

# A Handbook of Dialogue



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## Trust and Identity

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## Contents

INTRODUCTION	9
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### PART I

#### AGORA, BRIDGES, HOSPITALITY

1. KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: Practices of Intercultural Dialogue	18
COMMENTARY: Interview with Krzysztof Czyżewski, Hamid Herishi, Artush Mkrtychyan, and Stanisław Zapaśnik by Viktoria Maksoeva for “Caucasian Accent”	30
2. ELŻBIETA MATYNIA: An Old Bridge and a New Agora	37
3. CEZARY WODZIŃSKI: On Hospitality: Celan and Heidegger	46
COMMENTARY: Discussion from the New Agora Symposium in Sejny 2008	57

#### INTEGRATION, TRUST, SOCIETY

4. ZYGMUNT BAUMAN: Terrorism and Religion	74
COMMENTARY: KONSTANTY GEBERT: How Not to Shame God: Commentary to Zygmunt Bauman’s Lecture,	86
COMMENTARY: EDWIN BENDYK: Desire Called Utopia,	91
5. ISABELLA THOMAS: Religion vs. Civil Society: The Right Question?	98
6. ALEŠ DEBELJAK: Europe: Dream of Unity, Life of Divisions	105
COMMENTARY: UGO VLAISAVLJEVIĆ: Commentary to Aleš Debeljak’s Lecture	115

## CRISIS OF MULTICULTURALISM

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 7. BO STRÅTH: The Multicultural and the Social  | 122 |
| 8. MARINA ELBAQIDZE: Multiculturalism in Georgia: Unclaimed Asset or Threat to the State? | 132 |
| 9. NICHOLAS STAVROULAKIS: Crete: A Borderland in a State of Denial                        | 144 |
| 10. ISABELLA THOMAS: Living Together Apart: Lessons From “Multicultural” London           | 157 |

## PART II

### HISTORY AND IDENTITY

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 11. LEONIDAS DONSKIS: Reflections on the Canon, Identity, and Memory Politics                        | 186 |
| 12. MUSTAPHA TLILI: Islam And European Identity  | 204 |
| 13. SELIM CHAZBIJEWICZ: The Historical And Cultural Message of Islam And Europe                      | 208 |
| 14. NIYAZI MEHDI: Philosophy of Crisis, Illness, and Complication in Light of Intercultural Dialogue | 223 |
| COMMENTARY: Interview with Niyazi Mehdi for “Obozrievatel”   | 227 |
| 15. HARUTYUN MARUTYAN: Historical Memory in Cultural Dialogue: Opportunity or Obstacle?              | 229 |

### RELIGION AND TOLERANCE

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 16. MUSTAFA CERİĆ: The Art of Tolerance  | 242 |
| COMMENTARY: Fr. Maciej Zięba OP: Christianity, Ideology, and Freedom   | 250 |
| 17. MOSHE SHNER: On the Necessary Preconditions for Dialogues of Tolerance: Baruch Spinoza (Benedictus de Spinoza) & Moses Mendelssohn | 257 |
| 18. STANISŁAW ZAPAŚNIK: Traditions of Tolerance in Local Muslim Communities in Central Asia  | 269 |

- 
19. LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: Georgian Practices of Tolerance  
and Situations of Their Renouncement 279  
COMMENTARY: Discussion from the Tbilisi Colloquium 290  
COMMENTARY: Interview with Niyazi Mehdi  
for Obozrievatel 300  
COMMENTARY: Interview with Rev. Basil Kobakhidze  
by Bartosz Hlebowicz 301

## NATIONALISM AND XENOPHOBIA

20. BASIL KERSKI: Central and Eastern Europe:  
Germany and Poland 304  
COMMENTARY: LESZEK KOCZANOWICZ: The Rise  
of Post-post-communism 313  
21. GABRIELA ADAMEȘTEANU: Central and Eastern Europe:  
Romania 327  
COMMENTARY: ALEKSANDER KACZOROWSKI: The Price  
of Our Success 336

## PART III

### LANGUAGE AND DIALOGUE

22. SRETEN UGRIČIĆ: A Post-Balkan Symbolic Infrastructure 342  
23. FATIMA SADIQI: Native Culture In the Global Context:  
The Role Of Women 350  
24. ZALIKO KIKODZE: New Borders: Borderland Regions  
of Georgia 363  
COMMENTARY: Discussion from the Tbilisi Colloquium 369  
COMMENTARY: Interview with Neal  
Ascherson by Bartosz Hlebowicz 372

### EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE

25. TADEUSZ SŁAWEK: Apocalypse and Metamorphosis, Civic  
Education and Utopia 378

COMMENTARY: Discussion From the New Agora Symposium in Sejny	390
26. RICHARD TERDIMAN: Education, Enlightenment, Interdependence, and Difference	398
COMMENTARY: Discussion From the New Agora Symposium in Sejny, 2008	400
27. GRZEGORZ GODLEWSKI: The Community of <i>Universitas</i>	407
COMMENTARY: Discussion From the New Agora Symposium in Sejny	411
28. MOHA ENNAJI: Multiculturalism, Education, and Democracy: Debates and Contentions in Morocco	426

## CITY AND DIALOGUE

29. EVA HOFFMAN: Some Reflections on the Multicultural Cosmopolis Today	440
30. HUSEIN ORUČEVIĆ: Defending Public Spaces – Defending Our Future	451
31. ELŻBIETA MATYNIA: Between the Local and the Global: or, What Wrocław Has Given Us	464

BORDERLAND GLOSSARY	473
THE CONTRIBUTORS	481
ABOUT THE EDITORS	489
BIBLIOGRAPHY	491
INDEX	495

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF DIALOGUE	I
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## Introduction

Late September 1989. Three months ago, Solidarity won the first free elections in Poland since the 1930s. Soon, Lithuania will pronounce independence. The border, however, is still fully protected, though in only a few months, near the Polish and Soviet checkpoints, the Lithuanian checkpoint will appear. The Nobel Prize winner for literature, Czesław Miłosz, returns to his childhood home after over fifty years. But he cannot yet travel to Lithuania, so he tries to get as close as possible, to Suwałki, to Sejny, and to Krasnogruda, almost at the border itself, where a ruined mansion, a family heirloom, stands.

And it is over there, on the Polish-Lithuanian borderland, that the returning exiled poet and the young alternative artists encounter each other. Before, they had read about the multicultural inheritance of the Jagiellonian Commonwealth, the memory of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, and the cultural myth of the Borderland in Miłosz's works. To them, it represented the ideas and actions described by the circles of Jerzy Giedroyc and his *Kultura émigré* journal from Paris. The young artists have their own experience of alternative culture coming from the theater director Jerzy Grotowski's concept of "active culture." As a result of the meeting with the exiled poet, the young artists establish the Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations Center in Sejny. It is among the pioneering enterprises of the new Poland, delving into a new archeology

of memory for the rebuilding of the “homelands,” a multicultural heritage and good relations with neighbors. At the same time, and from similar beliefs, emerge the Festival of Jewish Culture in Krakow, of outstanding merit to the Polish-Jewish dialogue, the Culture Community “Borussia” and the Krzyżowa Foundation (Kreisau Stiftung), concentrating on the issues of the Polish-German neighborhood.

When speaking with the young artists of the Borderland, Miłosz seems to care for one thing in particular: that their idea will not become an illusionary utopia and fade under the pressure of everyday needs; that the space around Krasnogruda would accept them permanently. He consequently brings them down to earth, into the dimension of everyday practice, which does not merely show itself off in quick results and, thanks to that, it lasts. The history of the past centuries has strengthened the feeling of uncertainty and brevity in this part of the world, he says. Barely the rebuilding had begun after a cataclysm – then came another cataclysm, leaving nothing but destruction; borders shifted, rulers changed, and disrespect for the old grew, if not hatred. The returning exiled poet experienced all of this, and wants to explain to them that they meet in a strange moment in time, because they have a possibility to build life around them

on the foundation of a long-lasting view on the world – one that, he believes, is not another hopeless perspective.

Today, the young alternative artists, the team of the Borderland – we – see ourselves as part of this great history. With European societies, we pulled down the Berlin Wall, opened borders, popularized the Internet, and promoted growth of multicultural metropolises. However, there is another wall, which remains a vivid symbol of contemporary Western experience. It does not any longer run along national borders and it is not created by different languages or political systems. Today’s wall grows inside societies and it is being made of sharp, confrontational borders of cultural identities. The new wall, which we call the Identity Wall, is founded on our fears and

**THE WEST**, Western World, the Occident, is a term referring to the European countries as well as countries of European origin in Americas, Australia and New Zealand. The concept has its roots in Greco-Roman civilization and the advent of Christianity. In the modern era, *the West* has been heavily influenced by the traditions of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the European colonial ambitions. Its political usage was temporarily informed by mutual antagonism with the Soviet bloc during the Cold War (1944–1989), although it has a broader meaning, encompassing all societies originating in European culture. The term is used in post-colonial and “clash of civilizations” discourses to different ends. It is often abused as a helpful generalization for the formulation of cultural antagonisms.

losses, and nourished by the growing awareness of the alien. The Identity Wall is not being established somewhere outside the societies, but *inside* – inside intimate personal spaces, which not so long ago were reserved only for that what is nearby and ours. We realize more and more, that identity stands against communality, and that, while promoting the growth of singular identity, we have created the Identity Wall to block the idea of community and, in doing so, we removed *trust* from our lives.

Western societies resemble more and more an archipelago of detached cultures. The archipelago appeared due to the emphasis on individual growth and self-reliance. This disables natural abilities of communal networking and leaves only standardized means of communication of artificial singularities. However, there is no going back to the communal state of societies, the solution may be to develop sensibility for communality, in order to counteract the influence of the Identity Wall. We do not, therefore, propose rejecting the achievement of individuality in Western culture, but rather call for the simultaneous promotion of communal trust.

In other words, the Identity Wall issue is the reason for the Western archipelago of detached cultures. The detachment comes from the absence of what Czesław Miłosz called “connective tissue,” on which he based his concept of Europe as a native realm (coming from the title of his book, *Rodzinna Europa*). *Connective tissue* is a remedy for the dissolution of all Western societies, and Miłosz’s poetic name for promoting communal trust. The growth of connective tissue between individuated cells may only be fostered through raising the consciousness of various cultures and identities. This is the essence of the ethos of the Borderland: to foster understanding of different identities in order to cross the Identity Wall in both directions. The ethos of the Borderland is not to tear down borders, but rather to develop and discover competence in crossing them (border-crossing). While preserving the idea of identity, we at the same time promote trust.

The ethos of the Borderland stems from the cluster of issues of the so-called Central Europe, yet it does not concentrate on criticism. In contrast to a common belief endowing Central Europe with the character of an Arcadian myth – especially in relation to the multicultural heritage of tolerance – we avoid idealizing and displacing the dark sides of its history. This does not mean that we would go to the other extreme and repeat another widespread belief, that the history of the region is an uninterrupted trail of cataclysms and tribal quarrels. The values we associate

with the Central Europe could not come to life in the reality of an Arcadia, but only in the collision of the interwoven dramas, differences and impossibilities of a borderland. By themselves, they may bring chaos and destruction, but when embraced and overcome, this collision evolves into the beauty and wisdom of the Old Bridge in Mostar, the philosophy of dialogue of Martin Buber from Lviv (Ukraine) and Emmanuel Levinas from Kaunas (Lithuania), the dialogic poetry of Paul Celan from Bukovina (Romania and Ukraine), or the writings of Danilo Kiš (Yugoslavia), one of the best antidotes to provincial nationalism.

The assumption that much has been built already in terms of dialogue, and that contemporary civilization prepares us to live peacefully are completely misleading and everyone needs to realize this quickly. People say “intercultural dialogue,” “meeting with the other” and “cross-border bond” as if those were commonly available at stores for purchase at a low price. But no one gives any long-term guarantee for those precious ideas, and this lack of guarantee does not bother consumers of fast pleasures and exotic impressions. Yet building connective tissue is the work of a lifetime and requires sacrifices. Then, the consciousness that something extremely fragile is being created bolsters its value.

Warned by Czesław Miłosz not to remain in the sphere of ideas, the Borderland Foundation, launched in 1990, initiated the creation of an international network of practitioners of intercultural dialogue whose main task is to support the creation of centers working in cities, to promote the ethos of borderland and to build bridges between people of different cultures, ethnicities and religions. Our activities are aimed at exploring, understanding, and debating intercultural processes, which historically shaped societies of the Central and Eastern Europe, as well as those taking place in today’s Europe. Considering culture the main instrument of intercultural dialogue, the Foundation leads educational and arts projects, largely directed at youth. Our aspirations manifest themselves in such projects as: Intercultural Dialogue Colloquia in Caucasus and Central Asia; European Mobile Academy “New Agora”; the Glass Bead Game; the “Person of the Borderland” Award, to enumerate our major concentrations.

The focus of all of our activities is the promotion of intercultural dialogue, in which – similar to the Human Rights Movement of the twentieth century – we try to find good answers to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

This book is the realization of our ideas and the years of our efforts to promote both trust and identity, so as to enable the crossing of borders. The majority of the articles in this book comes from the International Symposia “New Agora” (Sarajevo 2006, Wrocław 2007, Sejny 2008, Berlin 2009) and the Intercultural Dialogue Colloquium in Caucasus and Central Asia in Tbilisi (2005). Many of them give examples of intercultural activities and threats to dialogue from the well-known events of the time and region the articles were written in, and so, we decided to give information with each of them, so that the reader will have the possibility of relating them properly to their realities.

We do not aspire to fulfill the need for introductory texts on intercultural dialogue and we are aware of our Central European perspective, and so here we present *A Handbook*. The articles were gathered on various occasions where theoreticians and practitioners of dialogue from different regions of the world met and shared and methods ideas. We never restricted them by assigning subjects, although their interests arose simultaneously in similar areas of thought and practice. From this sharing and mixing of, often philosophical, thought on dialogue and descriptions of its practical implementation, we were able to compose *A Handbook* which conveys both new ideas and practices, both critical case studies and fierce discussions.

We divided the material into three parts. Part One presents our Borderland ways of thinking about dialogue as situations of “Agora, Bridges, Hospitality,” the global perspective on intercultural dialogue in the chapter “Integration, Trust, Society,” and the failed notion of multiculturalism in its critical state in Western countries. Part Two describes more specific issues relating to the “History and Identity” of particular ethnic groups, the role “Religion and Tolerance” play in their co-existence, and how “Nationalism and Xenophobia” handicap the processes of dialogue between them. Part Three moves to even more detailed elements orbiting around intercultural dialogue, that is, differences in language, systematization of education and the influence of the urban space on the mixing of cultures.

Along with the articles, we provide definitions of the more complex ideas, scholars and historical events that are crucial for dialogue and its understanding in side-frames. These are concoctions of information interpreted through our Borderland way of thinking, though stemming from encyclopedic definitions. Here, we are greatly indebted to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and *Encyclopedia Britannica*

*Online*. Finally, at the end of the book, apart from the list of contributors, note on editors and the index of names, the reader can find a “Borderland Glossary,” where words intrinsic and central to our way of thinking are defined in a more precise manner, such as the Identity Wall, border-crossing, but also neimar and kapija. For the purposes of *A Handbook* we also incorporated a few entries from the *Neimar’s Lexicon* created during workshops of the Bosnian Triptych.

We are heavily indebted to organizations who were our partners in projects which led to the gathering of all the articles under in *A Handbook of Dialogue*: “The Public” NGO, United Kingdom; “Pozoriste Lutaka,” MEDIACENTAR Sarajevo and PEN Centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina; International Institute for the Study of Culture and Education, University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland; Residential Arts Center in Wigry, Poland; the Federal Union of German-Polish Associations and the German-Polish Magazine DIALOG, Berlin, Germany;

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Krzysztof Czyżewski  
Joanna Kulas  
Mikołaj Golubiewski  
and the Borderland Team

# PART I



AGORA, BRIDGES,  
HOSPITALITY

## 1.

## Practices of Intercultural Dialogue

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI

Tbilisi 2005

Let me begin by describing the multicultural center established by the Borderland Foundation in the small town of Sejny. The first aspect of my story refers to concepts I talked about on the first day of the seminar – *logos* and *mythos*. How can we reinvent *mythos* in our life? And the second aspect of my story I discovered only today, when I was talking to Hamid Herishi. I said, “You see, the most important thing is the *ethos* of the society,” and Hamid said, “ethnos?” “No” – I said – “*ethos*..!” So, my question is how to go from *ethnos* to *ethos*?

We are a theater group that managed to create a Center in a small town and, for the last fifteen years, managed to avoid boredom and depression living in a small town in the north-eastern corner of Poland. Fifteen years ago, after working at an avant-garde theater with Jerzy Grotowski and other so-called “alternative” theaters in Poland, we decided to start living in a very small town, a very provincial town, somewhere in the borderlands. And we started to be, somehow, community artists.

This is a story about establishing a small place in a town that today is inhabited by Poles, Lithuanians, and Old Believers, with some Roma travelling around and living in this area, with some Belarusian villages in the south, and with Ukrainians living here since World War II (in 1947, the Communists accused them of fascism and deported them from the

Carpathian Mountains, which is also more or less the case of the Meskhetian Turks). We were outsiders, because only one person from our team was, at the beginning, from this exact place. We, outsiders came here in 1991 as a theater group bringing some performances that we could show to local audiences. We planned to give two or three performances, but what would we do afterwards? Here the story truly begins.

We decided to completely change our life after 1991, to be more engaged in the transformation of the country after the collapse of communism, to go somewhere to the outskirts, to the borderlands. We were actors and had performances to show, but after the two performances that we showed in this town the question was, what next? Of course, we could go to festivals, they invited us here and there. But at that time, it was so anachronistic for us to go to a theater festival because life itself was so interesting, so fascinating. To listen to these people, to get to know their problems, to build a new common country... and then somebody proposed that we went *festival*? At that moment it felt like something very anachronistic, I would say.

So, we decided not to be a theater. That was our first decision. We said: "OK, here is the synagogue, which we like very much, and the Jewish quarter in the very center of this town." There was the Lithuanian cultural house in this town, and there was the Polish cultural house, and between them there was the synagogue and the Jewish quarter. We started to talk to the local authorities, whether we could maybe somehow renovate these buildings and install ourselves in them. Today, we have three buildings, but at that time one of them was a former slipper factory, which had gone bankrupt with the collapse of communism, and another one was this empty synagogue. And they said "OK, if you can do something with this space, we do not have anything against it."

The question for us was: what does it mean that we are in this place? And what kind of instruments, skills and crafts could we use to work here? And that is how we initiated the building of what we call now the Center for Intercultural Dialogue or "Dom Pogranicza," the House of the Borderland, which now has different branches and buildings.

Around this very place, this Jewish quarter, we started to build different studios for art and educational activities. They were created not for us, and not to train my team's or our own skills, but rather to invite people living around here to join us and involve them somehow in the common process of work.

The first event we organized was just a gathering in the synagogue. We invited people from all the different ethnic groups living around here to meet. For us, the most interesting thing at the beginning, was to learn the old songs they could share with us. When we had worked with the Gardzienice theater and with Grotowski, I was mostly involved in this kind of activity. When you go to the villages in the older parts of the world, where ancient cultures have survived, you learn songs, rituals, gestures, and stories, and include them in your avant-garde performance. That was our artistic background, so we were interested in songs and stories from this area.

But only at the moment when all these people gathered in a circle, inside the synagogue, did we start to realize that something different and unexpected was happening. The emotional temperature of this meeting was so tense that people who were singing these songs started to cry. They started to share emotional stories, which is not usual when you are just sharing songs. So there was something more going on that we did not understand at first.

What was it? It was that these various peoples, who lived in the same town, had just met together for the first time in many years. Unconsciously, we had invited them to a common space to share something with each other. It was the first opportunity for them to meet, and to gather like that, after many, many years. These Old Believers who came here, Belarusians, Roma, Lithuanians, all of them gathered in this former Jewish synagogue – there are no Jews now in Sejny, but still something of the culture remains – and all of them made something special for the whole atmosphere and for this meeting.

This was the first sign for us of what we could do in this town. The second sign was that the first partners in our work were young people: children, students, youth from the town and the region. We organized something we called “Month of Tolerance.” At the very beginning of the 1990s, we invited various people from Poland and from other countries to discuss tolerance.

**ROMA PEOPLE** (pejorative, Gypsy), traditionally itinerant people, whose roots are in northern India, but today live all over the world, mainly in Slavic countries. Total population est. 2–5 million. The generic name, “Rom” means “man” or “husband.” Due to the nomadic nature of *Roma*, they are mostly unregistered and have multiple administrative problems. Often deported or banished, *Roma* still migrate along routes paying no attention to national borders. In the majority of countries, the policy against *Roma* has been settlement or assimilation. During the Holocaust, the Nazis murdered approximately 400,000 *Roma*. Some *Roma* still practice nomadic life, but many have settled as unskilled labourers. At the turn of the twenty-first century, *Roma* continue to struggle with distrust and intolerance. Often mistaken with the Romanians.

And, fortunately, we also invited young people from schools around Sejny together with their teachers, and we announced a competition for the best essay about tolerance and how young people imagine it. The award for the best essay was an invitation to this three-day international conference.

Of course, our discussion about tolerance was very noble. What fresh and new can be said about tolerance? Only at the moment when the young people started to participate in this debate did it suddenly become unusual and fresh. A young man just stood up and said: "OK, you see, I wrote this work about tolerance, how we cooperate, Poles and Lithuanians in the borderland, but in fact, I hate Lithuanians, because they are nationalists, and they killed my father!" And then, immediately, something started to emerge from this outburst! This kind of aggression he had towards Lithuanians in spite of the fact that he did not witness the Polish-Lithuanian war, and he had not witnessed all these previous historical conflicts – this aggression was still inside him. It was passed down through the family, through the school programs, through the church, and it somehow condensed inside him.

And this was a sign for us. Of course, the discussion after his speech was very tense. Lithuanians wanted to leave the synagogue, but we somehow convinced them to stay. Then, the dialogue with this young man and with those who defended him, because they appreciated that he had enough courage to speak openly, made a change in the whole situation. And it was a sign for us that he is our partner, this young man, and the whole young generation living around here.

In the Center, we designed studios for theater, music, and writing – different branches of art expression and activity – and we planned expeditions and cultural explorations in the region together with young people. We created several teams with them, and we also involved local schools and teachers, proposing programs to teach in schools that included extra lessons. The problem in our schools was that there was a lot about French-British conflicts in history, classes but there was nothing about the Polish-Lithuanian conflict. There was a lot about global European history, but there was nothing about the region, nothing about our own neighbors, nothing about the Old Believers, nothing about Jewish culture and heritage, and so on. And it was really an enormous effort to include some elements of understanding what Lithuanian literature is, what the Old Believers' history is, and so on, in the school curriculum, in the teaching of history, literature, and culture.

We tackled this from two sides. From one side, the Center proposed some new programs for schools in the town and the region. And from the other side, we opened our synagogue and our two other buildings for youth to come after school and participate in different forms of art expression.

What was this after-school work with the young people in this intercultural center? What was it about? It was nothing like “now we are doing a program for the Lithuanian minority,” nor “now we are doing a program for the Roma minority.” There were no minority issues, there was no *ethnos* in this work. The main thing was that these young people could work together, regardless of their origin, culture, or nationality. We created a space where they just met with each other and started to work together. This space between the Polish and the Lithuanian culture houses started to be a kind of meeting point. A place where you can work together with others.

What does it mean to work with others? Does it mean that we just take *Medea* and try to stage it together in a theater? On the one hand, yes, but for us it was evident that those who were coming to us were a little bit different. When you would ask them to present themselves, they had some kind of an internal obstacle to simply saying “I am Lithuanian,” or “I am an Old Believer,” or “my family was of Jewish origin,” or “part of this family was...,” or “my family is a borderland family” – a mixed family. It was very difficult for them to speak openly to the other students. So we realized that our approach was not adequate, that it was not enough to ask them to speak on universal topics. We thought that first we should

create an opportunity for them to express themselves individually, to speak to the others about who they were, and the cultural background of their families. We learned that first they needed to express individual differences, rather than collective universality.

And the situation in our intercultural center started to become a space – the only space in this region – where they could somehow express that they were different. Moreover, the students who were coming to us wanted to learn more about themselves from each other. “You are an Old Believer, please tell us, you know your history, a different tradition, please teach us some songs...

**OLD BELIEVERS**, Russian “Starover,” a religious group dissenting from the liturgical reforms in the Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Nikon (1652–58). Sometimes called Raskolniki, from *raskol*, the Russian for “schism,” the *Old Believers* colonized remote regions of northern and eastern Russia. They split into two groups: the Popovtsy (priestly sects) and the Bezpopovtsy (priestless sects). Having benefitted from the Edict of Toleration (1905), the *Old Believers* survived the Russian Revolution of 1917. They are supposed to live in Siberia, the Urals, Kazakhstan, and the Altai, also elsewhere in Asia as well as Brazil and the United States.

Share with us! You are with us to teach us more about your culture.” This dialogue started with the young people’s interest and eagerness to listen to each other, to learn, to contribute.

In their daily life, especially at school, they had to hide it somehow, to push it under the carpet. If you are going to school, to the Polish school let’s say, you would rather not say “I am Lithuanian,” and, for example, Roma children have problems using the Polish language because it is not their native language. But now, finally, there was a space for these children to feel valued *because* they had these differences. And this eagerness to share, to hear, to learn created an amazing and dynamic artistic situation. It was so powerful when they started to work on a theater performance!

These young children immediately started to create a space, a situation in this small town, where old people, grandfathers, and neighbors were all engaged in telling stories to each other. One of the first tasks for the young people was to write a scenario for the performance. What would be the basis of this scenario? “Let’s start asking about the stories, local legends, anecdotes, let’s make a compilation of this, and include that in our performance!”

One of our visual art projects was to build the town they were living in, not a real one, but rather a mythical one, including all these people who are not with us today – Jews, Protestants, who used to be here long ago, and including their long-destroyed temples and churches. This clay town they built is now very famous, and it has travelled around Poland and even to different countries. But this was the first possibility for them to show and to express the space in which they are living. And, having built this clay town, they started to add the stories, the songs, and the scenario. They started to make a performance that is now called *The Sejny Chronicles*, and it became like a town-story.

We have been working on this performance for ten years now. It is not like a traditional theater project, with one premiere, one performance. Each generation adds something to this scenario and the performance is becoming longer and longer. There is a book based on the performance, there is a film... It became like a local community story, a small epic poem, which had been lacking before. The situation of our society here in Sejny was one of people living together without a common story. I am not talking about history, I am talking about a story that people can understand as their local *epic*. As a roof over their heads. They can find themselves in a common house.

All that existed before was separate stories, *ethnos* stories, stories that painfully divided local families. There was a time, especially in the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, when we had to decide to which family we belonged: Polish or Lithuanian, Jewish or Russian Old Believer. It was impossible because family members could be of different origins. But there was a national mythology then, which said that if you were a Polish-Lithuanian family or a Polish-Jewish family, you were a traitor. Either you are a true Polish family, or a true Lithuanian one, or you are not Polish or Lithuanian at all. So from this time, all that was mixed was hidden, was taboo. For almost one hundred years there was a situation where people did not acknowledge their own family members from other national or religious group. Even the name that we have for this center – Borderland – was a new name, or not new, but something from the past, which did not exist in real life.

You can say about somebody “człowiek pogranicza,” a person of the borderland. Who is this? Who are these people here in the Center, in the *agora* between the Polish and Lithuanian cultural houses? The question to us was, who are you? If you are Polish, you have the Polish cultural house. If you are Lithuanian, you have the Lithuanian cultural house, so who are you, what is this Borderland?

Something new? Not necessarily. There were always *others* in this town and in this Jewish quarter. And there was a time in this town when people had mixed marriages and they used to say about themselves “I am a citizen of Sejny.” There was that time. And there was a time to say about yourself, “I am a borderlander.” This is the tradition in the borderland parts of Europe, that if you say that you are a borderlander, people understand that you know other languages, you understand other cultures, you belong to another reality that disappeared, essentially, after World War I. These borderlanders were just *losers* for one hundred years. The political power, the social power, the cultural power were all in other places, in another center. So, being a borderlander, you are definitely another person, but you are a loser, because time belongs to the others, to the other powers.

So, we slowly started on our project. Before coming to this town we did not know anything of what I am telling you now. We learned all this from these local people. But we very slowly started to design this multicultural center as the *borderland* center. Something that they, these people, knew from before. Maybe it is a utopia, maybe it is close to the losers, but it exists.

One of the first remarks we received from the local people, from the old people, the older part of the local society, was about why they agreed to send their children to this Center for all these programs, educational and artistic activities. It was the first consensus: “We maybe disagree with what you are saying about our Polish-Jewish relationships here and so on, but we believe – we, the parents – that what you are doing with our children is good for them.” That was the first consensus, at the beginning. So the gate was opened. “Let’s do it. Not with us – we are old people, we know the true life, we are experienced people. But we feel that this kind of work with our children in this new situation after 1991 is good. This works beyond any ideology, beyond any particular interest.” As a parent, you understand what can be good for your children.

This marked the first step and the first understanding of what the role of this intercultural center could be. Not necessarily and not only to make Poles in this Polish cultural house aware about this Lithuanian house. Which, of course, is important. Not to make Protestants or Ukrainians aware of the Old Believers and their traditions, and so on. That is important too. But now there is a place in this town, a market, an *agora*, a borderland center, which makes interconnections possible, which builds a kind of a tissue of communication *in-between*. This is like another level of our city life. Another level of our culture. Another level of our identity?

Of course, this does not mean that you should exclude the Lithuanian cultural house. The *agora* and our center do not exist without these people in the Lithuanian cultural house, or in the Polish one. So, our goal is not to diminish what is around and what is already here, but to find another level of doing things together, taking dynamic power and energy from this diversity into the activity of the Borderland Center and Intercultural Dialogue Center.

So, what were the other steps in our activities? We established very soon, together with these young people and children, a museum in the center. What kind of museum? Not professional, of course, but rather a museum of the multicultural heritage of our region. It was created because of the work on the theater performance. We gathered some old postcards, some documents, family photographs, and so on during this work. Together with the young people, we collected quite a huge collection of different photographs and documents, and first we made an exhibition, and then we established a museum of Sejny’s multicultural heritage. And this museum serves now as a place where, starting from

kindergarten, very small children come to get some knowledge about who lives here, and what was life here before, and how it is now. Which is not included in school programs, for example.

The discussion about museums and about heritage is a very pressing problem in our region. Sejny's Polish cultural house also created a museum, a Polish museum, and the Lithuanians have their own museum, a Lithuanian museum. And the question is, how can one design a museum of the *community*, like this borderland community? Is there something that could cover the entire local heritage, the entire region, all the people who lived here together, or is the museum for only some of them, a museum of one specific history, and of one specific view of life here? I would say that the invention of our borderland house is that now, in this Polish museum in Sejny, people started to think about "other rooms," as they say, "we will create a room for Lithuanians," "we will create a room for the others living in this region." But, of course, to create a room for a group does not mean that they belong to the core, to the mainstream.

This tendency is now very strong in Europe. I shared with Neal Ascherson my discussion with Krzysztof Pomian, who is the director of the Europe Museum in Brussels. They decided to create a Europe Museum in the European Union, and the discussion was how to design the European Museum today. And the question was, what about Muslims and Islam in Europe? The answer was – "OK, we will make a room for them." But this is just like the problem of the Polish museum in Sejny and its room for the others; if we have only a room for Islam and Muslims, it means that they do not belong to the core tradition of Europe.

This is the problem of our understanding of multiculturalism. The problem is that being multicultural means, sometimes, "to have different rooms." And this is correct: we respect you, you have your own room, your Armenian room in Tbilisi, for example. But this room is not the problem, the problem is that Armenians belong to the mainstream, they are the builders, they are citizens of this town. This is something different! So, issues like this also posed a task and a challenge for our work as the Borderland Center.

Another studio that we have is what we call, "The Documentation Center of the Borderland Cultures." It is now like a huge library, a music collection, and a collection of old postcards, which can be used by people coming from different countries and corners of the world to study borderland cultures and intercultural relationships.

On the basis of this local work, which we have now been carrying out for fifteen years, we started to develop a broader concept of being active in the borderland, of providing knowledge, experience, and practice of the possibilities for borderland activity. We have the publishing house, which is a very important instrument for us. Sometimes the books we publish are an advanced signpost of the programs and problems with which we want to engage. It happened with the book *Neighbors* by Jan Tomasz Gross. We published this book, which launched the most important debate on Polish-Jewish relationships after World War II in Poland. And we also have two culture magazines, one covering Central and Eastern Europe, one local on the Sejny region and community.

And so, the Borderland Center includes different studios working together, interconnected with common work devoted to the borderland, to dialogue as philosophy or *ethos*. This *ethos* is exactly – and it became clear for the people and for us – the outcome and the core issue of our work there: *ethos* as daily life practice. All you do in culture, in theater, in education activities, can be transmitted into people's behaviour. And, on the basis of this activity, which should last for years because you understand that it is not an overnight happening, you have the chance to create so-called *ethos*, a kind of behaviour that I would connect with this culture of dialogue. This is something that interferes with daily life, with human attitudes to others and to common problems – this is the culture of dialogue.

So, I would say that this work is focused on various daily practices in schools and in our Center, on work with different groups. But what is the impact of this work on the daily life of the whole community? We notice now how these children who work with us, who at the beginning received this “yes” from their parents, how they can change their family lives now. They can change their parents' and grandparents' attitudes to their neighbors. At the beginning I was convinced that we could only work with children. In this very tragic and conflicted society only the young people, I thought, could change their mind and comprehend another culture, another dimension of life. But now, after these fifteen years I see that something is going on with the older generation in our town as well.

One of our other activities is to give an award to the people whom we call “Persons of Borderland.” People like Tomas Venclova, a poet from Lithuania, or Arvo Pärt, an Estonian composer, among others, received these titles. You could say that some noble people from the world are

coming to this small town and this is a huge celebration, and you could ask what is the connection between this Arvo Pärt from Berlin (a famous composer!) and these people living in Sejny? But indeed, after several years they started to see that “Borderlander” is a good name, and something with which they could identify as well. More and more, I witness the situation when somebody comes and says, “You see, I am a borderlander too... I had a Lithuanian uncle,” or “My grandfather was Jewish,” and so on... So, there is really something new appearing from the older generation in this community, too.

And maybe the last point I would like to add to this picture is about the *witness*. When you create a space in a town called *agora*, you have a situation where witnesses can come to society. If you live only in the Polish or Jewish or Lithuanian cultural houses, then there is no place to hear the witness. Who is this witness? It is somebody who used to live in this town, in this community, or it is the son or grandson of somebody who lived here before you. The process of the return of witnesses to our community is something of crucial importance. When a witness returns to the *agora*, to this place, like, for example, a Jewish person visiting us, or a Protestant person, or someone visiting Sejny after fifteen years, then many things can be heard that should not be put aside.

I am referring to what Harutyun Maturyan said about historical memory or historical heritage. Of course, it would be best if we could put it aside, or maybe we should not – I agree with Jahangir Selimkhanov – we should not talk about this all the time, because there are some other dimensions of intercultural dialogue. But the situation in a local community is like this: there is no way that a witness will *not* come to your society. It does not matter if the witness is just one person, or a whole group, or other societies or communities. If there is a space or there is a possibility, these people living around here will not be peaceful until the moment the truth is shown. Of course, people can reject this, people can defend themselves as much as possible against facing the witness, but in any case, the time will come.

The role of our borderland center is to take care of the situation when the witness meets the citizens. Our work is not even to invite the witness, not to prevent him, but to be a go-between and facilitate these meetings, meetings of memories, of tragedies, of different attitudes. This is something crucial for the community, to have this “midwife.” Of course, not only centers like ours can do it, and not only borderland centers, but some others too. But there is a space in the community

– I call it an *agora* – it could be a newspaper, a museum, or an NGO, but it should be something that will work to bridge, to connect, this witness with groups of the society living together. This is crucial for our understanding of tolerance, and of multicultural society: the situation when the witness arrives.

We experienced this in the case of Jedwabne, a very drastic situation between Poles and Jews. I already mentioned the book *Neighbors* that we published, about the true incident during World War II, when the Poles of the Jedwabne community murdered the Jews of the community. In Communist times, discussion of the event was taboo, and the monument the Communists erected in Jedwabne claimed that all these victims were murdered by Germans, without mentioning that it was the Jews who were murdered and without mentioning who exactly was the murderer. It was hidden language. But all the time we felt that the people who know what really happened in Jedwabne, they will come, and their voice will be heard. And I consider this to be our work as well. It is our duty to moderate and to work on this difficult situation.

Of course, the easiest possibility is just to reject this voice, to reject the witness, not to hear it. But rejecting and not listening does not mean that you will live in a normal society. I am not talking about a tolerant society, but just a normal society. Something will be going on underground, unconsciously; you will have children, you will have grandchildren, but all of them will possess this abnormality. This will pass from one generation to another. So, it is better – it is very difficult and it is a long process that takes years – but it is better to have this space, to have this agora, this borderland center, or some other institution to deal with these questions.

This is what I can tell you about the experience of the Borderland Foundation, and about how we think about the Center of Intercultural Dialogue. For our circumstances in Sejny it is like I just described, and for other contexts and circumstances, such as that in the Caucasus, it will be different. But some practices, some universal knowledge and some experiences, I hope, could be common, and we can share it in common.

## COMMENTARY

Interview with Krzysztof Czyżewski,  
Hamid Herishi, Artush Mkrtchyan,  
and Stanisław Zapaśnik by Viktoria Maksoeva  
for “Caucasian Accent”

**KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI:** After the 1990 political transformation in Poland, I established an independent organization, The Borderland Foundation, together with my friends. We have also built the Borderland of Arts, Cultures, and Nations Center in the multicultural town of Sejny, Poland, in the vicinity of the Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Russian borders. The region has a rich multicultural heritage. For a long time Poles and Lithuanians, Old Believers and Roma People, Belarusians and Ukrainians, and also Jews in the past, have lived here together.

**CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ** (1911–2004), Polish author, translator, and critic who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980. He always emphasized the importance of dialogue and building connective tissue between borderlands. His work *Native Realm* (1959) treats the relationships between Eastern and Western European cultures. Although primarily a poet, *Miłosz's* best-known work is, paradoxically, a collection of essays *The Captive Mind* (1953), which illustrated the role of intellectuals under Communist rule.

The idea of multicultural dialogue was born in Poland among members of alternative culture. For us, the tradition of such artists as Czesław Miłosz, who was born on the borderland territories and was influenced by the variety of its cultures, inspired us to build bridges between those cultures. The artists called their homelands “borderlands.” When Poland regained independence the question was how to relate to this rich tradition. The threat of the Yugoslavian scenario was vivid. During the Soviet period, ethnic and religious differences froze and were

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now about to clash. We decided that to prevent that we needed to create an intercultural center.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: Why was the “Caucasian House” chosen for the site of this symposium?

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: We were invited here before to share experiences in ways of communicating. I know the Caucasian and Polish borderlands are not the same, but there are always similarities to be found. I am confident that from the experience of bridge-builders of dialogue in the Caucasus, those from the Balkans and other European countries may benefit. I have long worked in the area of culture at the Open Society Institute in Budapest and had to visit the Caucasus frequently for various programs. Over several years, we thought of opening a special program for the Caucasus and Central Asia. Last year, we organized the first Colloquium in Dushanbe, which was attended as well by representatives of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The Colloquium in Tbilisi is intended for the Southern Caucasian countries; however, it is not limited to Caucasian issues. For intercultural dialogue, local relations are equally important. We see similarities in different regions, even in Western Europe and the United States. Crises in multicultural societies occur in various places. Popular ideologies and concepts, such as cosmopolitanism or nationalism lose their power. The need for new thinking arises and, in my opinion, intercultural dialogue is one of the most important concepts. Most of the participants of the Colloquium are engaged in cultural work, because we need to work not only with elected leaders and intellectuals, but also together with a broad range of people, even children, to assure long-term activity. That is why we also presented the best practices from foreign countries, such as those realized by François Matarasso from the United Kingdom or Tone Bringa from Norway, as well as the experience of the Borderland Foundation and the “Caucasian House” itself. And this is only the beginning. We think of creating a kind of mobile master academy on intercultural dialogue. The idea is to gather an expert group to travel throughout the Caucasus to work locally, help activists create more effective programs and find financial support for their initiatives. We plan on opening a website devoted to intercultural dialogue in English and Russian. The Borderland Foundation is already working on it, so that it can act as a kind

of a school, an exchange platform where information on participants will be available together with interesting articles, books, and films. Schoolteachers, educators and activists require information about newly-developed initiatives. Finally, we think of creating a Center for Intercultural Dialogue. If we want to achieve long-term results, we need such an institute with a team devoted to develop the process of dialogue with the inhabitants of the region. It will be possible if foundations similar to ours gain support from the private sector and gather the interest of businessmen. Such a center may be created as well in Tbilisi and other regions of Georgia, and in Armenia and Azerbaijan. At our Borderland of Arts, Cultures, and Nations Center we provide activities for children on the culture of cohabitation with neighbours, as well as on literature and music.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: What differences handicap intercultural dialogue in the Caucasus and are they similar to issues of communication in other regions?

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: Certain conditions arise when politicians seek only their own short-term benefits. Such focus is disabled by tolerance and good relations with your neighbors. However, in various conflicts for “borderland” territories important roles were played by intellectuals, who supported nationalistic ideologies. Writers published books because of which peace-loving neighbours became enemies. I am a man of culture myself and I know that my work is to build bridges between people, but there are those who can only destroy them. I also saw what an evil role the media took in the former Yugoslavia. If media becomes a tool for politicians promoting war, it can be very dangerous. That is why it is the task of individual journalists to explain and support intercultural dialogue. On the other hand, there are several reasons why it is hard to embrace dialogue. Often, there is more confrontational language than the language of cooperation. What projects might fix this? During the Colloquium we debated the Soviet model of people’s friendship which proved inadequate for intercultural dialogue. In the Soviet Union there was people’s friendship, but only a superficial one. One knew little about the other. For example, in Tbilisi, the Armenian, Greek, and Azerbaijan cultures were diminished, in favor of the Georgian. Now, it is important to think on how we can work on culture in a different way. A danger lurks in Western Europe as well. The

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concept of multiculturalism states that it is not enough to meet and communicate. Those relations have no cognitive depth, they do not support mutual understanding and respect.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: It is said that the American *melting pot* changes the English and the Japanese, Italians and Koreans into Americans. However, even today there are ethnic frictions there. Why is this so? There were Swedish scientists coming to Georgia to learn the Caucasian experience of cooperation between different linguistic groups.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I believe the wars between countries and nations nowadays are wars between cultures, and this is also perceivable in the United States. Huntington writes on conflicts between Hispanic immigrants and white Americans. The former grow in numbers and reject assimilation, they know little English and live in ghettos. What could foster communication between these groups? I disagree with Huntington – who prophesies war – and I try to find another way, that will become a bridge. You know, probably, that also in Europe there are many Muslim immigrants with whom the non-Muslim community has a difficult time dealing.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: Do you think it is a crisis of democracy?

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: Yes, and it is connected with the borders of intercultural society. I need to explain here how it is connected to democracy. Neal Ascherson, author of *Black Sea*, states that when society becomes more liberal, this actually does not serve to create peace between people. Everybody wants to be free and begins to isolate himself. Europe is today a vast archipelago of small islands without bridges. And that is a crisis of democracy. How can we build bridges to connect people? Earlier, American citizenship was a priority for all nationalities in the United States. Now it is said that first one needs to present his/her identity. That is new to democracy. Similarly, after secularization comes a time of new religiosity. American society becomes religious again. It is necessary to create new models, one of which is an intercultural dialogue. In this new paradigm of dialogue religion may play a great role. I distinguish three eras: In the European civilization the Grecian era underlined the object; the Cartesian era laid stress on the *ego*. I believe, that we now live in the third era in which dialogue is the most important part. In this era religion will

have a great role. You can be Muslim, Christian, or Jewish, but in a civil society it does not play a role. A tolerant person, in my opinion is deeply religious and is open for others, building a roof for all people. The most observant Christian is a bridge-builder when he means the other. Christ himself was the other, different from one's *ego*. Reverend Basil Kobakhidze explained well that the idea of an open society is not Soros's idea but Christ's. Of course there is danger in various religious movements that may lead to secularism or fundamentalism.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: I have also talked to some of the Colloquium's participants.

ARTUSH MKRTCHYAN (ARMENIA): Our Urban Study Center examines cultural and historical monuments of Southern Caucasus architecture. We find European and Russian neoclassicism in Kars, Erzurum, Akhalkalaki, Baku, Ganja, and Tbilisi. I studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tbilisi so I like the city very much. But Georgia is losing its chance to retain Tbilisi as the center of the Caucasus, as it was for us, Armenians, Azeris, for the Caucasians. Georgian religious and spiritual nationalism influences Tbilisi in a bad way. Before, the city was inhabited by Jews, Greeks, and Azeris, but now it is changing. In only the last five years about 100 thousand Azeris and Armenians have left it. From over twenty Armenian schools in Tbilisi only four remain, and the situation is similar with the churches. The Greek population is now seven times smaller, and there are barely any Russians now. In this way we are losing multinational Tbilisi. And I still remember those Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and Azeri poets and artists who considered the city their own; they were not taken for Armenians, they were Tbilisians, and to be a Tbilisian was especially honorable. A Georgian Tbilisi will lose the most when no Azeris and no Armenians will think of the city as the heart of the Caucasus.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: I see you talking in a friendly manner with Azeri colleagues. This is so nice to see you being so open between each other.

ARTUSH MKRTCHYAN: I direct a non-governmental organization that has managed regional projects for five years. We never have any troubles with Azeri partners. The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh

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was not a social one, it was political. Today, millions of refugees still have unknown status and the territories are misgoverned. Intellectuals are exhausted with debates on the case. The conflict is unsolvable on the level of civic society, because Armenian and Azeri societies do not perceive each other as enemies.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: Professor Zapaśnik considers the crisis of multicultural dialogue to be present around the world. He speaks of Western society, where people do not show interest in each other. The European population quickly grows old and there is a lack of manual labor, which supports the flow of immigrants. In a nearly monoethnic Poland, today, there is already a growing minority of 30 thousand Vietnamese.

PROFESSOR STANISŁAW ZAPAŚNIK (POLAND): There are many political issues in the contemporary Caucasus. Georgia should have recreated its wholeness, but it failed to solve the issue through political means. Moreover, when I came here in 1997, I thought that there was no state and that the authority was in the hands of regional governors. Even after the Rose Revolution many believe it is even worse.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: Hamid Herishi is a writer and cultural journalist from Baku. What cultural issues are now important for Azerbaijan?

HAMID HERISHI (AZERBAIJAN): Azerbaijan suffers from the crisis of the Soviet model of people's friendship, as do the other republics of the Southern Caucasus. We had our own, national forms of communication but the Soviet model was quite effective. It is not familiar to Western countries, but it worked well and even now it still can work. Even the Russian language we are speaking in now reflects the Soviet model. There is no Soviet Union today, a new era brings to life new languages and new forms of communication. Today, the Caucasus is full of the worst kind of nationalism. It is clearly visible in the literatures of the Southern Caucasian republics. Nationalistic ideology is also over-represented in politics, never mind the ethnic affiliation. It is in Azerbaijan and Armenia as well. Lately, Georgia is coping with it better.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: What do you think about the recent events in Azerbaijan? Do you think another "color revolution" will happen?

HAMID HERISHI: I think that a healthy relationship between the government and the opposition is crucial and everyone can then choose freely during the elections. Nevertheless, I see today's Azerbaijani opposition without strong leaders. It is not enough to get people out of their homes and onto the streets. Strong leaders and strong candidates for the parliament are required.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: How will the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict change if the opposition does not come to power in Azerbaijan?

HAMID HERISHI: Our political leaders lack the will for an agreement between nations. Neither of the sides in the conflict wants to make concessions to the other. I do not want the conflict to be influenced by time, but by strong political figures. And there are no such in Armenia or Azerbaijan.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: To solve the conflict, concessions will need to be made to one side or another.

HAMID HERISHI: I believe solving the conflict is in the interest of both sides. We should understand that hostility is not the proper mode of the Caucasian nations. We are neighbours, and we would benefit from learning from the Balkan experience. They were and are the center of democratic transformations after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In Caucasus there was no clear center, though Georgia took that position. The Georgian president became the leader of democratic transformations among the Commonwealth of Independent States.

VIKTORIA MAKSOEVA: Do you think the dialogue of cultures can influence the conflict in a positive way?

HAMID HERISHI: I doubt such dialogue would be popularized in the media, so we can only influence the participants of such meetings as the Colloquium. However, new contacts will emerge and new projects, so we will see how it goes.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## 2.

## An Old Bridge and a New Agora

ELŻBIETA MATYNIA

Sarajevo 2006

In a situation of mounting conflicts between cultural groups, whether living within the same state, next to each other, or oceans apart, the organizers of this symposium have presented us with a demanding task, an assignment that I have read through the lens of my own social and intellectual experience. The basic challenge, as I understand it, is to figure out how to build an *agora* in a world which, though globalized, is at the same time becoming increasingly fragmented – in the best case, by groups claiming separate and exclusive rights for their communities, and – in the worst case – by distrust, fear, or direct hostility towards *the other*.

I think the challenge is additionally amplified by the fact that the two categories, *multiculturalism* and *agora*, which both seem to be sources of hope for the organizers, are themselves riddled with problems...though perhaps less so when taken simply as inspiring visions and ideals (even if realized in the past), not as actual, currently-existing institutions. In the latter case, multiculturalism is seen not just as a set of *differences embedded and sustained by culture*, but as a set of policies designed to provide recognition for, and manage the co-existence of, multiple ethno-cultural groups, or multiple cultural programs within one state, thus ensuring *separate but equal* treatment for them. We know that such policies were at work several centuries ago in this very region,

the Balkans. Implemented by self-governing cultural/religious communities recognized by the Ottoman Empire as *millet*s, they were designed to maintain a measure of harmony between various religious groups within the empire.

One of the problems of today's policies of multiculturalism is their uneasy relationship with the expectations of a world order based on the principles of international human rights. A frequently cited shortfall is that, while multiculturalism privileges and advocates the recognition of the uniqueness of cultural and ethnic groups, it also tends to assume a rigid and permanent makeup of cultures, and aims at preserving them, while preventing the potential conflicts between them. In effect, such policies reinforce the separateness of the groups, and can turn them into impenetrable islands, or separate, parallel worlds, in which group rights take precedence over the rights of individual members of the community. The culture of such a group as a whole may be dismissive of the rights of one part of the group, for example women, barring them from exercising the rights guaranteed to all citizens of the larger, multicultural state (Okin 1999). The result is that what is called multiculturalism looks more like an *archipelago of monoculturalisms*.

But what is important for us to notice here is, that while the policies of multiculturalism, a product of the liberal state, can be affirmative vis-a-vis a group's culture, they usually stop short of doing anything beyond regulating the group's relation to the state and towards other groups, and therefore allow the minority group to close itself off. What I am trying to say is that these policies are passive and seem to reward selfishness, as they rarely provide for that link, that extra space, that we are interested in here, that active space *in-between* that could facilitate inter-group dialogue, and even friendship. I also agree with those who say that in a world characterized by the flow of people and ideas we have to think about multiculturalism as an arrangement that not only recognizes the values of *other* cultures, but includes indigenous *local* cultures into that mosaic.

And one familiar word of caution concerning the other category, the *agora*: as inspiring a vision as it still provides of a restoration of the Athenian direct democracy, we all know that in its original Greek version it was a highly restrictive space, open only to male citizens of Athens, and excluding most of its inhabitants and laborers: foreigners (other Greeks), barbarians, those free non-citizens called metics (often employed in menial jobs), slaves, and women.

Still, I do understand that when we refer to a *new agora* here, we have in mind an inspiring vision for a world in which societal hopes are rapidly declining; that we are trying to envision such sites, sources, arrangements, or conditions that generate dignity rather than humiliation, trust rather than suspicion, productive coexistence rather than ruinous conflict, benevolence rather than malevolence. And the question is, what does it take for such a promising arrangement to emerge and to be sustained?

I think that – following the practices tested and developed by the Borderland Center – we ought to look locally, on the ground, at the places each of us knows best, at sites and narratives that have helped each of us to transcend political or cultural divisiveness, to ease tensions, mend fences, launch friendships, and to sustain what have turned out to be realistic dreams.

The projects or arrangements I have in mind, and that I have experienced myself, not only as promising but also as actually delivering on the promise, are of a kind that *create a public space* where none has been, or *re-activate* one where it has been taken for granted. Such public space – what Hannah Arendt, the chief philosopher of dialogue, has called the *space of appearance* – is the necessary condition for any dialogue to begin, as it facilitates conversation, and makes it possible for us to get to know each other and each others' idioms, to learn about our respective ways of knowing, and to figure out how to negotiate our differences.

In a manuscript I am currently completing, I discuss the gradual creation of such public spaces, ones that helped those previously silenced to regain their voice, and forced authoritarian, dialogue-hostile regimes to enter into dialogue. I call such processes *performative democracy*, and I explore a variety of its manifestations, among them semi-official theatrical movements, the emergence of a home-made mass press, and the roundtables that brought an end to both one-party rule in Poland and the apartheid in South Africa. *Performative democracy*, which does not readily lend itself either to theorizing or to institutionalizing, is the life experience and imagination that people bring to the system they live in, in order to collectively transform it.

**HANNAH ARENDT** (1906–1975), German-born American philosopher and political scientist famous for her works on totalitarianism. Arendt had a romantic relationship with her teacher, Martin Heidegger. In 1933 during the Nazi regime, she fled to Paris, and then again in 1941 – to the United States. Among the most controversial and well-known works of Arendt are *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *The Human Condition* (1958), and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), a reportage-like work on the trial of the Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann. Her other works include *On Revolution* (1963), *On Violence* (1970), and *Crises of the Republic* (1972).

I would like to argue that tangible and sustainable hope is rooted in such locally-inspired, perhaps even parochial, initiatives founded on provincial local knowledge and often discredited by self-imposed centers of knowledge and culture. And in my opinion we should look at local knowledge as a source of new arrangements and practices that can address matters that divide communities and societies.

In times of crisis like ours, people try – just as we are trying to do here – to conjure up hopeful images that help them to see possible solutions. Such imagery has been created and explored more frequently by artists than by politicians. Poetry is known for having such a capacity, as it captures an otherwise inexpressible combination of historical and visual experience, of time and space, of insight and emotion. I myself have found such a stimulating image of *a civil world*, or *a new agora* before my eyes, an image that I have been thinking about for some time already, which comes from a novel that takes place not far from Sarajevo, written in the middle of the last century by Ivo Andrić, and entitled *The Bridge on the Drina*.

The very imagery of a bridge and the effort to *bridge* is frequently used in discussions on social capital, networking, and the need to bring people together in an increasingly divided world. But the bridge in Andrić's book is a very special one – not because it is so old and picturesque, and not even because it bridges Bosnia and Serbia – but because of its unusual design, as it doubles in the middle to allow for something more than just a crossing of the river on foot or on horse. Thus, it is not just the bridge itself I am thinking of, but this additional physical space in the middle of that bridge envisioned by a fourteenth-century architect, called the *kapia*. This bridge's social, cultural and political power lies in this extra space, the *kapia*, with its terraces and *sofas* on either side that can accommodate conversations, get-togethers, or the savoring of Turkish coffee by those who most frequently used the bridge: Muslim Bosnians and Turks, Orthodox Christian Serbs, and later on also Catholic Croats and Jews.

The *kapia* was a place where those who would otherwise not meet could look at each other, sit together, and get to know each other. Not a market place, not a temple, not a court, not a school, the *kapia* was a place that people did not have to stop at, or come to, but they did. With its *sofas* on both sides, a stand with a brass coffeemaker, and a constant flow of people speaking different languages and worshipping different gods, the *kapia* was a space of which people made really good use. This neutral space, in the middle of the bridge, made it possible for people to feel at home with each other, to look through each other's

lenses, and to plant the seeds of trust. If we could lift the image of the *kapia* from the novel, and look at it as our new modern agora, this richly textured space, inhabited by diverse voices and faces – what would be, if any, its new features and principles?

In a way, the *kapia* is like a borderland, except that the very notion of a border here is conspicuously absent. Still, a *kapia*, a place on a bridge, is a *threshold*, a turning point, a place of challenge and transformation. *Kapia* is about horizons, not borders, and in times of crisis it provides new opportunities, openings to the future. *Kapia* is a lookout, and I do not mean a patrol or a guard, but a place from which one can see much more. Such lookouts used to be the harbor-cities of Gdansk, Odessa, Lubeck, or Cape Town, full of different flavors and voices. This is where foreign sailors came, with their different languages, foods, costumes, and customs. A *kapia* then, a site hosting various cultures, where one can see more and imagine more, is one that, though a man-made construction, may indeed be called a *natural* site for dialogue. The idea of a *kapia* is not a ready-made possibility, but rather something people have to work on, to envision, and then to build. The *kapia*, with its *space of appearance*, makes performativity possible.

In the course of a rather personal conversation, a friend from Warsaw recently reminded me of a remark by the Roman poet Quintus Ennius, who observed that he had more than one heart, as he spoke not one but three languages: Latin, Greek and Oscan. He meant that this made him at home with three different ways of comprehending the world, that each language opens for him a new way of knowing. What I like about this observation is that it does not suggest that one has to lose one's own self in order to understand the other. It makes it easier to see oneself through the eyes of the other. (Or perhaps to *try* to see oneself in that way, as in reality this can never be fully achieved.) I have been thinking about this, as I am a person who over the past quarter of a century has grown a strong second heart – an American one – and I understand now that it is not possible to have my two hearts achieve a state of blissful harmony. Perhaps it would be easier to do some trading, and then to pretend that I am a new person, with no traces of my old self. Perhaps.

But it is also possible to choose another – and I believe healthier, though not easier – route, and enter into a state of perpetual exchange, discussion, and dialogue that eventually leads to the achievement of a certain level of reciprocal understanding, or mutual consideration between one's two hearts. Only quite recently have I realized

that virtually everything I have done since I left Poland has been an effort to bridge my experiences of the two worlds, to domesticate an unfamiliar stock of terms, and thus to expand my own – and my compatriots’, whether Poles or Americans – ways of knowing.

Such *mixing-and-matching* efforts are no less taxing than the never-fully-successful effort to switch hearts and to assimilate; and I believe – as I am a strong advocate of such practices – that this captures my vision of multiculturalism more fully than the multicultural policies of a liberal state that are aimed at reinforcing the borders between cultural groups. I’d like to argue that *mixing and matching* reduces the fear of the different other – so easy to exploit for political gain – and helps to build trust. I am talking now at the individual-personal level about meetings within oneself; but one can imagine ways in which these very much subject-centered answers could be transmitted into arrangements at the community level. On a far broader political level – not the individual/personal or community level – such an effort has been undertaken by the construction of the European Community, a place with gradually dissolving borders, with strong local self-governments, and a thriving variety of local cultures and perspectives opened up – at least theoretically – to each other.

The other day I found on the website of the Borderland Center a lexicon of the builder of the Mostar bridge, a man named Nejman – an amazing effort by the Borderlanders to understand the space between the two towers of the bridge, the *Tara* and *Halebija*, as a very specific space expressing and embracing both diversity but also individuality, a space disclosing difference and, at the same time, a space suggestive of accord. I often think about the impossibility of translating terms conveying culture-specific categories, or about introducing to one’s own language terms from other cultures in their original form. I noticed such an initiative in the Polish version of the *Lexicon of the Bridge-Builder*, where the names of people and things intimately linked to the place, like Mostari, Hajrudin, Czuprija, Kapija, and Yurodivy, were left as they are when used in their original context. Bridges, and above all *kapias*, help us to think in terms that – though initially alien, with their strange-sounding, difficult-to-pronounce names – make it possible for us to enter the space and have a sense of sharing in it.

*Kapias* – like borderlands – are dynamic, and not because of the frequent shift of borders, but because of the flow of diverse peoples. I think of New York City as such a *borderland kapia*, with people on the move, a site of continuous re-positionings, transfers, and transformations,

mirroring the other, echoing others' voices, inserting foreign words, mixing languages, elevating remoteness, hardly noticing outlandish looks, discerning affinities and contradictions. Bakhtinian polyphony, multivoicedness, heteroglossia are the ruling principles here, though it has nothing to do with losing one's capacity to maintain one's own voice, while communicating with and living next to the other, and celebrating the mix. *Kapias* are sites that facilitate good *neighborhood*, help to develop neighborliness, lessen borders (real or virtual), and extend the sense of home; sites of diversity where recognition takes place, and where it is granted naturally. A space where work has to be done. And this is the last point I want to return to: *the principle of mixing*.

I am not the only one who questions the lingering power of the two-century-old ethno-national romantic paradigm developed in various parts of Europe in the age of empires. The paradigm was to mobilize cultural differences in the salvational service of national politics, more specifically, in the task of gaining, or regaining, the status of a sovereign nation-state. I know about this, of course, since I am a grateful Pole whose country in 1918 was awarded its own independent state by the western powers; I know that the strategy of salvational culturalism, or *salvational monoculturalism*, was one of the few available roads to modernity for the subjected peoples of colonized eastern and southern Europe. And I know that this strategy assigned prominence to the unifying ideological core of what was considered *unmistakably national* Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Hungarian or Serbian traits and values. But, again, I am not the only one who has noticed that the lingering power of this paradigm today – at a time of construction of a larger European community – is responsible for spreading the fear of losing identity, for feeding the phobias about *others* who are interested in weakening them, and for mounting a new host of divisive politics, even within those nations-states that are ethnically homogeneous and have no significant minority populations.

Yet, in such a context free of impurities as in Poland, one has also been able to observe the fairly recent emergence of a substantial – and to many, surprising – counter-movement of active and creative

POLYPHONY, notion of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), Russian literary theorist and philosopher of language. In his work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929), Bakhtin presented his conception of mutual relations connecting meaning and context. He argued that the author, the work, and the reader constantly affect themselves, together with existing social and political forces. In *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975) he outlined his theory of *polyphony*, or “dialogics,” his belief that language is not static but evolves dynamically and is influenced by and influences the culture that produces and uses it.

exploration of a forgotten, multifaceted world, its erased diversity, silenced voices, vanished words, music long gone. It is an effort to reinsert these elements back into the world to which they once belonged, an effort that for many critics seems hopeless, forced, or artificial. And though the movement is of little meaning to those who are gone, who are not there anymore, who cannot speak for themselves, it is of real significance to those who live there, as it opens up – and not just symbolically – their long-locked communities, it extends their horizons, it dynamizes them, and helps them to get to know each other.

Those efforts are virtual *kapias*, and I know them from Poland, with a master initiative already launched some time ago by the Borderlands Center, a work that not only spans and melts immediate borders, but also crosses the ocean. The peculiar thing about some of the recent efforts in my old country is that they force my compatriots to see the absence of the other, a potential participant in an encounter, and perhaps in a dialogue. One of the controversies surrounding the very popular annual Festival of Jewish Culture in Krakow is that the thousands of young people who come to Krakow to take part in its events – both joyous and solemn, designed in a participatory, interactive mode – are almost exclusively Poles. The Jewish Krakow is gone, and what is sharply articulated there is that tangible *presence of its absence*. And I want to emphasize that presence.

Another *kapia*, one that also actively brings back voices into the place to which they once belonged, and that challenges the romantic national paradigm, was established by the people of “The Gate” in Lublin. “The Gate” is a real space, a physical seventeenth-century building, and a few stories high, which served as an elaborate entry to the Jewish part of town, at the foot of the Lublin castle. Once in a state of disrepair, it was given to a young theater group that worked on it, restored it, and saved it from being dismantled. It is this group that now, using various art-mediated forms, facilitates encounters of the people of Lublin with their absent Jewish citizens.

Bakhtin would have appreciated their efforts to return polyphony back to the town, and to serve as the proxy host for those who were rounded up, taken away, and murdered in a nearby concentration camp, Majdanek. In this case (as in the case of the Kraków events) the idea of *hospitality* takes on an entirely new meaning. Through the Gate people cannot speak with the voices of those who are absent, nor see themselves through the eyes of a modern Jewish population that was still thriving

seventy years ago, but no longer exists, however the group's initiatives launched in Lublin are nevertheless preparing the ground for a conversation. They are hospitable to a dialogue.

Still, the idea that one could launch a dialogue in which one party to the exchange is absent, and is represented by somebody else (an idea that can be traced back to Socrates), strikes many as theatrical and artificial and therefore not honest. It strikes me – no matter how sentimental this may sound – that such a committed work, one involving the emotional, the ethical and the cognitive, might also be an effective way of growing that second heart, pluralizing perspectives, and paving a pathway to transformation. But, again, there is nothing easy about building the conditions for dialogue to take place, and then entering into it. As you know, it often requires personal courage, and more often than not, knowing – which brings both shame and pain – to create a threshold for change.

As a result of such efforts the superiority of cultural purity is challenged, and instead, what Anthony Appiah calls the “case for contamination” can be revealed. I myself have wondered whether Appiah's argument for contamination (he describes himself as a mixture of Africa and Europe) resonates with our task in the twenty-first century, or whether his is a proposal for the kind of cultural syncretism against which Leonard Swindler cautions us. Appiah says:

Living cultures do not, in any case, evolve from purity into contamination; change is rather a gradual transformation from one mixture to a new mixture, a process that usually takes place at some distance from the rules and the rulers, in the conversations that occur across cultural boundaries. Such conversations are not so much about arguments and values as about the exchange of perspectives (Appiah 2006).

Whether we call them borderlands, agoras, gates, or *kapias*, we know that they exist, and I would like to recommend that we try to find them, or build them, as in the case of Café Europa. These small places of encounters, with all their local distinctiveness, are also places where mixing and *contamination* can occur, helping us to think in terms that are not ours, and facilitate a gradual but meaningful transformation. And this should fill us with hope.

## 3.

## On Hospitality: Celan and Heidegger

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THE ENCOUNTER. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1967 there was an encounter between Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger. The encounter took place in Heidegger's famous *Hütte*, located on the outskirts of the small Schwarzwald town of Todtnauberg.

On this day, in that place, the German poet was the guest of the German thinker. They spent some time in the hut and then went for a walk on the heath nearby: *Hochmoor* – the upland moors.

The encounter was documented by Celan in two places: with an entry in the guestbook (the host called it *Hüttenbuch*); and with a poem, *Todtnauberg*, written a few days later (on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August) in Frankfurt am Main.

The short inscription in the guestbook reads: “Ins Hüttenbuch, mit dem Blick auf den Brunnenstern, mit einer Hoffnung auf ein kommendes Wort im Herzen. Am 25. Juli 1967/Paul Celan” (Safranski 486; Ott 287; Pöggeler 259). A poetic echo of the inscription is to be found in the third stanza of the poem *Todtnauberg*:

PAUL CELAN (1920–1970), Romanian-born German-language poet, major representative of German-language post-World War II literature. As a Jew under Nazi-occupied Romania, Celan was forced to work in a labor camp. His first collection of poems was *The Sand from the Urns* (1948). Celan translated poems from French, Italian, and Russian, as well as Shakespeare, into German. Other works include poetry books, *Poppy and Memory* (1952), and *Lightforce* (1970). The most complete English translation of his works is *Speech-Grille and Selected Poems* (1971).

[written] in this book  
 the line about  
 a hope, today,  
 for a thinker's  
 word  
 to come  
 in the heart (Celan 2005).

Let us add that on the eve of the Todtnauberg encounter Celan enjoys the hospitality of the Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg im Breisgau. There, in the *Auditorium Maximum*, the largest university lecture hall, filled with over one thousand people, he reads his poems. Among the listeners in the first row is Heidegger, a long retired professor and former rector of the Freiburg University.

THE LEGEND. The encounter of the German thinker with the German poet, the encounter of two such eminent people of their time, immediately gave rise to a legend, one unusually vivid that led its own life, quite independent from what happened in Todtnauberg on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1967.

There arose many commentaries and interpretations of the encounter. The rise and spontaneous growth of the legend was contributed to by such famous commentators as Gadamer, Levinas, Ricoeur, and Derrida, to name only the most famous. In a nutshell, as one of the chroniclers of the encounter stated, it is said that the poem documents its unfortunate course... (meanwhile) the poem itself knows nothing about it – and it knows better (Lacoue-Labarthe 122).

But the vivid legend will not occupy me here. Instead of looking after it, I want to briefly attend to *the place of the encounter*. In three parts: the place; the encounter; and finally – the place of the encounter. In fact, there will be two places that sound similar to the ear, but one look will show the difference: Todtnauberg and *Todtnauberg*.

THE PLACE: SCHWARZWALD. The name and profile of the place will vary according to the applied focal length of the lens. Let us begin with the widest angle. While preparing Celan's visit to Freiburg – and Heidegger had put a lot of effort to assure its good course – in a letter to Gerhart Baumann, local professor of German philology, the thinker mentioned, that it would be “salutary – *heilsam* – to also show him Schwarzwald” (Safranski 485). “To show him Schwarzwald...” Probably this was not about an ordinary sight-seeing trip, but introducing

MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1889–1976), influential German philosopher known for his existential and phenomenological explorations of the question of Being. His central belief was that philosophy and society as a whole, was preoccupied with what it is that exists. But he insisted that we had forgotten the basic question of what it is to exist, of what being itself is. This question defines our central nature. He wrote about many of these issues in his best-known book, *Being and Time*. This is considered to be one of the most important philosophical works of the 20th century and he has been influential beyond philosophy, in literature, psychology, and artificial intelligence. *Heidegger* remains controversial due to his membership of the Nazi Party and statements in support of Adolf Hitler.

the guest into a certain space, which might appear to him an exquisitely favorable neighborhood. From many testimonies by Heidegger himself we know how “salutary” a space the vicinities of Schwarzwald were for his thoughts. The *topos* of Schwarzwald marks the broadest circle of the topology of the meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 1967.

I select one document, even the most peculiar one and, because of that, very characteristic, due to the unbearably elevated tone and level of pathos. This is partly explained by the circumstances of its origin and – unusual in Heidegger’s writings – personal melody. In the beginning of 1934 Heidegger, for the second time, declined the proposal to take charge of the prestigious, in German academic ranking, Department of Philosophy at the University of Berlin.

His 1933 short article *Schöpferische Landschaft* (Creative Landscape; Sassen 2003), first broadcast by a local Freiburg radio station, gives an answer to the question stated in the subtitle, *Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?* (Why do we stay in the provinces?), and brings a justification for Heidegger’s decision.

To summarize: Schwarzwald is Heidegger’s *Heimat des Denkens*, the closest, indigenous, origin side of his thought.

THE PLACE: TODTNAUBERG. To narrow the topological perspective, we will find ourselves in Todtnauberg. A small town in the southern part of Schwarzwald, which now for over one hundred years has been regarded as a local mountain health resort. Someone so gifted in linguistic abilities as Celan had to notice the meaning of the town’s name, which means something between mountain and death. The name became the title of his poem not by accident. No word is used by accident in his poetry.

THE PLACE: HÜTTE. Let us zoom in once more and the contours will become sharper. We will see *Hütte*, placed at an elevation of 1150 meters on a slope of the vast Schwarzwald valley. The hut is small, the floor plan measures six meters by seven, covered with a steep roof. A solid wooden block, walls tiled with fine shingle, on a shallow stone foundation.

It is striking how the sturdiness of the hut, while keeping its balanced proportions, fits harmoniously and naturally into the surrounding mountain environment. *Umwelt*, the natural environment, accepts the architectural curiosity without any doubt. This is revealed especially by the freedom with which it accedes to the hut's modest distinctiveness and austere self-containment.

Here is the designed, formed, and seated – according to the rules of symmetry and the requirements of the surrounding surroundings – *monad*. A proportionally compact micro-space enclosed in itself, built into the open macro-space of the surroundings widely spread around it. The hut's monadic aspect is, in a single moment, grasped and kept by the most concise and austere stanza of Celan's poem. He needs only two and a half words to do it: "in der / Hütte."

Heidegger built his Schwarzwald seat in 1922, and from then on it served him for half a century as a proper place for work. No other place served his thinking so graciously.

THE PLACE: *IN DER HÜTTE*. Changing our topological focal length once more, let's get inside the *Hütte*, limiting the space of *topos* to the closest circle. Where are we as we enter the *Hütte*?

An early profile is provided by an unexpected context; that is, Heidegger's interpretation of *idea*, implemented within the framework of a serious debate over Plato's *mimesis* project. Here, we are interested in only one aspect.

From Book X of *Politeia* (*The Republic*) Heidegger recalls an image of a handicraftsman, a carpenter, who makes a cabinet so that "προς ιδεαν βλεπων ποιει," "he looks on an idea," "he has an idea before him"; that is, he has a view on a cabinet-as-such, its appearance: *eidōs*. While making the specific cabinet, the carpenter has before himself its *eidōs*, which he does not make, but looks upon.

An act of looking upon *eidōs*, viewing an idea, has more constitutive meaning for the profile of the *topos* in which we currently reside. In such way, the area of workshop markedly exceeds the four walls surrounded by tools and manufactured equipment. It opens out on a view, on the idea of what is ready-to-hand and (what) is utilized.

Where are we then? We are in a *workshop*.

Let us summarize the topological research. While describing the series of circles of the meeting's *topos*, we find ourselves first in Schwarzwald, then in Todtnauberg, to find the *Hütte*, which from the inside presents (opens) itself to us as a workshop.

**THE PLACE: IN THE WORKSHOP.** Since we have found ourselves in a workshop, let us examine the place now revealing itself to us from the inside. A view of the *Hütte*, perceived from the inside, presents itself differently than before. It gains a significant feature. This is, admittedly, the same micro-space enclosed (concentrated) in itself, but with wide opened, windows.

A monad *with windows*, which open on a view of what is ready-to-hand, in the sphere of *Zuhandenheit* (handiness) – absence and invisibility – but a view that opens *out* of the window and looks into (inside) and *through* the window.

The workshop area was well known to Heidegger. One of the articles from his book *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (Discourse on Thinking) has a title that could belong to many of his writings: *Aufzeichnungen aus der Werkstatt* (Notes From the Workshop). No wonder that the description of such an *open place* can be found in the series of lectures entitled *Was heißt Denken?* (What Is Called Thinking?).

The workshop (*Werkstatt*) is a place (*Statt*) in which a work (*Werk*) is made; for example, a cabinet. The term does not appear in Plato's or Heidegger's writings by accident, because it represents a certain type of work. It is handi-craft: *Hand-werk*. A workshop means a place where handicrafts are made. It is a place of handicraftsman's work and activity. Products of his work are made by hand. In what sense can thinking – an activity for ages passed down as an intellectual one – be handicraft?

Can the space of the workshop be a space of thinking?

At this moment, we need to risk a jump (*Sprung*) that only seems unbelievably big, from one shore to another. In fact, it is an insignificant movement, a nearly invisible dislocation that moves into an area we want to describe: *Ursprung der Werkstatt*, the source of a workshop. Let us assume, after Heidegger: "Perhaps thinking, too, is just something like building a cabinet. At any rate, it is a 'handicraft'. The hand is a peculiar thing" (Heidegger 2004, 16).

This special function enables us to extract the meaning of *hand* from its anatomical context and treat it in a way other

PLATO (c. 428–347 BC), Classical Greek philosopher, student of Socrates (c. 470–399 BC), teacher of Aristotle, and founder of the Academy in Athens. *Plato* believed that the good life does not equal to only acquisition of knowledge, but also the adaptation of healthy emotional responses and, therefore, harmony of the human soul. *Plato* created the literary genre called "[philosophical] dialogue" in which the author's ideas surface from the statements of different participating persons. *Plato* is believed to have written thirty-six dialogues and thirteen letters. Among them are such renown works as *Phaedo*, *Cratylus*, *The Symposium*, *Gorgias*, and *The Republic*.

than that of a human organ used for orienting in the sphere of *Zuhandenheit*, handiness. “Only a being who can speak, that is, think, can have hands and can be handy in achieving works of handicraft” (Heidegger 2004, 16).

The activity of the hand – its handicraftsmanship – is not limited to making manufactured objects. The range of its activity is much broader and, at the same time, much more elementary:

The hand does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes – and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. The hand is all this, and this is the true handicraft. Everything is rooted here that is commonly known as handicraft and commonly we go no further (Heidegger 2004, 16).

In this way, we prepared the moment in which the third and decisive phase of the jump begins:

But the hand’s gestures run everywhere through language, in their most perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent. And only when man speaks, does he think – not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes. Every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking. Therefore, thinking itself is man’s simplest, and for that reason hardest, handiwork, if it would be accomplished at its proper time (Heidegger 2004, 16–7).

If we are then in the workshop, where we found ourselves as we entered the *Hütte*, we are in a workshop of thinking – *in der Werkstatt des Denkens* – hence, in a place where the simplest and thus the hardest of handicraftsmanship is done.

Let us recall that in this place an encounter happens between a thinker (*Denker*) and a poet (*Dichter*). Celan stays at Heidegger’s, at his *Hütte*, in the workshop of his thinking, and Heidegger is the one

hosting Celan – he is the *Gastgeber*. A report of the meeting in this place is Celan's poem, *Todtnauberg*. We have reached the point where the first reading of the verse is indispensable.

THE ENCOUNTER: REGARDING THE OTHER. We have looked at the place; now let us pause a while at the word “encounter” and give voice to Celan. In his writings, we will find no philosophy of encounter; neither in his poems, nor in various prose writings. However, his famous speech, *Meridian*, is a kind of *poetic* report, which observes and describes the experience of encounter.

Celan is amazed by simple data: “But the poem speaks” (Celan 2003, 48), “das Gedicht spricht ja” (Celan 1999, 162). And he adds, that “it speaks only on its own, its very own behalf” (Celan 2003, 48), “nur in seiner eigenen, allereigensten Sache” (Celan 1999, 162). The poem builds its own complete world. It does not speak *about* but *inside the matter*: it expresses the *matter – thing*. It expresses the *world*. Can the poem, while expressing the world, enclose itself into an isolated monad?

It is another way: “The poem has always hoped, for this very strange reason, to speak also on behalf of the *strange* – no, I can no longer use this word here – *on behalf of the other*, who knows, perhaps of an *altogether other*” (Celan 2003, 48), “gerade auf diese Weise *in eines Anderen Sache* zu sprechen – wer weiß, vielleicht in eines ganz *Anderen Sache*” (Celan 1999, 162).

Let us stop. This decisive phrase gives access to the secret of the vital activity of the poem. It breaks open the alleged monad of totality and tautology. To speak “on its very own behalf” does not mean building a stronghold for protection against invasion of the other. The poem does not express anything outside the borders of its own world, but it finds the other inside its very own world. The poem has no borders; that is, its world does not refer to any other world.

IN OTHER WORDS. Transcendence as a transgressive movement does not mean a process of reaching the border that separates us from the beyond-the-border. Transcendence happens in the poem itself and it names its “very own behalf.” The poem is the *trance* of the other; the very own of the *poem* and – at the same time – the *altogether other*.

INITIAL SUMMARY. The event “the poem speaks” has a double meaning: it speaks on its “very own behalf” as well as on “the behalf” of the other. The autonomous world of the poem remains open for otherness. And vice versa: the otherness makes a place for that which is “its very own.” About the other itself Celan speaks, saying that the poem

regards it – the other – as attainable and sympathetic to it! Respect means mutual sympathy here. Both *sides* give way to each other. Maybe, then, the poem’s “very own behalf” is to speak on “the behalf” of the other, which consists in its permission to speak on its “very own behalf.”

THE SECRET OF THE ENCOUNTER. The relation open to the other has the nature of an encounter. The word “other” comes earlier than “encounter” not by chance. The other – on account of being attainable and sympathetic – enables the encounter. Not the other way around, as if the encounter were to condition the possibility of two different sides entering into a relationship. The other is not a side of the poem but the reason for which the poem speaks. Because of which the poem sets out for the encounter.

How does the poem come to the encounter? Let us repeat after Celan: “The poem is lonely,” “*einsam*” (Celan 2003, 49). And in this sense it must rely on speaking on its “very own behalf.” We already know that it is an incomplete report. That is why the phrase “the poem is lonely” requires an addition: “The poem is lonely and *en route*,” “*unterwegs*” (Celan 2003, 49). It is amazing that such a succinct formula is able to hold the sense of the poem’s experience, which, speaking on its “very own behalf,” thus speaks on the behalf of the altogether other.

Being *en route*, as abstract self-sufficiency, undermines and breaks loneliness. Loneliness closes itself in inertness, and resigns itself from searching and from seeking out encounters. Loneliness is unspoken and un-speaking. However, the poem speaks and, by speaking, it is already *en route*. It is a way out towards...

Now – in this moment, when we realize the poem’s way of being as *en route* – we can ask of the encounter: “Does this very fact not place the poem already here, at its inception, in the encounter, *in the mystery of encounter?*” (Celan 2003, 49). The question has a more compelling intonation and incantation for Celan than that of a statement or a vocative.

The poem is *en route* by seeking out the encounter. It comes into existence the very minute it enters “the mystery of encounter,” “im Geheimnis der Begegnung.” The whole mystery is *on the side* of the altogether other. The other protects itself in the shadow of the mystery, but does not prevent access. The other invites the guest. The invitation is the poem: “The poem intends another, needs this other, needs an opposite. It goes toward it, witnesses it” (Celan 2003, 49).

We may now complete the report’s formula: the poem as the mystery of encountering the other. The ambiguity of the formula is deliberate.

The other is a cryptogram of namelessness, *the carte blanche*, on which any word can be written: “For the poem, everything and everybody is a figure of this other towards which it is heading” (Celan 2003, 49).

The other, the altogether other of the poem reveals itself as polymorphous and nameless. Neither thing nor human – no thing and no human – is this other; however, this other towards which the poem inclines may show itself under the guise of “everything and everybody.” The other constitutes a guarantee of inviolable mysteriousness. The poem does not strip away the curtains of otherness, does not unmask the other; rather, it prepares for the other a sympathetic shelter. The exposition here means a disclosure and a guarantee of the right of (to) the other.

SOMETHING UNCANNY. In the earlier part of his speech – while commenting on a phrase from Büchner’s *Lenz*, “One would like to be like a Medusa’s head” to turn an unusual sight into stone (after Celan 2003, 42) – Celan says:

This means going beyond what is human, stepping into a realm which is turned toward the human, but uncanny – the realm where the monkey, the automatons and with them... oh, art, too, seem to be at home (2003, 42–3).

This is the way the poem lives. The poem’s typical state of being *en route* is “going beyond what is human,” transgressing what is human, and stepping “into a realm” of the uncanny. The poem distinguishes between, but also connects, what is human and inhuman. It does not content itself with a negative profile of the uncanny and gives it distinct features. This is the area where automatons, Medusa’s heads, monkey figures, and, finally, art and poetry “seem to be at home,” “zu Hause zu sein scheinen.” They are at home in the uncanny.

If we were talking earlier about sympathy for the side of the other, now it is time to lodge a significant correction. The other reveals itself as the uncanny. It arouses anxiety with its un-canniness and un-homeliness.

Being *en route* towards the other – now, towards the uncanny – is the way of being of the poem; the transfer – the moving across, the crossing, the trance – between the human and the uncanny. If one can go that way, then let us assume according to the abovementioned criteria, that he or she must be prepared to encounter... automatons, monkeys, Medusa’s heads. To do it, one must lose the feeling of the certainty

of homeliness, the feeling of being at home with what is human and must take the risk of moving there, where those inhuman beings “seem to be at home.” To find oneself in this space requires an effort of self-losing. The poem enables such moving. It is the means of transportation accessible to human beings to the orbit of the uncanny.

THE PLACE OF THE ENCOUNTER. Now, we need to get back to the place of the encounter, as I promised. Where are we, where do we find ourselves, when we fall into place where the poem, the automatons, the monkey and the Medusa’s head “seem to be at home?”

Where are we? We are *at home*, *zu Hause*. However, it is a bit *unheimlich* here, a bit scary, uncanny, and uneasy. Where are we? We are in *Todtnauberg*. We came back to the place from which we came. We are, again, “in the *Hütte*.”

THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE MEETING: *Hochmoor*. Let us go for a stroll in the surroundings in the company of Heidegger and Celan. They stroll as “*Orchis und Orchis, einzeln*, orchid and orchid, singly,” separately, on the highland moor; where “clumps of grass, unleveled;” where barely visible stony paths – mossy and wet – help walking on the marshes or falling into and getting stuck in the bog; where “humidity, / much” brings to our eyes not only a zone of rotting and decay, decomposition and loss, but also an area fertile with luxuriant vegetation of what is rare, endemic and secluded. This is the *topos* of the *Unheimlichen*. This is the *topos* the Germans call *Abgrund*.

They, separate (and separately), know well that we all stroll on the *Hochmoor*. That we all lay uncertain steps while having an *abyss* underneath. The experience of fundamental imbalance, what one Russian called the experience of groundlessness (*опытом беспочвенности*).

ZU HAUSE. Let us go back to the house, to the *Hütte*, which in this abyssal province is as “*Arnica, eyebright*,” a “draft from the well,” and “in the *Hütte*” we can enjoy *hospitality* (*gościna*). We are in the poem’s *Todtnauberg*, we are Celan’s guests, who himself is the guest of Heidegger “in der *Hütte* in *Todtnauberg*.”

Then, finally, *where* are we?

Where have we found ourselves, when we find ourselves “in der *Hütte*,” in the workshop of thinking, in the vicinity – let us just say it! – as guests to “des ganz Anderen,” guests to “des *Unheimlichen*?” The poem is our host. The poem – the *topos* that opens as wide as the wide open windows of *Todtnauberg*’s workshop – the poem happens to be and reveals itself to be *hospitable* (*gościnnie*).

"Hosp-itable" in Polish; exact translation:  
*Guest-other.*

However, we need to see and hear the word properly – that is, against the rules of common onomastic – we need to read it as:

*gość-inny.*

Nevertheless, we do not need to strain grammatical rules or play with words, it is not necessary in order to see and hear in the word "host" – but also "guest," German "der Gast," Russian "gost," Polish "gość" and even in Latin "hostis" and Greek "xenos" – the otherness. Each time we encounter in this word a *newcomer*, a *foreigner*, a *stranger*, a *non-local*, and finally – an *alien*. Polish "gościna" means the action of hosting someone, but it initially meant a foreign country and a distant land. "Gościniec" means a road used to travel into a foreign country, and also a road house hosting "alien newcomers."

THE MYSTERY OF THE ENCOUNTER. Maybe the "mystery of the encounter," which hides in the poem, is based on an insignificant, barely visible, and yet shocking and touching semantic transposition: on the change of the *alien* – and even the *hostile* and *unfriendly*, which is best heard in the Latin "hostis" – into the *other*, while preserving its whole irreducible uncanniness.

But the poem is not only *hospitable*, "gość-inny." It is also the *Guest*, "Gość." When we are *hospitable*, "gość-inni," to the poem "at home," in our world, in our *Heimat* – we open our windows wide for the "ganz Andere," we open ourselves for the "Geheimnis" of his "Unheimlichkeit."

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At the end, let us go once more to the uncanny encounter between the *Denker* and the *Dichter* "in der Hütte in Todtnauberg." I would like to perceive it in the light of the "gość-inność," the hospitality they shared with each other: "orchid and orchid."

The poem *Todtnauberg* is treated as a poetic record of the encounter between Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger. Let us look on it differently: the poem – *this* poem – is... the *encounter* itself.

Translated from Polish by Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

Discussion from the New Agora Symposium  
in Sejny 2008

ARTILA PATÓ: Let me concentrate on the very term of *hospitality*, which refers to the notion of home, host, guest and visitor. The guest-host relationship has a deep philosophical background. For Kant, the moral value of hospitality and the right to visit others are very important. This is also a key word in Sejny, because many of us are visitors here, and moreover, visitors to another culture. That our hosts invited us here reminds me of the place of a guest, who has a similar function as Hermes in world of Greek mythology. Hermes had not only the right, but also the ability to cross borders and different spheres: visible and invisible. He was the one who is not at home, but feels at home. He could understand the language and take the message to another sphere, e.g. from the invisible sphere to the visible one. Hermes could also express the form and the idea of transformation, which is a kind of crossing the borders of creation. In a way, poets, as we know, stay in good relations with

IMMANUEL KANT (1724–1804), German philosopher whose studies focused on theory of knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics. Kant was the foremost thinker of the Enlightenment and one of the greatest philosophers ever. He continued and united the philosophical thoughts of Rationalism (stressing reason), from René Descartes, and Empiricism (stressing experience), from Francis Bacon. He introduced the division of the individual perceiving subject, and the perceived object in Western culture, which is regarded as one of the cornerstones of modernity. *Kant's opus magnum, Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781; "Criticism of Pure Reason") was followed by several other works developing his ideas.

Hermes. In the very formation of a new artistic product, a transformation happens from the invisible sphere to the visible one. There are also some distinctions referring to history: ages and communities are invisible physically throughout time. After so many destructions, certain ages are visible only by material or physical signs of what remains, *e.g.* architecture. The communities that built the buildings are, however, invisible. The metaphor of the bridge very well shows the space of contact between the visible and the invisible. It is not only a one-way reference to the past, but also a visible space where we are. Our context is also a space regarded as open for spontaneous self-definition and self-identification. Professor Wodziński referred to this space at the beginning of his speech – this open-endedness, which provokes self-identification.

EJGIDIJUS ALEXANDRAVIČIUS: For me, the most important thing is searching for such intercultural encounters in time. Because many *kastalia*'s, many colleges, are real. We can search for such places in England, on the east coast of the United States, and we can find not utopias but submissive facts of reality. But why here in Sejny, on the borderlands, does it look like a utopia?

It seems the work of time is different, in this space because we are here after Communism and the Holocaust. After a revolution of consciousness, where the old centers of culture, the aristocratic mansions, were burned down. Here, the experiment of Marxism had great effects. But this mansion, Krasnogruda, is a symbol in which different times meet. You can speak of a *post-utopia* in time, when different utopias managed to do a lot of damage to the area. One was Communism: ending in gulags and Katyń. And we are here after those utopias trying to imagine, "In what new utopia does Krzysztof Czyżewski believe?" It is a very challenging problem. The Soviet utopia did many terrible things. I say to my friends that here, in Sejny, is the last bite of Lithuanian countryside, because the Poles conserved all of it. The Soviets destroyed the Lithuanian countryside with the *kolkhoz*, the nationalization of land and individuality, and after that nothing but emptiness remains, like on the steppe. Maybe such a Polish-Lithuanian encounter is needed to – if not fight with it – cultivate some deeper, more painful consciousness with which we need to live. Some can be taken from my own memory, *e.g.* both of my grandfathers were in Polish captivity after the wars in 1920. Different memories. I recall this all in the Synagogue. We need not

to forget those events, and yet simultaneously search for something new, about which we can meet and agree with each other and with ourselves. And what do I call a post-utopian reality?

In post-communist countries people, know everything about utopias and they do not want to hear anything about any new utopias. Such people concentrate only on pragmatics, like technology or money, and they do not want to take action if there is no talking about any of the above. If there is no chance for victory, it is better to do nothing. For adults like me and for young people, it is complicated to believe in useless actions. Sometimes I speak about the usefulness of the useless things, but words, poetry, ideas, utopia, what value do they have? Where do I find value for those if I am a man living after the times of utopia? This is the greatest challenge. It feels like a dream when I am shown a plan of the Intercultural Center for Dialogue in the Borderland Center. I consider it more *Hollywood* than a simple combination of Hesse's *kastalia* and a forgotten Polish-Lithuanian mansion. And I think the Center is useful and we must believe in it.

I am a historian and I learn a lot listening to lectures, like the one Cezary has just given. I must admit that, perhaps, only now do I start to realize the place of literature and poetry in this dialogue of usefulness and uselessness. Literature and poetry is a passage to the imagination of possible lives bringing wealth to societies and individuals.

We also created a small center in Lithuania. We have a virtual bridge between Szetejnie and Krasnogruda made of useless and impossible dreams, but it provokes, it fills life with sense. I do not know all the answers, but I do know we cannot allow ourselves to live in the world as it was, in the world of compulsory Marxism, where all the answers were known before anyone asked. Living in a world and culture that is made of the *unclear* and searching for an individual path through your own life is much better. This is what awaits us and (probably) also enables our encounters with different cultures. Because there must be a need to meet the different, the other, the alien. Because I do not want to meet people like myself anymore. I search for the different, because it is a chance for some sense in my life. And maybe it is also a brick for the pedagogical province, for the *kastalia* in Krasnogruda.

CEZARY WODZIŃSKI: I would like to add a few comments to the discussion. You mentioned Hermes as a patron of encounters. Truly, Hermes is a being that mediates between worlds and translates from

one world to the other. You were talking about the visible and the invisible. We must also remember that Hermes is a mediator linking the human and the inhuman, if not the divine. This moment of mediating between human and inhuman – what Celan also mentioned – is also essential. But to this patron we need to add his relative. If we read the well-known fragment from Plato's *Symposium* where the old Diotima characterizes Eros, we can see that Eros has characteristics of his elder brother, Hermes. Because it is Eros who mediates, links and invites to encounters. A minor conclusion would be that an erotic moment is required for a true Hermes-like encounter.

But there is one additional, smaller and less-often-recalled patron of encounters, and I am happy that you have mentioned the problem of *time*. Because an encounter makes something peculiar with time. This third patron is not a well-known Greek god like Hermes and Eros, but a relative to both and his name is Kairos. He makes something peculiar happen with time. Celan says that an encounter has something to do with the hands of a clock. While showing us the brilliant site of Krasnogruda, Krzysztof mentioned that we touch the problem of time there. But it is not about turning the hands of a clock anti-clockwise. It is also not about hastening time in order to move quickly into the future. It is, however, about disturbing the normal course of time, for this encourages meditation and reflection. I would like Hermes and Eros and little Kairos to be our patrons in this space. They probably are here already.

I am happy that you mentioned two problems that are also very important to me. The first is connected with words and their instrumental usage. We are slaves to the instrumental usage of words. We tend to treat words as tools. A tool is used to *do* something. By contrast, I would propose thinking of language as doing nothing. Language does not exist to do something and, without a doubt, it transgresses the sphere of being. What does language do? (If I may still ask such an elementary question.) Language reveals and uncovers. Language quite often covers as well, but it is not an instrument for coming to terms with something, or an instrument for passing knowledge, or an instrument for communication. Language is simply the way in which the world reveals itself, and our eyes must be open to see this world revealed.

The second problem is this poetical pragmatics, a clear oxymoron, it would appear. It reminds me of an image from yesterday. We are in Krasnogruda, excuse me for naming it so deliberately, standing before

a wooden ruin, even before a shack, which we call the “Krasnogruda Mansion.” At the same time this, is a wooden shack that reminds me of the time of the Polish People’s Republic, this is a wooden shack that is a complete ruin, a place which is *not*. And then, we are in the Borderland Center in Sejny watching the plans for the construction of the *Scryptorium* and the *Austeria* that have been designed with great spirit, imagination, encouragement and invitation. But these plans do not seem to connect in any way with Krasnogruda that we have seen a moment before. This is a project on the verge of madness, or even over the verge. An oxymoronic combination of these two visions. I am a supporter of a figure called the Wise Madman. There is this oxymoronic figure of a wise – or, if you will – sainted madman or even vandal that I see here. There is a postulate that summarizes it well: “Holy fools of all countries or spaces, unite!” (*Iurodivye vsekh stran ili prostranstv soedinaites*). I feel to be in such an utopian place where “holy fools” like Krzysztof Czyżewski meet with each other.

TADEUSZ BARTOŚ: After searching for a non-pragmatic approach to reality and for dimensions of reality that are non-pragmatic, non-utilitarian, and not countable with money, I find it true that the culture we live in can put a price on everything. The efficiency of our education is counted, tutoring programs are evaluated, and marketing actions are estimated. I am not a man to complain about the world for what it is, and the world’s organization in such a form has great assets. Nevertheless, the domination of a civilization of pragmatism calls me all the more to another dimension of being a human and not only a worker.

Because of my medieval education, I would like now to call upon a division dating back to Aristotle, but developed by medieval thought: practical reason and theoretical reason, *scientia practica* and *scientia speculativa, teoretica*. Thinkers had to consider both which domains of knowledge are practical and which are purely theoretical, and how to define these categories.

ARISTOTLE, (384–322 BC), Classical Greek philosopher and scientist, one of the greatest intellectual figures of Western history. He was the author of a philosophical and scientific system that became the framework and vehicle for both Christian and Islamic medieval philosophy. Even after the intellectual revolutions of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment, *Aristotelian* concepts remained embedded in Western thinking. He was the founder of formal logic underlining the rule of reason. His writings in ethics and political theory as well as in metaphysics and the philosophy of science continue to be studied, and his work remains a powerful current in contemporary philosophical debate.

Maybe those simple definitions will bring us closer and, at the same time, show that the problem is very old, reaching back to the Greek philosophers.

Theoretical knowledge is what you acquire for itself; it serves no purpose. It is its own useless value, and because of this it was called *a speculation that is contemplation*. On the other hand, practical knowledge is ability, different arts and a capability to act in a certain situation. It is the way a human moves and finds himself in the world. The description of practical knowledge was very broad throughout the history of philosophy. It reminds me of Henri Bergson, who described the practical dimension by using the language of twentieth-century biology: “The adjustment of a human to his surroundings, operating in this world, adaptation, all of this is the pragmatic dimension. Its detailed description is important, for it is the realization of how broadly it includes the life of a human being to something else distinct.” This is what Bergson called *durée*, a kind of an illumination, a mystical experience, an immediate participation in something that is happening.

Thus, a question arises: If our civilization does not give us ways of being in the world other than the pragmatic, then is it worth searching for them in other spheres? Maybe today this type of non-pragmatic being is preserved in the arts? Artists would like their art to serve nothing. However, artistic activities are also evaluated and qualified. We see the same situation with scholarly activities: If someone wishes to enter a college or find an academic job, it is important whether there will be a possibility to engage European Union funding in his activities. So this becomes a condition. I do not say this to condemn.

I understand the situation, where there is a great number of people who all need to live and receive a salary. I do not condemn the production of people who are educated and prepared for their profession. However, we need to fight for this other, non-practical, dimension.

The next example of how the practical wins over the theoretical is the freedom of study. The pragmatics of management and the organization of the world require the absence of polyphony. If the pragmatic dimension should fully dominate, then the

**HENRI-LOUIS BERGSON** (1859–1941), French philosopher, the representative of process philosophy, which rejected static values in favour of values of motion, evolution, and change. In his book, *Creative Evolution* (1907) he describes *élan vital*, vital force, which stands for the hypothetical explanation of evolution. In his essay, *Time and Free Will*, he describes *durée*, duration, which refers to the human lifespan in its ineffability and non-quantitative qualities. Bergson was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927.

search for knowledge *itself* would disappear. But the search for knowledge itself offers a way for human beings to live in the world, and this search should be protected and cared for so it shall not vanish. The learned societies of the thirteenth century were often religious, but there was a kind of selflessness; however, when it comes to religion in general, there are two dimensions. Bergson, for example, spoke of a static religion and a static society, as opposed to a dynamic religion and society. People must be given motivation. We can protect the world by magic; the ancient religions and their Christian versions are rituals, which protect the world from the fall of heaven and help the spring to return each year. This is a way of being religious for a pragmatic and technical man. The second, dynamic dimension is where the change that brings cognition is the principal aim in itself.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I would like to emphasize the notion of transformation that was mentioned by both of you, Tadeusz, and Cezary as the essential element of our path: specifically, this transformation from alien to other that Cezary mentioned. This very place that we are in also underwent a transformation. This was a place in ruins, and here were the people that were forgotten because of the ignorance that alienated them, and now here is the rebirth of a place that transforms itself and makes those forgotten people the *other*, an other that is ever-present.

Here, this work of language that Grzegorz Godlewski was speaking about must have occurred – this dynamic search for words and the activity within words. The words “Agora in Sejny” must have appeared for this place to open and reveal itself, just as you wanted it to do, Cezary. For creative work to be done, it must have been connected with creative work in language. If there were no language, no word to express this, it would not be able to open for us. This aspect of transformation that presents a drama and a dynamic for those activities is something essential.

Ejgidius also spoke of this transformation in a very important way for me. He recalled time as part of the formula of memory of our painful and unavoidable experiences. There is a risk even in utopia, and a consciousness that you take people with you on a journey despite not knowing how it will end. Because you could lose, it could be a failure and the promise might be broken. The memory about those who were the defeated ones on this journey is strongly connected with this place: I speak of the Jews. For me, speaking with them and asking if they will

once again join such an adventure, engage in building the agora, in cosmopolitanism, in building again with their neighbors, with others, after everything they have experienced is something utterly important. Not having them on board for this journey would be like getting lost, or not receiving an essential answer. These are the difficulties that we need to face in order to transform them, in order for them to gain the dynamic to transform. But these transformations will never be finally defined or confirmed, because there will always be an element of infinity, as Cezary said.

For me, transformation is also connected with the category of time. I am happy that Cezary gave so much attention to the place and to its meaning in the process of transformation, but there is also the category of time: this long *durée*, this long duration, an opening for something that has the possibility of lasting long. It is also important that this process can be activated for an encounter. And this reminds me that an encounter can be an epiphany, an event, an intervention of *Kairos*. But the encounter requires a path of duration and coming to and also a path of future. Without this dimension there is no encounter. To capture and hold onto the fluid stream of immutability is very hard. Because here is a place that was a ruin, that experienced a change of scenery, this place is post-People's Poland, where history has cut the continuity, violated the duration, the *longue durée*. We are constantly in such situations, and digging through them in the temporal dimension is really important. We need time for this constant madness. And we need to strive for additional time.

At the end, I would like to return to the work in words and the beautiful interpretation of "gość-inność," hospitality. I would like to add a word *obcowanie*, which means "to associate with" and "to spend good time" with someone. In Polish it consists of the words "alien" and "communal," "being together." The word suggests that a community cannot come to life, cannot join together, without the other.

TADEUSZ SŁAWEK: This is one topic that unites the four voices of Tadeusz, Cezary, Egidius, and yours, Krzysztof. But I will start from what Tadeusz Bartoś was saying. It is good to start with a warning. There is always a danger of building a dichotomist picture that everything useful is at once suspicious, and that everything useless is at once very positive. Even if we and agreed on such a division that Egidius spoke about, the usefulness of things useless, then I think the problem

lies not in the idea of usefulness, but also in the system, built by us, that discredited such an idea. It discredited it by not giving it enough time. It has done so that we perceive as useful only the things which are immediate, countable, profitable not only in a financial way and measurable or in some measure graspable. In everyday speech, we tend to say, "I don't have time, I don't have time." In reality, we don't have time for usefulness. We demand from usefulness the ability to perform immediately. We have trouble with the meaning of *duration*. Cezary was talking about the notion of exploding time, turning around and disturbing time, which is in the concept of Kairos. What is difficult for us about the idea of usefulness is that we demand a compression of time. We do something and feel that it must be effective in the foreseeable, immediate future. We can observe this clearly in politics. What is killing our public life is that we perceive the usefulness of a political decision only in the immediate future – at the furthest, the next elections in four years or so. Is this the problem, raised by Tadeusz Bartoś, that we should not build dichotomist pictures? The problem might consist not in usefulness itself, but in what we have done with our idea of usefulness. The problem might consist in our compressed category of time .

Finally, I wish to add that in pedagogy, in the teaching profession, the lethality of an obsession with immediate effectiveness, the (un)usefulness of condensed time (this has to bring an effect today, tomorrow or at the latest immediately) is very clear. The profoundly beneficial effects of the teaching profession come about only after twenty years when a former student recalls, "Oh! He spoke about that! It helped me a lot in something." It is the strange paradox of this profession that it consists in dying. It is important to rehabilitate the idea of usefulness, but not in the way the European Union uses in administration. There was a circular on the universities lately that ordered a survey of students' notions of their valuation of higher education. But it is completely senseless! It is a denial of the teachings of pedagogy. It is worth defending usefulness – however, I don't know how. Maybe with this problem of time.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: Speaking of workshops and handicrafts, a discussion that Cezary started, I must add that the temporal dimension attributed to these ideas is different. This kind of usefulness, connected with workshops and handicrafts, gives us another spelling of the word "time" and understanding of the word "usefulness."

ATTILA PATÓ: I just want to ask about the role of utopias just mentioned by Egidijus Alexandravičius. I would be more critical of this perspective; I am skeptical about calling totalitarian regimes “utopias.” I think that it is more appropriate to characterize them as “nihilistic regimes,” that is, political regimes that aim to destroy humanity, and do not serve an agreeable and nice utopia. Utopias, in fact, had a role in Nazi and Communist propaganda as a way to legitimize the regime. Utopias had an instrumental function, and I would say that the end goal of every totalitarian regime is to destroy humanity, and this has three dimensions: first, spontaneity and freedom, understood as the human capacity to begin something new; second, human faculties, such as judgment, imagination, etc; third, totalitarian regimes aim to destroy public space. They aim to destroy the distance between any two persons, this space where they can meet freely to practice their imagination and to begin spontaneously creating something new.

I believe, then, that the other has a very important role, because public space needs the other. There is no public space without the other. As for spontaneous action, a person needs someone else to get involved in his project as a partner or as a recipient. Even if I – let us say – start a family. The next thing are the values of space and the other. This topic is very deep and probably has many interpretations in phenomenology and ethics. But referring only to instrumentality: the divine, in a general sense, is the end in itself. The final value is something that is not an instrument. I think it is not by chance that Poetry is so undervalued. Poetry as a language addresses the other by creating something valid and fully existent in and of itself. Because we are living in such an instrumental world, we should postulate values that are valid on their own and accept them as such. We are embedded in our everyday *praxis*, in a continuous flux of needs and necessities, thereby maintaining processes of technological and social character. In this way, there exists a very strong temptation to seek a connection here between totalitarianism and modernity. The interpretations of modernity and the experience of totalitarianism are somehow connected.

CEZARY WODZIŃSKI: I would only like to add a strong polemical note, which will be connected to the words of my preceding speaker. Firstly, let us forget about ultimate values. I think that a perspective of final, definitive and fixed values destroys the sense of our encounter. So let us forget about them!

Secondly, it is impossible to agree on an anachronistic understanding of totalitarianism, whether it is a destructive power that constructs, or a destructive power that is exclusively nihilistic. All the power of the first and the second totalitarianisms consisted in exactly this, that it was a gigantic destruction in the name of the most positive and constructive of projects. The phenomenon of totalitarianism was that it broke through the opposition between construction and destruction.

Maybe also a short commentary on the problem started by Professor Bartoś and continued by Professor Sławek. This concerns the opposition between *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*, which is strongly consolidated in our thinking. I am not convinced that we are bound to this division, irrespective of Ancient Greek sources or any contemporary proposals and examples. On the one hand, if we come back to Aristotle, from whom this medieval distinction begins, then it will appear that the division between practical and theoretical was treated differently in his time than in our modern world, because the sole Greek notion of *teoria* had nothing to do with speculation or meditation as a purely intellectual activity. Instead, it meant a certain way of seeing, looking and watching that was different than the everyday way of seeing, looking, or watching, and this new way changed how we acted in the world. So, the Greek *teoria* was not so theoretical and non-pragmatic as contemporary theory that opposes usefulness and pragmatics.

On the other hand, if we evoke Heidegger and his postulate that thinking should be understood as the highest possible form of activity, the highest possible form of acting in world, then we surpass such an anachronic dichotomy. I think that surpassing such an opposition – one in a whole sequence of oppositions – is conveyed in our search for new space, our search for a new experience of time, which was the starting point of our encounter and conversation here.

LEVAN KHETAGURI: I think it might become dangerous if we try so hard to underline the things that we try to do as utopian. If we do not put enough trust in our actions, it can become difficult to go further with them. Yesterday, we were talking about reality. Today, we talk more of dreams and we are trying to figure out how dreams can become real. It is simply a matter of how strongly we can believe in them.

I remember a year ago I had a conversation with one of the cardinals. He told me that their religion was just a small sect that won. And this is the same in the case of each project that might look utopian at the beginning. It depends on us only if it becomes real or not. For me, it is important that life sometimes abstain from explaining what is universal. I find that we have three ways to do this. One is religion, the others are science and culture. I think we should find our primary instruments in culture. Because if we are talking about borders, then languages are already borders. According to the story about the beginning of civilization, creating many languages was a punishment, not a benefit. We now try to think about it as a benefit of diversity. But at the same time, we need to find out how we can escape borders. Because for this moment, due to language borders, our thoughts sometimes consist only in different definitions of one sentence.

We have already touched on the problem of education. I think the extent to which Western education departs from the old traditions is important. I always tell my students that education starts with teachers, and Western civilization replaced teachers with professors. Then, we formalized teaching and created universities, on one hand, setting them up as stabilized institutions to develop knowledge, but at the same time we lost them as institutions of knowledge. What do we give to our students? We give only formalized information, but we still have not given them any knowledge. I think the aims of new cultural initiatives, like workshops, might be just to return to important definitions.

To create borders is easy, but to remove them is terribly hard. How much will our personal experience be able to activate such removal? Again, we return to the importance of maintaining traditions that can change things. How can we have the same definitions? Again, if we have diverse definitions, language can become a primary border. I think we need to move onto more practical things. What I saw here many years ago were simple things that gave significant results. Maybe we need to think more about simplicity that always gives results, rather than just philosophizing. Obviously, thinking creates many models and variations, but always far from life. You mentioned you have started working with the Georgian academy. This is quite a small space. In Georgian academies we often use a table; people sit with wine and share ideas. Because an encounter is when people need each other, when they need to share their experience. An encounter is an encounter

of people who need each other for support, in order to go further and try to explain what has happened around them. Beginning in ancient times, we did not find solutions to figuring out which kind of world we would like. But I find that the easiest ways are those understandable for everybody, *e.g.* music, movement, art.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: Levan, I would like to follow up on what you said about words – that this conversation, or this encounter is an attempt of acting inside words, an attempt of surpassing the borders made by words. Can a language be a border that encloses the world? I think the world needs to be opened by working in words. We cannot be bound by language. The experience of being bound by language, or by weakness of expression remains very palpable. Miłosz, writing to the poet Issa, said that what is unspoken heads to non-existence.

What worries me during this discussion of the typography of words and notions is the question of utopia. I think Grzegorz pointed out – wisely – the dangers to come, should we bring our utopia into reality. Cezary was speaking about the final truth, when we capture a utopia, and when it denaturalizes by becoming its own opposition.

I would like to recall a Greek understanding of the word “rhetor”, reconstructed by Werner Jaeger in his *Paideia*. A rhetor was the one who speaks, but at the same time knows how to speak and how he does it. Those things were inseparable. The way we work, the kind of practice, the micro-activities, the steps, the simplicity of which Levan has spoken is in extremely vivid connection with the idea. I hope that, if we do it honestly, it will defend us against the tragic dimension of utopia and against wandering in vain. If we guard our workshop and constantly stay in practice – *i.e.* if we listen to ideas together – then we will be able to avoid the great danger of which Ejdijus has spoken. We will avoid the utopia mutating in such a way that we will not be able to control it. Then, where can we search for an answer?

I think that many of us understand it as participation in culture. Many of us tend more and more to listen and think about how the audience of a spectacle (*e.g.* here in Sejny) can participate in and study the idea and build with us together. Then, the idea will not be built in detachment from the place and its circumstances. I hope this relationship of mutual listening and feeling will save us from losing authenticity, or from forcing something instead of answering a real need.

We would like not to create new detached spaces – as Cezary had said – but to open spaces that are present and authentic. I constantly ask myself if by inviting people on this journey, of encountering the other, of the risk of change, do I not make up something alien or artificially forced?

Lately, a journalist asked me: “How do you cope with *polactwo*, with nationalism that is inside the society? How to free yourself from it?” My answer: it is just the opposite. Those people, burdened with painful memories, creating anxiety and anger at the other, those people are the most important partner for our cooperation. If they came on board with our work, if they engaged in with the conversation, then there would be a certain dynamic, power, truth. This work does not concern people who have figured out such problems. This is not an entrance of the Aesthetic Movement on board of a utopia. But, it is an entrance with something that must be constantly overpowered, something of which one is never certain, something about which you must constantly question the authenticity. This is the context in which I would see the problems we have been speaking about here.

TADEUSZ SŁAWEK: I would certainly agree with your suspicion, of formal pedagogical institutions, Levan. Your formula is – “we exchange teachers for professors.” And I totally agree with you. This idea goes back to one of my mentors, Henry David Thoreau, who says: “We don’t have philosophers, we have professors of philosophy.” There are four difficult points, however, that I would like to contest. One difficult moment is your statement that utopia is not about reality. I think that utopia *is* about reality. Because, first of all, it is about a vision and more importantly, second, it is an implied, or a very direct critique of what you dislike about reality and why you generate utopias in the first place.

The second controversial point is your postulate that we could possibly escape borders. We do not stand a chance. The problem is how to change and transform borders into horizons, and I think this is what the Borderland Foundation does. The difference is that the borders were always there, and the horizon is changing because everywhere you go the line of the horizon moves. I think one way to do this is not to abolish the idea of borders fully, like a dream, a political idea of a world without borders, but rather embrace the question of how to think about borders and how to subvert the significance of borders.

The third point: theory is not practice. I think that theory *is* practice. A theoretical statement is a manifestation of a certain desire. Would you more readily trust somebody who would practically tell you to stand up and do this, do that? Or would you rather more readily cherish someone who would say, think and then reflect, take responsibility for whatever you want to do? So, I do not believe in this strict distinction between theory and practice. Because each theory has its own practice, immediately after the theory is voiced.

And finally, your idea that encounters take place when people need each other. True, I think. But I want to focus more on what really happens during an encounter. I think an encounter happens when people try to understand their separateness and their basic loneliness. On the one hand, they try to overcome their separateness and loneliness by building communities – what we are actually doing. But on the other hand, we have to defend our sense of separateness so that it will not be completely dominated by our communities. I think an encounter is paradoxically suspended between these two desires: to overcome loneliness and separateness, and to defend it. A good community is born at this uneasy crossroads between these two desires.

EJGIDIJUS ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS: I was often told about the so-called “distance.” One needs to keep distance from ideas, from utopian thoughts, and from oneself. It is important to keep distance, because when it comes to an encounter with the other, with the other’s ideas and utopias, you need to be ready to deny yourself the right to devilish values and final truths.

That reminded me of a sentence spoken by a Lithuanian, Algirdas Julien Greimas, ten years ago at the Sorbonne in Paris: “After Camus and Sartre, speaking too seriously about oneself is already very funny.” Because of that, I thought it would be good to return to the word Krzysztof used – “obcowanie” (being together). It is a special word that in Lithuanian can be translated as “svetimavimas.” “Svetimas” is someone alien (*obcy* in Polish) and “svetimavimas” is “obcowanie” (being together). In Polish it means an encounter with someone unknown. In Lithuanian it means to desire a woman who is already in a relationship. “Svetimavimas” is not a good word...

What? In Polish it can be similar? Oh, great!

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: How can we build a workshop in this place and time? How can we create its foundation? It is hard to imagine

that it could function when there is such a division between art and education. In the world of art, there is a belief that someone occupied with pedagogy, education and social activities stops being a true artist and walks away from Art to lower levels, because true art is somewhere else. These are the problems we need to overcome.

I have had an interesting recurring experience during our work with the kids on the theatrical production, *The Sejny Chronicles*, directed by Bożena Szroeder. It often happens that when someone hears that the production involves kids, he thinks it has nothing to do with adults and it is not worth watching. When we staged the show in Vilnius, for example, our friends came only because they were our friends. They were still a little bit embarrassed that they were going to a kids' play. In many other places the attitude has been similar. We are dealing with this problem in our debating on a new workshop. These are the problems we need to overcome, because they represent those borders that enslave us and that ultimately define us.

Transcribed and translated from Polish by Mikołaj Golubiewski.

INTEGRATION, TRUST,  
SOCIETY

## 4.

## Terrorism and Religion

ZYGMENT BAUMAN

Wrocław 2007

Mark Juergensmeyer has analysed the intricate blend of religion, nationalism and violence in the perpetually simmering and occasionally erupting inter-tribal hostilities in Punjab (21–33). Focusing particularly on Sikh terrorism responsible for the death of thousands of victims,

and, among other crimes, for the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, he found what he and most other researchers would have expected to find before embarking on field work: “Young rural Sikhs had perfectly good reasons for being unhappy” – those reasons being simultaneously economic, political and social. Their farming produce had to be sold below market prices, their capacity for self-assertion had been reduced to virtually nil by the oppressive policies of the ruling Congress party, and they felt relentlessly degraded and as if they were falling behind the better-off urban classes. But Juergensmeyer also expected to find evidence of the “politicization of religion.” To that end,

**SIKHISM**, Indian religion, traditionally established by Guru Nanak (1469–1539) in the Punjab. Its members, the *Sikhs* (“learners”) call their faith *Gurmat* (“the Way of the Guru”). In the twenty-first century, there are almost 25 million *Sikhs* worldwide, the great majority of whom live in India. *Sikhs* believe that their soul is united with God. They are recognized by a distinctively wrapped turban, uncut hair, moustache or beard, and an iron bracelet. Sikhism is generally considered a peaceful religion; however the twentieth century saw a growing animosity between *Sikhs*, Muslims and Hindus. *Sikh* teachings underline the value of human life and, therefore, also are distinguished by a commitment to tolerance.

he studied the teachings of the young militant Sikhs' spiritual leader worshipped by his countless followers as a saintly martyr: Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. In this case, though, he was surprised. He found in Bhindranwale's speeches only residual and perfunctory references to economy, politics, or class. Instead, the preacher, like the legion of Protestant Christian revival speakers that traipsed through the Midwestern American rural countryside, spoke of the struggles between good and evil, truth and falsehood, that reside within every troubled soul, and called for renunciation, dedication, and redemption. It seemed that he was speaking to young men in particular about their easy compromises with the lures of modern life.

More often than in the case of the American Bible Belt preachers, though, one could find in Bhindranwale's sermons references to contemporary political leaders. Bhindranwale gave his spiritual war a clearly "external" dimension: he suggested that satanic forces had somehow come down to earth and now resided in the official residence of India's head of state. Intrigued, Juergensmeyer extended his inquiry to numerous other cases, like Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Iran, Egypt, Palestine, Israeli settlements, where tribal or class frontlines were drawn using religious markers and where blood was spilled in the name of the hallowed values of a virtuous, pious and saintly life – and found everywhere a strikingly similar pattern: not so much the "politicization of religion," as (in his phrase) *the religionization of politics*. Non-religious grievances, like issues of social identity and meaningful participation in communal life, once expressed in Marxist or nationalist vocabularies, tend nowadays to be translated into the language of religious revival. Secular ideological expression of rebellion has been replaced by ideological formulations that are religious. Yet, the grievances – the sense of alienation, marginalization, and social frustration – are often much the same.

Charles Kimball notes a phenomenon akin to the "religionization of politics" in the vocabulary of the current American administration (36). President Bush, creatively developing the language introduced into American political life by Ronald Reagan, is fond of speaking of "cosmic dualism" between good nations, led by the United States, and the forces of evil: "You had to align with the forces of good and help root out the forces of evil." He is fond of speaking of America's military escapades as of a "crusade," and a "mission" undertaken on Divine Commandment (qtd. in Kimball 36). Henry A. Giroux quotes John Ashcroft,

former United States Attorney General: “Unique among nations, America recognized the source of our character as being godly and eternal, not being civic and temporal... We have no king but Jesus.” Giroux warns of the massive entry of “moral apparatchiks,” politicians who “believe that Satan’s influence shapes everything, from the liberal media to how Barbra Streisand was taught to sing,” onto the American political scene (Giroux par. 10).

Giroux continues:

As journalist Bill Moyers has written, this is, ‘Rapture politics,’ in which the Bible is read as literally true, dissent is a mark of the Antichrist and ‘sinners will be condemned to eternal hellfire.’ As right-wing religion conjoins with conservative political ideology and corporate power, it not only legitimizes intolerance and anti-democratic forms of political correctness, it also lays the groundwork for a growing authoritarianism that easily derides appeals to reason, dissent, dialogue and secular humanism” (Giroux par. 11).

In the infuriatingly multi-vocal, confused and confusing world of crisscrossing, yet mutually incompatible messages, whose main purpose may well seem to be only to question and sap their own reliability, monotheistic faiths coupled with Manichaeism, black-and-white world

visions are about the last fortresses of the *mono: one* truth, *one* way, *one* life formula – of adamant and pugnacious *certainty* and *self confidence*; the last shelters for the seekers of clarity, purity and freedom from doubt and indecision. They promise the treasures that the rest of the world blatantly and obstinately denies: self-approval, a clear conscience, the comfort of fearing no error and being always in the right – just like Jamaat Ahli Hadith, a “strictly orthodox” preacher based in Birmingham, who “practises a form of Islam which demands strict separatism from mainstream society. Its website describes the ways of ‘disbelievers’ as ‘based on sick and deviant views concerning their societies, the universe

**MANICHAISM**, type of Gnosticism, dualistic religious movement established in Persia in the third century by Mani (“Apostle of Light”). Although long considered a Christian heresy, *Manichaeism* was a missionary religion (China). *Manichaeism* spread into the Roman Empire and then disappeared from Europe by the end of the sixth century. Mani’s idea was to create a truly ecumenical religion that would combine partial truths of Zoroaster’s, Buddha’s, and Jesus’ revelations. Therefore, depending on the context, *Manichaeism* resembles Iranian and Indian religions, Christianity, Buddhism, and Taoism. *Manichaeists* believed that salvation is possible through knowledge (*gnosis*) of spiritual truth.

and their very existence” (“Muslim leaders.”) Or like Jewish orthodox enclaves in Israel, that, in the description of Uri Avnery, have “their own logic” and “very little to do with anything else” (“Interview with Uri Avnery,” 33–39).

They live in a completely closed, theocratic society that is not influenced by anything happening outside it. They believe in their own world. They dress differently and they behave differently. They are a different kind of people altogether.

There is very little communication between us and them. They speak a different language. They have a completely different outlook on the world. They are subject to completely different laws and rules.

These are people who live separately, in their own communities, religious neighbourhoods, and towns in Israel. They have no contact with ordinary Israeli society.

Indeed, the Manichaeian vision of the world, the call to arms in a holy war against satanic forces threatening to overwhelm the universe, and the reduction of the Pandora’s box of economic, political and social conflicts to an apocalyptic vision of the last, life-and death confrontation battle between good and evil, are not patterns unique to Islamic ayatollahs. On our fast-globalizing planet, the religionization of politics, of social grievances and identity-and-recognition battles, seems to be a global tendency.

We may be looking in radically different directions and avoiding each other’s eyes, but we seem to be crowded in the same boat with no reliable compass – and no helmsman. Though our rowing is anything but coordinated, we are strikingly alike in one aspect: none of us, or almost none of us, believes (let alone declares) to be pursuing his own interests – defend the privileges already attained or claim share in the privileges thus far denied. All sides today seem to fight instead, for eternal, universal and absolute values. Ironically, we, the denizens of the liquid-modern section of the globe, are nudged and drilled to ignore such values in our daily pursuits and be guided instead

LIQUID MODERNITY, notion of Zygmunt Bauman. The present condition of the world is liquid, in contrast with the preceding “solid” modernity (*Liquid modernity*; 2000). Liquid modernity is characterized by unstable social forms and institutions that no longer function as frames of reference for human life. Thus, individuals organize their lives as an unending and non-sequential series of short-term projects. Individuals themselves need to be flexible and constantly willing to change, argues Bauman, to abandon commitments without regret and to pursue opportunities due to current availability.

by short-term projects and short-lived desires – but even then, or perhaps precisely then, we tend to feel even more painfully their lack or absence whenever (if ever) we try to spot a leading motif in cacophony, a shape in the fog, or a road in quicksand.

Muslims are not the only people prone to listen and keen to be seduced by siren voices. And if they do listen and surrender to seduction, they do not do that because they are Muslims; being Muslims only explains why they prefer the voice of mullahs or ayatollahs to the voices of sirens of other denominations. Others, who listen as keenly, and allow themselves to be seduced as gladly without being Muslims, will be offered a rich assortment of other siren voices, and will no doubt find among them such sirens whose tunes they would easily recognize as comfortingly familiar and resonant with their own. Siren voices of any religion may find support in holy scripture. The Qur'an is just like the books of the Old Testament, the shared inspiration of Judaism and Christianity. The troops of Joshua, it is written, killed sometimes twelve, other times ten thousand, men and women of Canaan, and Joshua himself held out his dagger and “did not draw back his hand until he had put to death all who lived” (Joshua 8: 25–27) and saw to it that “every living being was put to the sword and the work of slaughter was finished” (Joshua 10: 28–32).

It so happens, however, at the start to the twenty-first century, that for many young Muslims being a Muslim means being a victim to multiple deprivations as well as being cut off from (or barred from using) the public escape routes leading out of oppression, as well as from the paths of personal emancipation and pursuit of happiness which so many other, non-Muslim men seem to tread with such an astonishing, and aggravating, facility.

Young Muslims have reasons to feel that way. They belong to a population officially classified as lagging behind the “advanced,” “developed,” “progressive” rest of humanity. They are locked in that unenviable plight through the collusion of their own ruthless and high-handed governments with the governments of the “advanced” part of the planet, which ruthlessly turns them away from the promised and passionately coveted lands of happiness and dignity. The choice between the two varieties of cruel fate, or rather two parts to the fate's cruelty, feels like choosing between the devil and the deep blue sea. Young Muslims may try to cheat, smuggle or force their way around the “swirling swords and the Cherubs” guarding the entry to the modern Paradise, only to find out

(if they manage to cheat the guards or glide past the checking points) that they are not welcome there, that they are not allowed to catch up with what they stand accused of, and are ridiculed for not chasing after it keenly enough; and that being there does not mean sharing in the sort of happiness and dignified life that drew them in.

They are indeed in a double bind: rejected by their home community for desertion and treachery, and barred entry from the community of their dreams because of alleged incompleteness and insincerity, or worse still, because of the perfection and ostensible blamelessness of their betrayal/conversion. Cognitive dissonance, at any time a harrowing and painful experience of an intrinsically irrational plight that does not allow for a rational solution, is in their case doubled. Their reality denies the values they were groomed to respect and cherish, as much as it refuses the chance of embracing the values that they are insistently exhorted and enticed to embrace, even if the messages that encourage them to embrace those values are notoriously confused and confusing: "Integrate! Integrate! But woe to you if you try, and damnation if you succeed. Shame and vengeance on both your houses!" (Let's note that among the victims of the Islamic terrorists of the last few years the number of "brother – and sister, and child – Muslims" by far exceeds the numbers of all others. As Satan and his henchmen/tools are not choosy, why should his detractors and would-be conquerors be selective?)

What renders the opacity (the ambivalence, the irrationality) of such a plight even deeper, is that the Muslim world itself, by a geopolitical coincidence, seems to be placed across a barricade. It so happens that the economy of the wealthy and "advanced" countries is grounded in extraordinarily high oil consumption (dependent not just on the petrol meant to be burned in car engines, but also the oil-derivative raw materials for essential industries), while the economy of the United States, the largest military power by far, thrives thanks to keeping the petrol prices artificially low. It also happens that the most profuse supplies of crude oil, and the only ones promising to remain economically viable by the middle of this century, are under the administration of Islamic (more precisely, Arab) governments. Arabs hold their fingers on the lifelines of the West, those main taps from which the life-giving energy of the opulent and powerful West flows. They may – just may – cut its supply, with virtually unimaginable, but certainly dramatic (catastrophic from the point of view of Western powers), consequences for the planetary balance of power.

This concatenation of circumstances has two effects, both adding to the apparently incurable ambiguity of the Muslim plight.

The expectably acute interest of the “modern part” of the planet in securing exclusive control over the most precious supplies of crude oil casts them in direct confrontation with a large part of the Islamic world. Since the apocryphal meeting of Franklin D. Roosevelt with King Saud onboard an American cruiser over a half century ago, when the American President guaranteed to hold the Saudi dynasty in power over the almost empty yet fabulously oil-rich peninsula, and the newly appointed King promised an uninterrupted supply of oil to be pumped by American companies, and the CIA arranged a putsch to topple the democratically elected Mossadeq government in Iran – Western countries, and the U.S. in the first place, cannot stop interfering in Middle-Eastern Islamic regimes, using intermittently lavish bribes, threats of economic sanctions or direct military interventions as their primary weapons. They also, on the sole condition of keeping the oil taps open and the petrol pipelines full, help to keep in power reactionary (and in the case of Wahhabi-dominated Saudi Kingdom radically fundamentalist) regimes that have clearly passed their use-by and tolerate-until dates, and in all probability would not be able to hold their own if not for the Western, mainly American, military umbrella.

It was through the services of the special envoy of Donald Rumsfeld, now the Secretary for Defence, that the U.S. promised to support Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship in Iraq with billions of dollars of agricultural credits, millions of dollars worth of cutting-edge military technology, as well as satellite intelligence that could be used to direct chemical weapons against Iran – and the U.S. kept their promise. Kings and dictators at the helm of such regimes are keen to use their good fortune to surround themselves with the most whimsical toys that Western consumer society is able to offer, while fortifying their border-guards and arming their secret police against smuggling in the products of Western democracy. Fleets of cars full of gadgets, yes, free elections, no; yes to air conditioning, but no to the legal equality of women; and the most emphatic *no* to an equitable distribution of sudden riches, to personal freedoms and to the political rights of their own subjects.

Another effect of the peculiar concatenation of circumstances is apparently the opposite: the selectively “westernized” section of the elite in the rich Islamic countries may stop wallowing in their inferiority

complex. Thanks to their “nuisance power,” their potential control over riches that the West needs but does not possess, they may feel strong enough to attempt the final step: to claim a status superior to those who so blatantly depend for their survival on the resources which they, and they only, may claim to command. Nothing assures one so much of one’s might as the fact of being bribed by the mighty.

The calculation could be neither more simple nor more obvious: if *we* only gain an undivided control over the fuel which feeds their engines, *their* juggernaut will grind to a halt. *They* will need to eat from *our* hands and play the game according to the rules *we* set. The strategy, however, unlike the calculation of chances, is neither simple nor self-evident. Though *we* have enough means to buy more and yet more weapons, all the bribe money that finances their buying will not suffice to equal *their* military power. The alternative, even if only a second best, is to deploy another weapon of which *we* possess no less, if not more, than *they* do: our nuisance potential, the power to make the power struggle too costly to continue, unworthy of continuing or downright impossible to be continued. Considering the blatant vulnerability of their homelands, their kind of societies, the destructive capacity of our nuisance power may well transcend the admittedly awesome potential of their massive weapons. It takes, after all, much less stuff, men, and labour to bring a New York or a London into a state of paralysis, than to smoke out a single terrorist commander from his mountain cave or chase his subalterns out of the cellars and attics of urban slums.

When all textbook as well as other, home-made or cottage-industry remedies for cognitive dissonance have been tried, and all stopped short of reaching the hoped-for result, one finds oneself in the agonisingly pathetic condition of laboratory rats who have learned that savouring the titbits piled up at the far end of the maze can be enjoyed only together with the horrors of electric shocks. Perhaps escaping the maze once and for all (an option not open to laboratory rats) will bring the satisfaction that the most diligent learning and mapping of the twists and turns of its many corridors never will?

Whether they do or do not try to find an escape from the oppression, and whether they do or do not go on hoping without hope that an escape route from the dissonance may be found on this side of the maze, does not seem to make much difference to their plight. Prizes for obedience are tantalizingly slow to come, while penalty is visited daily

on those who do not try hard enough, or try too hard (and what the trying *not* “too hard” could possibly be like that would not be immediately condemned as “not hard *enough*”?!)

Becoming a terrorist is a choice; allowing oneself to be blinded by sheer jealousy, resentment or hatred is also a choice. Being penalized for confronting, genuinely or putatively, such choices is not, however, a matter of choice since that confrontation is the verdict of fate. The fact that a few people “like you” made the wrong choices is enough to deprive you of the right to make your own – right – choice; and if you made it nevertheless, the same fact would prevent you from convincing those who sit in judgment, or usurp the right to pass verdicts, that you have made it, and made it sincerely.

A few suicidal murderers on the loose would be quite enough to recycle thousands of innocents into the “usual suspects.” In no time, a few iniquitous individual choices will be re-processed into the attributes of a *category*; a category easily recognizable by, for instance, the suspiciously dark skin or a suspiciously bulky rucksack – the kind of objects that CCTV cameras are made to note and which passers-by are told to be vigilant about. And passers-by are keen to oblige. Since the terrorist atrocities in the London underground, the volume of incidents classified as “racist attacks” rose sharply all over the country. In most cases the sight of a rucksack was not even needed to provoke it.

A dozen or so ready-to-kill Islamic plotters proved to be enough to create the atmosphere of a besieged fortress and raise a wave of “generalized insecurity.” Insecure people tend to feverishly seek a target fit to unload the gathering anxiety, and to restore lost self-confidence by placating the offensive, frightening and humiliating sentiment of helplessness. Terrorists and their victims alike share habitation of the besieged fortresses, into which the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural cities are turning. Each side adds to the fear, passion, fervour and obduracy of the other. Each side confirms the worst fears of the other and adds substance to its prejudices and hatreds. Between themselves, locked in a sort of liquid-modern edition of *dance macabre*, the two sides will not allow the phantom of a siege ever to rest.

In his study of the surveillance technology introduced on a massive scale into city streets after 9/11, David Lyon notes their “unintended consequences”: “a widening of the surveillance web...and an enhanced exposure to monitoring of ordinary people in their everyday lives” (Lyon 297–311). We can argue, however, that among all such unintended

consequences the pride of place belongs to the “media is the message” effect of the surveillance technology. Specialized, as it is bound to be, in seeing and recording the external, visible and recordable objects, such technology cannot but be oblivious to individual motives and choices behind the recorded images, and so must lead eventually to the substitution of the idea of “suspicious categories” for individual evildoers. As Lyon puts it, the culture of control will colonize more areas of life, with or without our permission, because of the understandable desire for security, combined with the pressure to adopt particular kinds of systems. Ordinary inhabitants of urban spaces, citizens, workers, and consumers – that is, people with no terrorist ambitions whatsoever – will find that their life-chances are more circumscribed by the categories which they fall in. For some, those categories are particularly prejudicial, restricting them from consumer choices because of credit ratings, or, more insidiously, relegating them to second-class status because of their colour or ethnic background. It is an old story in high-tech guise (Lyon 297–311).

The anonymous detective who apologized to Girma Belay, the hapless Ethiopian refugee and marine engineer, for the police brutally entering his London flat, stripping him naked, punching, holding against the wall and arresting him for six days without charge, with the words “Sorry mate – wrong place, wrong time,” could (and should) have added: “and wrong *category*”... And this is how Belay sums up the consequences of that category-based, even if an individually suffered experience: “I am in fear; I don’t want to go out.” And he blames for his plight those “bastard terrorists” who “acted in such a way all that sweetness and freedom was destroyed for people *like me*” (italics added; qtd. in Lavike 7)

Through a vicious loop, the threat of terrorism turns itself into an inspiration for more terrorism, spilling on its way ever larger volumes of terror and ever bigger masses of terrorized people – the two products that terrorist acts, deriving their name from precisely such an intention, are bent on producing and plotting to produce. One may say that terrorized people are the terrorists’ most reliable, even if unwilling, allies. The “understandable desire for security” always waiting and ready to be manhandled by a crafty and astute exploiter, and now whipped up by the scattered and apparently unpredictable acts of terror, proves in the end to be the main resource on which terror may count to gather momentum.

Even in the unlikely case that borders have been sealed for the undesirable flesh-and-bone travelers, the likelihood of another terrorist outrage will not be reduced to nil. Globally generated grievances are floating in global space as easily as finances, or the latest music or dress fashions, and so is the urge to avenge their genuine or putative culprits or (in case the culprits are inaccessible) the most suitable and handy scapegoats. Whenever they land, global problems settle as local and quickly strike roots and “domesticate,” and having found no global resolution, seek local targets to unload the resulting frustration. Escaping arrest, Hussain Osman, one of the main suspect in London Underground assault, arrived in Italy, though according to Carlo De Stefano, a top official of the Italian anti-terror policy, no links were found between him and any local terrorist group there – “he did not appear to be in contact with any known terrorist groups.” “It seems like we are in front of an impromptu group acting alone in this case,” Stefano concluded.

Injuries inflicted by powers steering out of control on the negatively globalized planet are countless and ubiquitous, and above all scattered and diffuse. In all parts of the planet, the soil for the seeds of terrorism is well prepared and the travelling “masterminds” of terrorist outrages can reasonably hope to find some fertile plots wherever they stop. They do not even need to design, build and maintain a tight structure of command. There are no terrorist armies, only terrorist *swarms*, synchronized rather than coordinated, with little or no supervision and none but ad-hoc platoon commanders or corporals. More often than not, for a “task group” to be born apparently *ex nihilo*, it will suffice to set a properly spectacular example that will be obligingly and promptly disseminated and hammered into millions of homes by the constantly spectacle-hungry TV networks through all the information highways by means of which they send their moving messages.

Like never before has the old anthropological notion of “stimulus diffusion” (meaning the prototypes and inspirations which travel across lands and cultures without, or independently from, their original practitioners or mediators, and without their “natural habitat,” the forms of life in which they were born and have grown) grasped so well the character of the present-day cross-cultural communication and the epidemic, contagious potential of cultural innovations. On a planet crisscrossed by information highways, the messages will find and select their own grateful listeners without seeking; or rather,

they will infallibly be found and selected by their potential grateful listeners who would gladly take the chores of searching (“surfing the web”) upon themselves.

The meeting of messages and listeners is greatly facilitated on a planet turned into a mosaic of ethnic and religious diasporas. On such a planet, the past separation between the “inside” and the “outside” or, for this matter, between the “center” and “periphery”, is no longer tenable. “Externality” of life-threatening terrorism is as notional as is the “internality” of life-sustaining capitals. Foreign-born words become flesh inside the country of arrival, alleged “outsiders” prove in most cases the locally born and bred individuals inspired/converted by ideas *sans frontières*. There are no frontlines, only separate, widely dispersed and eminently mobile battlefields; no regular troops, only civilians turning soldiers for a day, and soldiers on an indefinite civilian leave. Terrorist “armies” are all *home* armies, needing no barracks, no rallies and no parade grounds.

The machinery of the nation-state, invented and groomed to guard territorial sovereignty and to set insiders unambiguously apart from outsiders, has been caught by the “wiring up” of the planet unprepared. Day after day, one terrorist atrocity after another, the state-run law-and-order institutions learn of their own ineptitude to handle the new dangers which blatantly put paid to the orthodox, hallowed and ostensibly tested and reliable, categories and distinctions.

All that does not promise an early freedom from ambivalence, that profuse source of anxiety, insecurity and fear suffered in equal measure by people cast in it and people living their lives in its obtrusive presence. No quick fix is conceivable, let alone available at hand. With the increasingly diasporic spread of the world population and with the orthodox hierarchy of cultures all but dismantled, any suggestion of a replacement is likely to be hotly contested. With the very notions of cultural superiority and inferiority eliminated from politically correct vocabulary, such a traditional and previously universally-tested way of fixing and solidifying the outcomes of successive resolutions of ambivalence as “cultural assimilation” (now politely re-named “integration” while remaining loyal to the past strategy) is neither acceptable nor likely to be taken and followed to the end any longer.

## COMMENTARY

How Not to Shame God: Commentary  
to Zygmunt Bauman's Lecture

KONSTANTY GEBERT

Wrocław 2007

Before I try to answer your question, I would like to briefly address the basic concept that Professor Bauman laid before us. I know that engaging in a public polemic with Professor Bauman is a particularly sophisticated and perverse form of suicide, but I will attempt it nonetheless. He began by describing a situation in which religion and politics seem to impact each other – the question being which is being impacted by which – and then posited that this interaction needs to be explained. But in saying so, Professor Bauman, you seem to assume that a) religion and politics are separate, and b) that their interaction is something that demands an explanation. I would posit exactly the opposite: that religion and politics are, and always have been, part of the same thing, and actually that it is the disassociation between the two, and the relative weakening of the impact of one on the other, that demands an explanation.

Of course, I do agree with what you said about humiliation being the root factor of the drive for religion, the basic element of humiliation being that we are mortal. So, all this will be over – my dreams, my loves, my hates, my work – this will disappear without a trace, even in the better world you describe, which no longer has global markets or imperialism, but no cosmopolitan cities either. Whatever comes, we are still mortal – the ultimate humiliation. Religion is the natural answer

to that. It says, “No, trust me, it is not over.” This is why the basic way a human being relates to the universe is through religion. This connection may be broken, and has been broken repeatedly, but without it, the human world is incomprehensible.

It is extremely natural for religion to speak of the political. For those of us who are familiar with the Torah, which the Christians call the “Old Testament” and which is also a Holy Book for the Muslims, it will come as no surprise that it also contains, for instance, the world’s first ever legislation on strikes and lockouts. This is one of the elements of the law that God gave humans. A very fundamental thing: workers cannot be deprived of their pay, and they should be paid each day at nightfall. At the same time, employers have the right to deny workers employment if other workers are better and more willing. These seemingly mundane rules are part of God’s revelation to humanity. Now, it would be incomprehensible to say that although God teaches us about labor law, religion should be kept out of politics. Religion is an integral part of politics and plays, as does any other factor, a fundamentally dual role, either constructive or destructive.

The problem facing religion today, however, is that each time we see someone on TV whose face is contorted with hatred, who is shaking his fist and abusing somebody else, we may be reasonably certain that this somebody claims to speak in the name of God, and is speaking about other human beings. Usually on Western TV, this hateful face will be a Muslim face, but we have seen enough Christian faces and Jewish faces looking exactly the same to know that this is not a specificity of Islam. We are giving God a very bad name, we, the people of religion. And therefore, we need to address this horribly destructive element, which is part of the impact that religion has on human life. And we ought to honestly address the question of whether religion has brought more good or more evil into human life.

For somebody who is religious, this question is absurd because we are religious in today’s liquid world by decision. We are free to choose not to be religious. If we are religious, it is because we know empirically,

**TORAH**, in Judaism, in the broadest sense the substance of divine revelation to Israel, the Jewish people: God’s revealed teaching or guidance for mankind. The meaning of “Torah” is often restricted to signify the first five books of the Old Testament (Law, Pentateuch). These are the books traditionally ascribed to Moses, the recipient of the original revelation from God on Mount Sinai. Jewish, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant canons all agree on their order: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The term *Torah* is also used to designate the entire Hebrew Bible or even the entire body of Jewish laws, customs, and ceremonies.

experientially, from the inside, that this works. That religion helps us become, hopefully, better people, helps us confront the humiliation of mortality, gives us guidelines for decent social and political life. So, a person who has religion needs no convincing about the good of religion. But this does not address the issue of how an honest and unbiased atheist views religion. If his vision is that of a spiteful, hateful contorted face – usually male and bearded, by the way – screaming from the TV screen, abusing somebody else, then I am not surprised that that person says, “OK, I want no part of that. If that’s religion, count me out.”

The way we who have faith have attempted to address religiously motivated evil has, in my opinion, been largely characterized by intellectual and spiritual dishonesty. I was reminded of this very strongly at an interfaith conference in Sarajevo two years ago, which was dedicated to dialogue, religion and social responsibility, the usual blah-blah. We had people of different religions speaking there, and all of them said the same thing, “It is slanderous, insulting and unacceptable to say that evil can be justified by my religion. This is all distortion, people who commit evil are fanatics, they are extremists. My religion (Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism) is the religion of good, and any evil that is supposedly motivated by it is a distortion of what we teach.” I was sitting there, in the heart of the city that I had years ago watched being destroyed in the name of religion. Part of that destruction had been ordered by some of the very people sitting at the conference telling us that evil is no part of their religions. That is when I understood where the problem lies.

In each of our three traditions evil is rooted at the core. We see it most clearly in Islam today, because it is the youngest religion of the three. Islam today is of the same age that Christianity was when it engaged in religious wars all over Europe – Christians slaughtering Christians for the greater glory of God. Judaism, which is the oldest religion, had at that same age Jews slaughtering Jews in the late Temple period, also for greater glory of God. It would appear that when religions get the age of fourteen to fifteen centuries, they act out like teenagers do at the age of fourteen or fifteen, and then grow up – so, there is still hope.

In the meantime, yes, it is very clear that Islam provides ample grounds for hatred, violence, and evil, which stem from the core of the faith. The *fatwas*, the teachings, the religious justification for slaughtering innocents do come from the core teachings of Islam, just as slaughtering infidels and other Christians in Christianity’s religious wars did come

from core teachings of Christianity, and murder of Jews by Jews in the name of God came from the heart of Judaism. Until and unless the three great religions will have the civil courage to address the evil coming from their cores, we will not be able to deal with the issue of religiously motivated evil.

What happens instead is a kind of conspiracy of silence, in which we, people of religion, justify other people's evil, expecting this to be returned. The Serbs, the Catholics, and the Muslims at that conference in Sarajevo did not challenge each other. They all said, "Oh no, no – our religion has nothing to do with this," knowing that if I cover up the other guy's hatred, he also will cover up for me. As a man of religion, I cannot accept this. Because, obviously, and I know it from experience and we know it from observation, just as there is evil at the core of our teachings, an infinity of goodness also resides there. But we are able to relate to that goodness and use it for good only when we call a spade a spade. The reason why the supposed *fanatics*, the supposed *distorters of the faith*, are so popular, is that they can quote chapter and verse. If we tell the outside world that religiously-motivated evil is a distortion of our religion, we may convince some do-gooders from the other religions. We are not convincing those whom the fanatics already convinced because the fanatics have religious authorities behind them.

So, what does this do to us in the contemporary multicultural and multiethnic world? This conspiracy of silence I described in Sarajevo does not prevail only there. I have not seen one interfaith dialogue in Europe at which anyone stood up and said, "OK, this is where my religion got it wrong, this is where evil has been committed in the name of my religion" – not in the name of distortion of fragmentary teachings, but because there is also evil at the core. We do not have the civil courage. I believe that ultimately the answer to the humiliation of mortality is asserting our dignity as beings created in the image of God. But being created as the image of God is not only an instrument for dealing with the humiliation of mortality, but it is also an obligation; we need to have this civil courage to address the evil that we are doing. We lack it! There is a cosmopolitan do-gooders' conspiracy of silence in which we say nothing bad about each other, because we want to avoid friction and conflict. Yet, we ultimately do not avoid friction and conflict, it is all over the place. But we deprive ourselves of the intellectual tools to understand it, and the moral stance to counter it.

One of my rabbis always told me that it is extremely important to believe in God, of course. But it is even more important to *believe* God. Believing in God is a philosophical proposition. Believing God is a moral stance. And then he went on to say, “The most important thing, however, is to be sure that God can believe in you.” That God can trust you to do the normal, regular, decent thing. And when I look at the state of religion in multicultural societies, in societies in general, I am not really sure that God still believes in us. We look like an experiment going wrong. The basic problem of religion today is not whether we believe in God. It is whether God can still believe in us.

## COMMENTARY

## Desire Called Utopia

EDWIN BENDYK

Wrocław 2007

Let us imagine that somebody from another planet arrives on Earth and tries to understand what is going on. The Alien begins by reading basic statistics, and what does he find? That it has never been so good on the Earth as it is now. The state of the world is improving. Yes, two billion people are living in misery, but generally poverty is decreasing and the standard of living is improving. There are two unprecedented examples: China and India, where the GDP is doubling every nine years, and where it is not only the boats of the richest that rise with the tidal wave of prosperity. The average growth of the global GDP in the beginning of the twenty-first century is more than 3% in a year-to-year-perspective. This pace of development is unknown in the entire history of humankind.

Let us try to analyse in more specific detail the picture of one country, like Poland. Once again, according to the latest studies, we can say that it has never been so good in Poland. The wealth of Poles is increasing, we are becoming happier, better educated and more satisfied with life and with the situation in our country.

Then our Alien arrives at a meeting, like ours, that gathers intellectuals and analysts of different fields of social life. And the Alien, I am sure, would have cognitive dissonance. We are talking about horrors and the end of the world seems to be quite close. The specter

of crisis is wandering over the world, the Alien would conclude, and so he would ask the following question: So, what is the real situation? Is it as bad as we picture it, or is it good as statistics show?

Perhaps both pictures are valid, and we can therefore conclude that the body of humanity is healthy, but its soul is sick. As critics of contemporary society from the left to the right say, our society has generally lost its sense of direction. Yes, we are better off, but “all that is solid melts into air,” to recall the famous sentence from *The Communist Manifesto*. The idea of family has collapsed, social ties are weaker and changing fast, institutions of modern society have weakened too, so we can talk about the crisis of the university, crisis of the school, crisis of the media and public sphere generally. Welcome to the world of liquid modernity, as Professor Bauman put it.

Another eminent scholar, professor Krzysztof Pomian, scientific director of the Museum of Europe in Brussels, wrote in 1980 that humanity was facing the crisis of the future. We do not believe in progress as an inevitable process described so beautifully by Condorcet. We do not believe that the future can only be better than the present; we are afraid that our children will live worse than we are living now. On the other hand, we need a picture of the future that is more or less clear and positive, because all of contemporary life, especially its economic aspects, is built against loans that we have taken and that we must pay back within the next few decades: individual and national debts, ecology, natural resources. We are borrowing from the future, assuming that hell does not exist. But at the same moment we are losing our faith in the future. As a result, we are destroying the foundation of our future prosperity.

What is the answer? One of them is a return to religion. Institutions of religion, like the Catholic Church, are traditionally well prepared to deal with the future. They have a clear message and sophisticated vision. It is enough to stick to the message of faith, to follow the rules of the institution, in order to save not only the individual soul, but also humanity as well.

Yes, in times of liquidity it seems a rather obvious choice to return to religion and its institutions in order to save the future and ensure the survival of the world. But I am afraid it is not the best solution. Why? When discussing the possibility of intercultural dialogue and the peaceful coexistence of different peoples and societies, we must use a global perspective. I agree that most real conflicts are exploding on local levels, between communities of different cultures living in one place, like the

modern city in Europe, the United States, or Brazil. But the real risk of Armageddon comes from the global level, like, for example, the current debate about climate change and the need for global cooperation, which demands universal codes and communication practices. Obviously, religion does not provide us with such universal codes.

This is a radical change from the age of the first globalization. In the beginning of the modern age, during the so-called first globalization of the fifteenth century, religion (here I mean Christianity) belonged to the official ideology of conquest and was a part of a universal message. The first global empire of Charles V was a Christian empire. At that time, we believed that the universal message of Christian faith would prevail and give the universal code of which we are in need.

But in the globalization of the twenty-first century, Christianity as a religion does not bring a universal message to the world, it has to compete not only with the messages of other religions, moreover, with the messages of other, genuinely universal powers.

There are three of these that shape the contemporary world and are at the heart of global processes. The first is the free market and forces of liberal economy. Statistics I quoted in the beginning of my presentation prove that market forces offer the best answer to the problem of the material development of humanity. But we have to agree that these forces, while bringing prosperity, can also create other problems and be a source of humiliation described by Professor Bauman. They are good for the body, not for the soul, and we know that since at least the time of *The Communist Manifesto*.

The second universal power is science, and technology. And we should remember that even if we lose faith in future and progress, the pace of development of new technologies in areas like telecommunications, computer science, microelectronics, nanotechnology, genetic engineering, neuroscience, neuro-economics, reproductive techniques, and pharmacology has never been so fast. According to some analysts of the development of science and technology, the future is bright and clear. Ray Kurzweil, one of the leading American futurologists, a man of vision and also of significant technological achievements, claims he knows the future and it is quite simple.

First of all, we have to realize that our civilization is ruled by the law of the exponential acceleration of the pace of growth. Technology is developing faster and faster, in a non-linear way. It is extremely difficult to comprehend that pace, but it means that within the next ten

years we will face as many important inventions as in the last hundred. In other words, in the year 2020 a computer bought for one thousand dollars will have the computing power of a human brain, and a similarly priced computer in year 2030 will have the computing power of all human kind.

What is the conclusion? That by this time scientists will be able to reverse engineer the human brain and its functions and reconstruct them *in silico*. Welcome to the age of conscious machines. Kurzweil is sure that as a result of the growing speed of scientific and technological development, we are fast approaching Singularity, when technology merges with biology and a new age of post-humanity begins. Kurzweil further claims that one of the consequences of post-humanity will be genuine immortality. Kurzweil is sixty years old now and he believes that he will live long enough to become immortal.

We can call these visions crazy, insane and so on. We can dislike them, but I am afraid we cannot stop people like Kurzweil. He is not alone; there are plenty of such people in places like Silicon Valley in the United States, who have huge coffers of money to pursue their goals. It is enough to mention Craig Venter, a genius biologist who, as an independent private scientist, was able to compete with the internationally-supported project of decoding the human genome. Venter is now working out the issue of artificial life, and he has just been granted a patent from the US Patent Office for a living organism made from scratch in a test tube. In other words, technologies that will bring the Singularity are now being developed in many laboratories. Most of them will fail, but who knows – perhaps some of them will be successful.

Is religion an answer to the universal power of modern technology, especially modern anthro-technology? Pope John Paul II, searching for reconciliation between science and religion, tried to give an active and positive answer by listening carefully to the voices of scientists. He achieved a lot, but also predicted that the development of science and technology, especially in areas like cognitivism and the evolutionary sciences, and the emergence of more complex technologies, would bring

**COGNITIVISM**, a psychological framework for understanding the mind, popular since 1950s. An American researcher Lee Cronbach wanted to unite studies of individual differences and human behavioral commonalities in a new field. Cognitivism is opposed to pure behaviorism that identifies thinking as behavior. All cognitive theories rely on the “serial processing of information,” meaning that cognitive processes are executed in series. Yet, there exists another assumption that cognitive processing is primarily parallel. Cognitivists use extensive experiments and measurement as scientific methods.

a crisis similar to the crisis we faced in Europe in the age of Galileo. I am afraid that Benedict XVI is trying to prove that the predictions of John Paul II were correct. I am referring in particular to his position on the theory of evolution. We could also read in today's newspapers that the Catholic University of Louvain, one of the most important meeting places between science and religion, is on its way to losing the support of the Catholic Church, in which case it could no longer call itself "Catholic." This is because of research on in-vitro fertilization is conducted at the university.

If religion gives no other answer than conservative resistance to change, perhaps we should refer to the third universal power. This is popular culture. I am not thinking about mass culture of the industrial age based on television and other culture industries targeting passive consumers through the mediation of the market. Contemporary popular culture is much more complicated. The advent of that popular culture we could place somewhere in 1977, the year when George Lucas showed *Star Wars*, and Steve Jobs introduced the first commercially-available personal computer. Just a few years later, Ithiel de Sola Pool, a scholar from MIT, identified new trends emerging in culture. First of all, he realized that personal computers linked together in communication networks would be, as he called them, "technologies of freedom," with a huge potential for re-creation of public sphere. Secondly, he noticed that a new culture was beginning to emerge, a culture of active participation called "convergence culture."

Henry Jenkins, who works at MIT and is one of the most important analysts of convergence culture, has shown an interesting new phenomenon spreading among participants of that culture. Consumers are more demanding and want to participate actively not only in consumption, but also in creation of cultural forms. But new forms of popular culture, especially these based on the Internet and network computer games, demand cooperation, often on the global scale. Jenkins calls the phenomenon of the creation of global communities mediated by popular culture "pop-cosmopolitanism."

This is not the place to analyze popular culture in more detail; it is a very fresh phenomenon and requires careful study. Why? The language of popular culture, its codes and practices, are starting to dominate the public sphere. This is especially true in the generation of so-called *digital natives* (the majority of young people), where the language of popular culture is also used in fields of activities outside of culture. The cases

of South Korea, France, the United States, as well as the Philippines, China, and Brazil, all show that participants of modern popular culture know how to use new skills not only to play games on the computer, but also in politics. More importantly, the pop-cosmopolitan popular culture creates a universal environment, in which new forms of social life are invented, tested and discussed.

This is the environment in which technological progress is mediated and put into different contexts. One of the responses of popular culture is the new “enchantment of the world,” to paraphrase Max Weber, through cultural forms like computer games (but also literature) based on fantasy topics. New myths appear and old myths are revitalized.

I would not like to say that modern culture is superseding religion. But I would like to show that modern religions have to accept the existence of these universal powers and use the communication platform of popular culture to get out from the enclosure of particularity. I am afraid that I am saying nothing new, I am just repeating conclusions drawn by Marshall McLuhan, a devout Catholic and one of the most influential analysts of contemporary modern culture.

But still, we have not solved the problem of the future, since we can see that religion and its concepts of future is only a part of the solution. So, what are we missing? We need to deal more with the future itself. Undoubtedly, we need a fresh utopia, a secular story about the future that could shape our thinking about what is coming, even if we are not yet conscious of it. This is utopia as defined by Ernst Bloch, the result of daydreaming about the better world. Daydreaming based on reason and insight. The question is, why do we have so many dystopias, and why is it so difficult to find compelling utopias? We can find an interesting explanation to this question in Fredric Jameson’s last book on utopias.

Utopia as a concept is strictly linked to the state of development of infrastructure. The most interesting utopias appear around turning points of the development of civilization. Thomas More wrote his *Utopia* at the beginning of the modern age, when nobody could predict the coming of industrial society, but when new forms of the creation of capital through the means of private ownership of the means of production and market forces were present, and a man of deep insight was able to dream about a possible future.

Let us follow this suggestion and look for a new utopia in a place where new forms of production are now being tested. We could move to a place like Silicon Valley. And what do we find there? Once

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again we should refer to the utopia of post-humanism expressed by Kurzweil and countless other prophets of the cyber future. Just to let you know, the official name of the professional position of Vinton Cerf, one of the fathers of the Internet and now vice-president of Google, is “Chief Internet Evangelist.”

And what about Al Gore? As Vice-President of the United States he was one of the prophets of cyber utopia in the 1990s, but now he has expanded his mission to promoting an eco-utopia, a vision of the world in danger because of climate change caused by human activity. But the whole vision is a positive one: we can save the world, we just need more technology and more global collective action. So how can we trigger this? You know the answer: using the universal forces of the market, science and popular culture. The pace of the spread of the so-called New Greens movement around the world, especially in the United States, shows that the strategy works quite well.

So, we need fresh utopias not to substitute for religion, but to have a richer spectrum of dreams about the future. We need to push collective action to pursue the common good, beyond particular differences enclosed in frames of individual cultures and religions. As long as utopias continue to inspire people, such as Muhammad Yunus, banker of the poor inspired by the utopia of technology who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year, or politicians, such as Al Gore, who want to save the world, the situation is not so bad. And it is the problem of religions and religious institutions to find their place. They will never be obsolete, but very easily, in spite of the current wave of religionization, could end up on the margins of development.

## 5.

## CASE STUDY

## Religion vs. Civil Society: The Right Question?

ISABELLA THOMAS

Wrocław 2007

The Borderland Foundation espouses a noble aim: to try to build connectedness between different groups of people in different countries, across frontiers. This sort of aim, however, is not only necessary in places that are on borders or run along frontiers. In the heart of the old metropolitan cities of Europe, bridge-building and projects for community cohesion have become urgently necessary. This is especially true of London. For just as the British have begun to give up class divisions, or class awkwardnesses, new walls between people have begun to be built. This in part is because of a new penchant for multiculturalism that has flourished in Western Europe as a way of fending off racism; instead, it has harbored a different sort of racism, and has diluted the values of the Enlightenment, which need to be firmly entrenched in the face of the threats of intolerance and intransigence faced by the world today.

Multiculturalism may be variously interpreted, and it is difficult to discuss this term in an international context, knowing that some societies have very little experience of it. Diversity can be deadening, but some societies experience a cacophony of different cultures in their midst that do not always meet. In Britain, many have taken “multiculturalism” to imply simply the coexistence of different cultures living happily and easily alongside each other without mutual tension. This is popularly known as the “rainbow” theory of multiculturalism, and in today’s

London it is becoming increasingly criticised for its distance from the harsh realities that surround the integration debate today. Not only is multiculturalism building walls between people, because it emphasises segregation and stalls integration, but it also has the effect of fostering “monoculturalism.” The expression of group rights rather than individual rights tends, it is alleged, to empower “community leaders” who then often impose highly regressive versions of cultural practices, which are anything but multiple, to their audiences. Increasingly, in Britain, one sees evidence of new immigrant groups who possess no sense of association to the place they currently live in, and a distrust of people from ethnic groups that are different from theirs.

Differences can be fostered in different ways, but religion can, at least, be partially responsible for divisions in society.

Civil society is potentially more inclusive in the sense that any individual of whatever culture or ethnicity, can seek to belong to organisations that might be understood as part of “civil society.” But the word “versus” in my title may be misplaced. I am not convinced that religion and civil society are necessarily in any kind of conflict or competition: religion can undoubtedly be a part, a segment, of civil society. In the years after the fall of the Berlin wall, religion was associated in this way as *a part of* civil society. It was emphasised at that time that it was important for societies emerging from communism to thicken their sources of loyalty to different entities, so that an individual could be German and Christian and European and a lover of theater and a chemist all at once, rather as if one were giving advice to a capital investor to spread their assets widely.

Like the former communist world, the state and the public sector in the West, are, for better or worse, disengaging from all sorts of spheres of public life. This is not just a facet of privatization; it is a reflection of a changing climate. There is room not

**MULTICULTURALISM**, a notion created in the late 1960s, associated with the politics of recognition, it reevaluates disrespected minorities and appreciates non-dominant patterns of representation and communication, hence it stands against essentialism. A politically underestimated and abused umbrella term, *multiculturalism* propagates a certain agenda of group-differentiated rights, coming from three ideas: (1) a community is equally important as an individual; (2) membership in a minority culture is an unchosen circumstance of inequality; (3) historical injustice was perpetrated against Native peoples. Though criticized, it was introduced for a time in several Western countries as an official policy. After the bombings of 9/11 in New York and 7/7 in London by extremists of Arab origin, changes in policies and funding have begun, now termed as a retreat from multiculturalism and a crisis of multicultural societies.

just for the private sector, but also for civil society to step into the breach. That includes religious affiliations and organisations as well as NGOs and sporting groups. On the other hand, the current debates in Europe over multiculturalism and its alleged failures beg the question: to what extent should religious groups play a role in our societies? Multicultural sceptics have argued that we have done too much to emphasise the various factors that separate a society, at the expense of what might bind them together. Figures such as Gordon Brown, the Labor Prime Minister of the UK, Trevor Phillips, the Head of the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sachs, are using this language now. This is extraordinary, because these preoccupations were once the preserve of the political Right. Because religious groups exercise strong exclusive affiliations, one must ask whether religion can have a divisive influence while civil society can be more unifying?

Although Britain is a state with an established religion, where the Queen is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and national rituals have religious references, the state church is nonetheless weak, *precisely* because it is a state religion and is required to be inclusive. In contrast, France has no such established church, because the dominant religion, Roman Catholicism, has, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, been kept at bay from French public life. This central difference between British and French relations to their dominant religion has key implications for the way both countries then relate to their minority religions. It is the relation of religion to the State that seems to herald the nature of the relationship of religion to other elements of civil society. Certainly, if you compare the experiences of France and Great Britain in recent years in terms of the treatment of religious minorities, this seems an important factor.

The Church of England has lived alongside other religious affiliations since the Act of Catholic Emancipation in 1827, according to which Catholics became free to practice their religion after hundreds of years of discrimination since the Reformation. The toleration of Catholics and other dissenters marked a breakthrough in relations between those of different faiths. In the course of the twentieth century, the British state has accorded other religions their own institutions in order to keep them on a similar footing to that of the Church of England. This is a very different situation to that in France where religious affiliations are banned in public spaces, again, for historical reasons.

Britain has often done as the French have not done; sometimes we have not done as they have done in conscious contradistinction. The war between the two that lasted for many centuries may have made that inevitable. And many displays of British tradition were devised (or invented) in the early nineteenth century, in an effort to establish that we were not French, not Napoleonic, and not Revolutionary, thereby to stall incipient revolutionary instincts in Britain. Even in the absence of war, islands can have grandiose ideas of their difference from the continent looming on the horizon: Britain, Cuba, Taiwan and many others have done so. It is a way of preventing the mainstream continent from absorbing you into their bosom and of preserving your identity. But in the case of Britain and France, it goes further than that. For a long time, the British view of French politics has shaped and reinforced British self-perceptions. For the Whig tradition in England in the nineteenth century, the chief foil to English political development, the cautionary tale which in modern history replaces Rome as history's greatest warning, is France.

These differences are so marked that even when France and Britain begin to agree, they do so in such a way that instead of converging, they change positions. Britain and France have sometimes changed positions and acquired the manners of their counterparts.

One sees signs of this when it comes to the question of the integration of immigrants and the role of religious groups in French and British societies. The two have had very different approaches. Just as the British are beginning to see the weaknesses in multiculturalism, the French are taking to it. The French tradition has been to establish as soon as possible that the newcomer is a French citizen in all dimensions; immigrants from former colonies often had that status when they arrived in any case. But even those that came from elsewhere were to experience the religiously neutral apparatus of the French state, so that they could more readily accommodate Frenchness to their train of identity. Even if the reality was more complex, the notion was that religion was one's private matter, not to be trumpeted in state institutions. Religion, in French experience, was divisive. It was illegal to state your religion in schools, on forms, in censuses. The 1905 law that had made all French state institutions secular (whose original purpose had been to draw a line under the continuous rumbling of the French revolution) had a new purpose in the post-war religious diversity in France.

It may have been that the French had a more confident sense of superiority of the French culture. In other words, they believed that it was easier for immigrants to grasp what it was to be French – even if they chose to dislike it. Pride in France had never been affected by the post-imperial self-doubt, as it had been in Britain. Whatever doubts the 1968-ers may have had about the ethos of the previous generation, it did not diminish the strength of French patriotism. In schools, immigrants were required to learn French history, and there was a greater general strength of belief in French cuisine, French style and the French way of life.

In Britain, the situation was different. You did not need to know much about the British Empire to feel Empire guilt. It was a frame of mind associated with a desire to shake off the presumptions and the pomposity of the previous age. It was associated with the liberation movements of the 1960s, and with the view that imposing British culture on others via the Empire had had disastrous consequences. Instead, we should encourage and learn from other cultures. Imposing British culture on newcomers, many of whom had come from the former Empire, would be considered similarly vainglorious. Notions of multiculturalism were born in this high-minded vein. The sense that Western cultures were all becoming far too alike also encouraged the idea that we needed a plurality of values, or we would all be sucked into one vast American dominated miasma, and would have nothing to choose between. In addition, the Church of England was never uncoupled from the State, so there was no sense in emphasising the secularism of state institutions; other religions thus deserved to have their own such institutions and their own schools.

For different reasons, but at rather the same time, both the British and French began to think that perhaps the other country had a point on some of these issues. The British have realized that the problem with multiculturalism is that we may have emphasized the themes that divided the plurality of people now living in the UK at the expense of the things that drew us together. We may have been guilty of a different sort of racism in seeking *not* to share British culture with newcomers. The riots in Birmingham last year, between Asian and black youth, who felt that they did not belong to the same society seemed to emphasise this. The sense that a vast majority of Muslims in this country do not feel as if they belong to Britain, or it to them, is another signal of multiculturalism's failure. And according to the latest polls, 81% of British

Muslims themselves believe to be Muslims first, and citizens of the UK second. The British have begun to draw up lists of Britishness in a faintly embarrassing non-British way. The British are exhorting each other to be prouder and firmer of who they are. The British are, without recognizing it, looking to the French.

The French have had riots of their own, which made them believe that their policy of integration has also not worked. There were, in fact, thousands of alienated Muslims in the *banlieux* who had no conception of what it was to be French. The French, led by Nicolas Sarkozy, have begun to think that perhaps “les Anglo-Saxons” had a point after all. Perhaps multiculturalism (or *diversité* as they call it) may have answers that they could draw on. They have set up institutions that parallel the British ones. French politicians are beginning to turn to Muslim leaders as a way of establishing what Muslims think, instead of getting them to involve themselves in mainstream politics.

Both France and Britain have come to this position after violence in and against their societies. Both may be in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The French tragedy is that their principles are noble, but the reality in France is more racist than these principles. The idea that newcomers should be initiated more quickly into French society is a good one; the principle of the secular state and the independence of state from religion are valuable in an age of religious diversity; emphasising individual rights over community rights is in many ways a more liberal way of proceeding. But, French immigrant populations are not being drawn into mainstream French culture because of the lingering snobbery and rigidity that keeps all sorts of outsiders outside. It is not that the principles themselves are bad, but they are badly applied. And inflexible labor markets make it more difficult to absorb immigrants into the mainstream.

The British, in contrast, may be so worried by the evidence that British Muslims have no sense of belonging in Britain, that they seem to be all too prepared to accept the facile assessment that British Muslims are alienated by British foreign policy per se. Whatever one might think of the Iraq war, it is simply incorrect to suggest that British foreign policy has been anti-Muslim, even in Iraq. If anything, quite the reverse. The wars in Bosnia and Kosovo were fought to ensure that Muslim societies could coexist in the Balkans; Saddam was a murderer of thousands of Muslims etc.; the war to displace the Taliban replaced them with more responsible Muslim leaders. The tragedy in the British

case is that British Muslims are alienated by Britain's *perceived* anti-Muslim bias. It is a tragedy of miscommunication. The British need to be firmer in pointing this out, and in making Britishness more easily accessible and recognizable to newcomers, as the French have done, while listening to some of the very valuable complaints made by immigrants about the problems in our societies.

The riots, bombs, and the ensuing panic have both countries scurrying in the opposite direction. They should, however, recognize what is good in their own experiences of integration, and simply borrow from the practices of the other when helpful in correcting weaknesses. They should not change places, but should rather make an attempt to integrate each other's historical lessons, and to build a new sense of the association of place and history among their newest inhabitants.

## 6.

## Europe: Dream of Unity, Life of Divisions

ALEŠ DEBELJAK

Sarajevo 2006

In the 1990s, the European Union aimed to achieve two ambitious goals: to end the Yugoslav wars of secession and to lead the nations of Eastern Europe towards economic and social prosperity. Today, both of these goals remain elusive. The Dayton Accords, brokered by the United States in 1995, merely *froze* the state of war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia without in any way remedying its causes. Moreover, it was not European but American military force that effectively intervened in Bosnia and then later in Kosovo. Indeed, I fear that if the Yugoslav wars of secession had remained the exclusive responsibility of the EU, Sarajevo would still be under siege today.

As for the second goal of economic and social prosperity for post-communist countries: after the *velvet revolutions* of 1989 ushered in a period of renewed hope, the EU failed to respond with a European version of the Marshall Plan offering substantial assistance to these nations. The subsequent integration of many of these countries into the EU presents a grave challenge.

**DAYTON ACCORDS**, peace agreement from 21 November 1995 by the Presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, ending the war in Bosnia and detailing a General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia became a single state with two parts, the Bosniak-Croat Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic, with Sarajevo as the undivided capital city. The name of the agreement stems from the venue of the negotiations, the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base outside Dayton, Ohio. The process was led by Richard Holbrooke (the chief U.S. peace negotiator) and Secretary of State, Warren Christopher.

**VELVET REVOLUTIONS OF 1989**, a wave of protests against Communist rule in Eastern Europe. The most significant events include the culmination of the Polish Solidarity movement, the adoption of a democratic constitution in Hungary, and the mass exodus of thousands of freedom-seeking East Germans. The Velvet Revolution, or the Gentle Revolution is specifically a term for the non-violent overthrow of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia, 17 November – 29 December 1989 that peaked in the election of Václav Havel for President.

Consider: the current annual gross domestic product in the EU is approximately 23,000 dollars per capita, which is as much as four times that of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The average EU citizen today is ten times wealthier than the average Romanian or Bulgarian citizen (in other words, the citizens of post-communist countries in the second round of candidates for a membership). Put bluntly, the chosen mission of the EU to bring prosperity and stability into Eastern Europe and the Balkans is an expensive and contradictory enterprise, that is sure to keep EU nations at odds for another generation at least.

We are thus left with the dawning realization that Europeans may have tragically failed in the very objectives that they strove to realize on their own, that is without any outside (read: American) help.

From this vantage point, it seems clear that the various networks connecting Europe and America reflect a real, mutual and inescapable dependence. Despite the self-righteousness of the American government under President George W. Bush, and the controversial war and occupation of Iraq in the spring of 2003, the community of European nations cannot simply retreat into their historical bunker of cultural specificities and try to make meaningful distinctions from America, or, as some commentators suggest, define themselves against America. The attempt to build a European political identity on anti-American foundations is just as likely to fail as the past attempt of German Romantics to define their nation on an exclusively anti-French basis.

Moreover, America has been much more systematic than Europe in providing support to Eastern European anti-communist dissidents and to the fresh buds of civil society that sprouted there. From a historical perspective, this is hardly a surprise. In the wake of World War II, Western Europe was a *de facto* American military protectorate. It is ironic that without the threat of war and the assistance of America, Europeans would certainly not have been able to afford the massive investment that extended over half a century, to further their search for so-called *universal peace*. It was only under the protective umbrella of NATO forces, in which America had the leading role, that Western Europe could even begin the post-war project of reconciliation and integration.

During these years, Europe took ample advantage of the instruments of American aid intended for the rebuilding of the ravaged continent, but it always did so with great reservations regarding America's potential economic imperialism. It was also America that provided European nations with the incentive to summon adequate political will to overcome the violent conflicts that had divided them for centuries. This endeavor required the strategic construction of common life-world structures, which rendered war between European nations not only materially impractical, but also morally unacceptable and mentally unfathomable. Despite progress in this direction, however, it has not been possible for Europe to entirely eliminate the many obstacles on the complex map of historical hostilities, across which any prospective idea of a community of European nations must navigate.

One would think that the first thing needed to conceive of the imaginary totality of Europe would be concrete and identifiable boundaries. But the absence of a strict natural border on the Eastern flank of the continent has instead conditioned the need for a *symbolic geography*. Historically, distinct areas were (and indeed may still be) defined by mutual opposition. In other words, Europe has traditionally defined itself negatively, its self-perception arising from what it is not, rather than from what it is. Accordingly, its outer boundaries shifted with political circumstances and the various and sometimes random features of different historical periods. At various times, this boundary has been determined by the Oder and Neisse rivers, by the ridges of the Carpathian Mountains, the Ural Mountains, the summits of the Alps and the Pyrenees, the Atlas mountains, the coasts of the Black and Caspian Seas, the Iron Curtain, and, most recently, by the so-called Schengen *limes*. Throughout the ongoing changes in the significance that Europe has attributed to the imagined or real enemy (the existence of which has always been crucial despite its many disguises), temporary alliances of interest and pragmatic coalitions of power were formed.

In any event, the common denominator has always been fear. In the collective popular mind of the nations claiming

LIFE-WORLD STRUCTURE, German "Lebenswelt," notion in Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), the world as directly experienced and subjectively perceived, as sharply distinguished from the objective "worlds" of the sciences (*Crisis of European Sciences*, 1936). The *life-world* bases on perceptual, and practical, individual, and social experiences. Phenomenology shows how the world of science stems from the *life-world*, discovers the mundane phenomena of the *life-world*, and analyzes the factors of time, space, body, and the very givenness or presentation of experience to study how the experience of the *life-world* is possible.

membership in Europe, the East and the West have acquired polarized meanings of value, with the East becoming the negative *other* of Europe. In modern times, it was Eastern Europe and the Balkans, with the attendant communist ideology that assumed this negative role. However, going back to the Middle Ages, European rhetoric has more persistently perceived of the Orient and Islam as the *other* incarnate in its ongoing process of defining borders between the *domestic* and *foreign*, between *us* and *them*.

The noble ambition to see Europe united and free served as an ongoing inspiration to a significant number of national elites since World War II. These elites realized that they must limit potential sources of fear, while at the same time striving to integrate increasingly large chunks of the continent into common life-world structures. This ambition continues to drive many European leaders. Despite increasing public protest, they must accept the challenge that lies ahead of them and persuade their constituencies to follow the vision of a *free and united Europe*.

But who *is* a European? I suggest that it will be my children, who are less than ten years old today, and their generation that may become the first Europeans in the full sense of the word: that is to say, possessing a self-assured sense of belonging to a broader and more abstract union than that provided by the nation. The generation for whom the entry of Slovenia into the European Union is coterminous with their enrollment in elementary school could be the first to make full use of European opportunities and, more importantly, to identify themselves as true Europeans, an identity that will no longer belong, as it does today, exclusively to a small group of national elites. Instead, the *European identity* will represent an orbit of authentic empathy, thoughts and deeds that will accrue to the benefit of all citizens. As adults, the European children of today will, I hope, be free of the persistent burden of prejudice that there is a *good* part of the continent and a *bad* part, a prejudice, that I admit has historically assisted in the development of the European idea. As for me, I must confess that having come of age under the Yugoslav communist regime, I shall never be able to completely shed these complexes. They are part of my cultural baggage, the contents of which are determined in many ways by the limitations of the Slovenian collective experience, to say nothing of my individual one.

But there is a hidden potential within these very limitations. A person, after all, does not belong to a single environment. Within each individual exists a plentitude of residual forces from numerous identifications,

sediments from various collective experiences. The European *human condition* dramatizes these numerous identifications by providing the very real possibility of belonging to concentric circles of identity in which we may simultaneously exist, even if we do so with varying degrees of emotional intensity and existential validity. Thus, if one is aware of the various layers of identity shaping the individual personality, then it may be hoped that the often poisonous allegiance to one single and exclusive identity will remain closed in the bottle of moral and political unacceptability.

And that is where the poison of nationalism belongs, as anyone who experienced the devastating wars in Yugoslavia knows, wars that were driven by the ideological wind of national unity, which in turn drove the attempted genocide of anyone perceived as *different* or *other*. Fundamentalism that terrorizes and kills people in the name of an illusory national purity is no more justified than terror and killing in the name of a religious idea or ideological doctrine. The EU tragically failed in its mission when it refused for such a long time to intervene in these most recent outbursts of fundamentalism on the old continent, that is, to intervene in the wars for Yugoslav succession. This recent European history has profoundly affected my observations and critical thinking; my skeptical position towards European institutions is rooted specifically in my horror at the EU's passivity during the Yugoslav cataclysm.

This particular set of doubts rushed into my mind when I picked up my children's *European passport*, with which the three occasionally play make-believe travel games. This booklet is just one of the many promotional materials that Brussels uses to bring the idea of European unity closer to the public at large. It is a sort of illustrated catalogue of different countries, languages, flags, information on the populations and political systems of the EU. It is written in an exciting and yet perplexing way. In other words: it is much like Europe itself.

As I flipped through this fictional passport, two urgent questions came to my mind: Where does Europe end? And who is European? Will we, the citizens of post-communist countries, new members of the EU after May 2004, receive not only the rights of European citizenship, but also the respect worthy of an association of equals? The recent ban on the free movement of workers from the new countries into the *old member states*, which was announced directly prior to the enlargement of the EU, reveals the sad truth that, for now, the ideal of European citizenship

that would provide equality before the law to each and every EU citizen does not exist. How long then will it take to cast off the legacy of the traditionally divided continent? How long will Western Europeans need to cast off the deep-rooted feelings of suspicion (or at best apathy) that they feel towards the *barbaric* states and peoples of the East, Europe's *terra incognita*?

"So Lošinj is not in Europe?," my son asked when we could not find Croatia in the mock document. And here we are again: how do I one explain to a seven-year-old that an island off the seacoast of Slovenia's eastern neighbor, where my family regularly spends the summers, *is*, in fact, European, at least as much as Cyprus or Malta? I tried to wriggle my way out of this ordeal by giving a confusing geography lesson about the Mediterranean Sea: Spain, Italy, Greece, all *European* countries.

"Oh right," he said, "those are the places where we need Euros if we want to buy ice cream?"

"Yes, yes," I sighed, growing weary of the discussion. But the child persisted, "But we have Slovenian tolars, not Euros. Does that mean that we are not part of Europe?"

I threw up my hands and gave up.

In such cases, I generally retreat into the refuge of history. For some, the idea of a united Europe provokes a condescending smile, but history teaches us that it is equally laughable to contemplate a divided and successful Europe. A united Europe, of course, would be utterly unique and the commentators who have pointed to the United States of America as a paradigm have simply not done their homework. The European Union is a transnational community of nations, and not a nation of (federal) states, like America. Therefore, the EU is inventing a political form as it goes along. The dream of a united Europe, however, is ancient. It was pursued by the Roman Empire, Charlemagne and Napoleon, even by Hitler (and this is only a partial list). After World War II, the European idea was adopted by the institutions designed to prevent future armed conflict on the continent. Regardless of the vantage point, one is left with the same conclusion: the European idea is indelibly scarred by wars, aggression and violent conflict. At its very inception, Europe was born out of three catastrophes: the collapse of the city state in ancient Greece, the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, and the disintegration of the Roman Empire. It was built, on other words, on ruins. European cultures, along with Europe's churches and castles, are constructed from old and bruised material.

In order for European citizens to gain a reflexive awareness of their shared history, the shaping of the politics of European identity is of paramount importance. Yet, sober reflection calls for the acceptance of the invisible character of *Europeanness*. If children from the diverse European nations were to go on a summer camp together, they would communicate in English, and the subject matter for their conversations would likely be drawn from global cultural industries, in which the American matrix holds sway.

It would be far easier to integrate the common features of various European nations into a unified history in which particular cultural narratives from all nations, not just the traditional West (France, Germany and Great Britain) are reflected. In order to have this kind of common curriculum, however, we would need to define the common goals of European integration. In view of the bickering inside the EU and the bitter disputes over the European constitution, it is impossible to deduce with any certainty what, in fact, are the common goals of European integration. Does the goal lie in a *Fortress Europe* that closes its doors to new member states after May 2004? Or is the goal, rather, a Europe as the embodiment of universal ideas: the rule of law, the liberal democratic system, constitutional respect for human rights? A union that can and must expand, perhaps to Turkey and the southern coasts of the Mediterranean, if not to the countries lying east of the borders of Poland?

In today's unstable environment, the European Union as conceived of in the Eastern part of the continent appears to be the ultimate purpose of national life. At the same time, political, economic and intellectual forces cannot avoid the fact that Western Europe, despite the collapse of communism, remains by and large a *family unto itself*.

Looked at from this perspective, four aspects of the shaping of contemporary Europe come to the fore. First, there is the economic aspect that emerged from *etatist* political culture, and is based on the belief that it is possible in a relatively short period of time to change individual behavior and value systems by altering market conditions. The second aspect lies in the fact that Europe defines itself negatively. The third aspect is the shared mental framework that might eventually nurture national awareness of the commonality of European nations. At present, this element is still very weak, abstract and optional. The popularity of *European jokes* is telling. Namely, there are virtually no jokes about Europeans, in contrast to the abundance of jokes about

individual nations. As stereotype-affirming as jokes tend to be, they do reveal the preoccupations of normal people in their everyday lives. The European is not featured as either the protagonist or the butt of jokes for the simple reason that *Europeanism*, the identity in which to ground such jokes, is barely present in the individual, national public spheres.

This brings us to the fourth key aspect of the current European order: its democratic deficit. United Europe remains, in fact, the project of social elites rather than that of broader national populations across the continent. Due to the inescapable fact that the European Union is being established from the top down, it has yet to take root among ordinary people. The European anthem, the flag, and the Euro banknotes are isolated bricks in the mental structure of the European identity: they still need common masonry to hold them together.

The EU, which thrives on formal procedures, negotiation, and consensual compromise in the search of the common good, today faces its most profound challenge: it must invent a new political order. Regardless of whether the future holds prospects for a confederate Europe (an approach often favored in French political circles) or for a federation (a favorite of German diplomacy), a European democratic political culture must first be put in place and nurtured within the member states themselves. This is especially true in the post-communist countries where democracy is, metaphorically speaking, in its early adolescent stage – that is to say a difficult teenager. Democratic life in individual member-states is the main precondition need to foster the same culture on a trans-national, European level as well.

Unfortunately, a culture where trust, consent and solidarity are the main ingredients in common European life, remains a long way off. In the renewed ambition of the three strongest members (France, Germany, Great Britain) to create a directorate that would lead the EU with relative independence even after enlargement is realized, then the future of the EU is painfully obvious: a Europe of two speeds, or put another way, a Europe of the first and second class citizens. This current policy only reinforces the historical discrimination of the traditional West against the countries, languages, cultural traditions, and people in the *wild East*, the *petit pays de merde*, “little shitty countries,” as the French like to say.

The fact that, while Europe equivocated, America finally intervened with military force in Bosnia and Kosovo (however late) increases my personal doubts all the more. My dilemma stems, in part, from the

realization that many rejections of strategic American dominion in Europe are permeated with an anti-American sentiment. It is this popular sentiment that has, after the end of the Cold War, replaced the structural source of fear that the Soviet Empire once represented. I would be blind if I did not recognize, however, that the escalation of America's global military presence that began with the legitimate and legal attack on Afghanistan as the base of the terrorist network of Al-Qaeda, and went on to illegally occupy Iraq, has not meant a huge backward step for transatlantic and international relations. The so-called *coalition of the willing* might also be called a coalition of bullied states, deceived into believing in the existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

The legacy of American ties to Europe, however, cannot simply be regarded from the aspect of contemporary circumstances, however grave they may appear. For Americans after World War II, a united and free Western Europe represented the best form of security and peace. Over the course of the last hundred years, Europe produced two World Wars, was the key geographical and political focus of the third conflict, the Cold War, and then played a crucial part in the wars of former Yugoslavia with its apparent neutrality which only tied the victims' hands behind their backs. Each of these conflicts prompted in turn an American engagement on the European continent.

After the Cold War, however, America ceased being regarded as the guardian of the old continent. Instead, it became a mirror that Europe uses to correct, create, and improve its self-image. At the same time, American strategic interest in European matters has declined. Even before 9/11, America has begun to shift its focus to the former Soviet Central Asia and the Arab peninsula. Later, America would be naively appalled when faced with the fact that most of the European countries refused to join them in the clumsily conceived and poorly executed Iraqi adventure. The American Secretary of Defense's division of countries according to the attitude toward the invasion of Iraq into the *Old Europe* (the US-defying countries) and the *new Europe* (the US-supporting countries) had a twofold character. On the one hand, it stands for the policy of *divide and conquer* that benefits America. On the other, it has functioned as a sobering statement that may one day work to Europe's benefit. The division clearly illustrated the following: the governments of post-communist countries not only demand the right to have a voice in the common European house (the indecisiveness of Western Europe during the accession process did not instill much

optimism), and they have not forgotten the Cold War. Namely, during the Cold War, any culture of mutual trust and solidarity between the Western and Eastern Europe lived a cold and miserly existence.

In order for Europe to achieve greater authenticity as a pluralistic *open society*, it must significantly enhance the culture of trust. This culture of trust presupposes a democratic frame defined by solidarity. As with many other underlying social concepts, Western and Eastern Europe differ in their concept of the basic social bond. In the modern Western world, the understanding of solidarity is pragmatic, while in the East, the understanding of solidarity has been a moral one. Typical of the former is a concerted effort to join forces of all involved, in order to attain a common goal which in turn reflects the common values and interests of participants. In the East, however, the prevailing belief is that solidarity is rooted in the unselfish assistance of the stronger to the weaker, even if the only reward for such a sacrifice is a feeling of moral satisfaction.

There is no doubt that institutionalized solidarity played a crucial role in contributing to the modernization of Greece, Ireland, Spain and Portugal, following their entry into the common European structures. However, solidarity was forced to yield to the demands of greater individual freedom and economic profits that have grown apace with global capitalism. The rebellion of the middle class against the continuation of guarantees for the minimum social safety nets, intended for people living in poverty, has been, in Western Europe, seized upon by the authorities and channeled into limitations on the national budgets. The result? The solidarity that was once the central supporting pillar of communal well-being is now seen as a luxury that individual nations can, but are not obligated to, afford. It is no longer a crucial value, as it has been pushed off to the sidelines.

And where is the place where such dilemmas might be confronted and perhaps resolved? Not only in the Euro-palaces of Brussels, Strasburg and Luxemburg, but also in the public, among the people, among European citizens. Unfortunately, it is impossible to speak about an authentic European public that transcends individual national public spheres and their identifying features. In other words: a single and united Europe still remains a dream.

## COMMENTARY

## Commentary to Aleš Debeljak's Lecture

UGO VLASAVLJEVIĆ

Sarajevo 2006

Actually, I have very little to say right now, because I was supposed to speak of the architecture of the mind, and my predecessor, an architect of renown and a poet, performed that task perfectly. Still, I would like to speak further along the same lines, but from the very local perspective of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. My first association when my predecessor was speaking about trespassing as an important concept here in Sarajevo, was a lesson in logic I did a month ago with my fourth-year philosophy students. There was actually a drawing in a textbook of symbolic logic written by an American author that was an illustration of a logical formula, saying “trespassers will be shot.” It is very typical for the American environment to try to defend your liberty from intruders, etc. And perhaps here in Bosnia we have experienced that trespassers will simply be shot in the name of liberty, by us, us who are supposed to defend ourselves from the others. Another association is this epitaph or motto I will give shortly. Another is that people do, in fact, have roots, something I have experienced in the most painful way.

Everywhere you can see people, or you can meet people, with long and powerful roots. In their feet, in their minds, in their hands, everywhere. It is like a network, and you are like a fish, and if you do not have those roots you can be caught in the most unpleasant, perhaps a very painful way. So, I would like to give you a little bit of the context of Bosnia

CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION, a phenomenon by which everyday experience is a product of influences of a diffusion and transmission of commodities and ideas, and thus also a standardization of cultural expressions around the world. Wireless communications, electronic commerce, popular culture, and international travel make human experience homogenous, essentially alike, whenever and wherever he/she currently is. Cultural globalization stands for a pessimistic approach towards contemporary effects of globalization on culture.

and Herzegovina. First, the regional context. Montenegro got its independence just a few days or weeks ago. There is a very powerful echo throughout the region, now that another small nation state is created, belonging to the network of nation states in Europe. This is a contribution from the region in our era of globalization, in the time of building the European Union etc., and it looks as though, perhaps, the requirement to enter the EU is to be a homogenized, small, kingdom-like or dukedom-like, *Staatsburg*-like state. So, in our region we have a patchwork of these homogeneous states

in order to enter this federation, the consociation called the EU. Kosovo's path to independence has also created a powerful resonance throughout the region. The final event in the chain of this drive to independence is the famous statement given by the President of Serbia, Milorad Dodik, who shook public opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (especially in the Federation and in Sarajevo) when he declared that the Serbian Republic should also have a referendum, a people's plebiscite, in which they would declare their path to independence. You know the problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Dayton Accords: we have two or even three unrecognized states within one state. Actually, we have divided the country into pseudo-states, or political entities with their own governments, their own public institutions, education systems etc. This, briefly, is the local context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I will now turn to the topic of the general will of the majority conceived in this ethno-national way, of people who have a specific color, firm self-identity and convictions, and who also have their roots, roots and kinship, alleged blood kinship including ethnicity, ethnic community, etc. I would like to speak about the politics of mistrust and the famous *referendum*, which, as you know, expresses the will of the people, and therefore is something that should be allowed; at the same time, however, it creates division, disruption, and even ethnic hatred. Within this context, it's important to shed some light on *trust*. In the academic community and in the media nobody speaks loudly enough about *trust*. I cannot inform you visually on this topic, I cannot express it in pictures, but my predecessor succeeded in giving an image to something invisible, using visible things.

Freud analyzed trust in psychoanalysis as a question of transfer; but nobody can say what transfer actually *is*. It happens between us when I am speaking to you, or when you are speaking to me; it is like an invisible tie that comes from the heart, from feelings, from emotions, but you cannot guarantee it, or take it for granted, or assume that it will be produced between us, etc. We, who are teachers and who are working in public spaces, we have this experience of having or not having this transfer of trust. We have the experience of speaking to people and noticing that they are not listening, that they are bored, and when it happens, it is a very powerful thing. Local politicians know how to produce this transfer, but they do it in a register of brotherhood feelings, which is always misused, and which is a politics of transfer of the worst kind, so they have so-called *charisma*. That is, they immediately take to the hearts of people. But, if you are a media analyst, or, if you are politically aware of what these politicians are doing, you will understand that this is a miserable way of recruiting and grouping people around you, and of pushing them on horrible paths and tracks. So, what is the politics of mistrust here when everybody trusts his or her own politicians? A few days ago, a famous political philosopher and trained sociologist, Claus Offe, came to Sarajevo. He is now teaching at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and he talked about a kind of a box. He is known for making drafts of different boxes in his books, so please allow me to make a draft of this box of trust.

It is very simple. On the bottom of the box you have two *M*'s which stand for Masses, and on the top two *E*'s for Elites, the political elites. So, the box of trust shows that if you are going to have a successful political community, you should have a substantial trust between masses and elites, which is to say that the masses should have trust in their political elites (the arrows towards the top of the box). The opposite is also true. You should have the trust from elites to the people who have elected them. You also have to have trust among the political elites, among the leadership of political parties on both sides. Those masses, supposedly divided because they voted for different political elites, should have some sort of political trust among themselves. When looking at this picture of trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we could say that it is actually a picture of mistrust. In the first place, this mistrust is due to the war, but perhaps politicians profited from this mistrust even in launching the war. We can say that this is the diagram of mistrust in Bosnia and Herzegovina: no trust on the part of the masses in their

political elites, no trust between political elites, and no trust of elites towards the masses. Everything is disrupted here, and this is the picture of mistrust ruling Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was my response to Claus Offe's presentation, and he said to me, "Oh, oh, oh, you are even more pessimistic than I am."

Now, we still have some kind of solid, powerful trust in this divided and disrupted political community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But where does that trust actually come from? Perhaps the whole situation now created, ten years after the war, produced by the war, could be entitled something like *the politics of mistrust*. That is, one cannot imagine a situation without the strategy and policy of mistrust. As somebody working in the field of cultural and social anthropology, I have been interested in the question of what ethno-nationalism actually is and what it means for years. Everybody around me, even scholars, not to speak of ordinary people, behaved like they knew what ethnic identity actually was. And I think this is a substantial problem, because ethnicity here does not spring from nothing, but is produced, and it is obvious that it is produced, because there is no substantial kinship, no blood ties among people. Those who are Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina might have the same ethnic roots or origins in a scientifically and rigidly understood sense. Ethnic identity is produced in the interpretations of the culture, interpretations in the scholarly works of historians, folklorists, or politicians. I think there is a serious enigma connected with this question of ethnic identity. So, I have a kind of response, a suggestion, of what ethnic identity actually means. I think it is mistrust. A long history of many mistrusts, connected with the working of politics. We know that this ethnic identity is produced by politics, but I am suggesting something different, that is very important to grasp. Politics has produced this ethnic identity, but not as people used to think with the help of successful politics and political outcomes, but rather with a long history of failures, non-success, lacks, political defeats. What does this mean? We have a long tradition of democratic politics. We entered modernity here in Bosnia and Herzegovina one-and-a-half centuries ago, in some places even earlier, so we have had public democratic institutions. We have had political institutions in their proper sense for a long period of time, but what we do not have is political success. This means that politics never functions the way politics is supposed to. If we take politics as an encounter, facing, meeting the other, working, talking, debating,

discussing, dialoguing with the other, this means that the other is there from the beginning in a very essential way. The other should be included in politics. The major failure, then, is that this meeting with the other never succeeded. Instead, we have constant dissipation and division of this meeting with the other, and splitting with the other actually has been occurring for a long, long time.

What is ethnicity in today's ethno politics? It is this deprivation of the possibility of working with the other. It is a huge, huge disappointment for everybody in politics, for everybody in his or her belief that it is possible to work and debate with the other. Ethno politics, then, consists in a core of a certain trust, and a lack of trust in the other. Even in ethno politics when I, as a Serb, or Croat or Bosniak, when I give my voice, when I vote to elect my political elite, I still do not believe in them. This is a very important fact, even in today's elections, in yesterday's election, for example, those who gave their ballots to their representatives do not believe in their elites. They are voting in a state of urgency, they are voting because they are forced to vote, they are voting to avoid the victory of the other, of the other political elite. The connection of supposed trust is the connection of mistrust. It is as if we were saying, "I am going to vote for you because if they win, it will be very bad for us, but I do not believe you." We have a long collective experience that our political elites are not simply bad, but the worst possible, they are horrible and cannot succeed in anything, but still, we vote just to survive, to preserve ourselves, to make a mark, to survive at the age of existence. This is it. The politics of survival against those who are threatening us. Ethnicity is nothing more than trust in those who are not to be trusted, but trusted only in order to avoid the consequences of mistrust in the other. What are politicians promising to their followers on election day? They are saying, "We are not going to be successful." The most successful politician would openly say, "I am going to do nothing about You. I am a loser. I am the one who cannot do anything in politics." He is a loser in politics in the proper sense of the word. He is saying, "I am not going to negotiate with them, I do not believe in them. So, please, follow me, we are not going to believe them." And everybody is saying implicitly, or explicitly, to those who are going to follow, to those who have the same kinship (it has to do with kinship), "Believe me, because You have this name. You'll be recognized as mine. You'll be preserved in a state of urgency because you have the leadership of the same type, with the same family of proper names."

Why do I have this view on all this? Because I have a certain name. Vlaisavljevic means that my family origins are Serbian. But, actually I am not. I am more Muslim. No, I am not really Muslim; I am a Muslim only partially. I am a Croat actually – but no, I am not Croat enough. It is like being a virtual refugee. There are stateless people who never left their country. Everybody is mixed here, there are no pure origins – that is just ideology. You can imagine that Alija Izetbegovic is more Serb than Karadzic, that Karadzic has more Muslim roots than everybody else. Because one cannot trace these connections, because the maternal line is not inscribed among proper names. And proper names perhaps are empty, they are void of substance, of the ethnic origins they supposed to transfer. It is a complicated situation, the same as with trust and mistrust. So what is going on with the referendum? It is an open invitation to mistrust, “Nothing in politics can happen here in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the only way is to believe me, have trust in me and we will all go out of this framework.”

Dodik is actually a Moses, promising to his followers, in this case Serbs, to leave the country of political slavery, to leave negotiations, debates, and politics proper. But, actually, everybody here is doing the same thing. Everybody is promising that nothing should be promised in politics.

CRISIS  
OF MULTICULTURALISM

## 7.

## The Multicultural and the Social

BO STRÅTH

Sarajevo 2006

The crisis in multicultural societies today forms the serious backdrop of our symposium. The image of peaceful multicultural co-existence has broken down under new waves of refugees and under catchwords like *clash of civilisations* and *war on terror*. The key question framing our discussion is to what extent we are witnessing a decline of *agora* in our modern, multicultural, democratic societies. In Sarajevo, as we know today, it was much more a *collapse* than a slow decline of the *agora* and *charshija* culture. But is Europe, in a more general sense, following the developments we saw in the former Yugoslavia? We could, in fact,

argue for such an interpretation. But, the further question we are investigating is how – if at all – we could possibly restore the lost *agora* and the culture of dialogue.

Discussions of these and similar questions move on an ideologically loaded ground; multiculturalism and cultural dialogue are far from neutral and innocent concepts. The idea of multiculturalism, as we know, broke through together with the new globalization language in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War.

CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS, notion by Samuel Phillips Huntington (1927–2008), American political scientist and consultant to various U.S. government agencies. A conflict in international relations between world civilizations, rather than between states or ideologies, observed at the rise of East Asia and Islam (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996). A synonym of warlike foreign policy and thus, object of many protests.

At the beginning of the 1990s, together with the emergence of the idea that history had come to an end (Fukuyama), a new *Zauberwort* was launched: globalization. The argument contained in this concept was that the old Westphalian order, re-constituted in 1918, and again in 1945 as socially responsible nation states, had been overtaken by History. The globalization concept did not provide much empirical underpinning, or attempts to establish *differences* and *similarities* in relation to the free-trade discourse that penetrated the world in the nineteenth century together with a new global trade pattern, or to the unification of the world through the gold standard from the 1860s. Globalization discourse proclaimed the transcendence of boundaries as a new and epochal achievement in the progress of mankind. This discourse gave a teleological and axiological presupposition to the political language: teleological in the sense of having an ultimate goal, a *telos*, and axiological in the sense of representing an epochal break with the past. The denigration of borders was, rather than empirically demonstrated, a constitutive dimension of the emerging interpretative framework, which eliminated the political boundaries that had embedded economies and de-emphasized the importance of the physical borders between states. Capital emancipated itself from political control in ways reminiscent of the 1920s. The connection went from theoretical postulation to empirical implementation, rather than from empirically-based problem definition to theoretical proposals for solutions. The liberation of capital movements all over the world at this time was described as something that could not be avoided, with market deployment as a natural force.

**WAR ON TERROR**, United States' official foreign policy following the attacks of 9/11, after which guerrilla warfare, no matter the form or purpose, was generally judged by Western and some Eastern countries to be anathema. Law-enforcement agencies and military forces around the globe were enlarged and adapted to fight terror – literally and with no holds barred. The most unfortunate effect has been the use of the *war on terror* as a shield for continuing abuses by the military, paramilitary, or police in fighting domestic insurgencies. The result is ironic: the more repressive the military terrorism, the greater the number of moderates who come to sympathize with extremists and turn a blind eye to their murderous attacks – a vicious cycle, sadly illustrated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as conflicts in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Chechnya, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere.

**WESTPHALIAN ORDER**, Peace of Westphalia, European settlements of 1648, which ended the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch, and the German phase of the Thirty Years' War, including Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III. The negotiations took place from 1644 in the Westphalian towns of Münster and Osnabrück. Although the *Westphalian Order* did not fully restore peace in Europe, it resulted from the first modern diplomatic congress. In the 1648 Treaty of Osnabrück, part of the Peace of Westphalia, religious tolerance was declared.

This globalization language about the Market as an unfolding natural force often seemed tied to images of cosmopolitanism and the multicultural integration of a world society without borders. Habermas talked about a post-national constellation, and Fukuyama described a post-historical universalization of liberalism. Together with globalization discourse, there emerged a normative teleological project of transcending the division of the world into plural, territorially-bound entities by a variably construed form of *world unity* (Prozorov).

At the same time, paradoxically, an intensification of the identity discourse occurred. Those borders that were proclaimed to have been transcended and belonging to the past were re-established. The idea of the nation was reinforced at the very moment when it was seen as a historical category. One innovation in this paradoxical development is particularly striking, however. While society in Old Europe had primarily defined borders socially, society now defined borders ethnically. The question of social solidarity and social responsibility disappeared, and ethnic cleavages emerged even stronger. Religious cleavages, in turn, reinforced ethnic cleavages.

The issue of territory, which the globalization language posited as a historical category, returned through the back-door, but it did so in a biased way because the social dimension, the question of social justice, had simply vanished. Dominating images of the world as *dialogue of civilisations* and non-hierarchical webs of political, geopolitical and economic relations, repressed crucial questions about interests both mutual and conflicting, power and social justice. Religions and civilizations do not throw themselves as suicide bombers into innocent crowds of people or initiate *banlieue*, suburban, riots, but frustrated individuals do, because of social realities and feelings of impoverishment and powerlessness. The prose of the world is being romanced in the spirit of chatty humanism, and an empathic concept like dialogue acquires strong ideological overtones concealing social biases.

**GLOBAL VILLAGE**, notion by Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980), Canadian philosopher and communication theorist (*The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, 1962), which describes the societal and cultural effects of telecommunications. An era of complex interdependence among states, and of disintegration of normative values and institutions. A global village has been created by modern weapons, communications satellites, and global finance and commerce that has made security and well-being of all peoples interdependent. Simultaneously, ethnic, religious, ideological, or economic differences spark resentment and conflict among the “villagers.” In a global village, dialogue constitutes both a necessity and – because of mutual interferences – a threat to all.

We have a tendency to idealise and to blur unpleasant differences when we look for distance to our problematic present situation. How utopian is the global village promised in the globalization language about both nearness and cosmos? Utopian means, as we know, *the nowhere land*. To what extent is the image of the global village or the *agora* based on escapism and illusion? How harmonious was the multicultural and peaceful coexistence in our *agora* societies in the past? What about internal and informal power structures, social inequalities and repression? How nostalgic is our view, in hindsight, on a recent past that seems so distant?

We must openly discuss these questions in order to avoid self-delusion. There is a need for a realistic historic de- and re-construction. Only on that basis can we find any inspiration for coming to terms with the future. The inspiration must be based on learning from past experiences. Coming to terms with the future requires coming to terms with past.

Having said this, I also want to emphasise that the multicultural *agora* and *charshija* image indeed *does* cover a reality, which disappeared in the years of ethnic cleansing and ideas of blood purity. It is important to retrieve this historical reality, but we should do so in a more realistic way than the one offered by language of the global language. My argument, then, is this: only a renewed focus on the social issue, the issue of social justice, will give us a more realistic view on historical reality. A focus on the social question in a historical reconstruction highlights both problems and possibilities, because it moves beyond the dichotomy of a borderless world on the one side, and of ethnic and religious border-building on the other.

In *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith discerned a global order based on transnational distribution of labor through transnational mobilisation of production factors. However, he and his colleagues never argued that nations and their governments would disappear. On the contrary, the aim and the consequence of market deployment was to reinforce peoples and their political institutions: the wealth of nations. Free trade, according to Smith, constituted the economic cement of political democracy.

The advance of industrial capitalism eroded the confidence in this harmonious fiction of a world both with and without borders. People increasingly took notice of poverty, and linked it with the emerging economic system, as opposed to blaming poverty on the poor individuals themselves. The ostentatious wealth of the few provoked the

**DAS KAPITAL**, one of the major works of the nineteenth-century economist and philosopher, Karl Marx (1818–83), in which he expounded his theory of the capitalist system, its dynamism, and its tendencies towards self-destruction. He described his purpose as to lay bare “the economic law of motion of modern society.” The second and third volumes were published posthumously, edited by his collaborator, Friedrich Engels (1820–95).

**THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO** (1848), German *Manifest Der Kommunistischen Partei*, pamphlet written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels; one of the principal programmatic statements of the European socialist and communist parties in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; embodied the authors’ materialistic conception of history; argued that history was destined to be overthrown and replaced by a workers’ society.

idea that wealth was a matter of class, rather than nation. The social issue appeared on the agenda everywhere in Europe from the 1830s onwards, when people gained the insight that the emerging capitalist order produced damages that were beyond the responsibility of the individual (as was the old view on poverty, which blamed the poor for their misery). A systemic dysfunction was diagnosed, but the emerging issue at stake was to determine who was responsible.

The debate accelerated in the framework of the long economic depression beginning in the early 1870s. The tension between economic integration and social disintegration increased dramatically, and protectionist practices and politics replaced confidence in free trade. *Unemployment* as a concept was invented in the 1880s to cope with a new mass phenomenon, but the concept was socially constructed. Eventually, economic

groups acquired social borders, and then, the social question became the worker or the unemployment question, that is, the class question. *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx in 1867 and the *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848 gave a new shape to the class concept.

In conservative defence strategies, the social question became intertwined with the national question. Protectionism and nationalism emerged together with a growing attention to social protest. The liberal fiction of a state-bounded universalism and general economic wealth declined. The conservative response to the emerging project of “class struggle” socialism was National Socialism, imbued with a social Darwinian language. Nations were fighting for survival against other nations, it seemed, and only the strongest would survive. The economic wheels began to roll again through rearmament politics, and the road to 1914 was paved.

This was the long beginning of the Second European Thirty Years War (World War I and World War II, 1914–1944). The Westphalian order that had been established after, and in response to the First

European Thirty Years War imploded in 1914. The armistice in 1918 resulted in political projects for *never again*. The League of Nations, the Pan-European Movement and other similar projects for peace through wealth emerged. However, they all suffered from the weakness of vague idealism about universalism. The locus of political control and political power was not a central question in the plans and in the emerging institutional setting. In the lack of institutionalised *international political* power, *economic transnational* power emerged. In the 1920s, governments lost control over their economies and succumbed to a global order of transnational price and production cartels. Instead of the contours of a world government, envisaged in the idea of the League of Nations and of Pan-Europe, there emerged a global capital governance in which international cartels in key production areas divided the world markets through secret price and product agreements (Gillingham). Against the backdrop of this development, governments lost control over the social question when in the early 1930s economic depression recurred in a form much more intense than ever. Under these conditions of transnational economic governance and political impotence, the world order collapsed under pressures of the social question.

The confidence in global capitalism collapsed when the practices and the effects of global capital operations confronted ideals of universal market mechanisms. When world economic governance became mass unemployment, the masses revolted. Social protest declined the key tool of international transactions: the gold standard. Social protest enforced a definitive answer to the century-long contested issue of social responsibility. The answer was the state. The state re-established political control of the economy. The state became the generator of national integration through recognising the responsibility for the social question.

The substance of the political answer to social protest varied widely: fascism in Italy, national socialism in Germany, *front populaire* in France, the New Deal in the USA, red-green worker-farmer coalitions in Scandinavia, and so on. In retrospect, we see how different the solutions were. In the early 1930s, when the future was still unknown, these responses were seen as much closer to each other. Roosevelt's great interest in Mussolini's experiment, for example, is well known (Schivelbusch 2005). Social protest was integrated in a new wave of nationalism that paved the way towards the second half of the Second European Thirty Years War.

With Enlightenment philosophy we ceased to consider history as *vita magistra*. We realised that we never learn from history. Nevertheless – or better, precisely because of that fact – it is difficult not to see how in many respects the situation today is reminiscent of the 1930s.

I am well aware that the historical outline I just made is a West European view covering industrializing societies in the Western part of the continent. I am also aware of the East European experiences of enforced industrialization under Communist rule, where the social was in the focus, certainly, but was so in an overstretched and grotesque way. The image of the social was heavily abused. The criminal outrages in the name of, at first, National Socialism, and then, what outsiders came to call “really existing socialism,” cannot conceal that there was, and still is, a social problem.

It also seems obvious that the social problem today has grown from a European focus and become global. The globalization narrative about market deployment needs a socially informed counter-narrative to express this situation. The mass migration we experience so strongly today is a truly global movement that has the potential to link the world together in new forms, but also the potential to destroy the world. The question that, perhaps more than anything else, influences the direction of this potential is the social question, and the problem of responsibility for a global solidarity remains in social terms.

It goes without saying that such a responsibility requires some kind of political capacity, and I cannot say that this capacity needs to be democratically controlled. We are far from a world government, and although such ideas have become somewhat more topical in academic debate in recent years, they still in many respects seem like utopian dreams. However, less utopian and perhaps more realistic would be a European political capacity with a responsibility beyond Europe, perhaps a kind of global responsibility. When I talk about a political capacity with a global responsibility, I expressly do *not* do so in terms of some neo-colonial *military* capacity to intervene as arbitrator, but in terms of socio-political capacity. For the moment Europe is far from the realisation or implementation of such a capacity, as we all know. In particular, if we talk about a democratically controlled political capacity, the European crisis and action paralysis is obvious. A border between democracy and populism, which once seemed so clear, is getting more and more blurred; at the same time, a tension between social protectionism and social dumping is taking on more distinct proportions, as is the

mutually reinforcing language of protectionism and nationalism. There is an obvious risk in looking for solutions for the future in the world of yesterday, and there is a risk that the ethnically defined national question continues to cover the social question.

It seems obvious that the ongoing European crisis has to do with dramatically growing social differences in Europe after the enlargement from EU 15 to EU 25 in 2004. Europe, as it was equipped with a political capacity in the Coal and Steel Community in 1951, and the Economic Community in 1957, was never conceived of as a democracy. The architecture was a *market* under strict international, no, supra-national, control. The High Authority, as the Commission was called in those days, was a kind of European anti-trust authority, where *Europe* consisted of only six countries. The task was to prevent both the interwar rule of the international cartels, and the relapse of the national governments into populist politics. The memories of Hitler's populism were still fresh, but an even bigger threat in the world of Monnet, Adenauer and de Gasperi was probably the fact that twenty-to-twenty-five percent of the electorates in France and Italy at the end of the 1940s voted Communist. The European market integration would make Europe safe for democracy *without* being a democracy itself. British economic historian Alan Milward discussed the European rescue of the nation states.

Exactly how the talk about Europe as a democracy with an argued democratic deficit emerged remains un-investigated, but there could be a connection to the decision by the European Council in 1973 to introduce a European identity, which later provoked the question of a European *demos*. Furthermore, the direct election to the European Parliament from 1979 fits into this location of the 1970s as a crucial time for the transformation.

In any case it is reasonable to argue that the non-democratic organization, with implicit growing democratic pretensions or ambitions, functioned fairly well as long as social differences were relatively small in Europe. The incorporation of several poorer countries in the West (Ireland) and in the South (Spain, Portugal, Greece) was relatively easy. A European regional policy emerged as an instrument of a European solidarity and economic equalization.

The EU enlargement in 2004 dramatically increased the social differences and destabilised the situation in increasingly populist politics where social protectionism emerged in the richer Western

part of Europe against what was argued to be social dumping from the new member states. Instead of Milward's coordinated European rescue of the nation states, a scenario of *sauve qui peut* is rapidly emerging.

This is a dangerous situation, which seeks only simple solutions to complex problems. The image of the Polish plumber in the referendum campaign in France in 2005 is a case in point. Competing cheap labour was packed together with what was experienced as threats from the Muslim ghettos of the French suburbs. The social problem was transformed into an ethnic and religious question. Instead of discussing the risk of a European social over-stretch, the problem is addressed in religious and ethnic terms.

Turkey is a case in point. Leading German social historians argue that since Turkey is Islamic and never was Christian, it does not belong in Europe. This comes close to essentialist cultural arguments similar to those used in Germany in the 1930s, irrespective of the fact that constitutionally, Turkey is a secularised state. The question of Turkish membership in the EU is legitimate, but then it should be discussed in terms of EU's capacity of social and political integration, not in terms of cultural-religious essence.

The *agora* was a local place, but the global village of today is inscribed in a context of economic forces that do not know any borders. The collapse of Yugoslavia was not only the political breakdown of a corrupt system, but also the outcome of economic forces undermining political capacity. How much of the *agora* was there before the breakdown? *Agora* is an urban concept, but Tone Bringa's documentary *We Are All Neighbours* demonstrates the existence of an everyday life in rural districts in ex-Yugoslavia that transgressed ethnic and religious differences in practices of co-habitation. The documentary also shows, however, how fast such practices can break down, and how tolerable differences can change to insurmountable cleavages and entrenchments.

Multiculturalism spread a concept all over the world in the 1990s to legitimize the failure of states to guarantee overall social integration of various social and ethno-religious groups, exposed as they were to global economic forces. Multiculturalism became a concept of *laissez-faire* liberalism legitimizing the transfer of social responsibility to local communities and ultimately to the individual. This transfer led to different cultures playing off each other.

The *agora* was the center of politics. If we consider the performance of our antique model in *democratic* terms, we should not forget that democracy then was in crucial respects far from what we mean by democracy today. Slaves and women were excluded from the *agora*, for instance. Nevertheless, the *agora* was the center of political deliberation and decision-making. The idea of a multicultural society is in many respects a capitulation of politics. By that I mean that the propagation of peaceful co-existence across ethnic and religious divides obscures our sensitivity to social inequalities. *Agora* and multiculturalism are not immediately compatible concepts.

If we do not learn from history, we should at least avoid being naive, and in that respect there are historical experiences to draw upon. Democracy is clear as an ideal and easy as a word, but difficult, complex and diffuse as practice. I have already addressed the proximity to populism. Another difficulty is the definition of the *demos* that constitutes democracy. For Woodrow Wilson, this was not a big problem when he claimed to have the prescription for making the world safe for democracy in Versailles in 1919. The possibility for everybody to proclaim oneself as a people and claim sovereignty was an explosive combination, as we know today. We should not forget this bloody experience when we congratulate Montenegro on its newly-won independence and when Montenegro offers a pattern for other parts of Europe, such as Spain, for instance.

The overall message of my paper can be summarized as follows: Democracy without social capacity is fragile. Democracy with only an economic underpinning is fragile. Democracy must be more than dialogue. Dialogue is a necessary, but not a sufficient component of democracy. Democracy can only be sustainable in the long-term if it is based on some form of social responsibility and solidarity. The link between democracy and ethno-religious identifications is explosive.

## 8.

## CASE STUDY

**Multiculturalism in Georgia: Unclaimed Asset  
or Threat to the State?**

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Tbilisi 2005

The understanding of Georgia's multiculturalism is connected mainly to multinationalism, or more specifically, to the presence of a range of ethnic groups in one country. How can such a situation be a "threat" to the Georgian state? Are multiculturalism and multiethnicity good for development, or do they only carry the potential for conflict? Are they both not a threat to the wholeness of a newly independent country? The majority of Georgian society and political circles are engaged in discussing these questions.

The diversity of cultures may leave its mark on all spheres of social and individual activity (art, everyday life, social mentality and values, ideology, stereotypes, politics, the connections between various social groups, etc.), but still, the basis for cultural definition and identity, is as a rule, ethnicity and/or confession. More rarely, multiculturalism, described in terms of, for example, counter- or alternative culture, might prove a basis for cultural definition. In Georgia, however, the notion of multiculturalism is clearly associated with ethnic or confessional factors.

In the contemporary world, along with the processes of political unification of cultures (like the European Union) and globalization, there are ideas calling for self-determination and self-preservation on grounds of nationality, language, and confession. The same ideas serve also as important criteria for various political demands (autonomy, independence,

giving languages official status, etc.). Such ideas constituted a significant reason for various ethnic armed conflicts over the last decade (e.g. in the Balkans or the Caucasus).

In contrast to appeals for universal democratic values, one often hears statements about the crisis of multiculturalism and globalization. What might be causing this “crisis”? Might it be psychological, social, and “genetic” mechanisms inherent to people and society at all times and countries? Or is it rather “big politics”? Even a cursory glance at the history of humankind can show both positive and negative (aggressive and friendly) examples of various intercultural relations. Hence the question: Why do cultures (and groups) in contact treat each other in so many different ways? Why do they sometimes merge or coexist peacefully while enriching each other, and then “suddenly” disagree? What “makes” them coexist or merge? Is it because of weaknesses or, on the contrary, because of the freedom of choice? And what pushes them to opposition?

These issues are relevant to Georgia, where, at various times, one could observe tolerant merging and peaceful coexistence of cultures, at other times, the rejection of different cultures. What does it mean for contemporary Georgia: the history of the presence of different ethnicities, religions, and cultures; the history of aggressive or passive coexistence; the history of surrender or fulfilled integration?

The same question applies to the Caucasus as a whole, because the Caucasus is a multicultural space, and Georgia is both part of this space and a place where different Caucasian cultures mix. The topic is old; it has been debated at various occasions from rational, political, cultural, social, and even mythological perspectives. The people of the Caucasus retain an ambivalent attitude to the issue; the idea of the “Common Caucasian House” (common identity) often occurs simultaneously with the tendency for self-preservation through dissociation from what is close and similar, in order to prevent losing oneself.

On the one hand, it seems that self-preservation dictates neighbourly unity as the best defence against stronger influences, foreign to both cultures in contact. On the other hand, distance to the “brother” is also necessary in order to remain “different,” so as not to merge completely and transform into the “fraternal” culture. This is a perpetual motion of “collective identity” between the threats of full difference and less difference. The latter is more familiar, yet precisely for that reason, it too threatens the self.

Georgia, like other Caucasian peoples, has preserved the idea of independence for two centuries, while being under the rule of the Russian Empire and then of the Soviet Union. But at the same time, the idea of independence has not prevented a large part of society from adapting to foreign cultures and customs and benefitting from them. The idea, supposedly common to all the Caucasian peoples, of a common enemy (Russia) and a common struggle for independence (which appeared in various ways at various times) failed to unite them. On the contrary, there were times when it set groups against each other.

This article will use Georgia as a case study for presenting a few of the most important aspects of the manifestations of and attitudes towards multiculturalism.

#### THE MULTICULTURAL MAP OF GEORGIA: ETHNO-LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

To analyse Georgia's cultural diversity let me present the ethnic, linguistic, and religious "map" of the country. It is quite colorful. Georgia's population, according to the 2002 census, numbers 4.3 million people. Ethnic minorities make up around 17% of the population (in the 1989 census they made up 29% of 5.4 million). First of all, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, regions that are *de jure*, but *de facto* independent part of Georgia, need consideration.

Abkhazia is located in the far west of Georgia, at the Black Sea, and South Ossetia is approximately in the middle of northern Georgia. Both territories share borders with Russia and are populated with Abkhazians and Ossetians who speak their own languages. Unlike the situation in South Ossetia, Abkhazians are a minority in Abkhazia and knowledge of the Abkhazian language is low among the Abkhazian population. By contrast, many Ossetians know the Ossetian language. In spite of this, the Abkhaz language, according to Georgia's constitution, is the second official language in Abkhazia. However, hardly anyone knows the Abkhazian, including the President of Georgia.

After the armed conflicts of the 1990's, Georgian jurisdiction no longer includes these areas. In fact, we are dealing with so-called frozen conflicts. Although these conflicts should remain the subject of a separate discussion, it should be noted that the abovementioned minorities and their cultures are underrepresented in the rest of Georgia's territory. Expert conflictologists often argue that ethnic confrontation is one of the main reasons for conflicts in these areas.

The most significant minority – according to number and political importance – are Armenians (about 400 thousand people) living compactly in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti (on the southern section of Georgia's border with Turkey and Armenia) and Azeris (250 thousand across Georgia), grouped in the Kvemo Kartli region (on the border with Azerbaijan and Armenia).

In the region populated by Armenians, Samtskhe-Javakheti (in Samtskhe, the ratio of the Armenian and Georgian populations is approximately 50:50, while 95% of Javakheti is populated by Armenians), other minorities are minimal. The Samtskhe-Javakheti region is also characterized by religious diversity intersecting with ethnic minorities. The vast majority of the Georgian population is Orthodox Christian and the majority of Armenians belong to the Armenian Apostolic (Gregorian) Church. However, there is also a small number of Catholics among the Georgians and Armenians. There is also a religious-ethnic group, a sect called Russian Dukhobors, who were moved into the Ninotsminda region from Russia during the 1830s. The region also has a small Jewish community, and, before 1944, many Muslims lived in Javakheti.

During the Tsarist and Soviet periods, the Samtskhe-Javakheti borderland was a site of migration and mixing of different ethnicities and denominations between Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey. These processes are still ongoing, albeit on a smaller scale.

The Dukhobor community was the first to feel the threat of the nationalist policies of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1990–91). In addition, their relations with the Armenian population deteriorated, which led to their emigration from Georgia to Russia. The Dukhobor community decreased from more than 3000 people living in Javakheti in 1989 to the official number of 800. The majority of a small Jewish community has also left the region over the past ten-fifteen years.

In the early 1990's, after landslides in Georgia's neighboring region of Adjara, some Adjarians (ethnic Georgians of Islamic religion) were resettled to Samtskhe-Javakheti. However, the state has failed to provide them with adequate assistance and many decided to leave the region (called Ninotsminda). Nonetheless, some villages (in the Adigeni region) are still inhabited by a fair number of Muslim Georgians.

It is also worthwhile to mention the Bosch Armenians (Roma Armenians) in the Akhaltsikhe region. In terms of language, nationality, or denomination, they are completely assimilated with the

Armenian community. The same cannot be said about their social status; Armenians consider them people of a very low social standing.

Particular attention should be paid to the issues surrounding the Meskhetian Muslims, the so-called “Meskhetian Turks,” who were deported from Javakheti in 1944 to Central Asia. Muslims came to Javakheti for historical reasons. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the region was part of the Ottoman Empire. By the time Georgia joined Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century, most of its residents were Muslims. During the Russo-Turkish wars in the first half of the nineteenth century, they, unlike the Georgian Christians, stood by the Ottoman Empire. After Russian victory over the Turks in the years 1829–31, Russian commander Paskevich relocated thousands of Armenians to the region from the southern Turkish provinces because he considered them more loyal to the Russian Empire. On the other hand, the local Muslim population was the least trusted by the Russian, and later the Soviet authorities.

In 1944, the Soviet government forcibly deported the Muslim population to Central Asia. In their place, Georgians from other parts of the country were relocated, also with the use of force. Beginning in the mid 1950s, Meskhetian Muslims demanded a return to Georgia, but only a few dozen families achieved that goal. The issue of their repatriation is a subject of political debates and speculations. During Soviet times, Georgian society and dissidents supported the repatriation of Meskhetian Muslims as a nationally important issue. After regaining independence, however, only a small part of society now advocates for their return; the majority opposes.

After Georgia entered the Council of Europe in 1999, the government has committed over 12 years to Meskhetian repatriation. That is why the issue is especially crucial now. Opponents of repatriation argue that the appearance of a new cultural group with a different religion and ethnic identity will lead to new conflicts. Many believe the Meskhetian Muslims are Turks, and therefore deny them the right to return to Georgia.

The Kvemo Kartli region is populated mostly by Azeris, followed by Georgians, Russians, Armenians, Greeks, and a small number of members of other ethnic groups. It should be noted that several villages of the Kakheti region are also densely populated by Azeris, who do not mix with the local Georgian population and preserve their cultural environment.

The religious structure of the Kvemo Kartli region is as follows: Muslim Azeris; Orthodox Georgians, Russians, and Greeks; and Armenians belonging to the Gregorian Church. A special group

is formed by Svans, one of the Georgian tribes. They moved into the region in the 1980s from the mountainous Svanetia (in the north-eastern part of the country bordering on Abkhazia). Creating a distinctive cultural environment, Svans had difficulties living peacefully with the local population, which has led to frequent conflicts and tensions.

In addition to these groups, an important part of Georgia's multicultural map is Ajaria (in the western part of the country, near the Black Sea, on the border with Turkey), which is inhabited by Georgian Muslims. In addition, Georgia has also smaller religious sects: Baptists, Molokans, Dukhobors, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Hare Krishna, etc.

In Georgia, there are both large and small language groups. The former include the Svans and Megrels (Megrelia, Western Georgia). The latter include Tsova-tushints (descendants of North Caucasian tribes), who, however, completely assimilated and adapted to Georgian culture, preserving only the historical dialect of the language. The Udi people also need mentioning. They live in several villages of Kakheti. They also identify fully with Georgian culture, yet have (surprisingly, given that they number only a few villages) retained, in some form, the language of their ancestors, the Albanians. With the exception of linguists and historians, Georgians know little about this group.

All these language groups consider their nationality to be Georgian and they are identified as such by the rest of Georgia's population. This is a case where language groups diversify culture rather than stir conflicts. Only around the Megrelian language do debates periodically flare up, and there follow attempts to link it with Megrelian identity; however, these efforts have never been successful.

In the mountainous part of Georgia, in the Pankisi Gorge bordering with Chechnya, live the Kists (related to the Vainakh people), who are well assimilated into Georgian culture. At the same time, however, they have preserved their ancestral language and relationship with their historical homeland. The Kists, who number about 7000 people and profess Islam, are sometimes perceived as a conflict-producing group. However, most likely, various interest groups have simply attempted to use their origins for political games. The people themselves desire only to stay out of politics (after Russian military operations in Chechnya, about 3000 refugees came to the Pankisi Gorge).

Areas inhabited densely by ethnic minorities (especially Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli), are considered by some political analysts as potential conflict zones. Their views are based on the assumption that minorities retain secessionist ideas with the ultimate aim of reuniting with their neighboring historical homelands.

One must also briefly note the issue of temporarily displaced persons. These are mainly ethnic Georgians who fled from Abkhazia and South Ossetia as result of the conflict. Some of them (especially refugees from Abkhazia) found a kind of social milieu. They are called “refugees,” which emphasizes their low social status. They are concentrated in various parts of Georgia. There are complicated debates concerning their socio-cultural integration. They themselves do not want to integrate, because they fear losing any opportunity to return home. On the other hand, Georgian authorities on their own part did not seek to accelerate integration, hoping to use them as political leverage as they resolve the conflict.

An important factor of identity for many of these groups is the coherence of ethnicity with religion and language. It is believed, for example, that Georgians are Orthodox and speak Georgian; Armenians are Gregorian Orthodox and speak Armenian; etc. The famous Georgian slogan of a single “Language, Homeland, Faith” reveals the projected image of ideal Georgians, despite the fact that the country is inhabited by Muslims and Catholics as well.

In the Soviet Union, the official language was Russian, which still remains the *lingua franca*. Despite all attempts by Georgian authorities to teach citizens the Georgian language, “dialogue” between the various inhabiting cultures is still often conducted in Russian.

#### NATIONAL POLICY: THE LEGAL BASIS

At the legislative level, there are no discriminatory mechanisms in Georgia. The Georgian constitution guarantees all citizens social, cultural, and political equality regardless of ethnicity or denomination. Cultural and educational institutions (schools, theaters, museums, newspapers etc.) in languages of ethnic minorities continue to function.

Despite legal equality, however, there are issues in intercultural relations. Georgian authorities have no clear national policy or strategy. Despite their assured intentions of upholding a democratic government, based on citizenship and not nationality, one could say that after

the collapse of the Soviet Union the leading tendency in Georgia, like in other former Soviet republics, was the construction of a *national* government, dominated by the titular majority.

Georgia's recent history illustrates this attitude. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, an independent state was built under President Zviad Gamsakhurdia based on mono-ethnic principles. Popular slogans of the times reveal the government's extremely nationalist sentiment: "Georgia – only for Georgians," "This is Georgia, Georgians are rulers, while ethnic minorities are – guests." At that time, minorities were excluded from the nation-building process. Discrimination took place on social, domestic, and legislative levels. For example, ethnic minorities had limited rights to land acquisition.

Ethnic minorities' desire for independence clashed with the Georgian government's chauvinistic rhetoric and nationalist extremism led to tensions in international relations, and then to armed conflict in South Ossetia. The bulk of ethnic minorities' emigration from Georgia, from independence until today, is from the period of the early 1990s. With the rise to power of Eduard Shevardnadze, another armed conflict erupted in 1992 in Abkhazia, although Shevardnadze did not uphold nationalist policies and did not consider the minorities to be only "guests." In any case, as a result of the conflict Georgia acquired a large number of displaced persons from South Ossetia and Abkhazia, since part of its territory is out of central authorities' control. By creating the Union of Georgia's Citizens, Eduard Shevardnadze and his team have tried to emphasize the civil, or citizenship-related, aspect of state-building – rather than the mono-ethnic aspect. In reality, however, the process of integrating national minorities does not go further than declarations and assurances. Shevardnadze's domestic policy was formed spontaneously and had only one goal: to maintain the *status quo* and prevent further complications. The authorities tried to "manage" ethnic minorities, mainly by "bribing" their elites. Nevertheless, the parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and National Minorities was established in 1995, which was replaced in 1999 by the Committee for Civil Integration. The ruling party was not interested in minority integration, which explains the election campaign of November 2003, when reference to the opponent's non-Georgian background served as a primary method of discreditation. Georgian authorities never actually sought to increase the political participation of minorities, although their participation in the elections constituted a significant factor in terms

of absolute numbers. Ethnic minorities' participation in the parliament is minimal and far from corresponding to their percentage of the total population.

I should also note the particularities of the "active participation" of ethnic minorities in elections, which is reflected mainly in their constant support for the ruling party. For example, during the parliamentary elections in November 2003, the vast majority of members of ethnic minorities from Kvemo Kartli (Azerbaijanis) and Samtskhe-Javakheti (Armenians) voted for Shevardnadze (Union of Citizens of Georgia). Ethnic minorities approached President Saakashvili's "Rose Revolution" and accession to power with caution. This resulted not, of course, from a loyalty to Shevardnadze, as from a sense of vulnerability, distrust of authority and change, and, of course, wariness about the possible nationalist direction of the party called The United National Movement. Despite these concerns, however, during the next election just two months later, ethnic minorities again voted in favour of the ruling party, which this time was Saakashvili's United National Movement. Here, once again, a sense of vulnerability played a role and triggered the mechanism of pledging loyalty to the ruling party. The new authorities, apparently, decided to move the national issue forward and created The Ministry for Integration and National Minorities.

Despite certain legal steps (by each President), real change in resolving interethnic relations has not yet come to fruition. Authorities' actions for the management of ethnic and cultural diversity are often dictated by international affairs. It seems that the state and the majority have no trust in ethnic minorities and fear their potential separatism. The majority would eagerly assimilate them, or even push them out of the country by turning them into second-class citizens.

A number of other factors reinforce this fear and exclusion of ethnic minorities: weak infrastructure, especially in the field of communications; informational deficit; ignorance of the state language, which decreases participation in political and social processes and disables access to higher education, public service, public or legal information, etc. Therefore, the Georgian government and international organizations have established a variety of language courses, with no visible results. Close ties with their historical roots, such as Armenia or Azerbaijan deepens the sense of alienation because it is easier for minorities to reach these places than Tbilisi.

These factors are important, although there are other reasons, such as stereotypes and attributed social divisions that hinder interethnic relations. The majority's and minority's perception of each other is selective. The majority selects information that confirms their correctness and tolerance, and the lack of appreciation by the minority. On the other hand, the minority selects information on abuse of their rights by the majority, and focuses only on their own problems without noticing that their opponents suffer from the same problems (nationwide). The majority and minority also vary on causes and facts. The majority thinks, for example, that the lack of participation by ethnic minorities in social and political life stems solely from their ill will. Minorities, on the other hand, claim they are not trusted, and therefore, are separated from governance and decision-making opportunities. According to the minority, the majority uses their ignorance of official language as a reason (rather than an effect) for their exclusion from civic activities. Calls for studying the language sound at times to them like threats: either you learn the language or you will be nobody in this country.

#### GEORGIAN SOCIETY: TOLERANT OR XENOPHOBIC?

When discussing tolerance and xenophobia in Georgian society, one must refer to ethnic and religious groups on the multicultural map of Tbilisi, even brighter and more colorful than Georgia as a whole. Tbilisi is a cultural space where Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Russians, Jews, and other representatives of different ethnic and religious groups have lived in a multilingual, tolerant (though not always) environment and have mutually enriched each other's cultures. This picture gives reason for Georgians to consider themselves the most tolerant society in the world. However, this age-old image is changing and losing its multicultural vivacity. It has faded over the past fifteen years, for many of these groups (including Georgians) have left the city in this period for political and economic reasons. But the historic monuments of different cultures (the Orthodox and Armenian Churches, the Synagogue, the Mosque) in the old quarter of Tbilisi still make many Georgians proud and offer proof of their own tolerance. Tbilisi has been for centuries, and still is (although to a lesser extent), a multilingual environment, unlike the rest of Georgia.

However, this self-awareness of tolerance clashes with another formula, "Georgians are owners of the country and all others are guests," implying that owners and guests must behave accordingly. The

self-awareness of tolerance is usually understood by Georgians as the endurance of the unwanted, which makes the person enduring the presence of the unwanted better for it, because he acts leniently. There are also certain ethnic stereotypes from the Soviet era, repeated in jokes and articles that attribute social roles. A brief enumeration: the role of Azeri is linked to agricultural activities; the Kurds sweep streets and remove debris; the Ossetians are police; the Armenians are merchants and artisans; the Russians are employed in the service sector (waitresses), etc. These attributes reflect elements of reality but, as stereotyping mechanisms, they are still connected with almost all representatives of a described group. Georgians are tolerant to individuals from those groups while they stick to their prescribed roles. As soon as they depart from these roles and try to develop, however, they encounter rejection. But Georgian's assumption that "we are tolerant" is not rejected; it simply begins to work differently: "the hosts are tolerant, but if the visiting guests show lack of appreciation, they can be intolerant." This applies to only a part of Georgian society, of course. Much has changed in the perception of the social roles of ethnic groups, but the main role of the "guests" clearly dominates (and not only in Georgian society, which speaks to the general mechanisms of relationships between ethnic groups).

Why do Georgians fear minorities? Why do they suspect them of separatism? According to the last two censuses (one Soviet, one independent) Georgians were always the majority population (1989 – 70% of population, 2002 – 84%). How well is this fact known by the citizens and how well is it perceived? One poll indicates a significant percentage of Georgian respondents (20%) think themselves to be in the minority, while other ethnic groups account for 60% of the population. They are afraid of losing their national culture. Only a small percentage (15%) accurately assesses the situation and believes other ethnic groups do not exceed 20% of the total population. Most of the respondents did not answer the question. A small percentage (8%) states that minorities must assimilate. 18% said they should leave Georgia and return to their homelands. The biggest percentage (70%) supported the peaceful coexistence of different cultures. Among the opponents of assimilation, most likely, are both people recognizing the value of another culture, and those afraid of losing "the Georgian gene."

Despite a decrease in total population, the percentage of ethnic Georgians has increased. However, there is still concern that ethnic minorities, especially those living close together, threaten Georgian independence

and statehood. This concern is shared even by those who know that Georgians form the majority of the country's population. The recent events of de-facto losing territories and the uncertain prospects for their return have amplified this fear.

The majority of Georgians fear that the Armenians and Azerbaijanis (in regions most densely inhabited by them) will demand autonomy and then reunite with their historical homelands. Armenian nationalist organisations have repeated such demands, which nurtures fear (there is no real evidence, however, that such nationalist groups have any significant support among ethnic minorities, who are more concerned with economic issues).

Similar concerns are raised against the repatriation of Muslim Meskhetian Turks. If they were to return to Georgia, they would reside in the Javakheti region, near the Turkish border; then they will demand autonomy and finally join Turkey, because "they are Turks, after all."

One can see ambivalent attitudes on both sides. The biggest fear is the disintegration of the state by separatist tendencies. Georgia, as a "small" empire, seeks to make other ethnic groups Georgian, but is afraid to lose its "Georgian gene" should the majority decide to join the non-Georgians. The minority fears that the majority will assimilate them or will infringe on their rights and harass their culture. They fear assimilation and loss of identity, because they want to preserve the status of their (homeland) nation. With this in mind, it can be said that contemporary Georgia's poly-ethnicity is either a threat to the state or an unclaimed asset.

And yet, in the common life of different ethnic groups in Tbilisi and in Georgia in general, there has been and still are many examples of positive participation in each other's lives, which leave hope not only for peaceful coexistence, but also for intercultural dialogue. As an example, I give the poet Sayatnova, who symbolises intercultural dialogue for the three Caucasian nations because he wrote his songs in all their languages.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## 9.

## CASE STUDY

## Crete: A Borderland in a State of Denial

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Wrocław 2007

The term *borderland* as applied to territories describes in the most general terms the overlapping of ethnicities, religions and cultures usually on peripheries somewhat far removed and less affected by the centrifugal energy created of a nation state. By definition, *borderlands* are not comfortable phenomena as their very existence bears witness to changes in demography, religions and even state allegiances; each questions the very definition of the modern nation-state as it has evolved out of its nineteenth century character. This is because borderlands bear witness to a time when things were not what one might like them to have been, at least in terms of a national mythology. Borderlands defy the idea of a single *ethnically defined nation*, a national religion, history and language, more often than not expressed in a national literature.

Crete has been a borderland since early antiquity, except perhaps for the stagnant period that followed the destruction of the Minoan Civilization, which was due to a confluence of natural disasters, the arrival of Greek-speaking Mycenaeans, and the subsequent Dorian conquest and settlement on the island. From roughly the thirteenth century BCE until the arrival of the Romans in the second century BCE, Crete's borders were more or less sealed. The rich tapestry of Minoan civilization, an amalgam reflecting Mesopotamian,

Anatolian, North African and Egyptian ethnic, cultural and religious influences, was replaced by a sterile and apparently monolithic Dorian culture that appears to have been primarily concerned with control and pursuing the endemic Greek problem of internecine warfare. Having shed any possibility of being a borderland, Crete passes out of history – except in the accounts that have survived in Greek mythology, where the Minoans are described as sinister people ruled by a highly dysfunctional and monstrous family. These legends paint King Minos as a tyrant, demanding annual tribute from subject peoples in the form of captive youths to satisfy the unnatural hunger of his son. His wife, Pasiphae, was apparently a compulsively sexually-insatiable woman whose appetites were for a brief moment satisfied only when she could be credibly disguised as a cow, in order to entice the attention of a great bull with which she had become obsessed. Out of this bestial copulation the Minotaur was born, a child so monstrous in appearance and behavior that he was caged away in the depths of the great palace – the Labyrinth – into which the captive youths were fed to satisfy his hunger for human flesh. Ariadne, the daughter of Minos and Pasiphae is no less monstrous, because she falls in love with a *stranger*, Theseus, the son of the Greek king of Attica, aids him in killing her brother, the Minotaur, and then flees with him to Naxos, where, true to his higher values, he abandons her to return home. This view of the *other*, as encapsulated in Greek myths, served as a justification for the total enslavement of the eteo-Minoan population of the island and became the model of state control of populations as evinced in the Cretan (Dorian) Laws that influenced those of Sparta.

It was only in the wake of the Roman occupation of Crete that we see signs of its borderland character re-appearing. Linked already with Alexandria after its absorption into the world of Alexander the Great, Crete became an important link in the administration of North Africa, and Jews began to settle, initially perhaps in the third century BCE, and we can assume that they arrived from Alexandria and had close links with the Jews of Thessaloniki. Cities such as Gortys, Knossos and Kissamo to the west of the island became important centers of international trade between Egypt, the northern Aegean and Rome. Crete's fate, however, for centuries was determined by the fortunes of the Roman state. Religion changed dramatically with the imposition of Christianity in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. With the breakup of Roman unity after the division of the Empire,

**BYZANTINE EMPIRE** (330–1453), the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which survived for a thousand years after the western half had crumbled into various feudal kingdoms and which, finally, fell to Ottoman Turkish onslaughts. Its inhabitants never called it *Byzantine*, but rather the Roman Empire. During the sixth and seventh centuries, nonetheless, there were changes so profound in the state and society that historians traditionally have described the medieval empire as *Byzantine*. The name is derived from the capital city of Byzantium, refounded as the “new Rome” by the Emperor Constantine in 330 under the new name of Constantinople. The *Byzantine Empire* was a melting-pot, with a degree of social mobility that belies the often applied stereotype, of an immobile, caste-ridden society.

it was administered badly under the Byzantines, who were first distracted by Slavic invasions into the Balkans, and then by the loss of all eastern provinces to the Arab Islamic invasion in the seventh century.

Little remains of this period other than hints that Crete may well have become a passage for refugees, especially monks who fled the Islamic expansion into Anatolia and many of whom may well have passed on to Sicily and then southern Italy, as we shall see shortly.

Interestingly enough, it is only in the early ninth century that Crete re-asserted its ancient maritime identity, and even more interestingly, this revival was a consequence of conquest by a borderland people. Towards 810 AD, the emir of Cordoba, Abu Hafs Umar Aysi, was driven from his city along with some 10,000 followers. After

taking to the sea, they landed in Egypt, where they seized Alexandria, and after negotiations with the Fatimid Caliph they set their sights on Crete. The possible collusion between Abu Hafs and the Fatimids is still a matter of scholarly debate since Crete had long been sought after by Egypt – a natural extension of its northern border, as it were. After an initial reconnaissance of the island, the emir’s troops made a concentrated attack in 826. After landing with some forty ships possibly near the bay of Messara on the southern coast, the invaders burnt their ships, so as to sharpen appetites to remain on the island. The Muslim

band set itself on the conquest of key positions on the island in a remarkably short time, the most important being towards the east, where they established a fortress surrounded by a great moat that gave rise to its name: *Candia* from the Arabic Rabd al-Khandak, the present-day Herakleion. Crete became, under its Muslim emirs who ruled from 826 until the island was taken again by the Byzantines in 961, once

**EMIR**, Arabic “Amir,” commander or prince, in the Islamic Middle East, a commander, governor of a province, or a high military official, often possessed administrative and financial powers as well. Some rulers of states in Central Asia (Bukhara and Afghanistan) called themselves by the title emir. Despite the name, rulers of the modern United Arab Emirates, are sheikhs, not emirs.

again a thalassocracy, a kingdom of the seas. Annual raids along the coast of the Aegean and as far east as Beirut, brought great loot, and it is more than likely that there was not only considerable conversion to Islam but also active participation in these raids. Piracy in itself is a lucrative borderland economic activity and after several decades of neglect by the Byzantines, the island prospered during the Arab emirate.

The Byzantines re-conquered Crete with ferocious intensity and then not only re-organized the island administratively, but also allowed for the settlement of large numbers of Armenians and Bulgarians, who, as Christians, may have been brought in to counter-balance Cretan conversions to Islam, though there is some evidence to indicate that the Cretan Muslims were forcibly returned to Orthodoxy.

We know nothing of the interaction between these communities, though it would appear that their *Cretanization* was complete by the time of the arrival of the Venetians, after Venice purchased Crete from the Genoese following the infamous Fourth Crusade.

An easy and comparatively cheap acquisition, the Venetians set little value on the island initially, as their main objectives were the establishment of outposts throughout the Aegean coastlands and even into the Ionian Sea. Crete was treated as a colonial outpost, and its Cretan inhabitants fared badly as they were seen as schismatics and tensions ran high between the Orthodox Cretans and the Catholic Venetians. It was only after a massive revolt in the fourteenth century that Venetian interests in the Island became more concentrated, and it was given almost an independent status with its own Rector. Through greater involvement in local government, as well as reaching a kind of *modus vivendi* on a religious level, Cretans began to actively involve themselves in the arts. Scattered across Crete are some 600 small churches hidden for the most part in olive groves and hillsides. Hardly any of them show any dependence on the grand tradition of Byzantine architecture that emanated out from Constantinople. Even more striking is that their interior wall paintings, many executed

SCHISM, in Christianity, a disunification of the church. The main reason for *schisms* was more than a lack of consensus over basic doctrine. *Schisms* often began as various disputes and actions that did not let to any unifying conclusion. In the Middle Ages, Christendom was divided into Western (Roman Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) branches (*Schism* of 1054). A second medieval *schism* divided the rival popes of Rome and Avignon and, later, also a third pope. The most important Christian *schism* involved establishing the Protestant Reformation and its division from Rome. The church of the twentieth century is distinguished by dialogue, ecumenism and cooperative approach towards the schismatics (Second Vatican Council 1962–65).

by itinerant painters, show an iconographic dependence on early Palestinian Christian art that had developed in Cappadocia. There is little doubt that wandering monks from eastern Anatolia, fleeing the Arab invasions and then later the creation of a Seljuq Turkish Sultanate, passed through the island leaving in their wake a visual tradition that was quite unique. Under Venetian rule, Cretans were also given the possibility of participation in the Renaissance as it was developing in Italy. This included several Cretan painters, the most notable being Domenikos Theotokopoulos, El Greco. Though passing beyond borders and settling eventually in Toledo, his art is a strange syncretic fusion of styles, iconography and even technique that reflects the rich borderland that Crete had become. Even the relatively small Jewish communities of the island show a perhaps more varied involvement in the new borderland that Crete had become. Cretan Jewish farmers, shepherds and vintners produced kosher cheeses and wines that became famous throughout the Mediterranean, and via Venice and Jewish middlemen they entered Jewish markets in Europe. Several doctors and rabbis made their way to Pisa and Florence, where they taught Aristotelian philosophy, Greek, and even studied physics, as did Elia Delmedigo under Galileo. Another Cretan, R. Solomon Delmedigo, had a rich career as Talmudist and physician, and after studies in Egypt eventually made his way to Frankfurt via Florence and ended his life as a doctor in Prague, where his monumentally ornate tomb can still be seen in the cemetery of the city.

Mention should also be made of the influx of intellectuals and painters who fled to Crete after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, either from the City or from Mistra. This is all, however, but a mere preamble to the more important part of my paper, which will discuss modern Crete and its reversal of fortunes.

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During the late fifteenth until the early seventeenth century, the rising Ottoman Empire and Venice were involved in a struggle that was increasingly unevenly matched. The expanding Ottomans were steadily encroaching on Venice's grasp on the economic wealth of the Aegean. By the late fifteenth century, Venice had lost almost all of its main port cities along the Aegean and Crete remained its major holding. Between 1645 and 1669, after seizing Hania and much of western Crete,

the city of Candia (Herakleion) held out in what is credited as being the longest siege in history, and under Turkish Ottoman rule Crete entered into its pre-modern stage of development that ironically dominates its present condition in the twenty-first century.

Let me outline what I believe are the most important aspects of Ottoman Crete as it became a new borderland: first, the mass conversion of Cretans to Islam; second, ownership of property; third, internal demographic problems, ultimately defined in the vocabulary of nationalism, in vogue in the nineteenth century and aggressively pursued by the Greek State on the mainland.

#### MASS CONVERSION TO ISLAM

The Ottoman Turks were themselves a borderland people. One can find this characteristic as the Ottoman state evolved from the thirteenth through sixteenth century in many of its institutions and attitudes to conquered peoples. The Ottomans treated minorities, such as Greeks, Jews and Armenians, tolerantly and permitted their official leaders, whether bishops, priests or rabbis, a great deal of authority over their communities.

The rapid growth of the Ottoman people, the Tribe of Osman as it were, reflects a strange lack of concern for ethnicity. Conversions of Byzantines and Latins added to the initial Turkish core of Osman's people (if in fact they had ever constituted a Turkic tribe), and later marriages and alliances determined that even the Ottoman Dynasty was of mixed blood. The institution of the *devshirme*, the conscription of Christian male children from conquered Balkan peoples, plus the acquisition of slaves of European origins was, from the fifteenth through to the seventeenth century the source of manpower for both the new army corps, the *Yeniceri* or *Janiseries*, as well as providing men of abilities to the engineering corps or to the palaces of the Sultan. After their conversion to Islam and Turkification on estates in Anatolia, these children were fiercely dedicated not only to the Sultan (as members of his personal army), but were also members of a somewhat heterodox Islamic religious confraternity, the founder of which was said to have been Hacı Bektash, a thirteenth-century dervish. A select few of these conscripts were fed into the Imperial School that was located in the very heart of the Top Kapi Palace and there, isolated in the male harem, they were given the finest contemporary education and upon graduation were destined to become the ruling elite of the Ottoman Empire. Many were married to daughters of the Sultans.

SUFISM, Islamic mysticism, in quest for truth of divine love and knowledge, based on direct personal experience of God. Sufism promotes mystical paths to enable the experience of the presence of divine love and wisdom in the world. The Sufis are known for their educative and missionary work and commitment to arts and culture. *Sufism* was important for the formation of Muslim society. The Sufis are also called fakirs or dervishes ("poor"). Contemporary popular in Morocco and Senegal. One of the most important Sufi masters was Ibn Arabi.

This *open* attitude to conquered peoples played a part in the conversions of thousands of Cretans to Islam not long after the Ottoman seizure of the island. Under the Venetians, conversions to Catholicism were relatively rare and this may reflect not only the deep enmity that characterized Orthodox attitudes to Catholics after the Fourth Crusade, but also a lack of motivation, since nothing was gained in the process and potential converts had no incentive. Conversion to Islam in its Ottoman form opened many doors: less taxation, more opportunities for advancement in a highly mobile

society (which was not the case with Venice), and membership in the Yeniceri Corps, and hence proximity to the sources of power and influence. As in the case of Bulgaria, Bosnia and Albania, local languages were left untouched and the Cretan Muslims remained Greek-speaking, though severed from the rich literary tradition that was rooted in Greek Orthodoxy, or perhaps even in a romantic *Greek* root in terms of culture linking them to antiquity with pride. On the other hand, they, like other convert peoples of the southern Balkans, assumed an Islamic cloak that was highly heterodox and evolved from schools of Islamic mysticism – not simply Sufi or even Shi'a but, for the most part, rooted in highly antinomian traditions that had been absorbed by the Bektashi dervishes themselves, the purveyors of Islam in these regions. Bektashi practices and beliefs were themselves the product of a borderland experience insofar as they absorbed large numbers of Christians in Anatolia who inevitably brought with them aspects of their former religion. With these were also absorbed several other dervish orders such as the Qalandars, Haydaris and Abdals of Rum.

As a consequence, the Cretan Muslims, speaking Greek, but divorced culturally from their Greek roots, and adhering to a form of Islam that was in itself not reflective of high Ottoman circles, were never Ottomanized. This marks a contrast, then, from the case of Bosnia, Albania and Bulgaria. As a sizeable presence Cretan Muslims lived in a no man's land between their Greek Orthodox brethren and the Ottoman Turkish administration: hated for being renegades by the former and used as irregulars by the latter who were not above abusing their position. They were in effect a *borderland* phenomenon.

### PROPERTY

The traditional manner of assessing a new geographic territory absorbed into the Ottoman Empire was worked out over the course of several centuries. Taxation registers based on population statistics were established, and following this *timars*, small or large estates, were awarded to members of the cavalry, the *Sipahis*. *Cadis* (religious judges) were then established in village and urban centers. Tenure of property by the *Sipahis* was only for their lifetime, which inevitably led to abuses in amassing private fortunes for individual families. Crete was one of the last sizeable accessions taken by the Ottomans, and the *timar* system was not put into effect, however. This reflects both a decline in the use of cavalry, and the interests of high-ranking Ottoman officials in Constantinople, anxious to retain as much control as they could over local resources. Unlike former acquisitions, land was sold and bartered regardless of the religion of the persons involved. *Cadilar* registers record innumerable cases of litigation within certain families, that found themselves divided after some of them converted to Islam, which could complicate court decisions. Even more importantly, perhaps, potential property ownership attracted a great number of Jews and Greeks to return to the island.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES

The effect of conversion to Islam created an inevitable rift between the new Muslims and the Greek Orthodox, who had a long history under the Venetians of opposition framed in religious terms. The rate of conversion to Islam was especially high among urban dwellers, land-owners, and farmers, and almost non-existent among people in less accessible areas, especially shepherds and those in close proximity to the mountains. Hania, for example, had only one Orthodox church within its walled area and one small Catholic church by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Neighborhoods that had been, for the most part, delineated into quarters with all the institutions of Catholic parish life by the Venetians were now organized around the institutions of Islam: neighborhood mosques with their accompanying baths, charitable foundations, fountains or *tekkes*, dervish religious houses. Under the Ottomans, the Jewish ghetto had been abolished, and the Jewish quarter then expanded to the west, all the way to a Muslim neighborhood. Jewish housewives would then greet their Muslim counterparts immediately on opening their doors in the morning, and during festivals, whether Muslim or Jewish, there was a natural exchange of customs and sharing of common elements in life.

Many of the port towns along the northern coast of the island, such as Hania, Candia (Herakleion) and Rethymnon, were now focused on trade with Izmir, Rhodes and Istanbul. Those on the south coast, such as Ierapetra, were in close commercial connection with North African ports, such as Bengazi and Alexandria. There was a noticeable increase in the Jewish community of Hania, as shown by family names such as Constantini, Angel, Minervo, Sezanes, Politis etc., which indicates Jewish arrivals from not only North Africa, but also even Zakynthos, Corfu and, perhaps, the Peloponnessus, after the destruction of Jewish communities there in the first years of the Greek Revolt of 1821.

Especially noticeable during this period is the decline in the Greek Orthodox community on the island. The Greek Orthodox clergy leading the community were, for the most part, quite ignorant, but monasteries prospered, and even expanded their land tenure. Cretan Orthodox intellectuals in exile were active, especially in Venice and the Ionian Islands. Through them, news filtered into Crete of the French Revolution and the creation of the Philiki Etaireia, which became an early expression of Greek national identity in modern terms. But for the most part the Cretan Orthodox lacked organization, defined goals, and comprehensive leadership – a situation summed up by Panagiotis Nikolaides in 1824: “It is most distressing that one thinks that even the smallest Greek island can boast of at least two native-born men of education and learning, while in Crete, the largest of them all, there appears to be none worth mentioning.”

The first signs of revolt in Crete took place in 1770, when a ship owner, Yannis Daskaloianis, urged on by the Russians, led a revolt in Sphakia that was savagely put down by the Ottomans. This revolt and its lack of direction, unified support, and even intelligible ideological format, was the sad beginning for a series of revolts that marked the entire nineteenth century in Crete. For the most part, these revolts were all instigated, and even funded, by mainland Greeks, who by 1840 had achieved a Greek state. This small, newly-autonomous polity had irredentist aspirations that led Greeks into several tragic encounters with the Ottomans. Interestingly enough, the main supporters of these revolts were the mountaineering Greek Orthodox shepherd people. The failure of the revolts resulted almost always from the various interests and ambitions of the leaders. Crete entered into a period of civil war, with Cretan Muslims turning on Cretan Orthodox in a confusing kaleidoscope of players and leaders. Until 1912, when Crete was formally

annexed to the Greek Kingdom, two borderland communities, the Cretan-Muslims and the Jews, found themselves gradually, increasingly isolated and marginalized. When Crete was declared an independent republic in 1897, large numbers of Creto-Muslims had already left the island, and the Jewish community had so decreased that three synagogues in Herakleion closed. This process was finally resolved in 1924 when all of the remaining Creto-Muslims were removed from the Island and when the

1924 POPULATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY, THE forcible mutual expulsion and denaturalization from homelands of Greek Orthodox citizens of Turkey (1.5 million people) and Muslim citizens of Greece (500,000 people) based upon religious identity. *The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations* was signed at Lausanne, Switzerland, on the 30th January 1923, by the governments of Greece and Turkey.

Jews of Crete numbered less than 300. Some 30,000 Anatolian Greek Christians arrived roughly at this time as part of the exchange of populations stipulated by the Lausanne Conference. They immediately fell victim to the full weight of the consequences of the growing monolithic and xenophobic mindset that reflects the essential nature of modern Greek nationalism. The destruction of the Jews of Crete by the Nazis in 1944 served to finally remove any evidence of *otherness* from sight, which had characterized Crete for millennia. Especially noticeable during the period leading up to World War II until today, to my mind, is a staged denial of the complex history of Crete as an authentic and autonomous borderland. In doing so, this denial of history has stolen Crete's identity.

Hania is my home, where I have been able to observe the effects of nationalism in its ability to transform a society and a town into something almost unrecognizable. This has been accomplished by an overt policy of erasing any memory of *otherness* and replacing it with an abstract and meaningless identity. Crete is an autonomous region, well defined, well isolated but also well in touch with the world around it – it is also rich in natural produce. Governed from Athens, it is shackled to ministries and a bureaucracy that little suits either its size or its capabilities and potential. The disappearance of an urban proletariat – the Muslims, Armenians and Jews left all of the urban centers between 1912 and 1950 – has made Crete vulnerable to the arrival of villagers, shepherds, refugees, and, at present, a significant foreign worker community made up of Georgians, Rosso-Ponti, Albanians, Syrians and others. Furthermore, a sizeable number of Europeans have taken up permanent residence in Crete. Nothing has been done to integrate

these people into urban society, to educate them in assuming an active role in Cretan society, or to assist them in seeing themselves as part of a Cretan continuum, which could cause a creative re-birth of the island's identity as a borderland.

Perhaps the most pernicious presence in Crete is that of commercialized tourism, which brings in revenue (mostly, however, to the interests of the tourist industry itself), but is of little benefit to Crete. Tourism is often construed as creating a rich borderland zone that sees the overlapping of native residents with a continuous and ever-changing exploitable population that is not only transient, but that also contributes to exposure to the *other* as a source of enriching one's native human environment. In fact, this is not the case. The ubiquitous modern tourist is, for the most part, little interested in local culture, and the natives find the normal tenor of life disrupted. A good example in Hania is the covered market, at one time quite famous. The market was built in 1912 in an enormous cross-shaped space, where formerly the grand Venetian Rethymnon Gate had stood. Its destruction shows the lack of concern and interest in anything that was not *Greek* at this point, and was part of a general program that saw the destruction of innumerable Venetian monuments (not to mention Ottoman structures) in Hania and throughout Crete. For at least two generations, the new market served as an important *agora*, where village produce, meats, fish and cheeses were sold. Just ten years ago, however, two new boutiques opened selling leather goods and jewelry, followed by others catering to tourists attracted by "exotic" spice. Within two years, the *agora* had become a tourist attraction; one by one the vegetable markets, coffee shops, cheese sellers, and fishmongers were forced to close. Now it is all but forsaken by the local Haniote population.

The re-naming of streets in Hania offers one of the more interesting examples of the state of denial I am describing. Once named after urban benefactors of Creto-Muslim identity, most streets have now been re-named after recent Greek mainland politicians and public figures. The large metropolitan church of Hania (essentially, its cathedral) stands somewhat grandly in a square in the old city. Subsidized by Sultan Abdul Aziz, it was erected by Mustapha Giritli Pasha, a Cretan Muslim, though no mention is made of this uncomfortable fact. Even more grossly, the Venetian church of St. Nicholas, originally Catholic, was re-dedicated as the Mosque of Ibrahim not long after the Ottoman conquest of Hania in 1645. In 1912, it was taken over and converted to Greek Orthodoxy.

Today it proudly bears a sign that claims that it was *originally* a Greek Orthodox Church that had become a mosque and then was *restored* to Orthodoxy in 1912!

The signs of denial are found everywhere amidst the skeletal, neglected or obscured Venetian and Ottoman structures, not only in Hania, but also throughout Crete. Briefly, I think that such signs of denial are especially evident in:

The authorities' indifference to the Old City. As an urban environment, the Old City is but a shadow of what it once was. Some fifty years ago A. Kalligas made a very thorough, well-documented and well-mapped study of Hania. He stressed the need for zoning and even proposed the manner in which it could be done, taking care to retain the old Venetian and Ottoman quarters that could be created as neighborhoods. The aim of this study was to restore Hania as the living heart of the modern city now spread around it. His study is still unique and of sufficient relevance that it is often referred to – but never applied. The old city today has no chemist, no fishmonger, no butcher, only one bakery and two grocers who cater mainly to tourists. The most obvious sign of the authorities' indifference and lack of any will or direction is the shell of the Xenia Hotel. The hotel was originally built in the late 1960s on one of the most prominent Venetian bastions. It occupies a site of considerable exploitable interest, yet it has been not only closed, but in the course of four years has also been stripped of all of its furniture, window frames, and electrical and hydraulic fittings by looters from Hania and the surrounding villages. The Xenia has served as a refuge for foreign workers, who squatted there illegally, as a workspace for prostitutes, and it continues to attract drug dealers.

Another sign of denial is the indifference shown to the religious aspect of Hania. Mosques have become public galleries, given over to the selling of tourist trinkets. Two well-known seventeenth-century *turbes*, tombs, located on top of the graves of two noted Bektashi gazis at Hania's former city limits, have been renovated and are now occupied by a souvlaki shop. The nearby Mevlevihane, the first *tekke* of the Konyali dervishes in Crete, has been stripped of any recognizable sign of its use or even importance as the place where the whirling dervishes practiced their rites. Recently, the entire interior hydraulic system of the early seventeenth-century Turkish bath (across from the archaeological museum) was destroyed, and the entire structure broken up into tourist shops. Once again, nothing indicates either the former use or relevance of this place.

If only one considers that presently in Hania we have a loosely-connected Muslim community made up of Albanians, Syrians, Algerians, Moroccans and Egyptians! No means have been taken to renovate any of these buildings for their use.

One of the peculiarities of Ottoman cities was the interaction between communities, be they Muslim, Christian or Jewish, or *other* in the form of foreign merchants, etc. We now have a completely dislocated society in Hania made up of Haniotes (divided between the Old and New cities), foreign workers (as noted above), large numbers of non-Cretan students from the University of Crete, foreign residents, and finally tourists. None of these groups interact or have any common ground which to stand on.

One of the dangers that dictated changes in the Venetian and Ottoman attitudes to agriculture in Crete was the danger of Crete's becoming a mono-economy. Essentially, Crete and its major cities have been sacrificed to a mono-economy, the tourist industry. The gross exploitation of tourist potential (Crete is described succinctly in a recent Tourist Ministry projection as a *national marketing product*) has resulted in a proliferation of cafes, bars, restaurants, taverns, hotels, trinket shops and guest-houses that all but obscure the very physical fabric of these cities and have all but destroyed any urban life.

If and how this process can be reversed is a massive and difficult task that requires vision and also considerable courage on the part of local leadership. It also requires a re-evaluation of Cretan history by restoring Crete's own autonomous history, which has been, for the most part, belittled. At present, Crete has become like the goose that laid the golden egg, and already the knife is at its throat.

## 10.

## CASE STUDY

Living Together Apart: Lessons From  
“Multicultural” London

ISABELLA THOMAS

Berlin 2009

## INTRODUCTION

In the multicultural world, what is said is less important than who says it. With that in mind, I need to explain why anything I have to say is remotely interesting.

I grew up in London, and my parents still live in the house where I was born, which is a stone's throw from where I now live. I had none of the stresses and strains of emigration, immigration or integration that others who comment on this subject have had to go through. The main drama in my childhood was that my father left the Left, and joined Mrs Thatcher's Conservatives at a time when this was considered a betrayal by most of his friends and contemporaries. My early youth was marked by the feeling that large numbers of our erstwhile friends might never speak to us again. That he then went on to work in Mrs. Thatcher's think tank meant that many of my friends thought that my father was working for the Devil Incarnate. Even as a fourteen-year-old, I remember this strange, instinctive sense of embarrassment of the matter, or at least, I was plagued by the thought that that embarrassment what I ought to have felt. Quite apart from the range of radical economic measures she introduced in the 1980s to privatize large numbers of nationalized industries, Mrs. Thatcher sought to breathe life back into Britain and to breed a new British self-confidence. It was,

I think, this in particular that partly repelled so many of my generation. It was a similar sort of profound embarrassment to the one I remember my brothers and I feeling when my Grandmother (who had been born in India, and became a nurse in Nigeria and then Ghana) would talk about the British Empire. I remember being about seven when she would sing some silly song about the greatness of the Empire, and we would shrink with the sense that that kind of thing was not acceptable. And yet, she was my grandmother. What was it that made me think this? I have often wondered. But seven-year-olds are also subject to the zeitgeist.

I make this digression for two reasons: that because by the accident of history, because of my father's involvement in all of this, I seemed to many to be an embodiment of Englishness, or rather of the Establishment. In fact, my roots are as resolutely mixed as anyone's (Armenian, French, English). But I have long been interested in the way that the more people perceive one as utterly English, the more one becomes so. Second, that I showed early signs of having a sense of the herd instinct and a certain sort of shame about something with which I had nothing to do (and about which, in retrospect, I should not have had any shame). This generational tendency to shrink from our history and this collective shame about it is indeed partly the topic of my paper: because this tendency is an intrinsic aspect of the disintegration of certain aspects of British identity. I am going to speak about the problems of identity politics and the unwitting creation of segregation in British society.

On the face of it, by many people's definition, you might say I am in some sense a committed multiculturalist. The word can mean many things: I work for a Swedish foundation, I live in London, I lived for several years in Madrid and Havana, I was brought up partly in Italy, I married a Cretan, and I am proud of my international ancestors: I go to great lengths to point out my Armenian roots, when in fact I am merely a one 32<sup>nd</sup> Armenian.

But *multicultural* means many things to many people. It is not just the proximity of different cultures to each other in a single nation; it became the name of a policy that in fact has gone quite a ways towards encouraging the *opposite* of what its originators might have wished. It has in many ways encouraged segregation.

I will try to substantiate how this has happened, but I am by no means alone in making this allegation. It was the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips (a Black Jamaican of the Left),

who claimed in 2006 that Britain was “sleep-walking towards segregation.” This idea has been echoed by many on the Left and the Right.

One of the things we need to be vigilant about in the battle of ideas is the gap between the expectations and intentions of ideas, and their practice. It is not enough to think that a policy sounds good. We need to look at how implementation has worked out. In Britain, the multiculturalist ethos has been, I would argue, disastrous, even if its intentions were benevolent.

So we need to think again. This is not the responsibility of Muslims or the Muslim community; it has been the outlook of the government for many years now.

The challenge of finding ways of living together with various immigrant groups, both new and old is, as we all know, a key issue for our times because of a number of factors I will enumerate below.

1. Immigration worldwide is high and growing. More people are on the move than ever before. It is, therefore, more important than ever to ensure that we have policies that facilitate trust between immigrant and non-immigrant communities. In Britain alone we have had especially high immigration figures over the period 1997–2007. Half a million a year (according to “migration watch”), which is twenty-five times higher than in 1950. Net immigration quadrupled between 1997 and 2007, and there were nearly 600,000 new immigrants in Britain in 2008.

2. There is a general atmosphere of violent extremism in the world generated from political crises in the Middle East, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and large swathes of the Muslim world.

3. Our societies are changing in radical ways quite independently of immigration, and this requires all citizens to integrate and to find ways to trust and to befriend. Integration is about the promotion of “trust.”

4. The growth of identity politics is increasing in the face of a decline of interest in traditional politics; we also see an erosion of major differences across this divide.

5. A highly volatile and intemperate language in politics (in part the result of the above).

RACIAL SEGREGATION, the practice of legal discrimination in voting, education, and the use of public facilities on the basis of race. *Racial segregation* involves restriction to certain areas of residence or separate institutions (schools, churches) and facilities (parks, restaurants). A practice employed by a politically dominant group, recently primarily by white populations (U.S.A.). Racial segregation became an official government policy in South Africa from 1950 until the early 1990s (apartheid system).

6. Technology is capable of isolating groups and individuals, as well as of bringing people together. But that isolation and loneliness are growing social problems, as evidenced by the recent Young Report.

7. Ultimately, integration is the challenge by which citizens develop a sense of “belonging” and feeling “at home,” and feel a sense of loyalty and pride of association with a place. It is not, contrary to what some people think, about promoting homogeneity.

#### FOUNDATIONS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Treating this issue in a sensitive fashion is notoriously difficult: it has for too long been associated with xenophobia and the far Right. David Goodhart wrote an influential essay in *The Guardian* in 2004, which had the effect of bringing to the attention of the Left an issue that they should have been thinking about for much longer. If you are a social democrat, you believe in generous welfare institutions and payments; in a world of growing diversity, this situation becomes more difficult. It is impossible for British tax-payers, for example, to pay for all the cancer treatments of anyone who might wish come to Britain from anywhere in the world. Where, therefore, and how do you draw the line? If you are on the Right, state healthcare matters less to you. But unlimited numbers of immigrants put a strain on that value. Diversity in some ways threatens the welfare instincts of the Left.

I will quote David Goodhart at length:

All acts of sharing (via the welfare system and a progressive tax system) are more smoothly and generously negotiated if we can take for granted a limited set of common values and assumptions. But as Britain becomes more diverse that common culture is being eroded. And therein lies one of the central dilemmas of political life in developed societies: sharing and solidarity can conflict with diversity. This is an especially acute dilemma for progressives who want plenty of both solidarity (high social cohesion and generous welfare paid out of a progressive tax system) and diversity (equal respect for a wide range of peoples, values and ways of life). The tension between the two values is a reminder that serious politics is about trade-offs. It also suggests that the left’s recent love affair with diversity may come at the expense of the values and even the people that it once championed (ie. the white working class).

One of the more counter-intuitive and alarming results of multiculturalism is that it breeds decreased connectedness between those who are not deemed to be within a particular group. When I moved to Brent, a large suburb of London in 2001, I found it delightful to discover the sheer range of different ethnicities and nationalities living in my midst. Beneath me there was a Sudanese couple, to one side some Russians, Poles and Czechs, to the other a group of Brazilian students who were living with some Albanians. There were many a Jamaican family, who had until recently been the dominant group in my street. The corner shops were run by Afghanis and Pakistanis, who, you learned if you engaged them in conversation, had been on some hair-raising journeys of exile. Sometimes I thought I would try to work out how many nationalities lived there, but I never did. What struck me after a few years of living there was that there was almost no opportunity or institution or system by which people living alongside each other could engage with each other. The multiculturalism I inhabited bred a sort of anomie. It was all very well for rich people to talk about the lovely Portuguese cafes, or the Lebanese restaurants, as if it was some sort of culinary experiment, but the reality was very different.

It struck me that there was a certain sort of tragedy emerging: just as Britain no longer suffered such rigid divisions in terms of class, new sorts of barriers were being built up between people.

I want to emphasize this because all too often critiques of multiculturalism are misinterpreted as an attack on Muslim groups *per se*, which is very far from the case. In fact, the multiculturalism that I speak of was initiated and perpetuated by government and by greater society, and in some ways Muslims have been the victims of it.

#### MULTICULTURALISM AND ISLAM

Some people looking at Muslims in the UK today, including some Muslims themselves, conclude that perhaps there is something inimical about living in the West and being a Muslim. There has been talk of the “clash of civilisations” between Muslims and Christians, famously touted by Samuel Huntington. The rise of Islamism and growth of terrorist networks are thought to give credence to this view. And yet, I would argue that on the contrary, it is the very policy of “community engagement” that is driving more and more Muslims into a sense of alienation. An increasing number of reports and policy suggestions have made the

SHARI'AH, also Sharia ("the path leading to the watering place"), fundamental Islamic system of law from the eighth-ninth century. *Shari'ah* is the Allah's command for Muslims and sustains of a system of duties for believers that should enable them to reach divine favor in the next world. *Shari'ah* law gained its authority towards the end of the ninth century when finally elaborated and written down by different jurists. Three main aspects distinguish *Shari'ah* from Western systems of law: scope and range (*Shari'ah* regulates not only religious practices but also everyday life, both public and private activities) and ethical character (*Shari'ah* is a code of behavior), as well as it being a divine will (*Shari'ah* is a static and unchangeable system, unlike Western laws that change throughout the centuries with the growth of societies).

case for trying to understand what Muslims want, which has led to creating all sorts of institutions that have been used to lobby for a particular version of Islam with particular self-appointed prophets.

This has ignored the sheer diversity of Muslims in Britain. The diversity of Muslims is reflected in their geographical origins, but also in their attitudes, which are wide-ranging and surprisingly complex. A recent study by Policy Exchange in Britain, written by Munira Mirza and others, took a sample of Muslims across Britain and presented a number of counter-intuitive trends.

Their research into the attitudes of Muslims in Britain showed that there is a growing religiosity amongst the younger Muslim generation. They feel that they have less in common with non-Muslims than their parents do, and they show a stronger preference for Islamic schools and *sharia* law. Reli-

giosity amongst younger Muslims is not about following their parents' cultural traditions; rather, their interest in religion is more politicized. There is a greater stress on asserting one's identity in the public space, for example, by wearing the *hijab*.

A number of statistics bear this out: 86% of Muslims feel that "my religion is the most important thing in my life." But 62% of 16–24-year-olds feel they have as much in common with non-Muslims as Muslims, compared to 71% of 55+-year-olds. 60% of Muslims would prefer to send their children to a mixed state school, compared to 35% who would prefer to send their child to an Islamic school.

There is a clear age difference. 37% of 16–24-year-olds preferred to send their children to Islamic state schools, compared to 25% of 45–54-year-olds and 19% of 55+-year-olds.

Some 59% of Muslims would prefer to live under British law, compared to 28% who would prefer to live under *sharia* law. 37% of 16–24-year-olds prefer *sharia* compared to 17% of 55+ year olds. 36% of 16–24-year-olds believe if a Muslim converts to another religion they should be punished by death, compared to 19% of 55+-year-olds.

Some 7% “admire organisations like Al-Qaeda that are prepared to fight the West.” 13% of 16–24-year-olds agreed with this statement compared to 3% of 55+-year-olds. 74% of 16–24-year-olds would prefer Muslim women to choose to wear the veil, compared to only 28% of 55+-year-olds.

However, there is also considerable diversity amongst Muslims, with many adopting a more secular approach to their religion. The majority of Muslims feel they have as much, if not more, in common with non-Muslims in Britain as with Muslims abroad. There is clearly a conflict within British Islam between a moderate majority that accepts the norms of Western democracy and a growing minority that does not.

For these reasons, we should be wary of treating the entire Muslim population as a monolith with special needs that are different from the rest of the population. 21% of Muslims have consumed alcohol. 65% have paid interest on a normal mortgage. 19% have gambled. 9% have admitted to taking drugs.

Radical Islam may have a global reach, but the terrorists who bombed the London underground in 2005 were not shaped by a Conservative Arabic education, or brought up in a rural Southeast Asian culture. They grew up in the streets of Britain, attended state schools and watched British TV. These individuals spoke fluent English, listened to pop music, watched football and shared many other cultural reference points with non-Muslims. Young Islamists are not responding to familial or broader community pressure: they are returning to the Qur’an and reading about religion of their own volition. To suggest that imams or Muslim elders are exerting an undue influence is perhaps missing the fundamental point: today’s religious extremists in Britain may be simply the products of British society.

The rise of radical Islam in Britain is not simply a “foreign problem” or a “foreign policy problem,” but is partly fueled by cultural and political trends that have their origins in the West.

Marc Sageman’s study of 172 Al-Qaeda operatives around the world indicates that most Islamic extremists have not been brought up with a strong religious influence. Nor are they the products of economic deprivation. In fact, many come from relatively wealthy homes. Only 9.4% had a religious education, while 90.6% had a secular education. 17.6% were upper class, 54.9% were middle class and only 27.5% were lower class. 9% had a postgraduate degree and another 33.3% had a college degree. Significantly, 70% joined the jihad while away from home, many after being sent to study in foreign universities, often in the West.

Sageman was able to identify three major consistencies, all of which appear counter-intuitive: the jihadists were usually radicalized in Western countries; they were likely to have had a relatively secular upbringing; and the majority were not recruited “top down,” but actively sought out terrorist networks. Such findings suggest that we cannot isolate the factors that create a jihad in a single country, lifestyle or religious denomination. Even where Islamist propaganda and networks assist the radicalization process, the contemporary jihadist is also a product of wider cultural forces.

These findings gain credibility when we look at the backgrounds of some of the terrorists who have emerged in Britain: the four London bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Jermaine Lindsay and Hasib Hussain were all British-born Muslims. Lindsay was a convert. Omar Khan Sharif and Asif Mohammed Hanif who carried out a suicide bombing in Israel, killing people at a Tel Aviv pizza parlor in April 2003, were from Derby. Sharif went to King’s College, London. Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, arrested in 2002 in connection with the murder of journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan, was educated at a fee-paying school in Essex and at the London School of Economics. Saajid Badat, the would-be second “shoe-bomber” who changed his mind, attended a Church of England school in Gloucester.

A Muslim upbringing is a common factor in almost all cases, but even that is not a prerequisite for becoming a jihadist. A small number of converts have become radicalized in western countries. In Britain, for instance: Andrew Rowe, who was convicted in London after being caught with dangerous materials to be used for terrorist attacks and was also suspected of trafficking arms to Chechen militants, was born to Jamaican parents and had dabbled in petty crime before converting to Islam in the 1990s.

There is undoubtedly a growing religiosity amongst young people, and a broader shift towards Islamicization of identity throughout Europe. There are various indicators of this:

- Growth in wearing of headscarves
- Greater cultural identification with transnational Muslim identity
- Growing membership of Islamist political groups and youth associations
- Increase in anti-Western and anti-Semitic attitudes in Muslim literature and websites

British Muslims, apparently, are the most anti-Western of those in France, Spain, Germany or the UK, according to studies conducted by the Pew Center in the United States. While publics in largely Muslim countries view Westerners as violent and cruel, this view is not nearly as prevalent among Muslims in France, Spain and Germany. British Muslims, however, are the most critical of the four minority publics studied by the Pew Center. Some people may attribute this to Foreign Policy, but that is not a sufficient explanation. Spain, for example, was bombed in 2004, and 9/11 happened long before the invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan. The appeal of radical Islam is more than an angry response to Western foreign policy; it has more to do with attacks on binge drinking and a deep hatred of the decadence of Western society. To understand the appeal of Islamism, we should think about how it feeds off of a number of broader cultural trends in our modern age.

9/11, September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 attacks, series of airline hijackings and suicide-bomber attacks committed by nineteen militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda against targets in the United States: the Twin Towers, the most visible landmark in New York and site of the World Trade Center; the Pentagon, the military strategy center near Washington. The attacks caused extensive deaths (nearly 3000 people), destruction, and triggered an enormous U.S. effort to combat terrorism as its main foreign policy. The effect was war waged on both Afghanistan and Iraq, political decisions that are today highly criticized both by the media and cultural authorities of the West.

#### POLITICS OF IDENTITY

Muslim consciousness in Britain has grown steadily with the arrival of new migrants from countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, East Africa, and lastly, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Africa, and parts of Eastern Europe. According to the 2001 Census, there are approximately 1.6 million Muslims living in the UK today, which is 2.7% of the total population, and an estimated 2.5 million in 2009. Many cities now boast a sizeable number of mosques, around which Muslim communities live, work and pray.

However, the increased prominence of Muslim lobby groups and the nature of their demands have been shaped by wider political trends in Britain. In the era of multiculturalism diversity policies at local and national levels have encouraged different ethnic and religious groups to organize politically and fight their corner for extra resources. The competition emerging between groups – a sort of tribal thinking – has reinforced a wider feeling of social fragmentation, in which each group is encouraged to look after “their own.” More generally, in the

past few decades there has been a weakening of older, collective forms of identity, such as nationalism, political parties, or trade unions and even families.

#### HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF IDENTITY POLITICS

The kind of demands made by minority groups has also changed. It is worth looking at the history of this. In the 1970s, anti-racist groups campaigned largely around issues of material and political equality. There was, for example, the Coordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination and the Black People's Alliance, or organizations like the Asian Youth movement. These groups made no distinction between religious communities and were created by younger leaders who had been born and educated in Britain. Activists defined themselves more by their political allegiances. In recent years, this has given way to the demand for "difference," and cultural issues such as clothing, halal meat and blasphemy have come to dominate Muslim politics. The shift to religiously-oriented politics took place over the 1980s and 1990s for a number of reasons. The first was a shift in the intellectual climate on the political left, away from the traditional emphasis on class struggle and economic equality and towards a new politics of identity and group rights. The anti-racist movement began to reframe their political demands from equality of provision and treatment, to diversity, which entailed greater recognition of cultural issues. Also, more strident Islamist groups emerged and started to exert an influence on the younger generation.

Importantly, this shift towards cultural issues from the 1980s onwards was facilitated by the state. Urban riots and unrest during the 1970s and 1980s provoked concern about how to engage ethnic minority communities in the political process and give them direct political involvement in their areas. As a bastion of the new left, the Greater London Council under the leadership of Ken Livingstone was among the first institutions to give concrete expression to the importance of

identity and diversity in its policies. It pioneered numerous multicultural initiatives to appeal to a new "rainbow coalition" of groups such as ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and the disabled. Even less obviously-radical organizations such as the Home Office began to reflect the new

**HALAL**, the description for objects or actions that are allowed according to Islamic law (Sharia). Used especially to determine the type of food that one has a permission to eat. The opposite word is *haram*.

intellectual fashion. The Scarman Report following the 1981 Brixton Riots called for a multi-racial, multi-cultural approach, which would recognize the different needs and ethnic communities in society. This entailed a shift from the liberal tradition of dealing with people in a “color-blind” way in the public space, towards differential treatment according to their cultural identities. The privileging of diverse identities in race relations discourse meant that people were gradually demarcated into visible cultural and religious “communities.” In particular, the idea of cultural assimilation was attacked by certain segments of the political left because it was considered likely to marginalize ethnic minorities. In its place, “cultural diversity” and the recognition of difference was welcomed as an alternative way of including people in society. For the political left, an additional driver behind this effort was a desire to connect with new constituencies of people beyond the white working class, which had traditionally formed the basis of left-wing politics.

Since the 1980s, official support for “diversity” has moved from a marginal preoccupation of activists to a central concern of all institutions. The idea of diversity has spawned a massive infrastructure of policies, funding streams, services, voluntary and semi-governmental organisations and professional occupations. In the UK, a range of services, such as housing, healthcare, arts and cultural provision, voluntary support, public broadcasting, and policing, have been restructured to accommodate the supposedly different needs of ethnic users. There are dedicated ethnic housing associations, voluntary bodies, arts centers, radio channels, and policing units. This emphasis on diversity was articulated most clearly in the 2000 report of the Commission for the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, chaired by Lord Bikhru Parekh, which argued that equality also required “cultural recognition and respect.” If a person’s culture is not affirmed and given status, this is considered to be denial of equality.

#### SOME PROBLEMS WITH THIS APPROACH

However, some people now argue that the official drive to recognize diversity has been counter-productive because it has prevented migrants from fully integrating into Britain. Zia Haider Rahman, a Bangladeshi-born human rights lawyer, has argued that many new immigrants are discouraged from learning English. She points out that the government spent £100m in the past year on translation services: “We are telling them they don’t have to learn English, let alone integrate. Worse, by insulating them, we have created communities that are now incubators for Islamo-fascism.”

The growth in translation services has coincided with a broader shift in education towards recognizing different cultures. In 1985, Ray Honeyford, a head-teacher in Bradford, warned about the growing segregation in nearby schools and about how the fear of offending minority groups was thwarting the teaching of English as a first language and also English history – something he believed concerned most Asian parents. His stance against multiculturalism provoked consternation from local authorities, and Honeyford was pushed into early retirement. Today, we can see how his dire predictions have been borne out. Schools throughout the north of England are highly ethnically divided. Honeyford's old school, Drummond Middle School, has been renamed Iqra School and is now 100% Asian.

The privileging of cultural difference means that multicultural policies have often ignored the needs of less powerful sections of ethnic communities. Organisations like the Muslim Women's Network have argued that community leaders silence their own women and prevent the criminal justice system from tackling problems such as domestic violence, honor killings and forced marriages. Although such crimes are not specific to any culture and have been carried out by Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Hindus, the patronizing – even racist – view of some multiculturalists that these crimes are part of “their culture” has led some critics to argue that the issue of domestic violence in ethnic minority homes is not tackled with the same force as in white people's homes.

#### SHIFT IN POLITICAL CULTURE TO DIVERSITY

The logic of diversity and multiculturalism has also led to a shift in political culture, whereby ethnic and cultural groups are encouraged to make demands based on their differences and cultural exclusion from the mainstream. In order to gain resources from the public purse, or even garner media attention, particular groups have to claim they are unfairly disadvantaged. The effect over the past two decades has been the emergence of ethnically or culturally specific lobby groups, each arguing in their own corner for more money, resources and support for their particular identity.

Finally, the defining moment of British race relations in the past decade was the Macpherson inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence investigation, published in 1999. The murder of the black teenager in south London, and the substandard police investigation into the incident led

to a major shift in the national conversation about race issues in Britain. It brought to public attention the concept of “institutional racism,” which the Macpherson report defined as

the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (Macpherson 6.34).

The report’s seventy recommendations included an increase in ethnic monitoring, the adoption of race awareness training, targets for ethnic minority recruitment and promotion, and greater attention given to “hate crimes.” Although the use of the term “institutional racism” ostensibly emphasized structural factors behind racism (such as employment, institutional practices, and statutory policies), the effect of Macpherson was to focus authorities’ attention on the everyday, low-level experience of racism in the workplace. Today, anti-racist measures concentrate on changing organizational culture, and rooting out “unwitting prejudice,” defined as prejudice towards ethnic minorities that is unintentional, but can still lead to feelings of disrespect. Macpherson’s highly subjective definition of a racist incident, as anything “perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person” has turned any act of aggression, or even criticism, into a potential racial offence. Despite its high-minded aim, the preoccupation with monitoring racism seems to coincide with increased racial tensions between groups.

The shift towards multicultural policies has had a profound impact on the Muslim population at the local and national level. Local authorities have found new partners in religious institutions and recruited them to help with public service delivery. For instance, some people in the 1980s argued that the Muslim community’s religiosity should be encouraged because it helped maintain relatively low crime rates of young Asian men compared to their Afro-Caribbean counterparts. These partnerships with the authorities endowed religious institutions with extra prestige. They affirmed the status of religious leaders as representatives of the local population, often hiding the tensions between religious and secular factions beneath the surface. Local state support, which has become increasingly organized around the perceived

**SYNCRETISM**, an attempt to balance and meld contrary beliefs, practices, or thoughts (“combining”). *Syncretism* involves finding analogies of diverse traditions, especially in theology and mythology. Often occurs in arts (eclecticism) and politics (syncretism).

needs of those with distinct communal identities, has created a fierce competition for resources in some places. In many cases, well-organized and dynamic religious organisations have played the “cultural identity card” better than some less well-resourced secular groups. The new status awarded to certain Muslim organizations

by local and national government has arguably given more strident elements the confidence to challenge the dominance of older, secular traditions.

The shift at the local level from secular to religious partners is demonstrated in East London, where during the 1990s funding declined for secular Bangladeshi community organisations but rose for religious organisations, such as the increasingly prominent East London Mosque. Over the years, tensions between different religious and secular factions have arisen. For example, local Islamist groups have criticized longstanding local Bangladeshi New Year celebrations for being “syncretic,” because they include Hindu symbolism and encourage boys and girls to mix. Meanwhile, many secular activists have criticised the visits to the East London Mosque of Islamist politicians from Bangladesh’s Jamaat-I-Islami party, who allegedly committed crimes against humanity in the war of independence in 1971. The notion of a singular “Muslim community” belies the internal tensions that exist in places such as these.

At a national level, during the 1980s and 1990s radical Muslim organisations began to cohere into a national voice and exert a more powerful presence than apolitical or localized Muslim groups. In 1988 the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) was set up to campaign against Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses*, which eventually led to a fatwa by the Ayatollah Khomeini “condemning [Rushdie] to death.” The issue drew together diverse Muslim groups who recognised the need to work together. The anti-Rushdie campaign was led primarily from Pakistan by disciples of the late Islamist ideologue Abul A’la Mawdudi, who founded the Jamaat-e-Islami party in 1941. The campaign combined grassroots mobilization on the streets of the UK through demonstrations and petitions, with diplomatic pressure on the British Government through Saudi-linked networks. The carefully orchestrated book-burning on the streets of Bradford raised

the profile of Islamism amongst younger Muslims, who were more literate than their parents and easily provoked into anger by the affront to Islam.

For the first time, anxiety emerged that some Muslims would refuse to obey British law, wedded as they were to a trans-national belief system. The discomfort about the loyalties of Muslims became even more pronounced during the first Gulf War, and later, the Palestinian intifadas in the early 1990s and later, in 2000. In 1992, the Muslim Parliament led by the late Kalim Siddiqui launched its own Muslim Manifesto, promoting jihad as a basic duty of any Muslim, regardless of their place of birth.

#### BIRTH OF THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

In the face of the growing number of Muslim groups competing for attention (and resources), the British Government helped to establish the single umbrella body, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in 1997. This followed a demand by the Conservative then-Home Secretary, Michael Howard, for Muslims to develop a single representative body. The MCB represents 350 mosques around the country and its staff work on a voluntary basis, although it has received public money from time to time (for instance, the government awarded it £140,000 to help publicize new religious discrimination legislation). The MCB has been an important influence in strengthening the political identity of Muslims in the UK, commenting openly on British foreign policy, religious discrimination and problems facing Muslims. In 2001, its “Electing to Listen” document was part of a move to encourage tactical voting amongst Muslims in the General Election. It highlighted issues such as Islamophobia (especially in the media), religious discrimination, and international concerns in Palestine, Chechnya and Kashmir.

However, in recent times the aims and methods of the MCB leadership have been called into question, particularly since the London bombings. Some argue that the organisation does not adequately represent the diversity of cultural and religious beliefs of British Muslims, particularly the majority group of Sufi Muslims in the UK (which has since established its own representative organisation, the Sufi Muslim Council). The MCB has responded by stating it has only ever claimed to represent its affiliate organisations, but there is little doubt that the Government has tended to treat it as a proxy for mainstream Muslim opinion in general.

Others have expressed concern at the “extreme” opinions of some of the MCB leadership who are linked to politically radical organisations abroad, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-I-Islami. Whilst there is little serious suggestion that the MCB endorses the aims of organizations such as Al-Qaeda, its views on issues like homosexuality, arranged marriage, the causes of radicalization of Muslims in the UK and Holocaust Memorial Day have provoked controversy. The MCB’s first appointed leader, Iqbal Sacranie, was formerly the head of the UKACIA and once famously said of the novelist Salman Rushdie, “Death, perhaps is a bit too easy for him.” This has created doubts about whether it should be considered a viable representative body for Muslims. Other groups, such as the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC) and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), and its offshoot the British Muslim Initiative (BMI), are even more under suspicion of having extremist links and attitudes.

Political Islam in the UK has, of course, developed under the influence of Islamist groups operating from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Middle East. As the Muslim voice in Britain was beginning to develop political coherence, it was energized by the Shia-led Iranian revolution in 1979, and later *The Satanic Verses* affair. By the late 1990s, Muslim groups had built an effective national lobbying machine. The strength of Islamist groups was significantly bolstered by the flow of money from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan for new religious facilities, buildings, and resources for publishing and education. This shifted the balance from more traditional and apolitical Muslim organisations towards more internationalist and politically radical groups with Wahhabi ideologies, as mentioned previously. It has been noted by numerous commentators that London (or “Londonistan,” a term originally coined by the French secret service) became a center of refuge for Islamist groups in the 1990s, as various governments squeezed their operations out abroad. Three prominent Islamist clerics, Abu Qatada, Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri Muhammed, operated out of London until recently.

The events of 9/11, of course, only did more to give new significance to being a Muslim, as it gave increased attention to being a Muslim. A new generation of Muslims was maturing and starting to consider questions of personal identity. Many are doing so in a context in which they feel they are seen as Muslims and little else. This is emphasized by the way the media, politicians, and Muslim groups talk about the “Muslim community.” In fact radical Islam’s narrative of the victimized *ummah* (community) has drawn sustenance from broader public attacks on US and UK policy.

### IMPACT ON MUSLIM IDENTITY AND BIRTH OF “ISLAMOPHOBIA”

This brief history of Muslim identity shows that it has not been constant. It developed out of a combination of factors, and in recent years it has become markedly self-conscious. No doubt, one of the effects of the increased scrutiny of the “Muslim community” is that the more we talk about it, the more likely Muslims perceive themselves to be part of it. Economists use the term “informational cascade” to describe how people give answers based on what they think other people in their group believe. Muslims, who are undoubtedly diverse in their opinions, may well tend to give similar answers because they are influenced by this kind of group-think. When Muslims are asked questions about “their” community, there may be a sense of not wanting to let the group down, and feelings of defensiveness. The Muslim identity, therefore, has, to some extent, become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The theme of religious persecution and hatred of Muslims, Islamophobia, has been an important one for galvanizing support from younger Muslims. Crucially, the issue of Islamophobia provided a route into the existing framework of race relations practice, with its growing interest in the protection of cultural identities and “respect” for minority groups. It was actually a generic race-relations body, the Runnymede Trust, rather than a Muslim lobby organisation, that first popularized the term “Islamophobia” in 1997 in a major report on British Muslims.

After the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, the Muslim magazine *Q News* asked, “Where’s the Muslim in Macpherson’s Black and White Britain?” Non-Muslim anti-racists, perhaps stung by such criticism, answered the call and incorporated Muslims into their work. Official anti-racism laid the foundations on which Muslim groups would build their own campaigns.

Following 9/11, Muslim representative organisations framed their concerns in terms of feelings of vulnerability and the perceived backlash against Muslims. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) called for greater protection by authorities, claiming that: “Muslims in the United Kingdom feel particularly vulnerable, insecure, alienated, threatened, intimidated, marginalized, discriminated and vilified since [the] September 11 tragedy.”

Today, a range of Muslim-led organisations actively lobby about Islamophobia. These groups include the Muslim Council of Britain’s Media Committee, the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), the

Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR), MPAC, BMI and the Muslim Safety Forum (MSF). Their campaigning efforts helped to secure new legislation in 2006, banning the “incitement to religious hatred.”

The Government has also accepted the role of Muslim representative organisations with regards to welfare provision and possible changes to the law. In August 2006, representatives from the Union of Muslim Organisations in the UK and Ireland asked Ruth Kelly, the Secretary of State for Communities, for holidays to mark Muslim festivals and Islamic laws to cover family affairs which would apply only to Muslims. The Secretary General, Dr. Syed Aziz Pasha, said she told him she would “look sympathetically at all the suggestions” and also agreed “it should be a partnership approach.”

#### RANGE OF GROUPS

These developments contrast with reality. It is important to recognize that British Muslim groups are far from uniform in outlook – to return to Munira Mirza’s point. Apart from the historic theological differences between Sunnis and Shias, Muslims espouse a range of political and religious views, often in contradiction to each other. Some are avowedly Islamist and political (Hizb u-Tahrir, MPAC, Al Muhajiroun), while others are more culturally and religiously orientated (Tablighi Jamaat). The largest organisations like the MCB and the MAB straddle an uneasy line between mainstream political engagement and the imperatives of Islamism. More recently, there has been a growth in secular Muslim organizations seeking to find points of connection with the non-Muslim majority, such as Progressive British Muslims, Muslims for Secular Democracy and the City Circle.

Despite claims about the “Muslim community,” Muslim organizations are deeply split over the appropriate way to pursue Muslim aims. Some Islamist organisations such as Hizb u-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun (a group that, despite being banned, mutates and resurfaces) denounce democratic politics and consider voting to be un-Islamic. Meanwhile, MPAC strongly criticizes this rejectionism, and argues that younger British-born Muslims are neglecting their Islamic duty if they do not vote and harness the political system to Islamist ends. MPAC preaches a uniquely British brand of radical Islam, and has campaigned vociferously against MPs whom they see as demonstrating a pro-Israeli bias. They actively supported the election of the Respect Party in East London in 2005.

Whatever their differences, these overtly political organisations tend to share a disdain for more mainstream groups like the MCB. For more radical groups, the MCB is associated with the Government and therefore fails to address the demands of younger Muslims, who are attracted to Islamism precisely because it fiercely opposes government policy. After the London bombings, over forty Islamic scholars and leaders organised by the MCB produced a statement calling the attacks “absolutely un-Islamic,” and representatives from the 500-strong Muslim Forum stood outside Parliament and issued a fatwa in response to the bombs saying that suicide bombs were “vehemently prohibited.” The MCB has also been criticised by some younger Muslim organisations for being out of touch with their generation. They would prefer to develop a British Islam that is more “relevant” and they see the MCB as a barrier to this. Secular Muslim groups have complained about the failure of the MCB to discuss the modernization of Islam and religious practice.

The meaning of modernization is itself confusing, and for some, it can mean a return to Quranic injunctions rather than a relaxing of rules. For instance, MPAC has run a campaign to encourage mosques to open their doors to women – something that has traditionally been denied on both religious grounds (regarding the strict segregation of men and women during prayer times) but also practical grounds because of the limited space available in most mosques in the UK. MPAC’s campaign has been presented in terms of “Women’s Power,” and borrows heavily from the language of contemporary feminism, making it highly appealing to commentators who long for a reformed Islam. Yet, the “women’s power” promoted by MPAC is also highly religious. MPAC has supported women who wear the full veil (*niqab*) and the headscarf (*hijab*), saying that, “they should not be proscribed but treated with greater dignity and respect than most.” The “women’s power” it promotes is about protecting women’s rights only insofar as they are justified in terms of the Qur’an.

The considerable range of organizations suggests that British Muslims are not responding to the current climate in a uniform way. Young British Muslims may be hostile to an older generation’s way of doing things, but there is no consensus on what a “British Islam” should look like. While some organisations reject the “Western” mode of democracy and political participation, others push for greater involvement and even celebration of “Western” ideas. Some Muslim groups wish to enjoy the

cultural or “folk” aspects of their religious upbringing and keep them as a valued part of their heritage, while others wish to “purify” Islam of such traditions.

As outlined above, the growth of Islamism in the UK over the past two decades has been encouraged by a series of political events and, indirectly, by official policies. However, it also reflects a deeper yearning among the younger generation of Muslims growing up in Britain. Tanveer Ahmed, an Australian Muslim psychiatrist, has written about the way in which young Muslims growing up in the West may feel caught between two different cultural systems with competing values. He argues that the turn towards a religious identity is partly a response to a sense of cultural alienation in the West. This might sometimes be fueled by experience of racism, or by a sense of incompatibility with the cultural mainstream. According to this thesis, the Muslim is a “marginal man” who feels rejected by, and alienated from, one or both parents, family or school. This confusion of identity may then lead to higher levels of deviance, excessive anxiety and psychiatric instability. Ahmed writes,

In lay terms, they cannot carry their inconsistent selves through to adulthood ... This often involves a dramatic shift to either side of the cultural divide, perhaps committing to an arranged marriage or seeking refuge in deep religiosity. Or it can occur in the opposite behaviour, such as eloping with a partner against their parents' wishes (37).

It seems that embracing religion can help some Muslims overcome this sense of alienation from the mainstream, and give them a sense of belonging, which neither Britain nor their parental homeland provides.

Certainly, young Muslims can feel torn between the culturally strict expectations of the home, and the more permissive, morally relaxed environment of school and friendship groups. This is an experience known to many new immigrant groups. But it should be remembered that the appeal of Islamism is not limited to young Muslims who have been brought up in culturally strict homes. Some react against their parents' attempt to “fit in” to British society and many converts from a range of backgrounds have been lured by the strict ideology. A range of personal factors may contribute to their interest in Islamism, but what seems to be a common factor is the attraction of a morally absolute vision of the world and the sense of belonging to a community.

### DECLINE OF OTHER SOURCES OF IDENTITY

In this sense, the appeal of Islamism as a kind of identity may also reflect a wider cultural shift within society. As older forms of political and national identity come under attack or have diminished, people search for new forms of meaning and belonging. This growing inclination to retreat into exclusive cultural or religious identities is certainly not confined to Muslims, and we should consider the extent to which younger people more generally feel a sense of detachment from society as a whole. Some commentators have observed a small growth in Sikh and Hindu youth organizations, which suggests a tendency towards exclusive identification amongst non-Muslim minority communities too. Other people are turning to regional or local identities, away from the nation state.

In the last fifteen years, Englishness has changed significantly. It was once, as Roger Scruton attests, a rather gentle concept, embodied by cultural totems such as parish churches, boat races and Morris dancers. It has become a much more assertive, populist identity. English, Scottish, Welsh as categories and identities are racially exclusive, and they are inevitably more ethnically-based and nativist, closer in character to national identities in many other parts of Europe. The inclusiveness of British identity, with its (UK-wide) multinational and Commonwealth roots, is unusual and offers a greater opportunity to the British for absorption of others. And yet it is not being deployed.

If young Muslims feel increasingly detached from Britain, it is not primarily because their religion is pulling them away, but because there is considerable confusion in wider society about what belonging to Britain actually means. Recent attempts by the government to introduce citizenship tests and education have become mired in controversy about the meaning of Britishness itself and what it ought to signify.

For many observers, one of the principal factors in undermining British identity has been the rise of the politics of multiculturalism. Intellectual fashion has dictated that right-minded people should feel shame and guilt about Britain’s imperial past and

**POLITICAL NATIVISM**, policy of favoring the interests of certain citizens upon the claims of newcomers. It describes a political or legal practice of lowering the status of other- than-natural ethnic or cultural groups based on an assumption of their hostility and inability to assimilate. Commonly mistaken with defense of national, cultural and religious identity. Political nativists tend to criticize multicultural policies and generally oppose immigration, whence their xenophobia. Depending on whether they belong to a dominant or “inferior” culture, nativists are negatively or positively assessed.

embarrassment about overt manifestations of national pride, as I did. In recent years, there have been many incidents that reveal the degree of discomfort the authorities feel about many aspects of Britishness.

At Aberdeen University, army cadets were asked by the Officer Training Corps (OTC) to remove their uniforms when marching past a mosque after people driving by in a car shouted abuse at one cadet. This sent two apparently officially sanctioned messages to Muslims: first, British Muslims may legitimately object to being exposed to the uniforms of their country's armed forces; second, that this objection will take precedence over the desire of cadets to wear their uniforms or the wishes of the majority to see them. A leading community figure and a worshipper at the mosque, Habib Malik, said, "I am very surprised the OTC has done this ... the Moslem community respects soldiers and thinks the Army is doing a wonderful job" (after Ja'far, Mirza, Senthilkumaran 34).

When the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) released details of the new history curriculum to be taught in secondary schools it was revealed that prominence was to be given to one of the darkest incidents in the history of the British Empire, the Amritsar Massacre of 1919, regarded even by critics of the Empire as atypical. The Chief Executive of the QCA, Ken Boston, did not seek to justify the inclusion on historical grounds: "Given the mix of nationalities in England, it is important to foster understanding through learning" (after Ja'far, Mirza, Senthilkumaran 34). History teaching that starts from the assumption that pupils have no common nationality is unlikely to foster any shared sense of British identity.

British identity has been undermined for political reasons, but other institutions that provided previous generations of Muslims with a sense of collective identity have declined through more natural causes. Political parties and trade unions have hemorrhaged members over the last decade. The anti-racism movement that involved the previous generation of young Asians has been largely co-opted into official race-relations bodies. Older ways of engaging collectively have declined and in such a vacuum, a politicized religious identity has emerged.

In this context, younger Muslims are much more conscious of their difference from the mainstream and more aggressive in asserting their identity in the public space. In light of these shifts, it is important to consider the response of Government policy, and the impact it has made on the feelings and attitudes of Muslims. For the past decade,

and particularly after the London bombings, Government policy towards Muslims has been to engage with them as a distinct community, whose special needs qualify them for particular policies and privileges. In 2005, the Government assembled a group of Muslim representatives and leaders, entitled the “Preventing Extremism Together” taskforce, which recommended increased funding of religious groups and projects to bolster Muslim community needs.

However, despite good intentions, this approach has often seemed inadequate and muddled. Trying to do “community engagement” with Muslims has proved difficult because they are not really a coherent and unified community. The Muslim population is ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse; while some younger Muslims are growing more religious than their parents, others are becoming more secular or “Westernized.” Therefore, what “community strategy” would fit all the diverse needs and expectations of this group?

#### INDIVIDUATED ISLAM

Just one more note about modern British Muslims. Olivier Roy talks about individuated Islam: while religion has become important on an individual level, it has become less important in regulating the cultural life of the community. Many Muslims “pick and choose” so that they only follow the rules that they personally value. For instance, a sizeable minority of the Muslims have admitted that they drink, smoke or have pre-marital sexual relationships, all of which are forbidden in their cultural or religious upbringing. They preferred an inner consciousness of what Muslim identity means to them.

This raises an important question of to what extent, if at all, the authorities should attempt to recognize Islam in public life. The tendency of the government to engage with Muslims as a religious group with particular attitudes and practices misses the three-dimensional, contradictory character of human beings living through cultural transition. Although many may be culturally or ethnically Muslim, they may not be particularly observant. For some individuals, the stereotype of how a Muslim is supposed to behave can be a straitjacket. Many feel they have to hide a part of their personal life, such as drinking, boyfriends, etc., from their families and local community, and it probably does not help to feel that the rest of society expects the same. The introduction of *sharia* in areas with high concentration of Muslims – as sometimes proposed – would thwart the freedom of people to choose by themselves the culture

by which they wish to live. The willingness of the Government to even consider this sends a message to Muslims that they are supposed to act, behave and feel a certain way about their religion, even when many do not. The extent to which many of them are willing to adapt to their surroundings, possibly even rejecting some of the values with which they were brought up, should not be underestimated.

A further point about multiculturalism: it has encouraged a very strong sense of victimhood amongst Muslims that only increases their sense of difference, and does little to help them. Some commentators have even suggested that the plight of Muslims in Britain today is akin to that of Jews in Nazi Germany – a totally ridiculous comparison. In fact, in Mirza's survey, 84% of respondents said that they felt they had been treated fairly in this society. Most Muslims feel confident about showing their "Muslim-ness." Indeed many say that they are better able to conduct their religion in Britain than they are in "Muslim countries." A paradox has emerged: while younger Muslims are unlikely to experience significant racism or discrimination because of their religion, they are much more conscious and sensitive about the possibility of being victimized. There is a huge gap between perception and reality. The overall culture of victimhood has not allowed us to deal with Muslim fears. Rather, this culture has exacerbated them.

And instead of showing that Muslims are like everyone else, the authorities have been treating Muslims as a distinct group and as a result, our society has come to see them as more alien than they actually are.

#### CLOSING DOWN DEBATE

Lastly and even more seriously, the accusation of Islamophobia has now become a convenient way of closing down debate. Valid criticism of Islam or Muslims is hindered by such accusations. The politics of multiculturalism has created a curious dynamic: some groups demand special protections for their particular identity, which in turn encourages other groups to make their own demands. Muslim groups have operated along these lines for some time, but they did not create this framework. It was the broader politics of multiculturalism, asserting that controversial opinions must be silenced in the name of protecting minorities, that did so.

In reality, Muslim groups' demands are not the first to undermine the principle of free speech in western countries; rather they follow a trend that has been institutionalized since the 1980s through speech codes on university campuses, diversity etiquette guidelines in the

workplace and politically-correct jargon in local councils. As the Canadian philosopher, Michael Neumann, points out, it is Western culture’s own exaggerated anxiety about giving offence that has created some of the current dilemmas regarding Muslims. Interestingly, it was feminist and gay rights lobby groups in the 1970s and 1980s that first demanded curbs on hate speech to protect their particular identities.

### CONCLUSIONS

My main point is that some extremely well-meaning policy is, and has been making the situation worse by encouraging too strong an emphasis on religious identity, which makes sharing public space more difficult. Religion undoubtedly plays an important part in many people’s lives, and we must respect that, but in our anxiety about people joining radical Islam, we should not unthinkingly bring religion into the heart of our institutions, without questioning what this might do to them.

We need to stop emphasizing difference (through initiatives like “inter-cultural” dialogue). And we need to engage with Muslims as citizens and not just through their religious identity. The Muslim community is far from homogeneous. And we need to revive a sense of wider community ethos. We need to end institutional attacks on national identity, such as the cancellation of Christmas festivities and the neurotic bans on displays of national symbols – not to mention the anti-Western bias of history. And we need to thicken the sources of loyalty that individuals instinctively have and refrain from putting people in boxes. I recently had recourse to think about these things when I invited some of my Afghani neighbours to a Christmas party that I held at my flat. One of my neighbors came with a friend. They spent forty-five minutes with us and ate two potatoes and drank a glass of water each. They told us of their journey from Afghanistan to London via various detention centres. We sat goggle-eyed listening to them. A few months later, I met him in the street and asked him whom he was supporting in the World Cup. “England,” he said, “and I’m supporting England for YOU!” He added, “Yours is the only English household I have been into.” In an unpremeditated and unintentional way, I had, by inviting this man to my house, made him feel more at home. Should not old ideas of hospitality play a stronger part in ideas of integration? Counter-intuitively, we may need more common sense and less expertise in these difficult issues.



# PART II



HISTORY  
AND IDENTITY

## 11.

Reflections on the Canon, Identity,  
and Memory Politics

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## IS OUR LIFE AS SHAKY AS THE FIDDLER ON THE ROOF?

Duality, as major modern philosophers and sociologists have noticed, permeates human nature. One part of human nature is beyond our reach and control, whereas another part is made up by us. Determined by our existential and moral choices, this mobile part of our identity becomes another facet of our nature, manifesting itself as a set of our accomplishments and achievements. We could safely assume that up to the nineteenth century, theorists were inclined to see that unchangeable part of the human nature as primary and essential. A paradigm shift in social philosophy and sociology signified an identity shift towards the mobile or changeable part of human nature.

In his political treatise, *Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784), Immanuel Kant noted that human nature is contradictory and split, that a discrepancy exists between different faculties of the human soul, which creates mutual antagonism in society, and that the best name for this antagonism would be the “unsocial sociability.” We are longing for creative solitude and individual self-fulfillment, which is always limited and restricted by our social milieu and society at large; yet another part of our self is inseparable from society, its norms, social recognition, and the sense of fellowship.

Of this antagonism, Kant writes,

The means which nature employs to bring about the development of all the capacities implanted in men is their mutual antagonism in society, but only so far as this antagonism becomes at length the cause of an order among them that is regulated by law ... By this antagonism I mean the *unsocial sociability of men*; that is, their tendency to enter into society, conjoined, however, with an accompanying resistance which continually threatens to dissolve this society. The disposition for this manifestly lies in human nature. *Man has an inclination to socialize himself by associating with others, because in such a state he feels himself more than a natural man, in the development of his natural capacities. He has, moreover, a great tendency to individualize himself by isolation from others, because he likewise finds in himself the unsocial disposition of wishing to direct everything merely according to his own mind; and hence he expects resistance everywhere, just as he knows with regard to himself that he is inclined on his part to resist others.* Now it is this resistance or mutual antagonism that awakens all the powers of men, that drives him to overcome all his propensity to indolence, and that impels him, through the desire of honor or power or wealth, to strive after rank among his fellow men – whom he can neither bear to interfere with himself, nor yet let alone. Then the first real steps are taken from the rudeness of barbarism to the culture of civilization, which particularly lies in the social worth of man (cited in Gardiner 1959, 25–26; my emphasis).

Whereas one part of our identity motivates us to keep away from society, another part calls for going towards society in order to be identified, recognized, appreciated, and befriended (or envied, despised, and hated, which also allows us a path to relationship and social existence). We are able to hold mutually exclusive attitudes to society inside ourselves that are at the same time exclusive and inclusive, individualistic and holistic, each of them granting us the way of existence. It is difficult to define identity better and more precisely than Kant did without using the term itself. Having an identity allows us to be identified as a unique individual, a family member, a human being with his or her unique existential experience and validity, a social class member, and a member or representative of the nation.

Durkheim stressed the duality of identity as well. Partly echoing Kant, Durkheim asserts that every modern individual is *homo duplex*,

due to the dual character of the need for identity. This duality springs from our desire to be accepted into a community and its culture through concepts that our minds communicate. By no means does the assuming of collective identity or participating in social ritual prevent us from having an individual and uniquely valid identity. As Durkheim notes:

Because they are held in common, concepts are the supreme instrument of all intellectual exchange. By means of them, minds communicate. Doubtless, when one thinks through the concepts that he receives from the community, he individualizes them and marks them with his personal imprint, but there is nothing personal that is not susceptible to this type of individualization ... These two aspects of our psychic life are ... opposed to each other as are the personal and the impersonal ... The old formula *homo duplex* is therefore verified by the facts. Far from being simple, our inner life has something that is like a double center of gravity. On the one hand is our individuality – and, more particularly, our body in which it is based ... on the other is everything in us that expresses something other than ourselves (Durkheim 1973, 152).

The ambivalence of identity lies in the fact that we never know what leads people to celebrate their identity. On the one hand, it could be a dream of being identified as a member of a nation internationally credited for its economic success or its fight for independence; on the other hand, identity could be used with much success to underline the uniqueness of a particular individual who wishes not to be associated with or attached to anything. Therefore, identity can serve equally well as the transmission belt or as the emergency exit.

**EMILE DURKHEIM** (1858–1917), founder of French sociology, his methodology combined sociological theory with empirical research. Durkheim believed that progress was not caused by technology and science, and feared the equilibrium in the modern industrial society with no social norms. His sociological works are close to moral philosophy. In his view, technology and mechanization constituted a threat both for societies and individuals. Among *Durkheim's* major works are *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), *Suicide* (1897), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912).

The phrase “identity crisis” sounds like a pleonasm, since no identity exists that would not be in crisis. An intense search for an identity is a symptom of crisis. Identity itself is a crisis of tradition. A frantic search for identity, rather than an attempt at self-comprehension, self-articulation, or self-reflection, signifies no more and no less than the crisis of a particular individual

and his or her personality, of a social group, or of a society at large. Our search for identity, as well as our propensity to engage in identity shifting, is a sign of uncertainty, unsafety, and insecurity. Failing to successfully establish ourselves at home, we try to do it elsewhere. Finding no understanding or consolation in our hometown, we move to another town establishing our new legend or story of how we cherish the spirit and tradition of that newly found town. The search for identity is an internal migration process, which culminates in the individual's departure from modern life. This usually happens by choosing a militant religion, an anti-modern ideology, or a hate group.

Today, we are accustomed to beating the drums of supposed danger against what appears as the unavoidable outcome of globalization. Are we, Europeans, losing our shared historical and civilizational identity? Is Europe at the peril of losing its core values and cultural identity? Does a modern, liberal-democratic, and multicultural society have the ability to uphold its cohesion without succumbing to atomization and fragmentation? Does a blueprint for an open society go hand in hand with an ability to sustain a set of historically- formed ideas, culturally-shaped values, and collective sentiments that we take as identity? Did Europe abandon itself by adopting a blueprint for a social and moral order that no longer supports its core values? Are we facing the breakdown of the world that we once knew as Europe?

Some of these questions have their theoretical rationale; yet others appear as a political fantasy fueled by our troubled identity. In fact, our identity needs an assurance and confirmation. There was a time when being a European was as easily shared and understood as playing a *concerto grosso* composed by an Italian and performed by a Viennese chamber orchestra conducted by a German, or portraying an English aristocrat by a German or Flemish master. Those times are long gone. Now being a European is part of the political agenda. Being a European increasingly tends to become a political manifesto, a matter of politically mobilized identity, and an expression of what I would describe as the politicized moral sentiment or the politically tuned and exposed sphere of human intimacy.

We have to spell out and cry out who we are as if it were a matter of utmost moral loyalty or high treason. We are not at peace with our sense of belonging, which is placed in jeopardy. Being constantly questioned about our loyalty and even pushed to the limit where we have to endorse the elusive set of attitudes and views just to assume certainty,

safety, and security, and being unable to get away, in this troubled world, with our sense of shared memory and sentiment as a dweller of a city, town, or region, we successfully pass an examination to qualify for becoming a European, a Westerner, or a Civilized Person. Having failed to endorse that set, we may slide into a resistance identity that allows us to raise the voice against modernity and its unbearable burden of ambivalence and uncertainty.

#### WHAT IS THE CULTURAL CANON? PROTECTIVE ARMOR?

##### SELF-EXAMINATION? SELF-DISCOVERY?

In the modern world, identity increasingly tends to become a password to real or imagined solidarity, a political and moral examination, a mask that we wear to conceal our uncertainties and worries, and an achievement that we celebrate as nearly a mystical unity of the individual and their community. Thus, a well-publicized interracial marriage or an adoption of a child of different race becomes a political statement, rather than an act of love, compassion, and human intimacy.

The same applies to the fierce defenders of identities based on the blood-and-soil type of symbolic logic and moral culture. They speak up in favor of the distribution of power and prestige on the grounds of ethnicity or the Heideggerian “mythopoetic substance,” rather than human fellowship and solidarity. Last but not least, this is the world that incites and invites the new type of religiosity, something like politicized religion where wearing religious symbols is no longer an innocent detail of private life and silent devotion; instead, it becomes a war cry or a military uniform. Some political scientists, perhaps, would gladly use the adjective “civilizational,” which is tantamount to “militant” or “military” nowadays.

Are we losing our Tradition, this haven of certainty, safety, and security? Does it slip away robbing us of our sense of pride and belonging? Does it vanish in the air leaving no trace around us? If we are not to conflate Identity and Tradition, we have to admit that Identity relates to Tradition as Civilization to Culture in Oswald Spengler’s gloomy prophecy, *The Decline of the West* (1918–23). Spengler notes that the epoch of culture is able to create masterpieces of art and great treatises of philosophy without engaging in the analysis of every single episode from social life or without asking questions about the meaning of art and culture, whereas the epoch is civilization is devoid of any authentic form of art or philosophy; yet it has the striking powers of analysis and interpretation. Much in tune with Spengler, we could assert

that Tradition is what is taken for granted, what makes the world, and what allows us to paint, to compose, to write, and to pray without asking the cursed questions, such as “Who am I?” and “Why am I here, and not there?” Tradition is creative and Identity, interpretive. Identity is the end of life cycle, a sign of exhaustion, the kiss of death on Tradition, and a symptom of our inability to accept the world as it is.

Our reliance on Tradition without being able to explain what it is makes us sound like Tevye the Milkman, from Sholem Aleichem’s collection of short stories, *Tevye and His Daughters* and later the main character in the famous stage musical and film adaptation *Fiddler on the Roof*, who is certain that only Tradition can keep the Jews going in this world, without being able to explain why, how, and for how long this would happen. Finally, Tevye finds himself unable to put this in words and explain what the Tradition is. He just feels it. Without Tradition, assumes Tevye, our life would be as shaky as that of the fiddler on the roof. The irony is that Jewish tradition, as we learn from Tevye’s life, has already become the fiddler on the roof. What is left of it is just the common destiny of being a target of irrational hatred. Tevye’s daughters marry three men who represent three trajectories of the fate of the Jews in the modern world. One daughter marries a deeply traditional Jew, a poor and hard-working tailor who desperately tries to make ends meet; the second daughter marries a revolutionary, secularist, and modernist; and the third one marries a gentile. No less ironic is that Solomon Rabinowitch, a Jewish writer in the Russian Empire, wrote under the pseudonym Sholem Aleichem, since, at that time, Yiddish was considered “déclassé,” and Rabinowitch wanted to keep his identity a secret.

Do we need Tradition as strongly now as we did earlier? And do we need the cultural canon in our age of encounter and discovery of multiple traditions, identities, and canons? Is our life without them as shaky as that of the fiddler on the roof? In a way, this is true of the infatuation with the cultural canon, if we take it as a protective armor of our troubled identity, instead of perceiving it as a bridge between tradition and modernity or between classical and modern sensibilities. We try to restore or rediscover the cultural canon in the hope that it might protect us from the unbearable uncertainties and ambiguities of liquid modernity, to use Zygmunt Bauman’s term.

Yet the question arises: What is the canon? The cultural canon is hardly a recent invention. We could recall the debate that took place in the sixteenth century, which we know as the debate between

the Ancients and the Moderns. We know that in the Renaissance two groups of scholars existed. The first one argued that scholars belonging to the camp of Moderns, that is, philosophers and philologists who never reached for anything beyond their Greek or Roman counterparts, held that virtue and a higher standard of education lay in Ancient Greece and Rome. Yet, the other group argued that whatever our appreciation and our great fascination with Classical Antiquity, the modern sciences easily surpass it in their ability to transform reality beyond recognition, knowledge of mathematics, physics, and modern referential knowledge.

Some scholars, such as Niccolò Machiavelli in his *Discourses on Livy*, or Francis Bacon, actually provided many interesting insights concerning this tension between Classical Antiquity, for which they had much admiration, and Modernity. They held the first debate concerning the nature of the canon. And this allows us to think that the canon originates with the tension between tradition and modern interpretation: this tradition and its discovery. We know that this continued for some time. In the seventeenth century, Charles Perrault, a French philosopher whom we know better as an anthologist of fairy tales, and the English philosopher Sir Francis Bacon wrote about this tension between Classical Antiquity and the Modern era, rehabilitating the latter and putting the idea of its misery vis-à-vis Classical Antiquity into question. However, David Hume in the eighteenth century, in his *Natural History of Religion*, still argued that the pagan religions were more tolerant than the monotheist ethos characterizing Christianity (see Hume 1956, 1985). Here again, we see a tension: What was better? What was more prominent? Classical Antiquity, that is, the pagan world, which was quite tolerant and quite inclusive, or the Modern era, Christianity, and its great achievements in science and culture?

To describe the canon as a sort of “ever-presence”, or as a collection of rules or standards is the last thing I would do; nor would I define it as a collection of texts that have to be reinterpreted each time we discover them, or each time we include them in our curricula. Instead, I would describe the canon as a dramatic debate and a crossroads where tradition meets modernity, where modern interpretation can rediscover or reinterpret some important texts, some core texts. Instead of being a matter of ascription, the canon is a discovery of a form of life and creativity. What is behind the canon is a unifying language of art and style, which permeates culture and historical epochs. In addition, the cultural canon fosters a mode of aesthetic sensitivity that bridges societies,

their traditions, and ways in which they grasp reality. Therefore, the canon is likely to serve as an interpretive framework within which we identify ourselves and the world, rather than as a ready-made mode of the assurance and confirmation of our identity.

Having said this, we have to add that this does not prevent us from understanding the canon as the discovery of universalistic systems of thought and action; it can be easily thought of as a paradigm in the arts and sciences, as well as in philology. Finally, I cannot imagine the canon without *studia humanitatis*, or without the great inventions of the Florentine humanists, which allowed people to share their knowledge of Europe, and of the Middle East, as well as of the great non-European cultures. When we think about Europe's cultural canon, instead of measuring swords when it comes to the composition of the European cultural canon, all we need to do is remind ourselves of the European canon as it was and as it has continued to grow up to our day.

For instance, my argument is made quite simple when I think about the epoch of the Renaissance. The embodiment of this European relationship and the core of European intellectual interplay lies with people like Erasmus and Thomas More: one, a Dutchman, the other, an Englishman, and what brought them together in Paris was an admiration for Lucian, a Greek writer whom they translated into Latin. And that was how their friendship started. They began sharing important insights; we know that Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* was nothing but a play on words: *moria* as folly but also a play on More, a subtle dedication to Thomas More. This friendship led to the emergence of talented people like Hans Holbein the Younger, who was discovered by Erasmus and then introduced to Thomas More, which led to the painter making his fortune and reputation in England at the Royal Court. Who cared that one of them was Dutch and the other English and that they shared admiration for a great writer? That was how it went. That was the point. And this tells us something about how humanism and universalism are absolutely indispensable prerequisites for the European canon, because the canon can be understood as a dialogue or as a very intense dialogue between tradition and modernity.

*In Praise of Folly* (lat. "Moriae encomium") by Desiderus Erasmus (1469–1536), humanist and the greatest scholar of the northern Renaissance. Considered one of hugely popular Renaissance books and catalysts of the Protestant Reformation. Filled with classical allusions, *In Praise of Folly* was written in Sir Thomas More's residence. It is a learned satire on the Roman Catholic Church – to which Erasmus himself was nevertheless faithful.

The canon originates in the discovery of what was an anticipation of a modern language. We know that Frans Hals, or his great followers such as Judith Leyster, were re-discovered and incorporated into the canon by French art critics and painters for a very simple reason: they understood that Hals and his school invented loose brushwork as well as a good part of the modern language of visual art, an aesthetic language that was to become accepted and even widespread in the nineteenth century. Hals and his school anticipated what was to become a modern aesthetic language or idiom in the nineteenth century, and it was for this reason that Claude Monet and other great French impressionists held that their masters were the great Dutch masters. And so the Dutch masters became part of the canon.

Another example that underscores how the cultural canon works is William Shakespeare, a classic story. Rumors about Shakespeare's identity persisted because no one believed an actor was able to compose or to write such fine tragedies. Many versions of these rumors supported those speculations: people imagined that Sir Francis Bacon or Christopher Marlowe might have been Shakespeare's ghostwriter. Few took Shakespeare seriously. Even in nineteenth-century Victorian England, people were still tempted to doubt whether a man not affiliated with Cambridge or Oxford would have been able to compose such masterpieces.

Who made Shakespeare a great standard-bearer for the canon? It was the Germans Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller of the *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) movement. It was not the French, who were skeptical or ambivalent about Shakespeare. Voltaire had some admiration for Shakespeare, but questioned Shakespeare's supposed inability to distinguish between comedy and tragedy. Molière, it seems, felt similarly. But somehow it was with Goethe and Schiller that Shakespeare became a cultural icon for Europe and literature in general. Therefore, within Shakespeare, a European project exists. He became the greatest writer because of this creative interplay of cultures.

We could continue providing similar facts. French art critics in the nineteenth century rediscovered Johannes Vermeer, precisely because they understood that his was an incredible artistic language. It is difficult to describe the European canon in any other way than *European*, in the deepest sense of this word. Can we imagine Rembrandt or Bartholomeus van der Helst without Caravaggio and the Dutch movement of the *Caravaggisti*? Or without *chiaroscuro*, the painting technique revealing the light *di sotto in su* (up from under) and similar techniques of artistic

delivery or devices that came from Italy? Again, these are profoundly European things. The same logic of the interplay of cultures holds for early Renaissance Italy, itself a recipient, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, of the expressive qualities of northern, especially Netherlandish, “portraits and devotional images that attracted the Florentines” (Aikema 2007, 105).

Anthony van Dyck is another example. Without Van Dyck, we could not imagine Europe – namely, people who belong at least to several cultures. Van Dyck spoke Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and English and spent much of his time in England with Charles I and became the royal household’s finest painter. And there is no question that Van Dyck laid the foundations for English portrait painting because even Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough in the eighteenth century regarded themselves as his disciples. Obviously, he belongs to several plains of creative work. The same could be said about Frederick Handel in music. Handel in Italy and England, yet Friedrich Handel in Germany – each plane of his artistic and political existence would allow us to talk about him as a great influence.

An eminent film director, Sergei Parajanov, who lived in the former Soviet Union, could be another great example of the canon as a continuing rediscovery of self in the world of multiple identities and as a shared space of cultural identity. He was born into Armenian family in Tbilisi, Georgia, and spent much time in Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Georgia, finally settling in Soviet Armenia. He spoke several languages, and all of these countries regard him as having been one of their own. Parajanov was sent to Ukraine and made a magnificent film, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, which is regarded as a classic in Ukraine, and the Ukrainians acknowledged the film as a significant part of their national rebirth movement.

That was how a person invented himself while acting in several cultures, all of which were involved in a dialogue that was intertwined, constant, and that had multiple strands. Parajanov achieved international fame and professional credit after the triumph of his movie *The Color of the Pomegranates*. The film was about the life of Sayat Nova, a great medieval poet of Armenian origin who lived in Georgia, and who wrote in Armenian, Georgian, Persian, and Azerbaijani Turkish. The greatest folk singer-songwriter that ever lived in the Caucasus, Sayat Nova would be unthinkable without the context of several languages and cultures.

The cultural canon as it stands today is impossible to squeeze into a single culture. The ability to place something exclusively in one culture means that we have merely a political invention or a political project masquerading as culture. And one more point should be made

concerning the way in which the canon could be “seeded,” that is, by placing to one side those things that are absolutely obvious, and which we take as a great continuation of European spiritual and intellectual process. We know that some things are politically planted.

If we speak of a European canon, we cannot treat it as something distant from us; nor does it make sense to define it as something that has to be celebrated and mobilized. In fact, the European interplay of epics, cultures, and languages is exactly what Europe is and has always been about.

#### MEMORY POLITICS: REMEMBERING VS. FORGETTING

In my opinion, the conservative imagination is tragic and pessimistic, while the liberal imagination reveals itself and the world around us in a more playful, optimistic, and ironic fashion. Tragedy remains the essence of the conservative imagination; the liberal imagination is best represented by laughter.

In *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera describes Gustáv Husák as the President of Forgetting who needs the forms of aesthetic and political Kitsch and mass culture as potent instruments of organized forgetting. After 1968, Husák refuses to take seriously a mass emigration of Czech and Slovakian writers, composers, film directors, scholars, and medical doctors, yet he immediately reacts to the emigration of a pop music star, Klaus. Husák writes a friendly and warm letter to the pop music singer, asking him to return to Czechoslovakia and promising him heaven on earth. Never mind that an exodus of the intelligentsia deprived the country of its intellectual and artistic potential; but the emigration of a music idiot is a tragedy, for Husák understands that they can work hand in hand to jointly and efficiently rob Czechoslovakia of its memory and history. They need each other. The President of Forgetting and the Music Idiot work for the same cause.

In winter of the year 1948, the Czech Communist Party leader Klement Gottwald and his comrade Vladimír Clementis stand ready for a solemn speech in a historic building without being aware that this was the German gymnasium where Franz Kafka studied. They would never suspect that Kafka’s father had a store on the ground floor of the building where a jackdaw was depicted on the wall. “Kavka” is Czech for jackdaw. In four years, Clementis, who kindly offers his hat to Gottwald to protect a comrade from freezing, will be hanged

for the alleged coup, and his image will be eliminated from all photographs. All that remains of Clementis is the cap on Gottwald's head. The same applies to Clementis's place in political memory manufactured by the régime: he is merely a miserable traitor whose face is unworthy to remember, and whose name must sink into oblivion. Kundera ascribes the fatal forgetting to the city of Prague. Prague appears in Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) as a city devoid of memory and self-comprehension. The real Prague is entangled in the same frame of mind. It constantly changes the names of its streets, forging the city's life as a never-ending present and obliterating every trace of the past. In doing so, the city turns into a memory-free ghost, a creature of anonymous mass society, and a non-entity. The Counter-Reformation did this by changing the names of Prague's streets and creating the illusion that real history will start anon. In the twentieth century, Prague was forced to believe that up to now its history was a fraud, and that History with a capital H now creates new names and narratives.

However, to lightly equate remembering with authentic existence, and forgetting with the obliteration of self or the denial of the world, is the last thing a serious writer would do. Too much memory can destroy human life, as Kundera convincingly shows by depicting the novel's heroine Tamina, a young and beautiful widow who is unable to build a second life in France. Tamina is unable to establish any lasting emotional and social intimacy with a small French town's milieu. She does not belong there. Mentally, Tamina continues living elsewhere. She is incapable of restoring her powers of association and ability to forget, two indispensable conditions of the will-to-life.

Tamina is separated from her intimacy and memory, since all of her letters are left in Prague. Little chance exists that her love letters and diaries remained unread by her relatives or, worse, un-scrutinized by the régime. In a desperate attempt to keep in touch with her family members and to recover her letters, Tamina engages in an empty and meaningless affair with a young Frenchman only to be able to make expensive long-distance telephone calls to Prague from his apartment. The divorce of the present and the past does not offer any way out of this predicament. Tamina is doomed to failure. Too much memory becomes the unbearable burden depriving her of the meaning of existence and forcing her to take her life.

In Kundera's novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, the heroine Teresa becomes vulnerable and fragile because of her failure to forget the traumatizing experience with her mother. It is hardly accidental

that, in addition to Kafka and Kundera, one more major Central European writer, Robert Musil, depicts a man without qualities in his novel of similar title, *The Man without Qualities* (1930–1942). The anonymity, facelessness, *Angst*, anguish, solitude, isolation, and despair of the cornered individual come out in Musil's novel as the unavoidable signs and manifestations of the destructive powers of modernity with all of its obsessive fixations on the liberation of individuals from their legacy, past, and inherited parts of identity.

The destructive powers of modernity would be unthinkable without forgetting the past, a crucial aspect of modernity's obsessive belief in the future. That dying individuals lose their past rather than the present and the future we learn from the unbearably light and ironic Kundera, but not from the deadly serious prophets of modernity. Yet the politics of remembering is not the way out of the uncertainties and painful dilemmas of modernity. It works well as a remedy from the malaise of forgetting, oblivion, and insensitivity, as long as it serves as a framework for dissenting thought and stance. The politics of remembering begins in a prescriptive mode of self-comprehension; however, it can turn into a dangerous fixation on selected series of events and historical personalities that would result in the total denial of those individuals and groups that remember in a different fashion.

The politics of remembering is sound and good only insofar as we maintain the legitimacy of two or more opposed modes of memory and narrative. The legitimacy of two opposed interpretations of the same phenomenon, including political experience, is what modernity with a human face is all about. A happy and unforced equilibrium of remembering and forgetting appears as the natural condition of our life. The politics of remembering, if forced and practiced with no alternative, it will unavoidably be at the peril of becoming an oppressive instrument of arbitrary and selective memory. Such memory work can serve as the denial of others and their right to experience and remember the world in the way they want. Competing memories and opposed narratives are characteristic of warring nationalisms, especially when they clash in multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural cities.

In fact, the politics of remembering reveals the past as a critical aspect of our experience, as something without which we could never sustain our political and moral sensibilities. Yet when it becomes the axis of political life, we can slide into the tyranny of a frozen time that divides the world into "us" and "them." In doing so, we are at the

risk of adopting the Manichaean moral logic that does not allow us to grasp social reality as consisting of flesh-and-blood human beings able to change their views, convictions, and stances. The tyranny of the past would never allow us to reconcile ourselves with the world, especially when peace with the former political foe and oppressor is at issue.

Nothing is simple and obvious here, for the dialectic of forgetting and forgiving is one of the most complex of all human experiences. To regard all Germans as crypto-Nazis and anti-Semites, or at least as covert sympathizers of National Socialism, would be barbarous, as would taking all Russians to be natural-born totalitarians and imperialists. We have to suspend the details of our martyrdom and to overcome the temptations of comparative martyrology not to contaminate present forms of life with hatred.

This effort implies a methodical forgetting, which is reminiscent of suspending or putting aside what does not help to deal with present social and political reality. Such an effort does not signify the repression of our memory or the arrival of a mental self-censorship. Contrary to widespread opinion, the politics of forgetting does not necessarily imply the destructiveness of modern life with totalitarian régimes, devaluation of life, insensitivity, and social constructivism. Sometimes, forgetting lends itself to forgiveness, liberating us from the burden of worn-out concepts and arguments. Like remembering, forgetting is at its best when it comes as an existential and moral choice. Forgetting cannot be an imposed action, which surfaces, leaving unresolved tensions, animosities, and hatred underneath. This is to say that remembering and forgetting have to encompass each other as two complementary forms of grasping life and as two intertwined ways of looking at the world around us.

According to Kundera, if human beings were able to remember everything they would become totally self-contained and self-sufficient, and, in effect, would end up with dramatically diminished powers of association. Modernity is obsessed with controlling memory and rewriting history in accordance with power distribution or disposition. I am in control of societal existence and culture; therefore, I am able to provide a legitimizing narrative. Memory is an aspect of power. What and how to remember and what and how to forget depends on who writes an account of an epoch's history and political deeds.

To memorize and keep everything for the generations to come, prolonging the existence of, and giving a second life to, those who deserve it? I remember, therefore, I am? Or to forget what is irrational

and does not qualify for the realm of collective memory? These are two opposed, if not mutually exclusive, promises of modernity. We know that all three of the greatest authors of twentieth-century dystopias, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell, prophesied the arrival of a social and political catastrophe resulting from the logic of modernity pushed to the limit. This is to say that they depicted a radical version of modernity running up against its ultimate barrier. Using literary techniques and devices, Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Orwell's *1984* seek what such twentieth-century thinkers as Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, Lewis Mumford, Isaiah Berlin, and Leszek Kołakowski sought in their social and political philosophy. In its much earlier anticipation of totalitarianism, literature overtakes theory. Literature offers a deeper presentiment of modernity's dangers.

Zamyatin, whose novel *We* (1924), markedly influenced Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Orwell's *1984* (1949), portrayed transparent glass houses in which the inhabitants of the Only State were required to live and be constantly seen. This novel, half century before Michel Foucault's "panopticon" theory appeared in *Discipline and Punish*, revealed modernity to be the incarnation of the obsession with unlimited power and unrestricted control. Zamyatin describes this obsession as the observation without a response and as a perfectly developed discourse of power. The asymmetry of power lies in the elusive authorities' ability to deprive us of our privacy and to make us act as if we were under surveillance all

the time. To cut a convoluted and long story short, Zamyatin preceded and anticipated what the French poststructuralist, historian of consciousness, and political theorist Michel Foucault was to achieve through his complex and multidimensional theory.

Doubt may arise about chastising authors, especially Zamyatin and Orwell, as having been allied with the conservative imagination. These writers were openly leftist in their political views and attacked modernity more as a basic foundational structure of economic, social, and political existence. The essential institutional manifestation and at the same time the sociological hypothesis of modernity is capitalism. Yet the

**MICHEL FOUCAULT** (1926–1984), a French philosopher, social theorist and historian of ideas; held a chair at the Collège de France with the title "History of Systems of Thought," and lectured at the University at Buffalo and the University of California, Berkeley. Best known for his critical studies of social institutions, most notably psychiatry, medicine, the human sciences and the prison system, as well as for his work on the history of human sexuality. His writings on power, knowledge, and discourse have been widely influential in academic circles. He classified his thought as a critical history of modernity rooted in Kant and particularly influenced by Nietzsche.

criticism of modernity of these authors, when we set aside their political views and biographies and then analyze the texts themselves, is notably conservative and proffers forms of the recognition and interpretation of reality which would be held by just about any conservative writer or thinker.

All three authors of great dystopias portray the death of the institution of family. Orwell reveals its degradation, while Zamyatin and Huxley its utter disappearance. But they object to the annihilation of love. The love story of Winston Smith and Julia in *1984* is a final desperate human and social attempt to stave off the depersonalizing and dehumanizing machine of totalitarian control. This effort fails, just as the love between the narrator D-503 and the dissident I-330 in Zamyatin's *We* fails. The narrator's love, sociability, and powers of association are cut from under him by the régime. *We* and *Brave New World* reveal a reality in which love and the family cease to exist. Only sex, unrestrained by the state, remains. In Orwell's novel, even sex starts to degrade because the Party is powerless to destroy the orgasm, over which it has no control. As we learn from Winston and Julia's dialogues, sex in Oceania is reduced to mere multiplication, although this does not apply to the Inner Party with whose members Julia has had secret affairs. The three dystopias describe the elimination of privacy, which means a veritable triumph of the state organs of control. This obvious threat posed by present-day modernity, that was to be flagged in studies by Jürgen Habermas and Zygmunt Bauman, was foreseen by writers of dystopias.

Modernity seeks to control our memory and language in their entirety. Winston Smith attempts to recall a cherished boyhood song, which is taken over and finished by the character O'Brien, an alleged friend and brother in arms of Winston in the holy cause of resistance to the régime, who turns out to be a high-ranking official in the Inner Party. Oceania, in which Orwell's book creates a new language, the New Speak, is supposed to become a place where human perception and understanding of space and time would be totally transformed. With this language, nobody would be able to understand Shakespeare. This means that the reality represented in the classical literary imagination would become unrecognizable. Radically changing everyone's field of reference and system of concepts will make easy to take away the dimension of the past from them. And by taking over their field of reference and system of concepts, humanity's history can be firmly taken over in the manner required by the collective solipsism professed by Big Brother and the Party.

*We* speaks to the death of the classical and the death of the past. In the Only State's education system, classical studies no longer exist, and the humanities in general disappear. Regarding the death of humanism and the prohibition of the study of history and classics in the education of the world of the future, the French writer Sébastien Mercier, in 1770, had first written about and given form to the extremes of the ideology of never-ending progress in his work of political fantasy, *L'an 2440 (The Year 2440)* (see Bury, 1987, 192–201). In Zamyatin's dystopia, the past is associated with barbarians whose primitive works, threatening rationality and progress, cannot be studied, while the worst illness in the Only State is what the ancient Greeks referred to as the soul. Therefore, in the context of the dystopias of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell, the compound phrase "technocratic totalitarianism" would be a pleonasm, since no other form of totalitarianism seemed possible to them.

These dystopias present the disappearance of other important spheres: private space, private property, which is torn out by its root, and our favorite belongings. Winston reminisces constantly about his favorite possessions, which are a part of his world and his human identity. Michael Walzer points out that it is for Winston's lower middle-class sentimentality and attachment to things, and not for his ideas, that Orwell was criticized mercilessly by Raymond Williams and other intellectuals of England's Left. Such intellectuals were unable to forgive Orwell for bestowing Churchill's first name on his novel's protagonist.

We can reject any residual doubts about Orwell's conservative sentiments, which were never incorporated into the realm of his political views and evaluations. Unlike the majority of English socialists, Orwell held patriotism to be a value and would have agreed with Simone Weil's reality of rootedness, as developed in her work, *L'Enracinement (The Need for Roots, 1949)*. Like Weil, Orwell was convinced that our rootedness in this-worldly reality of community life, locality, and attachment to the past is a crucial fact of life and an existential need. That we lose the past, rather than the future, when we die was sensed by Orwell long before Milan Kundera made this insight the thread of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting (1979)*. Curiously,

**SIMONE WEIL** (1909–1943), French social philosopher and activist during World War II. Though Jewish, *Weil* had several mystic experiences close to those of Roman Catholics. *Weil* was committed to the idea of social justice. She explored the lack of spirituality in industrial society and the terrors of totalitarianism. *Weil* emigrated to Spain, the U.S. and London. Among *Weil*'s works published posthumously are *Gravity and Grace* (1947), *The Need for Roots* (1949), *Waiting for God* (1950), *Oppression and Liberty* (1955), *Notebooks* (1951–56).

Kundera strongly disliked Orwell's *1984*, describing it as a bad novel that, according to Kundera, misrepresented human existence, dangerously reducing it to politics (see: Kundera, 1995, 225).

What kind of imagination constructs utopias and dystopias? To come up with an overarching answer is difficult. This is a form of imagination where plots dictated liberal, conservative, and socialist thought and sensibility. Yet, utopias and dystopias would never have been born without the conservative trajectory of this form of imagination, and without the conservative sensibility which lurks in the modern moral imagination. Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* all depict a memory-free world deprived of public historical archives and the humanities in general, just like Mercier's *The Year 2440* presents the world of the future where no room for history exists. The study and teaching of history is abandoned in twenty-fifth-century France, since to study a series of human follies and irrational actions is a disgrace. How on earth can a rational human being study the past, deeply permeated by superstition and backwardness?

In the philosophical implications of Kundera's literature, history appears as a meaningful and silent moral alternative to the brutality of geopolitics and power politics carried out by the powerful. Memory becomes a tool of the small and weak, while forgetting best serves the interests of the big and mighty. In this way, memory manifests itself as an alternative moral imagination in opposition to the logic of power. Memory of the powerful is nothing more than a celebration of successful practice, in the sense of Niccolò Machiavelli's concept of *verità effettuale*. Memory is a practice, instead of an elusive human ability or potential.

Yet this thread of Kundera's thought does not exhaust his understanding of how memory works in the modern world. Kundera implies that memory uncovers its essence as a conscious effort to continue or prolong the existence of what *deserves to exist*. Therefore, the cultural canon is a mode of the existence of organized memory. Within the framework of organized memory, Shakespeare, Van Dyck, Hals, Vermeer, or Rembrandt, depicting, portraying, or else individualizing their contemporaries, become part of the process of a conscious continuation of someone else's existence.

## 12.

## Islam And European Identity

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While the specific identity of any given country in Europe has its own historic characteristics, it cannot be disassociated from European identity, which itself cannot be disassociated from its age-old connection to Islam.

History teaches us that Christianity existed long before Europe; for more than seven centuries, it continuously interacted with the Muslim world. Sometimes peaceful, sometimes violent, this interaction gave

rise to a continuum of exchanges, both material and intellectual, both commercial and cultural, which profoundly molded Christian and Muslim psyches. The Andalusian period, so well described by Maria Rosa Menocal in her book, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, remains without a doubt the best illustration of the fecundity of this multi-dimensional and multi-faceted interaction.

European identity was forged over the course of this process, first at the level of multi-ethnic empires, then, progressively,

**CRUSADES**, Christian military expeditions on Islamic lands, from the late eleventh until the sixteenth century, in order to recapture the Holy Land and other formerly Christian areas (Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Anatolia) as well as conquer pagan territories. Initially, the Crusades were successful, but already by the fourteenth century a retreat from Muslim lands began. Controversial crusades were excused by the Church as means of expiation for sins and redemption. Today, they are often regarded and utilized as examples of ideological explanation for fundamentalists' violence.

at the level of modern nations. When this period in history is evoked in the West, we often cite specific battles – from Poitiers to Constantinople – or, in the larger context, wars – such as the Crusades or the Reconquista. We too often omit the fact that, in Andalusia as well as in the Holy Land, there were long intervals between battles during which people talked, shared ideas, fell in love, married.... all within a context that was essentially favorable to Islam – not only militarily, but also in terms of civilization. In fact, European medieval identity and, later, European national identities were nourished by the philosophical, scientific and artistic advances of Islam.

Most notably, during the twelfth century, the cities of Spain recaptured from the Muslims by the Catholics undertook the formidable task of translating masterpieces written in Arabic into Latin. These works served as the centerpieces of some of the transcendental debates that shook the Sorbonne and Oxford in following centuries.

At the end of the Middle Ages, the balance of power between an inward-looking Islam and an emerging, outward-looking Europe began to turn in favor of the latter. Centers of intellectual and cultural ferment moved to European towns where, having thrown off their feudal bonds, freedom flourished. Paradoxically, these towns were all struck by an odd historic amnesia, and they forgot the Islamic period of their history, which became entirely concealed.

The fact that few European students today can speak of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), al-Khwarizmi or Ibn-al-Haytham is no matter

**RECONQUISTA**, Spanish for “reconquest,” a series of Christian campaigns in medieval Spain and Portugal to retake control over Muslim (Moorish) territories of the Iberian Peninsula. The *Reconquista* began as early as 718 (Battle of Covadonga) and peaked in the eleventh century, so that by the thirteenth century most of the peninsula was under Christian rule. A Moorish enclave existed in Granada, southern Spain until 1492.

**AL-FARABI**, Latin Alfarabius or Avennasar (c. 878–950), Muslim philosopher and scientist, one of the greatest scholars of medieval Islam and preeminent authority after Aristotle. *Al-Farabi* took advantage of the Greek heritage, especially Aristotelian teachings for Islamic philosophy. He considered revelation as inferior to the human mind. *Al-Farabi's* writings focus on the order of the state. In his view, philosophers, being the greatest of men, should rule over societies just as God rules over the universe.

**IBN SINA**, Latin Avicenna (980–1037), Muslim physician, the greatest Islamic philosopher and scientist, follower of Aristotelian philosophy, medic, and influential polymath of the Islamic Golden Age. His major works are an encyclopedia *Book of the Cure* and *The Canon of Medicine*. Among the famous predecessors of *Avicenna* are Ibn al-Muqaffa (Aristotelian logic), Al-Kindi (the first Islamic Peripatetic), and Turkish polymath al-Fārābī (Aristotle’s metaphysics).

**IBN RUSHD**, Latin Averroes (1126–1198), great religious philosopher, reconciled ancient Greek thought (Aristotle’s system) with Islamic traditions. His summaries and commentaries on Aristotle’s works (1169–95) and on Plato’s *The Republic* had considerable influence in both the Islamic and Western world for centuries. In the twelfth century, Aristotle’s work was recovered in the Latin West through Arabic translations by *Averroes*. Among his independent works are: *Decisive Treatise on the Agreement Between Religious Law and Philosophy*, *Examination of the Methods of Proof Concerning the Doctrines of Religion*, and *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, all devoted to the philosophical study of religion.

**AL-KHUWARIZMI** (c. 780–850), Islamic mathematician, geographer, cartographer, astronomer, contributed to European mathematics by introduction of Hindu-Arabic numerals and concepts of algebra. His major work, *The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing* was translated into Latin in the twelfth century (introducing the notions “algorithm” and “algebra”). The second work by *al-Khwarizmi* is preserved only in Latin translation, *Algoritmi de numero Indorum*.

**IBN-AL-HAYTHAM**, Latin Alhazen (c. 965–1040), mathematician and astronomer, contributed to optics and scientific experiments. Among his most significant works are: *Optics*, *Solution of the Difficulties of Euclid’s Elements*, and *On the Configuration of the World*. *Alhazen’s* treatises had a great influence on European scholars like Roger Bacon and astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630).

of chance. This “oversight” can be explained by the fact that the emerging European nations – the Spanish, the French, the Italians, and the English – denied the cultural exchange to which they owed their birth, instead inventing a fictional history asserting the myth of uninterrupted historic continuity between Ancient Greece and Modern Europe.

This myth gains potency by a continual focus on the conflicts in Islamic-Western relations, by concentrating on the battles, whether won or lost, thus turning Islam into a hereditary enemy instead of the indispensable partner it has so long been. Although it has been disproved by many studies demonstrating the historic meshing of European and Muslim identities in a process of mutual influence, the denial of a Muslim heritage persists in the European subconscious even today.

Since the tragedy of 9/11, we have witnessed a new interest among historians in highlighting this shared identity, which links Islam and Europe at a much deeper level than reflected by the simplistic “clash of civilizations” theory concocted by Samuel Huntington. In addition to Menocal’s *The Ornament of the World*, I would like to mention three other books: Michael Hamilton Morgan’s *Lost History: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Scientists Thinkers and Artists*; David Levering Lewis’ *God’s Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570–1215*; and George Saliba’s *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. These four books brilliantly challenge the glaring ignorance of the “Clash of Civilizations” theory advanced by the neo-conservatives

to justify their political and military agenda since the end of the Cold War. But Huntington is not the only culprit. The determination to deny Muslim contributions to European identity is also evident in books such as Sylvain Gouguenheim's *From Aristotle to Mont-Saint-Michel: Greek Roots of European Christianity*.

Debates such as this one are vastly important to reveal people's biases that otherwise remain obscure. The most glaring bias today is the one that considers Muslim communities in the West as being somehow alien to the West, or a phenomenon exclusively of the twentieth century. Since the collapse of the Communist bloc, the West has been determined to find a new target for its antagonism. Since 9/11, it has found this target in Islam – Islam, so easily blackened by the actions of extremists coupled with the shadow that has for so long existed in the collective Western unconscious.

Are we moving towards an inevitable global confrontation? The answer is in our hands. It is, however, a matter of urgency as the tendency to ignore Islam, even to “cast it out” of the West, is hardening, despite the fact that Islam is an integral part of the West. In Europe alone, there are 25 million Muslim citizens. They are at home, yet uncomfortably so because they are viewed as being separate from the national communities of which they are a part.

To be sure, the gap between Muslims and the non-Muslim majority in Europe can be attributed to many political, economic and social causes. However, this gap is very difficult to resolve because it is experienced by groups with separate, selective and antagonistic memories. For some, Islam has always been the target of aggression by Europe; for others, Europe has always been the target of aggression by Islam. In both chains of memory, there is a missing link: those seven centuries during which the destinies of Europe and Islam were, for better or for worse, inseparable. To acknowledge this missing link would not only correct a major historical omission, but would also build valuable pathways between the two groups and forge a shared sense of European identity.

## 13.

## The Historical And Cultural Message of Islam And Europe

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Samuel Huntington's geopolitical vision of the clash of civilizations, that is, of the European and American with the Islamic civilization, belongs, in fact, to one of the viewpoints on the relations between the West and Islam. Of course, as usual, two extreme camps opposing each other exist. One claims that relations and mutual influences cannot and do not exist, and that they have never existed. The other tries to prove the opposite by writing and speaking of the fusion between Europe and Islam. Nowadays, we witness the domination of the first camp. It draws a thick line between the two civilizations and assumes that their ideas, historical past, values and hierarchy of values have absolutely nothing in common. Arnold Toynbee, the excellent English historian and philosopher of history, wrote that in the past when Europeans opposed Muslims militarily, Europe avoided confrontation with Islamic civilization by seeking different trade routes and territories for colonization. Perhaps the main reason why Islam was distanced from Europe was that it did not participate in the Age of Exploration and Discovery. Indeed, the discovery of America and of a sea route to India marks the beginning of European domination. This standpoint is supported by another brilliant British scholar and orientalist, Bernard Lewis, specializing in the relations between Islam and Europe. The turning point in the struggle between the civilizations came in the eighteenth century, when the balance of power between

the Islamic and European civilizations was lost. This process seems to have been launched by the peace treaty of Karlowitz, according to which the Ottoman Empire, for the first time in history, ceded conquered land to Austria and Poland. Nevertheless, one can think of other events marking the beginning of the end. In the military or political sense, it could have been the Turkish defeat at Candia on Crete in 1572, or at Vienna in 1683. Of course, these are only guesses, which help identify, more or less precisely, the turning points in military struggle between the two civilizations. The significant and visible domination of the West, that is of Europe, or to be more precise, the Latin civilization, arose in the eighteenth century. Russia, that is, the Orthodox or Byzantine civilization (as some prefer), overpowered the Ottomans, representing the Islamic world, as well.

But one must not forget that Islamic civilization, which was not a monolithic body, had different phases, forms and stages. Although Europe has common Christian roots, scholars speak of at least three forms of civilization: Latin, Protestant (Nordic) and Byzantine (Orthodox, Russian). Similarly, in Islam, one can distinguish important forms of civilization as well: Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Moreover, from the diachronic point of view, they existed in the following eras: Early Islamic (rule of Righteous Caliphs and the Umayyad dynasty), Middle Islamic (rule of the Abbasid and Ottoman dynasty) and contemporary (since the end of World War I). The contemporary period could be divided into two sub-periods: the first extending from the end of World War I to the 1990s; the second encompassing the period since the war in Bosnia and Afghanistan till now. The Muslim rule in Spain and the presence of Islam in India, Indonesia and the Malaya Archipelago should be treated as yet other civilizational entities, the first being purely historical, the rest both historical and modern.

Still, another civilizational entity can be distinguished in the Ottoman Empire from the eighteenth century when Europe started wielding more authority there. The turning point came in the Tanzimat period, when Sultan Mahmud II introduced a series of reforms and

**OTTOMAN EMPIRE**, empire created by the Turkish tribes in Anatolia. One of the most powerful states in the world during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it spanned more than 600 years and came to an end only in 1922, when it was replaced by the Turkish Republic and various successor states in south-eastern Europe and the Middle East. At its height, the empire included most of southeastern Europe up to the gates of Vienna, North Africa and most of the Arabian Peninsula. The term Ottoman is a dynastic appellation derived from "Osman," Arabic "Uthman," the nomadic Turkmen chief who founded both the dynasty and the empire.

partly Europeanized the state and customs, especially of Ottoman elites. The reforms, which had an impact on the entire Muslim civilization, had similar consequences to the reforms undertaken in Russia at the turn of the seventeenth century by Tsar Peter I. On the one hand, the Ottoman Empire was renouncing its unique identity based on social, economic, administrative and political identity. On the other hand, the reforms were intended to strengthen the state in its struggle with Europe.

From a geographical point of view, the areas of confrontation between Islamic and European civilization are situated on the western, southern and eastern extremities of Europe. On the west, Muslim culture spread on the Iberian Peninsula. First was the culture of the Caliphate of Córdoba ruled by the Umayyad dynasty, after which came the culture of the Granada emirate. The Caliphate was founded by Abd-ar-Rahman III, who started his reign in 921 at the age of 23. He united the Muslim domains on the Iberian Peninsula and proclaimed himself Caliph on 16 January 926. The Caliphate thrived and its apogee lasted through the rule of Abd-ar-Rahman's successors, Al-Hakam II and Al-Hajib Al-Mansur, who ruled from 977 to 1002. The tenth century was the peak of Muslim culture in Spain. It was also the century when one of the first Islamic philosophers, Ibn Massara, lived. He joined European and Greek philosophy with Eastern and Muslim traditions. He founded the first philosophical school in Muslim Spain. Ibn Massara died in 931. Our knowledge about his life comes from many sources, but primarily from the works of Ibn Hazm, another great writer and thinker. Ibn Massara tried to link the ideas of Empedocles with the Muslim, or rather the Eastern, tradition. He was almost certainly influenced by Neopythagoreanism and Neoplatonism in its late form developed by Proclus or Iamblichus. He associated the latter with the philosophy of Empedocles. Following Neoplatonism, Ibn Massara taught that beings are *emanated*. He assumed that there were six beings, two of whom, the knowledge and power of God, were considered to have appeared during God's emanation. He also posited that the journey of the soul leading to purification begins after death. Ibn Massara had many followers and is believed to have been the founder of the Spanish branch of Sufism, mystical philosophy in Islamic tradition.

Ibn Massara's philosophy evolved into a movement developed by his disciples, one of whom was a Spanish mystic, Ibn Arabi, who is considered to have been the greatest philosopher of mysticism in the

Islamic world. Ibn Arabi lived in the years 1164-1249, more than 200 years after Ibn Massara. His teachings are a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Muslim doctrines, as well as of Buddhism and the tradition of Ancient East, which is visible, for instance, in the remains of the cult of Mother Goddess represented by Sophia, god's wisdom, who walks the Earth as a beautiful woman, whom Ibn Arabi is said to have seen once in Mecca. Ibn Arabi taught the unity of existence, which could stem from the influential Hindu concept of Atman-Brahman. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Ibn Arabi had an understanding of the existence of God and the world similar to Hinduism that was.

Apart from philosophy, poetry developed in Muslim Spain as well. Among many poets, special attention should be paid to the already mentioned Ibn Hazm, who wrote a prose poem, "The dove's necklace," which could be considered a precursor to the canon. It speaks of courtly love, which was praised by troubadours imitating the poetry of Muslim Spain. Let us not forget another Muslim philosopher from Spain, Abu l-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd, in Medieval Europe known as Averroes. He was a doctor and a thinker, who developed and reinvented the philosophy of Aristotle. Averroes tried to reconcile philosophical discourse with a religious way of thinking. His philosophical method spread in Europe through the translations made at the court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. The Latin versions of his works became the foundation of Latin Averroism, a philosophical school existing in thirteenth-century Italy. Latin Averroism, in turn, became a methodological foundation of Thomism, the doctrine created by Saint Thomas Aquinas. Thus, Greek and Muslim thought became the methodological cornerstone of Catholic Church doctrine.

Sicily was yet another area of both political and military expansion of Islam in Europe and of cultural synthesis. The Muslim conquest of the island was initiated in 827 by the North African dynasty, the Aghlabids, and completed in 967 by Egyptian rulers from the Fatimid dynasty. Next, from 1061–1085, the Normans under the lead of Roger I reconquered Sicily.

THOMISM, the theology and philosophy of Thomas Aquinas (1224/25–1274) and its various interpretations, usages, and invocations by individuals, religious orders, and schools. Thomas Aquinas was a monk of the Dominican Order and studied at the University of Paris. The interpretations of his work changed, and so did the ideology of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church over the centuries has regularly and consistently reaffirmed the central importance of Thomas Aquinas' work for understanding its teachings concerning the Christian revelation, and his close textual commentaries on Aristotle, represent a cultural resource that is now receiving increased recognition.

His successor, the tolerant and enlightened Roger II, contributed to the development of a unique culture that synthesized European and Islamic culture with elements of Byzantine culture. This original cultural unity was protected by the German emperor and the ruler of Sicily, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. The emperor's name may be associated with the great Muslim philosopher, Ibn Sab'in, who wrote *Yemenite Answers to Sicilian Questions*. This work was commissioned by Frederick II. It gives answers to basic philosophical questions raised by the emperor. The book is also a valuable period piece and a great example of ideological and philosophical discourse on the borders of Europe and Islam. The influence and synthesis of the two civilizations can be found in architecture, decorative ornaments and literature, for example, in *Kitab Rujar (The Book of Roger)* commissioned by Roger II and written by Al-Idris, the great Arab traveler, geographer and cartographer. The book offers another example of the ideological, cultural and philosophical discourse of Islamic and European tradition, expressed by intellectual elites of the time. On a side note, let me just mention that Roger II of Sicily was a protagonist of one of the best modern operas, written by Karol Szymanowski. In the early Middle Ages, both Spain and Sicily, where translations of Greek philosophers, from Arab into Latin, reentered European culture, were a place of cultural exchange and theological debates.

Another exchange and synthesis between the civilizations took place in the Balkans, where the Muslim culture of Bosnia was born. The Ottoman culture, founded partly by the Arab and Byzantine traditions, mixed with Slavic and Latin culture, and with Manichaeism, which is the real name for the Bosnian church tradition. The church originated from Gnostic Paulicianism, Catharism and Bogomilism. A syncretic architecture appeared, most famously represented by the bridge in Mostar, destroyed during the war in the 1990s. Old Bosnia was praised by Ivo Andrić, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, who described its customs, tradition and history, and by Meša Selimović, author of the stunning novel *Death and the Dervish*.

The southeastern borderlands of Europe, the Crimean Peninsula and the north coast of the Black Sea, were still another area where Islamic culture and civilization influenced Europe. I would even suggest that this area is the least known, since there has been no great scholar of the Black Sea civilization comparable to Fernand Braudel. Its northern coast, including the Crimea, became a crossroads

for different cultures, civilizations, languages and religions. The Crimean peninsula is mentioned in *The Iliad* under the name of Tauri. The Greek influence dates back to Homer and the Greek colonization. The Argonauts' quest for the Golden Fleece in Colchis was, in fact, a journey of Greeks to the land of today's Georgia. For almost 900 years, in the eastern and southern part of Crimea, there existed the Kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, whose culture, religion and language were Greek. The later rule of Romans in the southern part of Crimea left its mark as well. Next, the peninsula was subsequently under the influence of Byzantium, Rus' and the Khazars, who formed a strong Khanate in the North Caucasus and the Black Sea region in the eighth and ninth centuries. It had well-developed literature and material culture. Judaism, brought by Jewish merchants and accepted by the Khanate ruler, was its predominant religion. The army of Rus' prince Sviatoslav definitively defeated the powerful Khanate in the tenth century.

But this is not the end of cultural influences in the region, since the Ostrogoths, representing Germanic civilization, settled and formed states in Crimea from the time of the Migration period. The Ottomans conquered the last state, the independent Principality of Theodoro, in the late fifteenth century. Crimea was also settled by Turkish tribes, Pechenegs, Huns and later Kipchaks, called *Polovtsy* by Old Slavic chroniclers. Pechenegs were present on the north coast of Black Sea as well. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols invaded their lands. As a consequence, Crimea and the Black Sea region were more and more influenced by Islam. In the fifteenth century, the Golden Horde, the Tatar state that appeared on the ruins of Genghis Khan's empire, gave birth to the independent Crimea Khanate. Its culture was composed of the previous elements and was an original synthesis of unique cultural value, parallel to the Bosnian culture from that time.

I would now like to mention the completely forgotten civilization of Volga Bulgarians, who were Muslims existing from the tenth to thirteenth centuries, until the Mongolian invasion. Their state was the

ILIAD, THE epic poem on the Trojan War, traditionally attributed to the ancient Greek poet Homer. The *Iliad* is not merely a distillation of the whole protracted war against Troy but simultaneously an exploration of the heroic ideal in all its self-contradictoriness. It speaks of Ancient Greek ethics, presented in the actions of Gods and the balance provided by *hybris*, pride, which is often the main source of action. The poem is, in truth, the story of the wrath of Achilles, the greatest warrior on the Greek side, that is announced in its very first words. The poetry is based on typical and frequently recurring elements and motifs, but it is also subtly varied by highly individualized episodes and set pieces.

first victim of the invasion. Since the tenth century, the central Volga Region witnessed the rise of Islamic culture, which had contacts with the Islamic center, the Abbasid Caliphate with its capital in Bagdad, and original Islamic belles-lettres, philosophy, law, architecture and art. The Muslim state on the southern boundaries of Europe influenced not only Kievan Rus', but also other Eastern states, some of them indirectly, such as Poland. This Volga Muslim civilization was contemporary to the Muslim civilization in Spain during its heyday.

The southern edge of Europe, from the west to the east, was surrounded by Islamic culture and civilization forming a crescent. But there was still one more Muslim culture of a small Islamic community from Central-Eastern Europe that was shining like a star in the middle of the crescent. I refer to the culture of Polish and Lithuanian Tatars. They lived within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which later became the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The federation was marked by high levels of ethnic and religious diversity and had a culture, unique in Europe, containing elements of eastern cultures. The Muslim influence is visible in material culture from the time of the rule of King Stephen Báthory in the late sixteenth century. Stephen Báthory was a Hungarian prince of Transylvania and even in the choice of gowns we may notice that he was assimilating Ottoman traditions, which he later implemented in Poland and Lithuania. The so-called traditional dress of the Polish gentry, *szlachta*, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is almost an exact copy of Turkish gowns. The only exception is the headwear. The difference is visible on portraits from that time. Even in military tactics and choice of weapons, the *szlachta* accepted Ottoman culture. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Poland was also under the influence of Persia, which is visible especially in material culture.

In the 600 years of their existence in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Tatars created a priceless culture, endemic, as biologists would say, only to the Tatars living in the Duchy. It was a fusion of the Eastern (Muslim) and Western culture. I would like to say a few words about this culture. Although scholars conduct more and more research dedicated to Tatars, the vast majority of the public has no knowledge of it. This conference is therefore a chance to present the Tatars' cultural tradition to a larger audience. Tatars were living far from Islamic cultural centers and from the vivid Turkish culture to which they ethnically belonged. They created substitutes for Islamic spirituality and a Muslim way of living. Over hundreds of years, they became separate entities of different spiritual and material

cultures. Having lost fluency in the Tatar language in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Polish Tatars founded their spiritual culture on the unique literature in which Islamic tradition was described in the Polish dialect of the *kresy*, or in Belarusian and written down in manuscripts in the Arabic alphabet.

The Golden Horde, whom I have already mentioned, created its literature in Chagatai language. This was a Turkish dialect spoken in Central Asia, which was ruled by the second son of Genghis Khan, Chagatai. High Turkish culture especially thrived in two cities, Samarkand and Bukhara, which are ancient civilization centers. The culture radiated to the Volga region, Crimea and partly to Anatolia. It also reached the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania through Tatar elites, who used its literary patterns.

Living conditions in Poland and Lithuania forced Tatars to develop defense mechanisms, which guaranteed continued self-awareness. At the same time, they showed a great capacity for assimilation and adaptation, including assimilation of language. Tatars lost the ability to speak their mother tongue, the Kipchak language from the Turkish language group, as early as the sixteenth century in favor of the Polish or Ruthenian language. The main element constituting self-awareness was, therefore, literature, which replaced oral folkloric traditions. The manuscripts concerned mainly Islam, and some of them were created in absolute isolation from Muslim cultural centers. The literary tradition was based on a Muslim manuscript created in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. When Tatar literature was forming, it absorbed elements of the Golden Horde culture, and therefore elements of the older tradition of Khwarezm, ancient Sogdiana and a mosaic of Silk Road cultures. Some of the literary themes created by the Golden Horde were common to all Muslim cultures. These themes were then adapted to Old Polish reality, and so existed in the literature of Polish Muslims. The literature manifested itself in different forms that existed until the twentieth century. These were, for instance, the so-called *Tasfirs*, which

**KRESY**, Polish term meaning "borderlands," refers to a land adjacent to what Poles consider the historical eastern frontier of their country, today's western territories of Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. The territory was part of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795) and then during the interwar period belonged to Poland (1919–1939). Formerly a multiethnic entity, now divided into several nation-states, *kresy* are a symbol of Polish nationalistic longings and the biggest sign of Poland's colonizing efforts from sixteenth to eighteenth century. Even today, the *kresy* may create distrust between the mentioned nations.

are commentaries to the Qur'an. In the Tatar tradition, they were written in manuscripts covered with leather. They contained texts from the Qur'an written with saffron ink, with accompanying commentaries and translations written in italics in Polish, or more often in the Belarussian language. Tajwids were another genre present in Tatar literature. They are rules that govern how the Qur'an should be read. They contain information about proper intonation, pauses, ways of recitation, articulation of Arabic phonemes, as well as phonetic and musical values of the Qur'an's form. The most important genre of Tatars' culture were Kitabs, from the Arabic *kitab*, or *book*. Kitabs contained, therefore, many different moral parables, stories from the life of Muhammad and other prophets, religious lore and legends, poems, magical recipes, deeds of Tatar rulers, commentaries to dogmas and religious rules, prayers, as well as local parables, legends and stories. Another important genre were *hamā'ilī*. The word itself means "what one has with him." These are prayer books containing the most common prayers divided according to the five periods of a day, supplication prayers called *dua*, and explanations of the most common religious rituals. *Hamā'ilī* contained hints about the ceremonies of marriage and funerals, as well as about the ritual of naming a child.

Even today this literature contains uncharted plots and themes, which were often paraphrases of the Sufi tradition – Islamic mysticism – in its Middle-Asian and Anatolian variants of such Sufi brotherhoods as *jesewije*, *nakszbandi*, *bektaszi*, *hurufije*. The Sufi tradition functioned in Crimea as well as in Ottoman Turkey, in the Balkans, in the Volga Region and among the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars.

There is also, I should add, a Tatar minority in Finland. Tatar colonization began to arise there only in the beginning of the twentieth century, especially after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The majority of the Tatars living in Finland come from the Volga region. They made some contribution to defending their new homeland during the war between Finland and the Soviet Union. The Finnish Tatars created original Muslim literature, as well as a Muslim press and educational system.

From the diachronic point of view, I should discuss European-Muslim relations since the eighth century, when Muslim armies struck Europe for the first time. The attack came from the West, through the Strait of Gibraltar and Spain, as well as from the East, at Constantinople. In both cases the offensive was suppressed. At Poitiers, Provence and Constantinople, Islam met defeat. Afterwards, the

offensive of Christian Europe began. And this is the name we should give to the Crusades, beginning from the very first in 1099, when Jerusalem was conquered. Next, there was the Muslim counter-offensive in the thirteenth century led by Salahhedin, known in Europe as Salladin. It resulted in the conquest of Jerusalem and the final collapse of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which had been the medieval continuation of Europe in the Middle East. The crusades and the existence of the Latin state surrounded by Islam stimulated civilizational progress in Europe and resulted in many changes. The Muslim offensive, started by Salahhedin, was continued by the Ottomans from the fourteenth century, first in Anatolia and then in the Balkans. It was ultimately stopped with the Treaty of Karlowitz. Since then, the initiative to dominate has belonged to Europe. Russia had its "reconquista" as well when it was fighting with the Muslim Golden Horde, and later, after the inland disintegration of the Golden Horde, with its successors – the Crimean Khanate, the Khanate of Kazan, the Khanates of Astrakhan and of Siberia. The military struggle of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, and later the Russian Empire, with Muslim civilization, in this case represented by the Tatars, resulted in Russia's capture of the Volga Region, the Siberia region and the Caspian Steppes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the eighteenth-century, the Russian Empire, as well as the Polish Commonwealth, both went on the warpath with Ottoman Turkey. This military struggle ended in the twentieth century during World War I. But lets not forget about Russo-Persian Wars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fought over Azerbaijan and Dagestan.

Russian culture, or Russian civilization, as partisans of Eurasianism like George Vernadsky would refer to it, also adopted many elements from Muslim civilization. Eurasianism had its roots in the beginning of the twentieth century in the minds of exiled Russian thinkers, historians and researchers. It presented Russia as a separate civilizational entity situated between East and West, an entity with both Eastern and Western elements, but at the same time displaying completely separate qualities – which gives this entity the right to be perceived as independent. However, elements of music, decorative art, material culture, or vocabulary and even political and administrative tradition were all taken from the Turanian civilization, the Golden and Great Hordes.

Today's Russia, with Western and Central Europe, has entered the next, modern stage in relations with the Islamic world. This stage began in the twentieth century, with the increasing role of fossil fuels

(such as oil and natural gas) in political and economic relations. The fall of the colonial system as well as the emergence of neocolonialism left their mark on these relations. The creation of the global Internet network, a virtual reality that sometimes influences the course of events or conflicts, also made it possible to mutualize relations between Europe and Islam. Several political turning points can be identified as the turning points marking the modern era of relations: the war in Afghanistan (1979–1988), the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and the first Gulf War in 1991. These dates indicate a breakthrough in mutual relations on both sides.

The 1970s were also a time of massive influx of seasonal workers into Western Europe, including immigrants from Muslim countries, such as Algeria, Morocco and Turkey. This influx was directed not only towards countries with a colonial heritage, such as the United Kingdom, France or The Netherlands, but also towards countries with no colonial past, such as Norway, Sweden or Germany, who lost their colonies in the aftermath of World War I. These colonies were insignificant in comparison with the British or French empires. Immigrant workers were at first greeted with open arms, as cheap manpower in a period of intensive economic growth. Today, they constitute an unwanted and unused segment of society, a segment we do not know what to do about. Problems concerning the cultural assimilation of immigrants on the one hand and reigning political correctness on the other have left many European governments in a dead-end situation. To this situation we should add modern terrorism for which the Muslim community, or rather its most radical members, is largely responsible.

The examples above illustrate problems faced largely by Europe; Russia has different difficulties, such as the political separatism of Muslim nations living within the Russian Federation. The conflict in Chechnya is the best and most spectacular example. But apart from Chechnya, there are other regions largely inhabited by Muslims: Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Dagestan and Muslims living in Russia proper. Russians themselves suffer from a decreasing population growth, which in turn increases the ratio of non-Russian citizens in the society and decreases the population of ethnic Russians in the country. In a longer perspective, this could lead to Muslim minorities naturally taking control of the state apparatus. This is of course just a prognosis, but a prognosis based on current geopolitical trends. It would be convenient to depict relations between Europe and the Muslim world

in the past and today, find similarities and differences between them. Are Edward Said's theses about cultural imperialism and colonialism still valid in present times?

If one would like to present mutual relations in a diachronic perspective, one could point out, in the earliest period of Prophet Muhammad and Caliph Abu Bakr and Umar, that the Byzantine Empire and Persia, who ignored the danger of a potential confrontation, had the advantage in the balance of power at that time. What followed was a period of Muslim advantage and conquest, accompanied by a triumphant feeling of superiority over Europe. Such an attitude lasted more or less until the First Crusade. The next period was one of equilibrium when both civilizations, despite temporary successes, failed to gain a significant advantage over the other. This period – lasting from the Middle Ages up until the end of the seventeenth century – was also the time of highest mutual respect stemming from the balance of power. From the onset of the eighteenth century until today we are facing the growing advantage of Europe, which has been increasing along with the development of European technical civilization from the nineteenth century to today's state-of-the-art technologies. This advantage has bred disrespect and contempt towards the adversary. The bigger the technological gap, the stronger such feelings. This contempt appeared fully during Napoleon's intervention in Egypt in 1798. From then on, Europe essentially ceased to perceive the Muslim world as an adversary, let alone a potential partner.

Public attitudes changed as well. Dislike, fear and a natural respect towards an adversary, but also a partner, were transformed into negative tolerance and partial acceptance. Currently, we witness distrust on both sides, as well as something I am inclined to call cultural or religious racism, manifested by radical, extremist and, I hope, small social groups on both sides of the civilizational barricade. Political relations are becoming increasingly confrontational. Most likely the situation will change completely after discovering new energy sources, when the fight for oil and natural gas resources will have become history. The aim of ensuring constant supplies of these energy sources by the European Union and the United States has caused a political and military pacification of Muslim countries in combination with traditional dislike, hostility or negative tolerance, the phenomenon that sociologists and politologists call "Islamophobia." It is not, however, a new occurrence. Even in the thirteenth century, Dante's *Divine Comedy* placed Prophet

**DANTE ALIGHIERI** (1265–1321), Italian poet, prose writer, literary theorist, moral philosopher, and political thinker. He is best known for the monumental epic poem *The Divine Comedy*. He created a new style of erotic poetry called *Dolce Stil Nuovo* (*Sweet New Style*), and written several books highly influential on future European culture, *The Banquet*, *Monarchia*, *On the Eloquence of Vernacular*, and *The New Life*. He was among the first European writers after the fall of Rome to write in his mother language.

**DIVINE COMEDY** (c. 1308–21), Italian *La Divina Commedia*, original name *Commedia*, long narrative allegorical and political poem written by Dante. It is usually held to be one of the world's great works of literature. Divided into three major sections – *Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise* – the narrative traces the journey of Dante from darkness and error to the revelation of the divine light, culminating in the Beatific Vision of God. Dante is guided by the Roman poet Virgil, who represents the epitome of human knowledge, and Beatrice, embodying the knowledge of divine mysteries bestowed by Grace.

Muhammad in the lowest circle of hell. The prophet was also an object of mockery for Voltaire in the eighteenth century. Deep dislike and contempt for Islam, the Qur'an, and its foundation, is visible in the works of Arthur Schopenhauer and many other European thinkers and writers. Apart from occasional contacts based on partnership in the Middle Ages, Islam has never been an ideology revered (and respected) in Europe. Without a doubt such a situation was a consequence of centuries of wars, but we cannot also disregard dislike stemming from purely religious motivations.

In a predominantly secularized society, however, such dislike manifests itself as a lack of cultural acceptance. Its origins date back to the early Middle Ages when Muslims, “the Sons of Belial,” tried to conquer Europe. Muslims themselves are also responsible for contemporary, and often painful, relations between both civilizations. The Muslim presence in contemporary Western Europe often goes hand in hand with separation and segregation resulting from tribal and post-tribal Muslim behavior.

Such course of action is treated as a consequence of belonging to Muslim culture, religion and civilization. In other words, newcomers to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s were not representatives of the elite, but members of lowest strata of society. This influences the quality of relations on a local level. The invasion of Muslim communities in Europe, combined with Europe's political and military invasion in the Muslim East has created, therefore, a deadlock.

Let us ask ourselves whether a message of the inter-relationship between Muslim and European cultures can be established. Is it possible to point out common spheres of tradition and a message of historical experience? Will the paths of the two civilizations forever stay separated and not ever converge? It is difficult to give an unambiguous answer. Is it possible for the two civilizations to coexist as partners in the near and far future?

A change in relations between European societies and European Muslim inhabitants would constitute a great opportunity, just as would a change in attitudes of Muslims towards their new European homelands.

The example of Polish Tatars illustrates a realistic possibility of a Muslim civil society. The ability to achieve high social status and full civil rights created Tatar citizenship in Poland. This is a very important conclusion in relation to today's Muslim community of the European Union, especially for the former EU of 15.

A common historical message is encompassed in the existence of indigenous European Muslim communities, such as Bosniaks, Polish Tatars as well as Muslim communities in the Crimea and Romanian Dobruja. It is possible for the values of two cultures to coexist within one community and one culture. This would contradict the theses of Feliks Koneczny, Oswald Spengler and Samuel Huntington. The historical existence of Norman-Muslim culture of Sicily or Muslim Spain constitutes another example of a common historical message of both civilizations. Despite the peripheral (both historically and territorially) character of these experiences, they can become a precedent for future social, political and civilizational experiments concerning the coexistence of Europe and Islam. Literature is yet another emanation of the common message. Polish literature is abundant in literary works depicting the common space of the two civilizations. As a representative of Old Polish literature one should mention a seventeenth-century poet, Samuel Otwinowski, and his translation of *Gulistan*, a work by Saadi, one of the greatest medieval Persian poets. This masterly translation proved the possibility of coexistence in a philological way. Jan Potocki's novel, *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa*, written at the end of the eighteenth century, played a similar role. Openness to common values is visible throughout the oeuvre of Tadeusz Miciński. For Miciński, a synthesis of both civilizations, a common cultural space, is possible and feasible. He was one of the few Europeans to see the need to open Europe for Muslim values, reevaluate mutual relations and abandon the position of power in favor of genuine partnership. Common Muslim-European values and the possibility of a common cultural space can be traced in the works of contemporary writers like Meša Selimovic, a Bosniak author of the novels *Death and the Dervish* and *Fortress*, as well as Bosnian-born Ivo Andrić, the Nobel Prize-winning author and creator of a historical vision of Bosnian culture as an alloy of European and Muslim traditions. The common civilizational space can also be found in the works of Orhan Pamuk, the winner of the

2006 Nobel Prize. The works of these authors reveal a genuine possibility of coexistence of two civilizations, a possibility of a common space of tradition, culture and history to emerge.

The literary history of the bridge in Mostar seems, therefore, to be the historical message of Europe and Islam. This history was described by Ivo Andrić in *The Bridge on the Drina*, where the bridge is real, but at the same time also a symbolic space linking two worlds in culture and history. The image of the bridge offers a way to create a common space of life and joy, as well as similar values.

Translated from Polish by Mateusz Płaziński.

## 14.

## CASE STUDY

## Philosophy of Crisis, Illness, and Complication in Light of Intercultural Dialogue

NIYAZI MEHDI

Tbilisi 2005

It is possible to formulate a positive attitude towards the concept of crisis in the discourse of “crisis of the multicultural society.” Democratic society is, in my opinion, a sick society, which is reflected in its constant move from one crisis (or crisis stage) to another. But unlike other types of society, the democratic one is the only one that is sick, yet permanently engaged in self-treatment. An analogy with the psychoanalytic concept of man supports this argument: full mental health belongs only to people in primal cultures, while the rest, even the sanest, sometimes experience narcissism and other neurotic states.

The scheme is analogical to the Bible story of Adam and Eve. Before eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge they were in a stable mental state. The assertion, therefore, that (except for primal cultures) all societies have various diseases is well within the biblical history paradigm as the history of crises.

Only democratic societies, engaged in self-treatment, have discovered that cultural means, tools and symbols, are full

**BIBLE**, the sacred scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. The Christian *Bible* consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament, with the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox versions of the Old Testament being slightly larger because of their acceptance of certain books and parts of books considered apocryphal by the Protestants. The Jewish *Bible* only includes the books known to Christians as the Old Testament. The arrangements of the Jewish and Christian canons differ considerably. The Protestant and Roman Catholic arrangements match one another more closely.

of “diagnostic” potential. Unlike other societies, they developed these elements as conscious “diagnostic” tools and, therefore, as a means of self-treatment. Many theories of social and cultural crises, therefore, like to diagnose diseases of modern society (and democracy) using symbols from other cultures. In the twentieth century, the means of diagnosing Western culture’s diseases were, for many artists and intellectuals, brought from Zen, Krishna and even Islamic discourses (for example, for Guenon or Gurdjieff).

Between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the image of the Azeri intellectual was based on a clear aesthetic manifestation of different types of modernity. In contrast with the development of modernity in the West, in Azeri modernity, the experience of crisis in the Middle Eastern Muslim society was made visible due to excessive description of its symptoms. In the theories of Mirza Fatali Ahundzadeh, Ali Huseynzade, Mamed Amin Rasulzade, Ahmet Agaoglu, among others, illness and virology became the primary motivations shaping national and Muslim discourse. In this situation, Western accomplishments and cultural facts that were already a part of Azerbaijani urban culture became tools for diagnosing national diseases.

It would be interesting to follow analogous processes in Georgia and Armenia. Even more so, because in Azerbaijan some exclusively Georgian and/or Armenian cultural facts were assumed Western; hence, the means of diagnosis were taken from Western culture, but in the shape of Georgian-Armenian facts.

If we approach the crisis of multicultural countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia from this position, then the key question lies not in the crisis of multiculturalism – because multiculturalism was in crisis in all empires and all multiethnic religious communities – but rather in the lack of making diagnostic tools for self-treatment out of heterogeneous cultural means. Is it possible to bring materials from Georgian society, where texts of Borchali-Azerbaijani culture were made the center Georgians’ diagnosis? Similarly, is it possible to do such a thing with Talysh culture in Azerbaijan? Means and symbols from different cultures could become means of diagnosis and self-treatment, such as Islam for Azerbaijan, and Christianity for Georgia and Armenia.

How can texts of one culture become means of diagnosis for another? To answer this question, I would like to discuss the *sharia* law forbidding the visual representation of people. The ban (analogical to the one

in Judaism) stemmed from the belief that no one should repeat the art of Allah when he created human beings. It was interpreted by many Muslim intellectuals as shameful, however, and was therefore often broken.

To better understand the law, the term “grammar of the world” may be used (analogous to the idea of syntax of life by the director, poet and semiotician Pierre Paolo Pasolini). Grammar conveys rules on how to connect things, signs and symbols. That is why the space and time connection may be called the grammar of the world. A miracle from God is exceptional, because it violates the grammar of the world and reveals God’s ability to disregard the grammar of the world.

I would compare this with the contemporary information society, where digital technology enables image manipulation, so that a prominent political figure may be changed into a participant in an orgy; where, with the help of a scanner or a copy-machine, brilliant falsifications can be made. Digital technology enables us to follow in God’s footsteps, as it were, and disregard the grammar of the world, and create the miracle of falsification and disinformation. Because of that, in contrast to medieval times, we today are less sensitive to miracles – to such an extent that we probably would not notice the miracles by Moses and Jesus. In this regard, our world has moved away from God even more. In the *sharia* law forbidding depiction of human beings, contemporary Western society may see a diagnosis of its digital illness.

Next, I would like to speak of religion in the context of multiculturalism. One of the primary goals of most religions is to make the believer more interested in God than in the world. To accomplish

**MOSES** (flourished 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century BC), Moshe in Hebrew, Hebrew prophet, teacher, and leader who, in the thirteenth century BC, delivered his people from Egyptian slavery. In the Covenant ceremony at Mt. Sinai, where the Ten Commandments were promulgated, he founded the religious community known as Israel. As the interpreter of these Covenant stipulations, he was the organizer of the community’s religious and civil traditions. In the Judaic tradition, he is revered as the greatest prophet and teacher, and Judaism has sometimes loosely been called Mosaism, or the Mosaic faith, in Western Christendom. His influence continues to be felt in the religious life, moral concerns, and social ethics of Western civilization, and therein lies his undying significance.

**JESUS** (c. 6 BC – 30 AD), Christ, founder of Christianity, one of the world’s largest religions, and the incarnation of God according to most Christians. They consider him to be the redeemer of the world from its original sin, which was to disconnect the believers from God. His teachings and deeds are recorded in the New Testament, which is essentially a theological document that makes discovery of the “historical Jesus” difficult. The basic outlines of his career and message, however, can be characterized when considered in the context of first-century Judaism and, especially, Jewish eschatology.

this, Christianity proposed various discourses degrading the world, so that one would turn his back on it more easily. Several Buddhist discourses hold similar ideas.

Islam solved the problem in another way. It did not praise asceticism and monasticism. It is interesting, however, that both monasticism (Egypt) and Islam (Mecca) appeared only two centuries apart in the same area, the Near East. The cloisters and asceticism were gaining popularity in Egypt when Mahomet preached the Islamic faith and said that there are three pleasures in the world: scents, women and world. Hence, Islam expects one to live among worldly pleasures and still be more interested in God than in the world. This goal, however, never became elementary in any religion. Contemporary Iranian Shia Islam is as reclusive as was medieval Christianity, and the contemporary Christian world is open to the world in the ways of early Islam.

With that in mind, I believe it would be best for the multicultural dialogue in Tbilisi to create a situation in which Christianity is read through Islamic codes and Islam through Christian doctrine. Understanding and not understanding would then gain a new configuration.

The multiculturalism of a society is linked to the philosophical problems of the One and the Multiple, which come from Ancient Greece. "The other," the favorite category of existentialists and postmodernists proved the "One – Multiple" opposition to be fruitful even for contemporary thought.

There are two ways of solving problems in society. The first one, coming from the idea of the One, simplifies each situation through various modifications of repressive methods in order to make the solution effective. The second method involves solving a problem according to the idea of Multiplicity; that is, in the mode of a complex situation. Tyranny utilizes the method of repressive simplification. Democracy uses abilities to work in complex situations. Multiculturalism in society is a complex situation. The traditionalism of the Southern Caucasus way of thinking – even among the democrats – manifests itself in the popularity of the simplification solution used in multiethnic issues. It justifies assimilation and other forms of repression against ethnic minorities. Therefore, we are not capable – even should we wish to – of altering our way of acting in a complex situation of interethnic relations.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

## Interview with Niyazi Mehdi for “Obozrievatel”

24–30 June 2005

## WAS THERE TENSION DURING THE DEBATES?

There was no cross-cultural or interethnic tension, except for during the presentation by Harutyun Marutyan. One of his ideas, although not very original, caught my attention. He spoke about the role of shared memory in national identity. I then reminded him of Lévi-Strauss’ idea that borders usually do not match boundaries of culture and language, which means that a person may belong to a shared memory without knowing the language of the nation (cf. Einstein, Freud, Fromm and others). The Austrians and the Germans speak the same language, but have different histories, which distinguish their shared memory and, therefore, their nationalities.

National catastrophes (like the Armenian genocide or Russia’s defeat of Sweden by Tsar Peter I) and national victories seem to me tools for enhancing the emotional expressiveness of historical memory; that is why I mentioned the issue during the conversation with Marutyan.

Marutyan caused tension in our discussion when he mentioned the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. His talk at that point was more ideological than scientific. It sparked a witty response from Jahangir Selimkhanov, Cultural Program Director of the Open Society Institute. He reminded everyone that the standard ownership claims by Armenia

for Azerbaijani land are inconsistent with the spirit of dialogue. “Each of your historical claims,” he said, “was given full response by Azerbaijani historians long ago. The Colloquium on Intercultural Dialogue does not involve experts on the Karabakh conflict, so your statement violates the spirit of our meeting.” This is the basic gist of what Jahangir said, but his response was a true game of intellectual subtleties.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## 15.

## CASE STUDY

Historical Memory in Cultural Dialogue:  
Opportunity or Obstacle?

HARUTYUN MARUTYAN

Tbilisi 2005

Although it is difficult to assert unequivocally, the experience of the past century suggests the following pattern: multicultural societies experience crises when an array of factors starts to play essential and crucial roles at the same time: a) multiculturalism is accompanied by multiethnicity; b) multiethnicity is accompanied by the existence of small countries within the given country; c) ethnic communities manifest a rapid revival of national identity; d) the ruling political elite acquires the distinctive features of an oppressive regime (totalitarian, authoritarian) or the commitment to democratic values dramatically plummets.

This reflection does not claim to be axiomatic; however, it can be supported by various examples. Thus, the roots of the ethno-political developments, that have been unfolding since the mid-1980s in the Caucasus, date back to the early years of Soviet power, when the non-democratic Bolshevik regime marked out the borders that have lasted for seventy years. Political constituents of non-titular minority peoples emerged in the Soviet republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan. The cultures of these peoples also differed; sometimes they even stood on a different civilizational level than the dominating ethnic majority of the state. Since the mid-1980s, under the impact of the democratic transformations taking place in the USSR, numerous problems that had been accumulating finally erupted, the majority of which were of ethno-political origin. Swift

ethnic and national revival took place, and when the ruling political entities of the central government responded with various forms of suppression, the problem deteriorated into ethno-political conflict. As a result, the well-known escalation of conflicts in the region: Karabakh-Azerbaijan, then Armenia-Azerbaijan, as well as Georgia-Abkhazia and Georgia-Ossetia. In Europe at the end of the twentieth century, we can find similar examples of this pattern in the demise of Yugoslavia and the devastating wars on its territory; in Russia, we can point to the Russian-Chechen conflict. As a rule, these conflicts are accompanied by ethnic cleansing, which was first exercised during the Sumgait Massacre, in Fergana, and then practiced on a wide scale during the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, as a result of which 360,000 Armenians were violently deported from Azerbaijan in 1988–1990, and 200,000 Azerbaijanis were deported from Armenia. Then this phenomenon became commonplace: the majority of the Georgian population was forced to abandon Abkhazia; in Yugoslavia, the violent creation of mono-ethnic territories continues to this day. Incipient ethnic cleansing in Moldova was prevented only by a Russian military intervention. In Czechoslovakia and Hungary, such ethnic conflicts did not occur because of the presence of more democratic local regimes. By contrast, in Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia this process was limitless.

Ethnic cleansing as a remedy for ethno-political conflicts was used in the USSR by central Soviet authorities, who switched from democratic rhetoric to salvaging their regime at any cost, not hesitating to use even the bloodiest means. Ethnic cleansing is, naturally, accompanied by the elimination of multiculturalism or, at best, by dramatic reduction of its scope. We can say the cultural factor plays the role of an “easy” ethnic-cleansing tool, thus making the latter indirect and somewhat civilized for the outer world. For example, in the case of the Armenian population of Georgia, ethnic cleansing by cultural means is manifested by indirect government support for closing Armenian cultural centers, including schools, the policy of enforced Kartvelization (forced usage of the Georgian language) of Armenian churches overtly supported by the state, fraudulent search for Georgian origins in Armenian surnames and forcing name changes by direct and indirect pressure, the propaganda of the “historical” thesis presenting Armenians as guests (and therefore implying they should behave as such), preventing the economic development of Armenian-populated regions, etc. By the way, the latter was practiced in the Soviet era by the Azerbaijani government; its outcome is well known.

In our investigations, therefore, we looked more closely at the cultural substrate of ethno-political conflicts and subsequent ethnic cleansing. Mono-ethnic entities, I should note, such as Armenia, are also prone to such (intra-ethnic) conflicts. Our ethnographic field materials collected in the 1990s in the Vardenis district showed deep cultural differences between the local residents and the Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan. These two groups, although both ostensibly Armenian in ethnicity, represented Western and Eastern cultural and value systems, respectively, which created a familiar ethnographic dichotomy: “ourselves vs. aliens” and “us vs. them.” The research conducted by my colleagues and myself demonstrates that instead of calls for unity, it is regular communication and better acquaintance with each other that will help to overcome such situations. The task behind our proposals was to overcome the intra-ethnic conflict rooted in culture and values through enhanced reciprocal familiarization with each other’s histories, traditions and culture, i.e., through the past. Is it possible to apply this approach to communities with various ethnic and, hence, cultural and value systems in the context of conflict situations?

Every year since the mid-1990s, meetings have taken place between various NGOs representing the conflicting parties of the Caucasus region: political scientists, human rights specialists, art historians, journalists, scholars, and people’s diplomacy groups (Schneider-Deters 2002). The meetings consist in situational analysis and various proposals for resolving conflict. Numerous proposals are made, numerous joint projects are initiated and implemented; however, nothing has gotten off the ground. There are many reasons for this. I cannot analyze the phenomenon in its entirety here, but I would like to share a few observations on this question of why ethnic conflict in this region has not been resolved.

I would like to single out two major reasons. First, to my knowledge, no target thematic problems were ever formulated for these meetings. These could have offered political direction to be implemented directly or indirectly by the state. Second, these approaches were not voiced by the leaders of the conflicting states, while the scale of public initiative has been limited, probably owing to poor support from the authorities. This can be regarded as a lack, or deficiency of political will.

What could be the central culture-based theme to organize discussions in order to shape mutual understanding between conflicting parties? It could take decades to transform conflict into genuine

reconciliation, or at least into changes in identity that would enable relations not only on the level of states and treaties, but would also outline the Caucasian model of the European Union, called the Caucasus House. We are surely far from summarizing conflict settlement principles and defining a single recipe; any problem requires discussion and consideration of its distinctive features.

I believe that in the case of the South Caucasus region (and Greater Caucasus), one should focus on the roots of the problematic relations between conflicting states and ethno-political entities. I refer here to history, or, more precisely, the role of collective and historical memory.

What is collective and historical memory? Let us try to outline its basic properties. According to Maurice Halbwachs, a classic source on the theory of memory, autobiographic memory, historical memory, history and collective memory are all differentiated. Autobiographic memory is a recollection of the events resulting from our life experience. Historical memory is a recollection that comes down to us only through historical records. History is the memorable past we are not “organically” related to, the past that is no longer an important part of our life, whereas collective memory is the active past that shapes our identity. Memory inevitably gives way to history when we lose the connection with our past. Historical memory can be either organic or dead: we can celebrate what we never experienced in reality, we can keep such a past alive, or maintain it only in historical records, the so-called cemeteries of knowledge.

Collective and historical memory is passed on both through oral (from the elder generation to the younger) and written sources in family, school, college, the public at large and via mass media. Historical memory, as a part of social memory, is a complex category encompassing the history pictured by the people itself and the general concepts of history. The moral norms contained in comment on historical events, and the behavioral norms of the major historical figures and heroes of the people, shape behavioral norms for individuals, groups of individuals and the whole nation. Collective and historical memory are major elements determining the terms “nation” and “national identity” based on people’s knowledge and attitudes to the nation’s entire historical past, actual or perceived, or episodes thereof (Smith 21, 40, 43 ff.). The manifestation of this history embraces branches growing from the same source, and developments that at first glance may have no immediate connection with this memory. These developments, however, are actually

determined and fed by memory, and form the collective memory of the nation. Collective and historical memory, as a component of national identity, also becomes an integral element of national culture and, ultimately, one of the factors that shape the dominating value system in any given society.

I will now attempt to refer to the elements of collective and historical memory that, in my opinion, are crucial to the problem in question. Firstly, a major property of collective and historical memory is its powerful ethnic mobilization potential. Secondly, at the same time, concepts of national identity and historical memory are not static phenomena, but rather are subject to transformations that can be caused both by internal and external developments. The two factors, as a rule, follow one another, the second manifesting the consequences of the first. Ethnic mobilization in a society, then, takes place both owing to the internal mechanisms working in the society and driven by the state propaganda machine (Zolyan 2005). In the latter case, the components I just described above are simply switched: the political elite attempts to shape a national identity and transform collective and historical memory, which can promote ethnic mobilization of the society around certain political problems put forward by the elite. Ultimately, the society's political life falls under state control.

Here, the "local-foreign" dichotomy comes into play. Why? Whatever the foundation of the community may be (territorial, ethnic or national), the image of the "foreigner" or "stranger" is compared and contrasted with the image of the "friend." The image of the stranger can be endowed with negative, neutral and positive features; in certain contexts, especially during confrontation, the enemy image may emerge. Research demonstrates the role the enemy image can play in the formation of national identity. Confrontation and the "enemy," real or perceived, incentivize national mobilization.

Unless the role of historical memory is taken into account, it is impossible to appreciate the process of ethnic mobilization around certain political tasks. Historical and collective memory of conflict-generating events becomes crucial during ethno-political confrontations. Historical memory becomes the foundation on which the perception of confrontation is built; the legitimacy of one's own demands and the illegitimacy of the opponent's are thereby explained. This memory serves as the basis around which the nation's forces can be consolidated and driven to the solution of certain problems. Moreover, collective and

historical memory about conflicts during ethno-political confrontations not only contributes to ethnic mobilization, but can also morally justify brutalities against the opponent.

The enormous mobilization potential of collective and historical memory explains why political elites intend to control and use it for certain political purposes. There are numerous examples of certain perceptions of history created by the political elite or a certain strata of intellectuals, which thereafter are instilled into the public at large through education and propaganda. In this process, the political elite, or certain intellectuals are not always interested in objective memories about the past. As a result, they attempt to strictly monitor the formation of collective and historical memory. In other words, the ruling elite wants society to remember not what *actually* took place, but what is advantageous for the elite. This “controlled” and somewhat restricted memory enables elites to make society more manageable and to consolidate society around certain political purposes.

There are numerous instances when the political elite tries to artificially shape or transform collective and historical memory. In particular, in the USSR the intervention of the political elite into memory formation was widespread and unscrupulous, which left an imprint on the processes that were underway in the Soviet and some post-Soviet republics.

For example, in the Soviet period, the targeted operation of the Azerbaijani state propaganda machine shaped certain stereotypical perceptions about Karabakh, its Armenian population and Armenians in general in Azerbaijani society. These perceptions became part of the Azerbaijanis’ collective and historical memory, and have been actively manifesting themselves since 1988, first in the Karabakh-Azerbaijan legal and political disputes, and then during ethno-political conflict. After the 1994 ceasefire, for more than a decade the Azerbaijani elite has been pursuing a policy aimed at the creation of the enemy image in order to consolidate Azerbaijani society and legitimize the authorities. Exploiting the conflict, the Azerbaijani authorities enhance the negative image of the Armenians and create “historical memories” based on this image.

It is indicative that during the Karabakh Movement (1988–90) and up until now, the Azerbaijanis have attempted to emulate the Armenian model of historical memory (cf. Abrahamian 71).

After 1991, the revival of state ideology began in the former Soviet republics: if previously the ideology of state structures was based on communist ideas, then after the collapse of the USSR it was replaced by nationalist ideology. This was quite

a logical process. The former union republics were undergoing transformation into nation states. It was also logical that parallel to the process of establishment of nation states, certain ideas about national history would be defined in order to ensure national state legitimacy. It was also necessary to prepare the population for ethnic mobilization and to consolidate the population against an external enemy. For this very purpose, historical narratives were created to replace previously circulating ideas and perceptions. As mentioned above, the development of collective and historical memory is largely influenced by the course of events, which changes the perception and interpretation of phenomena. By using the Armenian material, I would like to specify, in particular, the role of collective and historical memory about the Armenian Genocide in the Karabakh movement (1988–90).

A brief historical note: the 1915–1923 Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Eastern Armenia caused the physical extermination of the majority of Armenians, the loss of the historical fatherland, the formation of the Armenian Diaspora, and, consequently, the emergence of new historical memory. However, for a long time, out of political considerations, in Soviet Armenia references to the Genocide were effectively prohibited. Thanks to certain freedoms caused by changes in domestic politics and literature (Khrushchev's "Thaw"), during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genocide in April 1965, mass rallies took place in Yerevan, which was a rather unusual phenomenon in the USSR at that time (Abrahamian 2000; *The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* 2005). These rallies, as well as the growing interest in the theme of the Genocide in art and literature, attest to the fact that the memory of the Genocide, despite the official policy of silencing, continued to live on in the hearts and minds of the people. However, in these recollections the Armenians were innocent victims who lost most of their historical fatherland and needed compassion. Free and unrestricted references to the national liberation struggle, freedom-fighter heroes, or independent statehood remained under undeclared ban because of the ideological regime (Yeghiazaryan 1990, 36–47; Kaputikyan 1997, 173). Works on the Genocide written at that time could be summarized in the dictum about "peaceful revenge" by Silva Kaputikyan in her poem, "Contemplation in the Middle of the Road": "You should take revenge by continuing to live" (Kaputikyan 1961, 112). This was, in fact, the poetic formulation of state policy in the sphere of genocide memory. The 1965 rallies, followed by the construction of the

Genocide memorial and annual hundred-thousand-strong mourning processions, enhanced the memory and its uninterrupted transfer from generation to generation.

In the mid-1980s, collective and historical memory again came to the forefront. It was determined first of all by the Soviet politics of perestroika, glasnost and democratization, which initiated the review and re-evaluation of Soviet history in mass media and fiction (based on archival materials). Ever-growing Azerbaijani propaganda served as an external incentive because of the so called “Albanian theory” in Azerbaijani historiography, according to which Armenian cultural monuments in Azerbaijani territory were declared foundational cultural elements of the Albanian nation (which played a certain role in the ethnogenesis of modern Azerbaijanis). The “Albanian theory” thus attempted to divorce the ethno-cultural heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh from its Armenian roots in order to portray the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh as Armenized descendants of Albanians. It seemed, therefore, that modern Azerbaijanis and Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh had common ancestors, and so in historical and cultural terms they became “cousins.” Denunciation of everything Armenian was purposefully intended to destroy the ethnic self-consciousness of the Karabakh Armenians (Armenian origin, historical memory, ethnic symbols, etc.,) to undermine the Armenian value system, and thus to create a foundation for a change in national identity. Armenians perceived this as encroachment on national identity and especially on historical memory; this and other crucial factors induced Armenians to start fighting for the restoration of historical justice. The confidence that criticism of injustices committed under Stalin must necessarily result in the correction of the historical record enhanced Armenians’ desire for justice. It was not coincidental that from the very outset the Karabakh Movement initiated comprehensive scrutiny of the 1921 “Resolution of the Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party” (under which the territory of Karabakh, where the population was 95 % Armenian, was given to Azerbaijan) and dencounced the resolution based on Karabakh’s legal and historical status. Such debates were conducted not only in historical journals, newspapers, on television and radio, but also in the Opera Square, in the presence of tens and hundreds of thousands of people. Thus, the factor of historical memory slowly, step by step, consciously or unconsciously, became a decisive factor driving the Karabakh Movement ideology (Marutyan “Memory,” 56–57).

A week after the commencement of the Karabakh Movement, the Sumgait Massacre erupted. About thirty (or perhaps more) Armenian citizens of Azerbaijan were massacred with Turkish genocidal methods (dating back to the early twentieth century). Armenians unequivocally perceived these pogroms (which continued in Baku in January 1990, when, according to incomplete data over 400 Armenian citizens of Azerbaijan were killed) as a manifestation of yet another genocide and the event stirred up the most powerful layer of historical memory, that of the 1915 Genocide. So, the Karabakh Movement, initially aimed at supporting the self-determination of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and restoring historical justice by restoring the territory of Karabakh, acquired renewed impetus.

The analysis of various sources (speeches, newspaper articles, posters and banners) of the Karabakh Movement shows the following: because of the early twentieth-century genocide and late twentieth-century massacres, the theme of the Armenian Genocide remained the most important manifestation of Armenians' collective and historical memory during the Movement. At the same time, an examination of the source material proves that this memory was under transformation: attempts to resolve the late twentieth-century crisis were combined with the struggle *against* the early twentieth-century crisis. This meant that the image of the victim begging for justice and compassion gave way to the image of the fighter, who is aware that national goals can be achieved only by struggle. Perhaps this very change in Armenian identity determined success in the struggle for the liberation of Karabakh.

Evaluating the Sumgait events as genocide, then, became the undoing of stereotypes shaped over the decades of Soviet power: for the mass media that is the mirror of truth; for the so-called friendship of peoples; for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that cared about the well-being of the Soviet people day and night; for the Soviet-Russian army perceived as an element of Armenians' survival; for the "fairest" judiciary in the world, etc.

Our research shows that citizens shuffled off authoritarian ideology during the Karabakh Movement and, more importantly in this context, the collective and historical memory of the Armenian Genocide guided his thinking – which we can see in the perception of the Sumgait events as genocide; in the demand for political condemnation of the events; the prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators and organizers; the exposing of the possible organizers and proceedings of justice. In other

words, the genocide factor became the motor enabling gradual change in old perceptions and stereotypes, and transformation of identity based on new values. Thus, the theme of the Genocide in the Karabakh Movement went beyond the initial domain of pain and mourning and drove people to action, which, ultimately, resulted in the new parliament established in anticipation of radical changes.

Since the mid-1990s, the state has managed to achieve recognition of Sumgait as genocide and condemnation of Sumgait's organizers. It seemed that popular manifestations of memory were somewhat weakened. However, the mass popular protests against the treacherous assassination of Lt. Gurgen Markarian, an RA officer sent to Budapest under the Partnership for Peace program to teach English courses, in the winter of 2004 proved that this was not so. Lt. Markarian was brutally killed in his sleep by an Azerbaijani officer in Budapest who participated in these courses.

And so we can see what an active role historical memory plays in ethnic mobilization and subsequent identity transformation through the example of two South Caucasus republics standing in belligerent opposition to each other. As a result, there are two nations, the current conflict between which is largely determined by diametrically opposed perceptions of historical memory about in the events of the twentieth century.

Let us note that this phenomenon is characteristic not only of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. One can come across numerous and diverse examples in the Russian-Chechen, Russian-Ukrainian, and other conflicting post-Soviet regions. For example, in Chechnya, during the period of true independence, nationalist leaders and newly-formed state institutions worked out and actively propagated a completely new interpretation of its history. The state attempted to create its own version of history that differed from the one imposed by the Soviets. In other words, history based on international socialism and the civilizing role of the Russian nation was rejected and replaced with nationalistic Chechen ideology.

The widespread image of Chechens common in Tsarist, Soviet and also democratic Russia, presented them as a group of savages devoid of both statehood and civilization. Their incorporation into Russia was presented, therefore, as a blessing for them. However, Chechen national historiography presented Russia as an aggressive power always attempting to subordinate and destroy the proud Caucasian mountain tribes and their own version of statehood (Zolyan 2005).

We have also witnessed national identity changes rooted in historical memories that take place in Europe and other parts of the world. I will make only a brief reference to one “civilized” example.

Historiography always changes with time, as happened in Germany after its defeat in World War II. In other words, historiography is subject to change and causes identity change. Historical memories continue to exist through the period of changes in historiography. In the case of Germany, the 1959 lecture by Theodor Adorno “What does it mean to come to terms with the past?” played a pivotal role. One of the principles he preferred was “working through the past,” a process that required continuous self-criticism. He contrasted this with “mastering the past,” which suggested silencing the past. In the 1970–80s, commentators and political leaders called for “a ‘normalization’ of the past.” The West German authorities drafted a program, a strategy for normalization of the past. It had various consequences, such as the willingness of the political leadership to solve the problem of the past on the institutional level. One of its results was the payment of compensation to Israel (and probably the compensation paid to the Soviet POWs). Another result was the creation of Germany and the German nation’s image as a moral nation, made possible by the fact that, in contrast with the generation of the 1950s, the new generation wished to learn from the past. Back in the 1970s, the Chancellor portrayed West Germany as a Normal Nation facing the same problems as other western states with a history that incorporated both “ups and downs.” It was claimed that new solutions depended on the old ones, that the images of the past and the past itself were both resources and obligations for the present. In other words, the images of the past were neither dictated by the past, nor entirely created in the present, but were the result of continuous dialogue, where earlier images shape and suggest possibilities for a more successful present. The so-called regularization or ritualization is another form of normalization. Recognition of historical responsibility has become a distinctive feature of periodic manifestations of political liturgy, such as various memorial dates, such as 8 May 1945, or 1 September 1939, or visits to former concentration camps (Olick 2003, 19).

In other words, in the decades following World War II, we have witnessed the transformation of German identity because of critical review and re-evaluation of collective and historical memory of conflict-generating issues. Ultimately, this had led to full-fledged Franco-German reconciliation, which enabled the successful unification of Europe.

Cf.: "57.1% of the respondents in Armenia consider historical hostility [between Armenia and Azerbaijan] to be an obstacle to Karabakh settlement" (Public opinion survey).

Field materials were collected during the survey conducted within the framework of the research, "Poverty and Survival Strategy in Armenia" financed by the World Bank (1994, supervisor N. Dudwick, the head of Vardenis team H. Marutyan), then under the project funded by the NGO/UNHCR, "Cultural Dialog for Harmonious Coexistence" (1998, supervisor H. Petrosyan), and "Refugees-local residents: a decade of relations" based on Vardenis and Vayots-Dzor materials (1999, supervisor H. Kharatyan). (See also Marutyan, "Subethnic groups..." and "Ours' as 'Strangers'...").

Researchers of collective and historical memory (Maurice Halbwachs, Eric Hobsbawm, Barry Schwartz, J. K. Olick, Eviatar Zerubavel, among others) note that often the "past" is a cultural structure built in the present and, therefore, subject to numerous modern interests based on the latter. In other words, the transformation of current national identity can be achieved first of all by means of critical review of the past (and collective and historical memory based on it). In any case, this is a long and time-consuming process that cannot be achieved by numerous mutual visits of delegations on various levels or signing friendship and economic cooperation agreements, seminars and NGO activist discussions. This process must be based on civilized European examples of inter-cultural dialogue rooted in open,

professional, consistent, nation-wide debates on various issues of collective and historical memory of the belligerent nations supported by the political elites (cf. Mehdi) of the parties (cf. Marutyan "Historical Memory..." 76–78). Only this approach, i.e., the philosophy of genuine recognition and mutual understanding by means of cultural dialogue between nations about the crucial factor of identity, can lay the basis for a fundamental resolution of ethnopolitical conflicts.

RELIGION  
AND TOLERANCE

## 16.

## The Art of Tolerance

MUSTAFA CERİĆ

Sarajevo 2006

## WHY TOLERANCE?

I respect only those who resist me;  
but I cannot tolerate them.

– Charles De Gaulle, 1966

From Charles de Gaulle's statement we may conclude that it is easier to recognize the other than to tolerate him. The Jews suffered the Holocaust in Europe not because they were not recognized, but because the Nazis could not tolerate them; the Bosnian Muslims were exposed to genocide in Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina) not because they were not recognized, but because the Serbian Army could not tolerate them.

Although tolerance – the capacity to endure pain or hardship – does not mean the most good, it is still the least evil in human relations.

The opposite to tolerance is intolerance, which is “the deliberate attempt to eliminate disapproved conduct by coercive means, usually vigorously, perhaps even ruthlessly (persecution)” (Horton 521). But tolerance has another negative side as well. It is indulgence as an excess of tolerance. Against the notion of the negative toleration or indulgence came the notion of *zero-tolerance*, meaning that in morality there are some limits of *liberty* and *freedom*, which is the notion of the poet Milton's statement that “only the good man can be free” (Bourke 1967).

Indifference is also a form of tolerance by the means of which the human conduct is seen neither as moral nor immoral, but amoral. This is a passive approach to conduct that is different from the tolerance that “implies active restraint” (Lewis 548), as well as the active resistance against violence as the worst form of intolerance. It is in this context of the line of thought of the late Martin Luther King that we see the significance of his statement which reads: “The choice today is not violence or non-violence, it is either non-violence or non-existence” (Lewis 548).

But, perhaps, the best way to understand why we need to learn the art of tolerance is the following passage of the great Muslim scholar of the twelfth century, al-Ghazali, who said:

AL-GHAZALI (1058–1111), in full: Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad At-tusi Al-ghazali; Muslim theologian and mystic whose great work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, made Sufism (Islamic mysticism) an acceptable part of orthodox Islam. Al-Ghazali’s abandonment of a brilliant career as a professor in order to lead a kind of monastic life won him many followers and critics among his contemporaries.

Every one who considers himself better than one of the creatures of God Almighty is arrogant... Your belief that you are better than others is sheer ignorance. Rather you ought not to look at anyone without considering that he is better than you... Thus, if you see a child, you say, “This person has never sinned against God, but I have sinned, and so he is better than I;” and if you see an older person, you say, “This man was a servant of God before me, and is certainly better than I;” if he is a scholar, you say, “This man has been given what I have not been given and reached what I did not reach, and knows what I am ignorant of, then how shall I be like him?” And if he is ignorant, you say, “This man has sinned against God in ignorance, and I have sinned against Him knowingly, so God’s case against me is stronger, and I do not know what end He will give to me and what end to him;” if he is an infidel, you say: “I do not know, perhaps he will become a believer and his life will end in doing good“ (Faith and Practice, 122).

#### TOLERANCE: A SIGN OF STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS?

O God, teach us that tolerance is the highest degree of power  
And the desire for revenge the first sign of weakness!

– from the Bosnian Prayer, written during the Siege of Sarajevo

If right cannot control might, then might will overrule right and, as a result, intolerance will prevail. Pascal used to say, “Majority opinion is the best way because it can be seen and is strong enough to command obedience, but it is the opinion of those who are least clever” (52). And I would like to add to this that *it is the opinion of those who may be least tolerant*, because they believe that the majority might of theirs should make the minority right as they wish, regardless of what the minority rights really are. Is the intolerant behavior of a majority the sign of its strength or the sign of its weakness?

I believe that intolerance towards the rights of minorities in any society is a sign of the weakness of that society. The real strength is not to coerce others to accept your way of thought or belief. The real strength is in toleration of others, in the sense of showing that you are so strong in your own identity, that you have no need to be xenophobic about the other who is different from you. In the context of this attitude, I am surprised by the insistence of some European leaders to put the attribute *Christian* in the New European Constitution as the only source for the European history and culture.

This tendency in Europe demonstrates neither the historical, nor the cultural strength of Europe. On the contrary, it shows its weakness in the sense that Europe is not yet sure about its identity. It seems that Europe is not yet sure about the fact that it represents multiple experiences of history; that it cherishes diverse forms of culture, and, most of all, that it witnesses many manifestations of faith: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and of course, the legacy of atheism. The aggressive emphasis on one’s cultural, national or religious identity is not the sign of one’s cultural, national or religious inner security. By doing so, one is rather showing his/her cultural, national and religious insecurity.

**BLAISE PASCAL** (1623–1662), French mathematician, physicist, religious philosopher, and master of prose. He laid the foundation for the modern theory of probabilities, formulated what came to be known as Pascal’s law of pressure, and propagated a religious doctrine that taught the experience of God through the heart, rather than through reason. The establishment of his principle of intuitionism had an impact on such later philosophers as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henri Bergson, and also on the Existentialists.

Unfortunately, today some groups are doing a disservice to Muslims by their excessive use of the attribute *Islamic* for almost everything they do or not do on the global stage. They are forgetting, however, that the strength of Islam has always been in its tolerance, in its Quranic proclamation that *there shall be no coercion in religion*; in its Prophetic declaration that “there shall be no superiority of an Arab over a Non-Arab, nor of a Non-Arab over an Arab, and there

shall be no superiority of a white over a black man, nor a black over a white man, except by their good character”; and in its human experience which is best reflected in the line of this thought: “It is the law and custom since the world began that to treat others with humanity is the sign of being human. One good deed deserves another; indeed, the return for one kindness should be ten like it” (Qur’an 6:160/161). Furthermore, as the poet Yusuf Khasb Hajib wrote in the *Kutadgun Bilig*: “The true man treats other men/ Humanely and kind/ This kind of man gave humanity/ The name of mankind” (227).

### THE ART OF WAR?

Once lead this people into war and they will forget there ever  
was such a thing as tolerance.

– Woodrow Wilson

If peace means the absence of war; if good is a non-existence of evil; if love is devoid of hate, then tolerance means freedom from violence.

Is not peace, good, love and tolerance the natural state of humans? But then, where did war, evil, hate and violence come from? Everyone would agree that man was not born for war, evil, hate and violence. Man was born for peace, good, love and tolerance. But is that really so? Sun Tzu, the Chinese author of the famous book *The Art of War* thought 2,500 years ago that in order to survive man must know that, “The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death. Hence, it is a subject of enquiry which can on no account be neglected” (Sun Tzu 7).

I do not recall any book by the title of *The Art of Peace*. I thought, like many of my Bosnian fellowmen and women, that *Peace* is something that is inherited, a value that is undeniable, until the war erupted in my country that not only changed my life, but also my way of thinking. I realized that *Peace* is not something that you should take for granted. Also, I began to ask why people like to talk more about the Holy War, the Just War and the Justified War than about the Holy Peace, the Just Peace and the Justified Peace?! Why are those who kill human beings

SUN TZU (between 722 and 221 BC), is traditionally believed to be the author of *The Art of War*, an influential ancient Chinese book on military strategy considered to be a prime example of Taoist strategy. *Sun Tzu* has had a significant impact on Chinese and Asian history and culture, both as an author of the *Art of War* and as a legendary figure. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, his book grew in popularity and saw practical use in Western society, and his work has continued to influence both Asian and Western culture and politics. Historians have questioned whether or not Sun was a real historical figure.

regarded as national heroes? What is heroic in raping a helpless little girl? What is human in committing genocide against your neighbors? The answer to these questions is: We humans ought to appreciate the art of peace rather than the art of war; we ought to speak about the holy peace rather than about the holy war; we ought to learn the art of tolerance; indeed, we ought to come back to the art of wisdom.

#### THE ART OF WISDOM

Learn wisdom and earn the seat of honor.

– Yusuf Khass Hajib

The human senses are designated for physical pleasure or pain, the human mind is meant for intellectual success or failure, and the human soul is made for spiritual joy or sorrow. Furthermore, we receive knowledge through our sensory system, by our brain we gather and keep information, and in our heart we hold the wisdom of our personality.

Thus, knowledge, information and wisdom are properties that make us knowledgeable, informed and wise. All of these three properties are important for our physical as well as mental health. However, there is a difference between the fact of knowledge, the amount of information, and the eye of wisdom.

Also, there is a difference in the value of having knowledge without information, possessing information without knowledge, and keeping both knowledge and information without wisdom. And that is the key message of my presentation: today's world has a great amount of knowledge, it possesses a surplus of information, but lacks the insightful eye of wisdom.

There is a big gap of understanding between the human senses and the human mind of what is right and wrong; and there is a deep discrepancy between the sense-mind perception and the human soul's insight. Today, the human soul is very much confused by the perception of human senses and the mind about certain moral judgments. The soul cannot accept that all human sensual desires are morally justified and the soul cannot comprehend that all human intellectual adventures are legitimate.

Consequently, the soul is almost choked by the knowledge of the human senses, and the heart is almost lost by the surplus of information of the human mind. "An excess of learning," said Seneca, "makes us suffer as much as excess of anything else" (Pensees 216).

I will now quote Jeffrey Sachs from his book *The End of Poverty* at length:

Every morning our newspapers could report: More than 20,000 people perished yesterday of extreme poverty. The stories would put the stark numbers in context-up to 8,000 children dead of malaria, 5,000 mothers and fathers dead of tuberculosis, 7,500 young adults dead of AIDS, and thousands more dead of diarrhea, respiratory infection, and other killer diseases that prey on bodies weakened by chronic hunger. The poor die in hospital wards that lack drugs, in villages that lack antimalarial bed nets, in houses that lack safe drinking water. They die namelessly, without public comment. Sadly, such stories rarely get written. Most people are unaware of the daily struggles for survival, and of the vast numbers of impoverished people around the world who lose that struggle.

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has launched a war on terror, but it has neglected the deeper causes of global instability. The \$450 billion that the United States will spend this year on the military will never buy peace if it continues to spend around one thirtieth of that, just \$15 billion, to address the plight of the world's poorest of the poor, whose societies are destabilized by extreme poverty and thereby become havens of unrest, violence, and even global terrorism (1).

So, our problem is not in the lack of knowledge or information. Our problem lies in the lack of wisdom, which is, as our poet Yusuf says to his Prince Bugra Khan:

A mighty fortress. The heart and tongue are fitting for nothing without wisdom; with wisdom they fit everything, like water. However much wisdom you possess, still seek to gain more; for the wise man attains his desire by inquiry. If you say, I know, then you are far from knowledge, and among the wise you will be counted as foolish. Wisdom is a sea without bottom or shore: how much water can the swallow remove by sipping? Your head may swim with so much knowledge; but if you know not yourself, then you are far from yourself. Learn wisdom, and become a man by raising your soul aloft; otherwise be called beast and remove yourself from mankind. The wise man's brow is ever knit in thought, the fool is ever merry and smiling. How can the sage for his worry be merry? But the fool can go roll in the dust like a stag. The man who has wisdom is hobbled and cannot fool, then twist his hobbles tight! (253)

It is said that “the mind will never understand the heart.” However, the mind cannot ignore the feeling of the heart, and the senses cannot escape the judgment of the soul, i.e. of the art of faith of the individuals who are moving more and more from the importance of physical property to the development of intellectual, spiritual, and creative wealth.

Let me quote once again poet Yusuf, describing the state of the world of the eleventh century to his master Bugra Khan, but it is as if he is describing it now:

Behold now the times, O sage, how everything has changed! The wise are held in disrespect, the intelligent are dumb. The wicked have multiplied in the land while the peace-loving are downtrodden.

Those who disregard the daily prayers, and bath their heads in wine, now wield authority and are considered strong and manly. Now the fornicator is called a real man while he who refrains from drink is dubbed a miser and he who prays and fasts a hypocrite.

Behold how the world's habit is changed! Men's hearts are at variance with their tongues. Good faith is departed, and treachery is rampant. A trustworthy man cannot be found. Brothers are strangers to their kinfolk, and friends have abandoned their friends. The young lack manners, the old wisdom; the shameless have become legion, the modest lost from view. Now relationships are formed for the sake of money alone, and there is no one who performs his duty for the sake of right and trust. The name of trust still exists but no one left to honor it. Words of counsel still exist, but no one left to adopt them. Where is the man who commands the good and forbids the evil? Merchants do away with their trusts and craftsmen squander their skills. The wise no longer dare to utter the truth. Women have lost their modesty and no longer cover their faces. All straight dealing is gone, and crookedness has taken its place. There is none left who is honest-to-God. All have become slaves to Mammon; they bow their heads to anyone who has silver. Formerly congregations were large and the mosques too few; now there are more than enough mosques and too few people inside. Hear these words of the pious bard and take them to heart, O chief of the virtuous: Where is the man who walks upright? / Where is the friend for the sake of God? / The world is rotten through and through: / Where is one who thinks this odd? (250–1)

I would like to finish by a piece of advice of a wise man, hoping that you have already learned something of our art of tolerance in the city of Sarajevo:

Be not angry with me if I have spoken harshly, brother. True words come harsh to the ear and bitter to the heart; but once they take root, they bear sweet fruit. Likewise the poet said: Truth is bitter food / And difficult to eat; / Swallow the bitter pill, / For it shall make you sweet (Yusuf Khas Hajib 227).

### A BOSNIAN PRAYER

Our Lord

Do not let success deceive us  
Nor failure takes us to despair!  
Always remind us that failure is a temptation  
That precedes success!

Our Lord

Teach us that tolerance is the highest degree of power  
And the desire for revenge  
The first sign of weakness!

Our Lord

If you deprive us of our property,  
Give us hope!  
If you grant us with success,  
Give us also the will power to overcome defeat!  
If you take from us the blessing of health,  
Provide us with the blessing of faith!

Our Lord

If we sin against people,  
Give us the strength of apology!  
And if people sin against us,  
Give us the strength of forgiveness!

Our Lord

If we forget You,  
Do not forget us!

## COMMENTARY

## Christianity, Ideology, and Freedom

FR. MACIEJ ZIĘBA OP

My talk here today reflects not only my own private view, but also the view of mainstream Christianity, especially the Catholic Church. I am more and more a great admirer of the Middle Ages, of its inventions, such as the university, the hospital, and so on. The problem is that these are part of the bright side of the Middle Ages, but there is also a dark side. I always begin my lecture for students with the idea that the problem of the Inquisition is not only a problem of the past. How was it possible that within the Church established by the authorities, by the Pope, an anti-evangelical institution was established? It is a fact. Obviously, there are also dark legends and myths about the Inquisition, but if one innocent person was sentenced, that is enough. How was it possible? Now we say, "OK, it was a mistake." We can agree, but how was it possible if we claim that we have the absolute Truth?

The thesis I would like to share is that in the Middle Ages there was no division between ideology and religion, or religions. This division only emerged over time. Christianity was reduced to the level of ideology, and one product was Christian culture, with many unique advantages, such as the idea of human rights. But still, the problem is not the theory and practice of human rights, but the Inquisition or Crusades. Now, centuries later, we know, and since the Second Vatican Council it is extremely clear, that there is a structural difference between ideology

and Christianity. It is especially clear in the light of the thought of John Paul II, because he was a victim of two great ideologies, Nazism and Communism. I would like to share a quote from his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, in which he expressed this division between ideology and Christianity:

The Church does not close her eyes to dangers of fanaticism or fundamentalism among those, who in the name of ideology that purports to be scientific or religious claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good. Christian truth is not of that kind. Since it is not an ideology, the Christian faith does not presume to imprison changing sociopolitical realities in a rigid schema, and it recognizes that human life is realized in conditions in history that are diverse and imperfect. Furthermore, in constantly reaffirming the transcendent dignity of the person, the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom.

Two examples here would be Nazism and Communism, ideologies claiming a modern, scientific and rational basis.

Christian faith, however, in its structure is not outside this schema. Three points are important when thinking about ideology: first, that ideology maintains concepts of Truth and Goodness, which means that we, who profess this ideology have absolute Truth. Then, second, we can create a concrete (and rigid) scheme of social reality based on this truth. And third, because our ideology has absolute legitimation, we can, for the good of all people, even impose the truth. So, let us keep these three points in mind when thinking of ideology.

What is the difference between religion and ideology? There is none in the division between believers and non-believers of absolute Truth. Both religion and ideology, and even science!, require the assertion that they hold the absolute Truth.

JOHN PAUL II (1920–2005), original name Karol Józef Wojtyła, head of the Roman Catholic Church (1978–2005). Promoted understanding between nations and religions; undertook numerous trips abroad; campaigned against political oppression; criticized materialism of the West; issued unprecedented apologies to groups historically wronged by Catholics (Jews, Muslims); used his influence to advance the recognition of human dignity and deter the use of violence. His Polish nationalism and emphasis on nonviolent political activism aided the Solidarity movement and contributed to peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, his centralized style of church governance dismayed some members of the clergy, who found it autocratic; he failed to reverse a decline in the numbers of priests and nuns; his traditional interpretations of church teachings on personal and sexual morality alienated segments of the laity.

I do not like, and I hope we all do not like, such an easy dichotomy, a division so “black and white” as “tolerant and intolerant.” We have variety in our life. So we do in the case of questions of absolute Truth. The crucial question is not “Do you believe...?” but rather, “Who possesses the absolute Truth?” or even, “Who possesses this Truth in sufficient degree to install a social doctrine, to create a political power?” On this religious, or “yes” side we have two possible answers: first, that the only owner of the Truth is Absolute, God himself. And we do not know the whole, absolute, complete Truth. For example, the Catholic Church answers that only God is Truth and we have a deposit, a small deposit, which is sufficient for salvation, but not sufficient to install a special social doctrine. Second, the other possible answer is that we possess the absolute Truth. And this conviction was sometimes shared by Christians throughout history. And, as I have said, this conviction was held by Marxism. Those who answer in this way believe that we possess the (truth), we know what the shape of history is, and we can establish the Final Solution, as Nazism claimed or as Marxism claimed, or sometimes, as I said, the Christians claimed.

From the other side, which is the “No” answer to the question of absolute Truth, the majority are agnostics: “We do not know about (problems), we have real life, we have real troubles, for us, it is not such a philosophical question.” But, sometimes, and this is an important stream in contemporary culture, the answer is, “Nobody possesses absolute Truth, because it does not exist.” We know that there are many truths, truth is always about culture and values, good and evil are only products of culture, there is no ethics, absolute ethics or absolute roots of ethics, so “nobody possesses it” because there is no absolute Truth at all. And I would like to add that quite often this could be an ideological statement, because the only one statement that has absolute value is “we know that *nobody* has...” So we can also try to establish public or social life in such a way that we will remove, for example, religious convictions, because we know that they are always dangerous in a structure.

Now, a few quotes, just to show you that these ideas are in mainstream Catholicism. Let us start with St. Augustine at the beginning of the fifth century. He wrote that what we call “negative theology” means that we can say much more about what we do *not* know about God, than what we claim we know. St. Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century: “We cogitate God as Unknown.” This means humility when we search for Truth. And, the most important theologian in the

twentieth century, Hans Urs von Balthasar, wrote: “Dogmatic formulas prevent from renewed rationalization... Surround like cherubs with blazing swords, shocking for the Greeks and Jews, the madness of God’s love, not permitting any cabalistic or Hegelian storm of gnosis on love.”

So, our cognition of God is partial, needs contemplation, and we know Him as Unknown. There are two great quotations I like for thinking about this. First, Saint Augustine wrote in *De Trinitate*: “Faith is as from as seeing Truth as death is from eternity”; and: “The emotion moving us to seek Truth is safer than the assertion that we know that which we do not know.” This means humility in the process of discovering Truth, and that it is always a process. In the course of time the Church strives for the fullness of Divine Truth, so we are still in process, we do not know the Truth, we are searching for Truth. So, summarizing, it is the Catholic conviction, according to the Second Vatican Council, that the Church only stores the Divine Truth, who is God himself. So, Truth is granted to the Church in a sufficient degree only to lead people to salvation, to help us on our way to salvation. But the Church does not maintain a ready project of social and political development. There were such temptations in history, but theologically, these had no foundation. It was the personal conviction of, for example, Charlemagne, that he should establish the City of God. But it was his personal illusion, which was against the structure of Catholic faith. This truth transcends the Church, the Church can only protect it from being locked in purely human categories. And the Church examines the Truth, but it is a continuity, it is a process, which will never be fully comprehended in history.

Also, that ideology divides people is against the structure of Christian faith. Confessors are the owners of Truth; others are not of our ideology. In the Holy Gospel we see precisely that God gave the great commandment of love. Now, obviously, Christians are humans in all their sinfulness, and as I said, the history of Christianity can be painful and we are all sinners. But in the very foundation of the Holy Gospel is “love your enemies.” Sometimes, in other religions, there is a division between confessors and others. This makes a horizon for the believer, who has to overcome, ought to overcome, has to try overcoming, all the divisions. Most divisions are between Jews and Gentiles, this “dividing wall of enmity,” in the words of John Paul II. The wall in the Temple of Jerusalem was a courtyard for Jews and then for the Gentiles. Now, there is no such dividing wall. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free person, there is not

male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Slavery was abolished for a couple of centuries, but came back in contemporary times. Also, male and female: the position of the female was growing and growing, and in the thirteenth century it was much higher and better than at the beginning of the twentieth century. It then slowly declined because of political and social structures. This is against what was achieved by Christian culture, according to these words of John Paul II.

I would like to stress that within the Church now we have an instrument to define what is good and what is wrong. Christianity, one can even say religion, needs to be radical. Radical in a good or bad sense, and this is a problem. This ideological radical is very dangerous, and has brought a lot of evil in history. This is true of every kind of ideology, obviously. But not for Evangelic thought. So, now we have the intellectual and theological instrument to discover the ideology.

When we talk about the world outside the Catholic Church, we can still try to explain the structural difference between religion and ideology, which we must do when we remember all the mistakes and evil in history. Catholics could act against what they believed, even if it is not reflected. It is a good support for the free society of the Church that we can define and discover all kinds of ideologies, because ideologies are dangerous for free society. I will now turn to the Church’s understanding of freedom, because there are some misunderstandings. The question is not as Isaiah Berlin, for example, wrote in his famous Oxford lecture, that there are two concepts of liberty: negative and positive. Once again, we have a dichotomy that is too easy – if it is not negative freedom, then it is positive. And I do agree that all ideologies share positive concepts of freedom, but Christianity’s concept of freedom is the third one that I call the “moral concept of freedom.” It is precisely expressed in the *Dignitatis Humanae* Declaration of the Second Vatican Council:

Truth can impose itself on the mind of man only in virtue of its own truth, which wins over the mind with both gentleness and power. So while the religious freedom which men demand in fulfilling their obligation to worship God has to do with freedom from coercion in civil society, it leaves intact the traditional.

It cannot be imposed by any power – political, social, religious – only by its own power, the power of the truth. Next is a quotation from the Declaration:

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It is in accordance with their dignity that all men, because they are persons, that is, beings endowed with reason and free will, and therefore bearing personal responsibility, are both impelled by their nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth ... But men cannot satisfy this obligation in a way that is in keeping with their own nature unless they enjoy both psychological freedom and immunity from external coercion. Therefore, the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective attitude of the individual but in his very nature. For this reason the right to this immunity continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it.

So, the Dignity of men and women, the dignity of person, means that you have the right to be free. I quote from the constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council,

within the limits of morality and common utility, man can freely search for the truth, express his opinion and publish it; he can practice any art he chooses: finally, he can avail himself of true information concerning events of a public nature.

The last quotation is from the letter of John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*:

Another painful chapter of history to which the sons and daughters of the church must return with a spirit of repentance is that of the acquiescence given, especially in certain centuries, to intolerance and even the use of violence in the service of truth.

This was one of the great achievements of John Paul II; he openly spoke about these bad and painful moments in history in order to purify, and we can be stronger now.

Once again, this is what I want to emphasize: "Truth cannot be imposed by any social, cultural, religious power, but only by virtue of its own truth." I will touch last on Lord Acton, a great English Catholic of the twentieth century, who said: "Liberty becomes a matter of morality rather than of politics." This is what we claim within the Church: we appreciate the negative concept of freedom in the political sphere

because it is a condition of free society, obviously. It is freedom for all persons. But there *is* absolute Truth – we call it God – we have to remember about cultural circumstances, different individual problems, but there *is* a universal basis of good and evil, for example, human rights. The issue of human rights is universal. We cannot torture anyone; this is not a question of culture. In China, in Peru, in Cameroon, in Poland, it is the same: it is bad, it is wrong, it is evil to torture people. There *are* some universal bases connecting cultures. And we can judge, but we should judge deeds, not persons.

Transcribed and translated from Polish by Anna Wróbel.

## 17.

## On the Necessary Preconditions for Dialogues of Tolerance: Baruch Spinoza (Benedictus de Spinoza) & Moses Mendelssohn

MOSHE SHNER

Berlin 2009

### PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

It is my honor to be with you today in this important meeting. Before entering the philosophical and historical discourse about the idea of Tolerance and the necessary pre-conditions for the initiation of an effective dialogue of tolerance among people from different faiths, I would like to share with you my personal perspective on this crucial topic. I believe that philosophy is not emerging in an existential vacuum, but is rather connected to and contextualized by life experiences.

In an attempt to introduce myself, I would say that my identity is shaped by several places and several stories, all of which give meaning to this tolerance discussion. First of all, I come from Israel. I live in the north of the country, in an area called from antiquity the Galilee, an area of multiple cultures and the bedrock for many old and new spiritual movements. One can understand the need for tolerance, and even a theology of tolerance when one lives in a multicultural area where Jews and Arabs are living side by side. Speaking about Jews, we refer to a rich puzzle of people coming from dozens of countries, languages and cultures, seculars as well as religious, city dwellers and village people, newcomers and those who are already rooted in the country. When we speak of Christians – the majority of the Israeli Christian population is “Galilean” – we speak of Latin Catholics, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox and

**DRUZE**, a relatively small Middle Eastern religious sect characterized by an eclectic system of doctrines and by cohesion and loyalty among its members that have enabled them to maintain, through almost a thousand years of turbulent history, their close-knit identity and distinctive faith. They numbered more than 250,000 in the late 20th century and lived mostly in Lebanon, with smaller communities in Israel and Syria. *Druze* religious beliefs developed out of Ismailite teachings. Various Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, Neoplatonic, and Iranian elements, however, are combined under a doctrine of strict monotheism. They call themselves “muwahhidūn” (“monotheists”).

a few other minor Christian groups. Speaking of the “Galilean” Muslims, we refer first of all to Sunnites, but also to Sufi Muslims, Druze (all the Druze of Israel live in the Galilee), Circassian Muslims (non-Arabic people originally from the Caucasus) and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (an Islamic movement originally from India). A unique addition to this cultural puzzle is the presence of the two world centers of the Bahai’ faith in the Galilee (in Acco and Haifa). Together, we all face in this small area, loaded with history, memories, narratives, religious traditions and cultures, a major challenge of tolerance: how can people of so many identities can live side by side with mutual respect?

But I also come from Poland. My father was born in Łódź where his family lived among non-Jews – Polish and German people – on the main street of the city. His mother Golda Szner (Shner) was the youngest among sixteen brothers and sisters, religious and atheists, people of the political right and communist ideologists. All but one aunt, who immigrated in time to Israel, perished in World War II. A whole “tribe,” fifteen families, dozens of aunts and uncles, hundreds of relatives – all gone. This fact gives tolerance, in my mind, a dimension of urgency; it adds also a hint of skepticism. We Jews do not fully trust “tolerance talks” after what happened to us.

My mother Sonia Duschnitzky came from Sejny, a diverse city of Poles, Jews and Lithuanians. The family history in Sejny goes back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. My mother spoke about seven or eight languages (I hardly speak two). Thousands of Jews lived in Sejny before World War II – no one lives there now. All the Jews but one (as far as we know, and we know too little) who lived in Sejny in 1939 perished. There are no Jews in Sejny today.

Sonia Duschnitzky (Shner) survived the war as a partisan in Belorussia and, after a year in Soviet Lithuania and two years in Poland, rebuilt her life in 1948 in Israel; in 1949, together with my father and a few other survivors, built in the Galilee the Ghetto Fighters’ Kibbutz (community) and established the first Holocaust museum in the world

– the Ghetto Fighters House. Tolerance – and the historical failure of such ideas in the twentieth century – is a major topic of this museum's educational activities.

To add to this complex picture of destruction and resurrection, part of my story comes from here, from Berlin as well. My grandfather, Moshe Duschnitzky, a distinguished member of the Jewish community in Sejny until 1928, when he was forced by the Polish authorities to leave Poland, is buried here. Following my recent dialogues with Pogranicze, I renewed the search for the grave of my lost grandfather, and finally last year we found his tiny, long-forgotten grave at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin. I believe it would not have happened without the people of Pogranicze. I now have the chance to say the Kadish prayer (the mourning prayer) at my grandfather's grave for the first time.

So, I want to speak with you today about Tolerance and its very possibility in an interfaith dialogue. I want to share with you my understanding of the prerequisites for a dialogue of tolerance among people from different traditions. Part of it I derive from my life in the Galilee and the story of my family and my people, wandering homeless refugees who seek home throughout Europe and in an ancient homeland, and urgently need this antidote for hatred – tolerance. Part of it I derive from my study of Jewish philosophy in Modernity.

I am wise enough, following all that is said, to know that ideas alone are sometimes not enough to become actions and policies, but I also believe that we do not have the luxury of despair at the possibility of dialogues of tolerance. The alternative – as we already know from our history – is hell.

#### MONOTHEISM AND THE CHALLENGE OF TOLERANCE

I want to enrich our discussion of the core values needed for interfaith dialogue by the philosophical thought of two distinguished Jewish philosophers, the seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch (Benedictus) Spinoza, and the eighteenth-century Berlin philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn. From their thought we can derive at least two principles without which interfaith dialogue will not be a dialogue of tolerance and, therefore, would not produce mutual understanding, respect and peaceful co-existence.

It is the nature of a monotheistic faith to claim sole possession of the ultimate truth about God. Monotheism means an exclusive “explaining principle” of reality. Truth is one and is given in the sacred text of the monotheistic faith, any monotheistic faith. Therefore, contrary

**AUTO DA FÉ**, Spanish “act of faith”, a public ceremony during which the sentences upon those brought before the Spanish Inquisition were read and after which the sentences were executed by the secular authorities. The first *auto da fé* took place in Sevilla in 1481; the last, in Mexico in 1850. The victims were most frequently apostate former Jews and former Muslims, Protestants, and occasionally those who had been accused of such crimes as bigamy and sorcery. Life imprisonment was the extreme penalty that the inquisitor could impose; the death penalty was imposed and carried out by the civil authorities. Generally, neither punishment nor the handing over of condemned persons to the secular power took place.

to pagan religions, which tended to be pluralistic and tolerant by their very nature, tolerance is a serious challenge to monotheistic theologians. Throughout the medieval religious disputes, it was self-evident to Jews, Christians and Muslims that they, and only they, each from their own perspective, possess the ultimate truth. The others were, at best, mistaken, and at worst, enemies of God. Jews used to express the idea of Judaism’s supremacy over the faith of the gentiles (“Goyim,” non-Jews), while Christians tried to baptize and save the souls of all non-Christians. Alternatives were going to exile, or *auto de fe*. And Muslims offered non Muslims (*kuffar*) the generous choice between Islam and the sword. At best, Jews and Christians were tolerated

as inferior and dependant populations, the *Dhimmi*.

A demonstration of this monotheistic understanding of truth we have in Rabbi Yehuda Halevi’s classic philosophical book, *The Kosari*, which describes a competition between representatives of the three monotheistic faiths and philosophy for the soul of the king of Kosar who sought – probably in the eighth century – a true faith for his people. It is a great story, based on a vague historical account of a Jewish kingdom of Kosar, though we can assume that the actual reader whom Rabbi Halevi had in mind was not the Kosari king, but the twelfth-century Jews of Spain who faced the temptations and pressures of conversion. The Jew in that fictitious story – like the Christian, the Muslim and the philosopher – tries to convince the king (i.e. his Jewish reader) that he alone possesses the true knowledge of God.

**YEHUDA HALEVI**, (c. 1075–1141) a Spanish Jewish physician, poet and philosopher. He is considered one of the greatest Hebrew poets, celebrated both for his religious and secular poems, many of which appear in present-day liturgy. His greatest philosophical work was *The Kuzari*.

In modern times, following radical changes in the European economy, the development of Absolutism and the new cultural atmosphere of Enlightenment, the theological discourse among Jews and Christians changed as well. Jewish scholars, who recognized that the walls of the Jewish ghetto, physical as well as social and

spiritual ones, had started to collapse, wished to be accepted into the general society as Europeans. This desired emancipation could not come together with the old idea that their faith is the only true faith.

Modernized Jews entered new, “neutral” social circles that brought together Jews and non-Jews and enabled cultural interaction. The other faiths seemed more acceptable as they recognized not only the differences, but also the similarities between all monotheistic faiths (Katz 214–225). However, this was not an easy process and it never developed symmetrically in all directions. Europe was basically Christian, and many Jews crossed the lines to Christianity in their search for a better social status; in other cases, they adopted a neutral stance and even indifference towards all faiths.

Nonetheless, it was by no means just a practical choice; the New Europe influenced the Jews and gave them new spiritual horizons. Ideas of universal humanity and reason made the separation of individuals of different faiths archaic. Tolerance became a key idea in modern Jewish thought.

#### SPINOZA

In the seventeenth century, it was Baruch Spinoza (1632–1676) in the flourishing free Netherlands who led this vision of universal rationality. Baruch Spinoza was the son of a former *Marrano* family from Portugal. *Marranos*, an insulting word in Spanish, were Spanish and Portuguese Jews forced to adopt Christianity under threat of expulsion, but who continued to practice Judaism secretly. Spinoza’s family escaped to free Amsterdam and returned publicly to Jewish life. The idea of Tolerance, on the one hand, and the question of the validity of all religious traditions, on the other hand, formed the spiritual context in which young Spinoza was brought up. Being stuck in the in-between zone of Christianity, which his family was forced to practice for a few generations, and Judaism, which became once again the practice of his family, the bright young Portuguese-Dutch Jew, instead of becoming a distinguished rabbinic scholar, grew up to be the great critic of all established religions.

In his *Political-Theological Tractatus* (1670) Spinoza articulated a brave idea that caused his excommunication from the Jewish community of Amsterdam (1656). It was the idea that became the leading thread of this pioneering book: tradition is the historical creation of men and, therefore, any religious tradition should be learned in its historical context.

Spinoza articulated throughout his philosophical writings a monistic explanation of reality. All reality is part of one holistic Nature and one infinite God, which are, in the final analysis, the same thing: Nature is God and God is nature (*Deus sive Nature*). It follows, that all religious phenomena are part of one history and subject to the same historical logic (an assumption that is under severe criticism in post-modernity). One historiography explains all human phenomena, including all historical religions. Scriptures, as historical texts, teach us something about history and about the nature of those who wrote them; they tell us very little about the infinite.

The connection to tolerance is obvious. Spinoza is the great rival of any fundamentalism even today. If scriptures were written by men, then they lose any monopoly on God and God's words, and on human thinking as well. This is our first pre-condition for any fruitful interfaith dialogue: accepting the historical and cultural context of all religious traditions.

Even today, when I discuss Spinoza with my Jewish, Christian and Muslim students, I face many who cannot digest Spinoza's idea that scriptures are human-made, and therefore are subject to our rational autonomous criticism. Observant Jews, Muslims and Christians are sometimes insulted by this 340 year-old idea that it was human beings who wrote the Bible, the Talmud, The New Testament and the Qur'an, in a certain historical context. And yet, even if we ignore the historical knowledge we already have as modern people, and we grant a divine status to one or a few of these texts, or even to part of one of these texts as a few "modern-traditionalists" suggest, we essentially exclude the other texts. Only when we place these most important texts within one historical paradigm do we gain the possibility of respect towards all of these documents of tradition.

#### MOSES MENDELSSOHN

Spinoza was too early for the Jewish community of Amsterdam, but his idea of cultural history could not be dismissed anymore from the European intellectual arena. In the eighteenth century, it was Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), the father of Jewish enlightenment, who sought new bridges to the outside non-Jewish world and made the idea of tolerance a key factor of his thought. In eighteenth-century Europe, more and more Jews sought the modernization of Jewish life and education, but Moses Mendelssohn, the so-called "Jewish Socrates," an observant Jew and a known rational philosopher, was even then a strange

phenomenon. Jews and Christians alike could not understand how a Jew could adopt rational Deism, the Religion of Human Intellect, and at the same time remain an observant Jew.

Mendelssohn wanted to believe that he could hold these two worlds together and that the new spirit of enlightenment would enable him to be a Deist philosopher without being involved in medieval-like religious disputes; however, his dualism was not easy for his surroundings and finally he was forced to publicly defend his position and explain how a Jew could enjoy both worlds at the same time. Here, in the texts he wrote to defend his dualism is where the idea of tolerance entered his thought. Here, for the first time in Jewish thought, the medieval idea of “one-way-to-God” gave place to a pluralistic paradigm of many legitimate faiths.

Mendelssohn was born in 1729 in the town of Dessau, the son of a Torah scribe. The non-fanatic approach of the Dessau Jewish community enabled him to study philosophy in addition to the traditional rabbinical education. In 1743, he followed his Rabbi and mentor David Fraenkl to Berlin, at first as the tutor to the children of the soap maker Isaac Bernhard (1750), and later to become a rich merchant and a renowned philosopher. It was after this move to Berlin that he seriously undertook secular studies outside the world of traditional Jewish scholarship. A decade later (1754), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Mendelssohn became acquainted and a life-long friendship began, out of which grew Lessing’s play *Nathan the Wise* (1779). Their friendship exemplified the Enlightenment’s ability to surmount religious differences and it was Lessing who secured Mendelssohn a place in the circle of German intellectuals. Of course, Jews and Christians had maintained intellectual contacts in earlier times as well, but the friendship between Lessing and Mendelssohn moved these relationships much further and attracted considerable attention.

During the 1750s and 1760s, Mendelssohn wrote several philosophical discourses, including his prize-winning *Treatise on Certainty in Metaphysical Philosophy* (1763), for a contest in which Immanuel Kant also competed. Mendelssohn was by far the most dominant figure of the German-Jewish Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. He is considered the founding father and continual reference point for evaluating later developments in Jewish philosophy. His philosophy anticipated the aesthetics of Kant and Friedrich Schiller, which emphasized the autonomy of aesthetical judgment. His writings include *Philosophische*

*Gespräche* (1755), *Philosophische Schriften* (1761), *Phädon* (1767), and *Jerusalem: oder, Über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (1783).

As a thinker of the Enlightenment, Mendelssohn wished to introduce his people to German language and culture, and he translated the Psalms and the Pentateuch into German, written in Hebrew letters. The translation was accompanied by a traditional Hebrew exegesis. The translation work, which aimed at lowering the boundaries between Jews and their surroundings, stormed the Jewish community and aroused severe opposition among local rabbis. Nevertheless, the time of the *Cherem*, the traditional Jewish excommunication, was over. Mendelssohn maintained good relations with the Berlin community and after the disputation with Johann Casper Lavater, a Swiss clergyman, was appointed a *Parnas*, one of the community leaders.

Mendelssohn was acutely conscious of living in exile and being a man without a homeland. The failed attempts by Lavater to drag him into a religious dispute or to convert him to the Christian faith (1769) resulted in Mendelssohn's conviction that the social status of the Jews would never be secured without civil rights based on rationality, and the universal humanistic ideas of Humanity and Tolerance. Mendelssohn died in Berlin in 1786, probably from a heart attack following his intense engagement in a severe dispute over Spinoza's pantheistic philosophy.

In his own life, Mendelssohn exemplified the dualistic scheme of the modernized Jew, which tears modern Jews apart to this very day, a dualistic model of identity: being at the same time a Jew, a member of a defined particularistic religious group, and a respected member of surrounding society.

#### MENDELSSOHN'S PHILOSOPHY OF TOLERANCE

Mendelssohn's philosophy was influenced by the tradition of classical eighteenth-century rationalism: the emphasis on reason as the sole medium by which man obtained knowledge of his duties to God. The "Religion of Reason," which he adopted from European Deism, maintained the immortality of the soul (*Phädon*, 1767) and the idea that man is endowed with eternally-valid innate ideas of absolute goodness and truth. Morality becomes, in accordance with Kant's "Categorical Imperative," a faculty of the rational human being. A key value in this tradition is the belief that all men "are to be accounted by nature as equal." The truth – according to this tradition – is that reason directs men to happiness of the individual and society through the perfection of men.

One of Mendelssohn's main doctrines, which he shared with Locke, Shaftesbury and Leibnitz, and developed in his main book on Judaism, *Jerusalem* (1783), was the distinction between eternal truths, which are self-evident, i.e. metaphysics and physics, and historical truths, which require the evidence of sensory experience. This epistemology helped Mendelssohn to argue for tolerance towards the Jews. In accordance with Rabbi Yehuda Halevi's teaching, Mendelssohn argued that the giving of the Torah at Sinai is a historical fact, which was brought to us by the long chain of Jewish teaching. All Jews – *and only Jews* – accept this rolling testimony and it abides only them.

His idea of tolerance is based on a dualistic scheme, based on this epistemic assumption: as a rational philosopher, he shares with his non-Jewish neighbors the religion of reason and with other philosophers, the eternal truth evident to all rational people. As a Jew, he shares with other Jews a divine law – not human-made law, but divine law – given to Jews alone, that touches only Jews. This particularistic set of laws does not interfere in any way with his rationality nor with his good citizenship.

#### THE DISPUTE WITH LAVATER (1769)

Although it was against his nature and his intentions, Mendelssohn was compelled to publicly defend his personal dualism and the right and logic of the independent existence of the Jewish religion among the non-Jewish society of his time.

As Mendelssohn became more integrated into the Berlin Enlightenment circles, his prominence continued to underscore the anomaly of a traditional Jew at the center of this intellectual world. His encounter with the Swiss clergyman Johann Casper Lavater brought many of these underlying issues to the foreground. Lavater shared with Christian circles the ambition to convert Jews to Christianity and in that way to show the supremacy of Christian tradition over rationality, its most severe rival. Lavater and Mendelssohn met during the mid-1760s. Somewhat reluctantly, Mendelssohn agreed to some private conversations on the subject of Jesus Christ and expressed a positive attitude towards his moral teachings.

These positive remarks towards the father of Christianity were very tempting, too tempting. Lavater had sworn to maintain the privacy of these conversations. But in 1769, he recounted these discussions while dedicating his German translation of a Christian theology composition by the Calvinist Charles Bonnet to Mendelssohn, with the challenge:

To refute it publicly in case you find the essential arguments adduced in support of the facts of Christianity to be incorrect: in case, however, you find them correct, to do what prudence, love of truth, and honesty bid you do; what Socrates would have done, had he read this treatise and found it irrefutable.

Bonnet's book expressed the Christian dispute against Deism and rationality, and Mendelssohn was put in the middle of this public theological dispute. The Lavater affair revealed certain significant forces that were in play at the time, and the extent of whose significance historians still debate. Lavater's challenge provided a direct attack on the notion of tolerance. Mendelssohn was called upon to enter a religious disputation by refuting Bonnet's arguments on behalf of Christianity. The record we have from Lessing and his brother shows that Mendelssohn's first intention was to fight back and refute Bonnet's arguments, but his request for peace and the awareness of his political fragile situation as a Jew in a Christian state made him formulate a different reply. In his response, Mendelssohn explained that his refusal to enter the debate derived from the inferior legal status that governed the Jewish community, almost pedantically rationalizing to Lavater the simple politics of minority existence.

The main idea he brought forward in his letter (Berlin, 12 December 1769; Mendelssohn 1969, 117–8) was that we have to accept that there is more than one legitimate way to human salvation. Mendelssohn effectively forced Lavater to withdraw the public pressure, resulting in Lavater's isolation and the triumph of tolerance. On the other hand, Lavater was not alone in his wish to see Mendelssohn convert to Christianity and the pressure and social threat remained and affected the conversion decisions of many Jews in future decades.

Let us read a few lines from Mendelssohn's response to Lavater that illuminate his principal idea of Tolerance:

If a Confucius or a Solon were to live among our contemporaries, I could, according to our religion, love and admire the great man without succumbing to the ridiculous desire to convert him. Convert a Confucius or a Solon? What for? Since he is not a member of the household of Jacob, our religious laws do not apply to him. And as far as the principles of religion are concerned, we should have little trouble agreeing on them. ... Do I think he

can be saved? It seems to me that anyone who leads men in virtue in this life cannot be damned in the next. (Fortunately, I need not fear that I shall have to defend my views before an academic board of inquiry in the same way in which Marmontel was summoned by the Sorbonne to a hearing, because of the convictions he held.) ... It is my good fortune to count among my friends many an excellent man who is not of my faith. We love each other sincerely, although both of us suspect or assume that we differ in matters of faith. I enjoy the pleasure of his company and feel enriched by it. But at no time has my heart whispered to me, "what a pity that this beautiful soul should be lost..." Only that man will be troubled by such regrets, who believes that there is no salvation outside his church [house of prayers].

The letter shows Mendelssohn's stance towards the other. Tolerance in this text is not a matter of tactics, good manners or "political correctness." One should accept the other and his truth because one cannot have any claim of truth towards the other of different faith.

It is not a minor statement by a leading Jewish teacher; it is, maybe, the first time in the history of Jewish tradition that a leading Jewish scholar stated that Judaism – as any other religious tradition – is not the sole road to salvation, and that human perfection can be achieved within several circles of faith. Neither Judaism, nor any other faith can claim ultimate truth! This is our second prerequisite for an inter-faith dialogue – the idea that there are many ways to worship God and that they are all worthy.

We should be precise in our understanding of Mendelssohn's pluralism. It is not a postmodern relativistic approach, which gives legitimacy to every trend and every moral teaching, losing the very possibility of common ethics. Mendelssohn maintains in his philosophical writings, as he does in our text, that universal ethics are a necessary pre-requisite for a pluralistic vision of society. According to the basic convictions of eighteenth-century Deism, human beings share rational capacities that enable this universal ethical discourse. Solon (the founder of Athenian democracy), Confucius (the great Chinese philosopher and father of Confucianism) and Mendelssohn could, in principle, agree on ethics and questions of human goodness. This common understanding would not prevent any one of them to hold his particular tradition. As rational ethicists, Confucius, Solon and Mendelssohn share a common ground

of universal ethics. As members of different communities, each one has his own tradition which is legitimate as far as it does not exclude the validity of the other traditions.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In order to develop free dialogue among people of different faiths, where one will not feel that he is under pressure by the neighboring traditions, two pre-conditions are essential.

The first, following the seventeenth-century teaching of Spinoza, is the idea that religious traditions develop historically by human beings, and therefore lose their ultimate force upon human beings, within a religious community, and outside it towards other communities of faith. Traditions change and vary as human beings change in different times and different historical arenas.

The second, following the eighteenth-century teaching of Mendelssohn, is the idea that there are more true traditions than a medieval theologian would accept. There are many genuine roads to God's salvation and one should not bother himself with the thought that the other is mistaken and doing evil if he or she follows a different tradition. The only demand from one-each-other is tolerance and mutual respect.

When we accept these two principles, we are free to enrich our world with the beauty of other cultures and other traditions and we are welcoming interfaith dialogues. Human beings are different, and each one has his/her own beauty.

Accepting the historicity and plurality of religious traditions, we still have to maintain that in order to achieve mutual respect and co-existence, among people of different identities we need common ground. Spinoza and Mendelssohn maintain universal rational morality. Looking back to our twentieth-century historical memories we must have severe doubts about the very possibility of this common ground, and yet, the alternatives, which are religious fundamentalism and nihilistic relativism, seem much worse. Because we desperately need tolerance as a guiding principle for the post-twentieth-century world we have to establish the historicity of religious traditions and at the same time face again the challenge of core values that will serve as a common ground for our pluralistic society.

## 18.

## CASE STUDY

Traditions of Tolerance in Local Muslim  
Communities in Central Asia

STANISŁAW ZAPAŚNIK

Tbilisi 2005

My first encounters with Central Asian Islam took place in the early 1990s. In 1991, on the initiative of a famous Polish philosopher and mathematician, Andrzej Grzegorzczak, I organized the Institute for Dialogue between Islam and Christianity in Alma-Ata, the Kazakhstani capital at the time. Central Asia was then an area of large-scale processes of the rebirth of nations and, simultaneously, the rebirth of Islam. For those reasons – as we believed – a place was required in which a constant dialogue between Islam and Christianity would be led, so as to prevent the deepening of the conflicts between the native and the Slavic communities with the coloring of a religious conflict. When I think of that initiative today, it is obvious for me that both Andrzej Grzegorzczak and I had a certain bias against Islam, which can be found in history. For many centuries, Poland waged wars with the Tatars and then Turkey; that is why there is a stereotype, deeply rooted in Polish consciousness, of Poland as the *Antemurale Christianitatis* (Bulwark of Christianity). In this imagery, Islam acts as the enemy of Christianity.

To speak the truth, the planned Institute never came to life. And today, I believe it happened because of certain errors, which I – lacking knowledge of local culture – was making from the beginning of the endeavor. However, because I spent several years on the matter, I have reasons to believe that I was a direct witness to the rebirth of Islam and its ongoing evolution in Central Asia.

I began coming to Central Asia in 1992, as an anthropologist conducting field research. I noticed quite early that there are different notions of “familiarity” and “alienage” in the Asian cultures than in Western culture; and that there, “alien” suggests a different emotional approach. When I visit the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tajik, or Uzbeks in their houses for the first time, I may expect equally good receiving, as if my nationality, religion, political past or present were unimportant. And on such criteria as faith and ethnic or political affiliation we, at least in Poland, create the notion of “alien.”

Before departing on an anthropological survey, one of the requirements is to learn the history of the chosen society as well as possible, because it is part of the scholarly endeavor. If I intend to research small Asian societies, I learn that – as all the historians of Asia unanimously state – in the past there were no religious persecutions or wars. Moreover, it is a frequent opinion among the historians of Asia, that the Empire of Genghis Khan is, even today, a worthy pattern of religiously-tolerant state. The idea is less popular in Western scholarship, although Western authors nominate the Ottoman Empire as a state tolerant to all cultural differences. In such a way, even before my research, I received a key to interpreting behavior – made credible by academic authorities – that I then observed immediately after coming to Asia. Elements of this behavior have an illusory similarity to the behavior considered as tolerant in Western culture. I am not surprised, therefore, to see them characterized as such in academic literature.

**GENGHIS KHAN** (1162–1227), original name Temüjin, Mongolian warrior-ruler, one of the most famous conquerors of history, who consolidated tribes into a unified Mongolia, and then extended his empire across Asia to the Adriatic Sea. *Genghis Khan* was a warrior and ruler of genius who, brought all the nomadic tribes of Mongolia under the rule of himself and his family in a rigidly disciplined military state. He then turned his attention toward the settled peoples and began conquest that eventually carried the Mongol armies as far as the Adriatic Sea in one direction, and the Pacific coast of China in the other, leading to the establishment of the great Mongol Empire (1206–1368).

I needed six years to ascertain that the identification of such behaviour as tolerant is a mistake. It stems from ignorance of cultural differences. I will now try to succinctly describe the difference, beginning with the explanation of the Western idea of tolerance.

The idea of tolerance in its current meaning arose in Western culture as a consequence of a long-term process of a shift in values. Two new values, which came to life in Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, played an especially decisive role in understanding the essence of tolerance. The first value is human dignity. It is important that exactly at that moment human value began to be interpreted as the value of each

human individual, based on his belonging to humankind. Among other things, this meant that each man or woman should expect respect, regardless of his deeds for the society. We express this by stating that the dignity of the human person is an inalienable right. Even the worst crimes cannot deprive the one committing them of the respect due to an individual in a society.

This value then became the basis for the idea of human rights, which, in turn, are expressed in legislation: such as the prohibition of torture in an investigation, the presumption of innocence, and the right for professional legal counsel. Moreover, human dignity is also one of the values making the basis of liberal democracy. Western citizens treat the presence of democratic institutions in their states as the observance of their rights in political life.

However, the value of human dignity is not the source of the contemporary idea of tolerance. One can still show respect for the dignity of another human, identified as “alien,” while remaining the “let live” approach. By saying so, one does express respect, however, without answering to the other’s worldview. One abstains from judging, because of moral rights due to the other.

If we compare this attitude with the contemporary Western idea of tolerance, it becomes clear that it is nothing else than an attitude of resigned indifference towards divergent views and kindness towards the person holding them. However, a genuinely tolerant attitude is kind towards both the “alien” and his/her views. It means that there are other values specifying the essence of the idea of tolerance than the value of human dignity described above.

In search for those values, special attention needs to be drawn toward the cultural changes between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was then that the notion of individualism gained its full power, together with the congruent complex of moral ideas endemic to Western culture, which determines its unique character in the world. The basis for individualism comprises of at least four such ideas: value of human dignity; autonomy of the human individual; privacy; and the right for self-realization. The second is the most interesting. It represents a statement that each human, as a rational and free-willed being, is capable of defining his own aims for life and to choose the means for their fulfillment, and has the right to do it in a society.

The value of individual autonomy may be perceived in the request for transparency in public life. Societies condemn lies in politics, since hiding any information by the state deprives citizens of knowledge they

might use to change or reassign their aims for life and means for their fulfillment. The approval of the value of individual autonomy is the basis of a pluralistic society. Because of that, society acknowledges the right for citizens to have distinct views and to voice the subjective truth publicly. Philosophers justified the idea of pluralism in social life. John Stuart Mill, for example, wrote that the freedom of thought and word enables social evolution and discovery of new ideas by the individuals. However, the dissemination of new views on the matter of tolerance had decisive importance to the development of a pluralistic society.

Contemporary Western philosophers write about tolerance that it is the chief moral principle in liberal democracy. I disagree with this view, because – in my opinion – the origin and development of democracy is more connected with individualism, which, as I have shown, emerged from of a whole set of moral ideas in Western culture. As these ideas were disseminated among Western societies, the idea of tolerance changed. Currently, we accept the right of the individual to have divergent views not only when we believe that the environment to conduct free intellectual inquiry will contribute to social development. Our acceptance is unconditional and stems from a belief that each individual is unique, original, and as a morally autonomous being should be guaranteed the right to display everything that marks her individuality among other human beings.

I cannot engage the problem of the borders of tolerance here. It is solved differently, depending on the traditions of each society. For example, as American sociologists noticed at the end of 1970s, the vast majority of US citizens consider all behavior morally acceptable, as long as it does not harm others. I want to focus on the influence of the value of individual autonomy; in Western thought, the idea begins to dominate that tolerance requires not only a certain attitude towards the “alien,” but also towards the views he might hold. We display tolerance only when we give others the right to voice their views, even if we believe them to be unpleasant, unsound, shocking, and/or hostile. Among Poles, 74.4 percent have the exact same understanding of tolerance (public opinion poll 2001). In such a way, the principle of tolerance – even in the nineteenth century defined as a demand for kindness towards the “alien” – has transformed into a demand of partnership, a call for openness to “alien” views and for answering them with a dialogic attitude. Hence, moral premises were made for intercultural dialogue led on a partnership basis.

The idea of tolerance as it was developed in the West differs from the actions of people in Asiatic cultures, because in the latter there never was a notion of the individual human being in the Western meaning. An individual in Asia is perceived only as a sign of the community with which he is identified. Thus, one cannot be considered as completely separate from one's given community and the rights to which one is entitled as member of this community. Those differences are often expressed by calling Asiatic cultures as "collectivist," in opposition to the Western "individualist" culture. It is beyond doubt that they are the main reason for disputes over human rights. While in the West human rights are understood as the rights of individual in a society, in Asia the interpretation of human rights as the rights of a community is predominant.

In the case of Central Asia, the actions of people I described, which may be wrongly identified as tolerance, stem from the characteristic (in this cultural region) perception of human nature. After the Mongolian invasion, the Hanafi school of Islamic law (Madh'hab), known for its tolerance of the old traditions, dominated Sunni Islam in Central Asia. Islamization was mainly the work of Sufi missionaries, mostly ignorant in theological subtleties, what made them indifferent to the presence of local beliefs and customs. That is why, in the regions of Sufi influence, a large part of the pre-Islamic tradition was preserved and incorporated into Islam. That is why a Central Asia Muslim is the owner of two souls.

The first soul (*jon*) is connected to the notions of sin and salvation; but as I discovered in my research, it has a secondary role in religious life. I have never acquired an answer about its nature, which shows it is not a subject of reflection of the believers. They have knowledge of it, of course, but it does not go beyond the information on what behavior is required for its salvation and what leads to sin. On the contrary, religious life in a neighborhood community (*mahallah*), a popular institution among the agrarian people of the Central Asia, is organized around the beliefs connected with the second soul (*ruh*). This is an Arabic term, which means: a soul; a spirit; a ghost; life; an essence. However, in Central Asian beliefs and customs, for which the term is crucial, the *ruh* spirit acts as a being that, after one's death, remains in touch with the world of the living. It lives with the living and influences the fates of its descendants. In many ways, the *ruh* spirits resemble living people: they see, hear, feel, and communicate with the living. They have appetites and all the emotions and characteristics of living human beings. They participate in family matters and may support their relatives. They are

potentially kind-hearted but require care from living descendants; among other things, they need to be fed, and will make harm should their relatives not fulfill this obligation, by sending disease or even death.

After burial, the spirit of the dead haunts its home. There even are regular visiting days for these spirits, usually it is the night between Thursday and Friday. At such a reception, the houses and yards are cleaned, all doors and gates are left open and lamps are lit, so that the spirits will not get lost. In those days all meals are cooked on oil, because, according to the beliefs, spirits of the dead feed on the smell of boiling oil; special dishes are made that are the spirits' favorite.

I would like to bring attention to ceremonial burial and the rites following burial. That is, during the wake, which happens three days, fourteen days, and one year after death, no one uses the word *ruh* in singular when referring to the dead, but rather everyone use its plural version (*arvah*). The memory of the connection between *ruh* and *arvah* became so weak (both started to mean the singular spirit/soul, though used on different occasions) that in time the need arose in the area for a new plural form, which was done with the use of the Turkish suffix to the Arabic word and the making of *arvahlar*. The custom of naming the dead with plural from *ruh* (*arvah*) came to life when the knowledge of the Arabic language was still prevalent. In my opinion, this means the linguistic custom expressed a kind of social consciousness, which stemmed from the inability to consider an individual as a being separate from his/her kin. Thus, the content of the local ceremonial burial was not to worship a specific family member. The object of the worshipping rituals were not specific persons, but always all the ancestors.

The ontologic relation of an individual and kin began before birth – as one can find by analyzing fertility rites – since the sheer possibility of this act was connected with the transfer of ancestral power upon the living. I could give more such examples; but even those mentioned above enable the conclusion that an alien newcomer is perceived as a personification of powers gathered by the generations of one's ancestors. Complicated hospitality rites are performed to neutralize the powers. The exchange of gifts serves to ensure the kindness of the alien spirits arriving with the guest. The greeting ritual serves similar purposes and part of the greeting behavior is aimed at the newcomer's ancestors.

The elements of culture mentioned here are not sufficient to explain other behavior, such as those that made historians state that Asian countries were always tolerant toward religions. In this case,

the notion of religion caused the misunderstanding; precisely speaking, the transfer of the Christian notion of “religion” to describe religions outside of the Western culture. In a simplified way, these differences may be reduced to the following: what is European religion’s content, is Asiatic religion’s form, and vice versa. Islam in Central Asia exists only as a social record and collective ritual. The believers, apart from educated lawyers and theologians, possess only superficial knowledge of dogmas and are not interested in this side of religious life. Faith rarely has the character of spiritual experience here. Its essential content is the collective ritual.

It is true that in mosque teachings and sermons Islam is presented as a religion of neighborly love. I do not believe, however, that Muslim rulers were proceeding in accordance with Islam toward their infidel subjects. On the contrary, they were rather indifferent towards the dogmatic side of religion. Islam legitimized their power and was the instrument to uphold social order in the state. Rulers were willing to tolerate the presence of representatives of different religions as long as the latter were utterly loyal and did not deprave Muslim customs. Thus, tolerance for different religions in Muslim countries was always accompanied with certain restrictions of public rights of their believers. Another thing is that in the actions of Muslim rulers the same cultural pattern as in the hospitality rites of Asiatic peasants toward a newcomer came to life. When the latter ensures that the guest can act according to the rules of the ritual, he changes his attitude towards him; he gets rid of the etiquette politeness and replaces it with authentic kindness.

Nevertheless, I believe that the existence of such traditions – and they are vivid in the social memory of Asian Muslims – leaves an open space for dialogue between Asian Muslims and the West. I disagree with the view that a conflict between Islamic and Western civilizations is inevitable. The Muslims I meet in Central Asia and ask about it usually declare kindness toward Western values. And one can learn about such an attitude towards the West from thorough sociological research carried out among the Muslim populations in other countries. General distrust, on the other hand, is aroused about the intents of the US policies. No Muslim I talked to in Central Asia believed that the perpetrator of such a horrid – in their own opinion – crime as the 9/11 terrorist attacks was Osama bin Laden. On the contrary, they believed the attacks to have been ordered by President George Bush himself, or by his administration, so as to give reason for war with Islam.

**OSAMA BIN LADEN** (1957–2011), also spelled Usāmah ibn Lādin, a self-made billionaire, founder of the militant Islamist organization al-Qaeda (Arabic: “the Base”) and mastermind of numerous terrorist attacks against the United States and other Western states, including the 2000 suicide bombing of the US warship *Cole* in the Yemeni port of Aden and the 9/11 attacks on the United States. *Osama bin Laden* was killed when a small U.S. force transported by helicopters raided his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. His killing raised distrust in the Muslim world and split the West’s opinion. Despite the clear threat of the organization led by *bin Laden*, his execution seemed to many rather an attack against an unarmed man on soil not within U.S. jurisdiction, rather than an act of the so-called “war on terror.”

In media reports and declarations by Western politicians, I often encounter the view that the possibility of dialogue is excluded by the growing popularity of fundamentalist movements in the Islam world. I treat this as another misunderstanding stemming from ignorance of Islam. There is no “orthodoxy” in this religion, no commonly accepted and “symbol of faith” hallowed by God’s authority to which one could relate in order to divide the “true Islam” from the “fake” one. It does not mean that there are no religious authorities. Often, theology colleges or charismatic spiritual leaders are promoted to the status of authorities; but they act in a dispersed fashion, their influence has geographic limitations, and their authority is respected only by a group of followers in a certain place, not by all the inhabitants of their Islamic

country. One Islam – in the meaning of dogmas, laws and rites secondary to Shahada (the creed: “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God”) – does not exist. During my research in Central Asia I encountered many “Islams,” each of which were visibly different from the other, but I did not encounter religious symbols that would be generally accepted among the Muslim people of the region.

Secondly, the sense of Islamic fundamentalism is misperceived due to its name. The term “fundamentalism” was first used for a movement among nineteenth-century Protestants in the United States, who conditioned salvation via a set of ideas: conversion to Christianity; the infallibility of the Bible in matters of science, history and theology; and the close return of Christ to Earth, where he will establish the kingdom of peace and justice. From the beginning, the movement had an anti-modern character and stood against the transformation of customs through cultural change. Unlike this fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism is always a modernizing project, as well as the postulated return to the source of religion, and the first four Caliphs’ statehood is understood as a condition for introducing modern science and Western technology to Muslim societies.

On the basis of the documents handed over to me by Vitalii Ponomarev from the Moscow organization “Memorial,” I created a sociological profile of a popular and persecuted Central Asia Party operating in full conspiracy called *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Party of Liberation). To my amazement, I have found its members to be predominantly middle-class. During field research, I learned that many of the actual activists of the fundamentalist underground supported democracy during Perestroika and the first years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Some of the organizations, which advocate the building of an Islamic state, declare in their programs the desire to introduce democracy. This is the case of Adolat, from which came the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist party fighting side by side with the Taliban in Afghanistan against the US. Before the Adolat was abolished in 1992 and its members persecuted, all the oppositional democratic parties of Uzbekistan gathered around it.

This informs my belief that Islamic fundamentalism, as opposed to Christian, is not a religious phenomenon. It is, in each known case, a movement of social protest that refers to religion. That is why the aim of Western politics should be to change the situation arousing the protest; that is, above all, to change the political regimes against which it is directed.

As a researcher, I had multiple personal contacts with members of underground fundamentalist organizations, and I have never encountered behavior towards me that I could read as sign of religious intolerance. Moreover, all the fundamentalist movements that I learned about aim at rebuilding the Islamic state as it existed during the rules of the first four Caliphs. So, for Muslims it is this state that serves as the ideal of tolerance towards the believers of other monotheistic religions.

I have listed all the most important premises upon which I came to the conclusion that a conflict between the Islamic world and the West could only arise for political reasons, and that dialogue between the two is possible, but for its success a revision of the policies of the Western states is needed. I believe that tolerance is threatened by the authoritarian regimes of the Central Asian countries, which often benefit from the support of the West, more than by fundamentalism.

The dissolution of the USSR in the entire area of Central Asia triggered a deep identity crisis. It was especially dramatically experienced by young urban college graduates. From many of them I heard that they grew up with the belief that they were “Soviet people.” The birth of nationalisms during Perestroika and the emergence of nation states

after the USSR's dissolution created a situation that required a new assignment of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity, from the time of the Russian Empire's colonization of Central Asia, was strictly connected with confessional affiliation. The consequence of the mental changes triggered by the identity crisis was the rebirth of Islam. Many of the members of those societies at that time discovered Islam not only as a phenomenon of custom, but also as an essential element of their identities.

Another consequence of the identity crisis was the rebirth of traditional loyalties. The former nomadic societies like the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz and the Turkmen, understood the task of rebuilding ethnic cultures mainly as the return to tribal traditions. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, old regionalisms were reborn, created before the colonizing to strengthen clan relations, basing on the feeling of affiliation to a territorial group.

This is why from the first days of existence of the new states, their leaders had to undertake the task of transforming these societies into homogenous nations. In order to build nation states, they used Islam as a nationalistic ideology. To do so, they endeavored to subjugate independent religious communities, such as the *mahallah*. This stirred defiance among people who perceived governmental religious policies as anti-Islamic. In those circumstances in Central Asia, social protest against severe life conditions was expressed in religious form. The consciousness of the state strengthens my belief that we should consider Islamic fundamentalism not as a religious phenomenon, but as a political movement seeking ideological support in religion.

During our Colloquium, I have learned that the problem of religious intolerance, stemming from the use of religion as tool for building a nation state, exists among the countries of the Southern Caucasus as well. I assume that identical phenomena are occurring across the entire post-Soviet space, since the identity crisis is common to all post-Soviet states and it has stirred similar consequences everywhere, including Russia. That is why, not only in Central Asia, many religious conflicts result from the ruling apparatus' oppression of all religions apart from the "national" one. While preparing this paper, my main thought was to prove that it is not Islamic *religion* that obstructs intercultural dialogue, but rather politicians *using* religion to their own ends. However, after what I heard during the Colloquium about Georgia and Armenia, I wonder if there is already a need to defend Christianity the same way.

## 19.

## CASE STUDY

Georgian Practices of Tolerance and Situations  
of Their Renouncement

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI

Tbilisi 2005

Talking about tolerance in Georgia is an interesting and yet highly complicated subject. I cannot cover all the practices of tolerance from our history here; there are many legends about the tolerant Georgian medieval times, and the times before and after as well. I can only speak of what I know for sure: our relation to tolerance during Soviet times, and what happened after. I wish to simply present the facts, which I have as a member of this society.

During the Soviet times, in my childhood, everyone believed that we were the best society in the whole world. But in the “great” Soviet Union, Georgians believed they were the best of all. In this case, there has been little change in our society, though at least now we do not sing “those good guys are Georgians” all the time. It is a simple Georgian saying, which was never perceived as offensive towards other nations or societies.

We believed that saying because we were good, because we loved everyone, because we were very *tolerant*. The notion was used rarely, even during the Soviet times, because we knew it to be insufficient. However, we might have understood its etymologic meaning, which is “to be understanding.” But understanding is not a trait Georgians claim. Our society claims not understanding but common love and a perspicacity of life. The Georgians are this way; they are very decent,

**ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH**, independent Oriental Orthodox Christian church and the national church of Armenia. According to tradition, Armenia was evangelized by the apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. Armenia became the first country to adopt Christianity, about 300 AD, when St. Gregory the Illuminator converted the Arsacid King Tiridates III. The new Armenian church soon struck a course independent of the founding church at Caesarea in Cappadocia, though it developed in close relationship with the Syrians, who provided it with scriptures and liturgy and much of its basic institutional terminology.

very good, they love everybody, and so on. This was presented as a fact we all perfectly believed.

How did we confirm that we were “tolerant?” We absorbed the truths taught at school, home and in society: that only in our country such a situation is possible that believers of different faiths can live together without hatred. Each Georgian spoke about it as his personal participation in the tolerance of his country. “This is a small part of Earth,” the Georgian answered, “where side by side reside a Georgian Orthodox church, an Armenian Apostolic church and a synagogue.” And there was also a place meant for a mosque; however, they couldn’t tell

where, because something happened with the mosque during the Soviet times; but they were speaking of the old times, when everything was just great at our place. Everyone were close, everyone loved each other, mainly because we were so good.

But others might not be so good. What is the attitude of, for example, Turkey or of the other neighboring countries toward us? They usually said they treat us badly in Azerbaijan and even worse – so that there is no Georgian left – in Armenia. And this was presented as a kind of an advantage of the Georgian society over neighboring societies. This was our understanding: that we are very good, because we love everyone, yet no one loves us, because... quite simply, we are the best.

I was lenient towards such an attitude. After all, I grew up in this society, and I trust I am saying things all Georgians understand. Everyone thought this way, and many of our compatriots still do. This was a kind of hidden Georgian micro-fascism, because no large-scale harmful activities were undertaken; Georgian tolerance, however, meant that *only* Georgians are the best. The word “tolerance” was perceived as a mechanism of advantage: we are better, but we still tolerate the others.

There was a different, deeper understanding of tolerance in Georgian culture. I would mention the works of Vazha-Pshavela (Luka P. Razikashvili), which seem to me the works of the future. Even today, they are misunderstood by society; that is, no one sees what is really there. This writer proved several centuries ahead of his society. Vazha-Pshavela

is the only Georgian genius who for a long time was not considered Georgian. He was even buried in another place – not where he is now buried, where he was moved in 1936 on the orders of our “great Georgian leader” Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin.

Vazha-Pshavela wrote that the other people are exactly the same as we are. We do not need to simply bear them; we need to understand them. This is totally different from the social belief that “we are so good, we love everyone.” His writings marked the first culture shock in my life, but life moved on. Sadly, all the shallow practices of tolerance have led us to a certain moment.

It is usually believed that the Soviet times were highly tolerant, and then independence came and everything was set loose, including bestial instincts, and we then showed our true face. But this is not true.

We have always been as we were during the first years of the so-called independence. Why do I say “so-called?” Because Georgians express joy in a peculiar way. I remember that on 13 May 1981, the world was struck by the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II, but in Georgia everyone was celebrating the soccer team Dynamo Tbilisi, who had just won the UEFA Cup. Back then, we knew what true Georgian joy was. Never before, or after, have I seen anything similar to that. If anyone has seen true Georgian joy, he or she knows that such joy was not around when we declared independence.

Yet, we did declare independence, and it was a very strange one. Immediately, the instincts I spoke of were set loose, that instinctual feeling that “we are so good and they oppress us.” Society was setting itself free of fake tolerance, and in that way we revealed our true face, which we could not show during the times of Soviet ideology and oppression, so to say, official Soviet internationalism.

Immediately after the declaration of independence, Zviad Gamsakhurdia declared that the Meskhetian Turks were our enemies. Previously, throughout his entire life he had stated that they were a people harmed by the Soviet regime, and both he and Merab Kostava said their cruel

JOSEPH STALIN (1879–1953), Russian full: Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, original Georgian: Ioseb Dzhugashvili, dictatorial ruler of the Soviet Russia (1922–53). He industrialized the USSR, forcibly collectivized its agriculture, consolidated his position by intensive police terror, helped to defeat Germany in 1941–45, and extended Soviet controls to include a belt of Eastern European states. Chief architect of Soviet totalitarianism and a skilled but phenomenally ruthless organizer, he destroyed the remnants of individual freedom and failed to promote individual prosperity, yet he created a mighty military-industrial complex and led the Soviet Union into the nuclear age. Achieving wide visual promotion through busts, statues, and icons of himself, the dictator became the object of a fanatical cult.

**SOVIET RUSSIA**, Russian “*Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik*,” Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), northern Eurasian empire (1917/22–1991) stretching from the Baltic and Black seas to the Pacific Ocean and, in its final years, consisting of fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR’s) – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (now Belarus), Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya (now Kyrgyzstan), Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (now Moldova), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The capital was Moscow, then and now the capital of Russia. The political system was authoritarian and highly centralized.

displacement by Stalin was a tragedy of the Georgian nation itself. Gamsakhurdia said so because that idea was popular back then. Back then, we believed that “we are good.” If you believe you are good, then it is natural you were not the ones deporting people, and you were not responsible. This is partly true, because those who did displace the Meskhetian Turks were not good.

This was the proper common Georgian attitude before 1989. Of course, it meant that “this was done by some evil people and we, the Georgians, are not capable of such things; Stalin was ethnically Georgian but it was entirely a Soviet Russian matter, in no way connected to Georgia!” How-

ever, as soon as different times came, times of responsibility, it was said that they, the Meshketian Turks, the former victims, were hostile. They were our enemies and we would not help them return to their homeland.

Before, it was said that the Abkhazi were our brothers. I was convinced of it, since in 1979–80 I worked for over a year in Abkhazia lecturing on Ancient Greek, Latin and many other courses, because when the university was opened, I was the only teacher of classical philology. However, at the same time, of course, we read books, for example, by Pavle Ingorokva, who is an eminent philologist and one of the most talented Georgian scholars; he said that the word “Abkhaz” comes from “Meskhetian.” How is this possible?! He explained the connection goes from “Meskhi” then “Maskhi” and “Amaskhi” through “Abaskhi” to, finally, “Abkhazi.” Probably some were persuaded! This was a very solid book in a philological respect, it had many great innovations; but there was also a lot of foul wordplay leading to the assumption that no such nation exists – the Abkhazi are simply Georgians. And they are evil Georgians! We are true Georgians, good ones, and the Abkhazi are also Georgians, but fake and evil ones.

It was in the 1950s, even during Soviet times, that one could see the inadequacy of what was publicly declared (“we are so good”) and what was scientifically analyzed and read (“there are only Georgians here”). Instead of reading Vazha-Pshavela and exploring cultural roots, we decided that the Abkhazi were evil Georgians. There were Armenians

and Azeri in our country as well, but they are newcomers, we thought. What does a newcomer mean? It means they are not truly close to us, they are distant and inhuman.

In reality, to tell the truth, these were the impressions of Georgian society about others. This self-impression was conveyed by the complacency of a Soviet society, where everyone lived better. They believed, and we today believe as well, that they lived far better than the Russians. I know it for sure – everyone knows it – that during the Soviet times we assimilated better than everyone. It is an accusation directed at the nation but I do not fear it – it is simply the truth. Sadly, during Soviet times, Georgians were well off, probably the best.

As a dissident, a man who experienced the camps of the Soviet Gulag, I believed myself that there were repressions in Georgia as there were everywhere else, and the nation surely suffered from the repressions. We used to say that it suffered the same amount as other nations. If someone did not suffer in the 1930s then he suffered his part during the 1940s, when the whole of Georgia was drafted into the Soviet army and was lost in a completely unbelievable way. Nevertheless, everyone had respect toward the system in which they lived well. What does this mean? The Russians watched Georgian films in which everyone was eating, drinking and singing – and they thought to themselves, “These are the Georgians, oh, how they live, how well they live!” In reality, for the Georgians to live as well as others, a lot of Russian help was needed. The Georgians acquired from the Russians all the material goods they needed; we gave up independence in exchange for a better material life.

Today, this is an unwelcome memory, that we acquired anything from the Russians. We would have never built the Tbilisi subway ourselves, or the airport. So, Georgia received a lot of help from the Soviet Union as a self-respecting nation. That is where the feeling of being better than others came from. We are entitled to things. We gave up our independence, so we get a lot in return.

**GULAG CAMPS** (1918–1956), abbreviation of Russian “Glavnoe Upravlenie Ispravitelno-trudovykh Lagerей,” Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps, the system of Soviet labor camps and accompanying detention and transit camps and prisons that from the 1920s to the mid-1950s housed the political prisoners, prisoners of war, ethnic minorities, and criminals of the Soviet Union. At its height, the *Gulag* imprisoned millions of people. The name *Gulag* had been largely unknown in the West until the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). By 1936, the *Gulag* held a total of 5,000,000 prisoners, a number that was probably equaled or exceeded every subsequent year until Stalin died in 1953.

These are the roots of so-called Georgian tolerance. I am not even sure if there ever was such a thing here. We were a common nation at the pre-Soviet time of our independence. If you have a state, tolerance receives a certain function. This is why I expect our society to gain a level of tolerance if it should be required. If it will not be only a reason to say “how good we are,” but part of our well-being as a society. The most important thing is to make the unwanted something crucially important; so that life itself will show how you should act and what you are. That is why a man proud of his tolerance is a criminal. Tolerance cannot be the reason for pride and it cannot be what makes a society proud.

In this regard – it seems to me – there has been some change in society lately. I want to speak of our pride and hope. My concept is simple: tolerance is culture. It is not culture given to a person, or a society, from the beginning. The first point of the Universal Human Rights Declaration states that “human beings ... should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” But, thank God, it is not written that we are born brothers, but rather that we should *act* as brothers. We are born equal, but we are not born tolerant.

Tolerance is not the sign of a society; it is not the sign of a single human being. It is, however, the accomplishment of the single human being and the accomplishment of the society – it is culture. It is something that needs to be bred, bred and bred again. It needs to be taught; the culture needs nourishment.

In this sense, I think, we do not yet have this culture of tolerance, we lack this culture. I do not mean single members of our society, who in the name of the whole nation asked our brothers, the Ossetians, for forgiveness. There are people who show such manifestations of tolerance, but they are only manifestations of individual desires, since Georgia as a whole has not yet asked for forgiveness.

There were fleeting moments of tolerance. One President said that we feel a bit “awkward” in relation to our fellow citizens, but there were no direct apologies. No Georgian since, neither activist nor individual, has directed words of apology toward the Abkhazi. I, in person, said “forgive me,” but greater society cannot forgive through the actions of individuals.

Society did not apologize before for what was written at the hands of Georgian scholars. Historians and philologists are the ones truly stirring up the war, which politicians only brought into effect. We are the ones saying false things to them. Of course, on both sides, the

Georgians were doing wrong and the others were doing wrong. We said that the Abkhazi are simply local, corrupt Georgians. We decided they were never there before – which is very odd. It always amazed me and it amazes me today. That is why people in Georgia are persuaded they know for sure that the historical relations of the Apsari and Apshili have nothing in common with the Apsua and the Abkhazi. It is very odd. In Georgia, there are people saying Apsirtos, Medea's brother, has nothing in common with the people calling themselves the Apsua. It is very odd. Georgians who think this way had to be at some point shaped and influenced to think in this way, so that they would not even assume there might be a relation between these people so clearly related.

And the attitude toward those issues, naturally, offended the Abkhazi. On the other hand, for their part, we heard that there never was a Georgian script in the region, that Georgian script was brought there and placed in various monuments artificially. All of this is, quite obviously, war. War! A dishonest war not of the nations but, so to say, of the elites, who were building their own self-esteem through it. This is a dishonest society; society under the rule of the Soviet Union is not a society.

The biggest Georgian crime is not that we revealed ourselves as not being the best or the most tolerant in the region, because if one were to look critically at the whole region, it could be found that we were, sadly, not alone in our misunderstanding and mistrust. But I believe that others were never as proud of their so-called “tolerance” as the Georgians. The Armenians had nothing to be proud of, we thought back then, because Armenia was always 99% Armenian, so why would they need tolerance? We, on the other hand, we believed that the most tolerant are those who have the highest percentage of so-called minority populations.

But how did we live? Take me, for example. During the last five-and-a-half years I was the director of the National Library. I had the possibility to analyze Georgian media of any chosen period. Everything is kept in the National Library, it is a generally good institution, where even those pages that were officially ordered to be cut out and replaced with different ones were kept. They cut them out and replaced them with new ones, but they kept the old pages too, because good people worked there. In this way, I had the opportunity to see all the materials. For example, one of the popular social scares of the 1920s was that the Azerbaijani population was reproducing so quickly. The general thought went as follows: “They reproduce so fast that at the end of the twentieth century there will be more of them than the Georgians!” The letter

of one Georgian writer reveals it this way: “How many children do you have? Two? You bastard! If you have three then you may still be looked upon as on a human, but not worth attention. Four? Then you are a good man. Five – you are a true brave Georgian.”

Unfortunately, there are good Georgian writers who are mere fascists in everyday life. This is also interesting. We have splendid social activists who hate society. There are marvelous poets who do not deserve to be called human. I worry that this is the heritage of the Soviet Union. The cause of all our misfortune is not the Soviet Union, of course. The cause of the misfortunes of Georgia is Georgia herself, Georgia who gave away and lost her independence.

My thesis is that if you want to stay genuine, then be *with* the state and build social tolerance. What does this mean? It means that if you do not like, for example, that the Abkhazi are our citizens, then be human! Read the constitution! It is written there! Georgia’s constitution states that there are two official languages in Georgia; but we have a President who does not speak one of the official languages. Where is such a situation possible?! Can you imagine, for example, in Belgium, where there are two official languages, that the King of Belgium, Albert II, could not communicate with one of his ministers? In Switzerland, there are four official languages, and in the Parliament nearly everyone speaks at least three of them.

And in Georgia? We have two, and soon, I have no doubt, we will have three official languages, because it is easy to write this as law! This is how tolerant we are, we think, look! We gave the Abkhazi a language! Here you are, here is the official, national and socially-recognized-as-very-good Georgian constitution. If you consider yourself Georgian, then here is your democracy and tolerance. Here it is written that “in Georgia, the official language is Georgian, and in Abkhazia, it is Abkhazian.” However, the President does not speak Abkhazian! There is no one in the administration or the Parliament who speaks or is learning to speak the “official” Abkhazi language!

We say we should try, but how? We are simply not learning an official language of our country. Yes, our presidents usually know only few words. There was a time when Zviad Gamsakhurdia spoke to the Abkhazians in Abkhazian. Of course, the Abkhazi said that they understood nothing because it was “not correct.” Even Shevardnadze attempted Abkhazi at one time, and recently Saakashvili has dabbled in it. But he does not study the language properly; he does not even study the Ossetian language.

So, what I am trying to say is this: in fact, all these signs of the “new” tolerance are signs of statehood, and are the very best possible roots for future Georgian society. These signs mark the first steps. If you want to be tolerant, you need a school, a school for society. Society has to go to school, in a sense, to learn how to be tolerant. And we simply cannot say that we *were* tolerant in the past, and then someone took it away from us. Yes, I am saying that we never were really and truly tolerant. Yes, in a historical understanding, of course, when we had a state, David Stroitel in the twelfth century said that one should respect our Muslim citizens. Yes, this was right and good, and the government has absorbed this idea into its history. But the statehood that we had then is not sufficient now. We are building a new statehood, and only now is there appearing a new hope to build a new tolerance. And I want to say honestly that we have come very far from those times of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Very far. Despite the fact that it is not possible to see with the naked eye whether in fact Georgians have become more tolerant or more democratic. Still, we have come a ways from those times – not just a ways, we have come very far.

In the past few days we have had confirmation of the development of Georgian tolerance thanks to two moments. The first was the meeting of various confessions in Georgia under the chairmanship of the Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church, which would have been completely impossible not even ten or twenty years ago, but last year. It was impossible even last year to imagine seeing these people together. It was impossible to give the floor to the Papal Nuncio in the holy of holies of the Georgian Church – it was simply impossible, and now it is possible.

And let me be clear – there were no revolutionary shifts. There are people who do not like the fact that this meeting took place, and our Patriarch is the most liberal in the Georgian hierarchy, unfortunately. But young people are not against this meeting, it marks the first sign of a new tolerance.

And the second sign. There was an effort to pass a very liberal law in the Georgian Parliament. It is true that we lost, but at least we tried and they did not get rid of us; they even met us in the streets, questioned us, sometimes cruelly. I, for example, for the time being have the right to walk among people. Some of my friends from Parliament do not have this right. They cannot walk among people because people might kill them. And I will not say that the government is doing the right thing,

because the Parliament is still the best thing we have right now. It is the best thing that we have in general, and in politics, it is the very best thing. I hope that at some point in the future it will be better. We tried to pass this law and forty-seven people gave their voice for it. This is a law that would simplify the conversion of first and last names. This is possible now, but it is a long procedure and you have to show that if you want to become, for example, Berdzenishvili, you have to show that either your mother, or your father, or some other relative was Berdzenishvili. And you are offered this change right here and now, if you please. Or, you have to offer a huge bribe and you can also have this right here and now, no problem. In my class at school there was a Feride Bagration. She was not *actually* Bagration, because Feride Bagration does not exist; this was a Muslim girl, an Adzhar-Georgian, from that region of Georgia, but she took this family name because they had lost their own family name under the Turks about 300 years ago. And some people did not lose their family names, but they simply did not like their family names. And there was the possibility to change them. And now we have dragged out the process. I hope that we will approach the problem again, and maybe, if there will be a special session this month, we will be able to pass this law. What does it simplify? What does it mean? I could speak for a long time on this matter, but unfortunately, we do not have the time.

In Georgian society, there was a discussion that we should not do this, that all Georgians will write themselves as Bagration, because it's a Tsar's family name. But I am still not sure of this, because I myself never had the desire to become a Bagration. I still have certain pretensions towards the last representative of the Georgian rulers who gave away Georgian independence. I do not think that it is any better than that we have this family name Bagration in our history, although of course I will always respect certain Bagrations.

But there was also the opinion that all Armenians should write their names as Georgians. Ah, the Georgians have it all figured out! They still think that assimilation is bad! This is a very interesting nation, a state that is building itself, as it were, a state that sees assimilation in its nightmares. But this will never be. If you are not interested as to who will become a Georgian and why he will become a Georgian? Why will he take your family name, if he does not like you? Our friends in Ossetia and Abkhazia, they probably look at how we relate to our autonomous regions, like, for example, to the Adzhari region. It seemed to me that there were no rights left there at all. Who would respect us after seeing that?

And so here is the important answer to the question. Tolerance is the future of Georgia. We cannot change the word, although maybe we will one day think something up, but precisely in tolerance do we find the most important thing, the main orientation for the development of Georgian society. If we can only be tolerant, if we can only learn to be tolerant.

What do society and school teach us? In the morning, we raise the Georgian flag and children sing the Georgian anthem, which is good. But after that? After that, there will be a new school of tolerance. To love the national anthem, to love your own attributes, that is easy. To be able to love the person near you, your neighbor, for example, that is much harder. I understand that Dostoevsky said that the more Ivan Karamazov respected society and the population of the entire world, the more he hated his neighbor. So, this is a very important lesson for society as a whole. And if Georgia would only have less pride in its own achievements, and study the ideas of tolerance more, we would then have a chance.

And I hope you understand that in this regard I am a great optimist. I believe in my society, not because it was a great society, but because it *will* be a great society. When Armenians told me that they gave us the alphabet and, basically, they built everything that is built in Georgia, I never disagreed with them. I said, "Let us not fight about this, let us leave it to history. Let us think about who will first join NATO or the EU." And in this way new chances for Caucasian cooperation will emerge.

Translated from Russian by Mayhill Fowler, Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

## Discussion from the Tbilisi Colloquium

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: *Didi madloba*, thank you very much for this presentation, for a deeper understanding of tolerance. I understand what you said about a person who believes, a person who says very loudly that he is a tolerant person – one should never believe that this person is truly tolerant. This statement is very close to the hearts of people of the borderlands.

I remember a quotation from *The Captive Mind* by Czesław Miłosz. This is a book that many people recognize as the best deconstruction of communist ideology. This quotation is a statement by an old Jew from Galicia, who says: “When someone is honestly 55% right, that’s very good and there’s no use wrangling. And if someone is 60% right, it’s wonderful, it’s great luck, and let him thank God. But what’s to be said about 75% right? Wise people say he is suspicious. Well, and what about 100% right? Whoever says he’s 100% right is a fanatic, a thug, and the worst kind of rascal.”

Something like this is very common for our borderland region and traditions of tolerance. Thank you, Levan, for this introduction. Now, we have this opportunity to put forward some questions.

NIYAZI MEHDI: Three or four years ago, when I was at a conference here, the organizers prepared an excursion around town for us. In the bus, the guide was informing us about Tbilisi, and he said, here

lived the Jews, here the Armenians, and here the Persians (or Muslims). In this way, it seemed to me, he was trying not to mention the Azerbaijanis. Yesterday, we were in an architecture studio (I forgot the name of it), where all these ethnonyms were also mentioned, except the “Azerbaijanis.” Again only “Persians” and “Muslims” were mentioned.

So I have to at least suspect, that by these Persians and Muslims they understand Azerbaijanis. The issue is that the ethnonym “Azerbaijani” is very contested, even among ourselves. It is not a historical name. In historical documents up until the twentieth century we were called Turks, or Oğuz. Although I will note that in the Turkish languages there is no difference between Turks or Turkish. This was a difference thought up by Russian scholars specifically in order to differentiate all Turks from the Ottoman Turks, which the scholars had a right to do. We still have a disagreement about what we should be called: Turks or Azerbaijanis?

After that preparatory explanation, I will pose my question: with what is this connected, that instead of saying “Azerbaijani Turks,” or “Azerbaijani,” you use the words “Persians” or “Muslim”? Is there something in the spirit of the NLP that is a conceptual structure that cannot acknowledge Azerbaijani Turks as people of an ethnic minority, or is this a consequence of that tense situation I described above?

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: Thank you for your question. Unfortunately, in Georgian there is no difference between the words Turkish and Turk. This is not a curiosity of the Georgian language, but historical fact. We called those living, for example, in Borchalo, “Borchalo Tatrebs.” We have another word, “Tatars,” which is not used today because this word now refers to an entirely different ethnic group.

But I absolutely agree with you. Our scholars and politicians must clarify how to call each other. And if you have new self-appellations that you are trying out, then as a sign of respect we will call you as you like, as that very same Georgian Tamad does, who says, “What’s the best way to address you, dear brother?” And so we have to do this, too – this is a question for Georgian and Turkish scholars.

And after that, I am absolutely sure that our politicians will stop at nothing, that is, they will name people how they should be named, and this will spread very quickly. Our people love new things, and if we tell them, this is how we are called now – then tomorrow that is how it will be. In this regard, the people are really capable of learning something. It is simply openness. Nowadays, there is a certain openness to learning

new things. And I have to tell you, that in this regard there also appears new hope. If you are not 100% sure that you know how your neighbor is called – that is already a good thing, you can use the paradigm they just told us about. Georgians are now sure of themselves about 90% of the time, but not 100%, as it was before.

ARTUSH MKRTCHIAN: Speaking about how the Georgians love something new, let me add that they also love something old. How do you link the connection towards the Georgian church and, in general, the attitude of Georgia to Armenian churches, and to Armenian culture, an attitude that is happening right now in Tbilisi, and not only in Tbilisi?

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: In this regard, I have to say that it seems to me that in Georgia they say there is no anti-Semitism, that look, we are the only people in the world (they mention the Dutchans as being similar), they said this a lot in Soviet times too, but in fact, in Georgia there has always been a kind of anti-Semitism. It was not anti-Semitism, per se, but rather anti-Armenianism. And this is not true of all Georgians, of course, and officially no one speaks about this, but if you are a Georgian, then it is expected that you will not really respect and love Armenians. In this regard, we have to learn something and change.

Unfortunately, the attitude towards Armenian culture, to the Armenian church, is very similar to our attitude towards the Catholic churches. You probably know that there are serious problems. It is not just an anti-Armenian direction, but rather a general direction of society that is raising its head right now, and in several cases all parts of society are not equally democratic.

I really regret that there are people living in Georgia who have no idea what about half a million Armenians are doing in Georgia. No one knows anything about it, how they live, what they eat, what they love, what they look at, how they think, etc. They just are not interested. These Armenians are just votes during election time, and as usual, the government claims those votes. The opposition now has a chance to reach out to this Armenian population, the opposition has a chance to figure out who they are and what they think, but the opposition is letting this opportunity pass them by. And this means that the Armenians will not only be unable to give their voice to the government, but that this is a two-fold problem. If you want to be protected, then turn to those who are capable of this. The government and the social majority

are not capable of this; they only need votes. And the rest also need votes, but this is a good need. This will make them think through the problems facing this population more seriously.

In this regard, I am in complete agreement with you – unfortunately, the Armenians are marked among those towards whom in Georgia people have the worst, the very worst, stereotypes. You cannot even imagine these stereotypes. They are totally unjust. And most importantly: if Armenians say something about us, they know something about us. But we speak about Armenians knowing absolutely nothing. Not one Georgian would assign himself any knowledge about his neighbors, and no one knows anything. No one read Isaakian, a few people know who Isaakian was only because Gamsakhurdia mentioned him, but that is all. There is no knowledge of the enormous Armenian culture, part of which is located here, on this ground.

So I have to say that in this regard we have everything ahead of us – you could congratulate us, as the Georgian writer Dochanishvili said. We are a people whom you may congratulate. We have before us an acquaintance with our neighbors, whom we totally do not know. Or after that will be, of course, love, etc.

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: If they stay!

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: No, I hope, in this regard, that we all will stay in the Caucasus. Sometimes, in Russia and other places we address each other with the word, “countryman” and we respect each other. I mentioned that I served in the Soviet Army in ЖХХ 385/3-5 – this is the Soviet zone. There, we created the Caucasian Christian Federation, which Armenians and Georgians both joined.

So why Christian? Because we had no Azerbaijanis. At first, we made it just “Caucasian.” But we did not want any other guys to get into the organization, and there were some hijackers there, and others who were not very good people. They were convinced that they were atheists, and so we said that we had a *Christian* association. There were Georgians and Armenians, and we divided everything. And in this regard, for example, we were and we remain brothers. And I learned something from my Armenian brother, something I never would have learned otherwise.

In this regard I am not inclined now to think that we have to place all Georgians and Armenians together somewhere, that is understood. But it would not necessarily be terrible to do this. We are obligated

to be brothers, we are obligated, and in the Caucasus we *must* be brothers. Everywhere in the world this is laid out for us in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. But in the Caucasus, we are not only obligated, but also we are able to this, should we want to do it.

NEAL ASCHERSON: I just want to say – that was wonderful, and I wanted to remind Mr. Berdzenishvili of a very unpleasant German poem, a rhyme, which says – In German it will be, “Und willst du nicht mein Bruder sein, / So schlage ich dir den Schädel ein,” which means, “If you do not want to be my brother, then I will smash your head.”

Of course, Holland also has a crisis, a mental crisis, which is rather like the crisis of what you could call chauvinistic tolerance, which you have described in Georgia. The present crisis in Holland over immigrants is expressed by saying: “Holland is the most tolerant country in the world. Islam is intolerant. Therefore, Islamic immigrants are not compatible with Dutch citizenship and the traditions of Holland.” Therefore, in the name of tolerance, some members of the Parliament have brought in a suggestion that the Qur’an should be a banned book, it should be a criminal offence to sell, to have the Qur’an in Holland. All in the name of tolerance.

HARUTYUN MARUTYAN: What part of Georgian society supports the kind of views that you hold? Will these views help you in your fight for a deputy’s chair in the Parliament?

Levan Berdzenishvili: This is a very difficult question because no one has studied Georgian society in this way. This is because it is not decent to ask people such questions. And on the other hand, we were afraid that we were in the great minority. And we were afraid for many years that the majority of society was the fascist guys, the Georgian so-called scholars, like Sharadze, or certain partisans of former President Gamsakhurdia, who are very aggressive. And we were very afraid, but it turned out that they were in the minority.

How did this turn out this way? How did this happen? About ten people could speak like the partisans of Gamsakhurdia. About 90% of society could think like them. But thousands and thousands of people could speak against these people’s thinking. In this regard, therefore, we are in the majority. And as for our common population, so called

“public awareness,” that is, social self-awareness, is not non-existent, but is at a very low level in this respect. And so, the task before us is to learn and to teach ourselves and others, but in explaining to and teaching others we must ourselves learn something in order to become more or less tolerant. But, about liberal views and about tolerance thousands can already speak honestly.

These conversations, of course, hindered me in my struggle for a chair in the Parliament. In the past few days, I read an entire two pages about me in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, which no one reads as a newspaper any longer. There they said that I was bad because I was tolerant.

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE]: That’s a good compliment!

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: It is a good compliment. In fact, with respect to what we learned, we learned that we were not afraid to speak self-critically, and that we would stay around, and we learned that we were in the majority.

As for the general population, despite my liberal views, for example, I am a person who is more or less popular, that is, I can walk down the street and a few people will say, “Good job, you’re a good guy!” A few people will say that I am bad, but still, no one is planning to kill me. And three or four years ago, that was a serious problem, as it were, there were serious guys who were trying to really stamp out all voices that were against them. So in this respect, understanding is growing.

I always bring the example of the theater or the opera. Who loves opera? You can state that Georgians do not love opera. But that is not right – there are those who love it, but they are not more than three or four percent of the population. In fact, we are not all absolutely tolerant, and we do not have such an understanding and I am not sure that were 100% of Georgian society to ever be Vazha-Pshavela, that it would not be very interesting. But at least now, after the observations of Neal Ascherson, the great writer of *Black Sea*, I understood why our President married a woman from Holland.

HAMID HERISHI: You spoke about tolerance in Georgia, about its roots...But you should not forget that still, the countries of the post-Soviet space have a large neighbor in Russia, who influences the situation in our countries both on the cultural, and the ideological level. In Russian mass media presently there is no significant opposition paper,

there are no opposition party movements. And this anti-democratic virus from Russia is spreading throughout the entire post-Soviet space. And today's Russian society somehow – this is completely not understandable – positions itself as quite anti-Georgian. It is surprising. Such an enormous country as Russia, and such a small country as Georgia... one gets the impression that after the Cold War Russia finally found a long-awaited enemy.

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: Thank you for a good question. We should never, of course, forget about our great neighbor. Because, first of all, we are speaking in the language of our great neighbor and I am not inclined to think that these neighbors of ours are guilty for all our woes.

I well understand what one very good English scholar, who studied Georgian literature, said, "Guys, you are overestimating Russia – it's not Russia, not a country, but hell. It's hell, and your river Terek is a kind of River Styx, or Acheron – you cross it and you fall into hell." In this hell now live more than a million Georgians, not less than that. A million Georgians are now in Russia, so it is probably not hell. Because Georgians are still normal people, at least in this respect. They are in Russia, and so now there arises a new Russian problem.

Why has Georgia become Target Number 1? Anti-Semitism in Russia does not work now, because all the Jews have left or they are already... they are already in jail. So there is no good foundation, it does not work. In this respect, they had to find a new enemy. And they found one – the Georgians. Georgians a good enemy because Georgians have identifiable characteristics. You have probably noticed that when people make fun of us, they try to distort the Georgian accent – to put on this accent. They are never capable of it. Even the best Russian actors cannot do a proper Georgian accent, or Azerbaijani, or Turkish, or Armenian, for that matter.

Why? Because they do not believe in the identity of these peoples, these cultures. For them Tbilisi, Baku, Yerevan, it's all the same. A lot is lost, just as a lot is lost in the Georgian Parliament, when Georgians say that the representative of the Lithuanian Parliament has arrived, and the next day they declare that they met with the representative of the Latvian Parliament – it's obvious. Disrespect to the general Other is very easy to transfer to disrespect to Georgians. And it seems to me that Stalin – as a Georgian – plays a certain role in this respect. And I must say

that today, throughout the post-Soviet space there is a crisis of intelligence. The intelligentsia is, after all, an Eastern European and Soviet phenomenon. The Russian intelligentsia lost the war against the new intellectualism, and therefore the Russian intelligentsia behaves as badly as the Georgian, or any other, intelligentsia. And in this respect, there is no difference, in fact, between a good Russian intelligent and the person who happened to become their President, this KGB lieutenant.

And in fact, this lack of intelligence exists even among dissidents! I was so surprised – one day we were speaking together – Viktor Yushchenko for Ukraine and myself, for Georgia, and this was two or three years ago at the time of the 50th anniversary of Radio Liberty in Prague. And for Russia, a very interesting woman spoke, a historian, Ludmila Alekseeva. And we were certain that she would understand what we were saying, that in Russia there was no democracy. She said: “Guys, excuse me, we love our President – he is our chance.” They love their President – he is their chance. In this respect, I think that either Russia will become democratic, which is possible, because I do not think that there are countries that simply cannot become democratic, this would also be a kind of fascist understanding in general. Or, if they cannot become democratic, then Russia, as a significant and great country, will cease to exist.

Unfortunately, Russia is following the second scenario. I will just really, really regret this because it will mean very serious problems, even war, with the future Russia. In fact, there is a good chance for democracy in Russia, but right now no one is speaking about it. Can a person, who simultaneously embodies the Russian and the Caucasian, that is, who has Armenian and Azerbaijani roots, Garry Kasparov – could he become the primary Russian dissident and leader of the new opposition party? Maybe, but in any case I am simply certain that democracy has to happen in Russia and one fine day it will certainly happen.

As for diplomatic relations, yes, we must understand that without Russia we will not live, of course, Russia will always be our neighbor. We should not make of Russia such an enemy; we cannot

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shut all borders, etc., especially while we have no good energy sources, but we cannot close the borders. But at the same time, we have to speak honestly about our problems with Russia. We are now finally achieving something, for example, about the Russian military presence here in Georgia. And you can imagine what that means. The Lithuanians said to us, “Good job! Lavrov came to you, he is never coming to us!” So we are doing a great job, because Lavrov came to us, we maybe will attain such a great level that President Putin will come to us – maybe. By the way, every person who comes to Georgia loses power after a certain time...

HAMID HERISHI: And I can finish that point, that whoever comes to Baku loses power quickly – Brezhnev, Turgut Özal... Caucasian jokes continue to be not about life, but about death...

[VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE:] Wherever I have spoken publicly, I always speak about history, about the period at the beginning of the 1990s, etc, in Georgia, and it is with pride that I always relate the example of the pre-Soviet history of Georgia. I speak about Tbilisi in particular, about the old quarters of the city of Tbilisi, and I share many examples, as you said, of tolerance, love towards neighbors, etc. What would you say about this period, your opinion is very interesting to me?

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI: In fact, of course, in Georgia there have always been moments of tolerance and understanding and love, especially as regards educated people, or people who somehow understand the essence of things. But sometimes it is connected with the fact that in the Soviet period people did not really differentiate themselves from one another, did not distinguish who is who. Generally, people say, and this is also not what we need, that “We never shut each other out, we never said, you are an Armenian, I am Azerbaijani, you are a Georgian, etc.” This is also not what we need. We need to say, “Yes, you are an Armenian, and I love you.” That is the essence of the matter. We do not need what we had in the Soviet period.

I, for example, studied in Batumi – of course you know that this is a very international city. In general, the word “city” probably means that it is international because without this internationalism you cannot imagine it being a city at all. In Batumi, we lived in the kind of courtyard where everybody lived. It seems to me that Kofi

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Annan never met with the quantity of national representatives as I met with in my own courtyard in Batumi. Everyone lived that way, absolutely everyone – Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians, and Turks from Turkey, all sorts of Georgians and Russians. Three Heros of the Soviet Union in one courtyard, as they say. Maybe you can imagine this situation. And what did we teach each other? That we are all good and that we are all Soviet. That we all speak the same language.

But we learned nothing. For example, I did not know that Valera, who is Armenian, was a member of an entirely different culture. We all lived together, but equally. And there was not that profound understanding I am talking about today. Even on the level of cooking, we did not understand each other. You can live your whole life next to each other and not know how a person breathes and what is the essence of Armenian-ness, Azerbaijan-ness, Georgian-ness, etc, what they respect. We saw in the Soviet period only that these people are completely faded, just like us.

Translated from Russian by Mayhill Fowler.

## COMMENTARY

## Interview with Niyazi Mehdi for Obozrievatel

24-30 June 2005

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS  
OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE?

I was struck by Levan Berdzeneshvili. He gave a repentance speech for the Georgian false belief in superiority and ignorance for the other. He presented the Georgian way of thinking: they always regarded themselves as very tolerant and patient, simply because they could have punished others' misdemeanors long ago and yet they did not.

He questioned Georgian tolerance, so I found it necessary to ask him: Is it a Georgian custom to never refer to Azeri if at all possible or, if not, to refer to them only by the word "Muslim?" Once I attended a guided tour in Georgia, and the guide enumerated all the Georgian minorities and omitted Azeri by only mentioning "Muslims." Similarly, yesterday when we visited Abuladze's architectural studio "Arsi," I noticed the speaker listed the Armenians and Jews of Georgia, but said Muslims instead of Azeri.

I must admit, Berdzeneshvili's answer was unsatisfactory. I expected my question to serve his argumentation, yet he only said Georgians like novelties and so the Azeris need to define for themselves how they would like to be called. "Then," he said, "we will call you that way."

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

## Interview with Rev. Basil Kobakhidze by Bartosz Hlebowicz

**BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ:** What is the role of the Orthodox Church in building Georgian society?

**BASIL KOBAKHIDZE:** Sadly, very negative. The most troublesome phenomenon is religious nationalism in Georgia. It is conditioned by the history of being a colony of the Soviet Union and the diminishing education of priests during the twentieth century. A great darkness reigns. Poland was a socialist country as well, but we cannot compare Poland and Georgia. The church in Poland was always a shelter for intellectuals and scholars. You had the independent Catholic University in Lublin, for example, while in Georgia the uneducated were admitted to university on purpose. Today, these priests have a strong position, especially among the monks; and in the Orthodox Church only they can become bishops. Most of them promote nationalism, fundamentalism, and anti-Semitism. The Russian Orthodox Church exerts a strong pressure on our Church.

We have similar illnesses to those of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The priests often say, “God speaks in Georgian, God loves Georgians, St. Mary is our saint.” Often, tolerance is mentioned, but only declaratively. The education of most Georgian priests, monks included, is a mix of medieval folklore with a specific Georgian blend.

BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ: Are there any chances for change?

BASIL KOBAKHIDZE: A reform of the Church will be possible only when society demands it. Most Orthodox Churches are national, so what happens in the state, happens in the life of the Church. At the moment, there is no need for reforms, even to deny the nationalism, either in the Church or among the believers. The Church was against the Rose Revolution, but every bishop knows religion needs the state and the state needs the magi who will make it sacred. That is why the bishops agreed they will be needed even after the Revolution. Nowadays, it is fashionable to present oneself as a monarchist and a religious nationalist. This is meant to be a kind of a rebirth of tradition; “folk” dress is popular.

BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ: I understand that in this case the Georgian Church does not support joining the EU or NATO?

BASIL KOBAKHIDZE: There is no single opinion by the Georgian Orthodox Church about joining to the EU or NATO. There is no official stand. There are priests who share my views but are afraid to go public. They have families and are afraid to lose funding. It is obvious, though, that many spiritual leaders use Orthodoxy as an argument against Europe. The Georgians repeat that Europe is Satan’s nest and its consolidation is the prelude to Apocalypse.

The Russian Orthodox Church cursed Ukrainian Prime Minister, Viktor Yushchenko, as the Antichrist. I believe this was the aim of his poisoning, to turn a handsome man into a Quasimodo, an Antichrist. They say a true Christian should oppose the EU. For them, consolidated Europe is a tool for spreading Catholicism, which they do not consider Christian. The majority of believers and priests know primarily Russian and they take their knowledge from Russian literature exclusively. There is isolation, an intellectual vacuum in the Georgian Orthodox Church since 1987.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

NATIONALISM  
AND XENOPHOBIA

## 20.

## CASE STUDY

Central and Eastern Europe:  
Germany and Poland

BASIL KERSKI

Wrocław 2007

I would like to begin my speech with one basic remark: I find the present movements, reactions, xenophobia, and nationalist thought in Central and Eastern Europe a surprising phenomenon. Why? Because nationalism and xenophobia, which used to be integral elements of the policy of communist authorities in Central and Eastern Europe, are an enduring heritage not only of the 1930s and World War II, but also of the post-war decades.

I would like to concentrate on the German and Polish experience. I will start from the problem of nationalism as an integral element of communism on the example of the GDR. The founding myth of the GDR was its exemption from responsibility for World War II. The GDR lent no support to the discussion and self-criticism concerning German history or identity. The problem of the Holocaust was a completely tabooed theme. The East German society was mono-ethnic. The economic crisis of the 1980s and the emergence of competition between consumers in the Soviet Bloc, which took place, for example, in the 1970s when the border between Poland and GDR was opened, deepened animosity towards anything foreign, which strengthened xenophobic reactions. In addition, anti-Polish traditions during the period of the *Solidarity* uprising and the introduction of Martial Law were utilized instrumentally by the GDR authorities to – here I quote – “protect the citizens

of East Germany against the virus of *Solidarity*.” Wishing to strengthen their own position, and the ties between society and authority, the Honcker regime in the 1980s not only reached for anti-Polish and anti-Slav sentiments and stereotypes, but also rediscovered authoritarian Prussian traditions, in order to build the statehood identity of Eastern Germany, which had been occupied by the Soviet Union.

What was the situation of Poland after 1945? The pro-Soviet regime in Warsaw admittedly did not commit any ethnic cleansing in Poland in the post-war period; however, it continued the policy of expulsion of ethnic groups, the policy of destruction of the multiethnic tissue of Poland; the policy that started, of course, with two totalitarianisms: Stalinist and Nazi. The disastrous heritage of the Polish People’s Republic is the ideological alliance of pro-Kremlin Communists with the pre-war National Democrat elites. Polish Communists used the National Democrat philosophy of historical thinking to legitimize the post-war change of the Polish borders, in order to legitimize the takeover by the post-war Polish state of the former German provinces. The image used at the time was that of their Old Slavic, Old Polish origin. The image of Poland of the times of the Piast dynasty was popularized, not only to serve as the model of the first Polish state, but also as an ideal state. Polish Communists were also close to the National Democrats’ thought and their concept of Poland as a mono-ethnic nation. Similarly, the nationalist National Democrats were critical of the multiethnic Commonwealth, as well as the republican definition of the Polish character: the Polish character defined by the tradition of linking different ethnic groups, different languages and different religions. The Catholic Church reacted to this alliance in many contradictory ways. Facing the issue of the post-German lands it would use the rhetoric of the National Democrats referring to those territories as the Piast Polish lands, invoking the myth of Piast Poland. On the other hand, the anticommunist circles – especially those of the leftist dissidents, including those gathered around the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia, laymen

**POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH (1569–1795)**, or Union, was a dualistic state of Poland and Lithuania ruled by a common monarch. It was the largest country in Europe of its time, with one of the biggest (multi-ethnic) populations and relative religious tolerance. The Union possessed features unique among contemporary states: its political system was characterized by strict checks upon monarchical power. They were enacted by a legislature (*Sejm*), which was controlled by the nobility (*szlachta*). This idiosyncratic system was a precursor to modern concepts of democracy, constitutional monarchy and federation. The two component states of the Commonwealth were formally equal, yet Poland was the dominant partner in the Union.

and several *émigré* circles – tried to oppose the National Democrat traditions, especially those of strong nationalist, xenophobic rhetoric, trying to keep close contacts with the neighbours, to create an atmosphere of dialogue and neighbourly relations. Their great achievement was the letter of the Polish bishops to the German bishops in 1965, whose main author was the archbishop of Wrocław, Bolesław Kominek. The letter was an attempt, on the one hand, to legitimize the post-war land acquisitions, referring to the national philosophy of history, but the central element of the letter was reconciliation, i.e. breaking away from the fatalistic rhetoric of Polish-German enmity.

The ideological alliance between Communists and National Democracy had a great influence on Polish consciousness through the educational system. There took place, one could say, an institutionalization of outright nationalistic attitudes. Referring to National Democrat traditions served not only to legitimize the post-war borders of Poland (to posit them as an optimal solution), but also, more importantly, to win the broad support of Polish society. This is surely a characteristic experience for many of the states of the Soviet Bloc.

Another key experience of the Soviet Bloc epoch was the lack of dialogue between neighbours, lack of an open dialogue between the nations of Central Europe on the subject of history, lack of self-critical reflection, and lack of social contact. As a result of the unfortunate heritage of the communist historical policies and the policies of identity and relations between states, hardly anybody could accurately predict or expect the peaceful developments that took place in the Central Europe of 1989 and 1990, as well as the peaceful development of relations between nations afterwards. On the contrary, a return of conflicts between nations was expected. Let me remind you that all relations between neighboring states in Central and Eastern Europe, for example that of Poland and Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, and also even Poland, and the Czech Republic and Slovakia, were deeply, historically strained; remember that after the war, nations such as Poland or Hungary were forced, without any social consultation or any democratic legitimization, to shift the borders of their countries. As a result, ethnic Poles or Hungarians found themselves outside the borders of their motherlands. Because – and this is my next argument – a complete surprise and miracle happened, the new member states of the European Union developed in such a peaceful manner that they evaded any serious ethnic conflicts inside these states, and serious conflicts between

themselves. Why was there no conflict? Or: What positive tendencies or factors caused the peaceful development of the relation between states in this part of Europe and made possible the accession of these states to the European Union? Here, I would also like to come back to the example of Poland and Germany. In regard to Germany, the most important element in the political discourse of the German elites, the traditional anti-Polish policy, almost completely disappeared, or became almost invisible. I would like to remind you that in the democratic Weimar Republic not only the National Socialists and nationalist formations regarded Poland as “Saisonstaat,” a seasonal state, “the bastard of Versailles,” denying the independent Polish state its right to exist. The same attitudes also prevailed among most Germans; the democratic camp fundamentally rejected the Versailles resolutions, perceiving negatively the appearance of the belt of independent countries of Central Europe in the aftermath of the World War I. Now, this tradition of a negative policy towards Poland (“negative Polenpolitik”) has completely disappeared; this was clearly visible at the moment of the enlargement of the European Union. Until the last moment, *i.e.* until 2004, surveys in the European Union showed that the most of German society felt apprehensive about the enlargement of the Union, including Poland, especially as regards opening the labor market. In spite of German society’s negative attitude and potential for criticism, no prominent representatives of German political elites made use of these attitudes. Eventually, the consensus prevailed that the accession of Poland to the European Union was in German interest as it would liquidate its peripheral position in Europe. The conviction prevailed that the integration of Central Europe into the European Union would not only open a new market and investment opportunities, but also increase the country’s safety. Where lay the foundations for the change of attitudes? A very large part here was played by the debates of the 1960s and 1970s, not only those concerning the western border of Poland and whether this border should be acknowledged or not, but also the question of self-critical debates concerning the Third Reich, both on the heritage of anti-Semitism, and on anti-Slav attitudes, and the anti-Polish policies of the Third Reich. In Western Germany, in democratic Germany, the conviction of responsibility towards its eastern, Polish, neighbour was born.

As for East German society, a very important part in the change of attitudes was played by the young, post-war generation, the generation critically disposed towards the GDR regime, dissatisfied with

exactly the lack of critical debates in the GDR concerning the Third Reich, dissatisfied with the sense of lack of responsibility among GDR elites for Nazi Germany – elites who were also dissatisfied with the tabooing of discussions surrounding the Holocaust. These critical questions concerning the history of Germany were especially alive among anticommunist and evangelical circles. These two currents fundamentally changed the German way of thinking about their neighbors and about Poland.

I have drawn your attention to the critical attitude of Germans towards the enlargement of the European Union. Yes, it is the biggest problem, the heaviest burden, that must be carried by German political culture. German society has disproportionate sympathy for their western neighbors compared to their eastern ones, towards whom they feel criticism and reluctance. Interestingly enough, sociological research shows this reluctance to be especially large in those areas of Germany most distant from these eastern neighbours. The western periphery of Germany is the richest and the most stable politically, but was separated from contact with Poland or the Czech Republic by the divisions of Europe. The Polish- German borderland, in spite of its own large-scale social and economic problems, turns out to be a space where despite the cost of economic transformation, there dominates the deepest sense of community and the greatest wish to understand the neighbor, the other.

Unlike German society, Poles within the last twenty years, according to sociological research, have undergone a definite change in their perception of all their neighbours. Contemporary Poles not only perceive Germans neutrally (I daresay with some friendliness), but also people of other nations with whom Poles used to have conflicts and strained relations. In the case of perceptions of Germans, attitudes have so transformed that today Poles wish that Germany, after the United States, would become one of their most important political and economic partners. A very positive phenomenon was the appearance among the anticommunist opposition, in the anticommunist movement and émigré circles of the tradition of critical patriotism, of a self-critical reflection on the Polish history. This self-critical reflection not only changed the historical narrative, that is, freed Poles from thinking about fatalism and the inevitable enmity between Germany and Poland, but it also drew attention to positive chapters of the Polish-German neighbourhood. It contributed, for example, to critical

reflection on the part played by Polish Catholics during the Holocaust, and the lack of aid for Polish Jews; it contributed to critical reflection on the subject of the nationalist heritage, on strong pre-war anti-Semitism. This reflection also had its influence on thinking about international policy, about the position of Poland in Europe. Thanks to such self-critical reflection, Poles understood that the division of Germany was not in their interest, that it cemented the presence of the Russian Empire in Central Europe, that the unification of Germany was in the interest of Poland, and that unification should be done in such a way that Germany would become a democratic state completely integrated within western structures. This unification was to bring Poles closer to the West, delivering them from the hegemony of the empire of Communist Russia. Also, these two currents of thinking – about the position of Poland in Europe, and critical reflection on Polish history – built the foundation both for democratic Poland and for a new foreign policy and new relations with the elites of the neighboring states.

Concluding my reflections, I would like to raise one question: how strong are the positive tendencies about which I spoke? On the Polish side, I am troubled by the course taken by the Polish debate from the last two years on the subject of identity, Europe, and historical policy. I am worried by the attacks on Jan Józef Lipski, Czesław Miłosz, the architects and authors not only of reconciliation and agreement with all Poland's neighbors, but also of different forms of thinking about history, specifically, self-criticism as the foundation of patriotism in a democratic state. This attitude was attacked; it was attacked as an extravagance at the time of keen competition between nations, not only economic, but also in interpretations of history, the history of Europe and the dynamics of the European development. In this competition, so say the critics of Lipski and Miłosz, one cannot show one's weak side, one should divert attention from one's own errors and draw it to one's martyrdom or positive experiences.

**HOLocaust**, Hebrew *Sho'ah*, Yiddish and Hebrew *Hurban* (Destruction), the systematic state-sponsored killing of six million Jewish people and millions of others (Poles, Gypsies) by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II. The Germans called this "Endlösung der Judenfrage," "the final solution to the Jewish question." The word "Holocaust" is derived from the Greek "holokauston," a translation of the Hebrew word "olah," meaning a burnt sacrifice offered whole to God. This word was chosen because in the ultimate manifestation of the Nazi killing program – the extermination camps – the bodies of the victims were consumed whole in crematoria and open fires.

I am also saddened by the return of the National Democrat way of thinking about Polish identity. An expression of the return was the declaration that Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński gave at the beginning of the 2007 election campaign in Białystok, in which he emphasized the necessity of victory for PiS in the coming elections as the only force guaranteeing that Poland remains a state of one nation and not many nations. For the first time since 1989, the Prime Minister of the Polish Republic departed from the Jagiellonian definition, from the political definition of the Polish nation as a multiethnic nation. This is an alarming tendency. Of course, there is a place for a certain optimism coming from the results of the last election, because most voters seemed to question this kind of politics and were not seduced by this nationalist rhetoric, which shows a certain maturity. It confirmed the findings of sociologists I mentioned at the beginning of my lecture, that is, the popular wish for reasonable, peaceful relations with one's neighbors, a strategic partnership, for example, with Germany, in other words, normalization of historically strained relations.

On the German side, I am worried by the fatigue with the idea of European solidarity. After a very quick and intensive enlargement of the European Union came concentration on domestic problems. I am worried by the reluctance to confront the fate of other nations of Europe, such as Ukraine or Belarus, which found themselves outside the borders of Europe, and it troubles me to hear stronger and stronger rhetoric claiming that under the European Union, Germany should pay more attention to its own national interest, more than serving the idea of solidarity. This fatigue felt for the process of European integration is alarming. In Poland, in recent years, there have been levelled accusations against the German wish for the revision of history and its reinterpretation, especially concerning the history of World War II that emphasizes German losses during the war. I think that the problem of German historical debates lies somewhere else. The first aspect, similar to the Polish model, is a departure from the model of self-critical reflection, the reflection that can strengthen pluralism and democracy. More and more emphasis is placed on the large distance between the present and the past. Little has been said about the Third Reich, regarding it as a closed chapter, and there has been little emphasis on the fact that Germany should refrain from historical re-evaluation. Instead of self-critical reflection and questions about the shadow cast on the present by the heritage of history, there appears a pride of historical settlement, underlining the scope

of distancing themselves from the heritage. Another troubling aspect is interpreting history in a way that does not link Germany culturally with its neighbours, for example, with the Poles. The discourse on the subject of the extermination of the Jews is very abstract. Hardly anyone remembers the six million European Jews, and hardly anyone remembers that half of those were citizens of the Polish Republic. Great interest in the fate of the Germans deportees pushes aside the memory of the Polish, or Slavic, victims of the war, or memory of the policy of extermination, the example of which is the fate of Polish or Slavic elites in Central Europe. One feels a tendency to create distance between Polish and German interpretations of the war. I speak about these issues, of course, in a very superficial manner, a very general one. I am trying to sketch the prevailing tendencies; this does not mean that there are no positive ones. For example, among German elites there is an awareness of the fact that most of the European Jews were Polish Jews, that Poland was the center of European Jewry, that the policies of the Third Reich contributed to the destruction of the multiethnic tissue of the Polish Republic. Such consciousness does exist, but it seems to be rather marginal.

I am also worried by a certain dissemination of thinking about Europe. Germans, like other European nations, are shocked by the outcome of the war in Iraq, by their military commitment in Afghanistan; the experiences of the Middle East and Central Asia caused marginalization of the idea of international commitment in support of democracy. As a result, this country, like Poland, is turning inside, towards its own problems and shutting itself off. It is particularly apparent in German passivity, especially towards the processes of democratization, whether in the Balkans, or in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Assistance in stabilizing Ukrainian democracy is marginal, and German and Polish passivity in strengthening Belarusian independence movements is devastating in its consequences.

The Polish elections of 21 October 2007 and their positive reception in Germany allow me to finish my reflections on an optimistic note. The winner in Poland was not just a certain party, or certain politicians, but a relatively complex historical idea: the idea of pluralism and the idea of Poland as a multiethnic state. The elected Prime Minister of Poland is a person who in his native town, Gdańsk, during the last seventeen years contributed to a complex reflection on history; this reflection not only concerned the painful subject of the history of Polish-German relations, but also involved self-critical reflection on Polish relations with

other nations. The parties that won, postulated the construction of a new, multifaceted Polish identity consisting of three elements: attachment to one's own place of residence as a citizen (one's own small region, one's own "small homeland"), attachment to Poland as a democratic nation, and the third dimension, which is a strong emphasis on European identity, so an attachment to a certain catalogue of values, such as pluralism, respect in relations with others, multiculturalism, and also attachment to anti-totalitarian traditions. The winning parties are postulating and want to contribute to building a complex Polish identity.

This is also a process Germany faces, this part of Germany that from the late 1940s has been democratic, this part of Germany that since the 1950s has taken an active part in the process of European integration. This part of Germany, in the European dimension of its identity, must also understand that this new Europe not only consists of new members, but has been culturally enriched with a new historic experience, and it also must acquaint itself with the democratic traditions of its neighbors, must simply learn how to deal with these new members, who are still somewhat alien. And also facing this part of Europe, "the old Europe" one could say, is the challenge of building its own complex identity, which is a process of fighting the heritage of nationalism and xenophobia in Central Europe.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to one more thing: a very important factor impeding the process of democratization and causing a recurrence of nationalist currents is the return to promotion of one's individual perspective, one's own culture under the European dialogue of cultures. This is what caught Krzysztof Czyżewski's attention in his 2006 interview with Maja Jaszewska for the Polish-German Magazine DIALOGUE. He says,

Today, we reflect less on the building of the common space of agora, and are investing less effort in the cognition of the other, the other, but more in the promotion and presentation of our own experiences. This European dialogue of cultures is actually one great collection of different monologues.

Yes, it is a tendency which I also clearly observe, and which troubles me, and which in our part of Europe, one that is comparatively stable and in which the young democratic culture is well rooted, can contribute to the growth of nationalist and xenophobic attitudes.

## COMMENTARY

## The Rise of Post-post-communism

LESZEK KOCZANOWICZ

Wrocław 2007

THE EMERGENCE OF POST-POST-COMMUNISM  
OR POPULIST POST-COMMUNISM

What has really happened in Poland since the election of 2005? This question is not only an issue of current politics, but also a problem for social theory. After such spectacular events as lustration and questioning solidarity with the European Union, a problem has arisen: to define the real substance of this new form of society. The answer is neither trivial nor easy. First, the ruling party, PiS (Law and Justice), states its goal in moral rather than political terms. They use the language of “moral revolution” or “Fourth Republic,” never trying to explain the exact meaning of these categories. Second, the official rhetoric of the government is posited primarily in negative terms, which of course is connected with its moral involvement. The representatives of the ruling party are quite clear as to what they do not want but very vague on the desired state of things.

Therefore, if we ask about the real purposes of their activity the answer is always dramatic but unclear. They use extensively the language of struggle, but it is very ambiguous as to who the enemy is and what is at stake in the war. They declare that they intend to eradicate corruption, the establishment understood as the everlasting connections between the former “nomenklatura” (especially the former secret

service), and the politicians of the Third Republic that spoiled the social life of the country, but on the other hand, they never show the preferred state of things that would mean victory in their war. So, their language is full of mysterious ambiguities. On the one hand, they claim that their main purpose is a radical break with the past of the communist regime, as well as of the post-communism of the Third Republic. On the other hand, they are obsessed with the past. The majority of their activity is directed at clearing the traces of the past that, according to their opinion, are still present in the existing social system. They of course refuse to be a continuation of post-communism, all the more of communism itself, but they also deny that they are the end of the transformation, because it led to all of the distortions against which they would like to fight. So, they are at the same time inside and outside the process of transformation. This language, because of its ambivalence, helps to attract votes, but makes any theoretical reflection almost impossible.

But, it has been very clear since the election of 2005, that radical change has happened in Poland. Even if it is very difficult to connect this change to existing language, it deserves its own name. I have decided to use the label “post-post-communism,” which is just as vague as the language of this formation. Using this label, I intend to show both the continuities with post-communism and the break with this formation. I think that although post-post-communism appears in its most developed stage in Poland, it is by no means specific only to Poland. We can find its elements everywhere in the post-communist countries but what may be surprising is that they are present also in the West, in Western Europe and the USA.

This post-post-communist formation can also be labeled as “populist post-communism” because it has a lot in common with populist ideology as developed at the end of the twentieth century in Western Europe. But what is peculiar to Poland is that the populists are in power. So, populist post-communism is at the same time “populism in power.” Among many definitions of populism the most general one is that populism is by its nature a movement that questions the system. This non-systemic character of populism makes the “populism in power” label almost contradictory in itself. This oxymoronic character of the phrase “populism in power” gives rise to many, indeed almost all, ambiguities included in the language of the ideology of the government. Two discourses, that of power and that of populism, interfere with each other and this interference causes constant tension in language and in action.

Populist post-communism opposes itself to the previous stage in the post-totalitarian history of Poland, which in the convention I have proposed could be called “liberal post-communist.” Liberal post-communism was described and analyzed by many pundits just as “post-communist” (nobody at that time even thought of the next post-communist formation). I feel excused, therefore, from repeating those analyses and I would like just to recall the distinctive feature of liberal post-communism. It was founded on the conviction that introducing free market relations in the economy would almost automatically result in the creation of a democratic liberal system in all other spheres of social life. This never happened, and populist post-communism has drawn conclusions from this failure. It has rejected not only this automatic relation between a liberal economy and liberal politics, but it has also questioned the principles of liberal democracy.

#### WHAT IS POST-POST-COMMUNISM?

As I have indicated earlier, it is very difficult to enumerate the characteristics of post-post-communism or institutionalized populism. It evades any definite description because of ambiguities inherent in its very meaning. However, taking into account contradictory tendencies and actions, I will attempt to show the main constitutive features of this formation.

The most visible inclination is to replace civil society with the state apparatus. This tendency is a consequence of an aspiration to the maximal concentration of power in one center. In the Polish case, this tendency has found its expression in the Kaczyński twins, Lech and Jarosław, occupying two the most prestigious positions in the country (the President and Prime Minister), but of course post-post-communist does not assume such a biological concentration of power. Nevertheless, the state apparatus exercises dominance over the other sectors of society. There is a strong trend in post-post-communist policy to believe that only a strong executive can clean society from all the distortions brought about by post-communism. So, the police and secret services of various kinds enjoy special status and privileges, that is, of course if they are not stained by collaboration with the previous regime, that of post-communism. The executive branch also starts to prevail over the legislative and judiciary. Their prerogatives are called into question, or at least undermined by the strong executive. What is interesting is that this tendency goes against the dominant trend in First Solidarity (1980-1981), the movement that formed the

Kaczyński brothers' political sensitivity. Solidarity was an organization where openness and the idea of civil society as opposed to state power, was taken to an extreme. PiS, however, stresses the multiplication of various instances of state control.

The other expression of this tendency is the dominance of the executive over the legislative and the judiciary. The Sejm (Parliament) is reduced to the function of accepting the decisions of the ruling coalition, and the Constitutional Tribunal is constantly attacked for not supporting the decisions made by the government. The most visible case of this clash with the legal system was the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal on lustration. It struck down the law and ordered the government and the Sejm to amend it. After that, Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński reprimanded the Tribunal not only for this particular decision, but also for its general activity that slowed the speed of the changes.

What is, therefore, the source of legitimization of power? It seems that it is the past. The idea of overcoming the past plays a crucial role in the justification of different strategies, including even the most dubious, of the ruling party. The various governments of post-communist Poland never carried out a program of overcoming not only the communist past, but also the post-communist one. Moreover, the post-communist time added new distortions of social life to those inherited from the communists. So, to change the country it is necessary to overcome the past – or in a sense, to change it. Several activities are set in motion to achieve this task. The most important are lustration and the politics of history.

Lustration was presented by the PiS party as a procedure that was supposed to clear the past and distinguish the good from the bad. To make such a differentiation the government decided to put almost 700,000 people to the test. They were supposed to answer a question about their possible collaboration with the communist secret service. So the government wanted all teachers, journalists, and academics to answer the question: "Was I an agent? Or wasn't I?" With paranoid detail we were provided with a list of categories of possible involvement in such activity, and all of us had to work out whether or not we were a "live contact box," a "radiotelegraphic," an "illegal (sic!) agent of intelligence," or roles that were even more mysterious, but unfortunately (maybe for non-Poles fortunately!) untranslatable. The paradox of this situation consisted in dual methods of clearance (lustration). Apart from our declarations, the Institute of National Remembrance

(IPN) was to prepare a list of people registered as agents. Moreover, special prosecutors were hired by the government exclusively for the verification of our declarations. So, any person supposed to declare his or her innocence or involvement in collaboration with the secret service had to face multiple possibilities: he could be taken as innocent, as guilty of being a secret collaborator, as a liar in the process of lustration, or he or she could be acquitted by the court but still appear on the list as a “contact,” and, although such a list was supposed to be only a register prepared by the communist secret service, one’s name on the list had the effect of an irremovable contamination. In addition, people who did not complete the declaration on time had to be punished in the same way as liars, that is, they were to be suspended from fulfilling any “public role” for ten years.

For journalists and academic professors, then, this meant that those who for any reason opposed this formula were to be forbidden for ten years to teach or research, or, in the case of journalists, to publish their articles, because such was the definition of the “public role” of these groups. I do not want to go deeper into the details as they are boring in their bureaucratic systematization, but it is worth noting that this operation, contrary to the government’s assertions, had nothing in common with the real closing of the book on the past regime. It was to be an instrument for humiliating the entire social group that those in power perceived as a danger in developing their social, political, and cultural strategy. The Constitutional Tribunal has rejected the lustration law, but the problem is still open because the government is going to prepare a new version.

The other side of the same coin is the politics of history that is extensively propagated by the government. This politics of history reveals a further crucial part of the ruling coalition’s activity, namely, the ideologization of the state. The state is supposed to actively promote certain values and actively fight others. The state’s ideological involvement can take different forms and the politics of history is priority. The term,

**IPN**, Polish abbreviation for “Instytut Pamięci Narodowej,” Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, a Polish government-affiliated research institute with lustration prerogatives and prosecution powers founded by specific legislation. It specializes in the legal and historical sciences and in particular the recent history of Poland. *IPN* investigates both Nazi and Communist crimes committed in Poland, documents its findings and disseminates the results of its investigations to the public. It is often criticized due to its controversial evaluation of Poland’s recent history, mainly collecting and publishing previously secret archives from the Communist Poland’s security apparatus.

coined even before the elections of 2005, means that history should serve as a tool to build up pride in the achievements of Poland. The proponents of the politics of history accuse “the liberals”, who ruled Poland between 1989 and 2005, of depicting only the dark sides of Polish history and trying to implement this picture as an obligatory image in schools, universities, and the media. By contrast, partisans of the government intend to depict exclusively Polish accomplishments and to create Polish identity from that image. As for the communist period, the politics of history regards it as a “blank space” in Polish history. As such, resistance to communist power is the most important coefficient in evaluating the actions and attitudes of people living at that time. So, the image of the communist period is bipolar: on the one side, a few proponents of the communist regime who are denounced for betraying the nation, and, on the other side, the mass of people who opposed the regime. So, the nation has always been innocent and it has always suffered oppression at the hands of the foreign oppressors using a handful of Polish collaborators. In the Penal Code, the government even introduced a law that anyone who denounces the Polish Nation as complicit in carrying out the crimes of the Nazi or Stalinist period should be punished with two years in prison.

This ideologization of the state is even more visible in education. The Department of Education was given to Roman Giertych, the leader of the extreme right wing nationalist and religious party, League of Polish Families. He has introduced a kind of ideological indoctrination in school programs. For instance, he has changed the canon of literature taught in Polish schools. He tried to remove writers like Witold Gombrowicz, who were critical of the Polish nation, and instead include those like Henryk Sienkiewicz, who praised Polish virtues. The importance of this ideologization of the state was shown in the controversy between the Minister of Culture, representing PiS, and the Minister of Education over the canon. The final decision had to be made by the Prime Minister, Jarosław Kaczyński, who has reestablished Witold Gombrowicz’s novel in the canon. It was probably a unique event in democratic countries that the Prime Minister decided the school curriculum! However, nobody from the government intervened when Roman Giertych introduced a mandatory dress code, warned principals against “promotion of homosexuality” in schools, or made religious classes equivalent to other school subjects, to heighten the role of religion in school curricula. The Deputy Minister of Education, Mirosław

Orzechowski, member of the same party as Minister Roman Giertych, has officially condemned the evolution theory and openly encouraged teachers to include elements of intelligent design theory in their instruction.

The ideologization of the state presents a whole spectrum of different activities from radically extreme to moderate, but its main task is to preserve traditional values, especially religious values, in the face of modernization coming from united Europe. The model of modernization is an idealized Bavaria, which has safeguarded traditional values and, at same time, is highly modernized in the technological sense. To achieve this, Poland should be protected from the influence of cultural modernization that has infected Western Europe. So, an inevitable part of post-post-communism formation is suspicion of Western Europe. This creates the next inner contradiction in this formation, because Western Europe is, via the European Union, the main source of modernization that is a necessary condition for the strength of the nation. Therefore, the post-post-communist formation is inevitably skeptical of Europe. This anti-Europeanism is expressed in foreign policy as an insistence on preserving for the nation-state (Poland) the main prerogatives of sovereignty, but it also plays an important role in domestic politics. Namely, it allows the government to “export” domestic contradictions into foreign policy. In other words, the tension between national values and the dominance of a liberal discourse in the economy, with its obvious cosmopolitan bias, is resolved by a strict policy of defending Polish interests against the cosmopolitan, bureaucratic European Union. This strategy can secure votes from those voters who would like to see Poland as besieged by the secular environment of other EU countries.

#### ANOTHER DEMOCRACY, OR WHO HAS HIJACKED OUR COMMON BACKGROUND?

In contemporary political theory, it has become more and more clear that something more than the merely formal principles of political procedure is necessary for the functioning of democracy. Tacit consensus as to the values and rules is essential in order to accomplish the goals of democratic institutions. However, it is also clear that such a consensus can be achieved roughly speaking in two ways. In some societies, it appears almost automatically as a feeling of sharing the common good, which is accepted unreflexively and never questioned. In such societies,

of course, it is possible to have sharp disagreements over action in specific situations, but this common background is never seriously damaged. In other societies, this common background becomes eroded because of the appearance of different values and ways of life, so another means of establishing social cohesion is required. It consists of a consensus as to the rules of procedure and of achieving a common standpoint. Some of these rules are written in law but others remain part of unspoken knowledge, or a common background.

Poland, for historical reasons, was for many years (at least after the end of the eighteenth century) an example of the first kind of society. Poles shared common codes and tropes that allowed them to resist foreign powers. To a great extent, this situation was preserved under the communist regime. Briefly speaking, the most important parts of Polish consciousness were the nation and the family, which sometimes overlapped, creating an illusion of the nation as an extended family. This idea of extended family was nevertheless not illusory – as long as people could use the same language for their orientation in personal and social life. So, people at different extremes of the political spectrum could easily use language of the same values or the same metaphors to serve as signposts for negotiating the political. They lived in the same *Lebenswelt*, they shared similar experiences from childhood, and they shared the same religious-national values, even if some of them decided to reject their metaphysical and eschatological fundamentals.

The transformation of 1989-90 destroyed this common background. On the path towards modernization, Poland became more and more differentiated, and this automatic consensus was lost. This destruction of a common background has brought about two contradictory social phenomena: on the one hand, the need to construct a new system to achieve consensus; on the other, the longing to re-establish a system of shared values, which could re-create the feeling of belonging to the same family. The weakness of the liberal tradition in Poland meant that the latter tendency became dominant. It seems that the Kaczyński brothers have been able to convince a significant portion of the electorate that they can reverse the tendencies leading to a pluralistic, complicated society that has different sets of values competing on the political stage, and return to a relatively monolithic, homogeneous society with clear divisions between “us” and “them.” This strategy helped them to come to power, but its realization requires a total reconstruction of the political field.

To accomplish such a program, it is necessary to create a model of democracy that is not a liberal democracy. PiS has presented a fairly consistent model of a non-liberal democracy. Its characteristic feature is restrictedness; only people who share certain national and religious values can participate in politics. There are, of course, no plans to strip those who do not share these values of their political rights, but rather to undermine their moral legitimization to participate in politics. This position is at a higher level justified by intellectuals linked to the PiS party, who define it as a struggle between liberalism and republicanism. They argue that liberalism is something foreign to the Polish tradition, while republicanism is the real core of the Polish political heritage. It is supposed to be a project based on the tradition of the Polish “gentry democracy” of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Republicanism as opposed to liberalism allegedly contains such virtues as the acceptance of national and religious values, and an ever-active involvement in the pursuit of them. Instead of the liberal concept of a pluralistic society, we have (according to republican ideology) a homogeneous society that acknowledges the same values and is ready to defend them in any situation of real or seeming danger. The state, through its influence on education, should help promote these values. The concept of overcoming the past, by which effectiveness in eliminating the remnants of communism is more important than keeping to legal procedures and rules, is also of anti-liberal character. This project is still democratic in the sense of popular sovereignty, but it is far from the liberal concept of a division between the private and public spheres, and from the idea of the neutrality of the state on ideological issues.

#### POSSIBLE SCENARIOS AND TWO CONSERVATISMS

The project of establishing another democracy has bogged down in the current political situation, but the government has been able to introduce at least a few elements, especially in education and culture. As always in a political game, the result depends on the combination of more or less contingent elements. Nevertheless, writing under the curse of Hegel’s owl, a social scientist is tempted to outline possible scenarios for the future even if they are merely an extrapolation of existing trends.

One possibility is the rise of a liberal ideology that could present an alternative model of democracy, one pushing for the constitution of a pluralistic society that at same time would become

a basis for liberal democracy. There are obvious components facilitating such a state of affairs. The main opposition to PiS is PO (Civic Platform), the party that boasts of its liberal engagement. However, it is not difficult to notice that liberalism appears in Poland in a very restricted version. Liberalism is conceived mainly as the ideology of the free market, which is supposed to solve all social and political problems. People who support and who oppose liberalism, then, refer mainly to this free market conception of society. So, PiS played the battle easily on its own turf. A famous media spot showed how a refrigerator became empty after the introduction of a flat tax proposed by PO. This spot convinced people who feared for their future that a free market economy could threaten their lives. There was no proper response from PO because its program concentrated mainly on improving the economy via *relaxing* the state's regulation of free market activity. PO, in fact, waited for the errors of the ruling coalition, and this strategy has so far succeeded – but it has also prevented PO from developing alternative strategies based on liberalism understood not as an ideology of the free market, but as a philosophy of human freedom and tolerance. This meaning of liberalism is present in the debates of Polish intellectuals, but hardly at all in Polish politics. When it does appear, it is more as an import from the EU rather than homebred, and it is discussed more in terms of the limits of Polish adaptation to Western European values. Therefore, even if PO takes power it is difficult to predict that Polish politics would change in the direction of political liberalism. To be sure, this party will be less obsessed with nationalism and religion, but probably will stay on the same course of a *Polish* path to modernization.

Another possible scenario is a radicalization of the Polish Left. So far, the problem for the formation of a left-wing alternative has been the dominance of the post-communist party on this side of the political spectrum. SLD (Alliance of the Democratic Left) carried out, in fact, liberal politics in the economy and slightly left-wing politics in culture. After its defeat in 2005, this party tried to modify its image by changing its leadership to the next generation of activists, who are too young to have been involved in the communist regime. It has also transformed its program towards egalitarianism and supporting employee rights. At the same time, it formed a strategic pact with the remnants of the post-Solidarity Democratic Party, which in its various incarnations (Democratic Union, Freedom Union) was primarily responsible for the free-market policy of the years 1989–2005. This alliance gives SLD a kind

of legitimization from the former opposition, but it also sends a mixed signal to the electorate on the economy and the politics of culture, which undermines the left wing shift enunciated after the defeat of 2005. This defeat also gave rise to an intellectual ferment on the Left. The best example of this is the group associated with the journal *Krytyka Polityczna* (Political Critique), but so far this ferment has not affected the broader political stage, and is limited mainly to intellectual circles. The main problem for the Left is that the Right has been able to achieve hegemony over the concept of the nation, which is the most important signifier in Polish political discussion. Articulating a connection between the national-religious values and economic claims of the weaker groups of society turns out to be a fundamental source of successful politics for the Right. So, for the Left the main task is to regain control over the concept of the nation and to articulate clearly how this meaning connects with employee demands. To accomplish this task, however, the Left has to create its own politics of history, as well as to reject the fascination with liberal solutions in the economy.

However, the Polish right wing also has its own dilemma. Right wing politicians have been able to secure their hegemony over the Polish political stage based on their critique of the rule of post-communist parties, but two years after the elections that put them in power it is clear that the project of the so-called Fourth Republic is turning out to be a failure. The government has been able to accomplish only a small portion of its plans and it has gotten stuck in a mess of banal political games inside the ruling coalition. But of course, the end of one political configuration does not automatically mean the establishment of a new order, all the more so because there is no alternative political program. So, the right wing still has its chance to introduce changes, even though it has become quite clear that it is split into at least three camps. The first of them is a group of politicians who form the so-called conservative wing of PO. They found themselves in this party instead of PiS because of personal animosities and also because of a putative right-wing liberalism. In Polish circumstances, this means a symbiosis of free market economy with religious and national values and rather limited openness and tolerance to other ideological attitudes. They are against any alliance with the Left and would prefer to rule together with more "civilized" members of PiS. For such a coalition, an ideal situation would be a conservative state, but one that is rather cautious about direct intervention in the ideological sphere. National and religious values should, in their vision,

be a tacit background promoted by means of cultural activity. Poland should be an important player in the European Union and protect traditional ideals as much as possible but be ready to compromise. This group is to some extent the heir of the open Catholicism that was influenced by French personalism and gathered around the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. They try to continue this line in the changing circumstances of increased conservative dominance both in the Catholic Church and in Polish society.

The second group is associated with a very traditional, very nationalistic vision of Polish society. It is associated with the infamous *Radio Maryja*, which is the main channel of their propaganda. They are quite powerful, as shown by the fact that it is hardly possible to achieve electoral success on the right side of the Polish political stage without the support of *Radio Maryja*. People who are losers in the process of transformation, who feel dispossessed by the new social reality, who fear the future and who seek consolation in religion are the most loyal audience of this station. They vote exactly as they are instructed by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, the charismatic director of the station. *Radio Maryja* has caused a lot of turmoil in Poland, and even abroad, because of anti-Semitic and ultraconservative declarations. I think, however, that the role of this station is often overestimated and its influence is most probably dwindling. This station thus acts as if it were broadcasting from a besieged fortress; it does not even try to proselytize and Father Rydzyk prefers to preach to the converted. The number of supporters, though still significant, is shrinking as Poland becomes more and more modernized and prosperous. The political role of the station is limited to delegating its adherents to different political parties and to negotiating, in exchange, new privileges for the Church and new forms of ideologization of the state. One example of this strategy is the debate on abortion, when *Radio Maryja* promised to support those parties that would vote for a total ban on abortion. *Radio Maryja* can function only within the hierarchical Church. It has sometimes troubled relations with the Church hierarchy, but never directly rebels against it.

This is in stark contrast to the third group of conservatives that I would like to call the “Revolutionary Right” or “Revolutionary Conservatism” *per analogiam* with various conservative movements in Europe and the United States. They are not afraid of the challenges of modernity or post-modernity and they believe that they can shape it into the forms they desire. Therefore, they do not like to confine

themselves to a besieged fortress. On the contrary, they are convinced that they can attract not only losers in the Post-communist transformation but primarily Polish intellectual and political elites. In politics, the new conservatism is not attached to the traditional political parties because its purpose is much more ambitious than mere participation in normal political games. By the same token, it refuses to subordinate itself to the Church, as this institution is useful only as a source of support. This group sees politics as a tool for the total transformation of Polish society according to traditional values, but taken in modernized and universal forms. So, for revolutionary conservatives, traditional values are instrumental for achieving a society in which high-tech modernization would be coupled with resistance to any kind of social or cultural plurality, denounced as a threat to European Christian culture and its system of values. Generally speaking, there is a clear link between Polish radical conservatives and American neo-conservatives. In both cases, an ideal social system would combine religious values with a neo-liberal economy. A Polish specificity is its Catholic eschatological and metaphysical cast, and involvement in the Catholic faith by prominent representatives of this tendency. Almost all of them have written books on the currents and subtleties of Catholic theology.

I do not think that this radical conservative attitude has any chance of dominating the Polish political stage, but it has an important influence on other right-wing political movements. The new conservatism sees its role not so much as a significant power in current politics, but more as a source of moral and ethical standards for the entire political spectrum in Poland, with the clear exception of the majority of the Left. These moral and ethical standards should, they believe, regulate how politics can be done. These standards are presented as the necessary link between democracy and truth, as the necessary link to transcendental values in current politics. Translated into more political language, they presuppose the rejection of plurality and multiculturalism and the acceptance of homogeneous national-religious values. Some left-wing movements, therefore, would be classified under the aegis of this new conservatism. This is especially true of those agreeing with the political standards prepared by new conservatives, even if the Left denies the need for eschatological grounding. To establish such a Left is a dream of the new conservatives because it would allow them to dominate the entire political stage.

## NEW TRIBALISM AND POST-POST-COMMUNISM

Post-post-communism is very much entangled with contemporary Polish politics, but as a general social project it is a phenomenon that goes far beyond Polish circumstances. It is not even limited to post-totalitarian countries, but paradoxically extends to countries that were never under communist rule. Post-post-communism, with its combination of populist rhetoric, national values, and neo-liberal ideology in economics, is a tempting alternative to liberal democracy, which promotes universality of rights and plurality of cultures. Post-post-communism is an expression of the fear of losing identity in the face of globalization, immigration and the constitution of international institutions. Notable consequences of this fear are the desire to return to traditional values in the ideological sphere and the emphasis on the role of state understood as a system of organizations. A strong state should secure a fixed identity and remove any anxiety from the involvement in processes that nobody can control. This emphasis on the function of the state is a reversal of the dreams of the dissidents, who under the communist regime believed in the possibility of building an ethical politics *beyond* the state, a politics that was supposed to be an expression of civil society. They tried to lead the process of transformation in this direction and they failed. They failed not only because of the internal contradictions in post-communist countries, but also because of the changing political climate in Europe and around the world. In post-totalitarian countries, this rising wave of nationalism met, at some point, dissatisfaction with the post-communist politics of economic liberalism and (at least elements of) plurality in culture. Instead, post-post-communism offers traditional values and a strong state.

The worst scenario for the advance of post-post-communism would be its collapsing into a kind of new, modernized tribalism, which would combine modern technology with a closing of societies and an attitude of defensiveness towards their fixed identities. It is not possible to estimate the real weight of this threat, but it should be a warning sign for today's politicians.

## 21.

## CASE STUDY

## Central and Eastern Europe: Romania

GABRIELA ADAMEȘTEANU

Wrocław 2007

## NOT BACK TO 1944, FORWARD TO 2007

On 3 March 1990, my colleagues from the Group for Social Dialogue (created in 1989) and I found ourselves near Budapest at the first international meeting on a theme much like today's – with the difference that it focused exclusively on the relationship between Romanians and Hungarians.

The dissident poet, Mircea Dinescu, was the most widely-known member of the Romanian team. Certain foreign journalists had taken to calling Dinescu “the prince of the Romanian revolution” after Dinescu went on the air at Romania's television broadcast headquarters in Bucharest on 22 December 1989, to announce Ceaușescu's flight.

## MOMENT ZERO: 21 DECEMBER 1989

Romania's was the first revolution *broadcast live*, a subject that impressed professional students of journalism so deeply that our *live* revolution has since entered scholarly curricula around the world. But Dinescu's tense face still shocks each time the broadcast is aired. The Securitate guards had disappeared from outside the poet's house when the revolution broke out. Shortly after that, Ion Caramitru, the future Minister of Culture, showed up at Mircea Dinescu's house with a troop of enthusiasts, and the *ad hoc* group brought Dinescu to broadcast headquarters, where he was surrounded by Communist apparatchiks, people just

**NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU** (1918–1989), Communist official who was the leader of Romania from 1965 until he was overthrown and killed in a revolution in 1989. He won popular support for his independent, nationalistic political course, which openly challenged the dominance of the Soviet Union over Romania. While following an independent policy in foreign relations, *Ceaușescu* adhered ever more closely to the communist orthodoxy of centralized administration at home. His secret police maintained rigid controls over free speech and the media, and tolerated no internal dissent or opposition. He also instituted an extensive personality cult and appointed his wife, Elena, and many members of his extended family to high posts in the government and party.

arrived from the streets, adventurers, soldiers, and especially Securitate operatives. Time and again, Dinescu's face expresses the terrible anxieties with which we all lived in those years. The angsts of December 1989 were, without doubt, the most powerful emotions in the life of our community – linked to the spilling of blood: over one thousand dead, a statistic still unexplained and unpunished.

Although not a religious person, in announcing the era of liberty, Dinescu used a metaphor I'll never forget, "God has turned his face toward Romania." The nation adopted his phrase.

Dinescu spoke the words that came to his mouth; nevertheless, his speaking of God on the television of a state that had

been demolishing churches up until then landed as a provocation, and it jolted us upright. Formed by an obligatory atheist education but also by a relaxed, domestic form of Orthodox Christianity, I think most Romanians understood the phrase as I did, in a rather neutral sense. In place of "God," we could all very easily have put "history" or "destiny" or "miracle" – so that we might have said, it was "luck" that turned its face to us. Luck: the concept aligns with our local fatalism. It was as if a miracle unexpectedly released us from suffering and humiliation.

Nearly all of us were already resigned to the fact that like our parents and grandparents we would die under communism, under the Ceaușescu dynasty, and so would our children. Generally speaking, in Romania one lived then with a sense of humiliation, the more painful because the other countries in Central and Eastern Europe had gradually found their paths towards liberty while we were sinking in the mud of dictatorial communism on the family plan. Even today, newly released testimony and documents continue to confirm the dynastic rumors of that time: Ceaușescu was preparing to establish his son, Nicu, as President of the country and leader of the Romanian Communist party.

I realized, in the years following the revolutions in Eastern Europe, that the West itself had not foreseen the Wall's coming down – at least

the part of the West personified officially by politicians and journalists. I had seen the road from capitalism to communism strewn with prisons and concentration camps. The opposite road, the way back, no one knew.

What we particularly did not have to do was go back in time to recreate a vanished capitalism, as we thought in the first moment of freedom and as many of us still believe, unfortunately. Europe and America had evolved considerably since the moment when the Iron Curtain fell between us. In Romania, where passports were terribly hard to get, professors of foreign languages taught forms of French, English, German, and so on, that were barely intelligible then (or today) from out-dated, books, relics of the inter-war period, so that right then, when we thought we were prepared to communicate, in fact, we were not.

#### THE SPONTANEOUS AND ORGANIZED RETURN TO THE XENOPHOBIC EUROPEAN CULTURE OF THE INTER-WAR YEARS

Central and Eastern Europe – along with Romania – did not need to hurry back to 1944, 1939, or 1919. They needed to arrive quickly at the mentality, technology and behaviour of 1990, or of today, in the United Europe of 2007. Here, I believe, is the key to many errors of the last decade in the East, but especially in Romania, the most isolated country in the Communist bloc.

I do not believe that there was a rise in nationalist sentiments and xenophobia after 1990, after the fall of communism, but rather a partial return to the local culture before communism, a culture itself impregnated with European xenophobia from the long history that led up to and included World War II. And, without being a partisan of conspiracy theories, I believe that some of the throwbacks were directed by re-invented groups positioned at the conservative extreme, groups led by people who were themselves members of the former Communist regime – manipulators, in other words, who did not want to lose their privileges.

In Romania, the emblematic character in this domain is Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Ceaușescu's court poet, Securitate collaborator, and founder of the Greater Romania party as well as the extremist review *Greater Romania* (România Mare).

There exists a letter, which I published in *Revista 22*, addressed by Corneliu Vadim Tudor in the spring of 1990 to Petre Roman, then Prime Minister, in which he promises (if he is allowed to publish *România Mare*), to reduce the opposition press to silence, including the intellectuals belonging to the Group for Social Dialogue.

Vadim was allowed to publish his journal, which inundated Romanian public opinion for the length of a decade with dirty and xenophobic accusations, all of which instigated and brought to light an obsolete and embarrassing culture. Even during Ceaușescu's National Communism, certain Securitate groups specialized, pretty much on the quiet, in the manipulation of racist stereotypes, prejudices, insulting phrases – an imagery dominated by fear and hostility to the foreign. C.V. Tudor was even then a key player in that domain. Now, after the revolution, all the partially-occluded defamations were suddenly liberated and came to the minds and tongues of people who had learned them from their parents.

*Spontaneous* xenophobia, latent in the Romanian culture and mentality as I insist on underlining, was supported and utilized by groups of former Securitate operatives and members of the former conservative *nomenklatura* – those who did not want to lose their privileges in the new society. And they succeeded in large measure: some are in Parliament as deputies, others are corrupt business people, others have landed in prison, and still others have been marginalized. In any segment of a population there exist winners and losers.

#### ANTI-SEMITISM WITHOUT JEWS

This whole structure is best seen, in my opinion, in the matter of Romanian anti-Semitism without Jews. The same may be true in other Eastern countries. The violent, aggressive, anti-Semitic, vile language of the (Iron Guard) Legionnaire publications from before World War II was used with great public success at the outset by newspapers of the extreme Right, as it was in *România Mare*, even though the Jewish community had by then been greatly reduced with most of its members having left for Israel.

In time, without disappearing, the *România Mare* phenomenon (which includes both the party and the publication) has lost amplitude. This is partly due to some reactions from civil society. It is also due to reactions from successive governments. Both civil and governmental reactions are insufficient, in my opinion. For the most part, however, the *România Mare* phenomenon cooled down through the course of lived reality, which annuls and refutes aggressive delirium.

Anti-Semitism has moved its target, however, from the persona of the Jew to the interpretation of history and the politics of the present. Unfortunately, anti-Semitic stereotypes, especially along historical lines,

also circulate today, even in the public space, in the mouths of some influential intellectuals. There are a couple of frequent theses: 1. Communism was brought to Romania by Jews. That is why Jews are against denouncing Communist crimes. 2. Foundations abroad are run by Jews who do not permit research into the crimes of communism.

Such ideas were enunciated even at a recent conference about *Anti-communism as a Moral Obligation*. The irony is that I, as a former, anonymous member of the Communist Party, am able to recognize even in the title of this conference, the enduring influence of Communist language.

A commission of historians under the auspices of President Iliescu elaborated a *Report on the Holocaust in Romania* several years ago. Under communism, the subject of the deportations to Transnistria was not discussed. These deportations involved the Jews of Bukovina and Bessarabia (today the Republic of Moldova), territories with which Romania was reunited in 1919 under the Treaty of Paris and which were lost after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, together with northern Transylvania. In the war years under dictator Ion Antonescu, Romania became Germany's ally and lost a great part of its army on the eastern front between 1940 and 1944. During these years, the Jewish population of the new territories, Bukovina and Bessarabia, was deported to concentration camps in Transnistria. The dead numbered between 200,000 and 400,000.

Because the Jewish population in the old provinces, despite suffering anti-Semitic legislation and several pogroms, was not sent to German labor camps, and also because the information about the Transnistrian concentration camps is insufficiently known, the idea that the Jews lived well in Romania before and, of course, after communism still exists in Romania.

Unfortunately, the report on the Holocaust in Romania was insufficiently covered by the media for the Romanian population, which should know its own true history, hidden under successive dictatorships.

#### WHO ARE THE HEROES? WHO ARE THE TRAITORS?

I return now to the meeting between Romanian and Hungarian intellectuals that took place between 3 and 5 March 1990, near Budapest. As everyone knows, Romania and Hungary are neighboring countries that dispute possession of Transylvania, a territory that encompasses a largely Romanian population together with Magyars and Germans. It once belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Historically, Transylvania is a territory where ethnic groups engaged in mutual persecution/provocation, largely under the cover of religious promulgation, for Transylvania was a place where Catholicism, Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity met. At the end of the eighteenth century, half of the (initially Orthodox) Romanians in Transylvania solved the problem of belonging to a second-class group/religion and managed to acquire the right to higher education and civil rights along with awareness of their Latinity, by becoming Greco-Catholics. This bow to the predominantly Roman Catholic Magyar culture had the extra advantage of placing the Romanian converts outside the Vatican's reach. Living exclusively in villages before that time, the Romanian majority had been persecuted and deprived of rights. The Magyars, in their turn, felt persecuted after Transylvania was recognized as part of Romania at the Trianon Conference of 1919. During World War II, moreover (when the northern half of the Ardeal was given to Hungary as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), atrocities took place in the Transylvanian zone that left traumas in the memories of both communities. At that time, too, northern Transylvania was stripped of its Jews. The Horthy administration sent the Jewish population to Auschwitz. All these tensions were revved up by Ceaușescu's National Communism in the 80s.

**MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT**, German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (August 23, 1939), which was concluded only a few days before the beginning of World War II and divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence in a secret protocol. The name comes from the ministers of foreign affairs of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union who signed the pact in the presence of Stalin, in Moscow. The Soviet Union's borders with Poland and Romania that were established after World War II roughly followed those established by the *Pact*. Until 1989, the Soviet Union denied the existence of the secret protocols, because they were considered evidence of its involuntary annexation of the Baltic states. Soviet leaders were initially unwilling to restore prewar boundaries, but the transformations occurring within the Soviet Union in the early 1990s made it virtually impossible for Soviet leaders to combat declarations of independence from the Baltic states in 1991.

It was evident that, while Romania and Hungary escaped from communism in different conditions – Romania in a poor state after the shameful and ruinous Ceaușescu dictatorship, Hungary, much more independent and modern in its life after goulash communism – both countries had to use diplomacy to put out the fires of their historic pasts.

The struggle for Transylvania was now carried out by means of arguments over historic treaties that purportedly and “scientifically” demonstrated who first set foot in the disputed territory. The Romanians say that they were the original owners in their quality as descendants of the Romanized

Geto-Dacian population. The Hungarians claim pride of place because (the Hungarians say) the Romanized population fled out of fear to the south of the Danube when the hordes reached Transylvania. A useless struggle; no one was about to move borders.

A meeting of the intellectuals of both countries seemed the best road toward conciliation, especially because among the Magyar intellectuals present, several had lived in Romania and had recently migrated to Hungary. Others continued to live in Romania. I especially remember the highly visible figure of Domokos Geza, director of Criterion, the publishing house for minorities.

What is done at a gathering of this kind? The team issues a joint communiqué, naturally. We started writing it by negotiation.

At that time, I was terrified if I had to speak in public. I had kept quiet in meetings all my life, my only consistent form of opposition. Moreover, beginning 21 December 1989, as each week went by I came to understand the realities around me in new ways. Now, for the first time in my life, I had the opportunity to see deliberate history in progress, with all its manipulations and inconsistencies. I was the only woman in our group, and I volunteered myself for the post of secretary-typist: it was still the era of the typewriter. Honestly, I was not good for more, which is not to say that the rest of my colleagues understood better the way things stood – maybe with the exception of Mircea Dinescu, who has a natural sense of politics, as witnessed by the fact that from that day to this he has maintained relationships with the political upper echelon, without ever having held an administrative post.

I felt like a typist with access to privileged information. In any event, at a given moment, I heard Dinescu expostulating with Domokos Geza, Dinescu and Geza being the ones who negotiated the communiqué point by point. At that moment of intensification I heard Dinescu say, „Come on, Geza, don't keep insisting on this! Don't you realize how it will be for us when we return to Romania – you as heroes to your side (which is to say, the Magyar community in Romania), while we as traitors to ours?”

It was a key phrase for what would be a decade-long debate. What were the rights of the Magyar minority, and how much autonomy would Transylvania have? The dispute over Transylvania, much utilized by the parties of the extreme right (as, for instance, *România Mare*) lost steam after the Democratic Union of Romanian Magyars (UDMR) began to participate in the government, no matter the results of the elections, and especially after Romania became part of EU.

At just the moment on 4 March 1990 when we arrived at a communiqué well-negotiated between Romanian and Magyar intellectuals, which is to say, just as the communiqué was ready to be transmitted to the representatives of the press, news arrived from Târgu Mureș, Romania. A genuine inter-ethnic war had broken out there between the Magyar and Romanian populations, equally distributed there. Television and front-page news portrayed a wild scuffle. Suto Andras, a well-known Magyar writer, was wounded. A brutally-beaten Romanian was presented by the international press as a Magyar victim, and so on. Self-styled as “free,” Romanian Television manipulated information without embarrassment. It would take years to wipe out the shame and frustration of the Târgu Mureș episode. More germane to this narration: former Securitate agents – never lacking in any dispute – as well as xenophobia and historic resentments had all done their work before we had accomplished ours.

In the following years, considerable evidence of the former Securitate agents’ involvement in the incident came to light. Let me hasten to add, moreover, that a new Romanian Information Service was created right after the conflict at Târgu Mureș. The “new” service had engaged many of its old employees. And the story goes on. Virgil Măgureanu, the chief of this new service had taken a seat on the panel of judges that had condemned Ceaușescu to death. How? Why? Mysteries of the revolution.

#### XENOPHOBIA: HARD TO HEAL

Most xenophobic manifestations today are directed against the Roma minority. In a sense, the “gypsy problem” is payment for historic guilt, but, of course, the Roma are the real sufferers. They were the rulers’ slaves: slaves of the boyars, of the church, left as inheritance or sold, like the Afro-American population in the United States. Slavery was prohibited in Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century under pressure from the generation of 1848, composed of young boyars returned from studies in the West. In Romania, however, the freed slaves were not given land. There was no “forty acres and a mule.” The Roma remained a poor population, a heteroclite community, partly sedentary, partly migratory, and sometimes enclosed in ancestral rituals. The press has recently announced that there is still a large group of unregistered persons in Romania, and, being unregistered, these people lack civil rights.

On the positive side, there presently exist several Roma parties with significant electoral power, scholastic legislation with reverse discrimination (to use an American phrase) as well as very active NGOs. Recently, one of them reacted rapidly and intelligently by chiding President Traian Băsescu for calling a journalist a „stinking gypsy” (it’s true, in a private conversation with his wife). The press and the Council against Discrimination asked President Băsescu to explain himself, as they did Prime Minister Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, who had also committed a racist linguistic slip against the Roma. At a general level, one finds the Romanian population expressing frustration against the Roma because infractions by Roma outside Romania are “laid to the account of the Romanians” by the foreign press. Ironically, as it turns out, a number of the law breakers are actually non-Roma Romanians.

Romanians working abroad are more and more confronting for the first time systematic, racist attacks against themselves in western countries. An article recently published in a Romanian cultural review points to discriminatory tendencies in discussing Romanians in the Italian press. The article notes that the phenomenon has also been identified in Spain, another country where there is a large temporary Romanian work force.

Xenophobia is linked to economic frustrations as well as to stereotypes resulting from lazy thinking, and it cannot be totally eradicated. Like an insidious disease, it migrates from one social territory to another. To speak of its manifestations with calm is to fight against it.

Translated from Romanian by Jean Harris and Constantin Virgil Bănescu.

## COMMENTARY

## The Price of Our Success

ALEKSANDER KACZOROWSKI

Wrocław 2007

There is a joke from an essay entitled *Grey is Beautiful*, written by Adam Michnik ten years ago. A prince found a frog and it started to speak to him: “If you will give me a kiss, I will come back to my true nature, I will become a pretty princess and you will marry me.” But do you know what the prince’s answer was? “I do not care – it is better to have a speaking frog!” Of course, the prince was the West, or the European Union, and the frog was Central Europe, or Poland.

A lot has changed since 1997. Central European countries became members of the European Union. But the story about the prince and the frog is still not finished. Today, the prince says to the frog: “OK, I gave you a kiss, but you are still an ugly frog, not a princess! Why?” And the frog answers: “I was joking, stupid!”

It is a good introduction to the problems that we are discussing today: what happened to Central European countries during the last two years? Why are many of us disappointed? I guess this feeling started with the victory of the Law and Justice Party (PiS) in Poland two years ago. Then we had a comeback of nationalists and Vladimir Mečiar’s party in Slovakia. We witnessed the street riots in Budapest. And we experienced a strange situation even in the Czech Republic, where there was actually no government for more than half a year.

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There were a lot of articles on this topic published in European newspapers whose authors tried to find a common framework for these events. The most popular answer was that this is the consequence of the enlargement of the EU. People say, for example: “As long as Poles were struggling to join the EU, they were voting for pro-European politicians. Since they have been in, they have decided to choose new guys who will defend their national interests against the EU.”

But in my opinion, the European Union is not responsible for the problems we face. The main factor that organizes our societies and our political life is the attitude we take towards the process of our countries’ westernization. This process has taken place not for the last fifteen years, but for decades, maybe centuries. And there are people who are the winners, and people who are the losers. If we want this process of westernization to be continued and completed, then all parts of society must participate in it successfully.

The nationalist governments in our countries seem to be the price we pay for it. Thanks to the democratic institutions and the EU, this price will not be too high.



# PART III



LANGUAGE  
AND DIALOGUE

## 22.

## A Post-Balkan Symbolic Infrastructure

SRETEN UGRIČIĆ

Sarajevo 2006

Let the Balkans develop on multiple levels in geographic space and historical time: what you get is Europe. Conceive a culture in the Balkans, wait for two thousand and five hundred years for it to grow in all possible directions and aspects: what you get is Europe. Europe is a post-Balkan phenomenon – as an archetype and utopia.

Post-Balkans: Balkans after Balkans; troubled Balkans resolved; European Balkans regenerated. Symbolic: The dominant vision and narrative of the world and times defines the dominant experience of the world and times. Infrastructure: Arts and culture are a semantic and performative infrastructure of integrated, radiant and viable public domains and societies.

What we need is a Post-Balkan symbolic infrastructure. What is this... what do you mean... sounds promising, but not clear enough, like a magic formula or password... explain, please... give us some examples: these are the usual responses whenever I use the phrase *Post-Balkan symbolic infrastructure*.

Let me give an example to illustrate. The 2003 Bulgarian documentary *Whose is this song?* is a typical Post-Balkan product, which proves that even music represents an infrastructural symbolic resource of this region. The Balkanites in the film – the Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Macedonians, Bulgarians – express their certainty

that the melody in question belongs to them, that it originated in their region, from their people, that it could not have originated anywhere else, that it is authentic and inseparable from their identity and heritage. Finally, it turns out that the melody is one and the same everywhere, beautiful, belonging to everybody and to nobody in particular.

Whose is this song? European. Balkan. What is European and Balkan at the same time, we call *Post-Balkan*.

#### POST-BALKAN

Balkans after Balkans, the way the Balkans were presented in dominant representations, from outside and from inside. European Balkans is Post-Balkan Ethos and Nomos: *Pax Post-Balkanica*.

The previous matrix, "Ethnos and Chaos of the Balkans," has been exhausted, the effects are painful, leaving us weary, believing that we could do better.

The Balkans have represented disintegration: the loss of bonds, as well as resources of mutual trust and belonging, both within the region and between the region and Europe. The Post-Balkans restore these bonds and resources.

The Balkans were marked and scarred by resentment, frustration, prejudice, and intolerance. The Balkans suffered from self-pity, bitterness, hopelessness, fear, worries, sadness, anger, and vulnerability. The Balkans were impoverished in all kinds of capacities and competencies: economy, culture, technology and morals. In the Balkans, all levels of responsibility, public and individual, have been corrupted.

All these layers and aspects of historical experience, community and the public sphere in the Balkan region have created a symbolic infrastructure incapable of creation, recreation, or dissemination of the social and semantic capital that is required for sustainable development and vital axiological certainty, orientation, basic civil solidarity and trust.

The Balkans have failed. The Balkans remain in a stalemate position, in a deadlock. The Post-Balkans emerge. With growing danger also grows the potential for change and salvation. The Post-Balkans overcome the insufficient and regressive legacy of the Balkans. Earning and creating instead of spending and destroying irrationally, instead of stealing from our children and grandchildren. Acting from the mind, the imagination, and consciousness instead of instincts. Fair treatment for all instead of unfair, or even brutal, treatment of minority groups and individuals.

Characteristics of the Balkans were: intolerance and bias instead of openness and fairness, zealotry instead of sensibleness, hypocrisy instead of consistency, prejudice and arbitrariness instead of knowledge and ability, self-pity instead of self-confidence. The Post-Balkans turn all of these characteristics upside down and create a promising and stable environment where there once was uncertainty, distrust and confrontation.

The Balkan axiological matrix has produced demagoguery, populism, corruption, denial of reality, lowering of cultural needs, intellectual and moral standards. The post-Balkan axiological matrix, on the other hand, introduces the concept of development as a prerequisite for survival, and not as a possible consequence of survival. This approach introduces personal responsibility instead of servility and obedience.

The Balkans was an identity – from inside and from outside the region – and that was the essential problem. Identity versus otherness. The Balkans paid the highest price only to prove that there is no such thing as *identity*. The identity of a person – of peoples or states – is not a fact, but a function of the dominant social and symbolic order.

Identity is not a fact, but a context, a value option, a metaphor, a reductive narrative and a reductive emotion; not a fact, but an idea to be followed or to be ignored. Obsessively fixated upon reductive identity concepts, the Balkans wasted its great resources and powers and ended in implosion, sinking into a chaotic and vulgar spectacle, into the destructive denial of reality and time.

The Balkans were ethnic-centered and ethnic-based. The post-Balkans is ethnic-centred and *ethnic*-based. One letter makes all the difference; the difference makes culture.

In order to reshape and upgrade the dominant intellectual, moral and cultural standards – in the region and in the rest of Europe – we need a Post-Balkan symbolic infrastructure to be deployed as part of collective and individual attitudes, opinions, behavior, communication, dissemination processes, and decision-making procedures. This transfiguration cannot originate from the sphere of politics or economy, or a strict visa regime, but only from culture. Namely, from art and knowledge, imagination and memory, qualities and principles beyond the limitations and coordinates of the Balkans.

Post-Balkans: troubled Balkans resolved, deciphered, accepted, and involved. How? By means of the transformation of the dominant cultural patterns and an upgrade of the social and symbolic infrastructure. Because it is culture that provides the principles determining the constitution of society and the conditions of life.

In general terms: the Post-Balkans represent a cultural pattern that functionally controls the consequences of different beliefs and attitudes, exactly the opposite from the Balkans cultural pattern of direct control of beliefs and attitudes. The Balkans and Balkanites simply paid no attention to the consequences.

#### SYMBOLIC

The dominant image and narrative of the world and time define the dominant experience of the world and time. Social and symbolic framework and context define the actual hierarchy of values, beliefs and attitudes, positions, both individual and collective, private and public.

Our rights are derived from the notion of who we are, what we should be and what we should do. And our responsibility is derived from the notion of who we are, what we should be and what we should do.

The collective and individual imaginary is essential for the establishment of a community's internal order, because there is no order without an image (visions, representations, narratives) of that order. The image is constitutive, created by imagination. Therefore, the imagination is the ultimate and elementary source of legitimation and effectiveness of all things public. The imaginary provides the formative principles and prerequisites concerning the conditions and way of life, principles and prerequisites pertaining to the constitution of society.

The only possible reality of our humanity is constituted by the symbolic. Art is, therefore, as constitutive as the constitution itself. How is that? Let us respond with another question: Is there a belief without an image of that belief?

Art constitutes by means of representation, determining the manner in which all things human appear.

The image of order is not visible at all times, but has to be invoked, consciously or unconsciously, through the process of selection, evaluation, and action. It is politically unconscious (as described by Fredric Jameson); it determines how we feel, how we choose and make decisions, how we see and understand the past, present and future. This is the way to constitute the domain of possibility, freedom, meaning and primary value categories; this means that art, imagination and an innovative, critical and non-standard attitude towards the world are the key factors of our experience.

The image of order is determinative and overarching, even though it may seem a mere consequence, a result. It is therefore infrastructural, even though generically it belongs to the symbolic level. Without it,

nothing can function properly or function at all, in any other domain. Fictional by origin and factual by function, it provides the infrastructural framework for the production of meaning, for the production of all types of values. Without this infrastructural support and base, the world and life inevitably succumb to the production of meaninglessness, chaos, destruction, and redundancy.

Life can be reduced to a representation of life. Post-Balkan life can be reduced to a representation of the Post-Balkans, to a gradual process of a multi-threaded upgrade of taste, ethics and the mind.

All the problems in the Balkans have been problems of culture, problems inherent to the cultural matrix of irresponsibility, incompetence, servitude, inconsistency, and self-oblivion.

Why is an upgrade in taste, ethics and the mind required? Because low standards of the mind open the space for low standards of ethics and taste; low standards of ethics open the space for low standards of mind and taste; low standards of taste open the space for low standards of ethics and mind.

How can we achieve this? By acting from within art, culture, the imaginary, from within knowledge and the value criteria that render the Balkans European and Europe Balkan. From kinship, and not from opposition.

The living and inherited cultural capital both contribute to reinvention, regeneration and reintegration of the Balkans into Europe and Europe into the Balkans. Permanent strongholds and resources do exist, cultural history is on our side, as well as the current political situation and environment in the Balkans at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The Post-Balkans mean primarily that the Balkans is not the Other of Europe, and that Europe is not the other of the Balkans. We are connected by a “solidarity inherent to the citizens who share the same public space and a common imaginarium” (Birnbbaum 1997).

This common imaginary is possible because it is possible to place more trust in Euclid’s geometry, Newton’s laws, Kant’s categorical imperative, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, than in ethnic and nationalist myths.

**ROMANS**, citizens of the ancient state centered on the city of Rome, from the time of the events leading up to the founding of the republic in 509 BC, through the establishment of the Roman Empire in 27 BC, it continued to the final eclipse of the in the 5th century AD. The Romans are often referred to for the intricacies of their citizenship. Especially during the Empire, Roman citizens, who had full rights in Roman law, were in the minority, while in the majority were conquered nations, often in slavery. This is relevant for analyzing contemporary issues of illegal immigration.

This common imaginary is possible because after the split in the fifth century, the glorious Romans lived both in the Apennine and the Balkan Peninsula. The Hellenes and Romans were the first Europeans and the first Balkanites. Europe has history and a horizon of meaning both in the West and the East, in Rome and in Constantinople. More than twenty Roman and all Byzantine emperors were born in the Balkans, as well as several sultans and grand viziers.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

We are talking about the infrastructure of production and the reproduction of sense, meaning, order and the certainty of values: the infrastructure of culture.

This infrastructure has various aspects. The economy of culture creates, distributes, consumes and recreates sense and meanings. The ecology of culture offers a balanced habitat of self-sustainable life and energy cycles of sense and meaning. The security of culture safeguards against peril from outside and from within and maintains the stability of peace of sense and meaning. The politics of culture leads and makes strategic decision for the purpose of realization of sense and meaning.

This infrastructure consists of invisible mechanisms and strategic resources that never cease to radiate sense and values, with a force that reaches and extends over solid borders, obstacles and redundant noises of bodies, territories, identities, and ideologies.

The production and reproduction of sense forges a vital and self-sustainable relationship between state and society, between individual and collective, between private and public, between decision and deed, between distinctiveness and equality, between morality and power, between justice and property, between inevitability and freedom.

For example: the dialogic and interoperable quality of different languages is an infrastructure; the telepathy of reading is an infrastructure; the impartial yet irresistible poignancy of music is an infrastructure; over 2,500 years of development of the philosophical system and the critical apparatus of philosophy are an infrastructure; aesthetics and standards of quality are an infrastructure; energy pulsing in the streets and squares of cities is an infrastructure; the wonder of lively metaphor in speech, writing, thought and gestures is an infrastructure; the persistence of unwritten rituals and customs is an infrastructure.

The economy, ecology, security and politics of sense in the Post-Balkans world are not conceivable nor sustainable outside of the economy, ecology, security and politics of sense in Europe.

For instance, let us pay more attention to language. Language is the most fundamental of all human technologies, the most fundamental human infrastructure: all of civilization testifies to the results of the spontaneous application and development of this subtle technology and infrastructure. Because language does not only transmit information unidirectionally, but it also sustains information itself, creates and exchanges information, helping the spoken or the written word to effect real change. Language is a very subtle but effective interactive technology.

Here are the language infrastructures in the region and domain of the Post-Balkans:

The Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language zone, which includes these countries: Bosni-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria;

The Romanian language zone, which includes these countries: Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Serbia;

The Hungarian language zone, which includes these countries: Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia;

The Romani language zone, which includes all the countries in the region;

The Albanian language zone, which includes these countries: Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece;

The Greek language zone, which includes these countries: Greece, Cyprus;

The Bulgarian language zone, which includes these countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia;

The Turkish language zone, which includes these countries: Turkey, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina;

The Macedonian language zone, which includes these countries: Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Greece, and so on.

Just as the Balkans are, linguistically, so is the whole of Europe; Europe is covered by a cross-border language infrastructure. Just as the Balkans are symbolically, so is Europe.

Let the Balkans develop on multiple levels in geographic space and historical time: what you get is Europe.

In terms of anthropological paradigm shifts, chronology flows like this: Instincts, Myths, Religions, Ideologies, Laws, Responsibilities. The subsequent paradigm always reshapes and changes the previous one, exceeds its limitations, and shifts the dominant axiological pattern to the opposite end of the symbolic order. Unfortunately, in the historical realization the process can shift, either to go forward, or into reverse. A crisis requires a solution, which comes either in the shape of a progression or of a regression.

Today, Europe enters the Age of Responsibility. Legality is no longer enough for a sustainable uncontested legitimacy, so the dimension of responsibility comes to the forefront. The Europe of rule of law and human rights cannot respond to challenges by regressing into the previous ideological paradigm, but only by moving to a more advanced paradigm of responsibility.

Finally, why are the arts and culture so relevant – directly politically relevant – in times of paradigm changes, or in any time?

Politics is the function of the actual socio-symbolic order, as the origin of the ultimate justification and legitimation of power.

History deals with the consequences of socio-symbolic order, while art deals with the assumptions of socio-symbolic order. The assumptions are rooted in our imaginary.

What Europe needs is a symbolic infrastructure of the rule and culture of responsibility. Human rights have to be matched by human responsibilities.

This infrastructure consists of invisible mechanisms and strategic resources that never cease to radiate the sense and value of responsibilities, with a force that reaches and extends over the existing solid borders, obstacles and redundant noises of bodies, territories, identities, ideologies.

We can only live and survive in the paradigm of responsibility: the habitat and the algorithm of the Post-Balkans, of Europe as a whole – as an archetype and utopia.

## 23.

## CASE STUDY

Native Culture In the Global Context:  
The Role Of Women

FATIMA SADIQI

Berlin 2009

## INTRODUCTION

Berber language and culture are “native” or “indigenous” in North Africa, especially in Morocco and Algeria. Berber is an Afro-Asiatic language, generally claimed to be the oldest language in Morocco and North Africa. Although this language has never been associated with a “divine” written text, it has survived for over 3000 years (some sources even say 5000 years). Arabs and Islam came to Morocco hand in hand in the eighth century. By the eleventh century, Morocco was completely Islamized, but even today it is not completely Arabized. Today, there are three major dialects of Berber in Morocco and a unifying Berber script. Many factors have contributed to the extraordinary maintenance of Berber in Morocco: the mother tongue status of the language, female illiteracy, male migration from rural to urban areas or Europe, and French.

The politically correct word to refer to this language and culture is *Amazigh* (which means “free man”), because the French term *berbère* is said to derive from the term *barbare* (savage), hence the negative connotation in the French that the English term “Berber” does not have.

As a native language, Berber possesses the historicity, dynamism and vitality of mother tongues. As a rural and almost exclusively oral language, Berber has not been competing with “literate” Standard Arabic. Berber has been maintained predominantly in rural and semi-urban areas and is still used primarily in homes and intimate

gatherings. Berber is also the language of communication between (male) migrants to the cities or to greater Europe with their families left behind (as shown by exchanges of cassette tapes between migrants and families). Paradoxically, the presence of French in Morocco helped to maintain Berber – because via the dissemination of French-language education, language itself gradually became less associated with religion in the minds of Moroccans, a fact that tacitly “legitimized” the use of Berber in everyday life and improved attitudes toward it. Finally, the millennial presence of Berber in North Africa makes multilingualism and orality fundamental components of the cultures of the region.

The history and present of the Berber language and culture, and that of Berber women have had a common fate. Both have been marginalized in the public spheres of power until the last decade of the last century, and both were propelled to the forefront of the Moroccan political scene, almost synchronically, at the beginning of the present century. Berber was officially recognized in 2001 by the creation of the Royal Institute of Berber Culture, and women’s rights were officially recognized by the royal promulgation in 2003 of the new (and progressive) Moroccan Family Law. The two have been ascribed tremendous symbolic value both inside and outside the country. The spectacular change in Berber and women’s fates has, in turn, propelled Morocco to the forefront of the Arab-Muslim world with respect to cultural rights and women’s rights.

I deeply relate to both in my personal life and in my scholarly work. When I was studying linguistics as an undergraduate student in the 1970s at the University of Rabat, I often heard from my fellow students that Berber was not a language because it did not have a grammar book and a dictionary. I then promised myself to find out. Most of the literature available at that time was in French and so was tainted with colonial ideology. So I decided to search further, and was most attracted by Noam Chomsky’s idea that languages are by definition grammars, and that we come to the world with the mental equipment to acquire any human language. The idea that the grammar of Berber was in my mind and the notion that I only needed to bring it out was thrilling. I wrote my MA thesis on the Berber verb and my PhD thesis on the sentence (the verb and the sentence constituting the backbone of grammar). In 1997, I finally wrote *Grammaire du Berbère* (in French) and co-authored *Amazigh Grammar* in 2004.

In a quest for my cultural and personal rights, I added a sociolinguistic perspective to my writings on Berber grammar and embarked on women’s and gender studies. When I started writing about the Berber

My father was in the military. Military service members often came from rural areas, and when they emigrated to the city they were often less conservative than urban conservatives. Most of the women who could acquire education in the 1960s and 1970s were daughters of military men.

language and culture in the 1980s and about Moroccan women's issues in the 1990s, I was attracted to both, but as two "separate" domains of reflection. From the mid-1990s onward, I gradually began to sense the extraordinary link between the two, not only in theory but also in my own life, as I will now describe.

I come from from a monolingual Berber rural village and became multilingual through education and movement to the city. I, therefore, experienced the pervasive power of patriarchy and language very early in my life. I want this paper to be both scholarly and personal, because it is in that combination that I find myself most frequently. My main message is that globalization offers the right context for Berber language and culture, on the one hand, and Moroccan women's rights, on the other, to thrive, and that, on a more theoretical level, the two provide Moroccan feminisms with a new framework: a larger-than-Islam framework of reflection, which encompasses Islam without denying its impact. This paper is divided into three sections: (i) the official perceptions of the Berber language and culture in overall Moroccan culture, (ii) the role of women in preserving the Berber language and culture, and (iii) Berber language and culture in the context of globalization, i.e. teaching, activism, and research.

#### OFFICIAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS BERBER

There is a clear evolution in the official attitude towards Berber. In the two decades that followed Morocco's independence from France in 1956, the official attitude was rather indifferent, if not straightforwardly negative. The state-building process at that time needed a "one nation, one language" slogan to build its national identity and to create a place for itself in the Arab *Umma* (nation). From the mid-1980s, and with Morocco's gradual opening and democratization in the face of Islamic extremism, the call for human rights, including linguistic rights, intensified and, consequently, the official attitude towards Berber started to change positively. However, the real turning-point in the official attitude towards Berber was the late King Hassan II's speech on 20 August 1994. In this speech, the King, for the very first time in the history of Morocco, declared that teaching and learning Berber "dialects" was mandatory for all Moroccans. Following this speech, the already-existing Berber associations doubled their

efforts to promote Berber language and culture, and new NGOs were created with the aim of implementing the royal decision. Television news in the three varieties of Berber were launched in 1997. This buoyant Berber civil society was backed by human rights organisations and started to attract international attention.

Another important follow-up of the 20 August 1994 royal speech was the creation of the “Pôle Amazigh” (Berber Pole) of the BMCE Foundation, a private national bank. This foundation started an innovative model of construction and management of rural community schools where Berber was taught. The success of this endeavour led the Foundation to fund the first-ever textbook manuals on the teaching of Berber. I was one of the authors of these first manuals.

The spectacular revival of Berber language and culture came at a time when Islamic extremism started to gain space in the Moroccan political landscape. The political elite saw in the promotion of Berber a secular language and a shield against growing Islamist ideology and the homogenizing influence of Pan-Arabism across the Middle East.

The official attitude towards Berber became even more positive after King Mohammed VI’s 17 October 2001 *Ajdir* speech, in which he clearly stated that “the promotion of Berber is a national responsibility.” This date also marked the occasion of sealing the royal decree, which created and organized the Royal Institute for Berber culture (IRCAM). I was nominated to the Administrative Board of this institute. According to this royal decree, IRCAM is charged with “safeguarding, promoting and reinforcing the place of our Berber culture in educational, socio-cultural and national media”.

The creation of IRCAM marked a new phase in the history of Berber: the institutionalization of the language. In 2003, IRCAM signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Education, whereby programs integrating Berber in school curricula and training sessions for teachers were to be elaborated. In September 2003 Berber entered Morocco’s public schools.

#### THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE BERBER LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The factors that have ensured the maintenance of Berber are linked to women: women are the ones who have perpetuated the language; they are the illiterate ones, and they are the ones who have stayed home to take care of the children when the men migrate. To the extent that Berber

is the language of cultural identity, home, the family, village affiliation, intimacy, traditions, orality, and nostalgia to a remote past, it perpetuates attributes that are considered female in Moroccan culture. Indeed, the fate of Berber has always paralleled the fate of women in Morocco.

This type of women's agency is not visible in the Moroccan mainstream feminist perspective, where agency is linked to public spheres of power. Up to now, feminist writings on Moroccan women have been mainly produced from a sociological, political, and literary perspective, and, as such, these writings assume Islam and Arabic as a framework and therefore ground women's agency in the innovations created by Islam. In the book I am currently writing, I adopt a linguistic and anthropological perspective, where I assume the pre-Islamic era and suggest Berber as a overarching framework, where Moroccan women's agency is rooted in the 3000 years old pre-Islamic era. Though Berber is not backed by a religious book, Berber women have always expressed the sacred in their own way and have always managed to transmit religion from generation to generation. The book is called *Opening the Door of Silence* for that very reason: it highlights the hitherto invisible Berber women's contribution to the construction of Morocco.

I think that in order to include Berber women's agency we need a larger-than-Islam framework: a framework that would highlight the profound and pervasive impact of time-honored Berber women's expressions of faith, self, and life experiences on today's experiences and religious discourses. Berber women's religious expressions constitute the cultural roots of present-day Moroccan women's voices. Only a perspective on language and culture can inform this framework.

The major reason for the absence of the "language and culture perspective" in contemporary mainstream research on Moroccan women's issues, in general, may be due to two reasons. First, the official history in the entire Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) begins with the coming of Islam. As such, this history glosses over more than 3000 years of pre-Islamic recorded history. Second, Ibn Khaldun's influential work

forced the polarizing dichotomy "urban vs. rural" (with negative connotations associated with the latter) on subsequent research in Morocco and the Maghreb. The reading of these two facts within a heavily patriarchal context makes of Berber rural women's oral expressions the most disadvantaged

IBN KHALDUN (1332–1406), the greatest Arab historian, who developed one of the earliest nonreligious philosophies of history, contained in his masterpiece, the *Muqaddimah (Introduction)*. He also wrote a definitive history of Muslim North Africa.

category of research. With the advent of colonization and state-building in the middle of the last century, oral languages, especially Berber, and women (the great majority of whom using only oral languages) were completely marginalized under the pretext of building a state that belonged to the larger Arab Umma (nation).

I have been gathering Berber women's expressions of the sacred in the form of inscriptions, oral and written texts, art motifs, carpet weaving, and ritual for over a decade and a half. These are expressions combining daily concerns, faith and spirituality. Their appeal resides in their non-institutional symbolism that has survived for millennia in the collective unconscious of North Africans and southern Mediterraneans. After the tragic destruction of most of the southern Mediterranean's rural life in World War II, these expressions may well be the only remaining link between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Prior to and during the colonial era, many European missionaries and orientalist found interest in Berber women's rituals. This interest was, however, part of larger narratives of indigenous cultures, colonialism and anti-colonialism. In the post-colonial era, considerable work by American, British and Moroccan anthropologists has been carried out on the cultural roots of authority in Morocco (Geertz, 1968; Gellner, 1969; Eickelman, 1985; Combs-Shilling, 1989; Kapchan, 1996; Hamoudi, 1997). These works, however, did not underline the various means by which Berber women inscribed their role in shaping these very cultural roots of authority.

Berber women's expressions of the sacred in the works cited above are marginalized, scattered, fragmented, sometimes uprooted, dispersed or simply diffused into larger male discourses of political and ideological power and counter-power. This fragmentation not only deepens the historical gaps in Berber women's histories, but it also blurs continuity in women's agency and stands in the way of any coherent explanation of present-day Moroccan women's religious voices.

No serious work has focused on the cultural roots of Moroccan women's religious discourses; yet it is there that resides some explanation of continuity in today's Moroccan women's religious expressions, a continuity shrouded in silence and forever elusive (or made to be so). The roots of this silence are also the roots of the various patriarchies that have been shaping and controlling Moroccan societies throughout the ages. These patriarchies have been largely based on a strict segregation of space, with the public space allocated to men and the

**QUR'AN**, the sacred scripture of Islam and, for all Muslims, the very word of God, revealed through the agency of the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad. Although most modern Muslims know it as the Holy *Qur'an*, many of them still refer to it as "al-Qur'an al-karim" or "al-Qur'an al-majid," which can best be translated as "the Noble Qur'an" or "the Glorious Qur'an." The *Qur'an*, which is the central theophany (divine manifestation) of Islam, is written in Arabic, which is Islam's sacred and liturgical language. Because of Arabic's sacred status, the *Qur'an* is, strictly speaking, untranslatable, though the text has been rendered into nearly every other language.

private one to women. Both the expression and performance of the sacred in these patriarchies have always been understood as a token of authority in both the public and the private spheres and, thus, as men's prerogative. This resulted in the subjugation of women and the creation of a context where their voices (oral and otherwise) are *awra* (taboo) (Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006). This resulted in the high rate of female illiteracy, a strong veneration of the scriptural aspect of Islamic culture, and the gradual development of women's own (often private) expressions of religion and the sacred.

Women's expressions of the sacred are rooted in ancient history and cultural patterns; these expressions have survived

through various women-related means of transmission, and as such, have never ceased to be central to women's overall agency and power inside and outside the family. Women's oral texts, art and rituality preceded, accompanied and followed the coming of Islam in Morocco; the Qur'an itself was recorded from oral texts and printing reached Morocco only in the seventeenth century.

*Opening the Door of Silence* tells the story of Berber women's complex, millennial, and multi-vocal religious agency, which is rooted in the pre-Islamic Punic era, profoundly moulded by the early Islamic period, sporadically revived throughout the pre-colonial and colonial eras, and today is now regaining momentum. The first goddesses and priestesses of ancient times developed into Islamic female saints and spiritual leaders, and have ever since infiltrated women's expressions of the sacred and political, re-emerging in today's Moroccan women's orality, rites, art, and discourses. Such a story may also help us understand the deep commonalities between present-day Moroccan feminisms (liberal and religious). The roots of Moroccan women's expressions of agency have been wrongly associated with the encounter with the West, often constructed as "civilizational" and "urbanizing," or the *Mashriq*, often constructed as "illuminating" and "inspiring." In this book I argue that while the West and the Mashriq have had a significant impact on literate (often urban) women's agency, they do not constitute the

characterizing feature of this agency. In other words, assuming a Western or Middle-Eastern explanatory framework for Moroccan women's agency is misleading: it not only glosses over the pre-Islamic and the pre-colonial eras, but it also erases the rural female oral, ritualistic, and artistic legacy which is still dynamic and vibrant. The book seeks to reclaim Berber women's agency in a beyond- the-Western and the Mashriq frameworks.

#### BERBER LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

Morocco is characterized by linguistic diversity. Four major languages are used in this country: Standard Arabic, French, Berber, and Moroccan Arabic. The use of these languages carries specific political and socio-cultural meanings: Standard Arabic is the official language; it is associated with authority in public institutions, such as religion, the government, education, administration, and a large part of the media. French is a second language; it is associated with business, education, the military and elite media. As for Berber, and colloquial Arabic, they are largely associated with home, the street and popular media.

The teaching of Berber was officially motivated by two things: the necessity to safeguard it as a token of Morocco's ancestral identity, and the fact that millions of children spoke it as a mother tongue. This view was resisted by conservative forces but generally speaking, it was supported by large portions of the ruling elite (Ennaji 2007). This positive attitude proved to be indispensable to the continuity of the Berber language. Thus, the ebb and flow in the continuity of Berber depends on the ebb and flow of the official attitude towards this language. In order to better understand this dynamic, it is important to consider the socio-political background of the teaching of the Berber language.

In September 2003, Berber officially entered the Moroccan educational system, a powerful public space, for the very first time in its history. This spectacular entrance marked the transition of Berber from the private sphere to the public arena of authority. Three major factors were behind the teaching of Berber: the Berber cultural movement, the work of academics, and the King's desire to integrate this language into development.

The combination of these factors has been favoured by an overall process of democratization that Morocco launched in the last decade or so. From 2003 to 2009, the teaching of Berber in Morocco witnessed

ups and downs. In spite of the fact that there is no return in the process of teaching the language, the overall enthusiasm of its beginning is now fading.

#### SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TEACHING OF THE BERBER LANGUAGE

The demand for teaching Berber needs to be situated in the overall Moroccan socio-economic context. From the mid-1980s, the Moroccan educational system has had to face a genuine challenge: the growing demand for human rights, including linguistic rights. During this period, Moroccan society has been experiencing rapid change, which has myriad implications. The majority of Morocco's population (56%) now lives in urban areas, with the figure steadily rising at an annual rate of 3%. There is a spectacular drop in Morocco's population growth rate: from a steady 3% annual rate in the 1960s and 1970s, to 1.3% at present. The rate of female illiteracy in rural areas is still appallingly high: 87%, while in urban areas it has dropped to 49%.

Alongside these changes, Morocco has been witnessing a steady democratization process, including an "opening" on Berber, with the aim of teaching it at school. The Berber language question was becoming increasingly politicized and its codification gave rise to the 2002 heated media debates between conservatives (who preferred the Arabic script) and modernists (who wanted the Latin script). The ultimate choice landed on Tifinagh, an ancient Lybic alphabet that Berber used.

The new language policy on Berber was also motivated by the need to reform the Moroccan educational system and establish a new language policy in this field. In the 1999–2000 school year, the National Charter for Education and Training was adopted with the agreement of all political parties and syndicates. This charter aimed to outline future steps towards higher performance in national education and to break with the past. It also aimed to restructure the Moroccan educational system and included a series of articles related to future language policy that was to be implemented in the educational system.

The new Charter explicitly mentions the need to have an open approach towards the Berber language. It also refers to the importance of improving the educational system and foreign language instruction, and even notes the necessity of having a good command of foreign languages and using them in class.

Finally, the Charter underlines the fact that language policy needs to be compatible with the country's socio-linguistic reality and with the educational policy in practice.

The language planners, therefore, opted for a multi-sector language policy, where the teaching of Berber was perceived as a token of modernity and diversity. It is interesting to note that Berber was excluded from the school system in the post-colonial era in the name of unity, and it is under this same name that it is introduced into the system. Likewise, the former association of Berber with tradition started to shift to associating this language with modernity. This shows that the continuity and failure of Berber are linked to the concepts of *tradition* and *modernity*. The pre- and post-independence failures of Berber were blamed on tradition, and the relatively recent continuity of the language is linked to modernity: as Berber is not backed by a holy book, it becomes secular, thus modern. This is proof that the concepts of tradition and modernity, just as those of continuity and failure, are not fixed; they are constantly recreated in specific historical environments and for specific socio-political aims.

The presence of French and now Berber in the Moroccan educational system strips teaching from the religious database associated with Standard Arabic. Furthermore, not being supported by a holy book, Berber is further secularizing the Moroccan educational system. In order to solve the problem of training instructors, curricular design, pedagogical materials, etc. the King created the Royal Institute of the Berber Culture.

Thus, with the advent of globalization, "linguistic authority," just like religious authority, is no longer placed in one single language. A new dynamic between Moroccan languages is emerging: the initial rivalry over symbolic power between Standard Arabic and French, on the one hand, and Standard Arabic and Berber, on the other hand, is giving way to a drastic reduction of the space of Arabic in education and the emergence of Berber in schools as a sign of "opening."

Conservatives, moreover, have adopted French as a sign of "pragmatism," because it secures future employment, and the emergence of once "foreign" languages, namely English, and to a lesser extent Spanish, as strong languages of education, especially private education.

Against this overall socio-political context, three major factors propelled the teaching of the Berber language to the forefront of the Moroccan political scene: Berber activism, research on the language, and the royal will.

### BERBER ACTIVISM

After Morocco gained independence from France, activists started to call for the recognition of Berber as a specific identity. For example, the “Association Marocaine de la Recherche et de l’Echange Culturel” (The Moroccan Association for Research and Cultural Exchange) was founded in 1968 with the goal of promoting Berber identity and preserving Berber language and culture. This gave rise to other associations, such as the 1980 “Tafsut n Imazighen” (The Spring of Berbers) which demanded cultural and linguistic rights.

According to Berber-language activists, Berber ought to be restored and revitalized through teaching and use in formal and informal settings. They reject the idea of Berber becoming a memory language and fight to turn it into a language of active usage and everyday communication. However, for conservative Arabophones, the promotion of Berber could prove a danger for national unity and political stability. These views simply aim to maintain a socio-cultural status quo (Boukous 1995; Sadiqi 1997; Ennaji 2005).

### RESEARCH ON BERBER

Of the three countries of the Maghreb, it is in Morocco that research on Berber language and culture is best carried out. This research began during the Protectorate with the work of pioneering linguists such as David Cohen, Gabriel Camps, and others. After independence and with the rise of humanities and social sciences, a number of masters and doctoral theses were written on the phonology, sociology and grammar of Berber in both French and English. This gave rise to the establishment of research groups such as GREL (*Groupe de Recherche en Linguistique et Littérature*, the Research Group on Linguistics and Literature) which was created in Fez in the early 1980s. These groups greatly contributed to motivating students to write their monographs and theses on Berber language and culture.

On the other hand, considerable progress is being made in the flourishing area of language and gender (Sadiqi 2003).

### PROGRESS IN THE TEACHING OF THE BERBER LANGUAGE

The previous section showed how a combination of Berber activism, research on Berber language and culture, as well as the royal will led to the inclusion of Berber in the Moroccan educational system. Another contributing factor is the linguistic proximity between Berber and

Arabic, as the two languages share (more or less) the same phonological and grammatical systems.

The teaching of Berber is institutionally based: *Al-Mithaq* (Agreement) which is sanctioned by all decision-makers (the King, the Parliament and civil society), the 17 October *Ajdir* speech, and the Royal Decree that created the Royal Institute of Berber Culture. According to these legal and constitutive references, the teaching of Berber is to be based on universal values and human rights that need to be reflected in all the teaching strategies, methodologies, and textbook manuals.

The next positive step in the process of teaching Berber is the cooperation between the IRCAM and the Ministry of Education at the level of pedagogy, teacher-training, and the standardization of teaching the language throughout Morocco. This cooperation resulted in considerable progress in the teaching of Berber.

Thus, in 2005, 140 teachers and inspectors were trained in some 32 centers. In 2007, this number rose to 2000, and then dropped to 75 in 2008. The latter decrease is normal, given the logic of supply and demand. The number of beneficiaries (students) from Berber teaching reached 807 in 2003 and 1140 in 2008.

Curriculum development also progressed: the number of hours allocated to Berber in the primary school curriculum was fixed at three hours per week. This allowed those designing the syllabus to include various components of the Berber curriculum, such as reading comprehension, grammar, mathematics, and paralinguistic activities. The designers also allowed for a progression in the teaching of these subjects. Thanks to the rigor and efficiency of these pedagogical materials, the teaching of Berber has now reached the sixth and final year of the primary school level. Efforts are underway to extend the teaching of Berber to the second level and beyond. At the university level, Berber has been present as a subject of research in Moroccan universities since the 1970s. In the last few years, a partnership between the IRCAM and three Moroccan universities (Agadir, Fez and Oujda) resulted in the creation of department-like branches (*filiales*) of Berber. This new development allowed both students and teachers to study Berber and prepare future teachers.

The progress in the teaching of Berber is a strong symbol of this language continuity in an era marked by transition at the national level and globalization at the international level. This continuity not only promotes the language at the personal, social, economic and

political levels, but it legitimizes the long years of Amazigh activism and research on this language. However, this progress is not steady; from 2008 it has started to show signs of regression.

#### CONCLUSION

The fate of Berber language and culture, on the one hand, and that of women, on the other hand, have thrived in the era of globalization: official attitudes to both have improved, Berber and its millennial alphabet have entered the Moroccan educational system for the first time in history, research and activism in Berber studies and women's studies in the region have been invigorated, and all this progress raises a new issue: will the fate of Berber and of women remain parallel, now that both are becoming gradually more visible in the public spheres of power?

## 24.

## CASE STUDY

## New Borders: Borderland Regions of Georgia

ZALIKO KIKODZE

Tbilisi 2005

It is common knowledge today that ethnic borders never were, and never will be, identical to political borders. Georgians live in many countries. Muslim Georgians live in Turkey, other Georgians live in Azerbaijan, near the border with Georgia. Near one of our new borders.

New borders create new issues, because Georgian citizens – of all nationalities – are stubborn when it comes to changing old habits. During Soviet times, we could reach Sharihan in half an hour, spend there some time, and before 5 p.m. we were going home. Moreover, Georgia's borders are poorly marked so the change in mentality is slow.

## SITUATION IN SVANETIA

I want to describe the situation in a few regions; above all, Svanetia, where it is worst. It is the poorest region; people abandon their houses and move to Southern Georgia. Mountains hate superfluous populations. A traditional lifestyle is not enough for survival anymore – one needs money today. A big Svanetian community, the Uchgurs, consists of 400 families. They had no doctor, so the authorities made an agreement with one woman, for forty-six discs of Suluguni cheese per cow per month. And this happened today, in the world of virtual currency and bank accounts in general use.

In Chersurete, it is impossible to buy anything for money, and barter is a common practice. For a pair of galoshes one can buy, or, rather, barter, three kilos of *elbo*, a type of butter. Once, in the Muco village, I talked to my friend's wife. They have seven children and she grumbled about there being no school for them in the area. I asked, "What would you like them to study at school?" "So that they would learn about money and time," she answered. Money and time, it surprised me.

In history, Svanetia was always a treasury of all the temples, icons and all what was precious to Georgia, and it never gave up. It was simply too inaccessible a place, horses could not get there. Not until the Soviet times was a road made there. The oldest Georgian manuscript is kept in Svanetia up to this day. Even the Soviet authorities could not take the tenth-century icons. However, the environment is also the reason for them to decay quickly.

Moreover, in Svanetia live many refugees, deserters, and robbers. Many stayed there and exchanged Kalashnikovs for bread and Suluguni cheese. That is why the people of the region are very well armed. Nothing good came out of it. Traditional relationships were ruined. The robberies are so frequent, that a disciplinary expedition was sent there last year, but with little effect. It is impossible to take the arms away from the mountain people; they hide them in the woods.

There was even an idea to buy the guns from them: prices are low, you can buy one for 200 Georgian lari. When one day a guest from France was stabbed, an elderly lady asked me, "How is it possible for you to have guests when you don't even have a Kalashnikov? Even I have a Kalashnikov." In Svanetia, a Kalashnikov is part of the dowry. If you want to marry your daughter, you need to buy her one. It is very difficult to go there nowadays.

To summarize, Svanetia is in ruins. When they complain to me in Javakheti that Georgia does not make roads, "Your government does nothing for us," it is a problem of their lack of knowledge about their own country. If Javakhetian Armenians were to see just once in what kind of houses people live in Khevsuria or Tusheti – how much poorer they are from them – the Javakhetians would have a lot more understanding. People in those regions cannot even visit their own parents. There is no money in the villages. They sell the houses of their forefathers in Kakheti for only two-three thousand dollars. But poverty is one thing. The other is when you have richer people with whom to compare yourself. Now there are tourists visiting and people began to feel utterly poor and abandoned.

## THEVI

If we move further along the border we will come to Thevi, an Azbeksy region just near Northern Ossetia. People here can go to Vladikavkaz and, economically, they are strongly tied to Russia, especially in winter. For example, this year all the villages in the region were totally isolated from the rest of Georgia for forty days. Here, so to say, everything is alright. In the Thursu gorge, where many Ossetians still live, there were no conflicts, even during the climax of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, and there were no homicides or robberies.

## KHEVSURIA

Georgia borders with Chechnya in two regions, in Khevsuria and Ingushetia. In the latter, there always were good relations, even if there were some robberies or homicides in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Chechens call the Khevsurians *Thi (Txu)*. In those northern regions, Georgians and Chechens understand each other. Despite all the medieval wars and killings, they are still bilingual. There was dialogue. So during the First and Second Russian-Chechen wars this saved us from the most dangerous Chechenian fighters. And also what saved us was that the region is nearly uninhabited. In winter, no more than eighty people, mainly the elderly and children, live there.

## MUTUAL RELATIONS ON THE BASIC HUMAN LEVEL

As for conflicts, I can say from my own experience that on the basic level of interpersonal relations they cease quickly. After the Georgian-Ossetian conflict there was not enough chalk at schools, so UNICEF sent five tons of chalk for schools. Seven-hundred kilos were for Southern Ossetia. No one wanted to transport it, so I decided to do it myself. The Minister of Culture was then a very famous and practical woman – sadly, she is already dead – she helped me then. This is how relations are changing.

I believe that, above all, the Caucasian nations have a unity of character, in spite of the variety of languages and customs. If one can speak of a national character, then I can refer to Pavlo Vlashvili, who said that Georgians have no ability for strong and persistent hatred

CHECHNYA, republic and federal state of Russia situated on the northern flank of the Greater Caucasus range. Bordered by Russia proper on the north, Dagestan republic on the east and southeast, the country of Georgia on the southwest, and Ingushetia republic on the west. In the early twenty-first century, more than a decade of bitter conflict devastated the republic and forced the mass exodus of refugees.

**UNICEF**, acronym of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (1946–53), special program of the United Nations, devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children. Created for improvement of children's welfare, particularly in less-developed countries and in various emergency situations. The organization's broader mission was reflected in the name it adopted in 1953, the United Nations Children's Fund. *UNICEF* was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965. It is headquartered in New York City.

but, simultaneously, they are incapable of strong love. I am sad, as a Georgian, that he said so about love. But I believe we do forget offences quickly – we drink and forgive. I like this a lot. The Ossetians are similar. Despite all that happened there, on the basic human level, according to my knowledge, all grudges are overcome. People communicate, travel, trade, and marry. If not for the politicians from both sides, everything would be more or less good. In other words, there is contact with the Turkic, the Dagestani or the Lezgian people and the cultures frequently meet each other.

There is another good example, the Paravani Lake in Javakheti. The place is called Javakheti Siberia, because the Dukhobors were sent into exile there. Around the lake are pastures for the Kakheti sheep. Apart from that, everybody speaks Georgian there, the male population also remains in contact and fosters economic relations with the Georgians. Everyone can visit there – the relationships are great.

#### RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AS *LINGUA FRANCA* IN THE CAUCASUS

A common language is required for cultures to communicate. What language will be the one used for interethnic relations in the near future? Sadly, in Georgia, the new generations of both Ossetians and Georgians have lost the language we came to know very well during the last two centuries. In my opinion, this is a great loss. If I were the President, I would make Russian the third official language.

Why? Because seven-ten years ago I was afraid we would lose language. Holland is a good example. It is a small country with a territory twice as small as ours, however, three times as big in population. There – I had the opportunity to teach a group of twenty pupils at the University of Amsterdam – every student can speak at least four languages. For smaller nations, polyglotism is absolutely crucial. However, we were stripped of languages and left only with Georgian. I do respect my national language and love it, and know it pretty well; sadly, however, it is insufficient. I cannot speak in Georgian with the Lezgian people, with Armenians or Abkhazians. With some of them

it is hard to communicate even in Russian. In Javakheti, men speak in Russian and women in Armenian (Turkish dialect).

By the way, yesterday Levan Berdzenishvili spoke about the Abkhazian language. I think the Abkhazians, unfortunately, also do not know their own language. You probably noticed that they have great trouble with it. Only few of them actually know Abkhazian. At the same time, they speak very good Russian. All their political leaders, Ardzinba, Shamba, speak Russian perfectly. But our political leaders, Shevardnadze or Gamsakhurdia, speak bad Russian.

On the one hand, this shows (from an anthropological point of view) that Georgian works here in Tbilisi and Abkhazian does not work in Abkhazia. Not because it is a poor language, but rather because it is not a developed language. It is not capable of competition, and neither Georgia nor documents from the Hague can help that. And besides that, there is also a sense of a post-conflict generation, those who were nine or twelve years old, and who have never once been to Georgia – or have even never left Tskhinvali, even never left Abkhazia.

But the Russian language is for us, for Transcaucasia, completely indispensable. Because the region is poor and learning English requires huge financing. In Tbilisi, only children of the elites speak good Russian. I myself met girls, working quickly with English-operated computers, who could not understand a word in Russian. It is a lost language in the young generation. It should be made an official language or, at least obligatory in schools. Nothing good came out of the anti-Georgian hysteria promoted in Russia, and from the anti-Russian hysteria promoted in Georgia as well.

LINGUA FRANCA, means in Italian “Frankish language,” a language used as a means of communication between populations speaking vernaculars that are not mutually intelligible. The term was first used during the Middle Ages to describe a French- and Italian-based jargon, or pidgin, that was developed by Crusaders and traders in the eastern Mediterranean and characterized by the invariant forms of its nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Various languages play the role of *lingua franca*: Arameic in Southwest Asia from ca. 700 BC to 600 AD; Classical Latin among European scholars until the eighteenth century; Portuguese in times of early colonization; Malay in Southeast Asia for trade; contemporary English for international trade and law.

#### MUTUAL AND CULTURAL IGNORANCE

From the time I started lecturing at the university, during the first lecture I always ask the new group of students, “Has anyone ever been to the Armenian theater in Tbilisi?” In fifteen years I only had one case when a young boy proudly said, “I’ve been there, several times.” When I asked

him how it happened, he answered, "I was in love with an Armenian girl and she took me there." I think this is a good example of such *multiculturalism*, where cultures live right next door with no knowledge about each other. Georgians do not know their own culture. Maybe because of the war; in any case, the last ten-twelve years are lost for scholarship, I do not know. No one knows anything anymore, and we know less and less about each other.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

## Discussion from the Tbilisi Colloquium

ARTUSH MKRTCHYAN: Everything you said was right. However, I am not totally persuaded. You were not *exactly* right. You would be, if not for official Georgian state policy. For example, today the journey from Turkey to Armenia winds through many Georgian and Azerbaijani towns instead of following the better route used in Soviet times: through the Javakheti region, through the Akhalkalaki and Akhalteke road on the border of Armenia. Nowadays, the better route is in such disastrous condition that it can barely be called a road. Why cannot the Georgian government – in spite of many promises from Shevardnadze, Burjanadze, Zhvania, and Saakashvili – rebuild it? At the moment, Georgian Armenians need to make a detour 300 km longer than usual. Why do Armenian cars need to go to such great lengths?

Tbilisi has a great opportunity to become the capital of the Caucasus, but *which* Tbilisi? The Tbilisi of the past, where Armenians, Azeris and Jews lived side by side, the Tbilisi of many faces? But the Georgian Tbilisi – exclusively as the Georgian capital – can never be the capital of the Caucasus. One hundred thousand Azeris and Armenians have fled Tbilisi during the last five years. How many Orthodox churches have been closed? How many schools? There are only three Armenian schools left in Tbilisi, after the initial twenty-one. Tomorrow in the Armenian theater in Tbilisi there will be no Armenian actors. Even today, only a few remain.

I agree that social position is an important factor, but when the Armenian theater burned down, and the Georgians had great financial difficulties, even Shevardnadze found money for its reconstruction. This is the kind of message Armenians, Azeris, Jews, and Russians in Tbilisi need today! I have great sentiment for the city and I love Georgia, but if things go further in this direction, it will never be the capital of the Caucasus. It will just remain the capital of Georgia.

ZALIKO KIKODZE: I agree with you completely, and I have only one remark. Emigration does not always result from state policy. It is very hard to follow how this is happening.

It is true, there are political and religious reasons. Yet, there are completely different – economic – reasons as well. I don't know a Georgian family that wouldn't earn some extra money in Russia. People are ready to go there. Even in Soviet times, at the beginning of the 1920s and 30s, when they asked a Georgian, "What will you do when they open the border?" He answered "I will climb up a tree." "Why?" "Otherwise," he answers, "they will trample me."

For example, the Greek community emigrated strictly for economic reasons. No one oppressed them at the time. To this day, there is no such problem in Georgia as overpopulation. 40% of the agricultural land is unused; there is no one to work on it. If 100 thousand emigrated, then one needs to ask: Why? Which Armenians left Georgia in the beginning of the 1920s? Capitalists. Why did they leave? At the time, capitalism was endangered here. However Tbilisi was mostly an Armenian city then.

I would like to add that, at the moment ethnic minorities constitute only 20% of the Georgian population, and that percentage is shrinking. Two weeks ago, the Ministry of Education published results of a sociological survey asking, "What is the Georgian to non-Georgian population ratio?" Unfortunately, 80% of Georgia's population decided that on their own, Georgian, population was no bigger than 20%.

On another question, "What should be Georgia's educational policy?" 76% answered that it should encourage non-Georgians to get out of the country as quickly as possible and 7% would like non-Georgians to be quickly assimilated. Only 18% said the policy should promote the teaching of the Georgian language while supporting the growth of non-Georgian languages and minority cultures.

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To calm you down I must note that the phobia does not only concern ethnic minorities. At the end of August, the query was “Should physically challenged children learn together with other children, or separately?” The answer was nearly unanimous: 86% said that they should learn separately and in isolated conditions.

I would like to add something about languages. Two years ago a TV show *Crossroads* (Перекресток, Perekrestok) asked people on the streets of Tbilisi (Georgia), Baku (Azerbaijan) and Yerevan (Armenia), “What language will be used for intercultural communication in the Southern Caucasus in fifty years?” In Tbilisi and Baku people stood for English, only in Yerevan did they say Russian. However, if ethnic minorities in Georgia continue to ignore Georgian as an official language, in twenty years we will be unable to understand each other. It will bring a totally new meaning to integration.

Translated from Russian by Joanna Kulas and Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

Interview with Neal  
Ascherson by Bartosz Hlebowicz

Neal Ascherson, a writer and journalist, born in Scotland, for most of his life a foreign reporter for English and Scottish newspapers, after which he became a columnist for over a decade. He has worked in Africa and Asia, but mostly in Central Europe. On 18 June 2005, during the Second Colloquium of Intercultural Dialogue in Tbilisi we spoke about Georgia's contemporary problems, particularly its relations with Abkhazia and Georgia's attitude towards the European Union.

BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ: In your book *Black Sea* you devoted a chapter to the Abkhazia region. You described its political authorities as quite moderate, not supporting any kind of nationalism, pursuing common-sense politics, perhaps resulting from the background of these politicians (Soviet-education, never rooted in regional or ethnic identity). Has the situation changed since then?

NEAL ASCHERSON: I went back to Abkhazia about fourteen months ago. I found that the situation has changed. The old optimism or idealism seems to have largely disappeared. Instead nearly ten years on there was a mood of depression, defensiveness. There was a deep division between the government and very critical groups and circles, which are outside the government. I've found that many of the people who would be helping

to run or to rebuild Abkhazia when I first went there a few months after the war, have ended up effectively in opposition. They are expressing a great deal of criticism, they want more civil liberty. And many of them don't entirely approve of the general strategy of the government either. It was somehow depressing, perhaps not surprising after, ten years of isolation.

**BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ:** How do you see the situation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution, also in context of Georgia's plans to enter the EU and NATO?

**NEAL ASCHERSON:** Georgia is obviously destined in the long-term to become part of the European Union. I guess it may be in about ten-year's time. I think that is right and inevitable, I think the focus should be associated with Europe and it is part of not just a periphery, but of this big cultural political confederation, which Europe is becoming. At the same time, there are huge problems not yet solved in Georgia, which have got to be sorted out before Georgia can move further towards either NATO or, especially, the EU. And it is a question to get into NATO, because membership in NATO is, as they say, custom-made; different arrangements were made for each candidate, different conditions were set for each candidate, each is a special case. Georgia has got to sort out, first of all, its internal politics, a process begun with the Rose Revolution, but Georgia has got to carry it forward all the way, Georgia must deal with corruption, it must create a dependable, reliable and honest public sector service that works. Secondly, Georgia has got to deal with ethnic minority problems, with secession problems, and there are different ways of doing it, because all these problems are different. The Abkhazian problem is much the biggest, and, actually, much the most dangerous one, because – in my view – Abkhazia is now effectively independent, and it should remain independent.

**BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ:** Independent from Georgia, but also from Russia.

**NEAL ASCHERSON:** Yes. it should not become one more Russian republic in the Russian Federation, and I don't know any Abkhazian who wants that either. They don't want that at all. But on the other hand, neither do they want to simply rejoin or join Georgia, they don't wish to be dominated by Georgia... they do not trust the Georgian political authorities. Now a solution which is quite obvious to an outsider

is extremely difficult to reach if you are not an outsider. The obvious solution is, some confederal arrangement in which Georgia and Abkhazia are members of a confederation in which both say: "We have full sovereignty." They might even have their own currency, but nonetheless we have some kind of association, there is a state or confederation of Georgia and Abkhazia, whatever it's called. They are loosely associated republics.

If that can be achieved, which is an urgent question of internal politics in both countries actually, if they can do that – good, that would be settled. More difficult, in some way, are those ethnic minority questions inside Georgia, because many of them have problems of poverty. Poverty introduced isolation for Azeri minorities, Armenian minorities. They have become increasingly cut off from Georgia. As someone said at this meeting [Second Collouqium of International Dialogue] absolutely rightly: Russian as a language is declining all the time, the youngest generation in Georgia and in all Caucasus – they hardly speak Russian and they don't yet speak English. So there's no common language really, and that's desperately needed. So there's a real problem there, in some ways the indications of things getting worse, not better, between the Georgian center and the non-Georgian minorities. Money is gonna help. If prosperity of some kind can return to Georgia that'd be shared in some of these minority areas, and make roads better, improve the education problem ... as long as it is done in a proper liberal tolerant spirit.

These things have to be sorted out before Georgia could become a candidate to either NATO or the European Union. I think it will be done, I am optimistic.

BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ: Still, some of the priests and monks from the Orthodox Church, as well as some politicians, are speaking against joining the EU. Sometimes even those who officially support the idea of joining the EU.

NEAL ASCHERSON: That's true. It is very interesting that as soon as Misha Saakashvili started saying, "We are European, our destiny is Europe," quite a lot of Georgian intellectuals said, "Well, just a minute! Do we really want to be completely European? Because we mean more: our identity is not just European, it is a unique, Caucasian one, between Asia and Europe, with aspects of both. If we just join the EU like that, we will have to maybe surrender our identity, maybe we will be one more small European state among many others. And we really don't want that." I think it was a really sensible

objection, it is not an argument against finally joining the EU, but it is an argument for establishing the new standard of the EU, maybe changing it into a larger scale. Poland has the same problem, after all Poland is certainly a European country – one, but, two, on the other hand, it is not really a western European country, even though it is a Catholic one. And three, what really matters for Polish foreign policy interests, influences and connections, is East, the connection with Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine. So the Poles could well have said, they didn't say it, but they could have said – like the Georgians have – “We don't want to join the EU, because it would mean losing, surrendering our relationship to the East, which has been sometimes a very unhealthy, inferior relationship, but now we are going to make something quite different, which is a relationship of co-operation, partnership and idealism and we don't want to just look all the time to what are the French saying, what are the Germans saying, we are poor, but at least we wanna be friends with them.”

The Polish destiny in Europe is actually much more interesting, much more dynamic. So the Poles decided that despite insisting that their interest in the East is really a priority of interest, nonetheless, of course they want to become a part of the European Union too, and pursue those interests, fight problems inside it. I think Georgia will come round to this point of view too, at least I hope so. I see the point in criticizing. And I see some European propaganda here is completely uncritical... See this poster saying: “Georgia – cradle of the first European,” which is of course, in terms of palaeontology, complete nonsense.

**BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ:** What are common people's attitudes towards associating with EU?

**NEAL ASCHERSON:** It has changed over the fourteen months or so since I was last here. People have interest in Europe and they have turned much more critical of Europe, and they have started to debate about the project, and ask questions: “What would really happen to us? Are we really European?,” “Do we want to be European?” So there's an interesting mode of questioning. I am not quite sure why that is, but I think it is healthy, it is an argument about the identity of Georgia. Certainly, Europe is looking towards a way of saying, “Let's escape from the shadow of Russian influence. Let's be moving into a different world of relationships,” and at the end – I am quite sure – if the choice is to stay under the shadow of Russian influence and this path of Western Eurasia, or to associate with Western Europe, Atlantic Europe, the Georgians will

choose that. Nonetheless they are much more critical than I thought they would be. And the mood has changed.

**BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ:** What about the Rose Revolution itself? Two years ago it received huge support from the people. Are they changing their mind about it?

**NEAL ASCHERSON:** I think people are quite sardonic in a Georgian way. They feel disappointed, not that disappointed in Misha himself, I think they think something has changed, but not enough, I think people were extremely disillusioned and shocked by the failure in South Ossetia. I think it did him an enormous amount of damage... probably for the wrong reasons, because some people say, "He should have been stronger, should have been much stronger." Some people say he shouldn't have been so strong, he should have been more tactful, trying to solve this by negotiation and not to charge in the troops, produce a situation where people started killing each other. But I think quite a lot of people think that in a general way he lost prestige, he lost authority by that failure... South Ossetia was very bad for his reputation, and that's serious. Because if he loses authority and loses popularity seriously, I don't know what would happen. At that moment I think he has recovered quite a lot of what he lost. Bush's visit was pretty good, maybe not good from the point of view of the outside world, nevertheless it was the best perception Bush has ever had anywhere in the world outside USA that far and it gave Georgians a big injection, of self-confidence.

**BARTOSZ HLEBOWICZ:** Is it possible to support so-called intercultural dialogue through such conferences?

**NEAL ASCHERSON:** Interesting thing. It is this moment that sometimes happens at the conferences where you are stirring the pot, and suddenly the material solidifies. This is happening right now actually, I've noticed people sitting in closeness, they are beginning with these concrete ideas to network with each other, to arrange to meet, some projects to discuss, so this is happening. Also the discussions today were much more intense that they have been in previous days. As usual, from what we said from the platform, and what really matters is what happens off stage, when people are having coffee together, sitting in the sun together, that is now beginning to work. I am quite optimistic that we will come up with something.

EDUCATION  
AND DIALOGUE

## 25.

## Apocalypse and Metamorphosis, Civic Education and Utopia

TADEUSZ SŁAWEK

Sejny 2008

The essay stems from a conviction that pedagogy needs to be guided by a certain utopia. By this concept I do not, however, mean a mere

visionary denial of reality, a postponement of action through a description of the ideal; utopia does not lead us outside the world we know, but, just the opposite, it offers the prospect of a transformation of the real. Like democracy, which is, as Jacques Derrida famously claimed, always a democracy *to come*, also pedagogy, and the “pedagogical province” in particular, shows that teaching (also at the university level) is a pedagogy *to come*. Thus, a pedagogue is one for whom nothing at school, at the university, in a society, in class is “given” – ready-made with the condition, if not the obligation, that it must be simply transmitted to other minds. Utopia is a power not to proliferate the real as it is, but to reinvent it. Hence, there is no embarrassment of utopia but, rather, utopia helps us to overcome

JACQUES DERRIDA (1930–2004), French philosopher, founder of “deconstruction,” a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts, but also political institutions. Although Derrida at times expressed regret concerning the fate of the word “deconstruction,” its popularity indicates the wide-ranging influence of his thought, in philosophy, in literary criticism and theory, in art and, in particular, architectural theory and political theory. Indeed, Derrida’s fame nearly reached the status of a media star, with hundreds of people filling auditoriums to hear him speak, with films and television programs devoted to him, with countless books and articles devoted to his thinking. Beside critique, Derridean deconstruction consists in an attempt to re-conceive the difference that divides self-reflection.

the embarrassment of the real, which in many respects has become morally intolerable. I will try to argue here that the most important asset of pedagogy is to demonstrate that one cannot, and should not act merely by applying already-enforced rules and norms, and that, in consequence, civic education is a meditation on, and experimentation in individual responsibility. To think along this path implies a necessary reflection on the relationship between political power and universities, which are more and more aggressively pushed through budgetary balances to see themselves as a domain of the goal-oriented applied sciences. I would like to postulate a vision of the university founded not only upon the idea of *universitas* but also *societas*, a place that refuses to be an institution where knowledge is transmitted as a repertory of means for future careers but which, equally importantly, is a laboratory of the human connection and binding in the spirit of solidarity.

The pedagogical province is also a pedagogy of the province: both describe what I shall show here: intellectual labor belongs to the domain of what is provincial, to what is related to the province, never to a center. The province locates us where all who want to teach and study should be: the outskirts, peripheries, margins, and borders from where one can better see what is beyond the horizon, what is *to come*. Province (of pedagogy) names a place where alternative visions of the world may provide the grist for shaping powerful forces that may change the real. We would like to see citizens of the future world not only equipped with professional skills provided by universities, but, first and foremost, with the joyful willingness to critically reflect – and we would like to see them provided with the freedom to do so.

I would like to go back to this idea that was announced in this leaflet we received before coming here, and the idea played with the title of this conference. “Agora” was centered on three words, “utopia,” “pedagogy,” and “provinces.” I would like to focus only upon these three words here. That is, I would like use to the verb that was used very often this morning: to meditate together with you on these three notions. I would like to think about the following: Why do we speak about pedagogical provinces as an idea? It implies that there is a special kind of pedagogy called “the pedagogy of the province.” In the background, there is the question of utopia, which goes back to two larger issues we may not have time to explore. First, whenever we talk of utopia, it means we are having problems with what we have in common, together; that being together is not an easy thing to do. Second, is it still possible to say,

WALDEN, small pond in Middlesex county, in eastern Massachusetts, U.S. It lies just south of the village of Concord, in Walden Pond State Reservation. The pond was immortalized by Henry David Thoreau, who retreated there (1845–47) from society prior to writing *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. Thoreau, then 27 years old, built his home on the shores of Walden Pond. From the outset, the move gave him profound satisfaction. He spent long hours observing and recording the local flora and fauna, reading, and writing his journals, which he later polished and included in *Walden*. Much time, too, was spent in meditation.

to quote after Martin Luther King, “I had a dream”, without being laughed at for being naïve?

One of my starting points would be that I do believe in provinces and in this idea of the pedagogy of the province. Because what happens in the province is that it locates us in the territory where all who teach, all who want to learn should be. That is to say, as I noted above, the outskirts, margins, peripheries, borders, borderlands, and the territory that was announced today by Cezary Wodziński in his frequent allusions to the *Hütte*; or, if we could use an Anglo-Saxon example, it could bring us to the doorstep of another countryside, provincial location, which is the cottage Henry David Thoreau that he built for himself at Walden. Just outside the periphery of the peripheral city of Concord, Massachusetts.

Provinces and the attractiveness of the province, the attractiveness of the pedagogy of province seems to stem from the fact that it is not really an alternative, nor is it a negation. It is a challenge, posed for what can be generally described as the mode of urban living or the mode of urban life. Coming from the domain of the provinces: what happens is we tend to think about a possible direction to our life that may be different. I am not saying “better” or “worse,” just different from the direction we ascribe to our lives within the context of where civilization has placed us – big cities. Hence, one could say, after the eminent American scholar and philosopher Norman O. Brown, that prophesy – because I believe utopia comes from prophetic thinking – is a critical response to urban revolution, that irreversible commitment of the human race to the city and civilization.

I think, the strong point of the pedagogy of the province is that it tries to orient us in a different sense of direction that our lives may have had and, thus, the whole prophetic tradition is an attempt to give direction to the social structure precipitated by the urban revolution: to resolve its inherent contradictions, to put an end to injustice, inequality, and anomie, to end the state of war that has been its history from beginning to end. The notion of utopianism today is a proposition of another

direction given to our lives, but it is also a way of thinking on how to put an end to the long list above. Brown seems to suggest that the history of the city and of civilization is the history of war. Many recent histories are abundant with examples, like Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars Program" or Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory, or George Bush's famous "War on Terror." In other words, the prophetic spirit and utopianism seem to offer a kind of resistance against the notion that the world has already been ordered and reached a state of – not perfection, but – desirability.

Utopia is not necessarily a no-place; utopia is a good place that, however, is an *idea* that we have in front of us, rather than a place we have reached. I think utopia and the prophetic spirit are what we have ahead of us – a direction – rather than a specific place or a specific location.

One can ask now, what is the first step that we could possibly take? It may be to go back to the famous debate that took place in 1964 during the student revolts at the University of California at Berkeley, and the famous exchange between the University President, Clark Kerr, and Mario Savio, the leader of students at that moment. In September 1964, Savio said something very interesting that defines the framework in which we are today. He said, "President Kerr referred to the University as a 'factory,' a 'knowledge factory' engaged in the 'knowledge industry,' and just like in any factory or in any industry you have a certain product. The product is you. And you have got to be a part, a part of the machine."

Of course, this is an ironic statement, an ironic commentary on President Kerr's idea, which, unfortunately, seems to be the dominating European idea at the moment. It is the primary signal that we are now getting about the direction of education. One of the first steps in opposition to it would be to reflect on how to de-mechanize education. I believe this is one of the challenges, one of the advantages, of what I call the pedagogy of province. It tries to de-mechanize education; it struggles against the first and dominating principle of the machine, the undesirability of change. Machines do not want to change; they have been made to perform certain operations forever. So, there is a basic undesirability of change that I think the pedagogy of the province attempts to fight.

One can also say that what is happening in the pedagogy of the province is a certain liberation of the imagination, which I would rather call "moral imagination." By this I mean what the American philosopher John Dewey described as "dramatic rehearsal." He wrote that it was important because the "moral imagination" is based on the idea of deliberation, which "is a dramatic rehearsal in imagination of *various* competing and

possible lines of action. It is an experiment in finding out what the *various* possible lines of action are really like.” So, the idea of the pedagogy of the province is centered on the concept of moral imagination, of the moral dramatic rehearsal, of realizing that there is no *single* action, but a whole *constellation* of actions. In dramatic rehearsal, which is possible only due to moral imagination, one considers what the consequences of a given action may be, before one actually takes it. This is one of the challenges.

The French philosopher, Michel Serres, defines the matter very precisely: “We have at our disposal tools, instruments, notions in great number. We lack on the other hand, an intellectual sphere free of all relations of dominance. We have many truths, very little goodness. A thousand certainties, but rare moments of invention. Continuous war, never peace. We lack a simple democratic intellect for man.” In other words, the pedagogy of the province would be training in the simple democratic intellect for man. Moreover, this emphasis on war is important, because it is also interesting to see how it has already infiltrated language: the university site is called “campus.” What is “campus?” “Campus” is a military term, a camp where Roman legions would entrench themselves before defense or attack. So it is an interesting rhetorical trope, that academics have been very busy “building entrenchments” for themselves. I would like to propose now a little Joycean meditation from *Finnegan’s Wake*, an impossible work that nobody seems to understand, myself included:

Knock knock. War’s where! Which war? The Twwinns. Knock knock.  
Woos without! Without what? An apple. Knock knock (Joyce 340).

It is a very cryptic and enigmatic passage. The gist of the matter seems to be in the “knock knock,” because it implies the presence of a door, which is significant. We knock at the very beginning of every pedagogical experience. We do not abolish the door, we do not explode it, we simply and humbly knock. It has also another meaning in English, which means a jester’s trick, a snap with fingers. I believe the pedagogy of the province starts with knocking. One has to knock. There may be an answer, or there may be no answer at all. But knocking is necessary. The answer to the “knock knock” is very interesting because it is linguistic panic. We do not know whether it is in English or in German; who knows how to read it? So the next step is the confusion of languages, something that Cezary Wodziński also referred to as the necessity of the

disturbance of time. Here, it is a disturbance of language, in which language seems to lose certainty about the meaning of words. Let us notice the presence of war; not “war?” but “which war?” And “whose without” becomes “woos without,” the meaning of wooing being rooted in the eroticism of seduction. The word “without” is crucial in both meanings: “without what” and “without” in a sense of being outside. The necessity of going outside, of leaving your native territory and leaving your nest is crucial. And it is a certain sense of deprivation: one is going without *and* one is leaving something behind, losing something very important.

It can be said that pedagogy is about the knocking on the door and it is about dealing with the confusion of language, which such knocking may bring: coping with languages and meanings in state of chaos. And then, it is about the necessity to leave home, to go without, to go outside.

What happens when we are prepared? We have given a knock, we have been received gently by somebody willing to be enamored or open to our wooing, so that he or she left the home, left the nest. What shall we talk about? Shall we talk about discipline, mathematics, politics? We can talk about all these specific disciplines, but only on the condition that within these disciplines we are going to talk about something much more important, something much more basic: we talk about an *apple*. And we all know the story of the apple. The apple is crucial, the apple is the beginning, the apple is the desire for knowledge. The question of whether this knowledge has limits or not, whether there should be a ban on certain kinds of knowledge, the consequences should we transgress these rules, “knock knock.” But of course knocking brings us to the *Hütte*. You cannot knock on the university door, you can bang your head against it, but you cannot knock on it. You can give a knock on the door of the *Hütte*, or the Walden cottage. So we are back to where we were, and I am leaving you with the “knock knock.”

In other words, we can say that the pedagogy of the province also raises a very important question, because it does not abolish or invalidate disciplines. It makes us aware of the need to teach these, or approach these disciplines in such a way that there would be over-*turns*, something that is much more basic than the division between these disciplines. There is a famous exchange recorded between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thoreau. Both of them came from Harvard, though Emerson was more of a Harvard “type,” so he said very proudly, “They teach all the branches of knowledge at Harvard,” and Thoreau sneered and said, “Yes, they teach all the branches but none of the roots.”

Thus, the question is not to abolish disciplines. The question is how to teach these disciplines in a way that allows for something more fundamental: these disciplines would grow out of something more fundamental, not more immediate. Norman O. Brown poses a simple question, a romantic one, which is at the very foundation of the pedagogy of the province. The question is, "How do you start a new civilization?" Not a simple question. And he gives two answers. First, he says: "Out of the rubble of the old, there is no other way." So, translated, it means that teaching and learning must always teach all these things that we consider facts and information, but this stage has to reach what is called "deconstruction" or "critical reflection." It is high time to present the second quote from *Finnegan's Wake*:

he dumptied the wholeborrow of rubbages on to soil here (Joyce 17).

One can spend hours talking about it, but in brief, it is really interesting that "dumptie" brings the word "dump," but also Humpty-Dumpty; and it is known what the power of Humpty-Dumpty is. Humpty-Dumpty is the one who reflects on the power of language, who sees language as the game of power. The famous statement by Humpty-Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass* is the question, "Who has the power?" In other words, awareness that even the language in which we teach is a system of power is needed and one has to make everybody aware of this. Of course, "wholeborrow of rubbages" is also interesting, because "wholeborrow" is a parody of completeness, because it remains a whole, but borrow instead of a barrow; as I understand, "wheelbarrow" becomes "wholeborrow" here. The whole idea of borrow becomes borrowing, hence we live on borrowed time and goods, which is a satirical comment on credit, particularly. Today this is especially biting.

This is the first part of Norman O. Brown's answer: there is no way in which you could think of education outside data. What is important is that one has to turn it into a reflective or critical way in which this part of the process is taking place. The second answer given to the question "How do you start a new civilization?" is "not to introduce some new refinement in higher culture, but to change the imagination of the people." Which way this change could go I will show in the third quote from *Finnegan's Wake*:

We are once amore as babes awondering in the wold made fresh where with the hen in the storyaboot we start from scratch (Joyce 336).

Again, the meaning is very cryptic. What is essential for me is, “We are once amore.” The possibility of “once amore” is amazing, because it has the optimism of a crucial new beginning. But it also means “one’s more,” that is to say there is more of “me.” It depends on the degree to which I see that there is another before I begin. Thus, the more of “me” derives from the fact that there is less of me, because I recognize the importance and significance of the other. The crucial thing is that there is “amore” which means that “we are in love,” we are profoundly committed to others; and this “amore” results from our ability to be like “babes,” that is, the ability to be surprised from the wilderness, if one changes “world” to “wold,” which is the old English word for “uncultivated, savaged, uncivilized land.” Hence, there is the necessity for being amazed, for losing the security of knowledge, which is at the very beginning of the new foundation, which is the borderline, which is the border territory.

Only on those conditions can we see the world “made fresh.” The biblical phrase here is “the world made flesh.” Joyce rewrites it as the world “made fresh.” It can be said that the pedagogy of the province is constant interplay to what extent we can rewrite our everyday life reality, not as “world made flesh” but as “world made fresh.” Each time a new beginning. The ambiguity of flesh and fresh, which works simultaneously, is crucial. In other words, the advantage of *province* is that it is precisely the utopian sense of a new direction that we are looking forward to. It helps to make us aware of this “democratic intellect for man.” Let us remember that late Jacques Derrida described democracy only as “democracy to come.” If we believe that democracy is here, than we are making a serious mistake. Democracy is always “to come.”

Now I would like to refer to Hermann Hesse because, in a sense, I was provoked. I took seriously your allusions, Krzysztof, to Hesse’s *Kastalia* from his *Das Glassperlenspiel*, *The Glass Bead Game*. There is an interesting passage that summarizes everything I have said so far. In an imperfect English translation from Hesse it reads:

**HERMANN HESSE** (1877–1962), German novelist, poet, and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946, whose main theme deals with man’s breaking out of the established modes of civilization to find his essential spirit. With his appeal for self-realization and his celebration of Eastern mysticism, *Hesse* posthumously became a cult figure to young people in the English-speaking world. His most notable works are *Demian* (1919), *Steppenwolf* (1927), *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930), and *The Glass Bead Game* (1943). In the latter, his last and longest novel, he once more explores the dualism of the contemplative and the active life, this time through the figure of a supremely gifted intellectual.

They were surrounded by political, moral and economic tectonic shakes, they waged dreadful wars and civil wars but their unsophisticated didactic games were not only a graceful thoughtless infantilism, but they also reflected their profound need to close their eyes and run away from unresolved problems and visions of apocalypse to a thoroughly innocent world of pretences and simulacra. They've learned how to drive cars and played difficult car tricks and in a dreamy manner dedicated their time to crossword puzzles because, nearly helpless, they stood in front of death, anxiety, pain and hunger. Neither consoled by the church nor supported by reason, they who have read so many articles and listened to so many lectures could not pluck their energies into making effort to finding the time to overcome their anxieties and fear of death. They lived from day to day, shaken by fever with no faith in tomorrow.

This is, again, a very dense passage. Let us choose then only few points. Education has to break from its present state in which it merely prepares people to endorse the *status quo* and avoids true problems by supplanting them with artificial ones. Such education (and pedagogy of the province) calls for a pedagogy that does not confine itself to instructing in basic professional skills but – while performing those instructions – educates in a way that simultaneously teaches something else. I do not know the name for this something else. It might be called moral courage, moral imagination or honesty. Such pedagogy does not eliminate the value of the formal strategies of teaching, like lectures or articles, but it aims at showing that a good lecture or article is always pierced with a force that makes one aware of how to get inside of what Hesse finds essential. And what he finds essential is the four concepts: that we would not stand helpless in front of death, anxiety, pain and hunger. If education is not about this – it fails.

This is what I call the pedagogy of the province. Although it transmits the necessary knowledge, it somehow departs from the professional, academic heart of the disciplines. But it faces the essential problems that have been marginalized, and that civilization tends to marginalize, avoid, if not overtly eliminate.

My third point is about walking, since walking was mentioned several times today. Because pedagogy is about walking; the literal meaning of a pedagogue in Greek was “someone who walks a child to school.”

What is really essential about this idea of walking, in *unterwegs*, in being constantly “on the way to,” is precisely linked with utopia; because utopia is a direction but not a place. I would like to draw the attention to the centrality of the particle “con-“ in three words: “conviviality;” “confronting;” and “conversation.” “Con-“ itself means “with” and opens a whole wide territory, in which the idea of being with or being together is related to the humanity.

The idea of confronting – which I think to be central for education – is the idea of showing your face, disclosing, not hiding yourself, but really exposing your face. Confronting is slightly different from the word “confrontation,” which has a very aggressive meaning of a “clash, collision.” Con-fronting seems to be the central part of pedagogy of the province as an exposure and everything that is associated with this. One exposes oneself and pedagogy is about exposing, but not about imposing: running a serious risk of making errors. That is the first thing: confronting.

The second interesting concept is that of *conviviality*, which means living together, hopeful and joyful living together. Conviviality may be defined as “cultivation of good fellowship” or cultivation of such a society, in which modern technologies serve politically interrelated individuals rather than managers.

Conversation opens at least three different ideas of “change, versatility,” which are necessary to open the second idea of “poetry, verse” and also the idea of “dialogue, confrontation” in sense of “tension, exchange of ideas, versus this, versus that.”

Let me conclude with a brief description of the possible tasks for education and the pedagogy of the province. I think that one of the first tasks of the pedagogy is to teach critical reflection upon the very material it teaches. Science is good, but if it claims to be the *only* good and behaves as if it was the case, then it becomes the dynamics of madness. This is not something purely theoretical. During the 2001 United States Congress debate on banning human cloning, Congressman Ted Strickland of Ohio said, “We should not allow theology, philosophy, politics to interfere with the decision we make on the issue.” I think this is an opening to madness; this is an invitation to sheer dangerous madness.

That is the first task of the pedagogy of the province: to teach science, but also responsibility of science and knowledge, that science is not an ivory tower to decide every possible issue related to it.

The second task is probably very naïve: pedagogy of the province does not avoid power, but teaches a specific way of using it: to enjoy power, but not to pride oneself with it. I will quote from Serres:

The gentle man holds back, refuses in himself the brute power that is propagated. The wise man disobeys the single law of expansion, does not always persevere in his being and thinks that elevating his own conduct to a universal law is the definition of evil as much as madness.

The third task of the pedagogy of the province is to teach and be aware of the demands of accounting management. In a long perspective, it puts more accentuation on accountability than on accounting. In other words, it does not seem to endorse Milton Friedman's statement that, "Profit-making is the essence of democracy and accumulating material goods is the essence of the good life." Accounting is absolutely necessary, but in the long run it is the priority given to accountability, rather than to accounting that we all need.

The fourth task is to realize the ways in which pedagogy, science, education, and the humanities are treated by the state, by the general system, and to understand mechanisms that put these particular disciplines in their places. Scientific discoveries are not free from social and economic embedding. Thus, constant investigation of the ways in which the state organizes and funds education is required. That was one of the famous points of the late Derrida's text on education, where he says that – he is specifically talking about philosophy, but you can say it about any other discipline of the humanities – "philosophy is everywhere suffering by budgetary balances that give priority to research and research training that is labeled useful: profitable and urgent, the so-called end-oriented sciences and to techno-economic, indeed scientific-military imperatives." It is necessary, therefore, for education to be aware of these mechanisms and the task of the pedagogy of the province is to think and meditate on that.

The fifth task is to open a space for difference and debate. However, so many things has been said about it today that I will just pass it over in silence.

One of the most crucial things is not to choose an easy way out; that is, to teach how not to choose the easy way out, not to assume a position of an easy thing. There is also a long meditation on that in one

of William Blake's prophetic poems, where he warns against the attitude of easy: "let's choose easy things." The final line of this meditation is relevant to our discussion here: "It's an easy thing to rejoice in the tents of prosperity." Even if one forgets about this line, I think the vocation of pedagogy of the province is not choosing the easy way.

Let me conclude with a book that was published long time ago, in 1954, a set of dialogues with Alfred North Whitehead. We have a couple of interesting suggestions here:

I have a horror of creative intelligence congealing into too good teaching, static ideas, this is a correct thing to know, passive acceptance of polite learning without any intention of doing anything about it. Teachers should be acutely conscious of the deficiencies of the matter taught; they should be on their guard against their materials and teach their students to be on their guard against them. Once learning solidifies, all is over with it. The danger is that education will freeze and it will be thought 'this and this are the right things to know,' and when that happens thought is dead. I'm also worried by the aloofness of the university for practical life; not only the federal and state governments but even municipal affairs. There is a great function which awaits American universities and that is to civilize business, or better: to get businessman to civilize themselves by using their power over practical processes of life to civilize their sociological functions. It is not enough that they should amass fortunes in this way or that and then endow a college or a hospital. The motif in amassing the fortune should be in order to use it or a socially construct end.

So this postulate that education should not be aloof, away from municipal affairs, is something we also need to take into consideration when we speak about the pedagogy of the province.

Transcribed by Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## COMMENTARY

Discussion From the New Agora Symposium  
in Sejny

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: It was essential for us to make the third edition of the New Agora Symposium here in Sejny, the Wigry cloister and in Krasnogruda, because the subject we have chosen, “New Educational Utopias. Philosophy of Intercultural Education,” is very important here and now in the doings of the Borderland Center. We always point out the importance of the place where the debate is being held, so that is why yesterday most of the day was devoted to introducing you as deeply as possible to this place.

The telluric powers, the spirit of this place, is an important component of the upcoming debate and all our activities. What does this place tell us today? It wants to tell us that after years of practical activities in this small homeland on the Polish-Lithuanian borderland, in this former Jewish district in Sejny, we should create a new dimension of actions that would be connected with some kind of a school, academy or pedagogical province, where we could teach our craft, but also explore it, learn from it and examine it. This aspect accompanied the Borderland team from the start, when we began working in this exact community and place. A desolate place, such as Czesław Miłosz’s Krasnogruda mansion, or the Wigry Carmelite Brothers’ cloister was always an important referential point. However, it was never fully managed as such individual space dedicated to spiritual work, dedicated to something other than can be realized

in the town's element. It means a departure from practice and the stream of activities towards such a desolate place dedicated to reflection and spiritual work. We longed for this for a long time and never could realize it.

This element of involvement was far more powerful and abrupt, requiring immediate action rather than a place for reflection. The longer we do it, the stronger is our need to have such a place, and without it – at least we feel this way – this authentic bond between the cloister and the town, between the mansion and the town, will not last. This is a bond between something autonomous, which has the time to develop its own world, and practical things, the elements of a certain community and a certain place. This is the threshold where we are right now, here, attempting to build such a pedagogical province of bridge-builders in Krasnogruda. We do not know much about how to go about it, and we all as a team feel this is a new opening – which is, however, inextricably connected to our previous activities. I say this because I know many of you have similar experiences both from the borderlands and universities. I think especially of Tadeusz Sławek, who wrote a small but very important book about the contemporary university crisis from his experience as Rector of the University of Silesia in Katowice. This book touches on our common problems, like making academic education a blunt tool, the enslaving of education by means of professionalization and specialization, which takes away the space of free thinking and spiritual work.

It often concerns practitioners who in the element of action forget – or underestimate, do not have the possibility, or chance – to leave their work and sacrifice themselves in a stream of spiritual work of self-development. This is why I speak of understanding a kind of longing with which we all are touched in some degree.

These two days are to be devoted to how to cope with this longing and how to create an opposition to the specialization of education, an individual space unconcerned with practical actions and functioning in reality. Such a place would have its asylum, its own time and space required for the spiritual work to make its labor. These are the questions for our Symposium.

Looking at this space between the four pillars of the White Synagogue, I recall a place where my friends from Georgia brought me and which they called “the Academy.” On the way there I had expected to approach an infrastructure of buildings. When I finally arrived in Gelati (the medieval cathedral in Kutaisi, Georgia) – the place where Giorgi Pkhakadze lives – it appeared that the whole Georgian Academy founded

by King David in the twelfth century, is a circle, which we also create here, surrounded by huge trees, a circle in which eight to twelve elders could sit. Of course, there were ruins of an astronomical observatory and the remains of a cloister or another building that were elevated later around the circle. However the circle of only a few people that dialogued in Gelati and was called the Academy remained in my memory as proof of how this really starts. A space for such a circle is something hard, but essential to create. It is important to encircle such places out of our reality and allow ourselves to engage in a philosophical, humanistic debate over pedagogical utopias.

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The pedagogy of the province is also the pedagogy of many different provinces. It is a pedagogy that does not turn its back against hard problems and does not seek easy solutions. These virtues, I think, are connected also with the province itself. The province is for pioneers, because it is where new grounds must be broken and old ways need to be made impervious, it is to be tamed with hardship.

I have a feeling that every reflection, every statement here, every new meditation gives additional construction to our workshop and our handicraft. So we have a whole new range of things with which we can fill the workshop.

I recall this understanding of a bridge by Georg Simmel, who called it a *space of openness*. A bridge in my understanding has its doors. Such a bridge contains what Simmel understood as the power of the doors, so it can be simultaneously closed and opened.

In our practice, a bridge is the space that can be closed, can be questioned, can be destroyed and demands guarding its openness. It demands knocking on it, as you, Tadeusz, quoted from Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. It demands this act of coming to, knocking on it, and this uncertainty of what will come afterwards, after the space is opened and passed through, the entire dangerous situation of passage. Because of the possible opening there is always a certain hesitation in the knocking and one can always draw back his hand and not knock, stay on his side of the river, stay at home.

It is similar to the icon in the limelight of the museum hall: this place is an alien space for it and we can experience only some of its true power. Pavel Florensky wrote beautifully in his book

*Ikonostas* about the true context of the icon: apart from the image itself there are prayer, light, sound, architectural space, the smell of incense and all the other things in an Orthodox church that create the whole experience. I say this in the context of this answer that Thoreau gave Emerson about returning to roots: it is also about a return to wholeness, striving for a restoration of a disturbed unity. I have a feeling that all your different voices create such a unity, a whole of reflection, correspondences, events, gestures, senses and meanings. It looks like Thoreau's answer, that this is coming to those hidden consonances. We often forget it was taken from us and that we live only in some small part.

CEZARY WODZIŃSKI: I would like to stop for a moment at the metaphor of a bridge. I did not manage to even look at the *Book of the Bridge*, so I am still uneducated but what Tadeusz Sławek and you have said makes me think very suspiciously of this metaphor. Or maybe not suspiciously, but with a little bit of critique, because I found that the metaphor of a bridge brings two serious threats. A bridge enables passing to the other side, linking both sides, and I oppose this image to the idea that the pedagogical province should stay away from easy things. It should rather concentrate on the hard ones, not in a sense of complication, but in a sense of the high raised level and also of a deep reflection and meditation over the problems which it encounters. At the same time, a bridge helps one get to the other side.

Let us imagine a situation where there is no bridge and we are on the river bank looking at the other side we would like to reach. Thanks to that situation our invention and imagination starts working: How can we get to the other side? Maybe we need to swim or build a ferry? But we want to think of a bridge that will help us get on the other side and then, hop!, back again and that's all, we're here or there again.

The second threat is that a bridge is open for everyone, also for the uninvited guests that we don't want to invite to our encounter, but they do it themselves and they do not knock on the door, but bang on it – often with heavy tools like crowbars and axes. A bridge does not secure us against uninvited visitors. So I propose a new element in our bridge: a bascule bridge. You can close it sometimes and sometimes open it so that no one uninvited comes through. The second idea is that we live in a region where there are a lot of holes in the bridges. A bridge full of holes secures us against any intrusions.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: We also need to remember that we are talking mainly about building a bridge, and not about walking across it. To swim a river is easy in comparison to building a bridge, because it takes all the work and ability. And when it is built, the easiest thing to do is to destroy it: just one day or a few hours of work. It is just like in the pedagogy of the province: to build a bridge is not an easy thing.

TADEUSZ SŁAWEK: Krzysztof has already mentioned the most important aspect, that after building a bridge it is exposed to “abuse.” But I understand that the problem of building a bridge is the most important and is a postulate in the imperfect tense. And after finally building a bridge there are those dangers which Cezary has spoken of. But I think the true danger is what Simone Weil was speaking of while watching the renaissance bridges of Italy: the true danger is when someone will build his house on the bridge and will start to live on the bridge. A betrayal of a bridge, the real end of it, is not when an army crosses it, as Cezary has said, but when an army puts a tank on the bridge and starts living on it.

The late Ryszard Kapuściński found somewhere in Cyprian Kamil Norwid’s writings that we need to see in ourselves the Greek meaning of culture. This means looking at things in such a way that they show us their good sides, and not the bad ones. So that we will assume that will pilgrims come to our bridge and not a hostile army. I am not really sure how it is with the Greek understanding of culture but it is just an interesting quotation.

ATTILA PATÓ: I like the idea of the bridge very much, because it is very important today to construct means of communication and even more: conversation, dialogue. But the metaphor of the bridge may be risky. It reminds me of the famous book about the Balkans by Ivo Andrić *The Bridge on the Drina*. It reminds me of the superpowers’ wish to build bridges in order to conquer or to pacify a territory. And it reminds me of a post-war situation where some of the new newspapers in Hungary were called “The Bridge,” because they were supported by the new government to gain access into the community with the intent of manipulating elites.

I wanted to mention something about the concept of “culture.” The origin of culture is Latin “cultura” and it has two meanings. *Cultivare* – as preservation, and *cultura animi* in which the important part

is to cultivate the soul, the tradition, which was of Greek origin. On the other hand, the Greek tradition has the other meaning and it was not “to preserve” but “to create” something new. In this way “cultura” has a slightly different meaning.

MARIANA ASSENOVA: What if the bridge is already built and its purpose is to divide both sides of the river? And what if the people living on one side are the only ones crossing? And the people from the other side never cross? I witnessed this myself in a small town in Bulgaria. There is a bridge built to connect a part of the town where the Roma minority lives. But only the Roma People cross the bridge. The Bulgarians never cross it. They don't want to do anything in the Roma district. So this conviviality Tadeusz Sławek was talking about is only one-way here. Only the Roma show their faces, because they go to the town to work, they clean the streets, etc. But the Bulgarians never visit them; they never show their faces on the other side of the bridge. So we have a uni-directional communication where this “con-“ is disappearing.

HUSO ORUČEVIĆ: I am from Mostar, the city of bridges, because there are eight of them. The oldest one is the symbol of Mostar. There are one-way or two-way bridges, and there are bridges used by nobody. There is a bridge in Mitrovica, Kosovo, which is on a river that divides the city, so nobody crosses it. Neither the Albanians nor the Serbians cross it, so it is a dead bridge.

We have been building bridges for a long time now and we know the most important factor is that the local community become engaged in the action. They must feel that they need the bridge and that it will serve a great function for those searching for the other.

For me, the question of ideology and utopia is very important. In the late Yugoslavia, some people lived utopian lives. It was an ideological matrix. The others living in the matrix felt really good, but some of them just didn't feel utopia to be their place, they felt like they were not in the right reality. So, when the war broke out in the early 1990s, we all felt alien at once and I don't know why. This is an important question: why? How does it come to be that when one ideology, which somewhere probably created a bond of community, ended, it made everyone feel completely different? And now in Mostar, how does it come to be that there is tolerance in a city divided between the Serbians and

the Croatians who live nearby? There is tolerance, but there are still no people who wish to look on the other side of the wall that exists in Mostar itself.

In the city center is a street that divides it. It is not the river or the bridges that divide the city – it is this street. It was a military front between the Croatians and the Muslims during the war. Now it is a mental wall or a river, which no one tries to pass, and where no bridge is built. From both sides of the street there are destroyed buildings that no one wishes rebuilt. After fifteen years, we got used to it that this dry river is a border, and the end of one world, and the other. Those worlds live next to each other divided by such mental “abyss.” Right now, we search for young people who would wish to look through the wall, who are interested in the other, because today, Mostar is inhabited by alien people.

DANI ERICE: The process of the pedagogy of the province is started by knocking at the door. The pedagogy of the province produces a chaotic response in which different languages may be involved, as in theater. Chaos is a part of the theater and it is important to understand chaos not as disorganization but as unpredictability. In fact, you can have very structured chaotic systems like a hurricane – but unpredictable. Again, theater uses different languages: music, cinema, the body. The most important thing between those two is imagination, the capacity to produce images. So I think it is important for bridge building. Again, like in theater, the aim is to make decisions, not the easy ones but the simple ones.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I thank you all for your discussion and commentaries. When I was listening to Huso, I recalled that when the bridge in Mostar was demolished we all had this feeling – and I think an authentic one – that it was not a military strategy. What I mean is that the demolition of the bridge was not obligatory in the logic of war. However, it was painful for the army that such a beautiful bridge was built by an alien, by Mimar Hajrudin. The soldiers just couldn’t stand the bridge in its proud beauty.

When you were speaking of this dry river, of the street surrounded with ruins, I thought that the beauty of the Old Bridge evokes Eros, and it gives the seeds of building. That is why the Old Bridge must have been rebuilt, and was rebuilt. I know that this dry river is real but if there

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would be no Eros, no longing, then our work would be a lot harder. The longing for beauty surpasses all ideologies. I don't know a city built only on one side of a river, a bridge is always required.

So, I recall our earlier conversation that we always direct ourselves to one side, always create a utopia, an idea. And I constantly ask about the authenticity of all this, about the problem of easiness or enforcement of artificial thoughts over people who don't want them. But if not for the faith and trust in the erotic and vivid need for a bridge, there would be no possibility for our work and nothing to build on.

The dry river Huso has spoken of is unnatural and in opposition to the nature of our life, so there must be authentic powers that can be released for the dry river to be permeable and free to cross once again.

I thank you very much for today's debate. I feel that our workshop is constantly enriched in new reflections and meditations for which I am really grateful.

Transcribed and translated from Polish by Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## 26.

Education, Enlightenment, Interdependence,  
and Difference

RICHARD TERDIMAN

Sejny 2008

This talk will focus upon the tension between unifying and dividing dynamics in the sociopolitical realm and in culture. At the extreme, these dynamics can lead, on the one side, to suffocating orthodoxy, on the other, to unmanageable anarchy. For some examples of these stresses, consider the friction between national governments and groups within the territory they administer; or between generalist and specialist educational objectives; or between tradition and innovation; or between cosmopolitan and particularist ideologies – the list could go on. I want to suggest a basis for organizing teaching and learning in a world that appears so unruly as to be resistant to any common program.

Michel de Certeau introduced the term “heterology” for speaking to and about “others.” But a division exists between the extremes of two heterological models. On one side some discourses – say, the so-called “Republican ideal” in France – tend to promote unification at the cost of disadvantaging minorities or particularities. On the other side, as in certain cultural or ethnic struggles – say by Basques in Spain, or Kurds in Turkey and Iraq – such discourses evoke group-essentialism or identity-politics in such a way as to make conceiving common projects difficult to imagine. There are “absolutist” solutions to such tensions that tempt those in power. Power can always use force

to stifle dissent or repress separatism. But in a globalizing world, our intuitions about what a “society” is make this sort of solution appear untenable and destructive.

Can one find a way to bring common purpose to diverse institutions or societies without violence or suppression? What discourse might one turn to for working out these contradictions? What “heterology,” what way of dealing with “others” and “other” opinions and practices could respect difference without exploding the institutions within which difference occurs?

I will argue that in a globalizing world there is only one value-system whose tenets are honored widely enough to serve as a model for the formation of broad common purpose. In an environment rightly suspicious of domination, the singular advantage of this discourse is that it begins by resisting or reconceptualizing hegemony.

The eighteenth century European Enlightenment and its liberating prolongations into our own time define fundamental principles of human value. I want to attempt an argument that the Enlightenment, understood along the lines of its most progressive implicit tendencies, offers a conceptual framework that can make the contrary dynamics inherent in social formations productive while avoiding reductionism.

In particular, Enlightenment thinking calls us to reconceive education along the lines of both respect for the worth of every individual, and of freedom of collective deliberation. Above all it projects toleration for the diversity of values, opinions and practices, which become familiar as our world globalizes and as populations move. By the injection of diversity into a previously stable sameness, the guilty bias of existing institutions is revealed as repressive. This confrontation of difference itself re-enacts a familiar Enlightenment device for exposing irrationality and advocating reform.

We meet concerning one foundation of such reform. Education is the lever that can help pry loose a solution to familiar antinomies: on the one hand, essentialism, and on the other, suppression of difference by a dominant power. Of course, much of the world remains very far from embracing these values. But education is a constitutively endless project, and offers a paradigm for a prolonged effort that might otherwise daunt us.

## COMMENTARY

Discussion From the New Agora Symposium  
in Sejny, 2008

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I am thinking about the positive aspect of Richard Terdiman's statement. Bridge-builders must be people of the word "yes" – as Tomas Venclova once said about Czesław Miłosz – especially since in scholarly reflection negative language, of the dark side and conflicts, is used much more often. Most of the works concerning borderlands talk about hardships, conflicts and hopelessness. It is easy to find the proper tools to research and name such a reality. That is why I value Richard's attempt to make a positive statement so much, and to bring back the meaning of the word "tolerance" to the Enlightenment tradition. In today's Europe, "tolerance" is a suspicious word. We hear more often that tolerance is not enough. Bringing tolerance down to tolerating someone is arguing that conflicts should be resolved by the legal system concerning minorities etc. We started – dangerously – to lose our sense of "tolerance," but thankfully you have brought back the tradition, which we should take care of in our workshop of the bridge-builders.

I'd like also to say that we should learn – as you just said – not "conflict resolution" as it is actually called in the international vocabulary, but to "teach conflicts." For me this is very authentic. A conflict – as you said – is part of the very nature of life, especially in the borderland communities. The methodology of "conflict resolution" is efficient only in the short term because it uses methods that only extinguishing

something on the surface – and many of us have experienced such practices, monitoring and visiting experts. It is something different to teach conflict, to teach a culture that would let people live in diversity, tension and conflict, and at the same time the culture would stay on guard over these tensions not allow them to pass the brink of destruction. I take this as an important advice for my workshop of the bridge-builder.

DOROTA SIEROŃ-GALUSEK: First, I'd like to thank Professor Sławek for enumerating the tasks of the pedagogical province. I would like to add something to them that I think is important. It is about the word *życzliwość* (benevolence, kindness, good-heartedness, goodwill). It was mentioned in Professor Wodziński's meditation on meeting and hospitality. I think, it is the essence of such a meeting, that "*życzliwość*" is experienced in silence. This quality is what made this experience so powerful, and this is important in the work of the bridge-builders. Yesterday, it was pointed out that the ethics of hopelessness was constantly present in our work. We build a bridge and on the other side there appears someone who demolishes it. What is one to do? Build it again? The only chance for us to build it is doing it in the atmosphere of "*życzliwość*." Then, our work gains a new dimension. Professor Terdiman and Krzysztof were speaking today of tolerance, so I recalled words of Professor Tischner, who tried to explain Karol Wojtyła's phenomenon of relationship or his way of working. Tischner said back then that the phenomenon was tolerance, the essence of which was to take care of what was different. He also said that Wojtyła led people and ruled them, but they did not feel as if they were ruled. We also strive for change through our own work, so that people will not feel we force change upon them. We are charmed by the word "*życzliwość*" when we enter the space of the Borderland Foundation.

GRZEGORZ GODLEWSKI: I totally agree with what Krzysztof said, that the sketch of the problem Professor Terdiman made was very illuminating, however, it brings up a question. Referring mainly to the Enlightenment project, you have created a concept that does not deal with the coexistence of cultures. As we all know, the Enlightenment project also has some bad publicity nowadays. I do not belong to those blaming it for all the evil of the twentieth century: totalitarianism and other devastating attempts to assimilate reality to utopias. But the Enlightenment project is not completely innocent.

My question is close to Leila's. Is there no threat that the Enlightenment project is based on what *we* think universal and what *we* think common ground for different cultures? In other words – is there no anxiety that *our* universal rationalism is in reality ethnocentric?

If in other cultures the basic ontological categories are placed somewhere else, *e.g.* time and space are not prime categories but others are taken into account. If in other cultures the role of a human individual is stated differently towards the collective, then does it not bring up questions about the Enlightenment project as a hidden form of violence? An additional proof or argument for this thesis is that the Enlightenment project was very profoundly questioned *e.g.* by Rousseau who had shown that there was a much more basic level than the universal intellectual categories, *i.e.* the level of feeling. He was speaking of commiseration, meaning basic compassion on the level of what touches every human being: suffering. I'd like to ask: don't you think that this also can be – I say it as an addition, not as the start for a conflict – a kind of source for what you called the constitutive element of your conception?

ELŻBIETA CHROMIEC: I would like to add a few words to the subject of tolerance. I think tolerance itself is not enough; in the same way the knowledge of foreign languages is not enough to understand the world of the other. My grandmother told me, "Learn the language of your neighbors: learn Russian, learn German." When I was going to school my father, who had painful experiences from the war, said: "Please, no German in this house." However, later on it happened that I studied in Germany and in this language I developed as a scholar. For five years have I lived in Wrocław, in a city where the stones speak this language, where after World War II a great deal of the population simply fled from the Soviet army. The Poles have also fled from the Soviet army but from the Eastern regions with their mosaic of nationalities.

I still have in my head my grandmother's thinking about our neighbors. And when I started my post-graduate studies in cultural management, I found that my listeners, directors of many cultural institutions in Lower Silesia, had never before been to Saxony. They do not know the land of our neighbors. So together with our listeners we started exploration projects. We go to places connected by the common history of the Poles and the Germans, the Saxons. Year after year, the project gets bigger. We all learn how to actively perceive our neighbors, we learn to think

about these questions during meetings with those from the other side of the border. This project is still running and there is work for many years.

There are so many places there without signs. There are no signs where, for example, the first copies of the first Polish national epic poem came out from the printing presses. There are no signs in the place where the biggest Polish Slavic bookstore in the nineteenth century was located. No one is interested in common history on either sides of the border. I think there are many places like these on the borderlands. And there is a lot more of such organic, basic work that will build a mutual knowledge of our history and of how we cope with it. What we do is just a small contribution. This is the beginning of the road that ends where even I myself cannot see. But, I also think it is just one of many roads, one of many methods of how can we actively interact with problems such as the difficult toleration of our disturbing past.

RICHARD TERDIMAN: First of all, I want to thank those of you who spoke, made comments, and asked questions. Thanks also to the rest of you who had some thoughts but did not share them. I appreciate the fact that our reflection is ongoing, whether spoken or not. Secondly, all the answers to your questions were in the parts of my talk that I skipped over. There are all answered already.

Leila asked if I saw a distinction between cultural relativism and toleration. I used the word “toleration,” which is of a slight nuance with tolerance. Toleration is a more abstract noun. I was trying to talk about a kind of cultural attitude. But maybe the words are interchangeable for most purposes. In any case, is there a difference between toleration and cultural relativism? I would say that it is not a difference of kind, obviously. If you can’t get toleration it would be good to have cultural relativism, because if you don’t have cultural relativism, then you might have intolerance or you might have some kind of intercommunal violence. But toleration is better than cultural relativism. Because it is a more sophisticated attitude, both epistemologically and in terms of social practice. Cultural relativism is a quintessentially liberal attitude. And it occurs in areas where there is enough material wealth – not to speak of spiritual or other kinds of wealth – enough material wealth for everybody to be able to say: “Let him have his ways of doing things. Let her have her ways of doing things.” But I think cultural relativism misses the fact of relationship. And I think that is the distinction. Toleration implies an intense form of relationship.

Cultural relativism just says: "You do your thing. I do not want to know about it, I do not need to know about it. I will do my thing and I do not need you to bother me." I am in favour of relationship rather than of isolation. So that's how I would answer that question.

The second question was essentially about the critique of the Enlightenment. I take it that you are in some way referring to Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and its bitter end, which is a powerful critique of Enlightenment reason. Well, that's the book that would be my referent for a moment. It is the case that many things in the Enlightenment seem to us to have been extraordinarily prejudiced. And the essential question, which has been debated extensively, not only with Adorno and Horkheimer, but also in feminist movement in England and in the United States, perhaps here in Poland also, is whether Enlightenment's intolerance or depreciation of women, intolerance for people of different races, was essential to Enlightenment thinking. And you can make arguments on both sides. Kant, for example, has horrible things to say about Africans. He believed and stated it without the slightest doubt that Africans were inferior, hardly people at all. On the other hand, other Enlightenment thinkers, like Diderot, completely repudiated this idea and thought that both women and people of different races ought to be equal in rights and were in fact equal in capacities with white males, who dominated Europe at that time and perhaps still do. The question of thinking in the Enlightenment has always been, for me: Yes, there are horrible things of the worst kind in Enlightenment thinking, but if you were to remove those or to sublimate them in a kind of Hegelian way, raising them up to a higher level, would the Enlightenment still exist? Would it still have a fundamental perspective on the world? And after a lot of worry about this question, I thought that you can do without the gamophobia (fear of marriage), the anti-feminism of the Enlightenment, you can do without the racism of the Enlightenment, you can do even without the contrarian tendency in the Enlightenment, which you could probably associate with their combat against different forms of totalitarianism. They were, particularly in France, arguing against one of the most sophisticated systems ever devised, maybe outside China. They learned to conquer the mountains and to make the king present in the villages. That was a great technological advance for centralization. And we wouldn't have France today without it. But of course it also had serious downsides. Because the king wasn't necessarily a benevolent despot, the king could be a horrible force in people's lives. So you could argue that there may

be a potential totalitarianism in enlightened reason. I don't disagree with that, but I think it's a less essential point than the point about liberation. It's a tough argument. I wouldn't say that it's clear that the Enlightenment is the best thing ever; it had many downsides. What you lived through in Central Europe under the domination of the Soviet Union was arguably a kind of triumph of some perverted form of enlightened rationality. I don't speak about this with any authority. I am going to leave it at the table between us. But the claim was that it was a rational way to organize a society. We now don't tend to believe that that was a good claim. The Enlightenment has potential or real downsides of a considerable kind, but my argument was a more defensive one. My argument was: There is nothing better. And if you do know a better way, a better system, please, let us hear about it.

The third point – you said that tolerance is not enough. And with that I couldn't agree more. Again it's a weak argument that I am making, not a triumphant one. Tolerance is not enough, it's just a good step. And that there are further steps, and they involve education, learning languages, visiting other countries. They involve dialoguing with people, whose differences with us are obvious. I am just saying: "Let's not kill them. Let's not put them in prison. Let's not torture them." As you know, those last two or three points are active in my country today. We have been having for several years a powerful argument about imprisonment, torture and even about execution. We now have a President who says he is going to close Guantanamo. That's a great thing, but it's not enough. There is more work to do.

TADEUSZ SŁAWEK: Two words to what Dorota said. The ethics of hopelessness – we need to broaden this topic. You were speaking of *życzliwość*, which was implied in my speech by the ideas of hospitality and friendship. You pointed out that in our fervor of bridge-building we have forgotten that a bridge cancels neither a river nor the both banks of it. They remain in their place. The destruction of a bridge – which is a danger that Cezary Wodziński reminded us of – is not the biggest threat. The biggest threat is when we would lose the will to build it again and again.

We also silently agreed that a bridge cancels the banks. In everyday experience it is so. We drive across the bridge and we are there. For us the bridge cancels the river. You pointed also the problem of the distance. The whole problem of *życzliwość* and friendship consists in deforming these notions and the thought that they may be close to each other. The truth is that their relation is just a constantly-renewed form of distance.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: If I were to add something to the symbol of the bridge of which Tadeusz has spoken, I would say that a bridge does not only cancel the banks but is heavily supported by them. It also has to have foundations on both sides to support the thin connection above. Mostar's Old Bridge is based on two towers. It is an old construction rising from something strongly built on one and the other side, which refers to separate identities and what is created out of them. The bridge wouldn't stand a chance without them. We explored it in Mostar. It's not that we need to cover up the presence, cancel the banks or cover up the identity. On the contrary, this is the binding from which a bridge can be built.

With respect to the Enlightenment and tolerance, for me, it is one of the most important moments in history when the absolute truth was undermined and it was decided that there might be different truths. Of course, as Voltaire said: "I will be fighting for mine." But at the same time it gives a place for other truths to speak up. I think this negative aspect of breaking down the motivation of fundamentalism is today very important. On it was the tolerance built, not on some positive image of what it is but on a critical look at yourself and the borders of your world. I doubt, or rather, I ask if this is the absolute and only truth and I confront it with others. This tolerance I would defend. We can positively build universalism over it, but as in the eighteenth century – it will always remain imperfect.

Today, we have broader perspectives – *e.g.* thanks to cultural anthropology. We point out the borders of the universalism quite differently. It is the same with utopia – it is a constantly-vanishing horizon. But the negative motivation, which emerged in the Enlightenment, is priceless up to this day.

Richard was speaking of a noble statement by Benedict XVI in dialogue with the Muslims, but I still have in memory the last example, which was brought up in Poland thanks to Father Hryniewicz. The Catholic Church still has the problem of whether it participates in the absolute truth or whether it is an absolute truth. Father Hryniewicz is a priest engaged in ecumenism, so he did not agree with saying that the Church is the absolute truth but it "only" takes part in it. So, we are still facing this universalism but I think that even the people of the Enlightenment coped with it in a way. In this sense the tradition of Enlightenment is important for us.

Transcribed and translated from Polish by Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## 27.

The Community of *Universitas*

GRZEGORZ GODLEWSKI

Sejny 2008

I am familiar with the idea of bridge-building and I think the metaphor of a bridge is a strong one. That is why I will try to build a bridge between philosophical thought and practical problems that arise in Krasnogruda as a physical sign of the pedagogical province.

Pedagogy – we have not given enough attention to the word. Anthropologically speaking, there were always functions performed for forming younger generations like *Bildung* but the path of its realization has changed. In traditional cultures it was natural practice, and it was the organic way of their functioning, since it was about transferring traditions undividable from practices. To practice culture was to engage in tradition. There was no other way. The forming was undividable from the culture's functioning. Of course, it is a forgotten ideal founded on rules of imitation. As Richard Terdiman has asked the public yesterday to form the bodies of the actors on stage so did the masters of pedagogy: in traditional cultures the fathers formed the moves of children by moving their hands.

Such pedagogy – understood as a transfer through imitation – is impossible today. In can't be found even in the Ancient Greek *paideia*. And the culture we call Greek today, they would have called *paideia*, meaning all cultural functions serving to form the growing youth. It is worth remembering that forming is always made in the context of the

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF DIALOGUE IN KRASNOGRUDA, Polish "Międzynarodowe Centrum Dialogu," a center for intercultural research and practices; recalling the Polish tradition of organic work and the European tradition of *Bildung*, the literary equivalent of which were the "pedagogical provinces" (Wolfgang Goethe, Hermann Hesse, Maria Janion); created in the renovated Miłosz manor in Krasnogruda, Poland; a new space for culture engaged in a long-term program connecting innovative cultural practices with the growth of local community, and education with art. Described by Hermann Hesse in his *Glass Bead Game* as Kastalia: the workshop of practitioners and theoreticians of intercultural dialogue; a space of meeting, communication, and mutual relations with the other; an interplay of various cultural elements ("beads"). The model of multiculturalism based on differences and plurality – an archipelago of different islands, of which each defends its distinctiveness and identity – is replaced with a model of interculturalism: a connection of all the beads, where an individual bead is as important as the connection.

whole culture, even divided into disciplines. We cannot forget about the, often unwanted, environmental influence. We need to make it our partner, since the environment of everyday affairs undermines or enhances all disciplines. We need to develop it through conscious partnership. Thus, we need to tolerate it, to build a little bridge.

How does the school function in our era? It is specialized and concentrated on self-reproduction of the society. But it is inefficient, because societies and cultures develop much faster than the school system. Forming pupils to come out of their educational journey as planned is nearly impossible. Margaret Mead wrote that throughout the history of culture, children were always learning from their parents. They learned from them what was useful in life. However, the speed of culture development – wrote Mead in the 1940s – made us learn from our equals. But the time comes were the old process of learning is to be totally reversed: parents will start to learn from their children; for example, when grownups learn from kids how to use a computer. But, I disagree with Margaret

Mead. We can learn how to use new technologies from children but they are not any wiser if it comes to solving problems. I am worried a situation will come when new generations will have no one to learn from. You cannot learn how to act in an ever-changing, unpredictable world. But such thoughts had already Florian Znaniecki in his book, *Ludzie terażniejsi i cywilizacja przyszłości* (*Contemporary People and the Future Civilization*). The author was thinking about frequent crises between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But he used to say: "The crisis is deep. It will be hard but, my dear, it will never again be easy." Since then, we live in a culture of crisis, which will stand on no absolute foundations: neither God nor reason. Whatever beliefs do we personally hold; we need to take responsibility for what happens around us. We need to learn how to live fruitfully, creatively and constructively in the culture of crisis.

Znaniecki made a diagnosis, which sounds anachronistic today: “Civilization is materialized. We need to spiritualize it.” And later: “Civilization should be socially harmonized.” What does this mean? It means it shouldn’t waste its energy in conflicts but use it on co-operation; a great slogan. The third quote gives us a little more: “Civilization must be liquefied.” It means the cultural systems we lived in were a closed circuit up till now. They had some rules, developments and procedures. But when something undermined them, they broke apart. Znaniecki thought we should start the change by building open structures and cultural agreements focused on the change from the beginning. Seems reasonable, but how to do it?

FLORIAN ZNANIECKI (1882–1958), Polish-American sociologist whose theoretical and methodological work helped to make sociology a distinct academic discipline. He was a pioneer in the field of empirical investigation and was noted as an authority on Polish rural culture. His work made significant advances in methodology (notably in the use of intensive life histories) as well as in substance (a framework for the sociological view of personality and a study of immigrant social disorganization). Among his works are an introduction to sociology and a work on the sociology of education; *The Laws of Social Psychology* (1925); *The Method of Sociology* (1934); and *Social Actions* (1936).

He said we must not use old structures for new ones. We need to start differently, to start with new people, who are ready for different action, which he called “deviants.” It was the language of the 1930s, so the word did not have our connotations. He even added “abnormal deviants,” because they were to surpass the norms. Znaniecki searched for such people in the history of culture and called them “leaders of culture” and “rulers of culture.” They were great reformers who could think differently on the world and gain followers through thought, not through strength. Znaniecki says that to form such people is to train them in the experience of many different cultures, in cultural relativism. It will help them deal with the unpredictable and evolve through crises, which will no longer be a catastrophe but a challenge.

The university as a cultural institution is not a school, whatever it may seem nowadays. The university is to represent the universal. It is a community of *universitas*, which means it has to stay away from the everyday, particular restrictions of time and space. I think there is more to it. Victor Turner presented *liminal* situations. These are the situations functioning in elementary rites of passage: death, birth, coming of age, and rituals of affliction; that is, rituals for overcoming unhappiness. He showed three phases of *liminal* situations. The *separation* is when someone stops being what he or she was before; for example, one stops

being a part of society, being a child, being an unhappy person, but at the same time one is not becoming anything else. The *margin* is when one is disconnected from all social activity; he or she becomes nobody and functions out of hierarchy and structure. The *aggregation* is when a man becomes included into the society once more but as someone different: a grown up, a living person, or a spirit (if one dies). Such rituals are gone now and they exist only in forms of great need and social place for what is called the margin phase, the *liminal* phase, where something called *communitas* is created instead of *societas*. What is *communitas*? It is a society of people connected with one another by an elementary state where they are not obligated by all the norms. Carnival is a good example, since it is utopia realized. It turns the order upside down but only in an excluded time and space, as do all the other *communitas* situations. I find such a situation in the counterculture movement of the 1960's.

I think that the university also could act as a kind of *communitas*, because it is autonomous enough to safely experiment and undermine the sanctities of everyday life. Of course, it cannot function only as an anti-structure, since it would be idle and unproductive. In Krasnogruda, a lot of such work has been already done, especially in the symbolic space. It is an open space. It should be a laboratory teaching inventors how to think alternatively and be innovative. But it is nearly impossible to learn such things. That is why we need to create situations of fertile experience. But it is really hard. "You need to find your own San Marino," said Eugenio Barba about finding your own place, your own province. The answer is in the constant movement between *communitas* and *societas*.

For the pedagogical province to have such an education, we need to take care of all three stages of the passage. We must not only create programs giving new tools and experiences, inspiring and broadening horizons. We also need to perform safe experiments by separating and then aggregating again. Małgorzata Czyżewska has written a text about training programs for university students. She has written how important it is to leave home. It is good that the way from Warsaw to Sejny is a long one. The separation stage makes me reject the city. I come to Sejny, where I have the possibility to open and change. I believe now we need to work on the stage of aggregating, of bringing together again.

## COMMENTARY

Discussion From the New Agora Symposium  
in Sejny

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I thank Grzegorz Godlewski for building a bridge between anthropological reflection and bridge-builders' practices. Speaking of separation and aggregation, these concepts were mentioned several times yesterday when Tadeusz Sławek was speaking of Thoreau and going out of the city into a different/distant space. But what we are talking about here is the ability to return. The more opportunities one has to leave, to rebel, to question culture, the more problems one has with coming back, returning and integrating. Kazimierz Dąbrowski called it a positive disintegration. I have my own experience of participating in an alternative cultural movement when it was quite easy for us to get out and criticize. The bigger problem was to return. A lot of my friends and relatives never came back. I read this as an important challenge. To return to your reflections, Grzegorz, I perceive the work in cultural practice as creating a good way of return, and this is something extremely important.

BEATA SAMOJŁOWICZ: In our NGO, "Borussia", we have a practice called *accompanying*. It has a different character than the imitation described by Grzegorz Godlewski here. Accompanying in the process of teaching relies on a mentor. He is with you from the start and constantly helps you in your reflections during the process. Reflection is the most important part in the learning process, because it helps

us understand where we are starting from and where we are going to. The mentor is the most important link here. There is no enforcement, but there is an element of optionality that makes everyone decide on their own way of learning. I think that when I learn by myself I try to catch moments that might interrupt me. While striving for a goal, it is strengthening that helps us. Sometimes, it is hard to orient in the process, so the person who accompanies us is irreplaceable. He or she does not interfere, force us or order us, but talks with us just like we sit here and talk. I think it is a good way to try to exchange experiences and opinions.

“Borussia” was created in 1990 to popularize the culture of dialogue between different people. Two years ago, we were asking ourselves if we really live in a culture, where are tolerance, the culture of dialogue etc. Is our existence as a NGO required? You, Dr. Godlewski, are stating that we still need to do it. It only requires that we constantly create in the space of confrontation with others in our learning process. What ideas do we need in this stage? Tolerance? When did we have to do with someone alien and different from ourselves? Let’s experiment. Let each one of us, who wishes to build bridges or engage in social diplomacy on the lowest of levels, enter a situation in which we will be alien. How much empathy do we need to understand the other person? For me these are the basics: accompanying, empathy, mentorship, but also reflection.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I thought that we have common experience with Borussia from the times when we started our actions and when we came with the word “tolerance” and got an answer, “So what, we are not tolerant?” I speak of a time which in our work will never become perfect. It is a never-ending process. We are often asked if we have overcome prejudice in the place where we work. There is a city in Greece, Arta, which is famous for its ancient bridge. There is a legend about its builder who couldn’t finish it, because whatever they built during the day was destroyed overnight. Then a letter from heaven brought by a bird came to the *neimar* that he had to sacrifice his wife in order that the bridge be finished. Even today there is a proverb in Greek saying, “to build an Arta bridge,” which means, “to start building something then endlessly start over again with no end.”

CHRIS BALDWIN: Before I begin my comments, I think that what we have just said reminds us all that teachers are only good teachers when they are conscious of being students. Students are only empowered as students

when conscious of their ability to teach. The teacher as teacher/student and the student as student/teacher. In this way we teachers and students can enter into a mutually beneficial dialogue with one another.

I'd like to pick up upon some points that speakers throughout these three days have mentioned. I'd like to start with something that Richard said. You said something which I thought was deeply provocative and interesting. "In hopelessness," you said, "there might be a space for ethics." I want to leave that in the air for a moment. And yesterday, Tadeusz mentioned in reference to *Finnegan's Wake* that "knock knock" in old English is a gesture made with the hand.

I want to concentrate on these two asides. Because as a theater director I am always aware that within "spoken debates" there are other levels of communication taking place. To understand these other levels of communication we need to be conscious of certain performance theories. And we need to draw them out. This synagogue has been converted into a meeting place. But it has much in common with a performance space. There is also, embedded in the way we choose to use this space, a potential for a radical pedagogy. I suggest that it is the means by which we can explore the patterns and concepts of hopelessness and ethics.

This morning Gregorz talked about carnival, Victor Turner and liminality. He said that carnival is where people have permission to turn the world upside down. These are not his exact words. But he is right. In carnival there is a kind of morphing going on. Perhaps only on a temporary basis. Power relationships are subverted, turned upside down. So carnival is a liminal space, of course. But as educators, we can learn from the power of carnival and use its subversive elements in pedagogical contexts. How do we create liminal spaces with all their potential to usefully disrupt? As a theater director and pedagogue I often use three elements: I manage 1. space, 2. character and 3. time. That's the language of the "performative." How can I use these three elements to create liminal situations in which, for a few seconds or minutes, the world is turned upside down, in which we can free up fixed notions, subvert the accepted and reinvestigate philosophical issues. Of course, we must remember that carnival can have a conservative, not just a progressive function. I am referring to Stanley Brandes, the American anthropologist, who has examined carnival and fiesta in Mexico. He talks about how in carnival there are moments of release, but often brutality repressed as "official power" is reinstated. In other words, it's not necessarily the case that carnival creates new learning and new understanding about

how power relationships can be subverted. In order to sustain our new learning, communities need people to help. And that's our job, I think. Our job is to help our students negotiate and sort out that new learning.

Coming back to the "knock knock" and the jester. This character was always within us. He has, on many occasions, been a theatrical phenomenon. I am thinking here of the figure in the medieval theater whose job it was to talk directly to the audience, to provoke the audience into going to "places" (thoughts) they would not otherwise go. He was often physically deformed and linguistically dexterous. Those were the characteristics associated with the vice figure. And young Shakespeare would have seen these vice figures in the medieval theater in the streets. Robert Weiman talks about this in his book *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*. Those characters appear as Gloucester in *Richard III*. Gloucester needs the audience to help him gain power. He does so by directly talking to the audience and telling them in advance what he is about to do. He woos, seduces, the audience to the point where they suspend their own moral code. The audience is seduced by the delight of wanting to know what might happen. Gloucester feeds the audience with their own desire for immoral pleasure, a space without ethics as Richard said. Nevertheless, having drawn them into the plot and having gained power, Gloucester (now Richard III) no longer needs the audience. He disassociates himself from them. The direct addresses stop. And possibly the audience feels betrayed. Does the audience leave uneasy, unsettled by the consciousness of their own moral disturbance? Is this where the ethical debate can happen again? So that character is described as a vice. But in other forms the jester or vice also exists. She/he appears again in the twentieth century in numerous forms. I think that the joker, jester or vice figure helps us see utopia as a journey and a process. Coming back to what you said, Richard, this character is not neutral. He is not ethically neutral. I know that this word in this context, in Poland twenty years after the fall of the Wall, is a loaded concept, but I think that we have to talk about *solidarity*, active education, Building Bridges. The joker (the modern cousin of the vice figure) is a person who helps us make sense of the chaos by taking us to that chaos.

She/he helps us confront hopelessness in order to rediscover ethics. If we don't reinforce that notion, we're missing an important cultural/political paradigm. The joker, the vice character, the jester acts in solidarity with people and with our planet. Because while we search for the ethical, the planet is also suffering. There is only a space for the concept

of “ethics within hopelessness” if we can offer concrete strategies to help move from hopelessness towards ethics.

HUSO ORUČEVIĆ: I'd like to ask: why do we have such a system? We have professors, teachers teaching children. Where is their responsibility, and also, where is the responsibility of the politicians? At this particular moment, when we are searching for alternative solutions, where are the politicians? During the break, I've spoken with Mr. Godlewski about my entering and getting out of the dominant political system. Now I am excluded from my totalitarian system, a system of politics of division taking place in Mostar. It's hard to come back, to return, with the alternatives that we have discussed here, when the system and politics that are in place back home are not working towards those alternatives. These utopias are also self-destructive to me. Children are divided in Mostar into three systems: Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian. Each of the programs has its truth. They are divided by politics. If they would like to enter something new, they can choose from neoliberal ideology or media promoting the ideology of consumerism. They look at themselves as excluded from the nationalistic system and they enter another system or ideology.

Who creates the system? Professors, teachers and even teachers at elementary schools. It's a shame our Richard Terdiman has not spoken of gender and difference. You mentioned it at the start. Maybe there wasn't sufficient time. Mothers also create the patriarchal system. It is not created by all mothers, but some do teach children to behave in the system in this or that way. I think that politics has a lot to do in this area.

BOŽENA SZROEDER: There is a legend from Mostar about building the Old Bridge. When the *neimar* was building it, he was epileptic, concentrated on himself, he was different, and he had a lot of fear in him. When the bridge was about to be revealed, he did not participate in the ceremony, but he sent his apprentice, who had accompanied him from the beginning to the end. The *neimar* himself left for the mountains seeking peace and silence. The bridge was revealed and didn't fall – and it was the first construction of this type. The *neimar*, afraid his apprentice learned the secret of building the bridge, killed him. It's a good example of a great error.

It is very important to give your secrets to your apprentices. We must follow our students, when they say our work is a great pedagogical success. Weronika was one of the actresses in the first *Sejny*

*Chronicles* and today she speaks about them. I know it is a different story than mine, and probably a better one. We need to remember it when we work with kids: to cut off the bonds in the proper moment. Kids go out into the world and then we wonder who will fill our loneliness. But as their teachers we must help them in going out.

GRZEGORZ GODLEWSKI: I will start from what Huso has said. The kind of pedagogy we are talking about is not easy. It is not to be fully planned. It is stopped by reality, but also by our own inner realities. We won't invent a constitution of the pedagogical province. We can only assume some rules, but there is no assurance that its way of functioning or its consequences will gain its prosperity. Znaniecki thought that the natural and dominating way of the societies is the normal functioning. However in some situations normality is lack. There are situations requiring abnormality and offence. There is no other way but to group the "abnormal deviants."

As for Sejny, I think that you do not live in a *communitas*, but in a situation of a borderland. I think there was a passage – without the intermediate, liminal stage, where you could have seen what happened. Erasing the border is, of course, does not erase all restrictions and complications, but it does change the whole situation.

I think I can confirm what Beata has said. When I was speaking of imitation I referred to the situation of traditional societies, which is impossible to repeat. To think about the procedure of aggregation after the stage of *communitas* is to give the help of an experienced person. There are no ready-made prescriptions and it is all about support and advice. The real return of otherness – I think of it as absolutely fundamental.

I deal with anthropology but I don't call myself an anthropologist, because it would require me to conduct field studies. But they are conducted not for knowledge, but always to acquire the experience of being *the other*. I must question a large part of myself and admit that some things which are for me the measure of decency can be different. I need to feel it on my own skin not to become a native. It is about returning with a consciousness under your skin, not in your head. I think it is important to search for the equivalents of such experiences in the practice of a bridge-builder.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: I am starting the last session of our symposium and trying to approach a conclusion, and I am certain that we will think about these two days of meditations for a long period of time from now. I recall a fragment from St. Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians*, verse 14, just after the fragment concerning love, which, I think, is connected to what we said here today. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, who create a community full of conflicts, divided in fractions and pieces. So he concentrates on the form of the word and how to speak, "For anyone who speaks in a tongue[a] does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him... But everyone who prophesies, speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the Church."

However, St. Paul used the word "ecclesia" which means "community," a gathering of all the citizens of the *polis*, as it was understood in the ancient Greece. He says then, "If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say 'Amen' to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified... What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation... If anyone speaks in a tongue, two – or at the most three – should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God."

There is an aspect of speaking to yourself or edifying yourself, or speaking with God or the other, but there also is the need for words, for speech that edifies another. There is a translator required who can also be understood literally, as a translator from one to another. He can be our mentor, guardian, comrade, who helps us work in speech, word, practice. Our wisdom and efficiency is stated by how much it edifies another, because if not, then we speak only to ourselves. This is something that I would add to our thinking about the workshop and mastery (*die Kunst*).

It is important how we use our language. Will we learn – using the words of St. Paul – to give prophesies? Will we learn to edify another through our speech? When I think sometimes about a strategy to deal with the problems of the borderland, then I come to the conclusion that in the presence of another we always need to take his side. In a practical sense also, if we always take the strategy of taking the side

of another, or the other, then a lot of our unsolvable problems unexpectedly turn out to be very simple matters. It is really hard, of course, it costs a lot, but if we were to add the temporal dimension of which we were speaking before, then a new strategy appears. I speak of it because our meditation is concerned with building a new paradigm, that is, we find ourselves on the threshold of change, passage or crisis, which becomes not a moment in history, but the matter of our reality.

I also think of the situation in Lviv before the war, where young Martin Buber, as a boy in elementary school, is suffering in a class full of Catholics praying, and he as a Jew has to stay aside, silent, maybe even ashamed that he cannot participate in what everybody is doing. This painful experience from Lviv was – as we read in Buber’s biography – one of the strongest liminal experiences in his life. Later it was only worse, he left for Berlin, Germany, in 1933, the year of *Kristallnacht* etc. A similar experience, in a sense, we can find in the life of Emmanuel Levinas, who was born nearby, in Kaunas. Thinking of them right now I wish to evoke the philosophy of dialogue, which they created and which should be evoked in today’s debate as another tradition for our workshop.

Both Buber and Levinas – as many others who created this philosophy – did not try to create a strategy that would reproduce such bitter knowledge about life. Instead, they started creating something close to madness in the context of their experiences and the times in which they lived. They started building a workshop for the philosophy of dialogue. In it they tried to test a phenomenon, the idea that “I am never fully myself until I will not get involved into conversation with someone else.” To take another, to kill him, to cut him or separate him from me is a wound on my personality. Because of that, the path of searching for another became elementary for them. They created this philosophy in the darkest period of our civilization, but maybe such a moment in history was required for them to build a philosophy of dialogue so strong and powerful.

I am speaking about this now because I think they built the foundations for a new paradigm, which we can now take for our own. It is in their books where we can read that there are – generalizing – three eras of human thought. The first is connected to ancient Greece – I speak of Western civilization – which was concentrated on the third person, singular, concentrated on It, on *esse*, on the search for truth and objectivity. After that was the Cartesian era of the first person, which brought

freedom, individuality and self-realization for humanity revealing its individual being. And right now we are on the threshold of what Buber and Levinas were speaking of, it is an era of the second person, singular, an era of You. Of course this is only an imprecise generalization.

However, there is something interesting in this thought. I think that without such experiences and building the new paradigm founded on You, we will not manage with what awaits us, what comes for us. There is a need for prevention, but also what Richard mentioned before quoting John Stuart Mill, who spoke about a way out to another, in the meeting with another, that there is a dynamic of human evolution – the society. Without it the evolution and growth will not come. So, I feel that we need the philosophy of dialogue in our theoretical workshop and practice.

But if I feel the paradigm this way, then it pushes me up against hard educational challenges. Because it is an impulse that encourages us to think again about how we build our pedagogical practice. So I would like to add also the need for continuing the dialogue in practice and an attempt to answer the challenge of our times, to feel its dynamics. It may, of course, sound paradoxical in comparison with the contemporary situation in the Caucasus and in comparison to the situation in Mostar, in Bush's United States, in Kaczyński's Poland or any other country. But this is the attitude that Buber and Levinas chose in the darkest night of their times. And I think that this may be our utopia, our direction. Here we must look to, I think, the words of St. Paul, that each activity should edify another. Our strategy should be to stay by the other's side, and that strategy will offer a new, astonishing and challenging situation. After the ethos of freedom and strong individualism, which accompanied us during so many ages.

I experienced such questions when the discussion about the Prophet Muhammad's caricatures erupted. You probably remember the key argument of the Western world was the sainted *freedom of speech*. This was founded in the previous era, so as someone thinking about edifying another in my actions and about the practice of prophesying, I started to doubt if this is the appropriate priority for our time, or if I shouldn't surpass it and

**MUHAMMAD** (570–632), in full Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim, founder of the religion of Islam, one of the world's largest religions, accepted by Muslims throughout the world as the last of the prophets of God. Muslims consider him the restorer of an uncorrupted original monotheistic faith of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others. Often, *Muhammad* was portrayed in the West as the source of evil, an Antichrist, which lingers in European culture even today.

think whether or not I'm hurting others while defending the freedom of speech. I don't have any ready-made answers for these questions, but I only wish to point to the exhaustion or inappropriateness of the sainted ideas that have accompanied me through the greater part of my life.

I think our ideas must gain a fluidity mentioned by Grzegorz. He has said that we must be aware this is not an end to all problems and that we need to ask ourselves again in the new context of the reality in which we live. The same goes for one of the greatest achievements of the twentieth century – the human rights movement. And I think often, that if we had shown up here in Sejny, or in any other borderland, as a human rights organization, then we would have built a different workshop than the one we did as the Borderland. Another aspect is that we are in a dynamic situation, because it is different to edify another. The tools used in the defense of human rights may be inappropriate in different contexts, or even insufficient.

I have the feeling that I am walking out of this meeting with a basket full of ideas and reflections on how to do it, how to prepare dialogue. In our borderland practice, we encounter the lively cultural myth created by Herman Hesse in *The Glass Bead Game*. The idea is called Kastalia, a pedagogical province, which was a desolate place in the structure of the world imagined by Hesse. The plot of the novel is put in year 2200 – an escape forward – where the beauty of the province is described so suggestively that it makes some readers forget about the main problem of the hero, Joseph Knecht, who rebels against the isolation of Kastalia, which starts to wither because it is isolated and concentrated solely on knowledge and wisdom. I will remind you that at the end he finally leaves the place and starts the life of a teacher of a young student; for the rest of his life, he becomes a servant, which is implied by his German name, Knecht.

This drama and danger of isolation from the myth of Kastalia is present in our thinking. Starting from Cezary Wodziński, who has said that maybe we don't need to build anything new, but only open what already exists. For me, a practitioner, it means that in everything we build we need to seek reality, which opens each new building on the place, the people and society in this time. It means that we need the courage to build and open at the same time, rather bring back to memory, retrieve and add than build something new and isolated. So when I speak of Krasnogruda and the planned International Center for Dialogue, I think of rejuvenating the bond between the town and the mansion, the cloister and the city, the university and the society.

In the story of the pedagogical province it is essential that it had its own language of education, it had its glass bead game, that it had a *techne*, a practice, which provokes reading anew. And, of course, to create something provoking and fascinating, that once again connects what is painfully disconnected – because we all remember Hesse never fully described the rules of the game. We need to meet what should be connected, what should be between the student and the teacher, what connects art with education, what connects language with prophesy or edifying another. It is hard to describe, but it is already happening. But it does not mean we are done and we shouldn't seek for any more radical and braver form in which we would like to act. So the form of, for example, the New Agora is a beautiful accomplishment for me, but on the other hand, it is a call for more and we should not stop here, but go further and seek a closer meeting with different forms of theater, word, handicraft, and we should have more courage in exploring those.

And I say all this thinking about a concrete activity to which I would like to invite all of you: the first pedagogical province summer school of the bridge-builders. I would like us to try, this summer, to build the workshop here, where we prepare answers for what has been spoken here, and it could be an origin for the great pedagogical province in Krasnogruda in the future. I invite you all right now to think, help and share with us to initiate a workshop together. I thank you very much, we have a little more time, so I would ask you for any final reflections on our previous discussions or some new ideas and proposals on how to build the upcoming summer workshop.

PROF. TADEUSZ SŁAWEK: I don't have any ready-made proposals, of course. But I have put down a kind of a conclusion for myself together with an attempt of answering two important questions that were stated before lunch. Huso asked that if we undertake a large critique, then where are those who create such a system? Who makes the system? I thought of a direction for us, not a subject or an answer, but only a little hint, still very general.

The first general direction is what I mentioned before when quoting Michel Serres, he saw a deficit of a “democratic intellect for man,” for a single man. So not a democracy as a given system of rules for political games, but a democracy for an individual. Can we even speak of democratic thinking or a democratic intellect?

The second direction appeared in our meditations many times, under many names. I try to call it as generally as I can: inside/outside. During our conversations, we have spoken about an alternative of getting out of a situation and a game connected to it. In English, we would say dueling or breaking out. This is the relationship, because you can't stay always just on one side, you will still be in a relation between the other and leaving home, and the pedagogy as a need to leave your home, etc.

The third general direction is that we all had some distance towards the word "utopia." The word gained some our enthusiasm at first, but then it collapsed. I think that when we were talking about it, we weren't actually speaking about languages or methods, I am still looking for a proper name for it and maybe Krzysztof has found the right one, that is, prophesy. It is somewhere here and opens the discourse naturally on social and political but also on theological questions, which were suspended in a sense, because we cannot speak about everything at once. The word is also connected with the problem of the city and its separation, and loneliness also, because we treated "prophesy" as an attempt of finding a new direction different than the Enlightenment civilization given us by building cities.

This inside/outside would a variant explained a little by Grzegorz Godlewski when he was speaking about Znaniecki and the "abnormal deviants." So I thought about Huso's question, "who makes the system?" and I personally think that every one of us makes it. We cannot say "them" when we are not inside "them." Because we are *them*. But the question is, where are we? And I have thought that we are those "abnormal deviants," we are extreme, we are on the brink, at the edge. So we make the system, but we are on the edge of it. We're not innocent, but we strive for something better.

I also think that what Dorota said about *życzliwość* (kindness) and the ethics of hopelessness is very important and really interesting to think about. But my last comment is about thinking that there is only one dominant truth. Maybe a good subject for another meeting would be, *(dis)agreement*? We all have said that we should not dream that tensions will lessen and wars will end, but this is all a structure of a (dis) agreement of which Richard was speaking. Maybe agreement must also mean a kind of a (dis)agreement?

GRZEGORZ GODLEWSKI: I have a practical proposal that came to my mind when you, Krzysztof, spoke about Hesse's hero, Joseph Knecht, who after experiencing the pedagogical province moved

on to practice what he learned there. And I have thought that maybe there is another path. And I thought of Hesse's contemporary, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who had a totally opposite path. For him, the true reality was the reality of thought. After reaching the border of thinking about language as a logical form, when he could no longer describe what he had in mind, he decided to experience his passage, a liminal situation, and moved into practical reality. It was his liminality, *communitas*. He simply started to teach pupils in the elementary school. It was very hard for him and often was he greatly irritated so, seeking peace, he also took a job as a cloister gardener. But he only found peace back among the university walls, where he came back with new experience. And after his return he looked at the word not as a lesson of logic but as a form of action.

I think that for new practitioners encountering harsh circumstances, it is important to be detached from their particular problems for a moment and to think about them from a different point of view. So when they will come back they will be able to find new solutions. Similarly, theoreticians should gain a lesson of practice. I mainly have theoretical knowledge, since I teach about the word and anthropology, but I think that yesterday's experiment by Chris Baldwin showed me that there may be a different approach. I thought immediately that in the relation between utopia and reality the relationship between those who think about the issue together is really important. It's not only about my intellectual and physical attitude, but also in what relation will I be with others who are undertaking the same problem. I think it would be great if in the prospective pedagogical province there would be a purifying experience of practice for the theoreticians and theory for the practitioners. It could be an element of mutuality of experience, support and cooperation.

I forgot to answer one question before; I totally agree with you, Chris, that a carnival does not change reality. A traditional carnival is an element of the whole traditional celebration and we all know how it ends. The theory is that by questioning normal life in its isolated time and space, it strengthens it, because it runs it through a lively experience of questioning and building anew. However, the situations I have spoken of, and Victor Turner wrote about, are the ones like a carnival with an unknown ending. Most of us here know one carnival pretty well: the sixteen months of the years 1980-1981 was called "a carnival of Solidarity." It had its time, which appeared to be isolated, even isolated

by an individual. It was supposed a closed reality, but then it happened to have hidden continuations and late fruits, which are not perfect but they are concrete. So I think that a situation of open carnival with an open ending is something quite different.

Back to the point that Chris Baldwin mentioned and Tadeusz Ślawek developed. The philosophy of dialogue is not an easy one – but of course I don't need to explain it to you – because Buber, Levinas and others are not easy to read, but also because it's not an easy perspective. They search for problems and seriously point that good intentions are important, but they are not always the results. So I think that dialogue is required but we must not put faith in its immediate effect.

I am encouraged by Tadeusz Ślawek's word about the lack of the theological element. You have quoted from the Bible, Krzysztof, and it makes me say that there is *expressis verbis* told to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44). I just want to say that it is important even when emptied of its ethical sense. This is not an appeal to sensitivity, but to the strategy of winning the other, which, of course, must appeal to something common in myself and in the other. There is something common. If I appeal to it, there is a chance that I will become infected with the action.

LEVAN KHETAGURI: A few years ago we had a similar symposium in Tbilisi. It wasn't long after the incident in the Netherlands where Theo van Hoff was murdered. We were all surprised how the idealistic, tolerant Dutch society, which took such great pride in its values, in just a few days became very aggressive to the Muslim population. This small incident showed a lot of hidden emotions. This is always quite difficult: to realize what we really have around us, how much can we really reflect on the situation and how much the new generation can go against the mainstream, against something that we still don't like, that we would like to change. And how much they can be involved against existing rules. I think the new generation is really important, because it grows up with new ideas. It is possible in small societies, but will it be possible in bigger ones?

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI: There is a normal anxiety about too many words, Levan, and not doing anything. If you ask what we need, then I would answer that we need, precisely, to lose this anxiety and to put faith in theory, that it also forms practice. If you recall *The Glass Bead Game*, there is the old music master who teaches young Joseph

Knecht music. While Knecht became a skilled musician, he always reminded him, “do not forget to meditate,” your great abilities are not the end. You have spoken about the defenselessness of the Dutch society and I would say that practice is important in tolerance but we all must have a kind of self-consciousness. We need to be strong in our self-consciousness for the dangers to come. And it is being built by such conversations which we just have had.

The listening is really important to me and I am glad you mentioned it. I think this is the liminal stage of which Grzegorz was speaking. I recalled the time when we first came to Sejny; we knew nothing. We were no one at the time; we had just stopped being actors, a theater and the only thing left was to listen to the people and the place. We had a time when we didn't know who we were. And back then we were very concentrated on listening, opening and learning to build our own answer out of it. But I think this moment is really important at work.

Now, at the conclusion of our meeting, I'd like to go back to the word “hospitality.” You must know that it is a dangerous word. To accept hospitality is a risky thing. I had to do a lot of things in my life just because I recklessly accepted someone's hospitality.

Seriously speaking, I have to say that there would be no Borderland Center if I would not have recklessly accepted the hospitality of some people in my life, on my journeys, that gave me generous, heartfelt hospitality and it made me restless that I was not able to answer it. Hospitality meant that I was never left alone, I was on a theater festival somewhere, and I experienced extraordinary hospitality in various places. Hospitality is a commitment. If we accept it; we need to cope with it. At the end of the New Agora Symposium in Sejny, I would like to bid you farewell with a reflection on hospitality. And I wish thank you very much for everything that we experienced here because of you.

Transcribed and translated from Polish by Mikołaj Golubiewski.

## 28.

## CASE STUDY

**Multiculturalism, Education, and Democracy:  
Debates and Contentions in Morocco**

MOHA ENNAJI

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## INTRODUCTION

This article is an attempt to study the ramifications of multiculturalism for education and democracy among Moroccans. More importantly, it discusses the roles played by linguistic and cultural factors in the development and evolution of the Moroccan system of education and of Moroccan society at large. It focuses on the impact of multilingualism on cultural authenticity and national identity and on shaping education and citizenship.

The article also examines the relationship between education and cultural contact that fosters language shift and language change, and the variables that reinforce its maintenance. It is my belief that an adequate consideration of multiculturalism requires a detailed knowledge of the cultural environment in which the multilingual individual evolves. In the case of Morocco, which was under French domination for forty-four years, it is necessary to study the phenomenon of cultural contact, how it took place and its present state, with the new development of the linguistic context and the integration of Berber language in the educational system.

The approach that I have adopted is that of sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics, based on the relationship between bilingualism, biculturalism, and education. This sociolinguistic scope takes for granted the strong link between language, education, and culture as well as the idea of concurrence of multiple variables like class, gender,

attitude, and the channel of communication. The chapter is also inspired by Bourdieu (1982) and Fairclough (1989).

This article is divided into five sections. Section one deals with the historical background of Morocco. Section two discusses the multicultural dimension of Morocco, while section three deals with the challenges of education. Finally, section four deals with the role Berber education could play in the development of democracy and the management of citizenship.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Morocco was colonized by two European powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: France and Spain. The French colonial power justified its existence by pretending that it had a mission to civilize and develop the region. But politically the real reason was that the French wanted to dominate Morocco and subjugate its population; economically the intention was to exploit the raw materials and use cheap labour in the benefit of the European market in the region by building up the minimum basic infrastructure necessary to protect colonial economic interests. The main objective of colonialism was to perpetuate the political and economic dependence of the indigenous people. Concerning education and science, the kind of colonial education reserved for the local populations (whose objective was to train people for low-level jobs) and the economic policy adopted meant that indigenous people would remain dependent and under-developed in these fields.

The French colonial presence in Morocco provoked two different reactions: first, the spread of French culture, and the acculturation or alienation of the masses, and second, this spread of French culture caused anti-colonial feelings among nationalists. The latter reaction took violent forms in the struggle for independence, and was based on religious motives and feelings that are still strong among the population. After independence, almost the opposite tendency resulted, as many young people and intellectuals seem to insist on learning French language and culture for pragmatic reasons (for the reasons of social promotion and openness to the West). Today, there is return to the French schools and classes especially in urban centers (Ennaji 2005).

During the colonial period, the French colonizers made great efforts to dissociate Moroccan society from its indigenous languages and cultures. The French endeavoured to divide the country into ethnic groups to facilitate the colonization process. This act was not arbitrarily implemented; rather, it was carefully planned because the

colonizers were aware of the strong feelings of ethnic group membership in the region. The French passed the discriminatory law known as the “Berber Decree” (*le dahir berbère*) in 1930. This decision was, however, strongly criticized by Berberophone and Arabophone scholars, political leaders, and ordinary people, all opting for loyalty to their language and culture, national identity and territorial integrity.

Before the French colonization, an Islamic traditional system of education was prevalent. Quranic and religious schools, namely *medersas* and *zawiyas* (monasteries), offered an Islamic traditional style of education. They taught mainly the Arabic language and the holy Qur’an for centuries; the University of Qarawiyyine at Fès, built in the eighth century, helped students pursue and deepen their knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies (Grand-guillaume 1983, 70). Islamic philosophy and jurisprudence were taught, and religious counsels and public notaries were trained in these institutions.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the French occupation set out to systematically eradicate this culture by introducing a new language and a Western type of education. French was imposed as the official language in education and public administration. This educational system was to serve the interests of the French rulers while Classical Arabic remained restricted to the teaching of Islamic thought. The French authorities offered very limited access to education to the extent that the illiteracy rate was 94% among women and 90% among men (Drouilh 1948).

As a reaction to this colonial policy, which had hardly any interest in Moroccan civilization and people, religious and nationalist leaders created private Islamic schools in order to safeguard Arab-Islamic traditions and values, and to compete with the French public schools, which were destined for French people or to a few children of the Moroccan aristocracy. After World War II, these free schools expanded rapidly and became increasingly important, given their link with Moroccan nationalism. The latter was itself based on religion, for there was a clear relation between Islam and the Moroccan nationalist movement. Later on, these schools led to the Arabization of the Moroccan system of education after independence. The late King Mohammed V encouraged the creation and support of traditional free schools throughout the country.

These schools had four major aims. First, they were meant to teach Classical Arabic as a subject and to introduce it as a language of instruction. Second, they aimed to teach Islamic thought, which was nearly absent in French schools. Third, they were keen on encouraging nationalist feelings among students. Fourth, they contributed to the fight against illiteracy,

which was extremely high at that time (90%), by introducing adult education, which consisted mainly of evening classes for adult illiterate people.

When Morocco became independent from France, the country's leaders recognized the need to place education at the center of its socio-economic and political future. In 1956, there were approximately 2 million children in Morocco, but only 10 percent were enrolled in elementary schools, and only 15,000 boys were enrolled in secondary education. There were no girls enrolled at the secondary level in 1956. Only 350 students were enrolled at the university level. In 1956, liberated Morocco had to develop a comprehensive education policy. First, anti-analphabetism schools (*madares muharabat al umiya*) were set up. Second, the nine year basic education system was developed. At the end of the 1990s, primary education received 35.5 percent of the total education budget, secondary education received 46 percent, and higher education received 18.5 percent. In 1968, these amounts were 49 percent for the elementary, 40.5 percent for the secondary, and 10.5 percent for higher education (Damis 1970).

After the proclamation of independence, Classical Arabic was declared the official language and French the second language. Since then, French has been used alongside Classical Arabic. The former has been adopted for purposes of modernization and development. In this respect, Aljabri remarks that the Moroccan elite is in full favour of keeping the essence of the educational system of the French colonization and developing it on the basis of the French model (Aljabri 1973, 45).

It is not surprising, therefore, that after independence, nationalist leaders aimed to spread French language and culture as a means to modernize the entire population (Grandguillaume 1983). Post-independence officials endeavoured to spread French in fields like trade, administration, education, and the media. In the name of achieving modernity and preserving cultural identity, the ruling elite opted for Standard Arabic-French bilingualism in most active sectors.

Free education is provided to all children in public schools, where Classical Arabic is taught as the official language, and French as the second language. Some children attend non-compulsory, two-year pre-school programs. Students begin Morocco's

**ARABIC**, Southern-Central Semitic language spoken in a large area including North Africa, most of the Arabian Peninsula, and other parts of the Middle East. It is the language of the Qur'an and the religious language of all Muslims. Literary *Arabic*, usually called *Classical Arabic*, is essentially the form of the language found in the Qur'an, with some modifications necessary for its use in modern times; it is uniform throughout the Arab world. Colloquial Arabic includes numerous spoken dialects, some of which are mutually unintelligible.

nine-year basic education program at age six. The basic education program consists of six years of primary school followed by three years of junior high school. The basic education program is followed by three years of general secondary or technical education leading to the bachelor's degree.

Compulsory education was introduced in 1960. The technical track offers subjects like engineering, economics, and agricultural sciences. Vocational training courses are also offered. A second foreign language is introduced into the state curriculum in grade ten (first year of secondary school). English, however, is becoming popular in the private schools in Morocco (Clark 2006).

Morocco is keenly aware of the critical value of education to national socioeconomic development. In 2000, 50% of the Moroccan people were illiterate. According to the 2004 census, this percentage has dropped to 40%, but illiteracy is higher among rural women.

Various reforms were adopted to change the educational system. The reformers of Moroccan education laid emphasis on the Arabic language in the curriculum. Another aim was to unify the educational system. This was done in order to curb the differences in quality and standards. Two different educational systems in Morocco have always co-existed. The first one is the Islamic model of instruction at Quranic schools, which concentrates on Islamic studies and Arabic Literature. The second is the modern model, adapted from the French type, to serve the needs of Modern Morocco. Although only a small percentage of students follow the original track, the government stresses its importance as a means of maintaining a sense of national and regional identity (Wagner and Lotfi, 1980).

Today, primary and high schools have been totally Arabized: Standard Arabic is the language of instruction for both literary and scientific subjects. In high schools, however, technical studies such as economics, mechanics, computing, and accounting are taught in French. At the university level, the basic language of instruction is French, especially for economics, management, science, and technology.

When children are enrolled in schools, they must learn one or more foreign languages, including classical Arabic, in addition to their mother tongue: Berber or Moroccan Arabic. This language barrier causes some children not to attend school. Parents who can afford it usually enroll their children in private schools where classical Arabic, French, English, and Spanish are taught. A high percentage of these private school graduates are admitted to universities.

Let us now consider the multicultural aspect of Morocco and its impact on the system of education and on the democratization process since independence.

### MULTICULTURALISM

Morocco is characterized by multiculturalism in the sense that several cultures co-habitate in the country: Islamic, Arab, Berber, French, and Spanish Cultures. There are two major types of cultural trends, the conservative trend, which is in favour of the Islamization of the country and of the reinforcement of Arabization in all walks of life, and the modernist trend, which seeks to modernize the country through education and through the use of foreign languages, mainly French and English.

Both trends attempt to resist the Westernization of Moroccan society by raising the population's cultural and linguistic awareness. To achieve this, the use of language and religion is paramount. Arabization is employed to show language loyalty and maintenance. The fact that Arabic and Islam are closely related favors strong cultural revival.

Keeping a balance between modernity and tradition depends greatly on the extent to which both Standard Arabic and Berber are successful in fulfilling all the functions associated with them, as symbols of cultural authenticity and harmony, and as a mirror and an expression of a rich linguistic and cultural tradition.

Thus, both plurality and competition characterize the linguistic and cultural context in Morocco. This competition varies along a scale of tolerance, on the one hand, and tension, on the other hand, depending on the socio-cultural situation (Ennaji 2002).

There are few studies on the consequences and links between the Arab-Islamic and the Franco-Western cultures. This multicultural situation has been created by the colonial period in Morocco, which has known other contacts with foreign powers and cultures throughout history given its geographical situation: Roman, Byzantine, and Arab (Ennaji 2005).

After the colonial attempt to assimilate the society, the nationalist movement retaliated against the phenomenon of assimilation and acculturation. The most aggressive resistance came from religious institutions like Qarawiyyine University at Fès and the nationalist leaders many of whom graduated from this university like Allal Al Fassi and Mohamed Hassan Ouazzani.

The most prominent educational policy that occurred after independence was the implementation of French-Arabic bilingual education with the aim of revitalizing and modernizing Standard Arabic, as we shall see in the following section.

#### BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The fact that the post-independence government kept French and opted for Arabic-French bilingualism in education was certainly a pragmatic choice. However, this type of bilingualism encompasses a dichotomy between Arab-Islamic culture and Western values, rather than a deliberate choice, i.e. this option is more imposed (by historical political and economic factors) than chosen. The major reforms after independence were the omission of French of the two first years of public primary schools and the increasing of the teaching load of Arabic and the strengthening of the position of French in university, especially in science faculties. In addition, the government applied four principles in education: the generalization of schooling to all the population, which led to an extension of education, the unification of education, (the same programmes have been adopted all through the country), free education to all (no tuition fees are paid), Moroccanization and Arabization of education, which implied hiring Moroccan teachers to replace foreign ones, and progressively consolidating Modern Standard Arabic as the language of education, instead of French.

This kind of bilingualism and biculturalism is the source of difficulty for learners in schools because of the different and at times conflicting roles of Arabic and French. This difficulty is translated in reality by the high rate of failure and dropouts in primary, secondary, and higher education, hence the adoption of the Arabization policy whose aim is to reduce the number of drop outs and the failure rate at school (Grandguillaume 1983).

However, in 1973 the government decided to Arabize maths and the sciences in the primary and secondary education, to Arabize philosophy and the social sciences at all levels of education; French, thus, became a second language, and Arabic the language of instruction of all disciplines in primary and secondary education. However, up until now, the sciences are taught in French in higher education, and the faculties of science, medicine, engineering, and private institutes use French as the language of instruction.

The political leaders' stand on Arabization and bilingualism has evolved since independence. While the enthusiasm for Arabization was

very strong after independence, nowadays, it is rather weak as more and more intellectuals and youth are keen on teaching French to their children and on learning it in private schools.

The ambiguity and hesitation that has characterized the educational system and the language policies adopted in a way reflects the painful acculturation and alienation that a whole generation of politicians, officials, and people have suffered in the post-colonial era.

The expansion of bilingual and bicultural education to masses of pupils and students from different sociological backgrounds after independence, led to their alienation and had more ramifications for education and for the social perspective. The opposite should have happened, because one would have thought that the system of education normally reduces the social gap and the tension between the Arab-Islamic and the Western cultures by giving each culture its due position in society. In fact, the system of education in this case has consolidated acculturation and widened the gap between these two cultures, *i.e.*, between tradition and modernity.

Bilingual education is a political option that has a serious impact on education and local politics, and fosters communication with the West and the rest of the world (Fitouri 1983). However, after decades of the implementation of the Arabization policy, the degree of mastery of French regressed; yet, the prestige of French prevails and attitudes toward it remain for the most part favourable (Ennaji 1991; Boukous 1995; Elbiad 1991, among others). This is due to the fact that French is still the language of scientific, technical, and business studies, whereas Arabic and Berber remain the language(s) of cultural authenticity and ethnic identity expressing intimate, emotional, and spiritual values and beliefs.

This hesitation between modernity and tradition is what characterizes post-colonial Morocco. The rise of Muslim fundamentalism and extremism in the recent years in the region testifies that conservative forces have gained momentum and cling to the Muslim tradition rather than to Western culture. Today, one can safely state that the pendulum is on the side of tradition and conservatism, *i.e.*, on the side of Arabic, Islam, cultural identity, and authenticity (Gill 1999).

The youth suffer from some kind of schizophrenia due to the gap and tension between modernity and tradition. Two attitudes are attested among the youth: one of total immersion in Western culture seen as the sole model and means of progress, and the second is a detached attitude vis-a-vis Arab-Islamic culture, which is considered backwards (Fitouri

1983, 28; Ennaji 2005). By contrast, the political system of post-independence has been characterized by pragmatism and an effort towards modernization. However, this model does not lead the individual to accept change and adapt to it, as it does not carry an alternative societal project.

This ambivalence between modernity and tradition has influenced family, school, and various other institutions, which explains the contradictory attitudes and instability. All this accentuates tension especially among youth. School increases this tension, which augments acculturation and the sense of insecurity. That does not mean that there is incompatibility between the two cultures, but what is needed is a favourable social and educational climate, where educators are capable of decreasing this “psychological gap” and present the two cultures in a fair and objective manner (Fitouri 1983, 29).

The multicultural context in Morocco hides a class struggle, group competition, a clash of interests of the different socio-cultural categories, as well as ideological tensions. The multilingual situation itself is a mirror of a multicultural context. These tensions and conflicts reflect also the fight for power at various levels (Grandguillaume 1983).

Thus, the debate about Arabization and language policy in the region implies a larger debate on government policy, ideology, politics, religion, culture, and identity. Bilingualism as it is conceived and applied implies that Arabic is the language of the glorious past, religion, and tradition, while French is the language of modernity, secularism, and progress (Fitouri 1983). The fact that French is used in teaching science, technology, business and administration implies that French is the language of success, “la langue de la réussite sociale” or “la langue du pain” (bread language) as Grandguillaume puts it, that is, the language that guarantees or allows employment.

Thus, social selection is done on the basis of language policy; even the Arabization policy is a hidden fight for social promotion used by opposition political parties and the lower social classes in the hope that Arabization will re-establish social justice and the same opportunities for all. The dominant classes accept Arabization knowing that their own offspring will win when they join French and private schools, and the lower class children will be out of the competition.

There is also a contradiction between what is said and what is practiced, which translates into an ambiguity in attitudes *vis-à-vis* French and Arabic. This reveals a hidden cultural conflict, that there are frustrations and fears of the future inherited from the colonial past. The historical

heritage (beliefs, myths, values) is so strong that it has a significant impact on people's attitudes towards the present-day language situation. This anguish and ambiguity in attitudes are the result of an "underestimation" of Arabic and its potential functions in society, due to ignorance of the Arab-Islamic culture, which reinforces alienation and acculturation.

Recent studies have stressed the importance of learners' attitude to the culture of the target language in second and foreign language learning. This means that an individual who speaks a second or foreign language is also involved personally in the culture of that language. It also implies that the bilingual speaker knows both cultures and enjoys a greater experience than the monolingual speaker. Even intellectually, the bilingual's intellect is richer and has more readiness to conceptualize, and aptitude to adapt to new situations (Peal and Lambert 1965). Haugen (1956) dealt with bilingualism within a multidisciplinary approach, and states that cultural, sociological and psychological factors have great weight in bilingual education.

Nevertheless, a well-balanced positive bilingualism is, in my view, profitable for Morocco and other Arab countries; it is even compulsory for reasons of socio-economic development. This kind of bilingualism will create an equilibrium as the language and culture of national unity and authenticity, that is, Modern Standard Arabic, can be combined with an auxiliary language, that is, a second or foreign language of wider communication like French and English.

As mentioned above, Berber, considered by many as the poor parent in this linguistic "family," has been marginalized by Arabization and by French-Arabic bilingual education. However, since 2001 the authorities have called for the revival of Berber language and culture. Let us examine the impact of Berber on education in the following section.

#### BERBER EDUCATION

Since the creation of the Royal Institute of the Berber Culture in 2003, the existing multilingual and multicultural dimension of Morocco has been recognized, and a new language planning, codification, and standardization policy has been launched so as to integrate this language not only into the educational system, but into different sectors as well.

In 2000, the National Charter for Education and Training was adopted with the aim of restructuring the Moroccan educational system and language policy in order to upgrade standards. The Charter

outlined the role of Berber in society and the need to introduce it in education, as well as the need to have a good command of Arabic and foreign languages.

However, it would be interesting to find out whether the type of language policy set out by the Charter is compatible with the country's sociolinguistic and multicultural reality. Moreover, it would be of paramount importance to investigate the extent to which multilingualism and multiculturalism can be a source of conflict in language teaching and learning.

The teaching of Berber began officially in 2003, and by 2007 nearly 300,000 students – native Arabic speakers as well as Berber speakers – were enrolled in Berber courses, according to the Ministry of Education (Errihani 2008). The payoff has been broader: official support for Berber has helped fuel a larger revival of Berber culture and life in the kingdom, where the country's native people have long been shunned, and sometimes imprisoned, for public expressions of their heritage. Now, summer arts festivals are commonplace, Berber newspapers are thriving, and a long-blocked translation of the Qur'an into Tamazight finally made it into print.

Of course, the transformations have been far from uniform, and there are signs that the slow pace of change is beginning to alienate Berbers from the King's initiative. Yet the story of the Berber project and the challenges it has faced from politicians, parents, and Berber natives is in many ways symbolic of the broader struggle Morocco faces as it tries to balance the competing interests of a multicultural country of over 30 million.

Though the government initiative calls for adding a new level of Berber each year, many schools have offered only the first level for the past three years. Many still have no Berber teachers, and the Ministry of Education will not allocate money to recruit new ones – a position that many Berber people see as a sign that the Arab-dominated government has not fully accepted the initiative. Textbooks are not always sent to rural areas, where Berber speakers are often the majority, because they do not sell as well. Other promises, such as plans to launch an all-Berber television station and develop university-level programs on Berber people, have not materialized either. As a result, many Berber activists are beginning to criticize and distance themselves from officials' efforts. In 2005, for instance, seven of the thirty board members of IRCAM quit because of the constant pushback from the ministry.

Despite all the obstacles, Berber is no more a forgotten national dialect, but a subject in its own right in Moroccan primary schools. Different positions arise concerning its introduction in education. The attitudes range from those of Berbers advocating the promotion of Berber to Arabophones who are opposed to the idea of revitalizing it. Many disagree with the idea of having Berber as a mandatory subject in primary schools, claiming that the children will be better off learning Arabic and French and other international languages rather than Berber. They also claim that teaching them the Berber alphabet “Tifinagh” will make their task harder.

Proponents of the teaching of Berber think it is advantageous in many ways for it will motivate Berber-speaking students to continue their education and facilitate their learning achievements. The teaching of Berber will also foster the standardization and unification of the language; it will also consolidate the unity of the Moroccan people and develop democracy and citizenship (Ennaji 2005).

#### CONCLUSION

Fifty two years after independence, the linguistic situation in Morocco has witnessed many changes. Although French remains important especially in higher education and in the private sector, Arabic has been consolidated through the Arabization process. English has emerged as the most popular foreign language with no colonial connotations, and Amazigh has finally been recognized as a national language and been introduced in elementary education.

The cultural and linguistic context of Morocco is characterised by the significance of Arabic as well as by the presence of Berber, French, English, and Spanish which have been co-existing for a long time despite sporadic tensions. Moreover, the presence of Islam, which constitutes a fundamental cultural component side by side with Western culture, must also be taken into account, as a symbol of unity and a token of Morocco’s cultural diversity.

One of the major hurdles faced by the Moroccan system of education since independence has to do with the ambivalence and the indecisiveness of decision-makers, in addition to class, gender, and geographical gaps concerning education and illiteracy. In the planned reform, the government seeks to prioritize the poor, girls, and rural areas.

With the implementation of the new reform in education, other changes will be introduced in the areas of literacy and education to help Morocco become socially and economically developed.

In education, the Berber language is being introduced, slowly but surely, as the result of an initiative by King Mohammed VI to integrate the country's widely-spoken language, and its speakers, into the education system. The shift is part of a larger push towards pluralism and openness by the King who, since taking power in 1999, has moved away from some of the heavy-handed tactics of the old regime. He has liberalized laws affecting women (the new family code), forged stronger economic ties with the West, and created a commission to examine past human-rights violations. The aim of these reforms is to develop and strengthen democracy and multicultural citizenship among Moroccans in an increasingly globalized world.

Change can be made through education. To attain quality education, the educational system must develop awareness of citizenship in schools. Integrating citizenship issues may develop critical thinking, empower students to take action for problem-solving, and develop their awareness of citizenship issues and global issues (Ennaji 2004).

Multiculturalism, hence tolerance of differences, coexistence of different faiths, languages, ethnicities and variety of cultural identities can survive only in democracies. No other state system can guarantee these qualifications. In the same manner, opposition and differences of opinion can survive side by side with the majority, the dominant power, only in democracies.

Living in a democratic, secular and multicultural society, gives you the obligation to respect other peoples' liberties, ethnicities, lifestyles and personal preferences, and the border-line between individuals is the frontier where one should stop interfering and harassing other people's human rights.

CITY  
AND DIALOGUE

## 29.

## Some Reflections on the Multicultural Cosmopolis Today

EVA HOFFMAN

Wrocław 2007

Let me start rather personally, by saying that I was particularly delighted to be invited to a conference in Wrocław – as this is a city which holds vivid early associations for me. I grew up in Cracow after the war, but an adopted auntie – Ciocia Bronia – moved to Wrocław in the 1950s, and I remember visiting her here, and I remember the indelible sight of ruined buildings and post-war shabbiness still evident in much of the city. Such sights were sad and forbidding, but they also had, to a child – innocent of the history behind them – a strange lyrical melancholy. And so, when I came here again about two years ago – no less than a half century later! – I discovered a city that was entirely changed. But I also found (to my friends' surprise and dismay) that I was drawn to the buildings that still retained traces of that post-war shabbiness as if they were some wonderful madeleines. I realize this is not the kind of thing that can be taken into account in urban planning; but I mention it because it points up how much cities form our early imagery and internal topography.

Cities are a locus of imagination, and also of identification and attachment – certainly, earlier and perhaps more powerful identifications than nations. When I emigrated with my family to Canada at age thirteen, it was Cracow, rather than Poland that I palpably missed. I was still at a pre-ideological age, when the “imaginary community” of a nation meant little to me; but the place where I actually lived and that

I knew meant everything. But cities, more than nations, are also places to which one can form later attachments and forms of belonging. Having moved to Great Britain in full adulthood, I can never really become English; but I can and do feel to be a Londoner myself. Nowadays, when people ask me where my home is, I say it's between the Upper West Side and NW 6 – the neighbourhoods in New York and London where I have lived for extended periods of time.

**EMIGRATION**, change of residence from the homeland country to another by an individual or group; usually undertaken in search of better economic opportunities; at times, for political reasons, because of ideological persecutions, in search of asylum; also provoked by wars and natural disasters. It may effect the creation of socio-cultural diasporas, communities living in cultural relation to the country, now abandoned, from which they emigrated.

This brings me to my second, obvious point – and that is, that cities are natural landing places for immigrants like me, and therefore natural cosmopolitan, or multicultural formations. Urban centers have always been condensation clusters where individuals and groups from various places have congregated and coexisted with each other. We all know about the interwar artistic exiles in Paris, the political refugees in nineteenth-century London, the rich mix of populations in early twentieth-century Istanbul, or Sarajevo, or for that matter, in interwar Warsaw or Łódź.

So, when we talk about urban multiculturalism, in a sense there is no problem – until, of course, there is a problem. Cultural heterogeneity and coexistence have been, in many times and epochs, a normal condition. However, as the history of Wrocław, or more recently, of Sarajevo, reminds us all too vividly, there are times when a seemingly natural and benign *modus vivendi* among different groups breaks down terribly, and co-existence transmogrifies into conflict and, sometimes, deadly violence.

When I came to London, almost fifteen years ago, it seemed to me that I was coming to a city well used to dealing with exiles and immigrants of all sorts – a city truly cosmopolitan in spirit, and neither overexcited, nor dismissive of the many foreigners, or others, in its midst. London's sprawling urban topography, by the way, seems to me ideally suited to a live and let live attitude; the famous British tolerance that has been, equally famously, underpinned by the ethos of privacy and non-interference. But it also seemed to me that, besides the advantages of geography, there were also certain informal, but crucial containing structures for the many groups of immigrants sharing the city. There was, most evidently, a common and commonly cherished language; and

a code of urban civility which could still be taken for granted, and which lubricated daily exchanges between people – however foreign they may have been, to each other otherwise – in a very benign way.

Since then, however, London and many other large cities in Western Europe have come under intense pressure, as they find themselves suspended between the realities of multiculturalism, the tensions of living with quite radical differences and, at the extreme, but important, fringe, the threat of violence. For me, both the possibilities and the tensions were summarized by a particular moment, or day, about two years ago, when I went on a walk through the East Side of London. The East Side is traditionally an immigrant area, where various groups arriving on England's shores have first settled. The neighbourhood saw successive waves of Huguenots fleeing from Catholic repressions in France, Irish immigrants fleeing poverty and Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe coming there for a variety of reasons. These days, the area is home to a large Bangladeshi community, with its many colourful shops and excellent restaurants. A historian of immigration who was accompanying me that day pointed out proudly that the East Side was one of the few spots in the world where a Protestant church, a synagogue and a mosque could be found in close proximity, erected practically next to each other.

But that day, as it happened, also witnessed a protest, launched by the Bangladeshi community, against the filming of a movie based on a novel by Monica Ali, called *Brick Lane*. Monica Ali is Bangladeshi; nevertheless, the protesters felt that her picture of their community was unflattering and insulting, and they wanted to stop the film from being made. The protest was serious in tone, the voices angry, the signs written in Urdu. I must say I felt chastened by the sight.

Now, this may seem like a local event, but of course, conflicts revolving around issues of free speech have arisen in the last year in countries across Europe, and they have sometimes led to deadly violence. Moreover, it should be noted that such conflicts involve disagreements about absolutely fundamental values, and they are not easily resolved. Free speech is an absolute good in the Western context; respect for Islam trumps that good for many Muslims around the globe.

How have such situations arisen, and how can they be contained before they explode into even sharper conflict and even more violence? Much depends on how we envision our relationships within a diverse society, and the city is the crucible where such relationships are most immediately lived out and tested. And so, I want to probe a bit behind

the immediate realities of specific cities today, and think about these relationships in a more systematic, or principled way. I would like to sketch a kind of anatomy of the attitudes towards difference that, in my observations, have prevailed in recent decades. I would also like to ponder the kinds of frameworks we might need in order to contain inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflicts, and create humane and tolerant environments as we jostle against each other in the close proximity of city spaces.

Since my preoccupation with these questions comes from my own experience of emigration rather than from any scholarly expertise, I will allow myself to talk briefly about my own experience as someone who has been the other in several countries – but who has also been acculturated or assimilated enough to see social issues from the other side of the equation. Certainly, exile – to use the broad term that includes many kinds of migration – is a condition that brings you right up against the problems of deep values and foregrounds both the potency of cultural specificities and the potentialities of cross-cultural encounters very sharply.

Indeed, the first lessons of my uprooting were in the vital importance of language and culture – or rather, in the inseparability of these large and seemingly supra-personal entities from our most personal, most inward selves. For a while, I was in effect without language, as Polish went underground and English remained a *terra incognita*, and what that brief but radical interval brought home to me was how much our perceptions and understanding, as well as our sense of presence and even life – aliveness – depend on having a living speech within us. When we don't have words with which to name our inner experiences, those experiences recede from us into an inner darkness; without words with which to name the world, that world becomes less vivid, less lucid. On the other hand, the ability to name things precisely, to bring experience to the point of conscious articulation, gives nuance and color to our perceptions, our sense of others, and of ourselves. In a very real sense, language constitutes our psychic home. As with language, so with culture: what that first period of radical dislocation brought home to me was how much we are creatures of culture, and how much incoherence we risk if we fall out of its matrix. By "culture," of course, I do not mean only the shaped artefacts of literature or art, but the entire web-work of visible and invisible habits, of psychological codes and conceptual assumptions – a kind of symbolic system of shared meanings that structures our perceptions from early on, and that, within each culture, shapes the very shape of personality, and of sensibility. On that level, culture is not

only something we live in, but something that lives within us, not only as easily-changed ideas and beliefs, but as values encoded within our psychic cells.

I stress this, because it is the depth at which these things exist within us that makes the sense of cultural “difference” sometimes so intractable, and the process of cross-cultural understanding genuinely difficult. Now, it seems to me that within my own trajectory, I have seen quite profound changes towards difference on the part of the mainstream or majority cultures. I came to the United States in 1963, that is, at the very moment when America was on the cusp of enormous change, when the very idea of America was about to splinter into many ideas and images, many of them in conflict with one another. But at the time I arrived, the country still had a confidently unified sense of itself, and the conviction that it represented progress and the desirable human norm. The ideology on questions of immigration was still unequivocally assimilationist. The melting pot ethos was premised on the belief that new arrivals would be only too happy to leave their pasts behind, and to accept all America had to offer instantly and gratefully. And many were. America, after all, offered considerable numbers of people new opportunities, upward mobility and a refuge from various forms of persecution and oppression. I have certainly been the beneficiary of American egalitarianism and mobility – and I am truly grateful for that. But the unexamined assumption that America was the norm, to which others should be all too glad to accommodate, meant that the imagination of difference was neither nurtured nor strongly developed, that deep cultural difference often simply fell outside the pale of consideration or notice. The new arrival was often greeted with the kind of incomprehension that ignored the fact that there was anything to comprehend. And that, in turn, meant that assimilation carried with it a strong threat of colonization, of having one’s first self, so to speak, undervalued and stifled by a very powerful force. My own project was, in a sense, to transpose myself into the American vein, to really enter into the sensibility of my new world. Such an undertaking is exciting and enlarging, but I felt that it could not be done superficially or abruptly, that to shed my past too quickly would be doing a kind of violence to myself.

But since my own emigration, there has been a great sea-change in attitudes to questions of difference and the unfamiliar others. The changes have happened on several levels, and although I’ve been speaking within the American context, I think the same observations, with some obvious corrections, can apply to Britain, or indeed to Western

Europe. On one, rather rarefied, level a vast body of commentary and theory has grown up that is rethinking and revising the concept of exile. The basic revision has been to attach a positive sign to exile and the cluster of mental and emotional experiences associated with it. At least within the framework of a certain kind of post-modern theory, we have come to value exactly those qualities of experience that exile demands: uncertainty, displacement, the fragmented identity. Within this conceptual scheme, exile becomes, well, sexy, glamorous, interesting.

On the broader scale, too, in the realm not of high theory but of more general attitudes, one can also sense, say in the last two decades, a considerable shift. There has been the rise of identity politics, with its attendant demand for the full recognition of each group's particular character and history. The prevailing ethos on questions of immigration has transmogrified from the melting pot to the beautiful mosaic, from assimilation to multiculturalism.

But I think there has been a further move as well, both in the realm of high theory, and in broader attitudes – and that is, a kind of romance of difference, the sense that it is marginality, or the outsider position, which brings with it interest or wisdom, that rightness, or the good, or the nobility of victimhood, exist in the other, and that it is We – the putatively normative we – who are *a priori* in the wrong.

This further twist of the story became particularly evident since 9/11. There was, of course, a spectrum of reactions to that event everywhere, but in the supposedly progressive interpretation of the events, the Al Qaeda attacks were seen as an expression of justified fury on the part of victimized people; it was “we” who had to “learn our lessons” from this attack. Since then, certainly in Great Britain, one can discern, in the putatively progressive sections of public opinion, a flirtation with, or even an embrace of, clearly extremist tendencies – as long as they come from the putatively victimized other. Just to give you a concrete (if perhaps epiphenomenal) example: recently, *Time Out*, a magazine that lists all possible forms of cultural events and entertainment, and that as much as anything symbolizes groovy, cool and happening London, devoted an issue to the idea of the city becoming Islamic in its codes and laws. The editorial voices and the leading essay in the issue suggested it would not be a bad thing at all if this happened, because there would be less drunkenness and lewd behaviour, more hygienic personal habits and more true respect for women, who would of course be required to cover themselves according to *sharia* regulations, and to wear the veil.

This struck many readers of the magazine as particularly incongruous, since *Time Out* is the great bastion of liberated life-styles, listing gay bars and events, and featuring naked bodies with some regularity – all of which it would have to renege on if London were to become truly Islamic; and all of which it was notionally willing to renege on for the frisson of supposedly radical, but actually very conservative, chic.

Now, of course, I understand that these attitudes coexist with the more standard forms of prejudice and even bigotry, which should be countered and fought by any means possible. But I am talking about a set of ideas and attitudes that compel our moral attention and set the tone for a more liberal discussion of these matters.

And so again, I want to go behind the immediate realities and polemics, and think about these attitudes and their implications more systematically. On the ethical level, it could be said that our willingness to criticize the sins of our own tribes and to place moral merit in others, as well as the privileging of the outsider, and of certain kinds of under-privilege bespeaks a heightening of our ethical sensibilities. And, to some extent, I think it really does. It seems to me that British society, for example, really *has* become sensitized to its own history of colonization, and to the legitimacy of other cultural perspectives. Our awareness of the diversity within our societies means that we are less susceptible to the tyranny of some notional normative identity. Very few of us think that our nation is the only one to possess legitimacy, or the genius of the people we belong to is superior to all others. That is all surely to the good.

But there are several reasons why the idealization of difference, with its inversions of the older, triumphalist dogmas, seems unsatisfying both as a description of our world and as an ideal to which we should aspire. First of all, the glamorization of exile, diasporism and nomadism ironically underestimates the costs and hardships of such conditions. Real dislocation, the loss of all familiar external and internal parameters, is hardly glamorous, or cool. It carries great psychological and existential costs, and it is something that I think most immigrants want to get over and beyond; they want to find new ways of feeling at home. But also, I think that envisioning the conditions of displacement and immigration as ennobling, or radicalising, underestimates the opposite, conservative potential of these circumstances. The outsider position does initially have certain bracing, or subversive potential; but great upheaval and dislocation can sometimes produce some rather more rigid impulses of self-preservation and insularity. They can lead to a kind of psychic

fundamentalism, whereby one orients oneself towards an ideal and purer past or lost home, while remaining detached and separate from the compromised and conflict-ridden locality where one actually lives. I think such tendencies could be observed, for example, among the wartime generation of Polish émigrés in Britain; and they can be seen again among segments of Islamic communities in London today. Moreover, envisioning yourself perpetually as the object of prejudice or as oppressed by Them, can lead to a kind of separatism from the society at large, and to a defensive, basically conservative world-view, whereby one feels oneself to be always the outsider and the victim – even when that is no longer so. Several Muslim commentators in Britain have recently noted this tendency towards “victimology” among the Muslim communities – most notably Kenan Malik in a response to our controversial Mayor Ken Livingstone, who is a great advocate of multiculturalism, and has warmly welcomed some very extremist imams on their visits to London.

But also – to return to the mainstream, or the “majoritarian” point of view – it seems to me that to envision the other always as “our” victim, and always as acting in reaction to the putative “us,” is implicitly patronizing. Such a view underestimates the agency of individuals and groups, even if they are in minority positions. It ignores the force precisely of other cultures and ideologies, as well as internecine differences among other cultures and sub-cultures. In the conflict about the filming of *Brick Lane*, for example, there were Muslim voices protesting the protests – and even expressing outrage at them.

Indeed, it is often the commentators from minority groups who note that the model of a homogeneous majority, and the perennially oppressed minority no longer corresponds to the realities of our fast-changing and ever more mobile world. As our societies become more internally fluid, as centers of power or influence, or interest, multiply and criss-cross with each other, the very notion of a representative insider and a permanently excluded outsider no longer seems to apply.

In literature, too, it is writers like Richard Rodriguez, a Hispanic American essayist, in his book *Brown*, or Zadie Smith in *White Teeth*, who come close to depicting the syncretic and multi-dimensional topography of the new multiculturalism – a topography in which characters from various ethnicities intermingle and divide, affect each other for good and ill, while all the time dealing with problems and conflicts in their own lives and affinity groups – so that it is difficult to say that there is one center of authority, or power, or oppression, or victimhood.

But I am struck by the fact that there is much less of this new multicultural topography, much less representation or elaboration of it, in literature written either from the American or the British mainstream. We have become much more delicate about entering into cross-cultural, or cross-ethnic dialogue from that position, more aware of the pitfalls of condescension or arrogance – of a kind of perceptual imperialism. The pitfalls are there, and yet, I think we need to be able to talk to each other even across awkward boundaries, to take the risk of misunderstanding in order to extend our understanding.

Really, what I am saying is that idealization of the other is as insufficient to the occasion as denigration, and that both are a form of projection and a way of preventing a richer understanding and a fuller engagement with other cultures and collectivities. And engagement – from both, or all sides of the equation – is what we badly need if we are to coexist not as separate enclaves inhabiting the same territory, but as members of the same society, or urban space. Possibly, as we deal with differences in situations of close proximity, and sometimes tension or conflict, tolerance as benign indifference is not enough. We need a more strenuous effort of understanding and imagination – one that does not erase differences, but grapples with them in active and dynamic dialogue. And dialogue, by the way – if it is to be more than the kind of anodyne and cursory exchange in which everyone professes high respect for the others' values without in the least coming to grips with them – is a difficult and demanding concept. That all-too-familiar form of cross-cultural conversation is no more than what Trevor Phillips, the race equality chief in Britain, called “cultural tourism.”

As for more genuine forms of dialogue, they remain to be decoded and described. How do we stretch towards others, and incorporate their subjectivity, their view of the world, without losing some perspective from which we can perceive, or principles on which we are willing to stand? Those are difficult questions and challenging tasks. But the city is the ideal forum for such exchanges; it is a place where casual forms of conversation happen in any case in the natural course of events; and where a more strenuous dialogue could and should be encouraged. Schools are one obvious place. But it seems to me that one could create specific sites for dialogue – one can imagine, for example, intercultural centers, for conversation, shared activities and the arts. I realize, even as I say this that I am reinventing the wheel already invented at Sejny – but it is a very good wheel.

However, where diversity exists in the same space and the same body politic rather than across borders, another element and perspective needs to be taken into account – and that is, the perspective not only of the particular individuals or groups trying to understand each other, but also of society itself, of what can still perhaps be called the common good. From that third, but crucial vantage point, the question becomes not only how we can understand each other in all of our differences, but how can we sustain a notion of commonality, of some social cohesion, in the face of those differences – particularly the differences which are quite sharp and not easily reconciled.

It is precisely when we confront those sharp and extreme differences that a common sphere becomes very important – that is, a domain within which we act primarily as citizens, or, say, Londoners, rather than as members of particular groups; and where we are treated primarily in that role, rather than as representatives of some communal “identity.” The acknowledgment of a need for such a domain does not mean that there may not be other places – community associations, religious institutions, special schools, etc. – where distinctive ethnic or cultural identities can be expressed and enacted.

From the individual end as well, I think we also need to acknowledge that we are not monolithic, and to accept the notion of spheres or strata of identity, and of recognition. The need for both individual and collective recognition is deep – and there are situations and contexts in which we want to share and receive an exact and intimate understanding of our past, of the things that form us, and give us our distinctive personalities. In our multiethnic societies, as long as we expect new generations of immigrants, we need to make room for forums in which such particular pasts and cultural sensibilities can be lived and recognized – if only to give people that crucial transitional time in which they can make choices about the degree of acculturation or assimilation they want to pursue. We cannot, and should not, forcibly extract from people the elements that shape their selves and souls.

And yet: for the newcomers and minority groups, especially if their immigration was in some sense voluntary, some engagement and participation in the society they have entered is surely no more than a consequence of that decision. We can be Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Polish or Albanian – and, at the same time, identify ourselves as citizens of whatever country and society we have chosen to live in, and act in that role, where common interests are concerned.

**NATIONALISM**, ideology based on the premise that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpasses other individual or group interests; a modern movement, since the end of eighteenth century, developed simultaneously with the idea of citizenship. Nationalism is a generally-recognized sentiment molding public and private life; one of the greatest single determining factors of modern history. The American and French Revolutions may be regarded as its first powerful manifestations. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it flowered in the ancient lands of Asia and Africa. Thus, the nineteenth century has been called the Age of Nationalism in Europe, while the twentieth century has witnessed the rise and struggle of powerful national movements throughout Asia and Africa.

**PATRIOTISM**, a devotion to one's country for no other reason than being a citizen of that country. It is a related sentiment to nationalism, but nationalism is not necessarily an inherent part of patriotism. Comes from the Ancient Greek "patriotes," "countryman." The abstract noun "patriotism" appears in the early eighteenth century.

Beyond that, it seems to me that the very idea of that common realm may be changing as social realities change; and that the phenomenon of radical differences and of increasingly complex cultural mosaic calls on us to do something very challenging and interesting: to rethink, and perhaps to redefine – or sometimes reassert – the very basic principles on which our societies stand or fall. What do we mean by civility, free speech, democracy; why do we value the separation of church and state – if we do; in the light of what principles do we object to honor killings, or to a garment which covers women's faces – if we do. It would be good, of course, if we could forge the underlying principles for a *new agora* together, and in mutuality; and subscribe to them willingly, so that the ordinary life of our cities and societies could proceed an atmosphere of some basic trust, rather than mutual suspicion.

I do not mean to exaggerate the degree of that suspicion, or conflict, or even discomfort. On an ordinary day, London is still a wonderful place to live, with many surprising and enlivening encounters. The London of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* – multiethnic, rollicking, with vectors of power and attraction going in every which direction has become

as much a part of our collective imagination as the London of Charles Dickens. Cities are multiple organisms, and we can come to appreciate them and love them from many directions. Unlike national patriotism, which is based on ideological symbols, local patriotism is based on actual attachments, and can be a wonderful thing. But we do need to nurture this multiple organism in common, and to make sure that its connective tissue continues to be strong enough to sustain us, rather than fracturing or breaking under the strain.

## 30.

## CASE STUDY

Defending Public Spaces – Defending Our  
Future

HUSEIN ORUČEVIĆ

Berlin 2009

It is not easy to live in a split city, a city divided between two ethnic groups, two nationalities, each of whom claims the right to the other side. Unfortunately, such a situation extends to other spheres of life.

In a divided town, public places serve as a means to manifest nationalist policy. They are not used for the development of civic virtues and dialogue, but are rather the underlying cause of further divisions and antagonisms. They breed a policy of segregation and discrimination in all aspects of local community organization. The whole school system, for example, from kindergartens to universities, has become a victim of hatred.

Some public spaces and public utility buildings illustrate the presence of nationalist policies: buildings in the city might have a national prefix, signifying Bosnian or Croatian, inserted in their names. Or schools, for example, might be named after significant religious personages, a fact rendering history one-dimensional and discriminatory. Street names have been changed. For a person with a decent knowledge of Balkan history it will be obvious in which part of the city he or she is in: just look at the names of the streets.

The violent and bloody history of Mostar and the Balkans is still present in the street names of today's Mostar. It is represented by names of warriors and fighters, ideologists and heroes (one nation's hero is another nation's war criminal). Violence follows you wherever you go.

McWORLD, metaphor for globalization coming from the spreading of McDonald's fast-food restaurants throughout the world and, more generally, used to describe the effects of international simplification of services in the manner of fast-food-chains as well as the commercialization of goods.

Apart from the nationalist “frenzy” in naming, the (questionable) choice of people standing at the helm of cultural and public institutions, and the abolishing of public welfare, another problem has arisen: “McWorld.” It seeks new, “unplowed dollar-bearing fields,” unbroken spaces that crave the consumer world. It is accompanied by an unethical (even

inhuman) campaign. McWorld entered into Mostar as well, together with uncreative and antagonistic politicians.

Yesterday's Croatians, Muslims and Serbs, divided, quarreling, wounded, all became buyers and sellers. Shopping sprees and supermarkets are a surrogate for civic initiatives and public spaces, poor substitutes for an Agora, a place for gathering and discussion.

Objects that would be valuable from the public's point of view are prepared to be privatized or have already been sold, without informing the citizens. Destroyed buildings owned by the municipality are not restored, because the authorities lack the vision and the engagement to know what to do with them, how to govern and use them. Objects of historical value are sold at preposterous prices. Sometimes the façades of beautiful, old buildings are covered with McWorld billboards.

Huge billboards have become an end in themselves and the aim of the “huge profit.” Their owners disregard the violence inflicted on every person who enters the city or strolls on the streets of Mostar. These passers-by are the people who notice the traces of the city. Newly arrived Big Commerce destroys and defiles the citizens of Mostar, not to mention the people who work and learn in the rooms now obscured, darkened by the “Great New Emperor” of huge commercial banners threatening us with his black cloak. McWorld has arrived, and people are unable to oppose the global Emperor who pays homage to the idea of profit. Profit and well-being for the chosen few, of course.

The cosmopolitan idea in Mostar lost the battle with aggressive nationalist politics, responsible for destroying the city and its traces. They destroyed spaces of remembrance and identity, while trying at the same time to establish even older and more grandiose identities that no one remembers – neither the citizens of Mostar scattered all around the world, nor those divided within the city. Mostar is a city where no one feels good, not any citizen nor any person belonging to whichever nation, religion or subculture.

This is why the Youth Culture Center Abrasevic, an autonomous zone, a “House on the Border,” began to defend what is left of the city’s memory, including the memory of urban development. All Mostarians remember the Abrasevic building. They would learn there, play there, and fall in love there, but in that building they would also discuss solutions for saving the city and the urban idea. We had to sue the local authorities in order to save at least one site of remembrance and public interaction. We won the case and we will continue to develop this place in order to seek alternatives for today’s Mostar, as I have described in this short introduction to the larger discussion about how to defend public spaces, which are our future and the future of the City.

CITIZEN, a member of a political community who enjoys the rights and assumes the duties of membership; its contemporary meaning comes from Diderot’s and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopaedia* (1753) created in opposition to “subject” in monarchy. Citizenship is regarded as one of the features of liberal democracy and modernity. Often regarded as belonging to sovereign, territorial states in contrast to the globalized world. This premise is being increasingly contested by those who question the state’s right to determine who is accepted as a member and/or claim that citizenship can be meaningful beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.

AT THE GATES, STROLLING AROUND CITY, FLYING ABOVE:  
ON BOUNDARIES, AGORAS, BRIDGES AND MORE

In her book, *Post-polis. Wstęp do filozofii ponowoczesnego miasta* (Post-polis. An introduction to the philosophy of a postmodern city), Ewa Rewers distinguishes three ways of perceiving city life. The first is the perspective of a pilgrim standing at the city gate, its threshold.

*Getting to know the city from its threshold means posing questions: What is a city? What does it mean to live in a city? How does it reflect its name?*

In a city in Istria called Kastav there is a *Gradska loža* (city lodge), which some might call an Agora. The building is situated outside the old city walls, just by the city gate. It was built in 1571. The lodge has a unique architecture and is a remarkable building. It was built as a place for gatherings and celebrating folk holidays, as well as for expressing views and mitigating conflicts.

Gradska loža is situated in the metaphorical city threshold. People who wanted to find safety or who wanted to trade, people who were only visiting the city and people intending to stay, everybody had to visit Kastav’s Gradska loža and think and talk about the city. The building became a form of “municipal voluntary quarantine” – a field

for compromise. In a lodge that was created precisely as a place for reaching compromise, two adjoining worlds meet and permeate each other.

Two worlds establish contact on no-man's land (a land of compromise, of conversation) or on a land conceived and organized so as to be an entrance and an exit at a time; a space that leads us in both directions – to the inside and to the outside. A place that takes us back to an unorganized space with no memory, a space wandering and unpredictable. Or to a space of memory, which some say is close to eternal expanse: the city.

Kastav had a “bridge” that it one had to cross, a “bridge” of initiation, a lodge. Spending time in it was a kind of test – a test of conversation and a test for desire to live in the city. A short sojourn in the lodge allowed a stranger to cross the city boundary, cross its threshold. Kastav's border, the lodge, represented a well known idea by Georg Simmel on the inexistence of borders or existence of borders encompassing two strategies at the same time: closeness and separation.

Kastav was not named after its democratic lodge.

Another city I mention began with a bridge. Many people wonder what came first – the bridge or the city?

Before the bridge is built, many places alongside the river are inhabited. But only one of them is going to become a city – the place where a bridge will be constructed.

According to Heidegger, the bridge comes first. My city illustrates his thinking. Mostar was founded on a bridge, called the Old Bridge. A bridge opens possibilities to travel to the other side, enables free movement, removes the obstacle for walking. It is a link, but also a frontier. It is a great solution for the free movement of men, it enables things that were not possible yesterday, it becomes an idea. A bridge is situated at a frontier between two places, which form a city. It is a tool, a conversation of hands and technologies. It does not resemble the Kastav's “city quarantine.”

A bridge is a miracle that will fade away with time. It will cease to be an ideal and become a frontier. It will carry out a strategy of separation, despite the idealized original wish to bring people closer together—the bridge-frontier now creates an unhampered movement towards...

Turning a bridge into a frontier has its destructive, conflict-breeding consequence: separation. A bridge is a mixture of two worlds, two extreme human features: the idealistic world and the destructive world. Mostar, a bridge-city, has qualities of an extreme city precisely because it was founded

on a bridge. Closeness and separation, conflict and reconciliation, progress and backwardness, all of the vital energies of the world: everything intermingles in the city. The aim is to bring these forces under control.

By building bridges, Mostar made a step towards development; by destroying bridges the city reached bottom, the hell of divisions and separations. Today the bridges of Mostar have been reconstructed, but the city is still divided. One might say that the whole world is stuck in Mostar Valley.

Fortunately, what remains is not only frontiers and bridges. These are not the only things that constitute a city. If this were the case, I would have to stop my reflections on a grim image of a struggle between conflict and encounter.

Let us leave the threshold and the bridge and the frontier, let us enter the city and stroll around. Let us not forget that we are strangers. Those who enter the city have yet to get to know it and understand it. We have left the lodge and the bridge behind us, but this does not mean we will not encounter them in the city center. We may still need them in order to understand the rhythm, the dynamics and the development of the urban tissue.

We now reach Ewa Rewers' second perspective on city life: the pedestrian, the stroller.

*Pedestrians of city streets "write" the story of the city with their own bodies according to individual rules.*

Where do you go when you first arrive in a new city, when do you meet it for the first time? How do you get to know a new city? Let us seize the space, the memory map and the organization of traffic and movement, slow movement. Let us look at the city from the perspective of a stroller, not of a stranger.

Where will the stranger feel safe? What is he looking for when he encounters a new organism in which he will spend some time, or maybe stay forever? Maybe he has friends. Do they have time for him?

Personal relations, of course, exist, but humans have a questing and curious nature. Everyone would like to understand and organize space in his own manner. The possibility of organizing space in our own way is a very important, if not the most important constituent of the encounter with the city. It is a space in which the city meets itself, where individuals intermingle, where groups created by the city's past and memory encounter each other.

**COSMOPOLITAN**, from Ancient Greek “kosmopolitês,” “citizen of the world;” elaborated first in Stoic philosophy; used to describe a wide variety of important views in moral and socio-political philosophy. The nebulous core shared by all cosmopolitan views is the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, do (or at least can) belong to a single community, and that this community should be cultivated. The philosophical interest in cosmopolitanism lies in its challenge to commonly recognized attachments to fellow-citizens, the local state, parochially shared cultures, and the like.

In public spaces, where the familiar meets the different, it will not be difficult for a newcomer from another city or another country to enter the Agora and engage in dialogue. In this social and cultural blend, one is always among fellow people. We never feel alone in such public places, which constitute a space for art and social encounter. We are absorbed by the power of contact and dialogue, by different forms of communicative codes offered by such places.

My city is my individual network of city attributes, cosmopolitan spaces, “autonomous zones – islands,” cast aside in the boundless sea of self-sufficient, isolated spaces forming closed entities. The

network I create enables me (or at least does not hinder me) to meet the “other,” the “different”.

Today, when I find myself in a different, unknown city in Poland, I discover the grid of “my own city.” I am looking for features of cities I have known before; I am looking for places where ideas and art meet, places created by the city in the course of its unique history. It is in these places that one discovers the universal value of a city and its uniqueness.

Abandoned city space (the autonomous zone – island) pleads with us to take care of it. These zones, destroyed and abandoned, do not only need restoration. We also have to breathe life into them by creating spontaneous economic activity or content: parking lots, shopping malls or transport arteries. We also need to spend some time trying to understand the state in which these spaces find themselves, a state of neglect and abandonment. Here lies the key to understanding a city and its future, the key to creating that necessary openness to people who, just as we do today, will be walking down the streets of the city as they fill their own part of the urban map of memory and meaning.

In a city, there are many places we avoid, even if this means a longer journey (even though a city constitutes one entity and there are no problems with getting from one part to another in no time at all). However, we rarely ask ourselves: why is our itinerary so indirect, why do we avoid certain parts of the city? Are they not landmines that we ourselves have planted?

These parts are the wounds of a city, they become blank spots on the map, which only an experienced stroller can spot. These destroyed spaces were most often deliberately left out of the city communication grid. We encircle the “places of remembrance” in order not to look at them, but first and foremost in order not to ask questions, as questions must inevitably lead to answers. For many people today, neither the questions nor the answers are important. They claim that there is no alternative and that they have no time to ponder the subject of city: “Time is running out, we don’t have time for that,” “Time is money,” “Who gives a damn about it in the twenty-first century?”

It is the inclusion of such hidden, forbidden and ignored places that constitutes the main challenge for divided cities. An observant stroller, or even a less observant one (but still someone who wanders through the city), will see these blank spots, places cast outside the margin. This observation will cause a question to emerge: what is it that used to be here? Why was it destroyed, why is it not restored? Why was it left out?

While observing various cities and housing estates, districts, I discovered that every one of them had some kind of a “scar,” a place that begs you to get to know it, to restore its history and collect memories about it. If we do not undertake historical work and restore the memory of such places, we will just avoid facing the problem that will eventually arise. It may reappear in a different form and become an agent and accelerator of destruction. The visible frontiers within a city, spaces hidden from the sight of its inhabitants, constitute autonomous zones of remembrance, but also zones of ignorance – they are a problem that does not exist (“I can’t see it so it doesn’t exist”). Everything we want to ignore, everything we wish not to know about, is a sign of the passage of time, of the development of the city, so one might also say – a sign of the development of civilization.

*Because if the city is a splendid layer of memories, which as a rule exceeds the memory of just one given nationality, race or language, than what can the destruction of this “anthropological memory” bring? Does it not take away the good or maybe even the best part of the human essence?*

Are these not just city-destroying instincts? The only thing they can imagine is ignorance and the only solution they see is war. Those who hate the city and cosmopolitan life can present and accept only one truth. They prevent other truths from being stated by constantly fueling anxiety, including the fear of war. This fear hinders any attempt to meet.

Frontiers define an area for conflict, but also a scope for conversation. They are hidden in the dark, in inconspicuous ruins, revealed only by daylight. They rest unnoticed, unrecognized, they have no history, or their history is left unsaid. They remain unfamiliar until someone notices them, starts describing and working on them. In other words, until someone sets in motion the archeological memory of a place.

It is not easy to pass from the light, a light of blinding neon, into dark and unfamiliar spaces. In this case light serves as a separator – they are blinded and pushed into darkness by it. We who live in the light will never discover the other side, the “dark” side. The obscured side can teach us how to recognize light again and not to be blinded by it.

How can we be reborn?

We have to bathe in the light of people who used to be a part of the citylights, a light that surrounds us, but remains unseen.

Analogies can be drawn to the situation of ghettos during World War II. They were also hidden from the sight of passers-by and they were also victims of ignorance. Such spaces – inaccessible for passers-by, controlled, and after a certain period forgotten – are excluded from city life. They are hidden as if they had never existed. Are they lost forever?

Autonomous art spaces face similar problems. They have significant reintegration potential in divided cities, but a policy of segregation turns them into second-class areas with no light. They are situated in both physical ruins and ruins of memory, and are supposed to be forgotten as quickly as possible. Citizens’ (not strollers’) fear of an obscured and destroyed space surrounded by noise and by a sea of shining, glossy billboards reveals the problem of visual pollution and the fake feeling of security hidden behind immense quantities of light and omnipresent cameras. There is no mystery and no curiosity. The fear is stronger, because we do not meet each other any more, we do not know each other, and we buy safety in a package deal with blinding lights. No longer do we obtain it by talking and reaching agreements. The night has become darker than ever before.

Hidden, ignored spaces are silent, unlit. They resemble settings from horror films, and should be avoided at all cost. If we find ourselves in such a place we should return as soon as possible to the safe sea of citylights. We do not feel safe without cameras and screens, and the noise substitutes the feeling of activity and ongoing life.

The roads leading to autonomous zones look gloomy, they resemble a stroll of a blind man or a long, muddy passage in the dark.

But, as in a jungle full of dangerous, lurking animals, we unexpectedly discover a clearing, an open space with a source of a huge river. Life exists here as well.

How can we make this unpleasant passage of a blind man safer and more accessible? How can we humanize and shorten the path linking the two worlds, which were created precisely with a view to divide? How can we link them, how oppose them? One world resembles a curiosity museum, the other seeks safety in humanity and conversation. One is glossy, blinding, the other is hardly noticeable, hidden in the dark. One is homogeneous, uniform, recognizable, the other is diverse and pluralist. One is nationalist, enclosed by hatred, the other is curious and open, but hidden from the sight of passers-by.

If these were traits of human beings instead of features of urban spaces, which values would you like to protect?

Instead of creating enclaves or ghettos serving as a “place of transition for strangers,” we should act to change these “autonomous zones – islands” into public spaces, spaces for exchanging and creating new visions of unity.

Immigrants, foreigners, “others”: where were they born? What do they bring with them, what experiences, what memories? What stories about evil of this world? What tales and myths do they bring with them to the cities?

For these people, cities are mainly arrival terminals. Cities were formed by merging modern urban infrastructures; now virtual motorways develop within them. How can one find a place for oneself in such a mixture? How can we remain who we are and offer ourselves to others?

Only a real city is able to protect and secure the humanity of these strangers, who come to us and leave a part of themselves in our cities. They carry a burden we do not know about, a burden of reality that stands in our doorways or is hidden in the darkness of the ignored and remote places of the third world. Borders are created in our vicinity. Borders that exiles have already crossed on their way to our cities.

*Exile forces us to be reborn, opens one dimension in time and space which may prove useful to reveal the true importance of things. We have to open our eyes: before changing the reality we have to see first. Exile, which is always preceded by a failure, is not only a painful experience. It closes some doors, but opens others: it is a punishment, but at the same time freedom and responsibility. It has one black, but also one red face.*

Rebirth means re-discovering the world, once again. Regardless of whether you are born or reborn, you see the reality in a different, clearer way. Such a new reality is indispensable for a city.

A city cannot be surprised by anything if it strives to be a city, a space of cosmopolitan values.

Assimilation, multiculturalism, separation, integration. Many questions arise from fear and lack of knowledge of the other person.

Always a mistake.

Inadequate questions.

The results are shocking and divisions visible. How should we acquaint an immigrant with the achievements of a city? Achievements not of one confession, not of one district, but also the achievements of other confessions and other cultures? We often encounter “hidden” immigrants, poor people. We meet them in the outskirts of cities and in common municipal institutions. They are hidden from our sight, invisible, we do not even know if they are here. They come to us because we were not willing to come to them and try to understand their world.

We thought that because we provide room and board, the stranger will become a part of our world and our cosmopolitan (or rather economic) history.

We have not created such a space, an indispensable Agora, a space that enables meeting other people. We have not created places that would show what a city really is and what it will face tomorrow. The Agora encourages people to talk about themselves, to reveal a part of themselves to others.

Immigrants and strangers must be provided with the possibility to meet the city. They need open public spaces to give them support and a sense of belonging. They have already passed the threshold of the city; we open the doors for them. Now they are another part of a mixture, which the city has to develop.

They cannot be left to their own devices, because this breeds frustrated groups, which, instead of being curious about others, violently intrude their space. Public spaces, which are a means of transforming the divided city, are attacked first. Interest in other people, which is as strong as the curiosity of a baby, transformed into another, subconscious side of curiosity – irrational brutality. This aggression reaches the other side, crosses the border and tries to destroy as much as possible.

Here we reach the frontier – it is either an area for conflict or a place for reconciliation and dialogue. Whether it will function as one or the

other depends on us and on the behavior of the city. It also depends on preserving public places in border areas.

Ewa Rewers' third perspective has a privileged point of view; *one of an Icarus, a solar or divine Eye floating above the city, liberated from earthly ways, independent from street traffic.*

Observing the world from above, encompassing it as a whole, means understanding it. Monitoring and planning the development of the city demands creating ideas and putting them into practice. The city has become an invaluable dictionary, which, just as poetry does, may open horizons and draw attention to new solutions. Bogdan Bogdanovic, an architect and expert in urban planning, perceived the city as a great "technical tool":

The city in itself is a great technical tool, superior to all the other tools – not least because the city turned out to be a new "tool of thought." It is the creation of cities which enabled men to look at themselves in retrospective and almost tangibly establish the currents of their own fate, just as they can account for the ups and downs of cities. Before the emergence of cities, men were ahistorical beings, not only because usually cities and the art of writing go hand in hand, but also because the city itself became a unique sort of writing, an extralinguistic one. It became a complex and precious ideography.

Today's huge cities escape our perception because of their vastness; they hide beyond the horizon, no matter how high a mountain we climb. Even from a bird's eye view we are unable to see what has come into being in recent decades. Satellite pictures scan our streets, looking for the faintest light, controlling us and protecting us from ourselves. In these pictures, we will not find even one trace, even one sound, even one human story told from the perspective of a city.

Why was the City given to us? In order to dream in it and to find all the pleasure we are able to obtain? It seems a valid claim. But a gift of this importance imposes a duty. I think that the City was given to us first and foremost in order to understand ourselves better, enriched by virtues of urban wisdom. A marvelous toy indeed! If we take a look at it, we can see ourselves. If we place it between us and the world, we see the world, the universe, entirety. It looks like the city is a colourful, educational mechanism, one might say: a teaching aid, a cognitive model. In ancient Middle Eastern cosmogonies the "world" and the "city" would

often come into being simultaneously. Two sets of phenomena, city/civilisation/surroundings on the one hand and nature/world/universe on the other are inseparably linked in the mind of the archaic man.

#### ON THE FRONTIER OF DIVIDED CITIES

What infrastructure will the frontiers within divided cities need in the future?

Passageways, tunnels, and bridges? Or checkpoints, barbed wires, and minefields? Both of these groups of ideas have been tried in practice, both constitute a part of our infrastructure, “historical projects” and architectural ideas – how to extend a path without the need to stop and how to end a path to stop a stranger.

Here, I would like to avail myself of the metaphor of “a bridge over dry land.” There remains no river, no visible obstacle; still, a real wall, canyon or precipice exists in the minds of the city’s inhabitants.

Such a bridge does not look like a bridge because it has a different function and structure. It is situated on the border between two or more entities. Such an object can have one of the roles I have mentioned above. It is worthwhile to translate the functions of these objects into the language of society, politics and culture.

Passages: it is vital to ensure an undisturbed extension for pedestrian traffic regardless of the divisions and obstacles in peoples’ minds, especially if the passage is situated on the frontier. Such a space is a safe one, because the “stranger” is not seen from the other side and enters it undisturbed. Today, when we are just at the beginning of overcoming divisions, curiosity should be protected. The guarantee of safety is supposed to encourage the “coming-out.”

Tunnels: underpasses seem to be the safest way to reach the other side, under the condition that the entrances are situated in the heart of a ghetto, deep within the territory of the “others.” The tunnel resembles rather an underground city or a labyrinth, a path that leads everywhere, not only to one or the other side. Hence, a tunnel is not only a means of crossing the impassable frontier. It also opens other entrances to other parts of the city which were not connected with such a grid – an underground labyrinth – before.

Bridges and “bridges over dry land”: it is an unusual idea to not only cross a bridge, but to live on it. When you live on a bridge, every passer-by becomes your guest, because you live in the middle of it. A house-bridge.

Regular passers-by for whom crossing a bridge was only a means to an end will cease to exist (although people who are not curious will always be a majority). Who will live on the “bridge”? Who is capable of living on a bridge? Who will look after such a “house-bridge”? What values will such a “house-bridge” represent? The visibility of frontiers in the future depends on answers to these questions. The “house-bridge” teaches us how to go to the other side and who we will meet there. This in turn reduces the anxiety about the unknown or almost-unknown.

A tradition of living on a bridge that is a public space is not new in the Balkans. All social strata have visited the bridge without concerns – it was treated as a no-man’s land, but at the same time as a space belonging to everyone. These often very hermetic groups took part in mutually enriching encounters, after which they went back to their hometowns and villages not fearing to come across someone they had never seen before. They were ready to meet strangers. Such a space is best described by Ivo Andrić in his book *The Bridge on the Drina*:

On the bridge and below it boys were playing, first love blossoms, people work and quarrel; on the stone walls the merchants exhibit their commodities. People sit, deliberate, sing; beggars and cripples gather. Travellers arrive through the gate and people set off on journeys. They arrive for weddings and funerals alike. They leave summons and messages, but also heads of convicts. The news from the district, good and bad, reach this bridge faster than any other place. It is here that respected citizens meet to talk business. In difficult times people of all three confessions from three parts of Visegrad meet here. A mullah, an Orthodox priest and a rabbi exchange opinions and jointly make decisions concerning the city.

All these ideas have resulted from a lengthy struggle I undertook against divisions in Mostar. It is a struggle, over several years, against ideas and actions that continue to divide certain cities in the world and threaten them with violence and conflict. That is why I chose to end my essay with Bulevar Street in Mostar. This street divides the city into Eastern and Western parts. In conclusion, however, I will say that I believe it is not too late for Mostar to make a step towards creating unity. It is not too late to create the kind of infrastructure that would serve as a bridge over dry land and improve communication across Bulevar Street, and between both sides of Mostar.

## 31.

## CASE STUDY

## Between the Local and the Global: or, What Wrocław Has Given Us

ELŻBIETA MATYNIA

Wrocław 2007

It was late summer, and I was sitting in an air-conditioned movie theater in Manhattan, one of those places where New Yorkers who have to stay in town in steamy August love to go. The movie was seemingly simple: two middle-aged men – a chubby playwright who, as I later learned, actually lives in a roach-infested studio on the Lower East Side, and a theater director, a slender resident of an Upper East Side building with a doorman – meet in an elegant restaurant and have a conversation over dinner. They talk for almost two hours. And that's it.

The movie was called *My Dinner with Andre*, and I remember it because this was the first time I felt that I understood most of the conversational English coming from the screen. But what made me feel really at home with the movie was that at some point – when they were served the main course – the director, Andre Gregory (in fact an accomplished and well-known theater director), told the story of his trip to Wrocław. It had happened several years before, I imagine in the late 70s, and he had gone to Wrocław to meet Grotowski and take part in a theater

JERZY GROTOWSKI (1933–1999), international leader of the experimental theater who became famous in the 1960s as the director of productions staged by the Polish Laboratory Theater of Wrocław. A leading exponent of audience involvement, he set up emotional confrontations between a limited group of spectators and the actors; the performers were disciplined masters of bodily and vocal contortions. His productions included *Faustus* (1963), *Hamlet* (1964), and *The Constant Prince* (1965).

workshop run by his Laboratory Theater there. Andre Gregory talked about how this unusual place, its special people, had changed the way he thought and lived ever since. His dinner guest, the penniless playwright, Wally Shawn, tried really hard to understand the sources of gratification found by Andre in the entire experience, especially his interaction with nature and the strange pleasure he took in touching wet, moldy soil – and Wally responded by reflecting on his own pleasure provided by the extravagant purchase of an electric blanket the previous winter. The blanket was truly wonderful, he went on, and in the chilly winter nights it shielded him from the nasty drafts in his poorly-insulated apartment building.

Though I was not a privileged jet setter, but a poor post-graduate student stuck in the New York City during martial law, I suddenly saw myself as a fortunate member of a very special community. I could have easily joined in on that conversation between the two quintessential New Yorkers, as I felt at home both with Wally's poor housing and threadbare pleasures of the East Village, and with Andre's cosmopolitan experiences, opaque to most of the audience. I seemed to know the *way people know*, *their ways of knowing*, in both places.

I am not from Wrocław, and only recently have I realized how much I – and many in my generation – owe to Wrocław. You have probably already gathered that this will be a rather personal and subjective set of remarks, but before I go any further, I have to draw a *thick line* between the Wrocław I got to know, and the Wrocław of my father's generation. My father saw Wrocław in 1948, when he and his friends were brought here in canvas-covered trucks from central Poland – along with a million and a half other Poles – to visit the celebrated *Exhibition of the Recovered Territories*, an event that signaled the completion of the forced migrations, a project euphemistically referred to as the “full exchange of populations,” and which also marked the final homecoming of the “ur-Polish” lands.

I first came to Wrocław as a student in the mid-1970s, to see the Grotowski Laboratory Theater's *Apocalipsis cum Figuris*, a spiritual and disturbing performance that left one feeling strangely anxious, a far cry from any orthodox state-sponsored production, prepared by two irreverent misfits, Grotowski and Flaszen. By then, I'd been regularly reading the *Odra* monthly, a journal of critical essays, poetry, and cultural commentaries, which could not be published in Warsaw. By then, I'd heard of the *Kalambur* student theater, opened as a result of the October '56 thaw, with its already-legendary staging of a bold

Witkacy play on dictatorships, *The Shoemakers*. It was *Kalambur* that had organized the International Festivals of Open Theaters in Wrocław, which many of my friends from other parts of the country and I began to attend.

In the monologic world that my friends I and grew up in, in a world with newly-erected walls, a cleansed past, and increasing ethnic homogeneity (after 1968 officially cherished as a great achievement), in a world in which private passports belonged to the state – it was in such a world that Wrocław of the 1970s and '80s emerged as a site of polyphony, plurality and dialogue. Or even – though I am not sure whether professor Bauman would agree – a certain *liquidity*. It was an *uncanny* site both for my father and for me, but for different reasons. For him, it would probably have seemed *unheimlich* – as he knew that these streets had spoken German only a few years before he came here. While for me, this was an unusual *place of fleeting encounters* with unfamiliar sounds, images, faces, ideas and projects, and we were so hungry for it. Wrocław, a city far away from the power that was centralized in Warsaw, and perhaps because of that, functioned as a major scene of counter-cultural projects... as the *de-centered center*.

I do emphasize the social role of the theater in those times, as theater was above all a place to meet people and ideas, and a process that appeared to have no end in sight. In the decade 1970-80, for the generation of people in their 20s and 30s, born and educated under communism, it was this theater that provided a space for discussion and a sense of community. It was theater that instigated the surfacing of what Arendt would call the associational realm for appearance, debate, and eventually action. Unlike other forms of art, theater requires personal, live appearance and the presence of both actor and audience. Although the theatrical actions mentioned here were indeed limited in time and space, they provided a temporary residence for action and speech, and what I call an *embryonic public realm* (Arendt 199-207).

The ambiguity of theater as a genre, operating on the borders of art and reality, art and social life, art and social cognition, makes it a particularly apt system for supporting, facilitating, and channeling communication. The fact that communication was taking place within the framework of theater, an artistic genre, made it somewhat more tolerable, and less threatening for the authorities. Kundera wrote that the Prague Spring began eight years earlier with the Ionesco plays staged at the Little Theater in Prague. And the only thing I want to say is that Wrocław

was the caretaker of that movement, and the host of these early interactions, encounters, *meetings with the other*, with different ways of thinking, different ways of being, new publics.

There was always a visible crowd of foreigners in Wrocław: colorful pilgrims who came to study with Grotowski for longer or shorter periods time, actors, directors, journalists, thinkers or writers – Andre Gregory was one of them. And finally there were the World Festivals of Open Theater, hosted by *Kalambur* every two years, and there were foreign theater groups invited by *Kalambur* between the festivals.

Just to be clear: the *encounters* I am talking about were temporary, tentative, fleeting, since theater itself is a fleeting art. But the message of *openness* was a powerful one. The artistically provocative and politically audacious theaters came from all over: from Canada, Argentina, Portugal, Japan, Brazil, the *Bread and Puppet* came from Vermont, *Katakali* from India, *El Teatro Campesino* from Mexico, and *The Performance Group* with Richard Schechner from Manhattan's Lower East Side. (And I remember how striking for me their diversity was, as they had two African-American and some Latino actors.) Once the performances were over, we all – that is the actors, their crews, and the mostly Polish audience – sat long into the night in the smoke-filled Kalambur Club, talking, trying to figure out how to outsmart the system to get a passport, and pretending that we were living in a normal society and engaging in real plans to refurbish the world. But also this was a place that made it possible to discover that one's identity is also, at least partially, a personal work-in-progress, and that it does not have to be constrained by any standardized kit of cultural resources.

That's what Wrocław was all about: the yearning for plurality, the high-spirited conversations utterly disrespectful of any center, and the openness to difference, while struggling against prefabricated and imposed forms. That was our carnival, with its built-in, temporarily sanctioned, *dissent*, and it was here in this de-totalizing counter-site to Warsaw's officialdom, that a non-state (meaning non-official) *public space* emerged with its all-too-visible plurality. This tentative sphere of association and dialogue facilitated the surfacing of networks of civility, and prompted the recovery of an embryonic public sphere.

**PUBLIC SPACE**, space of social interactions, e.g. town square, open to all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socioeconomic level, with no entry fees or tickets. Entrants are not discriminated there based on background. It is crucial to social exchange and the cultural interaction of society.

I am not trying to explain here how under existing conditions this was at all possible. I am only saying that for the generation growing up in the 1970s and '80s, Wrocław managed to open the gate to a larger, and clearly much more diverse world.

Now, three decades later, almost everything is different. The bipolar world with its walls and curtains is over, but sharp new conflicts have emerged, and – as I understand it – our question here is: how to make our lives livable in this new world that is tightly interdependent, yet riddled with all sorts of conflicts? What – in today's world – are the conditions that generate dignity rather than humiliation, trust rather than suspicion?

I know that I am an odd optimist, as I always look for sources of hope, and I do not want to sound hopelessly naïve, but I'd like to suggest some directions in thinking that – I believe – could actually be translated into social practice.

I think that we ought to look locally, on the ground, in the places each of us knows best – the sites and narratives that have helped each of us to transcend political or cultural divisiveness, ease tensions, mend fences, launch friendships, and sustain what turned out to be realistic dreams. The projects or practices that I have in mind, and that I have experienced myself – not only as promising, but also as fulfilling the promise – are of a kind that create a public sphere where there is none, or activate it where it has become taken for granted.

And today, I'd suggest that we look into *the city*, or *the urban idiom* in general, and its potential for engendering a public sphere, where encounters can take place, where matters can be disputed, a plurality of voices generated, and a sense of choice secured. The medieval message was *city air sets you free*; once you're within the city walls, no master can claim ownership of you. The city also furnishes the possibility to step out, to exit, to move between communities, to explore marginal spaces. Diogenes Laertios did not care much about Athens when he stated, I am a citizen of the world. Yet to voice that statement, to make it effective, he needed that city, its public space, to deliver his message, its *Agora*.

The *discursive* quality of cities is provided by the fact that they furnish what Hannah Arendt calls a *space of appearance* – the necessary condition, according to Arendt, for an actual public realm to emerge. And cities were punished for displaying this potential. They were destroyed, as the destruction of a city is the destruction of *civility* as in the case of Troy, Warsaw, Dresden, or even Wrocław. A peculiar form of the

destruction of the city fabric was the cleansing of Cape Town's famous District Six, the forced removal of a thriving colored and Indian community, the demolition of its physical infrastructure, and the removal of its people to the sandy flat lands outside of the city – a particularly graphic instance of the implementation of the policy of *apartheid*.

A friend of mine has just published a wonderful book on the friendship between two poets, Czesław Miłosz and Joseph Brodsky, a Lithuanian Pole and a Russian Jew, two poets who lived in the United States, and who – as American poets – were awarded, several years apart, the Nobel Prize in Literature. Irena Grudzińska, the author of the book, calls their work in the English language *poetry with an accent*, as it enriches the tones of American poetry, introducing into it new elements, and opening it to the rest of the world.

I believe that there are *cities with an accent*. New York is clearly one, Cape Town makes its own miraculous recovery, Sarajevo was such a city, and so was Wrocław of the late 70's. Those are virtual borderlands, places from which one could see the world beyond. In the past, such lookouts used to be the harbor-cities of Gdansk or Odessa, full of different flavors and voices. Today, we should try to identify such places and note the practices of the local communities that maintain and support their respective accents, their impurity, and their hybridity. These are the best places for rich and effective encounters.

As a person who studied theater once, I am, of course, a big partisan of face-to-face interactions, but I admit that there are other, mediated forms of communication, in which the negotiation of differences and learning from each other can take place. One can meet over dinner and have a private conversation with Andre, but one can also make a film of that conversation, so that others can identify with the issues, discuss them in class, publish and read the reviews, arrange extra screenings, interviews, give awards...

The key task is to take care of a healthy public sphere, to furnish it, set the stage for conversation, and cultivate forms of communication so that we can get to know each other better, and perhaps even to understand each other better. And I believe that *the city* has the capacity to facilitate and stage encounters and conversations between people of different backgrounds, or generations, or genders, or locations, or religions. "Conversation" here, of course, is a figure of speech, the presentation and recognition of different paths taken, of available and viable choices, of elements and positions that familiarize us with

the unfamiliar, and that dialogize culture. The very objective and challenge of such a “conversation” between strangers, or people who have little in common, who may nurse wounds, or hold grievances (*vis-à-vis* each other), is not to seek an agreement, but to listen, or learn how to open up in order to listen. That is as far as the engagement with strangers has to go. Everything else is a bonus. We do not have to agree, but we need to try to understand the other side. I like Anthony Appiah’s golden rule of cosmopolitan philosophy (even if I am not crazy about the term itself): we should take other people’s interests seriously, take them into account, we should learn about other people’s situations, and then use our imaginations to walk a while in their moccasins (Appiah 2007, 63; Matynia 2006).

There seems to be a consensus among various thinkers dealing with the issues of intercultural dialogue, that the kind of agreement in which one party is expected to give up its position – especially when it concerns deeply embedded values – is not necessary, and in fact is rarely possible. Perhaps an ecumenical approach is something to learn from, a readiness to de-totalize the truth.

But what is necessary is an initial assumption of hospitality and generosity. And neither has anything to do with how lavish the context of the encounter may be. Hospitality is crucial for people to come, to be ready to open up. And the generosity I have in mind is of an epistemological kind. I would like to suggest that one should listen carefully and try hard to understand practices rooted in unfamiliar, locally inspired, perhaps even parochial initiatives that are founded on provincial local knowledge – knowledge often discredited by sometimes presumptuous foreign centers of scholarship and culture. To appreciate such initiatives even more fully, one should try to walk in their moccasins, sneakers, espadrilles, sandals, or valonkas. And again, following the generosity and imagination of Andre Gregory, we should pay attention to local knowledge, to “knowledge with an accent,” as it could be for us a source of new arrangements and solutions addressing the issues that divide communities and societies.

And a final question that I will treat here very superficially, since I talked about it at length last year in Sarajevo: How can we make sure that we actually meet, and listen effectively to, a stranger? How can we meet and facilitate learning from each other? Is there any available design, something that could help to envision and implement such a dynamic encounter?

The *Agora* is of course one model of such civic architecture, as it is a space of appearance and a dialogue. The civic architecture is motivated by a desire for a kind of hospitality and openness that nurtures dialogue in all its variety. One talks about arranging tables, constructing *roundtables*, and about building bridges. My own favorite is a special bridge designed with a *kapia*, a widened space in the middle, as described in Ivo Andrić's novel, *The Bridge on the Drina*. The *kapia* is a place where those who would otherwise not meet can look at each other, sit next to each other, enjoying the view, the breeze, a cup of Turkish coffee, and get to know each other. Not a marketplace, not a temple, not a court, not a school, the *kapia* was a place that people did not have to stop at, or come to, but they did.

*Kapias* can be real or virtual: they could be plazas, or carefully designed activities for crossing various borders with the principles of hospitality and generosity in mind, such as scholarships, joint study projects, theater workshops, or festivals.



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## Borderland Glossary

1492 AD – the year of the expulsion of Jews from Spain. Some of them found their new homes in Mostar. Also the year of the rarely-remembered Spanish conquest of Granada, the last Muslim fortress in Europe. Like the Jews, the Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula had to choose between converting to Christianity and exile. Among the witnesses of the conquest was Christopher Columbus, who set out to discover America the same year.

AGORA – in Ancient Greek, the gathering place; the central place in a town; a market; also, a public gathering. In the Athenian *agora* in Ancient Greece, democracy was born. Agora stands for the space of encounter, dialogue and exchange.

BALIYA – a contemptuous term for Muslims in the former Yugoslavia; it signifies someone alien and unwanted. The term was popularized during World War II, when in 1943 the SS Division Handschar (the word refers to a Turkish saber) was formed mostly from Muslim volunteers, who were encouraged by al-Husseini, a mufti (Islamic scholar) of Jerusalem. Together with the Croatian Ustaše, they murdered Serbians and Jews in eastern Bosnia.

BIFRÖST – the bridge connecting the human world with the world of the gods in Norse mythology; to humans, it looks like a rainbow.

BORDERLAND – not where the physical borders of states cross, but where there are differences of identity in community. It may occur in a town center or between family members. Where there is difference, borders arise. Yet, contrary to common belief, borderlands are essentially good, since living in such place teaches a path to encounter, to understand the other.

BORDERLANDER – a person with the ability to cross borders. Such a person understands borders are necessary challenges set for overcoming, so that one gets stronger while gaining the ability to pass them.

BRICOLAGE – from the French *bricoler*, which means “to do it yourself” or “to make whole from parts in a new way.” It means a process of creation through errors, rather than a prepared theory. A *bricoleur* is someone who makes things from beginning to end; a creative person who is interested in everything; he/she gathers various bits of information in order to order them in a completely new way. In culture, *bricolage* means creating a new identity across social or national divisions. Often, an element taken from one subculture gains a new, sometimes opposite, meaning when in a different environment, e.g. safety-pin as decoration in punk subculture. Claude Lévi-Strauss introduced the term into cultural anthropology, to refer to a single element set into a new environment that then becomes permanent to the new culture; it enriches the new culture while itself gaining new meaning.

CONNECTIVE TISSUE – Czesław Miłosz’s metaphor for linking disjointed communities; on supporting them with the abilities to cross borders of their cultures. *Connective tissue* may be introduced into borderlands, so that their inhabitants will have no fear of encountering the others from across the border.

ČARDAK – a room for the bridge guard built in the shape of a small house. It was built simultaneously with the Old Bridge in Mostar and hung from each tower over the entrance to the bridge. Only the *čardak* on the Halebija tower exists today.

ČARŠIJA – name for the central city square, a market, which is used in the Balkans since Ottoman rule; the famous *Baščaršija* of Sarajevo means literally “old market.”

DERVISH – a member of the Sufi Muslim mystic brotherhood. The term is equivalent for another Arabic word “*fakiir*,” which means “someone poor” or “beggar,” but also a Muslim ascetic who renounced earthly assets following the theory praising the good position of the poor in God’s eyes. Dervishes live in congregation houses resembling Christian cloisters, or they lead an itinerant life supporting themselves from alms. Their life is deeply devoted to God and the ideal of both material and spiritual poverty. A spiritually poor person is the one who got rid of all his earthly desires and ambitions, so as to gain divine features through prayer and contemplation of God’s nature. Dervishes from the Mevlevi order present their devotion to God through dance, hence the image of a “whirling dervish” popular in the West. The founder of the Mevlevi order was Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, called Mowlana; a charismatic preacher who gathered a group of disciples bonded with God’s love and practicing contemplation. Contemplation, for the Mevlevi order, was not meant to be found in stillness, fasting and ascetic, but in a spiritual ecstatic dance called “*sama*.” It was made in a monotonous fast rhythm with the accompaniment of a reed flute called “*ney*,” drums and *timpani*. During the ceremony, the *dervish* should have only a simple coat on him. In Sufism there is no more important instrument than the coat, usually made from wool, in Arabic called “*suf*,” hence the term Sufis.

DIVANHAN – a room in a traditional Muslim house in the Balkans, devoted to encounters and discussions; usually with big windows, a terrace or a garden, so that the conversations are accompanied by the presence of nature.

ENCOUNTER – an event necessary for change. It happens when one's ideology or worldview is confronted with the other. *Encounter* is when one decides to let go of his/hers previous beliefs and engage in trustful dialogue with the alien other. In practice, it may be to read Qur'an while as a practicing Catholic, or a simple talk between citizens of nations with long historical animosities.

EPOCHE – an Ancient Greek word meaning the ability of suspending beliefs, moving aside thoughts, so as to open oneself for a different point of view. In contemporary philosophy, it is one of the main postulates of phenomenology, a field introduced by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of the twentieth century.

FUNDAMENTALISM – a term originally used by supporters of a movement within the United States Protestant community at the beginning of the twentieth century. By naming themselves the Fundamentalists, they wanted to defend themselves from the religious Modernists. They underlined their need to return to the fundamentals of faith stemming from a literal interpretation of the Bible. Although there are various fundamentalisms today (e.g. Jewish, Christian, Muslim), common elements include: eagerness to engage in battle; frequent intolerance stemming from the sense of a crisis in spiritual values. The fight for their cause is not a political or world-view quarrel, rather a war of cosmic dimension between the forces of good and evil.

GADJO – a Romani term for an alien, a non-Roma person.

GALUT – literally "exile" in Hebrew. In Jewish tradition, it means living in diaspora (exile settlement) as well as the symbolic condition of being human in the world, that is, being exiled from the Paradise and longing for it.

HAREM – a tombstone in Muslim tradition.

HAYRUDDIN – the builder of the Old Bridge of Mostar; it took him nine years to build the bridge, which opened in 1566. He was a disciple of the most famous architect and neimar (bridge-builder) of the Ottoman Empire of the time, Master Sinan from Istanbul.

HOSPITALITY – an attitude necessary for encountering the other and undergoing change. It is the simple greeting of the guests at home as well as a general attitude of welcoming foreign beliefs and ideas.

INTERCULTURALISM – the perspective stemming from going beyond a single culture, e.g. the Western perspective. It underlines the equality of ideas and solutions coming from various civilizations.

KAPIJA – a gate or a niche on a bridge, used for encounters and discussions.

KAVANNAH – in Jewish mysticism tradition, a spiritual path which one can follow not with the use of reason or mundane logic, but with the help of intuition, heart, or inner voice; supported by concentration on signs, symbols, numbers and God's names.

KIFELI – originally a Hungarian word, which in Mostar means “go away, this is my place.” In Hungarian, the word is stronger and is an aggressive way of expressing “get lost.”

KOMŠIJA – literally “neighbor” and “neighborhood.” It is a highly significant term, because it means a relation nearly as close as family. One remains a *komšija*, neighbor, even if he/she moved far away. *Komšiluk* is the ethos of good neighborhood.

KRIVA CUPRIJA – a bridge on the small river Radabolja which flows into Neretva river just near the Old Bridge of Mostar. Kriva Cuprija is the oldest bridge in Mostar, built in 1558 by the neimar (bridge-builder) Cejvan Kethoda. Because of the strong resemblance it is regarded as a miniature and a test model for the Old Bridge. It was destroyed during the Balkan war as well as all the other nine bridges in Mostar.

KULA – the name for a tower, popular in the Balkans since Ottoman Turkish rule; interestingly, in Sanskrit, the word means “riverbank” and its negation “nakula” means “boundless,” which complements the meaning of the Mostar Old Bridge’s towers.

LEXICON OF THE BRIDGE-BUILDER – created so as to define words encompassing the space between the two towers of the Mostar Old Bridge and relate to their symbolic division, diversity, and individuality. However, without the dividing towers there would be no bridge. The lexicon entries characterize the personality of a bridge-builder, his beliefs and values, which establish the space of encounter and dialogue.

LOGOS – an Ancient Greek word for “word” or “thought”, referring to the rational discourse and practical presence in earthly life based on a logical and scientific world view. It is set against another Ancient Greek word, “mythos,” connected with the intuitive and irrational sphere of life, which once complemented the former, yet seems forgotten today. The contemporary Western world is dominated by the practical and progressive *logos* enabling civilizational transformation, control of the natural environment and discoveries.

MAJDAN – the name for a central square in old towns and the space of public gatherings. In Mostar, on the *majdan* in the eastern part of the city, people met to listen to stories and legends.

MATZEVAH – a tombstone in Jewish tradition.

MERIDIAN – literally a line of longitude. It symbolizes a route that binds spiritually related people.

METANOIA – an Ancient Greek term for “change in thinking, inner change, rebirth,” which happens in the face of the alien other. *Meta* means “to go beyond, to go higher than” and *noia* comes from “nous,” which means “consciousness,” coming from thinking and perceiving. Hence, literally, *metanoia* means “to think

differently after [a change] or beyond [the present horizon].” The term is often used by Jesus, in the Greek original of the New Testament it appears twenty two times. He calls for a change based on repentance. The Christian interpretation of *metanoia*, like the Greek one, does not have a negative connotation referring to sins. It rather speaks of a change of thinking and transcending the limits of the human mind through self-purification.

MIMARBASHI – the main bridge-builder. *Mimar* is another name for *neimar*.

MONOLOGUE – the epitome of singular ideology, closed from influence of the surroundings. Its most visible features are: hermetic language, vicious circles of thought, and disregard for (self-)criticism.

MONDO – Buddhist tradition meaning “long dialogue”, which is a never-ending cycle of questions and answers. It is believed that only such dialogue – not definitions or superficial short-term learning – leads to authentic encounter and knowledge.

MOSTARI – the bridge guards who take the toll for the crossing. They live in the towers on both sides. The name of the city of Mostar comes from their name.

MOSTI – an old Slavic word for “crossing” and “going through” used by the old Slavic people to name the bridge-builders.

MYTHOS – the Ancient Greek word for “myth” and the mythical way of thinking, which complements the *logos* sphere of human life. It comes from the word “*myo*” which means “to close eyes or mouth.” Hence, it refers to the type of knowledge stemming from silence and intuition, which gives sense to life but cannot be represented by rational means. *Mythos* never referred to practical issues or the rational; rather it concentrated on what is timeless and unchangeable, on the sheer sources of culture and the deepest layers of the mind, on what is the meaning of life. *Mythos* ascribed people to a greater whole; it searched the subconscious to give a feeling of connection with the universe. Its absence in contemporary life is a source of conflicts. The now-empty sphere, which was filled by *mythos* thinking, is now filled with categories from the sphere of *logos*, connected to pragmatism, politics and ideology. Thus, the logical elements are moved into the space of irrational, which makes them absolute. The contemporary disturbance of balance between *logos* and *mythos* is the most serious source of today’s fundamentalisms.

NEIMAR – Ottoman tradition meaning an architect and builder. Because bridge-building was regarded as work for the most skilled, *neimar* began to be the name of every bridge-builder.

OBCOWANIE – one of the most beautiful Polish words referring to the sphere of dialogue. It means “being together in intimacy, communion” and it comes from the word “*obcy*” (alien). For the creation of a real community presence of the alien is required. Being together is fulfilled only after encountering the other, through *obcowanie*.

OTHER – everything foreign to one’s worldview. It may be realized in thoughts, ideas, or images as well as in certain persons and their beliefs. The *other* is everything that stands in contrary to one’s ideology while – at the same time – it provides the proper counterpoint to bring one’s own ideology to light. Without encountering *the other* one cannot get better, evolve; that is, *the other* is a catalyst of change.

PEDAGOGICAL PROVINCE (WORKSHOP) – a space distanced from the structured ways of contemporary universities because it teaches both the rational sciences and irrational practices of being in the world. It is described as Kastalia in Hermann Hesse’s book *The Glass Beads Game*.

PONTIFEX MAXIMUS – in Ancient Rome, the priest responsible for conducting sacrifice for the protective deity of the place (*genius loci*) where the construction of a bridge was held. The name was later used by the Caesars and later, from the 5th century on, by Popes, as the mediators between the mundane and the heavenly worlds.

SHEKHINAH – in the Jewish mystic tradition, God’s providence, symbolized by a woman disconnected from God and fallen into the mundane world, upon which she wanders in search for divine sparks lost in people and nature, so as to return with them to God.

SIELO – a gathering of citizens on a majdan (city square) during which debates were carried as well as stories and legends were told.

SIRAT CUPRIJA – in Islamic tradition, the name of the last bridge one crosses, the bridge between life and death. It is thinner than a spiders’ thread and sharper than a saber, stretched over an abyss into which impure souls fall, unable to get on the other side. On the Last Judgement Day, all humanity will have to cross the bridge and those who will not make it will fall into the fires of Hell. The name comes from Persian and refers to the ancient Zoroastrian tradition called Chinvat (lit. the binding link) which is a holy bridge built by Ahura Mazda that leads over Hell to Paradise. It stretches between two mountains, on in the center of the world, the other on its end.

STARI MOST – (the Old Bridge) of Mostar, founded on two towers, Tara and Halebija, guarding the sides of the river Neretva.

STALKER – a guide to the unknown sphere or another world who follows a hidden path, invisible for others. The name was popularized by Andrei Tarkovsky’s famous movie *Stalker*.

STEREOTYPE – a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning. Usually held in common by members of a group. *Stereotypes* give foundations for distrust and disgust of the others who, then, may become victims of the majority believing in such *stereotypes*.

STOYA AND STOYAN – according to legend, the wooden scaffolding used for building the Old Bridge of Mostar, which had to be rebuilt again and again, because the rough river Neretva destroyed them. The bridge-builder Hayruddin and his helpers consulted a local witch, who said he needed to sacrifice two people and set their remains inside the bridge. Two lovers were sacrificed, Stoya and Stoyan, whose names mean “standing firmly on the ground” and symbolize the power and stability of love. Thanks to the sacrifice, the scaffolding was no more destroyed by the river and Hayruddin created a bridge famous for its beauty. Many lovers could now meet, thanks to the existence of the bridge.

SYZYGOS – in Ancient Greek means literally “spouse” or “co-carrier of burden”; a spiritual twin; a second part of one’s soul; the name is referred to by St. Paul as the co-fighter, the comrade who helps thinking jointly of God. Faith that one is born with a spiritual twin who needs to be found was especially popular among dualistic religions such as Manichaeism, as well its Balkan branch – Bogomilism.

TARIKA – an Arabic word meaning “road” or “path.” In Sufi tradition, it symbolizes the narrow and steep path of truth and inner voice. One can follow it only with the help of a spiritual guide.

TENELIJA – the white limestone used for the construction of the Old Bridge of Mostar. It possesses special physical and chemical properties. *Tenelija* blocks fit into each other without the use of additional material. The only links between the stones were small holes for iron clamps sealed with lead. Thanks to that, the whole construction was elastic and very durable.

USULIYA – the name for fundamentalism in the Islamic tradition. Earlier, it referred to studying the rules and practicing Islam law, however today it is more often connected with *jihad*, a war led in the name of defending the religion and its rules.

YURODIVY – a Russian term for “a fool for Christ” or “a holy idiot,” which in the Eastern Orthodox tradition was believed to have direct contact with God, prophesying and healing powers.



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## The Contributors

GABRIELA ADAMEȘTEANU – Romanian novelist, short story writer, essayist, journalist, and translator. Author of the celebrated novels *The Equal Way of Every Day* (1975) and *Wasted Morning* (1983), she is also known as an activist in support of civil society and member of the Group for Social Dialogue (GDS), as well as editor of *Revista 22*.

EGIDIJUS ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS – Lithuanian professor of history. Main areas of interest are history of the nineteenth century, Lithuanian cultural-national movement, Lithuanian gentry, Jews in Lithuanian historiography, cultural activity of Lithuanian émigrés. Author of several books on those subjects. He has been Vice-President of Vilnius University. Since 2000, he is the director of the Institute of Lithuanian Emigration. He worked as Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Chicago, USA, and now is lecturing in the School of Political Sciences in Bologna, Italy.

NEAL ASCHERSON – Scottish journalist and writer. He worked at the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Scotsman*, *The Observer*, and the *Independent on Sunday*. He contributed scripts for the 1974 documentary series *World at War* and the 1998 series *The Cold War*. In recent years, he has also been a regular contributor to the *London Review of Books*. He has lectured and written extensively about Polish and Eastern Europe affairs. As of 2008, he is a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. He has been editor of *Public Archaeology*, an academic journal associated with UCL devoted to CRM and public archaeology issues and developments, since its inception in 1999.

MARIANA ASSENOVA – Bulgarian journalist, producer and cultural manager with eighteen years of professional experience. For fourteen years, she has been working for the Bulgarian National TV News Department as a reporter, presenter and Editor-in-Chief. Her main topics were foreign policy and EU integration. She also writes scripts for documentaries. Since 2002, she has been managing her own company, running cross media projects, working as a marketing and communications expert for the European Software Institute Center Eastern Europe and the Minu Balkanski Foundation, and as a freelance IT columnist for *Dnevnik* daily. Mariana Assenova is co-founder of the Goat Milk Festival of memories, held every year in Bela Rechka

village since 2004. Currently, she is involved in projects related to Education, Civic Education and Culture. She manages the project “1989 – Mapping the Northwest” in the context of which young people from four schools study recent history: the changes after 1989 through personal stories, objects and arts. In general, her main topic of interest lies exploring how Civic Education and Culture could change the current situation at schools and how the “languages” of the different arts could be used in the process of teaching within diverse disciplines at schools.

CHRIS BALDWIN – British founder and artistic director of the theater project “Spiral,” La Rioja, Spain. A writer, director and academic who specializes in working with depopulating communities.

TADEUSZ BARTOŚ – Polish philosopher, theologian, publicist, and professor of the Pułtusk Academy of Humanities. Former Dominican friar, left the Order in 2007 due to his critical view of the Church.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN – Polish-born sociologist who resides in England after being driven there by an anti-Semitic purge. Professor of Sociology at the University of Leeds (and since 1990 Emeritus Professor). Best known for his analyses of the links between modernity and the Holocaust and of postmodern consumerism.

EDWIN BENDYK – Polish journalist dealing mainly with civilization issues and the influence of technology on social life. Connected with the weekly *Polityka*, he is also an academic teacher (Collegium Civitas; Polish Academy of Sciences).

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI – Ph.D.; founding president of the Republican Institute, a think tank focusing on civic education and democracy building in Georgia. Following his involvement in the establishment of the underground Republican Party of Georgia in 1978, he spent three years in the Soviet gulag (1984–87). Before and after his arrest, he was Professor of Classical Philology at Tbilisi State University. In 2002, he helped to found the United National Movement of Georgia, along with future president Mikheil Saakashvili. From 2004 to 2008, he was a member of the Georgian Parliament, serving on the Committee for Education, Science, Culture, and Sports. He is the author of several books, including *Human Rights and Georgian Culture* (2004, in Georgian).

MUSTAFA CERİĆ – Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1993. Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago. He has delivered numerous lectures and led several workshops on interreligious and interfaith issues at local and international conferences. He is one of the signatories of *A Common Word Between Us and You*, an open letter by Islamic scholars to Christian leaders, calling for peace and understanding. Member of several local and international scientific organisations and societies, including the Interreligious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Foundation of Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery, the Council of 100 Leaders of the World Economic Forum, the European Council for Fatwas and Research, World Conference of Religion & Peace, the Executive Committee of the European Council of Religious Leaders. He is also a member of the Committee of Conscience fighting against the Holocaust denial.

SELIM CHAZBIJEWICZ – Professor of Political Sciences in Olsztyn, Poland. Active participant of the interreligious Christian-Muslim dialogue in Poland. Co-founder of the Polish Tatar's Association in 1992 and chairman of the Association in years 1999 to 2007. Former imam of the Muslim Community Mosque in Gdańsk and vice-chairman of the Common Council of Muslims and Catholics. Member of the 'Abraham Forum' by the International Council of Christians and Jews. Member of the Oriental Sciences Committee at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The author of: *Tatar-Muslims in Poland, Crimean Tatars. Fight for the nation and the free fatherland, Awdet means the return. Political fight of the Crimean Tatars for the national tradition and independence after the II World War*. Also the author of several books of poetry.

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ALEŠ DEBELJAK – Slovenian cultural critic, poet and essayist. Currently, professor of culture studies at the Faculty for Social Studies of the University of Ljubljana. Ph.D. in Sociology of Culture from Syracuse University, USA. Senior Fulbright Fellow at University of California, Berkeley. He also worked at the Institute for Advanced Studies Collegium Budapest, the Civitella Ranieri Center and the Bogliasco Liguria Study Center for the Arts and Humanities. Since the mid 1980s, Debeljak has taken an active part in civil society movements. He has been one of the co-editors of the critical alternative journal *Nova revija*. He has also participated in the social liberal think tank Forum 21, led by the former President of Slovenia Milan Kučan.

LEONIDAS DONSKIS – Member of the European Parliament; philosopher, political theorist, historian of ideas, social analyst, and political commentator. As a public figure in Lithuania, he acted as a defender of human rights and civil liberties. In 2004, Donskis has been awarded by the European Commission the title of the Ambassador for Tolerance and Diversity in Lithuania. A center-right politician, he has always been opposed to all extreme or exclusionary attitudes and forms of violent politics, and, instead, has been leaning to liberalism with its advocacy of individual reason and conscience, ability to coexist with democratic programs of other non-exclusive ideologies, and moderation.

MOHA ENNAJI – one of Morocco's leading sociolinguists, with research interests in cultural and gender studies, migration, human rights and civil society. Full Professor at the Faculty of Letters, University of Fés, Morocco. He is Director of the Doctoral Program in Gender Studies. He is an author and editor of numerous books and articles on cultural identity, language and education, migration, civil society and women's issues. He has successfully organized many international conferences on civil society, women and education, sustainable development, and has actively participated in seminars and conferences in Europe, the USA, Africa and the Arab world. He is currently doing research on the evolution of social policy in Morocco, within the research programme of the United Nations Research Institute for Development (UNRISD).

DANI ERICE – director of the theater project “Spiral,” La Rioja, Spain.

KONSTANTY GEBERT – Polish journalist and Jewish activist, as well as one of the most notable war correspondents of various Polish daily newspapers. In 1978 he was one of the main organisers of the so-called “Flying University,” a secret institution of higher education educating people on various topics forbidden by the Communist government of Poland. In 1980 he joined the Solidarity movement and became one of the members of the Solidarity of Education and Technics Workers union. Since 1992, he works at *Gazeta Wyborcza*, one of the biggest and most notable Polish daily newspapers. As a journalist of that newspaper he served as a war correspondent during the War in Yugoslavia. Since 1997 he also serves as Head Editor of the Polish-Jewish monthly *Midrasz*.

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EVA HOFFMAN – Polish-American literary critic, author, and historian of Jewish origin; Ph.D. in English and American literature from Harvard University. She worked as senior editor at *The New York Times*. She is the author of four works of non-fiction: *Lost in Translation*, *Exit Into History*, *Shtetl* and *After Such Knowledge*; as well as two novels: *The Secret* and *Appassionata*. She has written and lectured internationally on issues of exile, memory, Polish-Jewish relations, politics and culture; has taught literature and creative writing at various universities, including the University of East Anglia, MIT and Columbia. She has written and presented radio programmes, and has received the prestigious Prix Italia for Radio. Her literary awards include the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Whiting Award and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She holds an honorary doctorate from Warwick University, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She currently lives in London, and works as Visiting Professor at Hunter College, CUNY.

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NIYAZI MEHDI – Azeri philosopher, literary critic, translator, member of the Writers’ Union of Azerbaijan since 1989. Professor of the University of Arts and Culture in Baku, Azerbaijan.

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HUSEIN ORUČEVIĆ – journalist, political thinker and activist, works as the editor of the socially-engaged multimedia project “AbramsMedia.info” in Mostar, consultant for the program ArtInDiCities (Art in divided cities) as well as a journalist on the national radio BH Radio1 in Sarajevo. He has long been involved in investigating the issue of divided cities and the effect of public spaces on reducing tensions between religious, ethnic and subcultural groups.

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TADEUSZ SŁAWEK – Polish poet, translator, essayist, literary critic; Professor at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. He was the President of the University of Silesia from 1996-2002. Visiting Professor at the universities of Naples, Italy, and

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Stanford, USA. Specializes in the history of English and American literatures as well as literary theory. He translated such writers as William Blake, Seamus Heaney, and Thomas Merton. Writes for the Polish weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*.

NICHOLAS STAVROULAKIS – Co-founder and the first Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece, now the head of the Etz Hayyim Synagogue in Hania, the only surviving Jewish monument on the island of Crete, reconstructed as a house of prayer, recollection and reconciliation, Hania, Greece.

BO STRÅTH – holds a Chair in Nordic, European and World History at the Department of World Cultures / Centre of Nordic Studies, University of Helsinki. The chair is part of the Finland Distinguished Professor Program. His research concentrates on two projects: Between Restoration and Revolution, National Constitutions, and Global Law: an Alternative View on the European Century 1815–1914, co-directed with Martti Koskenniemi; and Conceptual History of the World and Global Translations: The Euro-Asian and African Semantics of the Social and the Economic.

MARINA ELBAQIDZE – Georgian psychologist, expert at the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, Georgia.

BOŻENA SZROEDER – Co-creator of the Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations Center in Sejny, Poland. Since the creation of the Center in 1991 she is the main organizer of its activities and manages the Borderland Cultures Documentation Center. Experienced as culture manager, theater director and pedagogue. Organizes theater workshops for children and leads a new program of intercultural education for children, which is developed at schools in the northeastern region of Poland. Co-organizer of the Glass Bead Game program, devoted to cultural memory and place identity. Specialist in the culture of the Roma peoples.

RICHARD TERDIMAN – Professor of Literature and History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz, USA.

ISABELLA THOMAS – British activist. Senior Adviser to the Axel and Margaret Axson Johnson Foundation and Axess TV in Stockholm (where she holds the position of program director). She has acted as conveyor of European conferences on the theme of the Secular State and Society and on the future of the West. She led the development of the Blackwall Debates in East London, an initiative designed to bring individuals from different estates and different ethnic groups together in a debating forum. She is a graduate in Modern History from Cambridge University, and has a Masters' Degree in Development Studies from SOAS, University of London. She worked as a journalist and researcher in Spain (where she lived for 3 years), Cuba, Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. She wrote for a study group that looked at communist countries in transition, and for *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Politica Exterior*, *The Guardian*, *Prospect*, *openDemocracy*, *The Sunday Times* and others. She also co-produced several documentary films for Channel 4 and the BBC and helped to launch the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum in Bristol in 2002.

MUSTAPHA TLILI – Sorbonne-educated, Mustapha Tlili is the Founder and Director of the Center for Dialogues, a research scholar at New York University, and Senior Fellow at its Remarque Institute. Previously, Prof. Tlili taught at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and was a Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute of The New School in New York City. He is a former senior UN official, having served as Director for Communications Policy in the United Nations Department of Public Information, Director of the UN Information Center for France, located in Paris, and Chief of the Namibia, Anti-Apartheid, Palestine and decolonization programs in the same department. An established novelist, Mustapha Tlili is a knight of the French Order of Arts and Letters. He is also a member of Human Rights Watch's Advisory Committee for the Middle East and North Africa. Prof. Tlili served as a member of the Leadership Group on US-Muslim World Engagement, along with Madeleine Albright, Dennis Ross, Richard Armitage, and other American political and cultural leaders. Last September, the group issued its report under the title, *Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World*.

SRETEN UGRICIC – novelist, essayist, concept artist, astronomer and philosopher, born in Yugoslavia. Member of the UNESCO Commission for Serbia and Montenegro in 2002–2008. Director of the Serbian National Library since 2001. Member of the Serbian P.E.N., the Board of The European Library (TEL), and the prize of the Foundation Borislav Pekić. In 2010, elected Co-Chairman of the selection committee of the World Digital Library (WDL).

CEZARY WODZIŃSKI – Polish philosopher, translator and essayist. Member of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Translation of his book, *Heidegger and the Problem of Evil*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2000. Main areas of interest are the ideas of Shestov and Heidegger, metaphysics, phenomenology, hermeneutics and philosophy of dialogue. Translated Shestov, Nietzsche and Heidegger into Polish.

UGO VLAISAVLJEVIĆ – Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo. He has written widely on phenomenology, hermeneutics, post/structuralism, semiotics, and is currently a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Dijalog* (Sarajevo) and *Transeuropeennes* (Paris). During the last two decades, he has written numerous articles, also in English, French and German.

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MACIEJ ZIĘBA – Polish friar of the Dominican Order, theologian, philosopher and publicist. Provincial Superior of the Polish Dominican Province in 1998–2006; Head of the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk 2007–2010.

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## About the Editors

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI – Cultural animator and Co-founder and President of the Borderland Foundation and Borderland Center in Poland. His early experience as an alternative theater artist led him to a concept of cultural animation that would promote and develop the unique experience of multicultural borderland regions. The Borderland Foundation and the associated Borderland Center, both based in northeast Poland, a region with strong multicultural traditions, have been implementing this concept of broad and multi-disciplinary cross-cultural work since the early 1990s. For their activities focused on promoting dialogue between cultures and nations, Czyżewski together with the Borderland Foundation have been awarded many prizes by institutions and organizations from Poland and abroad. He is also a poet and essayist, the author of numerous articles devoted to the heritage and socio-cultural, bridge-building potential of the borderlands.

MIKOŁAJ GOLUBIEWSKI – MA in Polish and in English Literature; graduate of the College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities at the University of Warsaw, Poland, and the Institute for English Language and Literature at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. Editor of scholarly anthologies *Rilke po polsku* (*Rilke in Polish*, Warsaw UP, 2010) and *Doświadczenie nowoczesności* (*Experience of Modernity*, Warsaw UP, 2011). Creator and organizer of the Literary Contest of the University of Warsaw. Co-worker of the Polish Radio. Involved with the Borderland Foundation since 2009.

JOANNA KULAS – MA in Polish Literature and in Dance Studies; graduate of the College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities at the University of Warsaw, Poland, and Theater Studies Institute at the Free University of Berlin, Germany; member of the *Collegium Invisibile*. Editor of scholarly anthologies *Rilke po polsku* (*Rilke in Polish*, Warsaw UP, 2010) and *Doświadczenie nowoczesności* (*Experience of Modernity*, Warsaw UP, 2011). Recipient of multiple scholarships from the Polish government and the German government (DAAD). Co-worker of the Polish Radio. Involved with the Borderland Foundation since 2009.



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## Index

Entries in CAPITAL letters have their respective side-frames. Numbers in **bold** relate to side-frames. Names of authors who contributed to *A Handbook of Dialogue* not included.

- 1924 POPULATION EXCHANGE  
BETWEEN GREECE AND  
TURKEY, THE, **153**  
9/11, 82, **99**, 113, 123, **165**, 172–3,  
206–7, 275–**6**, 445  
Lord Acton, John Dalberg, 255  
Adenauer, Konrad, 129  
Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund, 239,  
404  
Ahmed, Tanveer, 176  
Al Fassi, Allal, 431  
Aleichem, Sholem, 191  
Alekseeva, Ludmila, 297  
d’Alembert, Jean Le Rond, **453**  
AL-FARABI, (Alpharabius  
or Avennasar), **205**  
AL-GHAZALI, **243**  
Al-Husseini, 473  
Ali, Monica, 442  
Aljabri, Mohammed Abed, 429, 491  
AL-KHUWARIZMI, 205-**6**  
Andras, Suto, 334  
Andrić, Ivo, 40, 212, 221–2, 394, 463,  
471, 491  
Annan, Kofi, 298-9  
Antonescu, Ion, 331  
Appiah, Anthony Kwame, 45, 470,  
491  
ARABIC, **146**, 163, 205–**6**, **209**, 215–  
6, 258, 273–4, **276**, 350, 354, **356-9**,  
361, 428, **429**–37, 474, 479  
ARENDRT, HANNAH, **39**, 200, 466,  
468, 491  
ARISTOTLE, **50**, **61**, 67, 148, **205**–7,  
**211**  
ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC  
CHURCH, 135, **280**  
Ashcroft, John, 75  
Augustine of Hippo, Saint, 252–3  
AUTO DA FÉ, **260**  
Avnery, Uri, 77  
Aysi, Abu Hafs Umar, 146  
Aziz, Abdul, 154  
Bacon, Francis, **57**, 192, 194  
Bacon, Roger, **206**  
Badat, Saajid, 164  
Bakhtin, Mikhail, **43**–4  
von Balthasar, Hans Urs, 253  
Barba, Eugenio, 410

- Bănescu, Traian, 335  
 Baumann, Gerhart, 47  
 Bektash, Haci, 149–50, 155  
 Benedict XVI, (Joseph Ratzinger), 95, 406  
 Bergson, Henri, **62–3, 244**  
 Berlin, Isaiah, 200, 254  
 Bhindranwale, Sant Jarnail Singh, 75  
 BIBLE, 75–6, **87, 223**, 262, 276, 385, 424, 475  
 BIN LADEN, OSAMA, 275–6  
 Blake, William, 389, 487  
 Bloch, Ernst, 96  
 Bogdanovic, Bogdan, 461  
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 101, 110, 219  
 Bonnet, Charles, 265–6  
 Boston, Ken, 178  
 Bourdieu, Pierre, 427, 491  
 Brandes, Stanley, 413  
 Braudel, Fernand, 212  
 Brezhnev, Leonid Ilyich, 298  
 Bringa, Tone, 31, 130  
 Brodsky, Joseph, 469, 492  
 Brown, Gordon, 100  
 Brown, Norman O., 380–1, 384  
 Buber, Martin, 12, 418–9, 424  
 Buddha, **76**, 211, 226, 477  
 Büchner, Georg, 54  
 Burjanadze, Nino, 369  
 Bush, George Walker, 75, 106, 275, 376, 381, 419  
 BYZANTINE EMPIRE, **146–7**, 149, 209, 212–3, 219, 347, 431
- Camps, Gabriel, 360  
 Camus, Albert, 71  
 Caramitru, Ion, 327  
 da Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi, 194  
 CEAUȘESCU, NICOLAE, **327–30**, 332, 334  
 Ceaușescu, Nicu, 328  
 CELAN, PAUL, 5, 12, **46–9**, 51–6, 60, 491, 493  
 Cerf, Vinten, 97  
 de Certeau, Michel, 398  
 Charlemagne, 110, 253
- CHECHENYA, **123**, 137, 164, 171, 218, 230, 238, **365**  
 Chomsky, Noam, 351  
 Christopher, Warren, **105**  
 Churchill, Winston, 202  
 CITIZEN, 14, 24, 26, 28, 33, 38, 44, 83, 101, 103, 106, 108–12, 114, 138, 139–40, 142, **153**, 159–60, **177**, 181, 207, 218, 221, 237, 265, 271–2, 284, 286, 287, 294, 304, 311–2, **346**, 363, 379, 417, 426–7, 437–8, 449–**50**, 452, **453, 456**, 458, 463, 468, 475, 478  
 CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS, **10**, **122**, 161, 206, 208, 381, 434  
 Clementis, Vladimír, 196–7  
 COGNITIVISM, **94**  
 Cohen, David, 360  
 Columbus, Christopher, 473  
 COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, THE, 92–3, **126**  
 Condorcet, Nicolas de, 92,  
 Confucius, 266–7  
 COSMOPOLITAN, 31, 64, 86, 89, 95–6, 124, 186, 319, 398, 441, 452, **456–7**, 460, 465, 470, 491–2  
 Cronbach, Lee, **94**  
 CRUSADES, 75, 147, 150, **204–5**, 217, 219, 250, 367  
 CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION, 37, 77, 84, 93, **116**, 122–5, 128, 132–3, 189, 326, 352, 357, 359, 361, 362, 399, 438, **452–453**, 485
- DANTE ALIGHIERI, 219–20  
 Daskaloianis, Yanis, 152  
 DAYTON ACCORDS, **105**, 116  
 Dąbrowski, Kazimierz, 411  
 Delmedigo, Elia, 148  
 Delmedigo, Solomon, 148  
 DERRIDA, JACQUES, 47, **378**, 385, 388  
 Descartes, René, 33, **57**, 418  
 Dewey, John, 381  
 Dickens, Charles, 450  
 Diderot, Denis, 404, **453**  
 Dinescu, Mircea, 327–8, 333

- Diogenes Laertios, 468  
 DIVINE COMEDY, 219–**20**  
 Dochanishvili, Guram, 293  
 Dodik, Milorad, 116, 120  
 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, **43**, 289  
 DRUZE, **258**  
 DURKHEIM, EMILE, 187–**8**, 491  
 van Dyck, Anthony, 195, 203
- Einstein, Albert, 227  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 383, 393  
 EMIGRATION, 9, 135, 139, 157, 196,  
     **202**, 306, 308, **352**, 370, 440–**1**,  
     443–4, 447, 481  
 EMIR, **146**–7, 210  
 Empedocles, 210  
 Engels, Friedrich, **126**  
 Erasmus, Desiderius Roterodamus,  
     **193**  
 Euclid of Alexandria, 206, 346
- Fairclough, Norman, 427, 491  
 Fitouri, Chadly, 433–4, 491  
 Flaszen, Ludwik, 465  
 Florensky, Pavel, 392  
 FOUCAULT, MICHEL, **200**  
 Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, 211–2  
 Freud, Sigmund, 117, 227  
 Friedman, Milton, 388  
 Fromm, Erich, 227
- Gadamer, Hans Georg, 47  
 Gainsborough, Thomas, 195  
 Gamsakhurdia, Zviad, 135, 139, 281–  
     2, 286–7, 293–4, 367  
 de Gasperi, Alcide, 129  
 de Gaulle, Charles, 242  
 GENGHIS KHAN, (Temüjin), 213,  
     215, **270**  
 Geza, Domokos, 333  
 Ghandi, Indira, 74  
 Giedroyć, Jerzy, 9  
 Giertych, Roman, 318–9  
 Giroux, Henry, 75–6  
 GLOBAL VILLAGE, **124**–5, 130  
 von Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, 194,  
     **408**
- Gombrowicz, Witold, 318  
 Goodhart, David, 160  
 Gore, Al, 97  
 Gottwald, Klement, 196–7  
 Gouguenheim, Sylvain, 207  
 Grandguillaume, Gilbert, 428–9, 432,  
     434  
 Gregory, Andre, 464–5, 467, 469–70  
 Greimas, Algirdas Julien, 71  
 Gross, Jan Tomasz, 27  
 GROTOWSKI, JERZY, 9, 18, 20,  
     **464**–5, 467  
 Grudzińska-Gross, Irena, 469, 492  
 Grzegorzczak, Andrzej, 269  
 Guénon, René, 224  
 GULAG CAMPS, 58, **283**, 482  
 Gurdjieff, George Ivanovich, 224
- Habermas, Jürgen, 124, 201  
 Hadith, Jamaat Ahli, 76  
 Hajib, Yusuf Khass, 245–9  
 Hajrudin, Mimar, 396  
 HALAL, **166**  
 Halbwachs, Maurice, 232, 240  
 HALEVI, RABBI YEHUDA, **261**,  
     265  
 Hals, Frank, 194, 203  
 Hamza, Abu, 172  
 Handel, George Frideric, 195  
 Hanif, Asif Mohammed, 164  
 King Hassan II, 352  
 Havel, Václav, **106**  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 253,  
     321, 404  
 HEIDEGGER, MARTIN, 5, **39**,  
     46–**48**, 49–51, 55–6, 67, 190, 454,  
     488, 492–4  
 van der Helst, Bartholomeus, 194  
 HESSE, HERMANN, 59, **385**–6, **408**,  
     420–3, 478  
 Hitler, Adolf, **48**, 110, 129  
 van den Hoff, Theo, 424  
 Holbein, Hans the Younger, 193  
 HOLOCAUST, **20**, 58, 172, 242, 258,  
     304, 308–9, 331, 482, 486  
 Homer, **213**,  
 Honecker, Erich, 305

- Honeyford, Ray, 168  
Horkheimer, Max, 404  
Horthy, Miklós de Nagybánya 332  
Hryniewicz, Waclaw Antoni, 406  
Hume, David, 192  
Huntington, Samuel Phillips, 33, **122**,  
161, 206–8, 221, 381  
Husák, Gustáv, 196  
Hussain, Hasib, 164  
Hussein, Saddam, 80  
Husserl, Edmund, **107**, 475  
Huxley, Aldous, 200–3
- Ibn Arabi, **150**, 210–1  
Ibn Hazm, 210–1  
Ibn Massara, 210–1  
Ibn Sab'in, 212  
IBN-AL-HAYTHAM, 205–6  
IBN KHALDUN, **354**  
IBN RUSHD, (Averroes), 205–6, 211  
IBN SINA, (Avicenna), **205**  
ILIAD, THE, **213**  
Iliescu, Ion, 331  
IN PRAISE OF FOLLY, **193**  
Ingorokva, Pavle, 282  
INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER OF DIALOGUE  
IN KRASNOGRUDA, 9–10,  
58–61, 390–1, 407–8, 410, 420–1  
Ionesco, Eugène, 466  
IPN, **317**
- Jaeger, Werner, 69  
Jameson, Fredric, 96, 345  
Janion, Maria, **408**  
Jaszewska, Maja, 312  
Jenkins, Henry, 95  
JESUS CHRIST, **76**, **225**, 254, 265,  
**419**, 477  
JOHN PAUL II, (Karol Wojtyła),  
94–5, **251**, 253–5, 281, 401  
Joyce, James, 346, 382, 384–5, 392  
Juergensmeyer, Mark, 74–5, 492
- Kaczyński, Jarosław, 310, 315–6, 318,  
320, 419  
Kaczyński, Lech, 315–6, 320
- Kafka, Franz, 196–8  
KANT, IMMANUEL, **57**, 186–7, **200**,  
263–4, 346, 404, 492  
KAPITAL, DAS, **126**  
Kapuściński, Ryszard, 394  
Kaputikyan, Silva, 235, 492  
Kasparov, Garry, 297  
Kelly, Ruth, 174  
Kepler, Johannes, 206  
Kerr, Clark, 381  
Kethoda, Cejvan, 476  
Khan, Mohammad Sidique, 164  
Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeyevich, 235  
Kimball, Charles, 75  
King, Martin Luther, 243, 380  
Kiš, Danilo, 12  
Kołakowski, Leszek, 200  
Kominek, Bolesław, 306  
Koneczny, Feliks, 221  
Kostava, Merab, 281  
KRESY, **215**  
Kundera, Milan, 196–9, 202–3, 466,  
493  
Kurzweil, Ray, 93–4, 97
- Lavater, Johann Casper, 264–6  
Lavrov, Sergey, 298  
Lawrence, Stephen, 168, 173, 493  
Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 265  
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 263, 266  
Levinas, Emmanuel, 12, 47, 418–9,  
424  
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 227, 474  
Lewis, Bernard, 208  
Lewis, David Levering, 206  
Leyster, Judith, 194  
LIFE-WORLD STRUCTURE, **107–8**  
Lindsay, Jermain, 164  
LINGUA FRANCA, 138, 366–7  
Lipski, Jan Józef, 309  
LIQUID MODERNITY, **77**, 82, 87,  
92, 191, 466  
Livingstone, Ken, 166, 447  
Locke, John, 265  
Lucas, George, 95  
Lucian of Samosata, 193  
Lyons, David, 82–3

- Machiavelli, Niccolò, 192, 203  
 Macpherson, William, 168–9, 173, 493  
 Măgureanu, Virgil, 334  
 Malik, Habib, 178  
 Malik, Kenan, 447  
 Mani, **76**  
 MANICHAEISM, **76–7**, 199, 212, 479  
 Marlowe, Christopher, 194  
 Marx, Karl, 58–9, 75, **126**, 252  
 Mawdudi, Abul A'la, 170  
 Mazda, Ahura, 478  
 McLuhan, Marshall, 96, **124**  
 McWORLD, **452**  
 Mead, Margaret, 408  
 Mečiar, Vladimír, 336  
 Mendelssohn, Moses, 6, 257, 259, 262–8, 491, 493  
 Menocal, Maria Rosa, 204, 206, 493  
 Mercier, Sébastien, 202–3  
 Michnik, Adam, 336  
 Mill, John Stuart, 272, 419  
 Milton, John, 242  
 Milward, Alan, 129–30  
 MIŁOSZ, CZESŁAW, 9–12, **30**, 69, 290, 309, 390, 400, **408**, 469, 474, 492–3  
 Mirza, Munira, 162, 174, 178, 180, 492  
 King Mohammed V, 428  
 King Mohammed VI, 353, 357, 359, 436, 438  
 Molière, (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin), 194  
 MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT, 331–2  
 Monet, Claude, 194  
 Monnet, Jean, 129  
 More, Thomas, 96, **193**  
 Morgan, Michael Hamilton, 206  
 MOSES, **87**, 120, **225**, **419**  
 Mowlana, (Jalāl ad-Din Muhammad Rumi), 474  
 MUHAMMAD, 216, 219–20, 226, 276, **356**, **419**  
 Muhammed, Omar Bakri, 172  
 MULTICULTURALISM, 6, 8–11, 13, 18, 24–6, 29–31, 33, 35, 37–8, 42, 89–90, 98, **99–103**, 121–2, 124–5, 130–4, 137, 141, 157–61, 165–6, 168–9, **177**, 180, 189, 223–6, 229–30, 257, 312, 325, 368, **408**, 426–7, 431, 434–6, 438, 441–2, 445, 447–8, 460, 486, 489, 492–3  
 Mumford, Lewis, 200  
 Musil, Robert, 198  
 Mussolini, Benito, 127  
 Napoleon Bonaparte, 101, 110, 219  
 NATIONALISM, 7, 12–3, 21, 31–2, 34–5, 70, 74–5, 109, 118, 126–9, 135, 139–40, 143, 149, 153, 166, 198, 199, 215, 234, 238, **251**, 277–8, 301–7, 309–10, 312, 318, 322, 324, 326, **328–9**, 332, 336–7, 346, 372, 415, 427–9, 431, **450–2**, 459  
 Neumann, Michael, 181  
 Newton, Isaac, 346  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, **200**, 488  
 Nikolaides, Panagiotis, 152  
 Norwid, Cyprian Kamil, 394  
 Nova, Sayat, 195  
 Offe, Claus, 117–8  
 OLD BELIEVERS, 18, 20–2, 24–5, 30  
 Orwell, George, 200–3  
 Osman, Hussain, 84  
 OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 38, 136, **146**, 148–52, 154–6, **209–10**, 2124, 216–7, 235, 270, 291, 474–7, 491–2  
 Ouazzani, Mohamed Hassan, 431  
 Özal, Turgut, 298  
 Pamuk, Orhan, 221  
 Parajanov, Sergei, 195  
 Parekh, Lord Bikhū, 37, 167  
 Pärt, Arvo, 27–8  
 PASCAL, BLAIZE, **244**  
 Pasha, Mustapha Giritli, 154  
 Pasha, Syed Aziz, 174  
 Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 225  
 PATRIOTISM, 102, 202, 308–9, **450**  
 Paul the Apostle, Saint Paul, 417, 419, 479

- Pearl, Daniel, 164  
 Perrault, Charles, 192  
 Peter I, the Great, Tzar, 210, 227  
 Phillips, Trevor, 100, 158, 448  
 Pkhakadze, Giorgi, 391  
 PLATO, 49–50, 60, **206**, 210, **258**  
 POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMON-WEALTH, 9, 214, **215**, 217, **305**  
 POLITICAL NATIVISM, **177**  
 POLYPHONY, **43–4**, 62, 466  
 Pomian, Krzysztof, 92, 26  
 Ponomariev, Vitalii, 277  
 PUBLIC SPACE, 8, 39, 66, 100, 117, 162, 167, 178, 181, 331, 346, 355, 357, 451–3, 456, 459–60, 463, **467–8**, 486  
 Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich, 298
- Qatada, Abu, 172  
 Quintus Ennius, 41  
 QUR'AN, 78, 163, 175, 216, 220, 244–5, 262, 294, **356**, 428–9, 430, 436, 475
- Rabinowitch, Solomon, 191  
 RACIAL SEGREGATION, 99, 158–9, 168, 175, 220, 451, 458  
 RADIO LIBERTY, **297**  
 Rahman, Zia Haider, 167  
 Reagan, Ronald, 75, 381  
 RECONQUISTA, **205**, 217  
 Rewers, Ewa, 453, 455, 461  
 Reynolds, Joshua, 195  
 Ricoeur, Paul, 47,  
 van Rijn, Rembrandt Harmenszoon, 194, 203  
 Rodriguez, Richard, 447  
 ROMA PEOPLE, 18, **20**, 22–3, 30, 135, 334–5, 395, 475, 487  
 Roman, Petre, 329  
 ROMANS, THE, **10**, 41, **76**, 110, 144–6, 192, 213, **220**, 332–3, **346–7**, 382, 431  
 Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 80, 127  
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, **244**, 402  
 Rowe, Andrew, 164  
 Roy, Olivier, 179
- Rumsfeld, Donald, 80  
 Rushdie, Salman, 170, 172
- Saakashvili, Mikheil, 140, 286, 369, 374, 482  
 Sachs, Jeffrey, 246, 493  
 Sachs, Jonathan, 100  
 Sacranie, Iqbal, 172  
 Sageman, Marc, 163–4  
 Said, Edward, 219  
 Saliba, George, 206  
 Sarkozy, Nicolas, 103  
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, 71  
 Savio, Mario, 381  
 Sayatnova, (Harutyun Sayatyan), 143  
 Schechner, Richard, 467  
 Schiller, Friedrich, 194, 263  
 SCHISM, **22**, **147**  
 Schopenhauer, Arthur, 220  
 Schwartz, Barry, 240, 436  
 Scruton, Roger, 177  
 Selimkhanov, Jahangir, 28, 227  
 Selimović, Mesa, 212, 221  
 Seneca the Younger, Lucius Annaeus, 246  
 Serres, Michel, 382, 388, 421  
 Lord Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 265  
 Shakespeare, William, **46**, 194, 201, 203, 414  
 Sharadze, Guram, 294  
 SHARI'AH, **162**, 166, 179, 224–5, 445  
 Sharif, Omar Khan, 164  
 Shawn, Wally, 465  
 Sheikh, Ahmed Omar Saeed, 164  
 Shevardnadze, Eduard, 139–40, 286, 367, 369–70  
 Siddiqui, Kalim, 170  
 Sienkiewicz, Henryk, 318  
 SIKHISM, **74–5**, 168, 177  
 Simmel, Georg, 392, 454  
 Smith, Adam, 125  
 Smith, Zadie, 447, 450  
 Socrates, 45, **50**, 262, 266  
 Sola Pool, Ithiel de, 95  
 Solon, 266–7  
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, **283**

- SOVIET RUSSIA, 9–**10**, 30, 32, 35–6, 58, 113, 134–6, 138–9, 142, 195, 216, 229–30, 234–9, **251**, 258, 277–**81**, **282**–6, 292–3, 295–9, 301, 304–6, 311, **328**, **332**, 363–4, 369–70, 372, 402, 405, 482, 488, 494
- Spengler, Oswald, 190, 221
- Spinoza, Baruch Benedictus, 6, 257, 259, 261–2, 264, 268
- STALIN, JOSEPH  
VISSARIONOVICH, 236, **281**–2, **283**, 296, 305, 318, **332**
- De Stefano, Carlo, 84
- Strickland, Ted, 387
- Stroitel, David, 287
- SUFISM, **150**, 171, 210, 216, **243**, 258, 273, 474, 479
- SUN TZU, **245**
- Swindler, Leonard, 45
- SYNCRETISM, 45, 148, **170**, 212, 447
- Szymanowski, Karol, 212
- Tanweer, Shehzad, 164
- Tăriceanu, Călin Popescu, 335
- Tarkovsky, Andrei, 478
- Thatcher, Margaret, 157
- THOMAS AQUINAS, (Thomism), **211**, 252
- Thoreau, Henry David, 70, **380**, 383, 393, 411
- Tischner, Józef, 401
- TORAH, **87**, 263, 265
- Toynbee, Arnold, 208
- Tudor, Corneliu Vadim, 329–30
- Turner, Victor, 409, 413, 423
- UNICEF, 365–6
- Vazha-Pshavela, (Luka P. Razikashvili), 280–2, 295
- VELVET REVOLUTIONS OF 1989, 105–6
- Venclova, Tomas, 27, 400
- Venter, Craig, 94
- Vermeer, Johannes, 194, 203
- Vernadsky, George, 217
- Vlashvili, Pavlo, 365
- Voltaire, (François-Marie Arouet), 194, 220, 406
- WALDEN, **380**, 383
- Walzer, Michael, 202
- WAR ON TERROR, 122–3, 247, **276**, 381
- Weber, Max, 96
- WEIL, SIMONE, 200, **202**, 394
- Weiman, Robert, 414
- WEST, THE, 10–1, 13, **30**-2, 35, 43, **57**, **61**, 68, 79–81, 98–9, 106, 108, 110–4, **123**, 128–9, 161, 163–5, 175–6, 179, 181, 190, 205–9, 214, 216–8, 220, 224–5, 231, **245**, **251**, 270–3, 275–6, 277, **283**, 309, 314, 319, 322, 328–9, 334, 336–7, 347, 356–7, **365**, 418–9, 427–8, 431–3, 437–8, 442, 444, 474–6, 486–7, 492
- WESTPHALIAN ORDER, **123**, 126
- Whitehead, Alfred North, 389
- Williams, Raymond, 202
- Wilson, Woodrow, 131, 245
- Witkacy, (Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz), 466
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 423
- Yunus, Mohammad, 97
- Yushchenko, Viktor, 297, 302
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny, 200–3
- Zhvania, Zurab, 369
- ZNANIECKI, FLORIAN, 408–9, 416, 422
- Zoroaster, **76**, 478

On the cover:  
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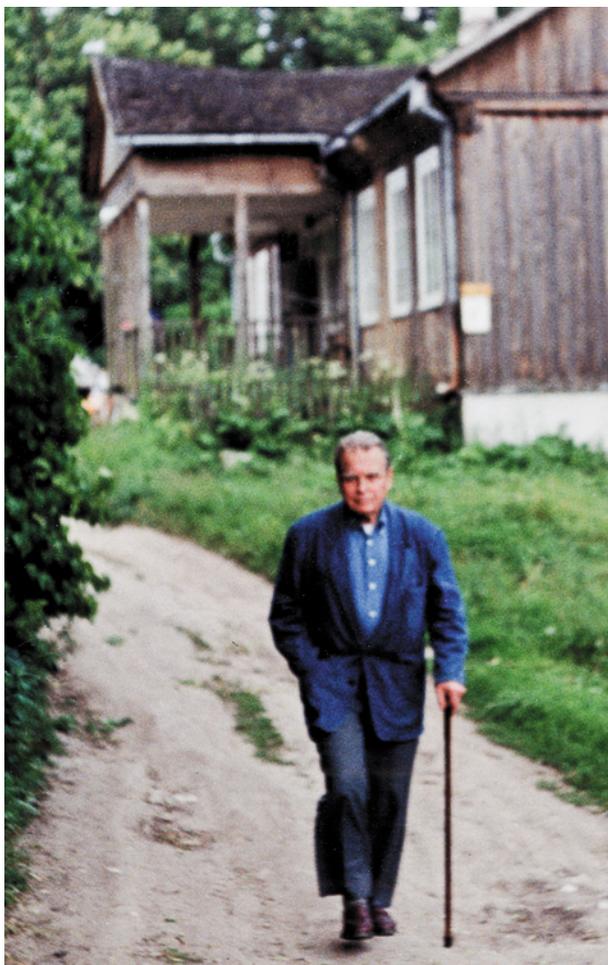




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Czesław Miłosz  
in Krasnogruda, 1992.  
Photo by Małgorzata  
Sporek-Czyżewska.



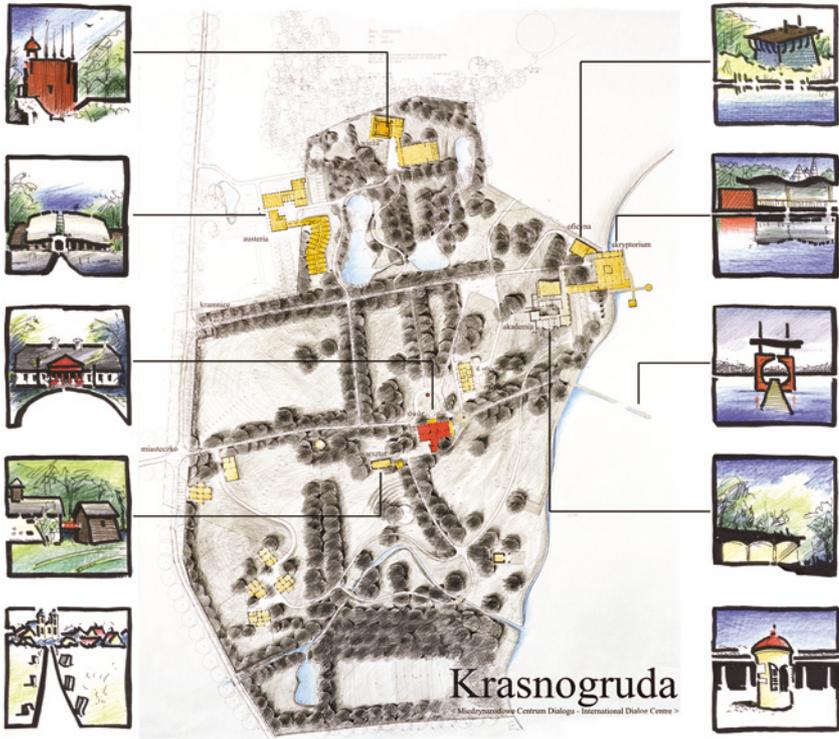
The Krasnogruda Manor just before renovation, 2007. Photo by Marek Skorupski.



Krasnogruda, June 1992. Czesław Miłosz visiting the Czeropscy household with his son Anthony, brother Andrzej and Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska. Photo by Krzysztof Czyżewski.



Meeting at the Krasnogruda Manor, exhibition and final workshop of the programme Trakt Krasnogrudzki (Krasnogruda Tract), 2007. Photo by Stanisław Woś.



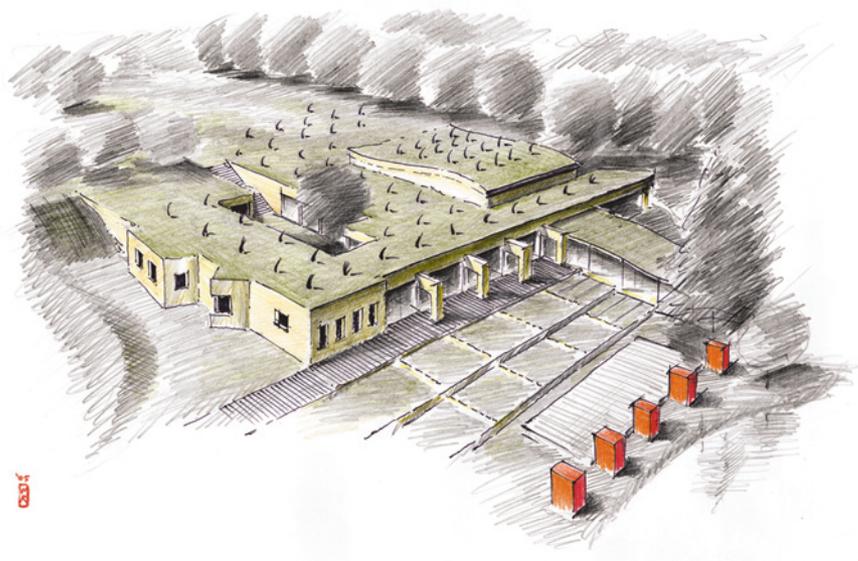
Drawing of the Krasnogruda Manor and a map of its surroundings by the architect, Rafał Winiewicz.



Laying of the cornerstone for the new Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Grzegorz Dąbrowski.



Laying of the cornerstone for the new Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Cezary Teodorowski.



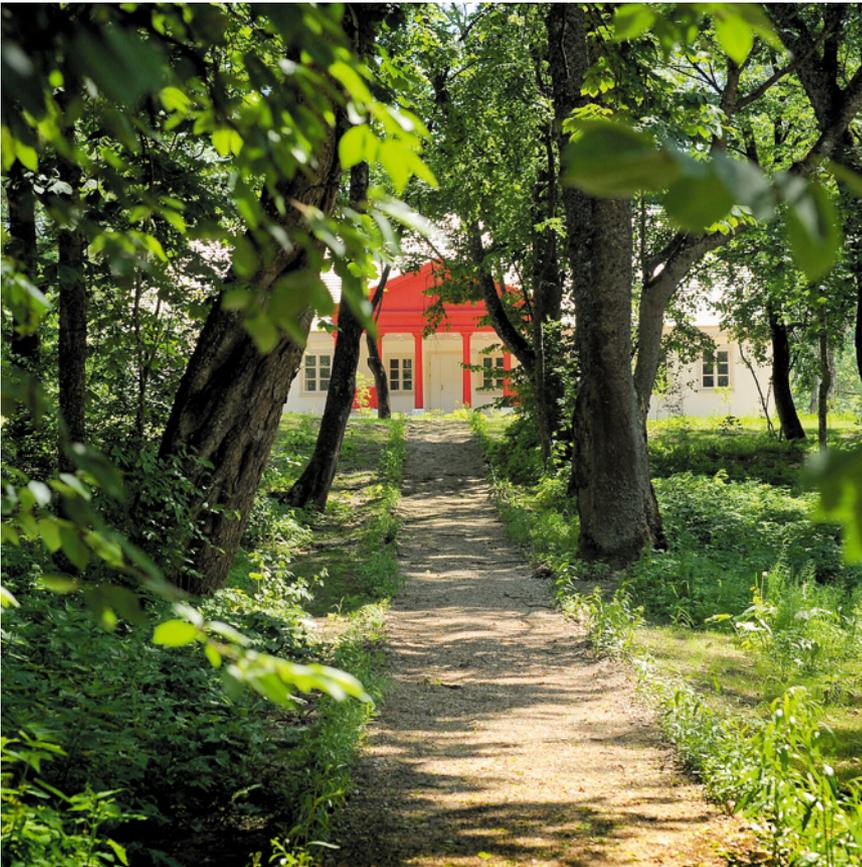
The Academy at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Krasnogruda Manor, a view from above. Photo by Kuba Kossak.



The Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Michał Moniuszko.



The Publishing House at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Publishing House at the Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Michał Moniuszko.



The Aviary at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



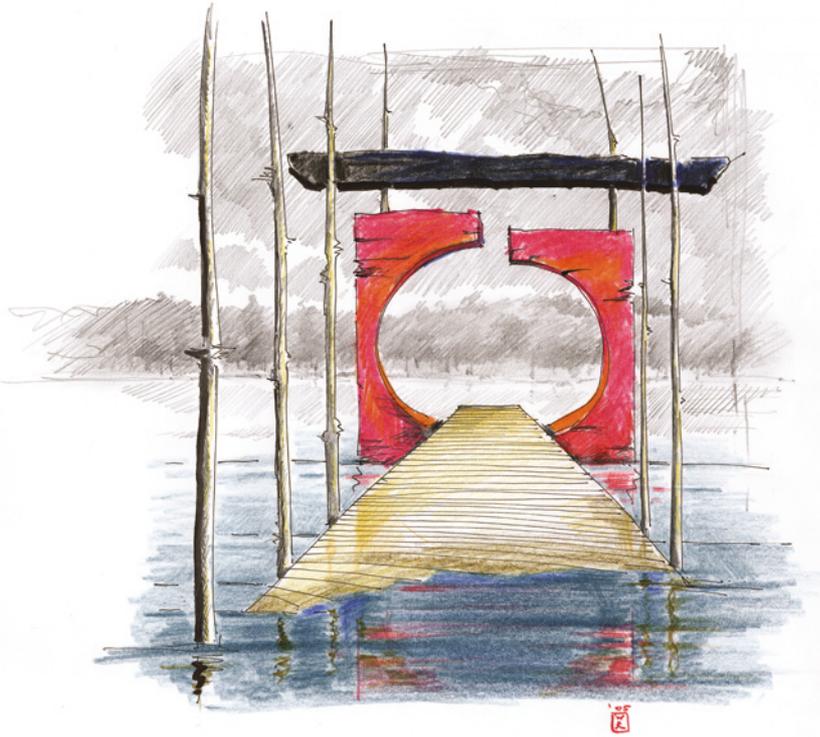
The Aviary at the Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Michał Moniuszko.



The Publishing House at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Publishing House at the Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Michał Moniuszko.



A jetty at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



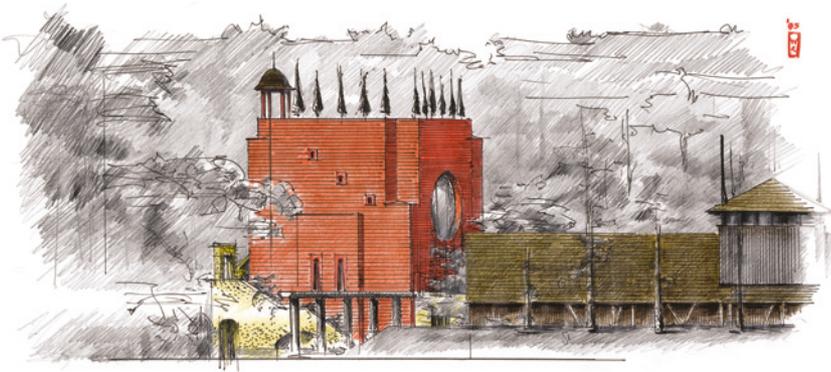
A jetty at the Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Michał Moniuszko.



*Search for the Motherland. The Witnessing and Prophecies of Czesław Miłosz* – fragment of the exhibition in the Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Monika Kmita.



The Publishing House at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Tower at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Scriptorium at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Austeria at the Krasnogruda Manor. Drawing by Rafał Winiewicz.



The Krasnogruda Manor. Photo by Michał Moniuszko.



*European Agora*, official opening of the International Center for Dialogue in the Krasnogruda Manor on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Czesław Miłosz's birthday. Photo by Monika Kmita.