the war, then in the post-war period. Many aspects of the symbolism represented by Sarajevo, if not by all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, remain in theoretical debates on the values of multi-culturalism, the open society, and liberal democracy.

As in many other parts of Europe, liberal democracy and the open society appear to have regressed in recent decades. This

regression may be a temporary feature in some parts of Europe. The problem for Bosnia and Herzegovina is that now functioning liberal democracy was ever established. Moreover, while the open society concept has contributed to several improvements in the community it has not become a dominant concept and is under severe pressure despite achievements. One may doubt whether Susan Sontag would put “Waiting for Godot” on stage in today’s Sarajevo.

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THEN-NOW-TOMORROW

Suada Kapić

THEN (1992–1996) – NOW (December 2019–
June 2020)

Now, in April 2020, in the wake of the global coronavirus onslaught, I sit in Grbavica in Sarajevo, the same spot where I was back **then**, in 1992, when the siege of the city began. Having survived the four-year siege, my friends think of me as a veteran who **now**, at the time of the coronavirus assault, has solutions for survival, just as, from 1992 to 1996, we came up with solutions to perpetual dangers (snipers, shelling, no electricity, water, or heating, phone, or post, food, school, clothes, shoes, or institutions, and moving around being a lottery where the stakes are your life on account of the high chances of being hit by a sniper or a shell). My friends think that I have a method for overcoming fear that can help **now** as we adapt to the rules of our new normal.

But this **present** beast has different elements. It is true that even back **then** (1993), we called the enemy of Sarajevo invisible (the city was the front line, those that shot at us were all around, on the hills: invisible); and **now** the whole world uses this term to refer to the coronavirus. Today, anything you touch could prove fatal, everything you breathe in, everywhere you walk, everything you exchange, buy... So, the DEADLY THREAT OF AN INVISIBLE ENEMY **then**, and the DEADLY THREAT OF AN INVISIBLE ENEMY **now**.

Except that **now** the shops are open and we have high-tech solutions for communicating with the world. The *similarity* is that both **now** and **then**, everything turned upside-down within 24 hours, before our very eyes. But back **then** we, the citizens of Sarajevo, developed a new way of living that took on the form of a resistance movement. **Now**, I see millions of quick-witted and

creative videos about people around the world saving themselves and their families in isolation through various inventions, activities and online visits to museums, courses, gyms, festivals, galleries, libraries.

Back **then**, we could not do any of that from home, so, instead, we ran the pernicious streets to get to the film festival, the theatre, performances under torchlight, we built the life-size Bosnian house, watched wire sculptures be installed over the river, planted gardens for survival, found water and made electricity in a city bereft of both... **Now**, one click opens up a whole virtual world, and you are not alone. Back **then** everything we did required immense effort and time. But back **then** we also won! **Today**, in 2020, the citizens of Sarajevo, the 92-96 GENERATION (which includes citizens of all ages who were under siege), I can finally call a Generation of Winners. Individually and collectively, we overcame fear, survived, and developed our need for culture (in all its guises) as vital. **Today**, across the planet, everyone is exhibiting that self-same vital need – artists, creatives, writers, and ordinary citizens, students, pupils, and others – expressing incredible talents through the need to continue life and experience culture, which is the guarantee of mental survival.

TOMORROW: Post-Covid-19

Like few other cities in the world of comparable area and population, Sarajevo is a city of living history, that could be turned into a museum in its entirety. The First and Second World War and the longest siege in modern history all happened here, around the corner, along the main street, and in the hills encircling the city.

But the momentous phenomena of those wars seem unable to pass into a legacy of knowledge about ourselves, society, wars, and politics in general. Because, we can already say that now, Sarajevo has inscribed in its genetic makeup both violence and freedom, aggression and resistance, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, common sense, too, cowardice and fear, but also nobleness of spirit and quickness of wit, neighbourhood life, skill and slothfulness, tolerance and suspicion and cunning, and creativity too...

The coronavirus has opened up new space in the history of the city. Since the first day, it has been clear that it is useless to read about how others from abroad, with clearly delineated borders, are doing this and that. We read articles from institutes, experts, doctors, reporters, improvisational thinkers, and then we realised that this time, just like then, we were shut up into our micro-environment and we would fare as the local powers-that-be decide. We had online access to the global world, we could watch and listen, but here we were in the hands of those in whose hands we should never have found ourselves.

Within a day, they had us all locked up, shut up all together in uncharted territory, and there was no time to learn protocols or establish routines. As Viktor Ivančić would say, we found ourselves living in a time of medically assisted dictatorship. Except there was no way to know whether what they were telling us would be good for our health if we obediently did as we were told.

And then, suddenly, here and around the world, our heavy sentence was lifted, hair salons opened, fitness studios ... then the cafés... when just yesterday, you had to pay a heavy fine just for going out to buy something.

Instead of being trusted to be reasonable and responsible, at least towards ourselves, we were put under strict duress.

They're unlocking us but have left additional threats in place: A second wave is coming and may be more fatal than the first!!! Get used to living with the virus!!! This is the New Normal!!!

What actually went on from December 2019 to June 2020 will be the subject of research the world over. Already, everyone is thinking, speaking, planning. And what will happen now, what will the post-Covid-19 age bring? – that we cannot know unless we draw lines from the Covid-19 2020 database. Many things have become necessary, new industries have cropped up, as have conversion methods, while many others have disappeared, and the general fear (no matter how temporary) will dictate the survival of old habits; policies will follow the same old matrices, but we should at least try to follow that Tomorrow, based on experience gained in this extreme-limited-locked-down onslaught of the coronavirus on the whole planet.

We have done this with a large and valuable database of experiences from the four-year-long siege of Sarajevo (through

oral histories and surveys). How did the citizens respond to terror, how did they resist and survive, what helped them mentally survive and in what context? What we do know is that we have not entirely managed to channel this enormous database globally, towards prevention and assistance (based on a wealth of experience) in extreme, unexpected situations. It is about universal human nature and the response of individuals and societies to fear and constant terror over a protracted time period.

I find explanation in the arrogance of the world at large and their intention to qualify the wars that marked the collapse of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1999 as civil wars, without further delving into what they could learn from that period about international relations, the functioning of the administration and crisis management, the role of the UN, the military doctrine of attack and defence, humanitarian aid, human rights, the role of the media, peace negotiations, how to survive in a cut-off city, human nature that sought solace in culture and art, mental survival, the existential discovery of new possibilities under the credo “Something from Nothing”, about recycling – repurposing existing items, about basic, non-consumerist human needs...

In its tempestuous sweep, Covid-19 has shut down the entire planet and imposed conditions. Everything has come to light, the weak points of administrations and the blindness of dictators, politics and ideologies and their amateurish management of an unprecedented crisis, crisis management teams without experts for all the fronts that Covid-19 opened up. We have seen it all, experienced it, and are still watching it. We watch as cities and countries come out of lockdown and we see people returning to their normality in a rush to escape the fear of the pandemic. As if they had not learned anything, their uppermost priority is to go back to their own normal.

That is why those who should be dealing with this (medicine, social sciences, media, anthropologists, climate scientists, virologists, psychologists, environmental scientists, legislators, pharmacology, agriculture, transport, crisis management...) have a great responsibility to build databases and conduct research (which has already started) as soon as possible and, instead of threatening us with the above dangers, they should direct new industries to find solutions for our ruined planet, by repurposing old industries and ways of working.

Within three months, we have seen that the recorded positive effects can serve as a future model for development, because Covid-19 has accelerated both the trends and the acceptance of those trends:

The **health industry** is a priority and public health systems must be reinstated in their full capacity, well-funded from state and local budgets. In emergency situations, private medical practice should become part of public healthcare, without exception.

Technology: *Online* platforms provide extraordinary opportunities in education (schools and universities have not stopped teaching), business, conferences, negotiations, mass access to culture, museums, collections, galleries, libraries, concerts. Savings are vast, and there is also the opportunity to create new systems of *online* funding through special types of donations. And the conclusion is that culture and education have acquired interesting new formats and a large number of users.

Telemedicine is a particular benefit. People will increasingly consult their physicians using apps and video-calls, which will reduce the number of visits to the doctor in primary healthcare.

Medical protective equipment: The pandemic caught the world unprepared; everyone suffered a great deficit in protective suits, masks, visors, gloves, ventilators. Still, large and small industrial plants, and new technological studies, found ways to convert their machines and tools for the production of desperately needed equipment.

The food industry and retail are functioning through special transport corridors and *online* food delivery, which have helped many agencies and distributors survive, and have kept the population away from the risk of infection.

Climate change: The pandemic halted transport and reduced activity, ushering in changes – the water has become clearer, the sky blue, the air unpolluted. People can survive without cars, they walk, ride bicycles, scooters...

We've seen negative phenomena, too, which pose a great danger for the survival of the human race and society, especially in the future, because this has been just a short-term "test":

Pharmaceutical industry: If we as a group of 8000000000 people have to get used to living with viruses, then the pharmaceutical industry must support research into new medicines and vaccines, because, in future, stopping the planet will lead to disaster.

Capital must not be allowed to decide whether or not to research and produce the necessary antidotes to pandemics and epidemics.

International relations: The pandemic has laid bare that the world does not have a leader or an institution or an organisation able to direct the majority. Everyone is in blocs and playing political games. Talk of solidarity between countries is practically non-existent, except when it is overdetermined by political and geostrategic influence in a race to claim infected territories. Everyone has shut themselves up in their own model and followed it through the dynamics of the pestilence. There hasn't even been solidarity among local communities.

Politics keeps evoking experts and science: A perfect model for those in power to use crisis staffs and orders to establish a very rigid model of ruling the masses, with the perpetual explanation of "that's what the experts say".

Human rights: In the "state of disaster" or "state of emergency", whichever we call it, human rights have been completely suspended. We had to trust in the lockdown based on so-called medical explanation of who was forbidden to go anywhere at all. We were then able to see that the old concept of human rights is dysfunctional, and there is no one to defend them. Civil society, with all the donations they receive, did not react to a single measure or plan of life under pandemic.

Living history: During the three-month rule of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been shown that living history or the manipulation of history directly impacts Bosnian and Herzegovinian politics, that it has affected the management of the crisis, given rise to new divisions, while stifling agreement, which is of crucial importance for a territory with common borders at a time of extreme crises.

Time has run out, but we could still go back to counting time normally if we were to articulate all these experiences, develop and use them for the common good and to defend individual rights, creating flexible social models and setting intelligence, humaneness and creativity as drivers of civic-mindedness to preserve life on the planet.

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

TWO SIEGES, TWO EXPERIENCES

Gojko Berić

I am eighty years of age and still enjoy the privilege of writing, as this text is witness. Ever since my wife died almost four years ago, I have lived by myself in a large apartment in an Austro-Hungarian building constructed on the eve of the Great War and located on the most popular street in Sarajevo, Ferhadija, a pedestrian zone in the centre of town. The windows in the two largest rooms have a view of Trebević, a legendary hill that enfolds the southern side of the city. It's spring, but I cannot feel its scent because a tiny virus from Wuhan has me under house arrest, which the authorities have merely legalised through regulations requiring all citizens older than 65 to remain in so-called self-isolation. I don't feel lonely. On nice days I open my windows wide, and, exposed to the beneficent action of the sun, I watch the rare passers-by in their masks and gloves. The isolation itself is bearable and for many even welcome. People are taking stock and dealing with things outstanding for years. Difficulties, fear, and uncertainty lurk outside your home's walls, because nobody can say what is happening or how long it will last.

In Spring 1992, the Serb separatist forces surrounded Sarajevo and placed it under deadly fascistic siege. Twenty-eight years later, its Spring again, and the town is under siege once more, by an invisible, insidious, and ruthless killer who spares no one. We knew everything about the criminals picking us off from the surrounding hills. Most had been our neighbours. We know practically nothing about this new killer, except that "it has neither wing nor hoof". People pass it on to each other at alarming speed. In an attempt to prevent the pandemic spreading, doctors, scientists, and politicians swap apartments at night. It is a life and death struggle. Nobody agrees on what should be done. In an interview with the German newspaper, *Die Frankfurter*

Rundschau, Jürgen Habermas (90), perhaps the leading philosopher alive today, offered a perfect definition of the current state of the world: “Never before have we known so much about our own ignorance.” The Churches and Mosques are empty. (Sarajevo’s Synagogues were emptied in the Holocaust by the Nazi’s during World War II). I’m watching an extraordinary event on the television: Pope Francis standing in the rain before a completely empty St. Peter’s Square. “For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people’s gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost... [We felt strong, capable of anything.] The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities... In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.”

A few days passed before I remembered one such experience, of an unjust battle between a man and a dangerous virus. It was in Albert Camus’s masterpiece, “The Plague.” The need to read it after many decades was self-explanatory. I found it in my home library, a 1956 edition by Belgrade’s *Prosveta*, translated by Jovanka Marković-Čížek. The allegorical novel, written as a chronicle, is set in the 1940s, in a fictional town called Oran, which has been attacked by a plague. The main character is Doctor Bernard Rieux, who puts himself on the frontlines of the fight against this rat-transmitted virus, and who enters the fight pulling no punches. His most important colleague and friend, the old wise man Tarrou, has the idea of creating sanitary units to fight the plague, to which he will ultimately succumb, as do Dr Rieux’s other friends and colleagues. There are a number of strikingly drawn characters, linked by their humanism, personal ethics, and the question of the meaning of life. The journalist Rambert counts among them. He fought in Spain on the side of the Republicans, the losing side. Happenstance brought him to Oran, where he is trying to escape a fate he doesn’t consider his and reunite with a wife he loves immeasurably, but in the end he decides to stay

among the suffering. The character of the Priest, Father Paneloux, is used by Camus to explore the question of God. At the beginning of the pandemic, Father Paneloux holds a sermon at his church in which he attributes Oran's tragedy to God's wrath: "for many of us must have sinned." Faced with the death of an innocent child, however, Paneloux is plagued by doubt in the existence of God. He enlists in a sanitary unit to work tirelessly until the plague is defeated. When it ends, Dr Rieux realises that, after it all, he has nothing left but the memories of the plague and of his friends. He decides to write his chronicle and bear witness in the name of the victims, to save them from oblivion and say, "human beings contain more to admire than to despise."

"The Plague" was published forty-five years before Sarajevo was enclosed by a ring of Serb howitzers, rocker launchers, heavy machine guns, and snipers. The writer Miljenko Jegović considers "The Plague" the most important and fundamental novel of the siege of Sarajevo. And truly, the entire series of events, scenes, and characters with their distinct moral evocation, empathy, and selfless sacrifices on one side and the terror of local bands under the eyes of the incompetent authorities on the other, the smuggling and the wartime profiteering, all the good and bad that made up life in wartime Sarajevo, all those everyday rhythms, seem as though copied straight from Camus' novel.

There are key differences between the Sarajevo that bled under Serb siege and the Sarajevo that is struggling because of the coronavirus pandemic today. It is no longer the same city, or the same people. The Sarajevo of the past has foundered, but not so badly as those who attacked it. They got their judgement at The Hague. But nothing in the world is as it was three decades ago. Sarajevo under siege was the biggest concentration camp in Europe since World War II, its name known around the world. Its fate was a lodestone to the world media, but Europe itself was indifferent to the suffering and death of its people, just as it was indifferent to the ethnic cleansing and mass murder of civilians across Bosnia and Herzegovina. The capitals of the most powerful countries in the world considered Balkan post-communist nationalism an isolated affair and Sarajevo and Bosnia collateral damage. Nowadays, try and find a country where nationalism isn't the leading ideology. Sarajevo under siege is difficult to imagine because of the distance of time. Bread, electricity, and

water were key to survival, and we didn't have these essentials. There was no bread, no electricity, no water, no phones. There was nothing but too little humanitarian aid coming in from the rest of the world. There was no contact with outside. Death lay in the streets. But, as the situation got worse, empathy became more pronounced. People's resistance to dying and their life force were incredible. One late-Autumn evening, as people were waiting in line for water at a water fountain by the Brewery, a targeted shell killed seven men and women and injured more. As the radio broadcasted the news, I met a neighbour from the second floor on the staircase. She was a tiny thin lady carrying a bouquet of plastic cannisters, on her way to the water fountain, a kilometre and a half from our building, where the massacre had happened barely an hour ago. To my surprise she said: "There's no crowd now, maybe there won't be so many people." There is a photograph I can't forget, taken by one of the dozens of photojournalists from the global agencies who risked their lives for a good picture. It was taken as day was transitioning into night and shows a one-legged man with a crutch under one arm and a bouquet in the other, making his way down an eerily desolate street. The flowers were probably for his wife. His darkened face betrayed his fear and determination. There were no doubt shells going off close-by.

1993 was a war year, the toughest Sarajevo would remember. You needed a lot of empathy and courage to take the long and uncertain road to the hell of Sarajevo. Two great women, Joan Baez and Susan Sontag, had both. One of the biggest singers of the 60s and an activist in the anti-Vietnam movement, Baez held a spectacular humanitarian concert in the hall of the Kino Imperial to show support for the citizens of the besieged city. However it happened, the author Susan Sontag, one of the most famous American women of her day, was in Sarajevo at the same time. She stayed a few weeks and went about the town in a Kevlar vest. She socialised with the locals and shared in their fate. She returned in the summer of that same year to the stage of the National Theatre to put on a production of Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," a work that symbolises the fate of the besieged city. Sarajevo was waiting for its own Godot. Just before the end of the war, Sontag returned to a half-destroyed and dilapidated Sarajevo. In the newly-founded Media Centre, whose founder was the famous Sarajevo journalist Boro Kontić, she talked with journalists and said,

among other things, that: “You should know, tragedies are like milk, they go off quickly.” It was as if she had a premonition that Sarajevo’s tragedy would become the monopoly of one ethno-politics and its protagonists.

War year, 1994, late autumn. Professor Hidajet Repovac and his wife Aida were on their way to a concert by the Sarajevo String Orchestra. On their way to the Kamerni (Chamber) Theatre, where the concert was to be held, they were followed by an unusually heavy rain. Shells were going off on all sides. When they made it to the Kamerni, they found no one there except for the members of the orchestra. The players performed the entire program for an audience of only two and received a sincere and long ovation from the professor and his wife, true music lovers. The emotions brought both sides to tears. There was something miraculous about how culture, in the widest sense, informed Sarajevo’s resistance, a front made up of actors and directors, musicians, painters, authors, poets, journalists, women and girls who would go out into the streets dressed up, with their hair and makeup done, whenever they were able. Back then there were incomparably more urban creators working at full force than there are today. Most are no longer among the living. Professor Repovac is dead, others left Sarajevo after the war, and some have lost the passion and strength to fight the windmills of nationalism.

Of course, people are losing their lives in this difficult and uncertain peacetime battle. But it is not my place to write about the coronavirus except to say that Sarajevo is fighting the pandemic in a manner much like the rest of the world. Sarajevo is no longer an object of international media and diplomatic attention, just an episode on the global pandemic’s progress. More than 90% of the city’s inhabitants are now Bosniaks, and its historical cosmopolitanism has been cut off from its native roots. Centuries of living together and more or less tolerable mutual toleration of religious, ethnic and cultural differences have been destroyed by guns and mass war crimes and finished off by the triune post-war politics of ethno-nationalism. The Sarajevo of today is no longer a paradigm of a better world. It is a paradigm of that world’s ruins, a world that existed once and which we still remember. What was destroyed can be rebuilt, what is lost found. It is not senseless to hope that the Bosnian ideal of a religiously plural society refuses to be destroyed and will rediscover its reason and

purpose in some future world. It comes as no surprise that the new citizens of Sarajevo, who have mostly come to the capital from rural areas, by hook or by crook, are the loudest protestors against the precautionary measures. A cynic might react to their “entitlement” as follows: “I know it’s tough being at home all the time but wouldn’t being on a respirator be more difficult.” For those like me who survived the siege of Sarajevo in the 90s these measures have not hit hard. Maybe the curfew didn’t make that much sense, but it only lasted 32 days. I didn’t manage to keep the curfew anyway because I go to bed early anyways. I did wake up once at 2pm and look out the window, and I saw a frighteningly empty city. The scene overwhelmed me with fear. Then, I saw a dog on a curb in the park. He seemed completely lost, turning his head from one side of the street to the other and listening desperately for signs of life. This only increased my uneasiness. I thought of how a person might behave if left alone in the city like this? Go crazy? Kill himself? Or might they notice a dog like this, and go with it to some happier place, wherever that might be?

The wartime “curfew” introduced by Ratko Mladić, the military commander of the criminal campaign against Bosnia, lasted a full 44 months. During that period, more than 11,000 citizens of Sarajevo were killed, 1,600 of them children. Mladić’s order to his subordinates, charged with maintaining despair and hopelessness amongst the city’s population, was: “Send them mad.” Mladić wanted to turn Sarajevo into a giant psychiatric ward, but the Sarajevans’ spirit was stronger. Our psychotherapists and psychologists didn’t bemoan the public’s mental health as it would have seemed at least inappropriate, even ridiculous. Our mental state was an expression of our resistance. Empathy wasn’t a question of politics. It went spontaneously from door to door, surprised by the siege. All in all, the dramas of survival differed significantly from the pandemic. In their anti-pandemic campaign, the media have been intensely concerned with the mental aspect of survival. Psychotherapists, psychologists, and sociologists are flooding our TV screens. They annoy me sometimes. They say the best medication against the frustrations and anxiousness of house arrest is reading. One cold April morning I saw a young man in the park. He was lying on his back, on a red blanket, spread out on the half-trampled grass under a tall cypress. He was dressed in black, from his heavy winter boots to his ski hat, reading a

book. It was a witty performance by a clever Sarajevan, with the message: Stay at home and read books! But, in a culturally debased city that has been literally turned into a village, as have Sarajevo and so many other cities of the former Yugoslavia, very few people actually read books.

The most famous resident of my street is the local vagabond, Ramiz. He is in fact only a vagabond because he lives on the street. He is a big, strong, intelligent, communicative sixty-year-old with short hair and a face framed by a thin beard. Ramiz has been in the newspapers. Apparently, he had a house in Zenica, but it looks like he wasn't happy with his fate, so he moved out onto the street. Ramiz sleeps in local garages and hallways. Summer or winter, he is on Ferhadija at the first sign of morning light, neatly dressed, accompanied by his dog. He carries a thick Styrofoam pad to sit on, a backpack, a black bag, and a piece of cardboard for his dog to lie on. His street address is right across from my window. Ramiz lays his things out meticulously, lights a cigarette, and curiously observes the other early risers. At some point he starts taking out bundle of food. He unwraps it and breaks off a few bites for his dog before taking any himself. He has plenty of food each day. Butchers from the close-by Markala market and Burek (meat pie) vendors give it to him. An occasional passer-by will slip a coin into his hands. Ramiz doesn't ask for anything, which is why he has everything he needs. Young female tourists like to have their picture taken with him; some even take a swig from his bottle. At dusk Ramiz packs his things away meticulously, he throws the day's waste into a bin, and walks "home" with his dog. Watching him, I think to myself, we can all be infected with the coronavirus, everyone but Ramiz.

I return now to Camus. When the plague has ended, one of his heroes says: "Some say: 'That was a plague. We have endured a plague.' Almost as though they expect a medal. But what is the plague? It's life, that's all."

Ramiz may not have read "The Plague." He's not a hero and has no advice for anyone. But by following the sun, from when it rises to when it sets, he is proving in his own way that the coronavirus pandemic is still just life. And that's all.

Which is why Ramiz is an important character in the Sarajevo story of the pandemic.

Translated by Hana Maurer

WHITE IMAGE OF THE SARAJEVO PANDEMIC

Jovan Divjak

For some, corona has meant falling
into the honey

As viewed by individuals with social authority, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has become, to say the least, unstable. According to Fr Ivo Marković: “As a state, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a cripple, not really there. There are just the political hyenas, snapping up whatever there still is to snap up. These political parties haven’t just destroyed the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have infected the people.”

Prof Izudin Kešetović of the University in Tuzla opines: “The Bosnian and Herzegovinian authorities have not used this time of crisis to establish economic power but to establish their own oligarchic power.”

So far as I can tell, the representatives of the European Union work more closely with the leaders of the three nationalist parties (SDA, HDZ, SNSD) than with the Council of Ministers or the national parliament. The agreement with the International Monetary Fund is an excellent example: agreed with the oligarchs and not the representatives of the people!

For two months, the people of Sarajevo, as paradigms of the three M’s (multinational, multi-ethnic, and multicultural), have generally shown respect for protective measures and kept themselves safe from the coronavirus plague. Their personal and collective discipline offers a positive example we can all be proud of. The city has not surrendered, just as it did not surrender through all the years from 1991 to 1995, when the spirit of Sarajevo was under attack.

I have only respect for all those who honour their Hippocratic oath. A tip of the cap (!) to all those making sacrifices, literally sacrificing their own lives, and indirectly the lives of their families, so that as few as possible fall victim to the virus. There have been individual cases of honourable doctors and citizens who have lost their struggle against corona because of inadequate care. Volunteers, most of them young, have sprung up like mushrooms after rain, their hands and youthful hearts outstretched to help those who need help. Educational establishments have shown a very high degree of responsibility and commitment, using online teaching and ultramodern methods to ensure schoolchildren and students remain within a teaching process.

In these two months, Sarajevo has “blossomed.” Through online links to theatres, musicians, painters, and workers in film have “worked” with enthusiasm and held the attention of the public, helping it keep above the surface and not fall into an abyss of helplessness. The town has come alive, an example of how even the most complicated problems can be overcome through togetherness, while scorning the individuals and, in some cases, groups who have ignored the recommendations to preserve our own health and that of others.

The Miljacka has never been cleaner. I recently saw an angler on Mak Dizdar Quay catch a fish. The sanitation services have never kept the streets cleaner or the green areas better, at least that I have ever had occasion to see.

Most media (I do not watch television programmes) have had a very successful “fight” against the pandemic and provided reliable sources of education on how to protect ourselves. They have been motivating. They have also “uncovered” a number of affairs and scandals, which has had a positive impact on public morale. Finally, it seems, corruption is being chased down... Of course, during this time of pandemic troubles, there have also been those who have attempted, as individuals or groups, to reject this vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of its capital city Sarajevo as our common property, for whose preservation we must and should make every serious effort.

Let us remember the floods of 2014, when relations between the entities and between neighbours reflected the popular saying – first God, then your neighbour. The coronavirus has furthered, at the very least, further dismemberment of the state. We have a

minimum of thirteen civil defence committees (the entities, Brčko district, the cantons), each of which with its own way of organising, deciding, issuing decisions, sanctioning, “bullshitting”, and ultimately making vital decisions about the lives of the citizenry. In many cases, anti-pandemic policy has been in the hands of people who have neither the expertise nor competence to conduct the complex and demanding fight against the virus. Their public appearances have served to sow disquiet and fear amongst their fellow citizens, as they underestimate the seriousness of the situation, to the point where their message has even been – *I’ll just take a couple of glasses of strong liquor (rakija), and I’ll beat the coronavirus, or We beat NATO and we will beat the virus.*

The authorities’ decisions on various forms of restriction created violations of human rights, for which they were admonished by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I am convinced that a single shared approach at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina would have been more effective in tackling the danger of infection. Naturally, I also imagine how much more effective and fruitful a single corona-law at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina would have been. Instead, they are all gathering and disciplining their own citizens in their own regions and their own ethnic groups.

I’ve also thought, over recent days, how useful it would have been to have had a single committee for the city of Sarajevo and the city of eastern Sarajevo, as good neighbours, and so for all the municipalities that made up the city before the war.

Yesterday, when the coffee shops and bars in eastern Sarajevo reopened, not a few young folk from Sarajevo made their way down from Vraca to Lukavica. Not even the coronavirus can prevent the young from meeting up and seeing each other!

For myself, I cannot decipher, explain, or justify the decision of the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina to hold a mass on 16 May, 2020 (!), for the very individuals (Ustashe, fascists, and collaborators) responsible for killing more than 10,000 citizens of the town in Sarajevo between 1941 and 1945, including more than 7,000 Sarajevo Jews.

What is the reasoning behind the claim made by all the churches in the Balkans for 30 years that they were persecuted during the “Time of the Communists” and outlawed by the Communists? – My personal experience does not accord with

these claims. I finished high school in Zrenjanin in 1956. There was a Catholic Church at the centre of town. Masses were held without any problems during holy week and on religious holidays. From 1966, I lived with my family in Sarajevo, in the Old Town, where four of the major world religions have houses of worship. They were treated with respect, just as the right to religious service was, except for a few minor individual incidents. The government authorities respected the right to religious expression, as was recognised by European states. I am proud of the claim: Sarajevo – Meeting point of East and West.

“Bleiburg in Sarajevo” is an insult to all Sarajevans and beyond that to a city of coexistence and tolerance and multi-religious community. I offer the following quotations of reaction from Sarajevans who have no second homeland or city kept in reserve:

[...] I was born in the city. I do not want a religious building Sarajevans are proud of to be used for other purposes, which I as a Catholic and a Sarajevan will have to feel ashamed of. (Zvonimir Nikolić, columnist, Sarajevan)

Why wasn't the mass held in Zagreb? Because Croatia is currently chair of the European Union's Council, so it was inconvenient, and they transferred it to Bosnia. It's particularly unpleasant, because the Vod (Počasni bleiburški vod/Bleiburg Honour Guard, op. a.), a fascist organisation, is behind it. It is true that some innocent people died at Bleiburg along with the criminals [...] I cannot fathom, however, a memorial to the criminals. (Eli Tauber, Adviser on culture and religion, the Jewish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

All human accounting to one side, you, Vinko Puljić, my brother in Christ, are called by a categorical moral imperative. An imperative that appears irresistibly in every believing conscience, in the conscience of every responsible individual. So, once more and publicly: Can we forgive the Communists... the Serbs, the Bosniaks? We have to! (Drago Pilsel, What Sarajevo needs isn't Bleiburg but antifascism)

Cardinal Puljić has a personal, priestly, indeed every right to be an anti-Communist, and even a right to serve peace and Pavelić and the NDH, but he has no right to rehabilitate Ustashism under cover of a mass for innocent victims. (Vildana Selimbegović, editor-in-chief and director of Oslobođenje)

It is not wise to hold a mass for the victims at Bleiburg unless you have protected the faithful by social and physical distancing from the virus of fascism first. Particularly not on the Day of the Victory over Fascism and Victory in Europe Day, because that is to stand on the side of death and not life. (Fr Marko Oršolić)

[...] They are usually self-declared charismatics. Remember Tora-bji and how he seduced and fooled thousands of people, and you get plenty of people of that type in all religions, but you also get people in all religions who are sophisticated theologians, bishops, imams, who take the stage with the authority of a false God and crazy ideas to seduce the gullible people, like, for example, that people cannot be infected at religious events, during service, or in their place of worship, and that they can heal everything. Responsible religious communities and society have to develop the necessary mechanisms to unmask such lunatics in time and stop them, because otherwise they can reach a critical mass that it is difficult to control. (Fr Ivo Marković)

The Catholic Church has a right to make its own decisions autonomously and, with regard to divine service, nobody else has a right to forbid anything. The reactions in Sarajevo indicate that responsibility has been laid at the wrong address and that is not good. [...] We must remain dignified. Some people are trying to associate it with the city, but Sarajevo is not commemorating anything. The Catholic Church is holding a mass in Sarajevo and it should stay inside the precincts of the cathedral [...] No doubt some people hope that this will cause conflict between Muslims and Catholics and perhaps some third element... (Reis Kavazović)

Such affairs and scandals, the scoundrelism of individuals and groups, cast an ugly shadow on proud citizens fasting during the period of Ramadan on whom this immoral behaviour necessarily has an impact. According to Prof Abdusamed Nazif Bušatlić of the school of Islamic sciences, referring to the importance of Ramadan for those wearing hypocritical masks on their faces and, even worse, on their souls: “[Ramadan] is a school for the rehabilitation of our spiritual condition.” To which I would add Socrates’ motto: “The spirit is knowledge.”

Bušatlić says that the faithful are brought up to a sublime morality, sincerity, justice, courage, sociability, love of each other, and solidarity. Sins related to interpersonal relations – gossip, passing on the words of others, lying, abuse of promises, illegalities, usurpation of other people’s property, putting off the repay-

ment of debts, and slander – are contrary to the observation of *ibadet*. I have learned that the first five verses offer the greatest incentive to learning, proper upbringing, and education. Fasting is a test. How do our contemporaries feel when caught in a lie, cheating, kleptomania, hypocritical behaviour, in the evil act that they have committed? On this earth, let justice and the people be their judges, and above let God be their succour. As for me, I do not think that they belong in the city, because they do not deserve the city's blessings. They have offended the spirit of Sarajevo, its morality, and sense of honour, and they are not even aware of it.

As individuals respecting the messages and how to protect ourselves and others (protective masks, social distancing), we are well on the way to preventing further contagion and death over the next month or two, and so to returning to our everyday problems, schools, university, socialising, and covering up even worse diseases – corruption, nepotism, fascism, nationalism, and other isms. Focusing upon the establishment of an effective healthcare system and insurance. Keeping the Miljacka and our boulevards and streets clean. Educating our citizens to resist any form of epidemic or pandemic.

Vaclav Havel, the Czech intellectual, warned us 60 years ago: “Tribal hatreds are slumbering everywhere, but if we allow them to win out in one place, they will start to awaken in many other places.”

In the hope that this may not happen here, I keep my silence, you keep yours, he keeps his, we all keep our silence, and they steal.

Translated by Desmond Maurer

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SENIORS AS A RISK GROUP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – A CASE STUDY OF A CITY IN THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA, USA

Azra Dobardžić

Introduction

Based on limited current knowledge and experience, those at highest risk of severe illness from coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are people aged 65 years or above, people living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities, and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled (1,2).

Coronavirus disease is caused by a respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. COVID-19 is a new virus that had not caused illness in humans before. It has resulted in infections of pandemic proportions, causing illness and deaths. New cases are being reported daily and information about COVID-19 is emerging from many valid and less valid sources.

A particularly concerning fact about viruses, particularly those of the coronavirus virus family, is their ability to mutate (change) rapidly.

The objective of this paper is to share reliable sources of information about COVID-19 and describe the experiences and initiatives of seniors while self-distancing and isolating in the neighborhood of Calvert Hills in the city of College Park in the Washington Metropolitan Area, USA. All information and data are based on internet sources and communications.

It is very important to know the facts about COVID-19. Rumors can have a negative impact on physical and mental health. Virtual communication has never been as important as now, when human survival is at stake.

Background

We still don't know for sure all the hosts that can harbor the COVID-19 virus or all the pathways of transmission. We are still not sure whether immunity follows infection, and if so for how long. Consequently, we don't know the risk of reinfection. Based on currently available information, the new virus, COVID-19, is very contagious. It spreads easily from human to human, and there are indications that some animals may be susceptible to infection (tigers at the zoo and house pets, like cats and dogs). Based on current knowledge, people can transmit the virus to other people both before and after the symptoms of infection appear/disappear, or even if there have been no symptoms.

Infection can spread by coughing, sneezing, and talking, which creates respiratory droplets, close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, or touching an object or surface with the virus on it. The virus has been found in the feces of infected people. The spread of infection can be halted by exercising protective measures.

The objective of this paper is to share reliable sources of information about COVID-19 (3,4). We also describe the experience and initiatives of seniors (65 and above) during self-distancing and isolation in a city in the Washington Metropolitan Area. The population of the city of College Park was 32,196, as of July 1, 2019. Persons aged 65 and over made up 5.9% of the total population, and the average number of people per household was 3.96% of households had a computer.

We have created three categories for important common issues faced by seniors and describe the resources and practices they found helpful during home isolation. The three categories are:

1. Health and health-related issues during self-isolation:
 - a. Obtaining prescribed medication in a no-contact manner;
 - b. Contact with health care providers.
2. Social distancing and the mental impact of isolation:

- a. Loneliness;
 - b. Depression, panic attacks and fear.
3. Nutrition and shopping in a no-contact manner:
 - a. Grocery shopping for essential food;
 - b. Regular nutritious meals.

Resources and Practices for Seniors

Health and health-related issues during self-isolation

Most seniors need medications. Pharmacies played a significant role in facilitating patients obtaining medications on time without contact. They have developed an alert system to remind patients of their medication status, by phone call, text, or email. Delivery was to the patient address by mail and the delivery fee has been waived for the duration.

It is very important to be able to contact health care providers to minimize risk of infection or access early treatment, when necessary. Hospitals and clinics in the area have established an internet-based patients' portal. It is used to allow patients to communicate with health care providers by secure mail, make and cancel appointments, review the record of their visit, and access the results of tests. During COVID-19, medical providers can also be reached via telemedicine.

To minimize risk of infection, medical facilities have designated separate spaces and buildings for COVID-19 patients. All patients have been informed of changes and protocols, either through the portal or by phone.

Drive-through COVID-19 testing and body temperature checking is being provided at streets and safe spaces near the hospitals and clinics.

There are many different insurance plans and all medical procedures have to be endorsed by insurance through a process that can take time and whose outcome is not certain. Insurance for seniors has endorsed telemedicine appointments and all COVID-19 expenses since the beginning of the pandemic.

Health Insurance and Health Centers usually have a range of programs to inform and educate seniors on how to prevent or cope with disease. The Community Centers offered seniors recreational activities, such as aquarobics, gym classes, and tailored group exercises with a professional trainer, before the pandemic.

During COVID-19, seniors' physical activities are being provided via the internet WebEx platform at home. These activities and programs are free to seniors.

Social distancing and the mental impact of isolation

Social distancing can lead to loneliness, fear, depression, panic attacks, reactivation of PTSD, and suicide. Social isolation should not lead to emotional isolation (5). There are several initiatives to ease self-isolation and prevent the emotional isolation of seniors in the neighborhood. We describe below the most common and most popular initiatives and practices.

Designated persons from the health care facility and city government check in on seniors by phone to see if they need assistance, food, water, or other supplies. They inform seniors in need on where and how to obtain food or other assistance.

Under self-isolation, neighbors and volunteers are contributing and playing a very significant role. Close neighbors, within 2-3 square kilometers, form Internet Google groups or use the Nextdoor app to share news and resources. The groups represent an "old fashioned neighborhood", in which neighbors help each other out.

A few examples of activities and ideas from neighbors are worth mentioning, as they remind me of caring, sharing, innovation, and sustainability in besieged Sarajevo.

Musicians and music teachers are offering children and adults programs, while raising money for food banks. Nonperishable food items, like cans, pasta, juice, etc., are collected by volunteers and distributed to families in need at home.

Other activities organized and supported by neighbors that connect and help personal wellbeing include "the Crop-sharing Gardener project" or "Friendly Listeners ask you to call", where you can chat over the phone or other media with residents experienced in gardening or with pets, exchange stories and memories, talk about travel, recipes and food, exercise and health, stress reduction, or skills and interests to share.

The face mask project has connected and helped neighbors with the material sharing and making of homemade cloth masks.

Nutrition and shopping without contact

Younger healthy people have been organized to check on senior houses in case they need help.

Volunteers, younger healthy people, do the shopping and run errands for seniors.

While many retail stores offer home delivery, neighbors in the group also share information about supplies and prices and the efficacy of different delivery options.

Food drives and banks have been established, along with contact-free pickup and deliveries for seniors.

Conclusion

There are currently no proven safe medications, cures, or vaccines for humans against COVID-19. It is our personal responsibility to practice protective measures and stay informed of new developments, information, and practices, by accessing scientifically valid sources. Everybody should practice protective measures.

Seniors should maintain regular virtual contact by phone or the Internet with family and friends to prevent emotional isolation.

Virtual groups can help in variety of situations, including with the prevention of emotional distancing and other more serious mental health conditions. Seniors should exercise and practice their activities and hobbies regularly, subject to the given conditions and resources.

Computer literacy is very important, especially for seniors, in crisis situations, and it should be encouraged and facilitated economically and through education.

There have been many deadly infections through human history and it has always been a matter of personal responsibility to do what is required to protect oneself and others. The deadly infections listed below have been either eradicated or contained, whether by systemic vaccination, effective therapy with new medications, or by applying safe protective measures (6).

The Black Death: the Bubonic Plague ravaged Europe and the Mediterranean from 1346 until 1353. Over 50 million people died, more than 60% of Europe's entire population at the time.

During the 18th century, over 400,000 people died annually in Europe from smallpox. Overall fatality rates were around 30%. Rates were much higher in infants (80-98%), and one third of all survivors went blind.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is another coronavirus infection that can be fatal. A total of 2,428 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS had been reported by the end of May, 2019. This figure included 838 associated deaths (a fatality rate of nearly 34.5%). The majority of cases were reported in Saudi Arabia (2,037 cases).

SARS infection: by the end of 2003, 774 people had died out of the 8,098 infected people notified to WHO. Many more people needed to be hospitalized for breathing assistance.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, mortality numbers are changing daily and rates vary by area and country (7).

Drug makers are trying to work on their best ideas to develop an effective vaccine and drugs to control the pandemic (8). They have succeeded in controlling deadly infections in the past either through safe and effective vaccines or drugs, and they will succeed again. In the meantime, use your head and prevent spread.

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SARAJEVO – FROM BIRTHPLACE OF INTEGRAL HUMANISM TO UNIVERSALIST DESERT OF MIND

Marko-Antonio Brkić

Sure your life will give no rest
You did the worst and they do the best
Say what you wish along with rhyme
You are stuck in the sand till the end of time

DESERT OF MIND,
Amine Elmhamdi, heavy-metal musician
from Morocco

Jacques Maritain was the philosopher who most influenced the fundamental tenets of the life and spiritual philosophy of Karol Józef Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II. He explained that the misfortune of classical humanism was that it was anthropocentric, not that it was a humanism. Analysis of the “tragedy” of this humanism, which Maritain calls paradoxically *inhuman humanism* precisely because of its anthropocentrism, refracts along three dimensions: the conception of man, the conception of culture, and our human conception of God. His key finding is that the starting point of such humanism is contingent and limited – so Maritain introduces a contrasting concept of holistic or integral humanism. To achieve the *minimum of unity in a pluralistic society*, in Maritain’s vocabulary, requires civic tolerance and mutual respect for everyone’s dignity, which, among other things, implies an obligation on the state to respect different forms of conscience. The key concept of a pluralistic society is that it multiplies freedoms, in a space where post-medieval philosophy has largely culturally replaced religion in modern Western societies – becoming the means by which Europe has made an absolutist attempt to save unity, unsuccessfully. (Maritain, 1989, 208-210)

Various instruments were developed during the twentieth century, both international (global) and local, that have contributed to the general humanization of relations, despite pronounced particularisms and interest-driven political and economic conflicts. The most visible illustration is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but there are many other harmonized and generally accepted instruments for advocacy, protection and education that permanently contribute to efforts to promote the shared values of what, from one perspective, perhaps just the perspective of a Christian circle of thought, can be seen as integral humanism.

One of the symbols, of the birthplaces of this universal humanism, in which history is lived authentically and profoundly and nearly a dozen opposing regimes have replaced each other over the last 150 years and where, under each of those regimes, despite the destroyers and the haters who tried to dominate the establishment, the general climate of the urban population has always to the highest degree reflected a tolerant, philanthropic, truthful and generally deeply pious attitude towards themselves and others, is surely the city of Sarajevo. The humanism that characterizes Sarajevo is both anthropocentric and timeless.

A city, special even in its suburban areas, different from all the other similar cities in its immediate vicinity, even, to speak lyrically, from Vienna to Constantinople. A city of neighbourliness, a city that has forgiven and suffered, a city that has inspired and attracted artists, scientists, and Nobel laureates, a city of the ancient spirit reborn and so of the modern Olympic Games, a city that has humiliated and punished tyrants and occupiers and celebrated simple and humble folk, a city that for centuries received transcontinental refugees, a city of deep spirit and humour, a city that survived the longest siege in modern history, a city of heroes, a city where Jews and Muslims live together in harmony, a city where churches and cathedrals were built and helped by sultans and emperors, a city that has shattered illusions and prejudices, that authentically testifies, like no other, to being where civilizations meet, a city of intersections, a city that did not allow itself to be destroyed despite its many confrontations with epic Evil. A city in which the orphan child of an Ustasha soldier received the chance to move on in society and become a respected academic citizen, to the point of becoming, in the late period of socialism, the Republican minister of education, over the objections of the

regime apparatus, and then being saved and protected from the politically inspired persecution of his ethnic fellows (Croats) by his Serbian and Bosniak best friends (*kumovi*/blood brothers) and neighbours. A city that has suffered long and short periods of political oppression, dictatorship, and the many scourges of a global order that at one time played a dominant role in determining its destiny and historical paradigms, imposed and justified. All this and much more, because Sarajevo is a true birthplace of universal integral humanism, in which no particularity is viewed as an independent variable, in which humanism has found ways to be realized towards others (neighbours), showing awareness of the *dignity of the human individual*, towards culture (mutual respect), demonstrating the *importance of human freedom*, and finally towards God (a timely and tested devotion, without any significant trace of radicalism in any respect), presenting an inherent *awareness of finitude*.

The mechanisms through which universal humanism has been realized have been different, sometimes incomprehensible at first glance, but always and permanently based on flexibility and the solidarity that has given foreigners and guests in the city a sense of trust, acceptance, and sufficient breadth. There are countless sources, documents, research results, experiential insights, and individual cases to illustrate this narrative, and it seems pointless to present them here. No well-meaning researcher will have difficulty convincing themselves of it.

Of course, in each time, under each regime, there have been those marked as undesirable or less desirable, as destined for a different fate - one of the regimes with the strongest negative consequences for public life of Sarajevo was that established during World War II, when so many innocent people suffered under the so-called Independent State of Croatia, and terror was commonplace for the many who did not fit the proclaimed image of the World, taken over from its ideological and political mentors, the Nazi and fascist regimes. All the other regimes, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, Old Yugoslav, Communist-Socialist, Pluralist-democratic, Wartime-democratic and Post-war, have had their victims too and those who remained in effect out of reach of the current humanism. Every regime has its victims. With no intention of any relativization or substantial deconstruction, I want to stress this fact here, with a very clear goal.

After the Catholic bishops, or members of the episcopal conferences of BiH and Croatia, gave their joint mandate to the Archbishop of Sarajevo, Cardinal Vinko Puljić, at the beginning of March this year, to celebrate a Mass for the victims of the “Way of the Cross”, that is of the so-called *Bleiburg tragedy*, which is a symbol for a mass crime by Communist partisan units against soldiers and civilians of Croat, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Serb and other nationalities, that was ordered by Tito and the supreme leadership of his army and committed in 1945, and in which at least 80,000 people died, the leading politicians in the state, including all the members of the BiH Presidency, started issuing messages of public condemnation and even demands for the decision (to hold the Mass for the victims in Sarajevo Cathedral) to be reconsidered, commenting that celebrating such a mass would actually *be a commemoration of the perpetrators of crimes*. After the most senior political representatives in the country, who rarely agree on anything substantial in the country’s political life, had taken their stand, public comments began to appear by the dozen, mostly from the political left and civic activists, ranging from demands to ban the Mass to public advice to the Cardinal on what he should say and how and on what message he should send the public. The volume and range of views expressed on the event, essentially a religious ceremony, which would normally imply, in a civilized society at least, a modicum of piety for the victims (almost entirely absent in the public discussion), exceed my capabilities as an author to absorb and process, in order to capture the essence of all who felt called upon to comment, protest, and participate in public life.

The *Declaration on Joint Moral Commitment*, signed on July 7, 1997 by representatives of the four traditional churches and religious communities in BiH, at one point describes the shared moral responsibility of the religious leaders of the traditional religious communities in BiH. Namely, it says that religious leaders recognize that *their churches and religious communities differ from each other*; and that *each of them is free to live true to its own calling*, that *they hold many values in common*, that *each of the traditional churches and religious communities recognizes that the dignity of man and human value are gifts of God*, that *all faiths and religions, each in their own way, call us to recognise the fundamental human rights of each person*.

The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the president of the Jewish community reacted fiercely to the announcement of a mass for the victims of the *Bleiburg tragedy* in Sarajevo Cathedral and publicly called out the leadership of the Catholic Church (Metropolitan Chrysostom of the Serb Orthodox Church even announced the cessation of any further cooperation!) and joined others (activists, journalists, politicians...) in public obloquy of the leadership of the Catholic Church for what it formally neither could nor actually did do (a dictatorial regime cannot be rehabilitated by a Mass for victims, nor can history be revised, nor criminals honoured). The head of the Muslim community, reis-ul-ulama Husein Kavazović, acted very differently from the two above-mentioned religious leaders, calling in public appearances for tensions to be calmed and for respect for the Catholic Church's right in practical terms *to act in accordance with its mission*, and rejecting in this case that a religious structure has a social and political responsibility in performing a religious ceremony.

On the other hand, Cardinal Puljić failed to act in a dignified manner that would have dismantled bias and robbed counter-arguments and quasi-arguments put forward in public of any strength, by sending a strong message stressing another of the values set out in the *Declaration on Joint Moral Commitment*: namely that *for religious leaders (and the churches and religious communities that belong to them) violence against persons or the violation of their basic rights is not only against the laws of man but also an infraction of God's law*. The topic of how individual churches and religious communities have dealt with their own and other people's past, their own victimization and other people's crimes, requires separate discussion.

In an interesting essay, Slavoj Žižek writes that the latest trend in capricious left-wing politics is *to retaliate in the same way for whatever right-wing populism serves it* (2019, 127). Symptomatically, left-wing public figures belonging to or inclined to Croat national or linguistic circles reacted almost apologetically, certainly with resignation, especially at the sending of messages of intolerance, hypocrisy and hypocritical responsibility, at selectivity and inconsistency in the case of this "Mass for Bleiburg" (what an unfortunate and clumsy phrase, practically useless in any internal sense – liturgical, theological, spiritual, and so almost ide-

al for political manipulation and the abusive depreciation of a communitarian expression of the sacramental life of a community, of prayer and of *bloodless sacrifice* to God Himself).

Ivo Banac has said that this crime of hatred towards religion (*odium fidei*) was “part of a wider complex of persecutions related to the Bleiburg tragedy, which is again a coded representation of never punished, rarely even recognized, Communist crimes against entire categories of opponents, all for the express purpose of establishing the Communist dictatorship” (Banac, 2013, 98-99).

Is the call for investigation, perhaps even punishment, sufficient reason to relativize and devalue so fully the significance of a horrific crime, in which between 80,000 and 100,000 soldiers and civilians of various social groups, but mostly Croats and members of the Catholic Church, were systematically massacred, in an organised and planned way, after the wartime conflict was over, without any process (except “summary execution”)?

Is such complete distortion of the thesis regarding victims an attempt to avoid facing trauma, whether one’s own or that of others? Is the emphasis on earlier crimes by Ustasha units and the NDH structures, which were also systematic, organized, planned, and inhumane, an attempt to justify one crime with another? Does the criminal character of the (Ustasha) regime wipe out the right to dignity and freedom of each of the persons massacred without scruple and is the value of their freedom and dignity *multiplied by zero* because *not all victims are the same*? Is the need and desire of the leadership of the Catholic Church (all the bishops of the “Church amongst the Croats”) to commemorate in prayerful and liturgical way the memory of all the victims of the *Bleiburg tragedy* actually questionable? Do left-wing social activists and various other anti-fascists have a legitimate right to set the conditions as to for whom, how, when, and where a Mass should and can be offered, if it is to be legitimate and acceptable to all members of society? The real question, in fact, is whether there is still any universal integral humanism left for these victims, for their descendants and ethnic fellows, who have for decades been marking with sadness and pain the painful and tragic anniversaries of a tragedy that left its biological mark on the Croatian Catholic corpus, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

The Christian vision of death and dying differs from that which is dominant in both pluralistic and postmodern society. The

Church does not flee death and suffering as phenomena. It accepts them with confidence in the One who overcame mortality, evil, suffering and sin. The Church is committed to the dignity of every human being, both in life and in the moment of dying, for death for the Church is not a sin but the beginning of eternal life in God. (Smiljanic, 2015, 24)

Grozdana Cvitan, a Croatian writer, says, in a travelogue from the Ukraine, where she visited the marked cemeteries of Croatian soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army from the First World War (and where she found a text in the cemetery at Glibivka that reminds her irresistibly of the poet of the Herzegovinian stone sleeper, *We once were (lived) where you now are. We are here now, where you will come to be*), of the environment it is located in:

Only when the dead rise in some future battle will our fragile knowledge waver. Because it is only then that we shall see graves opening of whose existence we knew nothing. That is why it is important for the traumatized to meet their traumas. Not to pass them on as a generational legacy.

(Cvitan, 2019, 323-325)

This artful statement of social literature introduces three key things that are needed to understand the victimological past and that may eventually result in some kind of normalization of a torn society, such as the one in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- the need to research and accept a blurred and intentionally (mis)interpreted history, in an open, tolerant, and self-critical spirit, on the basis of the available facts,
- the challenge of dealing with traumas, one's own and those of others, and
- courage for the task of taking responsibility for untying *the Gordian knots* of common heritage by resolving destructive conflicts, while fully respecting the dignity of all participants in the process (in other words, without "taking justice into one's own hands").

In one of the most significant polemical works of the 20th century in the former Yugoslavia, whether in the literary, ideological or every other sense, his *Dialectical Antibarbarus*, in which he presents an analysis of conflict on the then social left, Miroslav Krleža vividly presents his subjection to "orthodox" investigation:

I dared to poke my head out of the window, blinded by the beam of light that flooded over me from (...) the dialectical lamp that border guards used to illuminate suspicious carriages on roads that wound to and fro in the increasingly rightward and further right direction of the enemy, ecclesiastical, metaphysical and idealistic, aristocratic, in a word, Trotskyite utopias and sinecures ...

(Krlježa, 1983, 51)

These days (the first half of May, 2020) the dialectical lamps in Sarajevo are held by the many “guardians” of the idea of anti-fascism, blinding all those who dare publicly express any attitude other than unconditional adherence to the established anti-fascist code, unchanged for decades, except with regard to the goal for which it is manipulated. All those who dared to attend or even comment positively on the celebration in Sarajevo Cathedral of Holy Mass for the victims of the *Bleiburg tragedy*, as a metaphor for mass crimes committed by partisan (*eo ipso* leftist, anti-fascist) units, mostly in Slovenia, but throughout the former Yugoslavia in 1945, after war operations were officially over, were accused of – nothing more or less than – rehabilitation of the fascist regime, politicizing of a religious act, revision of history, and so on.

Esad Bajtal offers what I consider one of the finest definitions or understandings of what we distinguish as revision, necessary and needed revision:

Not accepting the diktat of facts, the human mind, over and over again, normatively and critically subjects them to its measure, as the highest measure of the historical world. Following in the footsteps of Mind, driven by an impetus of critical perfectionism, the *animal rationale* arrives at the realization that the mind is an irreconcilable opponent of the current state of affairs; that history is like a struggle of mind against non-mind, a constant struggle for freedom, and that, in Hegelian terms, “non-mind reality must change, until it comes into harmony with mind.”

(Bajtal, 2007, 226)

Elsewhere, writing on nationalism and how it is perceived, Bajtal states that ultimately ethnic homogeneity can be achieved in only one of three ways: a) genocide, b) ethnic cleansing, or c) assimilation. With all due reservations, *mutatis mutandis*, assimilation is the only permanent threat to disturbed social relations in the post-conflict period. Bajtal states that “in order to maintain its

artificial ideological uniformity, every closed system (national, confessional, ideological) finally resorts to instrumentalized and deliberate violence. Induced intolerance is a key moment of this violence.” (2006, 115)

It is rare individuals (like Bajtal), responsible and up to the ethical task, who prevent Sarajevo from passing from cradle of integral humanism to a desert of the mind. They are the ones who, despite the loud majority and the disproportionate reaction of the majority to the social minority, despite the clear bursting of the barely stitched seams of respect and mutual esteem, remain a hope for partnership in building future relationships.

Paraphrasing Hans Küng, we could say that there will be no peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina without peace between religions. The reactions of the religious leaders to the “Mass for Bleiburg” tell us that it will not be easy to achieve full peace and trust, despite the efforts made so far. To the political regret of those who traditionally advocate and argue and impute that the churches and religious communities are (co)responsible for violence, crime and terror, two forms of reaction suggest that the source of violence is to be sought elsewhere, but the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina really do have a right to expect social as well as spiritual responsibility, instead of a “desert of the spirit”, from their religious leaders and structures at various levels. This spiritual responsibility certainly implies self-criticism, solidarity, adherence to the postulates of the *golden rule*, and many other elements of the ethical fundament, which have woven centuries of common ground in Sarajevo as rarely elsewhere in Europe.

Two Bosnian Franciscans, Fr. Drago Bojić and Fr. Ivan Šarčević, expressed public criticism of how the notorious Holy Mass for the victims of World War II and the post-war period was published and announced. They delivered an accounting for everything the Church, starting with the Cardinal, should have done and hasn't to make a full contribution to trust building and thus to continue however indirectly to fulfil its part of the task of preserving the values of holistic humanism and, in the background, of culture. Because our relation to culture is our relation to the Other and to ourselves, in a collective sense. It is difficult to refute or argue against anything these two Franciscans said in their open letter to the Cardinal. However, the more important part of their text was about exposing the mask of *false* or *fake* anti-fascism.

Other important leftists from the Croatian national and linguistic (micro)cultural circle in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Miljenko Jergović, Ivica Pandžić, Željko Ivanković, Ivan Lovrenović, Marko Tomaš, and many others, have made similar public appearances or at least reaction aimed at similar patterns of behaviour by “certified” anti-fascists. The importance of their reaction is that they do not defend (nor would it be ethical to accuse any of them of doing so) any pan-nationalistic, quasi-fascist, or other flavour of idea or inclination, instead testifying credibly (through their many previous critical texts on negative and insufficiently responsible actions and events for which the Catholic Church in BiH and some of its leaders have been responsible). Finally, our two Franciscans, public figures and intellectuals, are no exception in this case, as critical reaction in defence of the Cardinal and organization of the “mass for Bleiburg” has been publicly expressed by the proverbially neutral and conciliatory (opportunistic?) administration of the Franciscan Province of Bosnia Argentina.

Šarčević has previously stated, in a recently published work on the elements of plural society, that the reason for ethnic collectivism lies primarily in the small size of certain communities, their fear of disappearance or assimilation, and in the fact that they mostly lack experience of independence and political culture, bearing in mind that their collective memories are mostly memories of suffering and of the troubles caused to them by others. (Šarčević, 2017, 79)

Finally, a line about rehabilitation. Predrag Matvejević, a well-known writer born in Mostar, wrote a letter to comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, then the head of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on August 12, 1985, advocating the *rehabilitation* of Nikolai Bukharin and his work and his ideas, mostly presented in the 1920s and 1930s (sic!), in which he said:

Bukharin has not yet been rehabilitated. (...) The rehabilitation processes, begun at the time of Nikita Khrushchev, were rudely and unjustifiably interrupted. It is hard to believe that economic life can be changed more thoroughly without corresponding changes in political and cultural life. We have long believed that new production relations will in themselves determine and produce a new culture, a socialist one. We expected, naively, that it would rise from its base in the most ideal forms, just as, in the ancient myth, the goddess of wisdom Minerva erupts in a spark from

Jupiter's head. The obvious forces us to abandon such mythical determinism: without a new culture there is no socialism, it is therefore not only an effect but also a condition, a cause as much as a consequence.

(Matvejević, 1985, 83)

The issue of rehabilitation is a reflection of historical responsibility, awareness of the need to correct injustices, untruths, misconceptions, opening up opportunities to preserve existing or of achieving new values. Paraphrasing this thought of Matvejević's, we could argue that perhaps we should open our minds to rehabilitations that may relax strained social relations, encourage reflection on abandoning the *mythical determinism* of the history textbooks studied half a century ago by the loud and certified anti-fascists of Sarajevo today. This censored, ideologized and staged history was written and edited by Communist Party historians, the assessors of the ideological suitability of historical factography (sic!). Even today these *interpreters of our past* will not allow a letter or context to be changed in "what has already been learned."

The abandonment of mythical determinism need not necessarily be translated as (ideological) revisionism, another term from communist dogma and communist vocabulary, as Srećko Džaja says, which in this case is used to denounce any attempt to relate critically to the canonized matrix of anti-fascist historiography. He postulates explicitly that historical science by its very nature *lives from revisions and through revisions develops as a science* (Džaja, 2017, 73). Unfortunately, in the Balkans, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a selective-utilitarian approach to understanding the role of historiography prevails, perhaps especially amongst intellectuals loudly engaged in the public sphere (read: the polemical arena of confrontation of collective interests of different types with few examples of individual demonstrations of free-minded spirit). It almost exclusively seeks to establish the fateful dogmas or rather - mythical determinism – of its own interest group (nation, church, party, ideology...). Without a new culture there will be no genuine humanism in Sarajevo, all that will remain is a universalist husk in a *desert of mind*.

Srećko Džaja, in a brilliant text on *Bosnian and Herzegovinian historical paradigms, national narratives and the issue of reconciliation*, writes of how the concept of victim is (mis)used, how *the*

victim becomes immune to criticism, ensuring a sublime innocence from reasonable doubt, and he quotes the Italian author Daniel Giglioli and his essay *Crittica della vittima. Un esperimento con l'etica* ("Victim Rebuke. Ethical Approach") written in 2014:

Inflating victim status strengthens the position of the powerful and weakens the position of the subordinated: it weakens the ability to act healthily and exaggerates the suffering suffered. It fuels the cult of hatred and revenge and elevates the cult of fabrication. It encourages the development of rigid and very often fictitious identities. It chains one with the past and thus burdens the future. It discourages us from daring changes. It privatizes history and mixes freedom with irresponsibility.

(Džaja, 2017, 69)

In light of victimization and analysis of the condition of the social mind in modernity, Džaja cites Giglioli's thesis that history is by nature possessive and totalitarian, and proposes other forms of thought and communication as positive ways of reflecting on events and contexts: argumentation, analogy, dialogue and discourse in the broadest sense. This should certainly not be understood as an attempt to relativize historically established facts and indisputably established situations, but rather as a way of saving us from a great deal of (maliciously) omitted, unattainable, incorrectly established and misinterpreted historical fact. Communist-based victimology armed with *certified* anti-fascist legitimacy became an obsession of Yugoslav society glorifying its own (war-time) victims, emphasizing cruelty and exaggerating the number of crimes of its ideological opponents, while in Socialist Yugoslavia even mentioning Bleiburg was forbidden, used here as a metaphor for crimes and numerous mass-execution sites throughout Yugoslavia, where thousands were executed without trial, flatly labelled as "enemies of the people". (Džaja, 2017, 68-70)

In November 1994, at the consistory in the Vatican, where for the first time in history, an Archbishop of Sarajevo, msgr. Vinko Puljić, was appointed Cardinal of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II said:

Among you are (...) pastors who lead Christian communities rich in history and known for their patient and courageous evangelical witness, dignitaries who for the first time have secured for the

communities from which they come a presence and a voice in the college of Cardinals. (...) I am thinking in particular of the Christians of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, unfortunately, the destructive rumble of weapons has not yet been stopped, and where so much innocent blood continues to flow without any prospect of peace.

It is a sad fact that, while in most places around the former Yugoslavia processes of normalization have been successfully carried out regarding the occupiers (mainly Germany and Italy), largely without significant reservation or factual objection, *internal normalization* has been much slower and on unstable ground. That normalization cracked in the 1970s, broke in the 1980s, and completely burst in the 1990s. Today's social climate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is fairly certainly most similar to that of the 80s, assuming an imaginary graph of destructive impulses, with a peak characterized by social disorientation, rising economic confidence, increasingly loud ideological and political monologues, institutional mistrust, an absence of any relevant meritocratic or ethical principle in the institutional approach to the public sphere, complete fragmentation, individualization of the views of politically undecided and ethically independent intellectuals, and a grouping and merging of social structures on the basis of (quasi) ideological and national-religious components. That is the case with Sarajevo.

Expressions of how a selective and clearly ideologized understanding of a traumatic reality is imposed on a minority community (like the Catholic Church in Sarajevo) are indisputable signs of attempts at aggressive political assimilation, imposing an obligation to respect *the code of the majority*, essentially an ideological majority imposing itself in public space. Nor is it just violent assimilation taking place, but also attempts to restore the Bolshevik-Communist-Socialist paradigms of guilt and responsibility transferred to the whole group, the whole nation, the whole community, or at least that (significant) part of it that is not "*superstitiously harmonized*" with the given facts and interpretations of history. Fortunately, in such a desert of the mind, apparently motivated universally (ideals of anti-fascism), in which the principle of shouting loudest reigns, to the detriment of facts, accompanying context, and deconstructed narratives, some

relevant voices are appearing to express support and care for the minority community publicly.

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SARAJEVO AND NEW DELHI DURING PANDEMIC: SOME REFLECTIONS

Asim Zubčević

This short paper offers some personal reminiscences and reflections on religion, nationalism, and identity in India and Bosnia, two historically plural societies besieged by the forces of religious nationalism.

“Under siege” is an expression in common use these days to describe cities and communities in the grip of the world-wide pandemic. But, for the citizens of Sarajevo those words bring back memories of one of the most harrowing periods in the city’s history: a 44-month siege (1992-1995) in which some 11,000 Sarajevans were killed, including 1,250 children, and many more physically maimed and psychologically scarred. When the Dayton peace agreement was signed on 14 December 1995, the city and the country were split into two separate territorial and political units as the price for peace, which, 25 years on, has not yet brought the sense of closure many hoped for. What is more, the ideology of religious nationalism that inspired the forces seeking to tear Bosnia and its social and historical fabric apart appear as strong as ever. The parallels between the two predicaments, a city or community under siege by hostile armed forces with guns and artillery on the one hand and by a pandemic on the other, may not be entirely adequate or even appropriate, but, insofar as the pandemic has forced us to face up to our responsibility for creating the conditions that made Covid 19 possible, including the flaws in modern economic systems and our continued depletion of the environment, then the crisis caused by the pandemic may also serve as a reminder of the poverty and immorality of the ideolo-

gies that feed on hatred and bigotry. Religious nationalism is a particularly potent type.

The author of this paper did not experience the siege of his native Sarajevo first-hand (barring a two week visit to the city in May 1994, but that is another story) and so the words “under siege” conjure up different, less painful, even if still vivid memories. Those memories are bound up with enduring questions of history, belonging, religion and nationalism in the Balkans and in the Indian Subcontinent.

In April 1992, the Serbian leadership in Belgrade and their Bosnian Serb allies launched an all-out war on the state of Bosnia in response to a successfully conducted referendum there in favour of independence from Yugoslavia. The war had a clear aim: to carve out an ethnically homogenous territory in Bosnia as prelude to annexing it to a Greater Serbia.

At the time, I had been living in India for more than two years as a student at the Aligarh Muslim University in the city of Aligarh, a three-hour train ride south-east of New Delhi. The university was founded in 1875 by Syed Ahmed Khan and was the world’s first *modern* Muslim institution of higher learning. Its founder was animated by a vision of fostering a new breed of young Indian Muslims who would lift their communities out of political and social decline in the wake of the unsuccessful uprising of 1857. This was to be achieved by embracing modern Western education, especially science and philosophy, and by a critical approach to Muslim tradition.

Once the siege of Sarajevo had set in, I could follow events from far away India only sporadically and superficially. There was no internet in those days, of course, and telephone lines with Sarajevo were cut when the main post office was destroyed, less than two months into the siege. The distance between Bosnia and India was not simply a matter of geography. There was not much for me in the Indian media, whose reporters and analysts were at a loss to explain how such a war could happen in rich “civilised” Europe. The fact that this military conflict was taking place in Yugoslavia, a country once respected as India’s partner in the non-aligned movement, which was originally launched by Tito and Nehru (and Egypt’s Nasser), made the bewilderment of the Indian chattering classes all the greater. My only link to my homeland was the BBC World News and the Voice of America.

But, even these two media outlets could hardly be expected to provide details about the things that interested me most: the fate of my family, relatives and friends, especially Amra, my only sister, who, as I would learn much later, gave birth to a girl and a boy in besieged Sarajevo. Then, an unexpected trip to Germany in late December 1992 enabled me to briefly reunite with relatives there, offering welcome respite to what had been a long period of dread and anguish.

The trip to Germany came shortly after a seismic event in Indian political history: the destruction of the Babri Mosque on 6 December 1992. The 16th century mosque was said to have been built on the site of a destroyed Hindu temple, originally erected on the birth spot of Ram, the seventh avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu. The mosque was pulled down by thousands of people fired up by a new political ideology that would change the face of Indian politics.

From the late 1980s, India was being transformed through the rise of an unabashedly Hindu nationalist party (BJP – Bharatiya Janata Party), whose charismatic leaders (A.B. Vajpayee and L.K. Advani) led the party to political prominence by challenging the long-standing dominance of the Indian Congress party. They did so by tapping into widespread dissatisfaction in Indian society with the corruption and inefficiency of the Congress politicians, but also by challenging the very foundations on which modern India was built as a secular democracy and a home for myriad linguistic, religious and cultural identities. There was a Hindu nationalist streak stretching back to the early 20th century and Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 by a Hindu nationalist. Crucially, the BJP ideology, also known as *Hindutva* (Hinduness), saw in Indian Muslims “the other” against whom their new reasserted Indian identity was to be restored. India, “a wounded civilization” (V. S. Naipaul), had to be healed and its pride restored by correcting the wrongs of history, in which Muslims had played so prominent a role. In order to galvanize their supporters, the BJP and related organizations (notably the Vishva Hindu Parishad) launched a prolonged nation-wide campaign for the demolition of the Babri Mosque and its replacement with a Hindu temple. A weak and inept government, led by the Indian Congress, which had ruled India for most of its independence, watched impassively, unable or unwilling to stop the grow-

ing tide of Hindu nationalism in the country. More than 2,000 Indians, mainly Muslims, are said to have died in the ensuing communal riots across the country. Reverberations were felt in neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh, where Hindu temples and property were demolished. The Hindu nationalist fervour in the wake of the attack on the Babri Mosque propelled the BJP to become India's biggest political party. Between 1984 and 1996, the party increased its number of parliamentary seats from two to 161, which led to the formation of the first, albeit short-lived, BJP government. A new kind of language of supremacism and bigotry became the new normal. Since then the party has been in power most of the time and today commands a clear majority. The party leader and the current Prime Minister of India is Narendra Modi, a man who had the distinction of being head of the Indian state of Gujarat during possibly the bloodiest anti-Muslim riots in independent India, in 2002.

The campaign to destroy the Babri Mosque had been going on for months and tensions were rising across northern India's mixed Hindu-Muslim towns and cities, Aligarh among them. Sporadic riots erupted during the weeks leading up to 6 December and Aligarh came under police curfew. University teaching was suspended. Shops were closed in the nearby Zakariya Market and, like the other students, my friend and roommate Sajid and I survived on bread, tea and noodles for about a month. All the while, I had no news of my family in Sarajevo.

Out of the blue, there came a letter from Lufthansa's office in New Delhi informing me that I should come collect a plane ticket for a flight to Frankfurt. Unbeknownst to me, in September 1992, my uncle had arrived in Germany on diplomatic mission and had sent me a ticket to visit him during the winter break of what was my final year of studies. The prospect of leaving India in the midst of all the tension and uncertainty and of being able to meet and talk with my uncle and learn about my family in Sarajevo first-hand remains one of the most beautiful moments of my life.

Travel through northern India had become dangerous. In fact, Aligarh students were barred from leaving the campus and I had to sign a statement in the Vice-Chancellor's office to the effect that I took personal responsibility for making the train journey from Aligarh to New Delhi. I did not realize the risk involved. Later I would learn the tragic fate of an AMU student of

Biochemistry, a quiet, studious Kashmiri called Javid, whom I knew vaguely. Travelling by train to New Delhi, from where he was to continue to his native Kashmir for the winter break, he was caught by a group of Hindu religious volunteers, known as *kar sevaks*, on their way back from Lucknow, the site of the destroyed Babri Masjid. Javid's fair complexion gave his identity away and he was stripped and lynched.

I reached New Delhi on an eerily empty train a few days before 6 December. I then flew out to Germany and stayed with my uncle's family, before returning to India to complete my studies in the summer of 1993. Finally, after collecting my university degree, I left India, first for Germany, and then for the UK, where I continued my studies.

In the first years after leaving India I followed Indian politics more or less regularly. As time went by, my familiarity with Indian affairs was intermittent. What has become clear since those fateful events of December 1992 is that the BJP had changed forever the course of Indian politics by making Hindu nationalism acceptable and mainstream. It has since become the main Indian political party, as reflected in the results of the last general election, held in April and May 2019, when it won a clear majority: 303 seats on its own right and 353 seats for the BJP-led right-wing National Democratic Alliance.

On 11 December 2019, the new BJP government passed a Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), allowing Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and Buddhists fleeing persecution by India's neighbours, principally Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, to become naturalized Indian citizens. The law excluded Muslim refugees on the grounds that they could not possibly be facing persecution in countries with a Muslim majority. The new law provoked mass demonstrations across India, by both Hindus and Muslims. It was seen as discriminatory against Muslims and as further undermining India's secular constitution and inclusive social ethos. The police responded with violent crackdowns and 25 people lost their lives. Among the protestors were students of two universities, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) in New Delhi and Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh. About 80 students of JMI had to seek hospital treatment. There were stirring images of female students of JMI standing up to the police, who were trying to beat their fellow students. In Aligarh, students and staff held

demonstrations to demand the withdrawal of the CAA. Police applied a heavy-handed approach. As a result, tens of students were wounded, some seriously. One student lost an arm.

The protests against the CAA were followed by counter protests and new anti-Muslim agitation on social networks. Disturbing clips showed vigilante groups targeting innocent people. Then, the Covid 19 pandemic forced the Indian government to introduce restrictions on movement. Clearly there was worry at the prospect of the virus' exponential spread in a country of 1.3 billion people, especially in big and crowded cities. One effect of the restrictions on movement was that Hindu vigilante groups could no longer operate with impunity. Ironically, as the virus took lives, it helped save others.

India may seem a country with little in common with Bosnia or the historical South Slavic lands that once formed Yugoslavia. But India and Bosnia (or, perhaps the Indian Subcontinent and what is today referred to as the Western Balkans) share at least one important thing: a polyphonic identity of shared histories, languages and geographies. The dilemmas and predicaments facing their peoples have many echoes. These include a history of being ruled by Muslim empires (Ottomans vs. Mughals) whose subjects remained largely non-Muslim, modernisation within the framework of foreign rule (Austro-Hungarian vs. British), socialist and secular ideologies following independence (Congress-ruled India vs. socialist Yugoslavia) and the pull of religious nationalism (the partition of British India vs. Bosnia's internal division or vs. Croatia-Montenegro-Serbia in a wider regional context).

Post-war Bosnia is a country in which politics is based on the country's constitutional set up, which rewards nationalism. It is a self-perpetuating machinery (media, parties, party-controlled public companies, etc) that cultivates selective readings of history, wallows in collective national self-pity, and is soaked in racism. Its main nationalist parties thrive on keeping communal tensions sufficiently high to prevent a reordering of the political system in favour of a more civic-oriented political system.

In Bosnia the pandemic has exposed in glaring terms an important corollary to the prevailing conditions: corruption and malpractice at the highest level. The ongoing inquiry into the purchase of 100 faulty respirators for patients suffering from Covid

19 is a case in point. At the start of the pandemic, certain politicians, who never miss an opportunity to strengthen their nationalist and exclusivist agenda through the language of fear and mistrust, stayed true to their colours, only to soften their language as soon as their incompetence and hypocrisy in handling the pandemic became public.

Historically both India and Bosnia are countries defined by unity in diversity. With the onset of modernity these two countries have been pressured and reshaped by forces of religious nationalism that seek to mould societies by what is actually a fundamentally irreligious worldview. The pandemic has opened the eyes of many to the fragility of the environment and the need to redefine the dominant political, economic and social models if the environment is to be protected. It has also exposed the limits and poverty of religious nationalism. Perhaps this is the right moment to reaffirm a new vision for a more pluralistic, less exclusive social and political order. To that end India and Bosnia can become, once again, wellsprings of inspiration for themselves and for the world, by drawing on the best of their history and the present.

LOCATING PANDEMIC GRIEF IN SARAJEVO: GEORGIC NOTES AGAINST SELF-ISOLATING REGIMES

Safet HadžiMuhamedović

Uzimam zdravlje, ostavljam bolest.
“I choose health, forsake disease.”
A Bosnian Georgic incantation

I began to write these lines on the sixth of May – St George’s Day in the Julian calendar. Known as *Jurjevo* or *Durđevdan* in Bosnia, it signals a cyclical revival, a world suddenly awake and burgeoning with diverse and entwined life. Set against the preceding hibernal restrictions, the day is a ritual celebration of movement, encounter and interaction, an antithesis of the endured seclusion. Its apotropaic rituals rely on interspecies and interfaith entanglements, as wellbeing is understood to necessitate a sensitivity to the relations between manifold vital actualities. Before I return to the potential implications of this tradition, I would like to make a couple of leaps into less jubilant themes. Chiefly focusing on recent developments in Sarajevo, I argue that the biopolitical regime of power in Bosnia – wholly conceivable through the currently deployed concept of “self-isolation” – is irreconcilable with the Georgic symbiotic perspective.

I am concerned with two occurrences that seem to connect Sarajevo to the world today: the social articulations of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the increasing audibility of nationalist Holocaust nostalgia. On the one hand, Sarajevans are slowly to emerge out of a period of state-imposed “lockdown” designed to curb the spread of the disease. On the other, they are witness to a sacropolitical ritual – a “holy mass” held as part of the 75th commemoration of the so-called “Bleiburg tragedy” – moved, for the first time, into the Sarajevo Cathedral.

Following the break-up of Yugoslavia, the small south-Austrian town of Bleiburg was publicly adopted in Croatian nationalist perspectives as the central topos symbolising the summary

executions by the Yugoslav Partisans of thousands of people whom they recognised as Nazis. The event in Bleiburg, organised and often sponsored by the state of Croatia since the 1990s, was banned by the Austrian diocese of Gurk-Klagenfurt in 2019 due to the overt promotion of nationalism.

Like so many Sarajevans who have voiced their opposition to the event in the city cathedral, I am not concerned with the “original” occurrence; in fact, the executions were a series of events rather than a single one, and the numbers and the guilt of those executed remain politically contested. I am rather interested in the “post-act”, the sacropolitical ritual of remembrance that aims to rehabilitate the *Ustaša* (Croatian Nazi) ideology and ideologies. Symbolically linked to later events, the ceremony also works to redeem the wider spatio-temporal coordinates of Croatian nationalist violence. Vjeran Pavlaković has written:

The blurring of the past and the present is an integral part of the Bleiburg commemorations; not only do the participants dress in Ustaša uniforms, display Ustaša insignia and iconography, and sell paraphernalia associated with the NDH and its leaders, but there is an active discourse about the Croatian War of Independence accompanied by images of heroes (as well as individuals guilty of war crimes) from the conflict in the 1990s. (2010: 129)

Croatian nationalist violence of WWII and the 1990s was built on the same grammar. Both of its most destructive waves swept through Bosnia in the form of pogroms and forced displacement of Jews, Serbs, Roma, Muslims, as well as political opponents, resistance fighters and other subjectivities deemed incompatible and “degenerate”.¹

On 16 May, as part of his sermon in the Cathedral, Cardinal Puljić proclaimed that the “traditional gathering” in Bleiburg had been moved to Sarajevo “due to the pandemic of the coronavirus that has yet to subside” (see *Radiotelevizija HercegBosne* 2020). At the same time, thousands of people, many with masks on their faces, poured into the streets of the city to protest the event, which they saw as a rehabilitation of Nazism and an injury to the memory of the Holocaust victims (see Figures 1 and 2).

1 The first cleansing was orchestrated by the Nazi polity of the Independent State of Croatia in the 1940s, the second by the post-Yugoslav Croatia in the 1990s.



Figure 1 Anti-fascist protesters in Sarajevo, 16 May 2020. Image courtesy of Amer Tikveša



Figure 2 Belma Alić's performance at the anti-fascist protest in Sarajevo, 16 May 2020. Image courtesy of Maja Baralić-Materne

Whilst the Sarajevo contestations received a lot of publicity, the *Ustaša* ideology remains much more palpable across other parts of Bosnia. In Mostar, where a parallel and much less controversial commemoration for the “Bleiburg victims” was held,

swastikas are habitually spray-painted over the Partisan graveyard. There, as in Čapljina, streets bear the names of notorious *Ustašas*. To understand the scale of the problem, one could take a short walk through Stolac, a town attempting to recover from the complete cleansing of “non-Croats” in the 1990s (see Figure 3). Despite substantial post-war return of refugees, discrimination lingers, systemic and unconcealed. Schoolchildren are still segregated along “ethno-religious” lines and the town memorial to the Partisans and victims of fascism was defaced in the run-up to the Bleiburg commemorations. The perduring apartheid is possible primarily due to the ethno-territorial provisions constitutionalised by the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The two apparently disparate and disconnected occurrences – the coronavirus pandemic and the Bleiburg commemoration – are linked through the renewed vigour they provide for the scalar politics of life. Both are framed to suggest that they refer to the *totality of affected life*. The word “pandemic” is a curious case in point. Its etymology suggests that a given sum of “all people” (*pan* + *demos*) is in danger of an infectious disease or some other undesirable phenomenon (see French, Mykhalovskiy and Lamothe 2018: 59-60). It is a visceral geography – a biopolitical map through which a body politic attains life in the individual body. It asks us to confirm the outlines of the meaningful world as meaningful life. The recognition of life starts from the narrowly defined “Human” and gradually dissipates as it moves down the scale towards viruses and other non-humans. A pathogenic virus becomes detectable as it jumps across the scalar levels, disturbing the categorical separation. The World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 to be a *pandemic* two days before its Director-General announced that Europe is the new epicentre, with more reported cases than China at the height of its epidemic (WHO 2020a, 2020b).

Likewise, the Bleiburg commemoration is said to recognise “all life”. Cardinal Vinko Puljić, who led the mass on 16 May, has written a public statement, “in disbelief” at the protests, noting that “all innocent victims” need to be treated “with equal respect”, “including those from the Croatian nation” (see Croatian News Agency 2020). Here, of course, the nation’s body pleading to *also* be grieved does not include those exterminated or exiled by the nation’s programmes. Croatian national victims are not the Partisans or Roma people, for example.



Figure 3 Ustaša symbol on a house in Stolac, 2012

To both events, we can neatly apply Judith Butler's argument on grievability as an operation of power, namely that the recognition of lives as lost or injured is a premise framing *the life that matters* (2009; see also 2004). Butler noted:

Without grievability, there is no life, or, rather, there is something living that is other than life. Instead, 'there is a life that will never have been lived', sustained by no regard, no testimony, and ungrieved when lost. [...] Forms of racism instituted and active at the level of perception tend to produce iconic versions of populations who are eminently grievable, and others whose loss is no loss, and who remain ungrievable. (2009: 15, 24)

Through the variety of perspectives on the pandemic and the commemoration, we see that the "eminent" subject of grief

offered to Sarajevo is a shifting and changing collage of bodies in both the ontological and political sense. However, these events also suggest that the scalar politics of life – of human defined against its non-human or not-fully-human others – has been re-energised.

From virus to genocide and back again

The notion that viruses and bacteria are invariably human pathogens, and thus in need of precautionary extermination, is scientifically false. Ruan *et al.* note that “a healthy microbiome consists of 30-plus trillion microorganisms per person”, mostly bacteria, viruses and yeast (2020: 696; see also Roossinck 2011, 2015). Even the pathogenic viruses appear to be beneficial occasionally (Russell 2011: 2). Rather than an imminent threat, viruses and bacteria are *immanent* to human life, inseparable from it. Yet, as this pandemic shows, we become aware of viruses only when they pose a threat and “our” form of life needs to be defended. “The problem is ontological”, Butler suggests, “since the question at issue is: *What is a life?*” (2009: 1).

The virus, as a dangerous form of lesser life targeted for eradication, is of course intimately linked with the Nazi construction of the other, the cornerstone of the Bleiburg post-act. Rather than revisiting their ideology and legal formulation of racial hygiene in detail, we can recall the abundance of metaphors employing nonhuman life. Most notoriously perhaps, *The Eternal Jew*, a 1940 Nazi propaganda film, juxtaposes scenes of the Łódź Ghetto and of sewer rats infesting torn bags of grain, as the narrator explains that rats spread disease and “represent the rudiment of an insidious, underground destruction – just like the Jews among human beings” (Livingstone Smith 2011: 139).

Rats were a ubiquitous metaphor, but Jews were also portrayed as other “vermin”, poisonous and diseased animals: as snakes, spiders, lice and insects, as parasites, microbes or a virus that needs to be done away with (see *ibid.*: 15, 150). For example, in *Mein Kampf*, Jews appear as “a noxious bacillus”, “typical parasites” or “disease” “in the national body”, “adulterating” or “poisoning” its blood, etc. (see e.g. Vol. 1, Ch. 10-11).² Ante

2 All references to *Mein Kampf* in this paper are based on the 1999 print of the 1943 translation by Ralph Manheim (1st Mariner ed.) published in Bos-

Starčević, whose works in early nationalist Croatian historiography underpinned the Ustaša ideology, referred to Serbs and Jews as “breeds” (see, e.g. Starčević 1876).



Figure 4 Poster for the 1942 antisemitic exhibition in Sarajevo

Sarajevo was treated to a plethora of such images in 1942, as part of a travelling antisemitic exhibition inaugurated by the State Propaganda Office in Zagreb (see Figure 4).³ The exhibition post-

ton by Houghton Mifflin and available at <http://mondopolitico.com/library/meinkampf/toc.htm> (Accessed on 13 May 2020).

3 The poster reads: “Jews: Exhibition on the Development of Judaism and Its Destructive Work in Croatia before 10 April 1941 / Solution of the Jewish Question in the Independent State of Croatia”. The image featured, along-

er featured a nude, muscular Croatian *Übermensch* fighting off an aggressive, green Jewish serpent. The image, reminiscent of the depictions of St George slaying the dragon, sought to prepare Sarajevans for what was to come: the annihilation of a lesser, dangerous form of life. The Jew-slayer – wielding in his hands total biopower – is, however, the inverse image of the symbiotic, life-sustaining George's Day in the Bosnian syncretic folk cosmology.

Diseases were historically a useful device for articulating and propelling systems of violence. Jews and other designated forms of lesser life were alleged to have spread the plague in the Middle Ages and were often persecuted and massacred, "their members locked in synagogues or rounded up on river islands and burnt to death" (Cohn 2012: 536, see also Savage 2007). Likewise, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, syphilis focused the discourse on the inherently immoral diseased Jews (Sontag 1978: 59, Naimark 2001: 59).

Mein Kampf is particularly immersed into the topic of syphilis (Vol. 1, Ch. 10). It describes the "poisoning of the health of the national body" as a result of the "Jewification of our spiritual life and mammonization of our mating instinct", which "will sooner or later destroy our entire offspring". Its "injurious effects should have been thoroughly hammered into people [...] until the entire nation arrived at the conviction that everything - future or ruin - depended upon the solution of this question". Through the use of biological and organic metaphors, Nazism requested that a total and durable self-isolation be achieved through the likewise total and durable removal of the threatening racialised other, the way vermin and pest are controlled.

Governance through these tropes is effective because it employs existing abjection. The abject is "[w]hat does not respect borders, positions, rules" (Kristeva 1982: 4). A rat outside of the sewer eating human food or a virus infecting the body are intolerable because they challenge the separation of the inside and the outside (ibid: 71). Ethnic cleansing, as an example of abjection, seeks to "put things into proper place", outside of the national body.

side many other examples of Western Balkan Nazi propaganda poster, in my 2008 dissertation at the University of Sarajevo. I thank again historian Eli Tauber who then kindly provided me with plentiful visual material from his archives.

A range of other diseases were fused with the Jewish being. The *Völkischer Beobachter*, a Nazi newspaper, reported in 1928 on the trachoma as “the sacred disease of the Jews” (Jewish Telegraphic Agency 1928). The Nazis also instituted a range of public hygiene measures to restrict the movement of Jews as the “typhus carriers”. Typhus, the *Warschauer Zeitung* reported in 1941, was “endemic among members of the Jewish race”. Restricting any contact was necessary “to avoid any possible danger to the health of the non-Jewish population by coming in contact with Jews” (Jewish Telegraphic Agency 1941).

The “sickening of the body”, Hitler wrote, “is only the consequence of a sickening of the moral, social, and racial instincts” (Vol. 1, Ch. 10). As such, the care taken for the body to “heal” is at once the care for the nation/race as a distinct biotic entity. Medical regulation becomes a responsibility of the state and the individual’s subjection to it a duty to the species. Foucault (2003 [1975-6]: 239-264) traced the emergence of these new biopolitical technologies of power to the eighteenth century and the quest to control and regulate biological and organic life, noting that they culminated in Nazism.

Biopolitics deals with the population as a scientific problem, establishing a biological relationship between the survival and proliferation of the self as a species and the elimination of inferior others (ibid: 245-5). In other words, the state’s care for our life *actualises power*. “We must also do away”, Hitler wrote, “with the conception that the treatment of the body is the affair of every individual” (Vol. 1, Ch. 10). The state’s “biological” attention to ensure the endurance of a vanishing nation is a frequent justification for the exertion of total control over life and death. For example, since the 1980s, and particularly during the military regime of the 1990s, Serbian biopolitical nationalism treated with great concern the problem of low Serb natality – referred to as “the white plague” – a problem to be redressed through “natural, heroic” masculinity and the kind of femininity that nurtures it (see Bracewell 1996: 27).

Turning to the question of governance through the biological is crucial to understand the contemporary Sarajevan (and Bosnian) predicament, protracted as it is. For, a pandemic is a constant reinvention of the self in the *demos* and vice versa. Numbers of fatalities are carefully tracked and compared to other self-isolating eth-

nonational bodies. Unwanted populations are removed from the streets, deposited into camps or exiled across the border.

One clear example is the trope of “migrant contamination” in Bosnia and the rest of Europe. It builds onto a flurry of organic non-human metaphors that refugees have been continually woven into. Many of them are quite Biblical, for example about the liquidity of the migrant threat (flow, influx, overflow, flood, stream, inundation, etc.), or their animalistic qualities (swarms, flocks, locust, etc.) – all seeking to deny full life and curtail the grievability of refugee death (see, e.g. Selwyn 2019: 139). The Orbánist Hungary, it seems clear, has long been taking cues from *Mein Kampf* as a textbook. It describes the refugees as:

a ‘poison’ that Hungary ‘won’t swallow’, a ‘slow and steady current of water which washes away the shore’, destroying Europe ‘as fragile, weak and sickly as a flower being eaten away by a hidden worm’, as ‘gangs hunting down our women and daughters’, an ‘invasion of migrant masses [coming] in waves’, as creating ‘a Christian-Muslim world [...] with a continuously shrinking percentage of Christians’ and turning countries into a ‘mere cloud of dust on the highway of nations’ (*The Guardian* 2016; Hungarian Government 2016, 2019, 2020a).

The examples are endless. Hungarian neo-Nazism also works to construct an intimate link between the COVID-19 epidemic and refugees (as “disease-ridden”), which provided the grounds for a recent law that lets Orbán rule by decree due to extraordinary measures (see Hungarian Government 2020b; *The Guardian* 2020a).

The deduction of refugee life to an unimportant speck is a pervasive mark of the Balkan states’ sovereignty. As I write this, I am looking at photographs of refugees who reportedly crossed the Bosnia-Croatia border only to have their heads spray-painted with red crosses by the Croatian police (see *The Guardian* 2020b).

An unusual term in Bosnia, *migrant* has now become a fixed lexical class in the media and the wider public discourse. Replacing the ubiquitous post-1990s *izbjeglice i raseljena lica* (“refugees and displaced persons”), or even the school textbook categories of *immigrant* and *emigrant*, this new word – *migrant* – has constructed people without a sense of direction. This is what they *are*. Although moving, they are essentially static: an aggregate racialised Other.

I should caution that in Bosnia, like elsewhere, there is no single discourse on those refugees who crossed the state borders over the past decade. The diversity of perspectives is not an effect of the notoriously labyrinthine Bosnian governmental (“Dayton”) apparatus, but rather, as in Croatia and Serbia, due to the voices of various non-governmental organisations and the availability of social media.

Yet, the biopolitical regimes urging the national body to “self-isolate” are prolific. Since Bosnia exists as a post-war, apartheid state of (“Dayton”) institutionalised ethnic sub-division, the biopolitical rhetoric follows the same model. Republika Srpska, one of the two constitutionalised entities crafted through ethnic cleansing, has already decided, “with the goal of preventing the spread of the virus”, “to control the persons entering [its] territory” (see *NI* 2020). This health control mimics the biopolitical concerns voiced by nation-states. In this instance, the “Serbs” in Bosnia are cared for through the policing of non-state ethnic borders. These ethnic entities and their borders were crafted in the 1990s through similar attention to pollution.

In Sarajevo, refugees have been rendered the discrete carriers of COVID-19. Ajan Ajnadžić, mayor of a central city municipality, instructed “the citizens [...] not to engage in close contact with persons of unknown origin, and so to avoid the evermore frequent purchase of hygienic items and other artefacts” (Općina Centar 2020). This appeal, directed exclusively at the “rightful” subjects of the state’s medical concern – the citizens – seized upon the refugees’ struggle to survive through the sale of paper tissues on the streets of the city. It is a simple, caring message: “protect your health”. Yet, the underlying script is biopolitical. The subject of concern delineates the boundaries of valuable life, whilst the “foreign”, refugee body on the street is cast as potentially more diseased than that of a cashier at a convenience store.

A range of other measures followed the same formula. As a move against coronavirus, the state rounded-up thousands of migrants and fully restricted them to a remote tent camp under constant surveillance of the police (*The Guardian* 2020c). The Minister of Security, Fahrudin Radončić, promised not to allow further migrant camps in Sarajevo or any other “areas with a predominantly Bosniak population” (*Klix* 2020). The coronavirus may have energised the abjection of refugee bodies in Sarajevo,

but it also exposed the national ordering of subject and object advanced by many of the same figures who opposed the “rehabilitation of fascism” through the mass for Bleiburg.

The scales of biopolitics in Bosnia are also deeply *necropolitical*, in relation to the ongoing refugee-phobic policies, but also to the continued restriction of life for the returnees following the 1990s expulsions. For example, over more than two decades, the returnees to the Field of Gacko have faced recurring attacks, intimidation, and complete isolation from public institutions. Achille Mbembé argued that necropolitics is the ultimate form of sovereignty, which takes onto itself “the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die” (2003: 11). This includes exposure to death as in the case of refugees.

The political power to create death in the name of “species survival” was fully mastered over bodies in the Independent State of Croatia and the 1990s wartime, post-Yugoslav politics. When, in 1993, Biljana Plavšić, “as a biologist”, spoke of her preference for the “cleansing of Eastern Bosnia of Muslims [as] a perfectly natural phenomenon” (Inić 1996), and when Radovan Karadžić articulated the need to fight the “Islamic penetration of Europe” so that “Islamic fundamentalism doesn’t infect Europe” (Cigar 1995: 100) – words actualised in yet another European genocide – they concerned themselves with the defence of life against contaminated life – the not-fully-life. “When I say cleanse, I don’t want anyone to take me literally and think I mean ethnic cleansing”, Plavšić said, to avoid confusion (Inić 1996). For her, this “natural” act of doing away with dirt was a question of safeguarding the national body.

Dirt that needs cleansing, Mary Douglas (2005 [1966]) famously argued, is “matter out of place”. The appropriation of purity and contamination as a method of governance works only once the scales of meaningful life have been firmly established. Dirt maintains the scalar system as it requires durable and systemic cleansing. As Douglas put it, “[d]irt is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt, there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements” (ibid.: 44).

However, in terms of the biopolitical modern state, dirt is not simply a by-product; it comes first, although it can be fused into or replaced with other sources of abjection. To perform care for

the individual-*cum*-nation, power firstly needs to prescribe what lies outside the boundaries of life worth its concern. Such extra-mural existence is, implicitly or explicitly, denied *as life*.

Georgic Perspectives: Reimagining Biotic Interactions

The last time I was in Sarajevo, in April 2019, I was attacked. First by a group of drunken individuals who were harassing a Roma child on the central city promenade, throwing change at her, filming her, and shouting requests for songs. And then, after I made an attempt to report it, I was attacked for the second time, by the Sarajevo police. The problem began when I was not allowed to report the incident. “You want to report it? Whom would we call? She probably doesn’t have a mother or, if she does, the mother is a sixteen-year old”. Realising that, in their constellation of meaningful life, the Roma girl did not meet the threshold of personhood, I turned on my camera, which quickly escalated the situation: a policeman pushed me into the car parked nearby, twisted my arm, forced me to provide a password for my phone and deleted some blurry photos and a video.

While I was being questioned at the station, a gun slammed on the table in front of me, the policeman screaming in my face, I retreated into the muscular memory of my teenage self (living in the same city some time ago) and kept quiet. Like a mouse, I thought. I recalled David. The vigorous clampdown on the protests following the murder of David Dragičević made evident, for those who were not already aware of it, the intimacy of the police and the autocratic government in Bosnia. David was a young man from Banja Luka, and he looked somewhat like my friends and me when we were his age. He had dreadlock hair, studied electrical engineering, and listened to reggae and hip hop (see *Deutsche Welle* 2018). His parents’ convincing allegation that he was murdered by the police sparked a two-year-long outpouring of public grief under the slogan “Justice for David”, first in Banja Luka and then, amalgamating with other similar allegations of police violence, in Sarajevo and Tuzla. The clamp-down on protests, which sent David’s parents into exile, continues.

About an hour into my quiet obedience at the station, the situation was de-escalated with some laughter, as if nothing had

happened: “Safet, had you approached us nicely and with respect, not filming us in front of the cathedral and all the surveillance cameras, we could have taken them [the tourists] to some dark alley and taught them a lesson. After all, you are on of us”.

Suddenly, he allowed me to step back into human form. I interpreted “us” as “Muslim”, although it could also have meant “Sarajevan” or “Bosnian” – probably not much more. In any case, it meant some sort of intimacy with him. It was his recognition of my worthiness, a link between my body and his body within something larger.

Grief is politically implicated. As an expression of intimacy with the injured other, it is always a scalar projection of meaningful life. This paper does not call for the curtailment of grief for those executed by the Yugoslav Partisans at the end of WWII. Those lives have been rendered non-lives, and thus ungrievable, by one state regime, and then pre-eminently grievable by another. Neither will it do to locate specific “innocent populations” (usually, women and children). As the biological intonations of the genocide in Srebrenica, or the Sarajevo “anti-Pride” event in 2019 showed, gender and sexuality are easy naturalised tropes for the denial of life.⁴ The coronavirus on the other hand, revealed that grievability sharply decreases with age. So, the question is not whether or not the “Bleiburg victims” or at least some of them should be grieved, but rather how we construct the position for the self through grief or the possibility of its absence. The question is, once equipped with the abject ungrievable body, what are we?

I have argued that biopolitical regimes in Bosnia work through one form or another of “self-isolation” and regularised care against the abject. However, the coronavirus and the Bleiburg commemoration may provide an opportunity for a reconsideration of life, an ontological shift of sorts. Such a transition would recognise the entwined being of the human–non-human world, the always already actual in-betweenness, categorical porousness and symbiotic nature of relation. Its acceptance would not require a surrender to death.

4 More than eight thousand men and boys were rounded up for execution in Srebrenica in 1995. The day before the first Sarajevo LGBTIQ+ walk in 2019, counter protests were organised “in the name of children and the family”, with banners declaring: “The strength of a nation lies in the integrity of the family”, “Support for biological survival”, etc.

St George's Day celebrations manage to articulate health *with* not *against* others. The gatherings host a mixture of ethnoreligious subjectivities: Roma, Christians and Muslims, as well as variously self-defining others, celebrate together.⁵ It is also a time for communication with and through other biotic forms. Children chase each other with stinging nettles or play on swings tied to old oak trees. Young women ritually descend to mills and river rapids to bathe in *omaha*, the efficacious droplets of rushing water. They decorate the front doors with *miloduh* (hyssop) flowers and guard them from the young men who attempt to steal them. They plant nettle in front of their houses or in manure to predict the direction of marriage proposals by the turning of the leaves. Fires are lit on hilltops and hands are joined into a circular *kolo* dance around them. Colourful stews are cooked with the intention to resemble the diversity of life. Eggs are coloured bright red like blood. Children are gently lashed with *drijen* (Cornelian cherry) six times and instructed: "May you be as healthy as the *drijen*". Red ribbons are tied to *drijen* branches. With each ribbon, one makes a wish for the prosperity of someone else and utters: "I choose health, forsake disease" (see Figure 5).

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote that the "world belongs only to the forceful "whole" man and not to the weak "half" man"" (Vol. 1, Ch. 10). Yet, the whole world escapes the whole man. It is the porous and unshielded life that manages to engage with the world. "Life is a window of vulnerability", Donna Haraway wrote. "It seems a mistake to close it. The perfection of the fully defended, "victorious" self is a chilling fantasy, [...] whether located in the abstract spaces of national discourse, or in the equally abstract spaces of our interior bodies. (1991: 224) Perhaps what this year, of much "self-isolation", can foreground is a proximity healthier than before. What the Georgic symbiotic perspective offers, it seems to me, is a step outside of the perpetual scalar horrors and into a possibility of life *with* and *through* the *otherwise*.

5 This is still the case across Bosnia, for example in the town of Visoko where Muslims and Christians join in on the Roma feast. In other places, like Gacko and Stolac, war and migration have disrupted the ubiquity of the day's interfaith quality (see HadžiMuhamedović 2018).



Figure 5 Melina tying ribbons “for health” onto drijen branches in Carica, Visoko, 2012.

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**HEALTH,
THE INDIVIDUAL, AND
POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY**

MEDICINAL GARDENS, HEALING TRAILS, AND OUR PANDEMIC BODIES

Elizabeth Alexandrin

When I first started writing this contribution, I thought I would go deeper into the question of solitude and separation. Instead, I found myself thinking about different questions: what would Ibn ‘Arabi have had to say about shadow forms and their presences in our viral and pandemic time of 2020? What might he have said about pandemic bodies, viral contagion, and the Unseen, where everything is continuous and in continuity? So, this is the starting point of a conversation I wish I could have now, in person, face-to-face, with you. My paper’s considerations of Ibn ‘Arabi hopefully will work as a juxtaposition; that is, a set of resting places and vantage points onto the local, from where I stand. From February onward, it already seemed to me that we had missed having been able to gather together, one by one, all of our singular stories of coronavirus, our novel virus, and being able to see together, from the same vantage place of consideration, where the world is going now. This is a matter of perception, and in speaking to my standing place, perhaps I leave silent some different things.

Things being what they are, I will try my best to write down some thoughts on reimagining universal political, cultural, and economic paradigms locally, from the perspective of Winnipeg and Manitoba. Winnipeg, the city, and Manitoba, the province, are in central Canada, far enough in the North to be on the periphery of the Hudson Bay and the Arctic. In ways that are meaningful, Winnipeg and Manitoba both share in the long histories of settler colonization and marginalization that shaped Canada as a nation state, following independence from Great Britain in 1867.

Resting places

You know, it is good to be able to sit and think about Ibn ‘Arabi – the great Sufi thinker and teacher from the 13th Century - and to try to think more about how he understood God and appearances. In terms of where I am now, I count my blessings each day that I have this chance to do exactly this thinking. Even before this new pandemic, it seemed to me that we are very fortunate when we can sit and meet to speak. Now, with pandemic and our uncertain futures, it is still great good fortune to speak from our virtual realities and share thoughts and ideas. Aren’t we, however, somehow spectralized through our screens? Where can we locate ourselves as forms and shapes in these meeting spaces tethered to technology- which have become newly shaped, with consequences and meanings, that allow us these privileges to be like ghosts or shadows?

Speaking in generalities, Ibn ‘Arabi, especially in his great work, *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah*, gives us a typography or graphology of reality as well as appearances. He has rather a lot to say about shadows. For example, the image of the perfect human being in the unseen is like the likeness of a person’s shadow. In fact, all of creation bows in prayer prostration (*sujud*) to God. Their shadows are bowing too, Ibn ‘Arabi explains, twice a day. Furthermore, in thinking about relationality and dimensionality, a person’s shadow, when extended, can show us how it is merging with the other person’s, standing in front of them. And a human being is the shadow of God, hidden in appearance and appearing in the Unseen. Shadow and dimensionality: shadow as a line and shadow of self as a line extended to other worlds.

But, like the letter *nun*, in the Arabic alphabet, “n”, also in thinking about bodies, *nun* is unmanifest in the manifest, and it is like its point (*nuqta*), which could be “above” or “within” what is seen as well as unseen. This black point of the letter “n” is also like the black pupil of the eye, with the iris surrounding it, forming the eye by which the world (and worlds) is (are) seen. As Ibn ‘Arabi mentions in Chapter Eight, this Earth is vast, and so is the seen.

I still am reading and re-reading Chapter 8 of *Futuhat* to think about what would be “surface”; those amazingly difficult, complex passages about the *safinah*. Chapter Eight begins with,

“He said, ‘Events and mysterious occurrences happened to me...’”, and with the sentence, “In her there are gardens and hidden grounds...” Ibn ‘Arabī says the sea (*bahr*) is made of mud or clay. Pure surface, over and on which things run and flow, as the surface itself is continuously flowing; as Ibn ‘Arabi notes in another work, that is, this sea, without *tajassud*, and without “Pearls”, would be quite smooth.¹

Would we begin to understand this as almost any body hidden and manifest in the unity, by a hair’s breadth, and with something smooth as skin, or flowing over a sea of *turab*, where the veiling is manifesting; veiling is displaying the manifestation, and we are like boats navigating through as well as on continuous spheres and spaces. What is in fact this relationship to the unseen and seen as if from the “point” of the End Time? Would we say, everything is apocalyptic, all of the time, and therefore everything is all *barzakh*, all *barzakh*, all the time, and time doesn’t really exist? Would that mean that our bodies are standing all the time in front, or face-to-face, with the “seen world” and that too is a *barzakh*?

Our pandemic bodies

Starting in late January Manitoban public health officials had already recommended posting everywhere in public spaces their announcement of a new virus, giving their novel virus counsel: to wash your hands and stay home if you are unfeeling unwell. In the previous pandemic of H1N1, in 2009, Manitoban Indigenous communities were gravely impacted and there were many deaths. At the advice of public health consultants and medical researchers in epidemiology (at the Canadian Center for Disease Control, in Winnipeg), our time of quarantine started with the universities and schools being shuttered on March 12. We were already tired and weary of a long and cold winter indoors; a winter that started with a blizzard the second week of October, and which in fact, continued until late April. We were told to stock up the cupboards and be prepared to be staying more at home, in case there was an emergency or if someone fell ill at home. The virus was here but not yet seen.

1 Elmore, *Kitab ‘anqa mughrib*, translation, pages 381-382. See *Futuhat*, page 154. Note as well, corporeal (*tajassada*).

By March 20, when Winnipeg announced that had its first official case that tested positive for COVID-19, the provincial government declared a state of emergency, with a strict enforcement of public health guidelines in both public and private spaces: for example, grocery shopping every two weeks, with no more than five people allowed into a store at one time; no meeting with anyone outside of the household; social distancing of two meters (six feet) when going for walks outside to get exercise, fresh air, and sunshine, or to take your dog for its walk! It was also stipulated, in different ways, that in public, there should be no conversations between individuals from other households for more than 10 minutes, even with social distancing. Social distancing also meant, no gatherings of households inside, not even family members living elsewhere in the city. While the models and predictions were not made public in Manitoba, this great overflowing stream of public health information was meant to shock, terrify, and alarm: if we did not isolate and quarantine, all across Canada - infected or not - we would personally be responsible – guilty - for the tens of thousands who could die and the hundreds of thousands who would be infected by May; in total, by the end of this pandemic's first wave, and as we are to fear and be prepared for a second wave, maintaining and towing the line for essential work and the frontlines.

Under viral siege, my university prepared to shutter itself until September at least, and offered as support resources to its students and employees carefully curated pieces on maintaining good mental health. The very idea that the university would be closed never crossed the minds of many university colleagues. It all came as a great shock. We were given three days to prepare to teach the remainder of the semester through “remote learning”, online.

Following this arrival of one case of infection, the emptiness and emptying of our city and city spaces because of quarantine and lockdown seemed to give rise again to thinking and re-imagining the discussions and conversations about de-colonization that were taking place in Manitoba before the virus “arrived”. Would this then be a possible future forward, to continue decolonizing the university, as “Thunderbird uprising”, a metaphor and symbol of an eagle bridging both “spiritual” and “material” dimensions, powerfully on display in Metis and First Nation art throughout Winnipeg in recent years?

Now we are almost at the end of May, and we hear that while we may still find some virus in our city, it is sometimes as few as one or two cases over the span of more than six days, and no one has died from virus since early May, which compares well to other cities in Canada and elsewhere in the world. Now the provincial government has let us know that we all be brought in to be tested, at some point, for the virus, as well as for antibodies: up to 500 or a thousand people a day, until the end of July. We have been prepared to organize our courses for teaching remotely in the fall, come September. We've been told, this will be a simple and unusual summer at home but to value it for what it is - simple, but home - and more stores and shops are beginning to open up again. Travel, however, between provinces is not yet allowed. Travel restrictions within Manitoba are in place to protect smaller communities further north. The border between Canada and the US remains closed until the end of June. So, in these respects, we feel less of the quarantine as we begin to go outside again, walk our emptied city, and work on growing our gardens, to keep some motivation - not to give into fear culture.

Optimism and the emptiness of failed capitalism

Dnenovksa explains about the emptiness of failed capitalism and modernity: "For the locals, emptiness is not a temporary state of falling behind the global march to prosperity, but a transitional state between a world that has ended and a world whose contours are not yet visible."² Dnenovksa is very interested in the question of the "Empty lands" settled by colonial modernizers, which provides an appropriate lens for considering the Western provinces in Canada and immigration policies up to 1984. Furthermore, in terms of decolonizing Manitoba, the very real histories of Residential Schools and Indigenous populations, up to 1996, needs to be taken into consideration. Perhaps the Canadian government's Truth and Reconciliation Process, from 2016 onward, gave enough space again for imagining in and outside of the city of Winnipeg – together with Winnipeg's largest Indigenous and First Nation urban communities in Canada - victory gardens, community gardens, and sharing seeds as curative for everyone.

2 Dnenovska, Medium, <https://medium.com/oxford-university/emptiness-capitalism-aftersocialism-2fca14324a3e>

Very briefly, and by way of example, Community gardens, the traditional approach to growing food, tobacco, and medicinal plants: tobacco and sage, for example, as offerings. Other medicinal plants are used as teas. Some plants have specific symbolism in thinking about family and community: corn, squash and beans are known as “three sisters”, as they are plants that support the growth of one another, together.³

In terms of healing plants as well as what is currently present in our local re-imagining of Winnipeg and Manitoba, are stories and memories related to medicinal plants and immigration. South central Manitoba and the inter-lacustral regions, where there are old medicinal gardens still growing, on abandoned homesteads, especially north of Dauphin; Ukrainian immigrants who came to Canada in the late 19th-century brought with them “the familiar herbs of homeland gardens, woods, and steppes.” Magical and medicinal properties of herbs and natural plant medicines, passed down generation after generation.

Vipp notes: “In Ukraine, each village home had a mandatory garden with its complement of indispensable herbs for cooking, medicine, and magic...So ingrained were plants in daily life that no family would think of leaving their homeland without bringing with them a selection of seeds, or even plants, not knowing whether these would be found in their new world. It was something tangible to connect them to the ancestral land they had to leave behind and would never see again. The nostalgic fragrance of “Yevshan-zillia” (*Artemisia*) was said to return lost souls to their native land, if only metaphorically. Thus we have Ukrainian pioneers to thank for many herb species that can be found in Manitoban gardens to this day.”⁴ Ojibway elders’ traditional wisdom and knowledge of medicinal plants were also part of a carry-over, as two-way exchanges from the 19th Century onward.

The ideal pandemic body, then, is this body that would have already started to think about where to find resting places and space in our decolonizing city, looking for the Healing Trails, and what was already growing out of community organizations, in February 2020, as in the following explanation or “manifesto”:

3 Creating community gardens, in the community, for youth group homes: <https://saymag.com/marymound-growing-thriving-medicinal-gardens-and-healthierchildren/>

4 Vipp, “Herbs and Ukrainian Immigration in Manitoba.” 115-116.

“Winnipeg Trails Association presents a new program called Healing Trails generously funded by the Winnipeg Foundation and the Trans Canada Trail. Healing Trails an Indigenous-led initiative to re-think transportation through policy work, capacity building, education and tangible real-world projects In the Ojibwe language, Miikana is the translated word for a road, a trail or a path. It is led by Adrian Alphonso and Janell Henry, supported by Anders Swanson and Dan Reihl. In the cityscape and architecture, roads and trails have different meanings and two different budgets. While trails have the natural capacity to spark healthy attitudes by getting our bodies outdoors, in this city, machines get higher priority as a mode of transportation than humans, active transportation becomes active conservation and an act of defiance.”⁵

“To act fast”, promoting as a result of COVID-19 a set of recommendations, such as the one that follows: “Recommendation 2 – Work with an existing and keen network of community organizations to permanently convert residential street space to more equitable shared space, starting in high needs areas, to achieve fast, cheap traffic calming and food security. Move to provide on street container gardening with any community that wants it which has access to water. This will help address physical distancing, food security, social cohesion, and transport all at once. As appropriate, consider appointing Winnipeg Trails to a leadership role to leverage existing relationships and trust in the community to do that expeditiously.”⁶

The Winnipeg Trails project has also been suggesting that resources (up to 5 million) be shifted to higher needs and reworking the city’s infrastructure, from downtown to the suburbs, to the perimeter of the city, promoting “equitable access to nature and physical and mental health”, moving from an immediate probability to an immediate reality, thinking and dreaming about Manitoba’s sometimes remembered but mostly forgotten healing trails and medicinal gardens.

5 https://reconnections.com/resources/Documents/Parks%20and%20Trails%20Program%20Brochure%202020_.pdf

6 <https://www.winnipegtrails.ca/elementor-8271/>

JURAJ DRAGIŠIĆ: DEFENDER OF REFUGEES AND EXILES

Mile Babić

In this paper, I will present the Bosnian Franciscan Juraj Dragišić (1444–1520), a refugee and exile from Bosnia who spent his whole life steadfastly and fearlessly defending other refugees and exiles. He defended Cardinal Bessarion, the Jews settled in Florence, Jewish books (actually, another defender of their books, the renowned German humanist and Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (a very learned Renaissance philosopher suspected of heresy) and Girolamo Savonarola (a great reformer of the Catholic Church, also accused of heresy). From Dragišić's support of refugees and exiles, I draw the conclusion that he was a supreme Christian humanist whose entire life was informed by the fundamental evangelical principle formulated by Jesus Christ: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." (Mt 25, 40) This sentence expresses the pinnacle of Christian humanism. Before concentrating on this point, it is worth presenting Dragišić's life and works.

The Bosnian Franciscan Juraj Dragišić¹ was born in 1445 in Srebrenica (Lat. Argentina). The monastery in Srebrenica

1 Dragišić signed his works in Latin variously as: Georgius Benignus de Salviatis, Georgius de Argentina, Georgius Benignus de Felicis, Georgius Grecus de Bosnia, Georgius Macedonus [Juraj Dobroćudni de Salviatis]. He was given the nickname "the Benign" (Benignus) by Cardinal Bessarion. He was admitted to the noble Salviati family of Florence in 1485, adding "de Salviati" to his name. "Georgius de Argentina" means George from Srebrenica; "Georgius Benignus de Felicis" means George the Benign of

belonged to the Usora custody of the Bosnian Vicariate.² After the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, Dragišić fled Srebrenica in 1462, first to Jajce, and then to Zadar. From Zadar, the Franciscan Vicar General at the time, Marco Fantucci, took two gifted students with him from Bosnia to Italy: Juraj Dragišić, by then a deacon, and Ivan of Jezero, near Jajce, a subdeacon. Dragišić continued his theological studies in Italy, first in Ferrara and then in Pavia, Padua and Bologna. He was ordained priest at Bologna Cathedral in 1469. After ordination, he went to Rome, where he transferred from the order of the Friars Observant to become a Friar Conventual, which provided him with better conditions for his scholarly work. This was when Dragišić came into contact with Greek theologians and philosophers who, like him, had fled Ottoman invasion. The renowned intellectual Basilios Bessarion, made a cardinal in 1439 and a protector of the Franciscan Order, would play a decisive role in Dragišić's intellectual development. When the Greek emigrant and Aristotelian George of Trebizond launched a scathing attack on Bessarion's work, *In calumniatorem Platonis* [Against the Slanderer of Plato], Dragišić wrote a defence of Cardinal Bessarion entitled *Defensorium cardinalis Bessarionis* [In Defence of Cardinal Bessarion]. Grateful for the defence, Bessarion gave Dragišić the nickname *Benignus* [the Benign], and it was probably on Bessarion's recommendation that Dragišić became professor in Urbino in 1472, where he remained for the next eight years. From there, Dragišić departed to pursue his theological and philosophical studies in Paris and at Oxford. He returned to Florence in 1482. That same year, he vis-

the Felici family (in Urbino, he became a member of the prominent Felici family which is what "de Felicis" means); "Georgius Grecus de Bosnia" means George the Greek from Bosnia; by adopting the Greek as part of his name, he demonstrated his fellow feeling for Greek Christians from the collapsed Byzantine Empire. For this reason, he took the name "Georgius Macedonus" or George of Macedonia.

- 2 In the Franciscan Order, a custody or *custodia* is the level below a vicariate, which is in turn below a province. The Franciscans arrived in Bosnia in 1291, but the Vicariate of Bosnia was only established in 1339/40. (The first vicar general was Peregrinus of Saxony.) The Ottoman conquest of Bosnia caused a division of the Vicariate of Bosnia in 1514 into Silver Bosnia/Bosna Srebrena [Bosna Argentina] (under Ottoman occupation) and Croatian Bosnia/Bosna Hrvatska [Bosna Croatia] (in unoccupied territory). In 1517, both vicariates were elevated to provinces (in the tradition of Bosnian Franciscans known as a "redodržava").

ited the Holy Land and brought back a relic (the left hand of John the Baptist) intended for Florence, whose patron saint John the Baptist was. On his return from the Holy Land, he stopped in Dubrovnik, where, struck by illness, he gave the relic for safe-keeping to two citizens of the town (Nikola Bunić and Paškal Vučetić). When he recovered, they did not return the relic, setting off an international dispute involving Pope Innocent VIII, Sultan Bayezid II, Florence and Dubrovnik. The dispute was resolved, but the relic remained in Dubrovnik. Dragišić went back to Dubrovnik again in 1491 in an effort to reach agreement on it.

In Florence, Dragišić became a regent of the university and in 1488 published a work, the *Dialectica nova*, dedicated to Cardinal Giovanni, later Pope Leo X, and his brother Pietro (known as Piero), with whom he maintained a friendship. It was to Pietro that he wrote a letter dated 9 January 1493, asking him to protect the Jews. Through the Medici family, he met the most learned and educated people of the age (Marsilio Ficino, head of the Platonic Academy, and della Mirandola, whom he defended). Dragišić then became provincial of the Province of Tuscany. Pietro de Medici wanted Dragišić to be reappointed as provincial and later become general superior of the Order but was unsuccessful. Due to a conflict with the general superior of the Order, Dragišić lost his active and passive voting rights and left to teach in Pisa. When his friend Pietro was removed from power, Dragišić was taken to prison, where he was kept for eleven days. That is why, in 1496, he returned to Dubrovnik (before which he visited his homeland of Bosnia). In Dubrovnik, he became renowned for his preaching at the cathedral and was a tutor of young Dubrovnik nobles. In Dubrovnik, he wrote his defence of Savonarola, the *Profeticae solutiones* [Prophetic Solutions], printed in 1497 in Florence.

In 1500, after the death of his adversary, the Minister-General of the Order, Francesco Sansone, he returned to Italy. He participated in a chapter of the Order held in 1500, and in 1503 became governor of the university in Rome. In 1507, Pope Julius II appointed him Bishop of Cagli. In 1512, the same pope made him Archbishop of Nazareth in Apulian exile in Barletta. He took part in the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517), to which he contributed a proposal to reform the Julian calendar. Elisabeth von Erdmann-Pandžić has published Dragišić's proposal and proved

that the 1581 reform of the calendar effectively adopted its main elements.³ Dragišić died in 1520 in either Barletta or Rome.

In Defence of Cardinal Bessarion

Dragišić supported Greek Christians fleeing from or persecuted by the Ottoman authorities. We should remember that when Constantinople (“the second Rome” and centre of the Byzantine Empire) fell to the Ottomans in 1453 it was a traumatic event for Western Christians as well. Basilios Bessarion (a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church since 1439) was also a refugee and exile from Constantinople and one of the most learned individuals of the age, who wanted to establish peace between eastern (Greek) and western (Latin) Christians.⁴ He was a friend of Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), another true advocate of unity between mutually excommunicated Christians. After the fall of Constantinople, Nicholas of Cusa wrote the *De pace fidei* [On the Peace of Faith]⁵ advocating peace among all religions, because religions exist for faith and should be in its service. Faith is man’s salvation, and human life can thrive only in faith (trust, love and hope), which is to say, in love of God and love of one’s neighbour.

Cardinal Bessarion took part in the ecumenical council in Ferrara/Florence in 1438/39. He was an intermediary between Eastern and Western Christians, but also among philosophical schools, especially the Platonists and the Aristotelians. He was an outstanding philosopher, theologian, philologist, humanist, translator, ecclesiastical politician, diplomat, orator, and publicist. He was twice nominated to be bishop of Rome (pope) and had an extensive library, which he bequeathed to Venice. He was also the titular Latin Patriarch of Constantinople. His teacher had been the renowned Neoplatonist philosopher Pletho (Georgios Gemistos

3 Cf. Elisabeth von Erdmann-Pandžić, “Ein Vorschlag von Juraj Dragišić zur Kalenderreform aus dem Jahre 1514: Sein Engagment während des V. Lateranums”, *Regiones paeninsulae Balcanicae et proximi Orientis: Aspekte der Geschichte und Kultur. Festschrift für Basilius S. Pandžić* [Quellen und Beiträge zur kroatischen Kulturgeschichte, Bd. 2], hrsg. von Elisabeth von Erdmann-Pandžić, Bamberg 1988, p. 285–299, 300–308.

4 Cf. URL: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki-bessarion>.

5 Cf. Mile Babić, “O miru među religijama Nikole Kuzanskog”, Nikola Kuzanski, *O miru među religijama*, translated from the Latin by Mile Babić, Sarajevo: Connectum, 2005, p. 187–294.

Plethon). The Aristotelian George of Trebizond, also a refugee exiled from Byzantium but writing in Latin in Italy, wrote a polemic in the 1450s entitled the *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* [Comparison of the Philosophers Plato and Aristotle] in which he blamed Platonism for all manner of misfortunes, including the weakening of Eastern Christianity and the consequent demise of the Byzantine Empire. He claimed that if Platonism were to spread, the West would suffer the same fate as Constantinople. Cardinal Bessarion penned a comprehensive response, the *In calumniatorem Platonis* [Against the Slanderer of Plato], which he then repeatedly revised and finally printed in 1469, and in which he develops Plato's thought without defending Platonism or disparaging Aristotelianism. More precisely, Cardinal Bessarion wrote a treatise, the *De natura et arte* [On Nature and Art], in Greek in 1458, which he later published in Latin, after multiple revisions, as *Against the Slanderer of Plato*.⁶

Dragišić claimed that his text, *In Defence of Cardinal Bessarion*, was lost in England. It is safe to assume, however, that Dragišić successfully defended Bessarion's position, because both he and Bessarion argued in favour of Christian unity and the renewal of Christianity. They were convinced that by returning Christianity to its sources, viz. the authoritative form of Christian life (modelled after the life of Jesus and his disciples), Christian unity would be restored and Christianity itself renewed. Both stressed the positive aspects of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies and both were men of dialogue rather than mutual exclusion. According to Elisabeth von Erdmann-Pandžić, no one at the time dared stand up publicly for Bessarion except the determined and brave Juraj Dragišić.⁷

Defence of Jews and Johannes Reuchlin

Dragišić supported not just Bessarion but also the Jews, whose persecution was reflected, among other things, in the imposition of high taxes. Dragišić wrote a letter to Pietro de' Medici on 9 January 1493, saying: "These Jews have sought my

6 Cf. URL: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki-Bessarion>.

7 Cf. Elisabeth von Erdmann-Pandžić, "Juraj Dragišić (1445–1520) i Židovi", *Encyclopaedia Moderna* 13 (1992) 3/39, p. 446.

help and I cannot withhold it [...] I truly sympathise with them.”⁸ He had deep sympathy for the Jews, upon whom the Florentine authorities imposed high taxes, exploiting them and threatening their livelihoods.

During the controversy against the German humanist and Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin, who had opposed the burning of Jewish books in his pamphlet the *Augenspiegel* [Eyeglasses], Juraj Dragišić published a highly appropriate defence, the *Defensio praestantissimi viri Ioannis Reuchlin* [Defence of the excellent Johannes Reuchlin] in 1517, dedicating it to the Emperor Maximilian. In his writing, Dragišić outlines and develops Reuchlin’s strongest arguments. He says, for example, that Reuchlin relied on the Holy Scriptures to demonstrate that Jewish books should not be destroyed, because Jesus wanted Christians to study the Holy Scriptures (Cf. Jn 5, 39). Namely, in the parable of the wheat and tares (Cf. Mt 13, 24–30), Jesus said to leave the tares until harvest, i.e., the Jewish books until the end of the world, while St Paul says: “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor 11, 19). The great humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam would also agree with Dragišić.

In order to understand the extent of Dragišić’s uncompromising commitment and fearlessness in defending the Jews and Reuchlin, we must take a closer look at the historical context. Namely, the so-called *Reconquista* (retaking territories lost in war) in 1492 actually meant the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. The Spanish royal couple Isabella and Ferdinand ordered all Jews to leave Spain or convert to Christianity. Spain’s example was followed by some other European countries, including Italy. The Jews fled to the Ottoman Empire, because Sultan Bayezid II welcomed them. This is how they reached Sarajevo and Bosnia, which was part of the Ottoman Empire by this time. Elisabeth von Erdmann-Pandžić points out that the year 1500 was significant, because at the end of the 15th century many Christians had expected the end of the world and the conversion of Israel (Cf. Rom 11, 25–27), but the Jews had not converted that year, which incensed their persecutors.⁹ It is important to note that Reuchlin believed, and Dragišić concurred, that conversions

8 *Ibid.* p. 447.

9 *Ibid.*

should not be forced and that all people are equal and accountable to God. These arguments show that Reuchlin and Dragišić continued the tradition of dialogue so well exemplified by Nicholas of Cusa and Ramon Llull (Lat. Raimundus Lullus), the famous Catalan writer and originator of Catalan prose and poetry, a philosopher, theologian and mystic (he was called *doctor illuminatus* [the enlightened doctor]). Both Reuchlin and Dragišić point out the importance of learning foreign languages, of mysticism, and of the fact that unity and diversity are not mutually exclusive but mutually dependant. Dragišić's support was important to Reuchlin, because Dragišić enjoyed the esteem of Pope Leo X, who allowed the Talmud to be published in its entirety for the first time.

Defence of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

The high regard in which Dragišić was held by the Medici family is clear from Lorenzo il Magnifico (Piero's father)'s encouragement to him to defend one of the greatest philosophers of the time, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, second in importance only to Marsilio Ficino, who led the Platonic Academy in Florence. Ficino too considered Dragišić an excellent thinker and his confidence in him and his philosophical argumentation led him to refer to the Bosnian with the possessive "my": "You know my Giorgio Benigno Salviati."¹⁰ Pico della Mirandola had been accused over certain of his theses, precisely because of his attitude towards Christian mysticism, but Dragišić defended him successfully, even though Mirandola's linking of Jewish and Christian mysticism seemed highly suspect to exclusivist Christians.

10 Erna Banić-Pajnić, "Juraj Dragišić (c. 1445–1520) – život i djela", *Juraj Dragišić (Georgius Benignus). Život i djela*, Ed. Erna Banić-Pajnić, Bruno Ćurko, Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin, Ivica Martinović, Zagreb: Institut za filozofiju, 2016, p. 11. I note with pleasure that this collection contains not just valuable works on Dragišić, but also some of his writings in two languages (in the Latin original and in Croatian translation), as well as a well curated bibliography. The following writings of Dragišić were translated: *Fridericus, De animae regni principe; Propheticae Solutiones; Defensio optimi ac integerrimi viri illius Joannis Reuchlin*; the ninth volume of *De natura angelica* whose full title reads *De natura coelestium spirituum quos angelos vocamus*.

Defence of Girolamo Savonarola

Dragišić wrote a defence of Girolamo Savonarola while in Dubrovnik, which he entitled the *Propheticae Solutiones* [Prophetic Solutions]. It was published in Florence in 1497. In it, he shows that Savonarola's prophesies are compatible with Holy Scripture and that the renewal of the Church advocated by Savonarola begins by going back to the Holy Scriptures, i.e. the source of Christianity (*reditus ad fontes*). Like Savonarola, Dragišić was convinced that Christians could only be reunited and Christianity restored by returning to the Gospels, the authoritative account of the life of Jesus and his disciples. In his treatise, Dragišić talks about the relationship between divine omniscience and the future of humanity, i.e. the relationship between God's foreknowledge and human freedom,¹¹ and he refers to the understanding of this relationship of Duns Scotus, one of the greatest Franciscan thinkers, known as the *doctor subtilis* [the subtle doctor]. Present throughout Dragišić's treatise is hope vested in the arrival of God's kingdom on Earth, or what was at that time conceived of as the realisation of God's earthly thousand-year kingdom (chiliasm).

From the above, I draw the conclusion that Juraj Dragišić, a refugee and exile from late medieval Bosnia, steadfastly and fearlessly protected refugees and exiles throughout his world. He had learned from his own experience to cherish freedom as a fundamental value of human life and developed this idea in all his works, following in the footsteps of that greatest of Franciscan scholars, John Duns Scotus. He was carried along by a longing for Christian unity and the restoration of Christianity, to be achieved by going back to the fundamental principle of Christianity – Jesus Christ. That is why Dragišić spent his life in accordance with Jesus' message: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

11 Cf. Aleksandra Golubović, "Problem sveznanja i slobodne volje u Proročanskim rješenjima Jurja Dragišića", *Eidos* 3 (2019) 3, p. 5–18.

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IN QUARANTINE

M. Ali Lakhani

Lent has fallen this year at a time when the world is beset by a deadly pandemic and is forced into quarantine. The term “quarantine” originated in medieval times when it was felt necessary to isolate those infected with contagion. Etymologically, it meant “a period of 40 days” and came to be associated with a period of both seclusion and of healing. Lent traditionally lasts for 40 days (not counting the Sabbaths). It commences on Ash Wednesday (marking the beginning of Lenten austerity, when penitent man is mindful of his creaturehood, signified by ashes) and ends on Easter Sunday (marking for Christians the Resurrection – the promise that, as *Imago Dei*, man is destined to transcend the frailties of the human condition). It is a time of inwardness and humility, of repentance (for the sins of forgetfulness and excess) and purification. The 40 days period also evokes for Christians the time spent by Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism – a time of testing and the confirmation of faith – and the period between Resurrection and Ascension – denoting spiritual rebirth and sublimation.

For Jews, Pesach or Passover, which coincides with Lent (both are calculated by reference to the Paschal moon and coincide with the renewal of springtime) similarly recalls a time of trial and spiritual renewal. It refers to the story in the Book of Exodus when a series of severe plagues was brought down on the Egyptians, oppressors of the Israelites, whom God spared from the scourges by virtue of their faith. But on their release from bondage, many of the Israelites strayed from their faith and the community was cast into the wilderness for 40 years, a symbolic exilic period preceding their entry into the Promised Land. This episode, like many others in the scriptures (for example, the 40

days of the Flood, the 40 days of Noah's waiting for the waters to recede, and the period of Moses' sojourn on Mount Sinai), associates the number 40 with the divine testing of man, a period when man is offered the opportunity to cultivate the qualities required to gain entry into the divine sanctum.

The number 40 also denotes the symbolic age of spiritual maturity, when one reorients oneself from the mind to the Heart, from mundane concerns to inwardness. For example, in Judaism, the rabbinical student must be at least 40 before he is permitted to study Kabbalah. Significantly, the Prophet of Islam was 40 when he received the first revelation from Archangel Gabriel – this, while being in a state of outer seclusion (denoted by the Cave¹ of Hira) and inner purification (denoted by Muhammad being *Ummi*, literally “the unlettered one”, understood esoterically as “the pure one” who has returned to the primordial spiritual state of the Origin or womb of the “mother”, *Umm*, from which the term *Ummi* derives²).

In spiritual terms, therefore, the period of a quarantine is a time to turn away from the adornments and distractions of this world and to reflect on one's spiritual condition. It forces us to be “out of the swing of the sea”³, to confront ourselves and take stock of our inner life and its relation to our everyday existence. In this sense, a quarantine serves the same purpose as a spiritual retreat (like a Sufi *khalwa* or the cenobitic or contemplative retreats in many faith traditions). And for Muslims, the period of the current quarantine significantly coincides with the three holiest months in the Islamic calendar, culminating in Ramadan, which are associated with inwardness and renewal.

From this vantage, one sees how, in the midst of the universal seclusion brought on by the current pandemic, a new awareness is dawning. The earth is beginning to heal. The signs are evident. Carbon emissions are declining. The forests are breathing cleaner air. The waters are becoming purer. In the face of

- 1 For Muslims, the Cave also symbolizes the protective Sanctuary which preserved Muhammad and Abu Bakr in Mount Thawr while they were being pursued by their enemies.
- 2 Hence *Umma* (“community”) also denotes the “matrix” of spiritual kinship.
- 3 From Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem, “Heaven-Haven”: “I have desired to go/ Where springs not fail,/ To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail/ And a few lilies blow./ And I have asked to be/ Where no storms come,/ Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,/ And out of the swing of the sea.”

human and ecological fragility, relationships and priorities are beginning to be re-evaluated. More importantly, man is being given an opportunity to consider whether he will conform to a higher order or will seek instead to impose himself on the natural world; whether he will recognize his interdependence with the sacred web of life or choose to be governed only by self-interest and self-will; whether he will seek the “norm” within his primordial nature or instead in his own grasping powers. One can either have faith in the transcendent order integrated with nature or simply believe in a material order that one seeks to control. In the words of Frithjof Schuon,

The error is to believe that the causes which determine human history or which carry it to its conclusion belong to the same order as our matter or our “natural” laws, whereas in fact the whole visible cosmos is resting upon an invisible volcano – but also, at a deeper ontological level, upon a formless ocean of bliss.⁴

The period of our quarantine is a time to contemplate these things, to reflect on “the sweet uses of adversity”⁵ and to accept the wisdom of the divine allopathy while continuing to fight the virus. It is a time to affirm our faith in Light and in Life. In the words of Her Majesty the Queen,

Coronavirus will not overcome us. As dark as death can be – particularly for those suffering with grief – light and life are greater.⁶

Light: in the goodness of the many around us, in the beauty that surrounds us, and in ourselves.

Life: in the knowledge that the waters which drowned the iniquitous were the very same waters which bore the Ark.

4 Schuon, F., from *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*, (World Wisdom, 2005) p. 505.

5 Shakespeare: “Sweet are the uses of adversity/ Which like the toad, ugly and venomous/ Wears yet a precious jewel in its head.” (*As You Like It*, II.i.12)

6 HM Queen Elizabeth II, Easter Address, April 11, 2020.

THE SELF AND THE WORLD: ON VIOLATING BAT RIGHTS

Rusmir Mahmutćehajić

No one who does science, whether in the modern or the post-modern sense, can avoid a certain unease over the *now* and the *here*. Understood in any absolute sense, you can't have one of this pair without the other. To say *now* is to say *here*. The *now* cannot be turned into an object of our knowledge. Try, as subject of the now, to observe and capture it in speech and you negate it. Spoken, represented, it is no longer what it is, inseparable from the subject that bears it.

Talk of the *now* necessarily involves the medium of images derived from our imaginaries of past and future. In our imaginary of the past, we remember what once came into our now and, just as truly, passed out of it. In our imaginary of the future, the now is overshadowed by presentiment, into which it transfers possibilities from the imaginary of the already past. Only the now is full or absolute reality. Past and future are its projections.

The *now* cannot be split up or divided. It cannot be dismembered into quanta or put together out of parts. One cannot say anything that is not of and in the now, but what is said nonetheless always seems to be separate and several from the now. It hints at a potential link between the imagined past, so full of suffering, and the imagined but entirely unknown future, a spectre of even worse suffering to come.

For a long time, natural philosophy, and even more its sublimation within natural science, did all it could to exclude the now, inseparable from the self, from its world-image, from its objectively observable laws of nature, describable by mathematical equation and testable anywhere and anytime, which could not possibly depend upon the observing self. This credo of modern

science has been harrowed out of it, however, and we once again understand that there cannot be a world without a self to observe (even constitute) it. Destroy either and you destroy both. More than this. The determinist world image, so long valued for its exactness, is no longer considered valid. Neither future nor past can be represented as unchanging images, precisely because we exist only in our now.

During the first three months of 2020, the whole world became preoccupied with the threat of a previously unknown virus, now said to have jumped from the animal world, where it had been minding its own business, to human beings, amongst whom it had apparently had no previous purchase. The bat is mentioned as its keeper for millennia. The animal's oddness, which sees when others can't, flies but is no bird, and sleeps when others don't, with its head towards the ground, renders it a tailor-made villain, given our need to claim innocence for any evils we suffer.

Some, even many, claim this unknown but world-threatening virus, named for the Sovereign Crown, was created in a modern laboratory, from which it escaped or was released. It poses a threat to every country in the world, but most of all to the weak, the sick and the old, the hungry and thirsty, all who form the yardstick of merit for any political order. If we are not to blame for this world-besieging virus and cannot be condemned over it, well the bat certainly can't be hauled before a court either. Isn't our finger pointing at the bat just shirking our own responsibility for the appalling pouring forth of corruption upon the earth and the seas?

Corruption has certainly gone forth on all sides. From hour to hour, the numbers of sick and dead unfold. No national boundary can stop the spread. The idea of sovereignty, of managing the exception and the emergency, has taken on both old and new meanings. Our democratically elected sovereignty-mongers, chosen in public combat by voters whose humanity has been reduced to a binary choice for or against, have been surprised in the nakedness of their inability to bamboozle the pandemic with their populist tricks.

The political leader offers himself to the people on condition that he be elected, as only he can lift up the endangered nation and lead it out of its difficulties and humiliation, but his populist narrative founders once actually introduced into the political order.

The pseudo-prophetic promises of the battle for political office must be brushed away and forgot, and that requires a new crisis to frighten the people with, so that they may seek exit from the fear of disease and death in absolute submission to the leader and whose enemies they shall take for their own.

A potential leader offers himself to the people in and through an image, as a prophet. He knows that the present is not all good, which is a betrayal of the sacred oath his supposed predecessors took. He says only what the fearful and disturbed majority wants to hear, standing outside and above this intolerable now, promising a different and essentially better future, guaranteeing the people everything they lack now if they stand with him. Once he has captured the power he craves and is constitutionally and legally ensconced within the governmental order, however, an unsettled feeling about the now begins to reappear. The people are still fearful and poor, sick and hungry. They still expect things to be changed by those in power. Power they see as the condition through which their wishes will be fulfilled.

The emergency they used to criticise the establishment when fighting for office and to interpret and legitimate their arguments for change ceased to exist when they took power. They no longer transcend that emergency. So now the leader's new authority is used to suborn followers and scare or threaten critics. But never enough, because the political order which the leader is now identified with, is unjust and that can never be hidden.

The political leader's nakedness in this *now* is obvious in the context of the legal order. Recourse to stories of the past and promises of the future will not obscure it. So he seeks out an emergency to rise again as prophet and as unquestioned and de facto unbound sovereign of the state. The pandemic seems tailor-made. It allows the leader to manage the people in their fear of sickness and death. But only experts and scientists have any real answers to offer on how to combat the affliction or heal the sick. Only they know how to combat and contain the plague or heal those it has afflicted.

As a result, the leader's role in combating and controlling the pandemic and healing the sick has three important aspects. First to admit his lack of competence to manage the processes of combating and limiting the plague or healing those affected by it and so to delegate that task to scientists and experts. Second to ensure

those scientists and experts have the conditions and resources required for the task. And third, to insist strenuously on the moral and legal obligation of everyone in government, no matter how personally loyal to him, to look after the vulnerable and eschew every attempt to exploit that vulnerability to legitimate illegal activities. The sanctity of individual life is the principle of all judgement. But even that principle does not legitimate illegal violation or suspension of the law or illegal interpretation of it. Faced with this necessity, populist leaders sense their own nakedness. They should admit it, but can or will not, and so pretend that everything they say and do is based on knowledge. They appeal for authority to invisible scientists in the background or surround themselves with quasi-scientists.

Even populist politicians who actively seek an emergency to reinforce their role as saviours of the nation have been flummoxed by the appearance of the corona plague. They need a political and theological enemy. The political enemy borders on the alien and is without theological grounding. It may have its fifth column amongst the people, which is anyone who doesn't think like the leader. The theological enemies are inside, in otherness or advocacy of it, in any identity that refuses to be retrofitted to the leader's preferred model. As a threat, corona lies beyond his understanding of enemies. Which is why this plague forces the leader to transform the scientists and experts combating and containing the threat and healing its consequences into ideological witchdoctors.

The leader won't willingly surrender his inalienable authority and vocation to speak on every and anything during public presentations. The good is his doing, the blame goes to others, whom he appoints and sacks. So, the leader insists on the threat to the survival of the nation. Fear of disease and death legitimates the unquestionable status of his orders, commands, and other measures, along with his arbitrary dissipation of the public wealth, which none dare oppose. The greater the fear, the more mandatory and less legitimate the obedience required to the leader and his witchdoctors. This is why his hiring and firing of government officials, (mis)management of resources and finances, and reorganisation of the public sphere transgress further and further any legal order and accountability.

The scientists and the experts are not making the decisions, because their roles, imposed by the pandemic, cannot and shall not infringe upon his political authority. More than that, decisions that can't be avoided must still reinforce the ideology of the political authorities. The problem with the pandemic is that it rejects interpretation under the usual paradigms for the enemy, the political or the theological. Causes of fear and suffering under pandemic siege are sought in vain in the distant past, just as no solutions will be found in the distant future. Answers actually proposed and implemented, because they are too urgent to delay, will be affirmed or denied by the numbers of sick and dying. A veil of fear of disease and death and the need for immediate answers hides all sorts of irresponsibility and greed. But an upright few, stirred by a sense of concern and called to answer suffering with solidarity, do still assume responsibility to care for the vulnerable. Unexpected and unprecedented affliction divides us into the inevitable polarity – the beautifully upright and the low and base. This is how the now disturbs the leader, who would hide from it but cannot.

The people of Sarajevo are under a regime imposed on their behaviour and work and justified by the pandemic threat, as is every other community around the world today. It is as though we were all focused on only one death, only death caused by coronavirus, fear of which has caused us to forget death's universality and inevitability. All other death, from hunger or cancer, alcohol or smoking, traffic accidents and suicide, malaria and flu, or war... seem somehow expelled over that boundary established by this siege. The fact that we so overinterpret getting sick and dying as a result of the coronavirus without knowing its full nature is precisely what provides cover for our political authorities in their incompetence. No one knows how to beat this invisible enemy. We know far more of other causes of death than we don't about the coronavirus. Should we ask, what has this generalised fear of just one form of death done to our responsibility for every individual life?

When the great Anti-Bosnian War began at the beginning of the final decade of the last century, it imposed a brutal military siege on Sarajevo, the capital city of the Bosnian state. Tanks and guns, rocket launchers and machine guns and sniper nests were set up in a wide and deep ring around the city and for 1460 days

killed and wounded people with no way to escape. Private and public property was destroyed and set on fire. Water, electricity, and gas were cut off. In the helplessness of those they had trapped in the siege, its authors and technicians found support for their mission: Destroy the Bosnian idea of a plural society once and for all and raise a monument to our murderous passion on the killing field.

Then too suffering and death, caused by the slaughter and destruction of the siege, produced a division into two opposing poles of beautiful uprightness and low baseness. Those who decided to defend the town and Bosnia too seemed dangerous lunatics in the eyes of their mighty enemy, who mocked them, saying "What can these poor fools do in the jaws of an army as powerful as ours?" But for these defenders of Bosnia denying death by denying the fear of death was how to stand upright in the sanctity of life. Many thought they had never seen such humanity or irrefragable arguments for it. Others sought shelter or ways to flee. Those people were everywhere, in power and among the criminals, from whom some of the first also came. The worst and the best in us were everywhere on display, but the essence of those days of Sarajevan and Bosnian pain was that good is stronger than evil.

Things in Sarajevo then quieted down for a while. But after the brutal shelling and the many deaths, the town and everything in it felt as though it had been killed too. During the first months of 1993, at the peak of the killing and destruction, as people were still learning to ignore the feeling everyone who heard a shell had that it was heading straight towards them, a group of 10 people involved in establishing and strengthening the defence of the city would walk in the late evenings down the street from their offices in the oldest part of the town. Few windows still had glass unshattered by shells. That year of killing Bosnia was coming to an end, and there was a stench of damp spreading from the buildings, whose roofs had caved in and whose interiors were soaked by rainwater and snow.

There was no one else on the streets. Dogs and cats, their owners dead or departed, stared in shock at these late evening passers-by. Hungry and recently made homeless, they searched the streets for traces of blood left by the dead and the wounded to lick. Their night-time path took them first past the Orthodox

Congregational Church of the Most Holy Mother of God, to the right, and the Catholic Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, to the left, then the Ferhadija mosque to the right, the Kal synagogue to the left, the Bey's mosque to the right, up to the Čaršija or Central Town mosque, and then back again. As infantry fire and shell explosions echoed through the night, but from what seemed far away from the dying Čaršija, or town centre. The murderous shells might begin to fall again in that part of town too, though, at any moment.

Locked down in his apartment, thanks to the anti-pandemic regime, the author cannot now avoid comparing our current global siege thanks to our ignorance of the virus and our fear of it with that murderous assault on and siege of Sarajevo. Recalling those walks down that dark street, he brings back to memory the major question of that date: Has this Sarajevo been killed off? The dark, the abandonment, and the stench of death forced the question on him then, but equally he knew that the small group of people around whom the town's defenders had crystallised served a higher ideal of Bosnia: To let people's differences follow their guides on their different paths – in their monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques – to find glory and praise of the name of God, the All Merciful, the Ever Merciful. During those night hours, Sarajevo really did look dead. The ideal to which Sarajevo's houses of worship all bore witness had been obscured by modern ideological images of a world without God, a world in which man raises himself to the level of Lord and engages in unstinting destruction of that external world, its order and horizons, and his own place within them.

Whenever a ceasefire was called and the shelling and the shooting quietened down, the boys and girls, young men and young women, and old men and old women would emerge, miraculously clean and shining with hope and pride, from this seemingly dead town onto those seemingly dead and abandoned streets. And the author would say to himself: this is Bosnia's head, the fount of its sublime ideal, that people can through their interaction realise that form of being in most beautiful uprightness which is their reason and purpose. Bosnia could not be killed. Here was the proof of it: even when caught up in those iron jaws, this city lived in the faces of its children!

Caught between evil and good, in the glare of Sarajevo's now, when all seemed lost to the majority, our only refuge was in such reasons for hope: These children will never allow themselves to be forced to live according to others' views of them, never allow others to deny them their right to life, freedom, self-concern, and commitment to Truth, to acknowledge which is justice. The only proof of this is our care for those weaker than us. Now, nearly three decades later, the author asks himself: Do those who hold power today in the state know anything of that hope or the sacrifice made for it? And he asks: Do they know that every time they betray their moral and legal duties, they join forces with those siege criminals and continue their assault on Bosnia and everything associated with that sacred name?

Rendered arrogant by military power, deployed in yet another assault on the Bosnian ideal, and convinced that he was completing that ancient task of homogenising a nation raised up to be a god instead of God, the patriarch of that murderous assault on Bosnia said sometime before that spring in 1993: "Sarajevo is the head of the serpent. We hold it in an iron grip. We will not, we cannot let it go." A Bosnian politician, involved in the peace negotiations asked that man's deputy: "How long will you go on killing Muslims?" The response, without hesitation: "Until you stop advocating coexistence." The essence of this criminal anti-Bosnian credo may be expressed as follows: We, the warrior elite of a godless nationalism, will stop killing you only when you start killing yourselves and finish our job for us!

Various means have been developed for pursuing this criminal goal. First, deny the existence of the Bosnian people, against all the evidence they have been around for more than a millennium. Second, present Bosnia's religious plurality as an unhappy consequence of external and, from the perspective of the ideology of Orientalism, despotic power. Third, offer various privileges to any Bosnians prepared to deny that ideal and accept reduction of the Muslim component of Bosnia's people to mere religiosity, ideologically alienated from proper self-awareness or self-responsibility. Once that component of Bosnia's people is safely shut up, politically and psychologically, in its ghetto, crumpled into a quasi-tribe with its tribal chief, the redemptive ideal of Bosnian identity, its recognition of internal difference safeguarded by a just political order, shall have been well and truly killed. Those

Bosnians will have been killed in their essence so that they may be resurrected as something they are not.

That siege of Sarajevo, which affected all the people of Bosnia and divided them into two opposed poles, one oriented towards good, the other towards evil, abandoned to their own resources by a world that largely ignored them, and this pandemic siege, for which ideologically informed differences between people are so unimportant, and maybe all the suffering and hardship that there ever has or will be all remind and admonish us that we come into this world alone and we leave it alone and that we alone are responsible for every atom of good and evil we have done while here. Did not we all, together and individually, swear an oath to the absolute Principle of existence that we would discover within ourselves and through our self-development the unconditioned meaning of existence?!

We did, and it was an oath to take responsibility for ourselves and for the world before that Principle. That oath connects contingent human being with the absolute Principle. We can forget it or deny it. But when we do, we stop being our own people, being free. We are our own people only when we and the world belong entirely to the absolute Principle. It may sometimes seem that certain forms that recall that oath and its many renewals remain meaningful, even without reference to the Principle, His glory and praise, and our responsibility to Him. But without that essential reference, we are no longer led on the upright path that leads from fear to knowledge and from knowledge to love, and then it is all just dead houses and rituals. The individual and the world, every individual and the entire world, are sacrosanct revelations of the absolute Principle. When something, no matter how small or great, in that unique temple, in which we reflect the world and the world reflects us, is injured, how shall we escape the response of that sacrosanct whole?

Every siege, including those of the war against Bosnia and these of our pandemic times, causes a cry to go up of the frightened and the sick, who ask: Will the witnesses of justice and her defenders ever come out from the monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, with the name of God on their lips? More than this, will God's commands be made real? The stranger who lives among you will become as one born among you and you will love him as yourselves; you will love the Lord your God with

all your heart and all your soul and all your mind, which is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like it, love thy neighbour like thyself; you, the faithful, be constant in your support of justice, and in your witness of God, even if it count against you, your parents, and your kin, wealthy and poor!

We are embroiled in an increasingly brutal conflict with the world. We are increasingly convinced that the world is powerless and at our feet. The more we assault and exhaust and destroy and transform it, the surer we are of raising ourselves to the throne as ruler. Just as we reinforce this image as ruler served by the world, the spread of corruption on the earth and the seas grows obvious. Our tyranny over the earth and everything in it necessarily provokes some form of striking back at the tyrant. The knowledge in which we have grown may seem great to us, but it is always little compared to the unattainable knowledge of the Absolute. Whenever we base our action exclusively upon our small knowledge, and it always is small, it will produce violence and corruption in the world and the self that acts upon it.

The world and everything in it are constantly changing. This is because they are beings in space and time, neither of which is absolute. They are contingent and cannot be observed without being allocated a beginning and an end. That being and that end are not time or space. Because they are unchanging and indivisible. When time and space and everything in them reveal this Unity, in which the absolute beginning is the same as the absolute end, the flux of the world's ceaseless coming into and going out of being and that of everything in it reveals itself in perfect order.

When the visible universe's start time, and so the very first possibility of spatio-temporal and consequently of mass-energy measurement, is determined, everything in that entire flux – which is to say the billions of galaxies like that in which the Earth with all its particles is – is brought into focus by human beings. Man is the keystone of existence. We are the summa of the contingent and so the last thing in that flux, as we are the first in the Consciousness of the One Who reveals Himself as Unconditional in the contingent all. The further we remove ourselves from the harmony of what is in the world and what is in the self (their identity), we render that distinction impossible. The essence of all our knowledge is the *anthropic principle*.

We observe the inner and the outer worlds, rejecting any impossibility of penetrating further and deeper. We grow in knowledge. We accept no limits to that growth. There is clear evidence that the world is as we see it: if it weren't, we wouldn't be there to see it, or rather to contain its image within ourselves as our selves, so that it, in all its majesty and complexity, is in our image too. But we and the world are contingent. So are our attributes. The contingent cannot be its own principle. That is why the contingent in the world and in our selves reveals and relates to the unconditioned It Is. Forget or deny this and fall into unconsciousness and lose purposeful and goalful being. Oblivious being loses contact with blessedness.

If the absolute One manifests Itself in the constant flux and so through spatial-temporal and mass-energy phenomena, there will be neither surplus nor deficit. Not a leaf on a tree nor a fly exists without reason and purpose. They have their claim and their debt to the One and to all that reveals Him. They realise themselves through us, however, because the world gathers in us. This does not make us lords of the world. Rather, it is only in humility, generosity, and right doing that we realise our relationship with the absolute Lord.

Nothing exists that does not glorify the Lord with praise. Existence and everything in it are placed under obligation by this and so rightly praised. God, the All-Praised, is revealed in and through existence. All this being comes together in us, who are also praised. When we take a stand against the external quarters of existence, we stand against our own selves. We raise ourselves up as little lords in place of the Lord and do violence against ourselves, the world, and God. Nor do we see our guilt in what we cannot accomplish or in the consequences of what we have done against ourselves, the world, and God.

Imam 'Ali ibn 'Abi Talib told a story of the miraculous creation of the bat to remind us of the inviolability of all of creation. We fear the unknown. But we have a responsibility towards it. It can seem to us that only that which physical light reaches is illuminated. But God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. Fear of Him is the source of wisdom. In talking of the bat and how it is part of the perfect order of creation, virtuous Ali reminded his fellows of their responsibility for the bat. The bat has no responsibil-

ity for them. We have been tasked with protecting its rights, an obligation we cannot put off on anyone else.

Emilijan Lilek, the Slovenian historian and ethnologist, wrote in 1894 that the Bosniaks were perhaps the only European people to consider the bat a blessed animal. May not our fear in the face of this spreading plague and the sickness and death it has brought to all peoples be precisely a warning against our obliviousness and the forms of action we have built upon it, which have caused us to cease being a steward and a servant in the world with responsibility for all it contains? Sacred wisdom contains our acknowledgement of our own responsibility for our condition on earth and consciousness that we can return ourselves to heaven: “Oh Lord our God, we have committed injustice against ourselves!”

Translated by Desmond Maurer

RESTRICTIONS AND REPRESSION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC APPROACH TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL MEASURES IN THE TIME OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Nerin Dizdar

Introduction

After the global outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, and the subsequent declaration of a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, states and administrative units at the below-state level, have reacted differently to this public health threat. Various forms of restriction have been introduced on a global scale to protect public health, along with economic measures and other measures aimed at pandemic prevention. Depending on their internal organization and the rate at which the pandemic was spreading, government measures have been subject to change or repeal, a practice that is continuing to the present.

The approaches taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighboring countries will be assessed in this text, with a focus on the public elaboration of certain restrictive measures, regulations, and the general state of society under pandemic, as managed by government authorities. The analytical accent is on restrictive measures and potential abuse of them to impose repressive measures that may limit or endanger civil and other basic rights guaranteed by law or the constitution. We also assess the proportional-

ity in implementation of restrictive and other measures to preserve social order and measures related to the economy.

The actions of Bosnia and Herzegovina at national level

It is worth stressing at the outset that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only nation in Europe and probably the world that has not introduced a unified set of measures to tackle the pandemic in any sphere of public life. This includes restrictive social measures. The Coordination Body for the Protection and Rescue of Citizens and Material Goods from Natural and Other Disasters has held two meetings, and, after the second one, held on 23 March 2020, its chair, the Security Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, resigned from the position of chair (on 30 March 2020). According to the available data, the body has not met since. At that second and only full working session (it was constituted at the first), they agreed the proposed text of a request for international aid to tackle the pandemic and sent it to the Council of Ministers for final approval. Municipal, cantonal and entity-level crisis management committees were advised to keep their requests for assistance from the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a minimum, as it was to be requested only when all other means had been exhausted.

Returning to other measures declared at national level, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at its March 16 session, adopted a set of eighteen conclusions, while Presidency Member, Milorad Dodik, said that for the European Union not to all the export of medical equipment was bad and that “we will not forget this”. Of the eighteen measures, almost all are recommendations and reviews of action by other institutions at various levels, the only practical conclusion being the order to the Armed Forces to make all its resources available for the purpose of protecting the population from the pandemic.

The Council of Ministers declared a state of natural or other disaster on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 17 March and passed a Decision setting additional conditions for entry by foreigners to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a supplement to the Decision on forming the Coordination Body for the Protection and Rescue of Citizens and Material Goods from Natural and

Other Disasters. The Chair of the Council of Ministers explained that its role is to coordinate all activities in the fight against the coronavirus in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Declaration of the decision on foreigners entering the country is important from a symbolical standpoint, as it coincided with a palpable increase in xenophobia and mistrust towards foreigners, specifically migrants, in public discourse.

A day earlier, the Security Ministry of Bosnia and Herzegovina had issued an instruction to the police and security agencies to “take illegal economic migrants off the streets as soon as possible”. Introduction of the adjective “economic” alongside the noun migrants is quite indicative, as it had not been used before. The intention is clear: desensitization of the public towards this group. Labeling migrants “economic” relativizes the scope their personal tragedy and shifts focus away from associations of war and general instability, which are the recognized cause of the migrations, to an alleged exclusively economic cause for migration from the Middle East and Central Asia. It is important to underline that in either case the cause of migration is existential need but that by “economizing” it an alibi is established for further repressive treatment of the population. The Ministry issued an additional public instruction to the heads of the police agencies to “deliver orders to police officers to act more energetically than before” in dealing with migrants. This instruction can only be interpreted as a call to use force of an extreme degree in relation to this category, which was already deprived of numerous rights.

Anti-migrant sentiment culminated with the accusation that migrants were contributing to a deepening of the economic crisis, for which purposes a number of eight to ten thousand migrants was used by the authorities, to present the migrants as an “immense burden” on the economy, even if such a group would make up roughly 0.25% of the population. It is important to stress that Bosnia receives millions of euros from EU funds to secure minimal living conditions for the migrants in the country. Accusing migrants of deepening the economic crisis therefore certainly displays several of the characteristics of the propagandist activity of scapegoating, not unlike the methods used in the rhetoric of radical and Nazi movements during the 20th century. It is a known social phenomenon for a dominant group to seek out the cause of its problems and deficiencies in others. It is interesting that this

phenomenon is occurring alongside an omni-present internal racism and discrimination against a population on the basis of specific identity markers, primarily their religious and ethnic identity. The political elites that promote such relations find a shared “other” in the migrants, onto whom they project their individual and collective frustrations and hatred, exercising a certain form of joint repression under the current circumstances.

On 23 April 2020, the Security Minister said Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to get rid of the “burden of the economic migrants” by deporting them to their countries of origin, calling for all those without personal documents to be detained. He said that “it is possible they are members of terrorist groups, who will wait here for a year or two to hide their pasts and play the role of sleepers.” This made the position of the migrants more complex, given the notable paradox that they were simultaneously being labeled “economic” migrants and being marked as suspected members of militant terrorist groups.

This desensitizing of the population regarding the migrants’ status was accompanied by additional negative categorization that presented them as a threat to the domestic population, meeting all the criteria for extensive repressive activity and the violation of this population group’s rights and even the exercise of violence against them. Milorad Dodik declared that “those who have entered illegally must be thrown out of Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately. This is not a humanitarian but a security issue.” The last sentence sums up the transition in public perceptions of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have now, without any legal grounds, been proclaimed a security threat, amid increasingly frequent calls for their expulsion.

A particularly interesting episode relates to the Security Minister’s call for deportation of the ambassador of Pakistan, because of a lack of cooperation over the deportation of his compatriots from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is an unprecedented case in political practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina and reactions were split, and it produced conflict in public between the political parties.

Desensitization regarding the migrant population is particularly surprising given past experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not only during and after the war of the 1990s, but also our society’s historical openness towards the underprivileged. In the past,

Bosnia and Herzegovina has often been not just a way station but a destination for endangered and persecuted groups.

Actions at lower levels of administration

The authorities at lower administrative levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the entities in particular, have been more concrete and direct in prescribing measures than the national-level authorities. It is important to stress, however, that the authorities of both entities and the District of Brčko have emphasized prescribing so-called health measures, most of which are restrictive measures for the general population. In fact, all measures declared within a month of the appearance of virus COVID-19 related to various forms of limitation and proscription or defining the procedural rules of conduct in health institutions. Not a single economic measure was adopted during the first month after the outbreak. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first economic measures were introduced two months after the outbreak.

For comparison's sake, just in the region, Republic of Croatia declared a state of epidemic on 12 March. The government introduced a first set of sixty economic measures five days later, on 17 March, and on 2 April it introduced a second package of economic measures. The Republic of Serbia announced a state of emergency on 15 March, and ten days later, on 25 March, adopted a set of economic measures for tackling the negative effects of the pandemic. Montenegro registered its first two cases of COVID-19 on 17 March, and two days later, on 19 March, the government there had announced its first set of economic measures. North Macedonia declared a state of emergency on 18 March and adopted its first set of economic measures a week later, on 25 March, and a second set on 3 April.

On the other hand, the executive in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina introduced measures that exclusively limited or suspended certain civil rights and freedoms, including the right to work, the right to freedom of movement, and even the right to freedom of speech, justifying it on the grounds that criticism of the measures and any irregularities represented the spreading of panic among the public. The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has ruled that the decision by the Federal

Headquarters of Civil Protection and the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to restrict the movement of persons under the age of 18 and over the age of 65 was an unconstitutional violation of their basic rights. Nevertheless, one should stress that the restrictions on movement have produced positive results, as, despite the limited resources of the health system, the number of those infected and deceased is relatively low in Bosnia and Herzegovina compared to most of the other countries in the region. The measures have worked, however, because the public has shown responsibility and discipline in following the restrictive measures.

A particularly problematic issue is that the government has not met its basic duty of care to the people. It has not ensured implementation of its own measures, so that authorities at all levels have participated in additional violations of rights, particularly the right of children to education. Schooling was suspended throughout the country at all daycare and school institutions, but state authorities at all levels failed to secure the technical and infrastructural conditions for all children to attend online classes. So, children from families in social need have not been provided the necessary tools, in the form of computers or tablets, or granted free internet access. This example exposes the disbalance in the acts of the governments, which have focused solely on restrictive measures that become repressive as soon as implementation begins to deprive individuals of rights.

Another recognizable phenomenon has been the tendency to introduce totalitarian principles of governance, concentrating power in the hands of small groups of individuals in executive positions, without any logical basis. While European Union countries have held parliamentary sessions on a regular basis despite the pandemic, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region there has been an evident trend to suspend democratic decision-making apparatuses. In Serbia, a state of emergency was declared on 15 March 2020, and then parliament was suspended and all power *de facto* concentrated in the hands of the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic. Measures to severely restrict movement were introduced, and citizens who violated them were harshly fined and some even indicted.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska has shown a clear tendency to imitate any measures introduced in Serbia,

reflecting the political background of adjusting its policies to the ideological center. It is interesting that a state of emergency was declared in this entity after political agreement was reached by representatives of two political parties, the SDA and the SNSD, after which they suspended the procedure for invoking the so-called vital national interest. In this way, a partocratic noninstitutional practice was introduced, whereby legislative bodies have been *de facto* suspended and excluded from decision-making processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even without the formal proclamation of a state of emergency as a legal mechanism.

Similar practice was seen in decision-making about taking a loan from the International Monetary Fund, this time under the sponsorship of the Mission of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Instead of negotiating conditions through the formal institutions, the Mission of the EU summoned the presidents of the three ethnocratic parties, indirectly acknowledging them as the “leaders” or chiefs of their respective ethnic groups. At a meeting that lasted a couple of hours, the trio agreed to take a loan of 330 million euro for Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with the principles for administering the money, without any consultation with the other political parties or any discussion and verification of the agreement through parliamentary procedure. By taking on 330 million euro in debt in the name of the country, they increased the debt of every citizen of the state, child and adult, by 110 euros, or around 440 euros per household. This increase in the debt owed by more than three million citizens was decided on by three men, who justified their anti-institutional actions by referring to the state of emergency, which is a continuous condition in our country.

At the same time, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were multiple attempts to suspend the work of parliament, by imposing a decision of the federal government, which has no authorities to do so, and by attempts to create conditions under which parliament could not meet, e.g., by banning travel and gatherings by larger groups. Such conditions would provide a justification for suspending the highest legislative body of the entity. These plans were not implemented, and the proclamation of the state of emergency in this entity does not entail the suspension of parliament.

Declaring a state of emergency does, however, transfer significant authority to the Crisis Response Committee of the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance, as a collective body. In this case, too, there has been a concentration of power in the hands of a small number of individuals. Originally, the Committee had 21 members, including the heads of the various institutions and agencies whose work is related to crisis management, working in a state of emergency, social and medical care, and other important functions of the system during a pandemic. Soon after it was formed, it was reduced to just seven members, which the Prime Minister justified by saying that the original structure “was too large, counting 21 persons, and that it had not risen to the tasks before it, especially acquiring medical equipment for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” For the sake of comparison, the same body in Serbia includes dozens of members with defined subcommittees and their heads, dependent on their field of expertise and jurisdiction. The Croatian counterpart has 22 members.

As a matter of fact, the purpose of such bodies is to plan and coordinate field activities quickly and efficiently. That is why they tend to have a lot of members, including the heads of ministries, state services, and agencies. The only goal achieved by reducing the size of the crisis management team was to narrow the decision-making process down to a small number of individuals in power, which as a rule leads to the abuse of power. The procedures for acquiring medical equipment are already the subject of multiple investigations by several state agencies, due to flagrant abuse and irregularities.

These examples, and many other cases, show that there is still a certain neo-communist understanding of the exercise of political power and management of state institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other countries of the region. Suspension of institutions and the activation of a concept of the all-powerful leader, who is above the system, is a continual practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, though the state somehow continues to function, even under these imposed real or pretended states of emergency.

NUTRITION AND THE CORONAVIRUS

Midhat Jašić

Introduction

Viruses have no real cures and that includes the coronavirus. When disease occurs, treatment is of the symptoms. The only real remedy is to prevent contact with the sick, though hygiene, disinfection and sanitation also have preventive value.

In nutrition, health and food hygiene are always the first priorities in handling and consumption. Then come nutritional value and any bio-active (medicinal) substances the food may contain. While food is definitely not medicine for diseases like Covid-19, it can help strengthen the immune system. Recent studies, and long-known facts, indicate a high degree of probability that active components in food can strengthen the human immune system and so support the treatment of Covid-19. Importantly, while the factors of immune system strength and vitality may be genetic (innate) or acquired, they can also be influenced by age, lifestyle, stress, sleep quality, and other life habits.

Being overweight carries risks and can reduce overall immunity and is consequently an additional risk factor, as is physical inactivity. Both factors come to the fore in isolation conditions. Physical activity promotes blood circulation and balances the immune and hormonal systems.

Stress can weaken the immune system and reduce the cell activity required to defend against viral and other diseases. This implies that deregulation and reduced efficiency of the immune system are related to aging, which is probably why the elderly are more susceptible to viral infections.

Immune modulation through dietary strategy has yet to find confirmation in practice but does promise to maintain general

immune homeostasis and the well-being of both the individual and the population.

Compounds and components of food with immuno-modulatory action

The immune system consists of several entities. The skin is the first organ of defence. Then come the digestive and vascular systems and defence systems at the level of each cell and tissue. Some food ingredients have their predominant effect on the digestive system, some on the circulatory system, and some on metabolic processes at the cellular level.

There are three groups of components in food: nutrients (macro and micro), biologically active ingredients, and toxic or harmful components. Nutrients are substances important for obtaining energy, building the body, and protecting and regulating metabolic processes. Biologically active components are not nutrients but do play an important role in protecting health and strengthening the immune system. Harmful components are most often residues from production or contaminants that reduce the efficiency of the defence system (they act as immunosuppressants), while nutrients and biologically active ingredients strengthen it (immunostimulants). This means that there are many natural compounds in food that have an immunostimulatory effect in the digestive tract, in the bloodstream, or in the circulatory system in general. These ingredients have different mechanisms for defensive action. Some of them destroy or inhibit forms of microorganism in direct contact. This action is performed by destroying the phospholipids' membrane, inhibiting enzymatic reaction or acting on the genetic structure of microorganisms. Alternatively, they may have an indirect impact on the immune system through various biochemical mechanisms.

When it comes to nutrition, the body's first line of defence is the digestive system, which makes up the largest part of the immune system. Digestive system immune factors are made up of naturally occurring components which form an integral part of that system. These are, first of all, natural antibacterial components in the mouth, such as: IgA, enzymes (lysozyme and myeloperoxidase) and mucin. Mucosal barriers in the mouth and nose perform a significant function in the immune system, especially

mucin and lysozyme. The mucosal barrier has been proven to be very powerful. On the other hand, it should be noted that dry air destroys the mucosa in the nose and mouth. Dry air in a room dries out the mucous membrane, so the recommendation to maintain relative humidity at between 60 and 80% is extremely important.

The acidic pH value in the stomach and the alkali value in the small intestine are a kind of antibacterial and protective factor. The rest of the digestive system is intestinal biota and Gut-Associated Lymphoid Tissue, or GALT. In fact, the gut has the largest mass of lymph tissue in the body. GALT also stores immune cells, such as T and B lymphocytes, that defend the digestive tract from pathogens.

A second aspect that can strengthen the immune system is the wide range of ingredients ingested with food. From the group of milk and dairy products, this includes colostrums, probiotics, whey, sour milk and curd cheese. They contain well-studied ingredients like immunoglobulin, immunoalbumins, lysozyme, free nucleotides, free amino acids, conjugated linolenic acid (CLA), lecithin, and calcium, amongst others.

The group of fruits and vegetables includes berries and berry fruits that have been especially important lately due to their high content of polyphenols and flavonoids, especially anthocyanins and proanthocyanidins, which have proven protective roles. These ingredients act as powerful antioxidants. Nuts are a source of essential linolenic acid and vitamin E. In general, fruits and vegetables contain phytochemicals (polyphenols, flavonoids, carotenoids, phytosterols, lignans, etc.), as well as water-soluble and liposoluble vitamins. Each type of fruit and vegetable contains a specific active ingredient; allyl sulphides in garlic stimulate enzymes responsible for the elimination of toxic substances from the body, isocyanates from broccoli and other cabbages stimulate protective enzymes, indoles from green leafy vegetables have antiestrogenic effects, soy isoflavones have multiple ability to reduce the risk of cancer colon, while flaxseed lignans, antioestrogens, flavonoids and carotenoids from fruit and vegetables have antioxidant action against free radicals and so significantly reduce the risk of damage to DNA structure.

Cereals, and especially the husk, contain beta glucans with anti-inflammatory effects. Cereal germ is rich in protein enzymes,

minerals calcium and iron and vitamin E. Mushrooms are known for their beta glucan and selenium (antioxidant). Algae like Kelp, Nori, Kombu, Wakame, Spirulina and Chlorella are a significant source of iodine and chlorophyll and minerals from the sea. Brewer's yeast is a source of selenium, but also of most B-complex vitamins, as well as of beta glucans. Bee products like honey, pollen, propolis, and royal jelly are useful as immunomodulators.

Particularly prominent antimicrobial factors in spicy vegetables include allicin in onion, capsaicin in hot peppers, piperine in pepper, cinnamon aldehyde in cinnamon, eugenol in cloves, carvacol in oregano, and thymol in thyme, hot pepper (alpsil pepper) isothiocyanate in mustard, oleuropein in olive oil, catechins in green tea, lycopene from tomatoes, and so forth. Teas and herbs are an extremely important source of immunomodulatory and antimicrobial components.

The use of some nutrients, especially of vitamins E and C, minerals Se and Zn, and phytochemicals (polyphenols, flavonoids, carotenoids, saponins, lignans, etc.) and of the probiotics docosahexaenoic (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), is a very common nutritional tool to improve the immune system.

Products that do not consist of only one chemical entity, such as plant extracts, dietary supplements, and functional foods, can exhibit an even greater plurality of effects.

Folk medicine knows two forms of penicillin: Russian penicillin (garlic) and Jewish penicillin, or chicken soup with pepper and onion, which undoubtedly strengthen immunity and many believe also have antiviral effects.

Dietary supplements and preparations used for immune system support

Dietary supplements are concentrates and extracts of biologically active food ingredients or other sources with physiological functions that serve to further enrich the intake of nutrients in the usual daily diet. These extracts and concentrates contain larger amounts of a particular active substance than naturally occur in food. Their impact is based on the biological activity of the components they contain. Some of these supplements strengthen the immune system in general, especially at the cellular level, as powerful antioxidants. These are the food components already

mentioned but concentrated and prepared in different pharmaceutical forms.

The best-known are colostrums, royal jelly, preparations based on propolis, various preparations extracted and concentrated from fruits, vegetables, spices and herbs, and vitamins and minerals.

The therapeutic concentration of immunomodulators from food is often insufficient. There are many different types of dietary supplements available on the market. Some of the components cannot be synthesized in the human body at all after a certain age, most often after the forties. These include alpha lipoid acid, coenzyme Q10, and others, meaning they need to be taken with food. More than 60% of the world's population is deficient in Vitamin D.

Individuals' or groups' specific needs should be aligned with the immunomodulatory properties of individual products. A particular type of food with immunomodulatory action may not suit everyone, but the development of an individually tailored diet is something to strive for in the future. Such a concept would allow for a lack of essential nutrients and protective immune-stimulating substances to be compensated for by taking recommended doses of supplements as part of the daily diet.

Preparations can be bought in pharmacies and used to strengthen the immune system and so help in preventing viral infections. Such preparations contain alfa lipoid acid, acetyl cysteine and glucosamines, known antioxidants zinc and selenium, beta glucans, chokeberry, etc. Doses should be determined in consultation with a doctor or a nutritionist, taking health status, age, body weight, etc. into account.

Meal organization

The question of meal-scheduling now arises. The preparation and scheduling of daily meals should be based on moderation and variety, with the obligatory consumption of warm drinks, fresh fruit and vegetables, and whole grains. Recommended protein foods include the dairy products mentioned above and chicken and fish. Up to two eggs may be consumed per day.

For example, one may consume sour milk, kefir, or butter-milk for breakfast, not least because it is also recommended for

respiratory diseases. Tea and white coffee (especially with chicory) are also recommended. Lunch might be chicken soup (Jewish penicillin), meat stew, vegetable salad and wholemeal bread, while dinner would be half the food from lunch, with a focus on fish dishes and salads. Blue and North Sea fish are recommended. Recommended spices include garlic, ginger and lemon, hot and sweet peppers, pepper, oregano, cloves, and others.

Recommended foods include fruit and lactic acid dairy products.

It is good to have canned sardines and fish in the store cupboard (other cans are not recommended in a healthy diet for the elderly). Integral pasta is important.

It should be noted that black tea contains theophylline, which is normally used as a remedy for asthma, as it can help with respiratory problems (present in acute Covid19 conditions).

Conclusion and recommendation

Due to the concentration of powerful herbal compounds, many active ingredients in food help fight viruses and are favoured by practitioners of folk and even natural medicine. These are primarily active components in spices and herbs like cloves, garlic, onion, oregano, sage, basil, fennel, mint, rosemary, Echinacea, green tea, cinnamon, turmeric, and others.

The best studied immunomodulatory components of food are colostrums, probiotics, prebiotics, immunoalbumins, immunoglobulin, polyphenols, flavonoids, carotenoids, and betaglucons. Vitamins (C, E and D), minerals (Zn, Se), and many other ingredients from spices and aromatic herbs. Most of these ingredients are commercially available in the form of concentrated active ingredients as dietary supplements or functional foods.

Meal preparation and the use of dietary supplements should be planned in consultation with a doctor and a nutritionist, especially when it involves active food components like those mentioned above, because of possible contraindications and interaction with drugs.

To sum up, nutritional and dietary measures are a good idea for all age groups and special activities should be taken to help the most vulnerable, especially grandparents and those over 65.

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THE PANDEMIC, THE NATION, AND FREEDOM

Taner Aličehić

Today Europe and the world at large are facing an entirely new challenge. There can be no doubt about the need to “analyse” the unexpected appearance of a virus so little was known about beforehand. The circumstances and ramifications in the north of Italy and the secrecy of the Chinese authorities over the number of the infected and dead have reminded the governments of liberal democracies that they cannot leave matters to fate. The facts at their disposal scared many serious European politicians, who resorted to radical measures in the absence of information. The need for these measures is already questionable today. But better safe than sorry, especially when dealing with an unknown disease.

The possibility of abuse of the pandemic by governments has alarmed intellectuals and thinkers around the world. One of the first reactions came from the well-known Israeli historian and author Yuval Noah Harari,¹ who pointed out that human rights could be at risk, in light of abuses of technology. Harari notes that the global fight against the pandemic may have significant repercussions for population control and surveillance technologies.

There is no need to doubt the good intentions of politicians in most liberal democracies, where individual human rights are sacred and have long been enshrined in these societies’ statements of their values and incorporated into political education. More questionable are the intentions of politicians ruling nations that have faltered on the path of civil society development. Within such national identities, the individual has (still) to become the

1 Yuval Noah Harari, “The world after coronavirus”, *Financial Times*, 20 March 2020.

focus of national policy, instead of the collective. Hence, human rights are not among the priorities of the ruling caste. These are nations, or rather national ideologies that have not rid themselves of the detrimental legacy of original nationalisms. It is precisely in these societies that the crisis has brought about “ill-intentioned” decisions, from “security measures” aimed at silencing the opposition and facilitating a victory in upcoming elections to controls imposed on citizens through the use of modern technologies and even the first signs of dictatorial behaviour.

In the European media space, it was Hungary and Serbia that attracted particular attention among professional reporters. Aleksandar Vučić, or, as *Der Spiegel*² referred to him, the “corona dictator”, is mentioned alongside Hungarian president Viktor Orbán as one of the politicians who have used the circumstances to extend their influence. The article notes that, of the countries in the region, Serbia has recently distanced itself most from the rule of law. Serbian opposition politicians, civil rights activists, and the independent media speak unanimously of a constitutional violation in the form of a coup by President Vučić.

In Hungary,³ Viktor Orbán has used a new law to assume additional powers that have elicited serious concern in the European Community. The opposition and democratic public have warned that the new law allows the authorities to curtail freedom of speech and prosecute all those who disagree with the ruling policy. Anyone concealing information that may help contain the epidemic is subject to rigorous sanctions (up to 5 years in prison), while the prosecutors have broad discretion in “estimating” what constitutes false information. The new law also undermines the right to new elections and referendums.

Which nations, or rather, which national ideologies are susceptible to abuse of the situation to quash human freedoms?

Today, both Serbia and Hungary are poisoned by a dangerous nationalism intent on “redrawing” borders. At the time of the pandemic, Victor Orbán’s “references” to the borders of Greater Hungary, which disappeared in 1920, have awakened old ghosts. Orbán has decided to stir the most primitive impulses of his peo-

2 *Der Spiegel*, “Die Demokratie wird eingesperrt”, Keno Verseck, 28 April 2020.

3 “For Autocrats, and Others, Coronavirus Is a Chance to Grab Even More Power” by Selam Gebrekidan, *NY Times*, March 30, 2020.

ple in order to show his electorate that Europe has never “liked” Hungary. And that, if they know what’s good for them, Hungarians must find their own way, Orbán’s way.⁴ Official Serbia has exhibited similar behaviour, never missing an opportunity to stress its territorial aspiration to the neighbouring Bosnian state by way of its Trojan horse in the guise of Milorad Dodik. Seeking international support and legitimacy to continue the genocidal policies of war criminals from the 1990s, throughout the crisis Serbia has endeavoured to ingratiate itself with the “fraternal peoples” of China and Russia. “When China sent an aircraft with help to Serbia, President Vučić made a great show of it. But, when far more substantial EU aid arrives there is no fanfare and no President in sight,” tweeted Carl Bildt, Swedish diplomat and think tank co-chair.⁵

Expansionist nationalism is by its very nature an aggressive and radical form of nationalism, and today it has permeated both Serbian and Hungarian official policy. At its core is a lack of respect for state borders. This type of nationalism was found in the policies of Germany, Italy, and Japan on the eve of the Second World War, but today it is discernible in the policies of Balkan nations in the form of Greater Albania, Greater Bulgaria, Greater Croatia, Greater Hungary, Greater Romania, and Greater Serbia. Some nationalist expansionist ideologies are interwoven with a kind of religious nationalism, where the identity of a people/nation is equated with religious belonging. The politicisation of religion and its influence in politics are common to this type of nationalism, which the Serbian national ideology has brought almost to perfection.

How do we resist the negative consequences of these current challenges?

The key word is trust. The trust that the government has towards its citizens, the trust of the population towards its government, trust among nations and, finally, trust among people who respect each other enough not to endanger each other.

4 “Što je točno Orbánova karta koja je uzburkala duhove, a Milanović ju je nazvao ‘mračnim fetišem’? Evo kako je najveća mađarska trauma prerasla u mit”, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, Marina Karlović Sabolić, 8 May 2020.

5 “Srbija: EU pomaže više, ali je Kina „bratska””, Sanja Kljajić for *DW*, 4 April 2020

It would be naive to expect that the technologies used in many countries during this crisis will simply disappear after the pandemic. They will remain in use by governments. The challenge is vast. It is worth remembering the scandal over *Cambridge Analytica*, which pales in comparison to what China has done during the pandemic.

Choosing between protecting the collective, health, and fighting these viruses, while at the same time feeding the unhealthy ambitions of small dictators and governments that may easily slip into totalitarianism is the challenge of the 21st century. And it is evident that many nations today have reason to be concerned for the future of democracy and human rights. And instead of the world uniting to fight a common evil, all nations have turned to measures that impose restrictions on their inhabitants.

Incidentally, I spent the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Canton of Zug in Switzerland. The authorities of this nation demonstrated a high degree of realistic thinking when it came to their attitude towards the population. The ban on gatherings never undermined individual rights. No one was banned from moving about, but regular communication helped build a relationship of trust that resulted in each individual behaving responsibly. People spoke at a distance, followed instructions, and avoided contact with the elderly and all other vulnerable groups. The economy continued to operate within its possibilities while upholding protection measures. On the day when safety measures were relaxed, all the people I spoke with were on their way to help, as much as possible, that portion of the population that had suffered economically over the past two months. With a mind to helping, they went to restaurants and shops and made appointments with their hairdressers. Not always out of need, so much as out of solidarity.

It is perhaps not even worth mentioning how inconceivable the Swiss find the concept of national identity as it is understood in Serbia. The Swiss are proud of their diversity in every respect, without degrading their national identity and without equating it with any single ethnic group (people), religious community, language or any other discriminatory factor that could endanger the individual. Swiss national identity is based on citizenship.

The coronavirus is a test of democracy and the notion of civil society based on individual rights, most certainly the highest

achievement of modern civilisation. We have seen how societies, nations, that systematically place the collective above the individual end up being abused for the benefit of the few in power. Isolationism, evidently cherished in nations that are either still developing democracy or are ideologically trapped in the above-described nationalisms, poses a real risk of return to dark times.

Time will tell whether this crisis will teach all nations to work together, to share knowledge and information, so that the human race may finally learn to defeat pandemics that can clearly, now more than ever, destroy everything this civilisation has achieved. That is why we need trust among people and among nations, as well as a much higher form of responsibility towards others on the part of the nation that has set the civilisational standards of our times, the United States of America. Nations that have achieved the highest degree of democracy and development and that have built societies where individuals and not collectives make the state successful have the responsibility to set an example.

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

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THE GLOBAL WORLD AFTER THE PANDEMIC: THE NOTION OF A POST-VIRUS WORLD AS CONCEIVED BY IMRAN HOSEIN AND ALEKSANDR DUGIN

Samir Beglerović¹ and Kerim Sušić

There is any number of ways to approach and analyse the challenges of the current pandemic. One we find both interesting and important is to examine the responses of intellectuals and its impact on their views about the future of the world. More precisely, given the importance of mass media and the internet, we think it urgent to look at the explanations of Covid-19's origin and spread currently being promoted in the virtual world. In this paper, we consider the views of two authors and popular internet lecturers and public speakers: Imran Hosein and Aleksandr Dugin. There are several reasons for our choice.

Imran Hosein and Aleksandr Dugin are acquainted with each other and jointly promote a number of theories.² Foremost among them is strong criticism of the Western Euro-Atlantic world and their shared belief that a better future for humanity is impossible without the complete disappearance of the bloc and the obliteration of its fundamental values. Second, both thinkers base their criticism and proposed solutions for overcoming the present dif-

1 Dr Samir Beglerović, a long-time active member of International Forum Bosnia and a professor at the Islamic Studies Faculty of Sarajevo University, contracted and died of the coronavirus in late 2020.

2 See, e.g., the round table with Imran Hosein and Aleksandr Dugin recorded by Eurasia TV, or Hosein's lecture on "Islam and the West". The round table was held at Lomonosov Moscow State University, 4 July 2013 (<http://dugin.ru/en/video/sheikh-imran-hosein-islam-and-west-english-only>)

ficult state of humanity, which they consider to be caused directly by Western ideology and the actions of the Euro-Atlantic geopolitical bloc, on *tradition* or at least traditional teachings of which they share an understanding, at least to some degree. Third, both authors agree that we are approaching the greatest war in the history of humanity, announced by all the monotheistic religions: the Malhama or Armageddon. Finally, both thinkers have a presence in Bosnia, not just as internet-lecturers but through their works, translated by sympathisers including some students at theology faculties. For Hosein's sympathisers, the connection between our authors is concealed from the public, especially as Hosein claims that what happened in Srebrenica was a major crime but not genocide. In his view, the Euro-Atlantic bloc needs the latter legal classification to calumniate the Christian Orthodox world and Serbia as an important ally of Russia in the Balkans.³

In the limited space of a paper, we will not be able to devote individual attention to each factor. We hope it will suffice to note that, though points of commonality exist, Hosein and Dugin articulate them differently, invoking different sources and speaking in the languages of different traditions.

Imran Hosein takes as his starting point two Islamic sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and relies extensively on classical Islamic theology. In his lectures, he goes a step further, expressing open criticism in some segments, especially of methods of interpreting the Qur'an and of valorising the tradition of God's last prophet Muhammad (pbuh). By contrast, Aleksandr Dugin constantly legitimises his theories as the logical and authentic continuation of the teachings of René Guénon and the traditionalist school. His thought is largely an idiosyncratic interpretation of modern philosophers, particularly Nietzsche and Heidegger, as well as a host of ancient and modern pseudo-mythologies.

It should therefore be clear why these two authors are significant, insofar as their thought is particularly engaged and presents, in our opinion, an original interpretation of current challenges. Nor are they alone in their endeavour, as a considerable

3 He has spoken about this a number of times, expressing grief for the innocent victims and condemning the crime. RTRS news, among others, reported his statement, 14 October 2015 (<https://youtu.be/YQZkvooXfgk76>).

number of intellectuals, from Henry Kissinger⁴ to Pope Francis,⁵ has addressed the challenge of the global pandemic in various ways, some even using the term “post-virus world”. On the other hand, the critical attitudes of Hosein and Dugin would seem to be based on a radical revision of traditional arguments and as such are extremely attractive to a wide audience. The number of visitors and regular consumers of their online content (YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter) provides sufficient confirmation of this.

Imran Hosein: The Ante-virus World as Heralding the Start of a Global Religious-Occult Stage of the Pax Judaica

Imran Hosein has developed his teaching out of the Islamic rationalist tradition. In other words, his theories are founded on the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and reason. He has, however, a specific understanding of each of these sources of knowledge. He recognises the Qur'an as Allah's last revelation to humanity in the form of a book and considers every segment of it sacred (*haram*), in the sense that every letter has significance both in and of itself and in relation to the entirety of the Qur'an.⁶ As a result, the Qur'an contain numerous meanings, from the literal to the occult. Understanding of its literal meaning depends directly on an appreciation of classic Arabic grammar and style, familiarity with recitative variants (*qira'āt*), and the Hadith. This knowledge is also the starting point for understanding the occult meanings. The exoteric meaning of the Qur'an is not strictly defined by the Islamic classics, and Hosein refers to recitative variants that are not included in the corpus of authentic traditions (*mutawātir*). The method of Quranic exegesis deployed is that of interpreting the Qur'an by the Qur'an (Ibn Kathir's method, e.g. in *al-Qur'ānu yufassiru ba'duhu ba'dan*). In his critiques, Hosein often warns

4 Henry A. Kissinger, “The Coronavirus Pandemic Will Forever Alter the World Order”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 3 April 2020 (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-coronavirus-pandemic-will-forever-alter-the-world-order-11585953005>).

5 “Pope dreams of post-virus world where inequalities abolished”, 19 April 2020 (<https://www.journal-news.com/news/world/pope-dreams-post-virus-world-where-inequalities-abolished/61IsP8Tgj9NAC1KroUR79N/>).

6 Imran N. Hosein, *An Introduction to Methodology for Study of the Qur'an*, San Fernando, Imran N. Hosein Publications, 2016, p. 15.-24.

against authors who rely on other sources and draw conclusions contrary to the literal text. The validity of other sources of Quranic exegesis or of knowledge, like the Sunnah or the Hadith, depends whether they can be verified by the Quranic text. Any hadith that is contrary to the Quranic text is classified as apocryphal (*mawḍūʿ*). Finally, the third method and third source of knowledge is reason. Following the logic of the emergence and development of Islamic speculative and philosophical theology or *kalām*, Hosein often points out that the strength and authenticity of a believer's religiosity depend on his deliberation and perseverance in deliberating on the content of God's Revelation. Parts of the Qur'an were revealed in a form entirely clear to man (*muḥkam*), but others are exceptionally difficult to understand (*mubham*), and yet others seem ambiguous or even polysemic (*mutashābih*). Given the unity of the Qur'anic text as such, however, it is often in the less clear and unclear ayahs that we find a natural complement to the main body of the Qur'anic text, so that our understanding of the meaning of these ayahs reveals a hidden meaning. Human reason is tasked with thinking (deliberation), but understanding the Qur'an's hidden meanings is a type of bestowed knowledge (*'ilm ladunnī*). Hosein calls this type of knowledge "Khidr's knowledge".⁷ This epistemological framework demonstrates two things: First, an undoubtedly excellent familiarity with the traditional sciences (*al-'ulūm an-naqliyya*) and acceptance of the fundamental meanings of Islamic sources based on classic Islamic theology, and, second, that some of Hosein's teachings are derived from difficult-to-understand polysemic content in the Qur'an and from Hadith that do not contradict the literal Qur'anic text but are not explicitly mentioned in it either. It is precisely this content that is at the core of Imran Hosein's teachings and their attractiveness.

In one authentic hadith it says that the arrival and stay of one of the greatest enemies of mankind, the false messiah the *Dajjal*, will last for forty days, of which the first day will be as long as a year, the second as a month, the third as a week.⁸ Employing the rational method, Hosein concludes that this hadith should be tak-

7 Imran Hosein, "Q&A – Hazrat Khidr and Baseerah" (<https://youtu.be/Q3u-66VmHHWk>).

8 The hadith is both authentic and well-known and may be found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Rijad, Dār Ṭayba, 2006, hadith no. 2936, p. 1341-1342.

en not literally but metaphorically. In fact, the stress on the unusual duration of the first of the forty days indicates political, cultural, military, economic and religious entities to be realised by the establishment of three great contemporary geopolitical empires, in the following order, from the longest lasting to the briefest: Great Britain (*Pax Britannica*), the United States of America (*Pax Americana*), and Greater Israel (*Pax Judaica*).⁹ The Pax Americana is ending and the current global crisis caused by the pandemic is a harbinger of the beginning of the Pax Judaica. Imran Hosein sees this meaning in the Qur'an verses that instruct mankind to move towards the *shadow* (*ẓill*) with three columns (Al-Mursalāt, 30). He does not refer to any specific hadith that connects these two elements, so we may conclude that this interpretation is a type of *bestowed knowledge*. From his works and lectures, primarily those on Hadith, including some from canonical collections, we know that he holds the establishment of Pax Judaica to be a precondition for the appearance of the *Dajjal* and his proclamation as messiah. The *Dajjal* is alive but "bound" in an abandoned monastery and his strength is growing as the time of his liberation approaches.

Hosein stresses that the current challenge of the pandemic is an *indubitable* sign of the power of the *Dajjal* and that the false messiah is somehow responsible for spreading the virus and everything that comes with it, including, and this is almost unprecedented in history, the closing of almost all mosques in the world and the interruption of Friday prayer services (*Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah*). From this context, Imran Hosein presents the post-virus world as the stage of transition to the Pax Judaica, which he sees as being characterised by the greatest challenge so far, global hyperinflation, by which he means the devaluation of money (whence his theory that cryptocurrency is an important project for the establishment of Greater Israel),¹⁰ and the complete collapse of the world economy. It is important to note that Imran Hosein bases his discourse of money on research he conducted at the Graduate Institute for International Relations in Geneva (Hosein was for a time foreign minister of Trinidad and Tobago, his homeland). In a

9 "The Corona-Virus and Akhir al-Zaman; Responding to my Critics from the Balkans" (<https://youtu.be/MsrVREKEbyo>). See also: Imran Hosein, *Jerusalem in the Qur'an*, New York, Masjid Dar-Al-Qur'an, 2003, p. 59.-67.

10 *The Anti-Christ Dajjal & Cryptocurrency* (<https://youtu.be/3LpC7kpSbAs>).

word, the agreement between Henry Kissinger and Saudi King Faisal is fraud on a global scale, given that it made the US dollar the main currency for oil. With the collapse of the oil market, which is undergoing a severe crisis, the US dollar will also fall, taking other currencies down with it, resulting in the collapse of physical currencies and the world economy.¹¹

Hosein interprets all of these events as fated, announced in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The responsibility of believers to history is being suspended, it seems, especially with respect to world history. As *sunnah*, Muslims have no other choice but to wait for the appearance of the imam Mahdi and the return of Isa (pbuh). Believers only responsibility now is towards themselves, their families, and their local communities. Imran Hosein encourages Muslims first to withdraw their savings from the banks and use the money, while it still has value, to buy land and cattle (a smaller portion should be used to purchase silver which, alongside gold, will once again become the only viable currency). Second, they should abandon cities and move to remote rural areas. In advice given a few years ago, he mandated that Muslims should found Muslim villages or join already existing ones. He now believes that the only condition is for the residents of these village communities to share a desire to live in line with traditional values and that the population may therefore be multi-religious.¹²

Finally, Hosein firmly believes that his analyses are correct and truthful, and some of his earlier predictions have indeed turned out to be correct, but the future he envisions is very pessimistic, and man's engagement, in the sense of a relationship to history, is almost entirely reduced to waiting on eschatological events. What is more, though in his interpretations of harbingers of Judgement Day, as a rule, he invokes the direct causes from revelations of specific Quranic ayahs or of Muhammad's (pbuh) sayings, he does not go beyond that, i.e. he does not confront these causes with the idea of history as such,¹³ nor does he even imply the possibility of their exhaustion within historical events

11 *Imran Hossein – Private Session – Published 2020* (<https://youtu.be/nH67M9PDn0o>).

12 *Preparing for the Post Virus World* (<https://youtu.be/-RTgPQ9ZpdY>).

13 Cf. e.g.: Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970, 19-24.

that took place soon after Muhammad's (pbuh) passing.¹⁴ The only activity of the believer is, once again, to study and read the Qur'an as much as possible (going through at least one *juz'* or thirtieth part per day). Politically, the one thing that may to some degree mitigate the troubles that are undoubtedly coming is fostering the coming-together and cooperation of Muslims and Orthodox Christians. Two main obstacles present themselves. One is the status of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, which the Ottomans "shamefully took from the Orthodox Christians and turned into a mosque and later a museum" and in that context the associated hadith whereby the "praised commander and praised army" would liberate Constantinople does not refer to Sultan Mehmed Fatih, as most Muslim religious scholars, particularly in Turkey and the Balkans, believe, but instead to the struggle of Muslims and Orthodox Christians to return Hagia Sophia to the Christians. The other obstacle is the development of Christianity in the West as Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, given that this religious experience has become a kind of spiritual generator of the inhumane civilisation of modernity, which has been orchestrated by none other than the false messiah Dajjal.¹⁵

It is precisely these two "obstacles" that have become the link between Imran Hosein and Aleksandr Dugin. We will have more to say about Dugin's analysis of the post-virus world in the next section of this paper.

The Multipolarity of the Post-virus World in the Works of Aleksandr Dugin

As mentioned above, we are witnessing the development of a specific discourse on a phenomenon whose current extent guarantees it the status of a significant turning point in the history of humanity. Our fragmented reality, devoid of clear criteria, essentially determines its form. The call for participation is open to all, with the added criteria, binding, so to speak, on all those involved in such endeavours, of ensuring a sufficiently ignorant audience and access to means of communication. These are global developments that have already begun to change major world relations

14 Cf. e.g.: Wilferd Madelung, "The Sufyāni Between Tradition and History", *Studia Islamica*, No. 63, 1986, especially 8-15.

15 *Between Constantinople & Ar Rum* (<https://youtu.be/1Bf5aYHAgLk>).

and processes permanently, and it is quite clear that the situation offers a unique opportunity for the voice of the learned to be heard, whatever part of the world they come from. Amongst the many internationally recognised intellectuals who have contributed to developing this discourse, Aleksandr Dugin holds a special place, mostly because of the idiosyncrasy of his views. A Russian philosopher and geopolitician, he is the major proponent of neo-Eurasianism, a geopolitical vision of the world that arose in the post-Soviet era and whose multifaceted effects should be understood in the light of the conceptual division into Eastern and Western worlds.

Analysis of major political theories, social movements, their ideologies, and their impact in a world strongly affected by processes such as globalisation is usually conducted at the level of everyday political discourse and liable to become the subject of debate in political science and sociology, and particularly geopolitics, which has become the dominant paradigm for interpreting 21st century reality. For a number of reasons, this approach often neglects the philosophical origins that shape it, something visible in the framework for understanding Dugin's teachings. It is, therefore, one of this paper's main purposes to identify and briefly describe the philosophical ideas that support the views on the post-virus world Dugin promotes in recent work and public statements.¹⁶ We have two main sources of motivation in doing so. First, we hope to overcome certain shortcomings and limitations of interpretations that come from within the above-described approach. Our second aim is to outline how well integrated Dugin's vision of a post-virus world is with his previous ruminations, especially those expressed in his political-philosophical theory, which is itself based on his rather convoluted synthesis of philosophical teachings and traditional world views.

16 In this context, two of Dugin's recent works are particularly important, insofar as they deal with socio-political relations in the post-virus world. See: Alexander Dugin, "Coronavirus and the horizons of a multipolar world: The geopolitical possibilities of epidemic." *Geonoutuka.ru*, 17 Mar 2020. (<https://www.geopolitica.ru/en/article/coronavirus-and-horizons-multipolar-world-geopolitical-possibilities-epidemic>) and idem, "Post-Coronavirus World Order (a Realist analysis)." *Geonoutuka.ru*, 29 Apr 2020. (<https://www.geopolitica.ru/en/article/post-coronavirus-world-order-realist-analysis>).

Understanding it is crucial for understanding the essence and real intention of Dugin's thinking about the post-virus world.

Namely, his central philosophical concept is his "fourth political theory," as presented in his book of the same name.¹⁷ Speaking very generally, this is a fusion of anti-modernist and anti-enlightenment ideas based on a critique of Western culture as the source of materialism and decadence. Again, according to Dugin, these are overdetermined by capitalist society, which draws on liberalism for its guiding principles. The origins of and intellectual motivation for this critique is to be found in the works of René Guénon and Julius Evola, two of the most important proponents of traditionalism.¹⁸ To understand properly the reasons that purportedly give rise to the need for this theory we must first look at the motives and background of the undertaking as a whole.

According to Dugin, we are currently exiting the modern era. The 20th century was a century of ideologies, with three political theories vying for control over modernity and each in essence, and in its own way of course, expressing its spirit. This is the context in which Dugin views the three major political ideologies and their fate in the 20th century. These are liberalism, communism, and fascism. We see that of the three political theories, only liberalism remains, having come out victorious over communism and fascism in the battle for the 20th century, thereby proving that it is the best suited political philosophy for the modern era. In addition, it is important to note that these political theories are founded on political subjects. Thus, the individual is the subject of liberalism, the second political theory referred to class, while the subject of the third political theory was the state in Mussolini's

17 Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory*, Eurasian Movement, Moscow 2012.

18 In one of his many interviews, Dugin explains his intellectual background as follows, "First of all in my early youth I was deeply inspired by the Traditionalism of René Guénon and Julius Evola. That was a definitive choice of camp – on the side of sacred Tradition against the modern (and post-modern) world. This choice and all consequences are still there in the present. I firmly stand for spiritual and religious values against actual decadent materialist and perverted culture. Traditionalism was and rests central as the philosophic focus of all my later developments." Alexander Dugin, "The Long Path", An Interview with Alexander Dugin, *Open Revolt*, 27 May 2014 (<https://openrevolt.info/2014/05/17/alexander-dugin-interview/>).

fascism or the race in Hitler's National Socialism.¹⁹ There is an important moment in the development of Dugin's thought that is worth noting here. Under increasingly frequent accusation in Western media that his works promote fascist, communist or national-Bolshevist ideas, Dugin introduced the fourth political theory as a way to distance himself from these ideologies, marginalising them in the history of the 20th century, when they were defeated by liberalism, and at the same time emphasising their irrelevance in the struggle for post-modernity.²⁰ He has thus opened up a way for his own theory, in his words, to be the only real competitor of liberalism or post-liberalism. This begs the question as to what the subject of Dugin's theory is, engaged in struggle against the individual of liberalism for domination of post-modernity. Dugin deftly takes Heidegger's *Dasein*, whose essence lies, in contrast to other beings, in existing, i.e., in creating a meaningful relationship to Being, as subject of his own political theory.²¹

There are two possible reasons for resorting to Heidegger. First, he was one of the greatest thinkers in the history of philosophical thought. His teaching, viz., concepts and argumentation, have certainly proved useful to Dugin, as a safe bet in philosophical battle against the dominant political philosophy of liberalism. Second, and more complex in nature, is his concept of transition, which he introduces into his philosophy to replace globalisation. In brief, transition should be understood as the process of fragmentation in modernity, as time dissolves into discrete moments, in order to abandon the present completely, entailing the eradication of transcendental subjects and ultimately transition from a human to a post-human world.²² Paradoxically, Dugin's ultimate

19 For more see: A. Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory*, p. 9-13.

20 Although Dugin clearly points out how the second and third theory are unacceptable on principle in the struggle against liberalism, there are two possible reasons behind the accusations often accompanied by a rhetoric *reductio ad* fascism: the same enemy and Dugin's emphasis on re-examining defeated theories to reject flawed and pick out valuable elements. According to Dugin, the valuable elements are primarily related to the fact that proponents of the second and third theory, whether knowingly or unknowingly, were on the side of Tradition. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17.

21 Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Bitak i vrijeme*, translated by Hrvoje Šarinić, Naprijed, Zagreb, 1985, p. 46.

22 Cf. A. Dugin, *The Fourth Political theory*, p. 79-80.

requirement is that we reject this process precisely by accepting it, by adhering to a political theory that opposes our current metaphysical origins and allows the conditions of existence to align themselves with transition. This is of course his fourth political theory, as a call to accept the inevitability of chaos.²³ In other words, this is a challenge to postmodernity and it follows the core logic of Heidegger's forgetting of Being, inevitably distancing humanity from our ontological and theological beginnings. To respond to the challenge, Dugin had to ground his political theory in something that goes beyond the metaphysical foundations of liberalism. He found this in Heidegger's teaching of *Dasein*, which he takes as the starting point for his fourth political theory, positing it as the subject. The reason is that *Dasein* is a being that projects the visions of the world and of humanity characteristic of other political theories from its own existence.²⁴

Analysis of Dugin's newer works reveals how the global pandemic has created an opportunity for the fourth political theory to approach the event that is its goal, heralding the return of Being at the moment when it has been completely forgotten. The vision of Dugin's post-virus world becomes the site of its complete actualisation. Dugin grounds these predictions in what he alleges is the beginning of the collapse of the world based on the principles of liberalism and so of a society built on a capitalist economy, the free market, and globalisation. He finds further material for his argument in current pandemic-affected socio-political processes and changes at the global level, including, among other things, political decisions that foster dictatorship and totalitarianism, the strong turn towards nationalism and isolationism, and the abandonment of policies geared at global supremacy and establishment of a unipolar world state. It is precisely in these developments that Dugin recognises the stirrings of long-dormant potential to recreate socio-political conditions and international relations and so enable the new beginning in the form of

23 It is important to note here that for Dugin, chaos is not meaninglessness, as it is usually understood in Western European culture". Rather it is the matrix from which meaning issues. A according to Dugin, this different understanding of chaos is the result of differences in cultural and civilisational context. See: Alexander Dugin, "The multipolar world and the postmodern", *Journal of Eurasian Affairs* 2 (2014) 1, p. 12.

24 Cf. Branko Malić "Protiv gnostika." *Kali Tribune*, 21 June 2015, (<https://kalitribune.com/protiv-gnostika/>)

a multipolar world²⁵ that the concept treated by this paper so clearly refers to.

Even though Dugin is an exceptionally gifted thinker whose keen analysis and critique identify real problems and shortcomings in Western European culture, his vision of a post-virus world nonetheless gives rise to difficulties that suggest an unreadiness on his part to accept the call to embrace the chaos towards which he alleges the world is sliding. Among the many reasons for rejecting this call, two are particularly important. The first relates to the rather unconvincing and vaguely articulated syncretism of Dugin's teaching, particularly the manifest contradiction involved in synthesising Evola's and Guénon's traditionalism with the philosophy of Nietzsche and ultimately of Heidegger. Such a combination would likely only deepen the chaos of the post-virus world. The second, which compounds our conceptual disagreements with Dugin, relates to an alternative order of the post-virus world and the attitude towards tradition outlined by his criticism of the current state of affairs. Though thinkers such as Dugin are seductive, for their strong criticism and exposure of Western decadence, their failure to connect consistently the different world views that are meant ultimately to contribute to the creation of a new alternative or a universally accepted vision of the world proves problematic. The alternative Dugin offers to the currently dominant social order is a military dictatorship with elements of socialism based on tradition. This would be the first phase of the post-virus world, in which the wealth of different traditions should be the major driver. History has shown that, under such circumstances, tradition becomes a shackle and not a source of creative potential for good, whether in the present or in the time that is coming. Above all, tradition means that people in uncertain and senseless times always follow the greatest gift, without resorting to unreasonable solutions. If an invocation is needed to help us avoid the precipice

25 For more details on the sacred space of the multipolar world, the symbolism of continents and the relationship between tradition and sacred geography, see Aleksandar Dugin, *Misterije Evroazije*, Logos, Belgrade 2008. In this book, Dugin uses sacred geography as a special discipline rooted in tradition to discuss the spiritual and metaphysical background from which the sacredness of certain parts of the world issues. Though written more than 20 years ago, the book is important for understanding his views on the post-virus world because it provides clear insight into the most important feature, the link between tradition and the multipolar world.

of metaphysical relativity, then the following verses may point the way for humanity in the coming days:

*My heart has become capable of every form:
It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba,
And the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take,
That is my religion and my faith.*²⁶

Conclusion

Referring back to our introductory remarks, we would like to stress both the similarities and the differences between the theories of Imran Hosein and Aleksandr Dugin. Their cooperation has the aspect of a type of mutual support critiquing the West, or rather the Euro-Atlantic world or, more precisely again, its Anglo-Saxon component. By all accounts, that is the extent of their cooperation. The fact remains, however, that Dugin comes to our region fairly frequently and has visited Bosnia, and Imran Hosein has also visited this region. To the best of our knowledge, Hosein has come only once, suggesting he does not have that much interest in visiting the Balkans. In other words, while Dugin, through sympathisers with the project of Greater Serbia, has sought to establish a strong presence as a “spokesman” for Russian president Putin and is partial to promoting Russian interests in the Balkans, Imran Hosein seems uninterested in promoting such a programme, beyond the minor reflection of it in his verbal support for Russia and the Christian Orthodox world. Hosein’s target audience is mostly Muslim, English-speaking, with at least a secondary or higher level of education, and young.

As mentioned in the introduction, a general analysis of Imran Hosein’s lectures and works does not allow us to discern links with the tradition of modern European esotericism. In fact, he expressly condemns many aspects of it, especially occultism as an element of contemporary occult-culture. In his interpretation of eschatology and the eschaton, however, Hosein shows a closer, and perhaps unwitting, affinity to Neoplatonist than to classic Islamic theology. Even if just one of its sources, Neoplatonism is

26 Muyhi'ddin ibn al-'Arabi, *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, Royal Asiatic Society, London 1911, p. 19.

nonetheless a tradition of great import precisely for the development of modern European esotericism.²⁷ While classic Islamic theology sees an opportunity even in the very event of the end of the world and time and urges believers to take an active attitude towards the general community (*umma*) and history as such,²⁸ Hosein's recommendation to retreat into strict smaller communities and family units suggests a monistic understanding of the relationship between the world and the Source, where the objectively evil and bad is interpreted as a *natural* deviation of the weaker from the whole, while the whole mimics the "sole origin of the universe" in its existence.²⁹ Wholly passively understood, plurality comes from One and then returns to One in its totality.³⁰

Aleksandr Dugin, on the other hand, explicitly criticises the legacy of Neoplatonism, while at the same time seeming to imply it tacitly in his own highly eclectic theories. By all accounts, Dugin does not see in the core concept of Guenon's traditionalism, at least as he understands and interprets it, a "source of original spiritual inspiration", but simply a summa of seemingly original theories whose fundamental value is their polymorphic utility.³¹ In this context, despite his constant criticism of occult Western culture, Dugin does not shy away from references to theories derived from it, like the opus of Aleister Crowley, whom Guenon considered a practitioner of black magic and a charlatan who founded associations that were counter-initiatic and *anti-traditional*.³²

Given the above, we note that both our authors and their public lectures have a strong presence in the virtual world on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. It would not be going too far to

27 See, e.g., Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 23-24.

28 See e.g.: Adnan Silajdžić, *40 hadisa sa komentarom*, Sarajevo, Faculty of Islamic Studies and El-Kalem, 2005, p. 217-220.

29 Cf.: Proklo, *Osnove teologije*, Uvod i komentar E. R. Dodds, Zagreb, *Naprijed*, 1997, para 25, p. 93-95; commentary on para 25, p. 279-280.

30 Ibid., para 21, p. 89; commentary on para 21, p. 274-276.

31 See Anton Shekhovtsov and Andreas Umland, "Is Aleksandr Dugin a Traditionalist? 'Neo-Eurasianism' and Perennial Philosophy", *The Russian Review*, Vol. 68, No. 4, October 2009, p. 666.

32 Ibid., p. 670-671.

say that it is precisely this presence that makes them so popular, which is somewhat ironic, given that the virtual world is one of the values produced by the Western world they so thoroughly reject.

Translated by Ulvija Tanović

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