

International Conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the International Conference Centre of Geneva

State-building and the constitution, economics, culture and education, security and democracy, justice and reconciliation, regional and EU integration, conditionality and ownership, beyond "lessons learnt", responsibility for the future

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Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ten Years of Dayton
and Beyond
2005

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Panel on Culture in Bosnia

Geneva, 20 October 2005



chair	Jasmina Husanović-Pehar, lecturer in cultural differences, University of Tuzla (Tuzla)
keynote	Nikola Kovač, professor of literature, University of Sarajevo (Sarajevo)
speakers	Tanja Miletić-Oručević, theatre director and lecturer (Mostar)
	Aida Kalender, art manager and journalist (Sarajevo)
	Damir Arsenijević, cultural theorist (Tuzla)
	Damir Imamović, cultural theorist and musician (Sarajevo)
	Edina Husanović, artist and researcher (Tuzla)
	Šejla Šehabović, cultural theorist and poet (Tuzla)



PANEL ON CULTURE

After the completion of both panels on culture and education, its participants agreed on the following press release statement:

PUBLIC STATEMENT

It is the role of culture and education to provide the critical optics through which we can express what transformative politics and reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be about. The cultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the source of alternative practices and conceptions of citizenship and identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but this must be translated into institutional political frameworks and non-institutional ways of organising for change. These alternative practices and conceptions have to become part and parcel of the educational sphere whose state in Bosnia and Herzegovina is at the moment discouraging.

Our key concern is how can we influence the sphere of politics and what roles do the cultural and educational policies and their reforms have in the processes of integration. Institutional politics in the sphere of culture and education today is focused on ethno-nationalist myths and cannons; it is about false choices, where intentional chaos, endemic corruption and acute incompetence rule the day.

Our challenge is finding new ways of organising for change and creating both mainstream cultural and educational politics and alternatives. This process must be head started by making cultural and educational policy an essential element for reform, and a condition for the accession and integration processes that Bosnia and Herzegovina is aiming at on the European level.

This 'pressure from above' (international level) must be accompanied by the 'pressure from below' (grassroots activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina) – in other words, by an empowered active participation, networking, lobbying and campaigning by those key actors and forces in the non-institutional sphere of cultural production, educational field and civic engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Struggles in the cultural and educational field are essential for the state-making and state-breaking processes. Hence, it is perfectly possible for some of them also to bring about 'a new Bosnia and Herzegovina' in line with the civic and democratic ideals of plurality and justice, diversity and difference.

Aims and objectives of panels on culture and education:

The aim of these panels is to present some key insights that resulted from the first stage of a long-term pilot project “In Search of New Politics in Culture and Education” which began in April this year and runs until September next year. This project is run under the auspices of the Association Bosnia and Herzegovina 2005, and has as main sponsor the Austrian Development Agency.

Its goals are:

- To identify and strengthen alternative cultural practices, which breed integrationist, cosmopolitan and civic identifications, solidarities and bonds,
- To interlock such cultural praxis with the concerted drive for a ‘new politics’,
- To infuse the educational system in Bosnia with such alternative cultural and political imaginings and enactments of Bosnia, and
- To reinvigorate civil society potentials by infusing it with progressive cultural and educational praxis.
- To create a critical mass of young academics, artists and activists who will act in concert and on a long-term basis on the production of relevant research, policy suggestions and advocacy in the field of cultural and educational politics.

The long-term aim of the project is the creation of a strong network of key actors and practices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sphere of education and cultural production in order to produce relevant knowledge, conduct research, instigate wider public dialogue on key topics and develop effective strategies for change in this direction.

We are only at the start of a complex process of interlocking research with public dialogue and policy-making on pertinent issues in culture and education, as envisaged by the project. Also, this pilot project aims not only to continue after September next year, but also to extend the scope of its programme in the course of 2006, more in the direction of campaigning and advocacy concerning policy-making and certain practices in the sphere of culture and education. This event in Geneva was the first opportunity to bring some preliminary insights from our work into the international public sphere.

PRESENTATIONS:

Aida Kalender

“The framework for action for cultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina”

It is clear that cultural field in Bosnia and Herzegovina is living the most difficult times. Reasons for this crisis are numerous, but not all of them are the results of war. I will try, at this occasion, to analyse some aspects of this crisis.

The fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the rare- if not the single one- country in Europe that lacks defined and written cultural strategy/policy reflects strongly on the daily life of cultural organisations and artists in this country.

Both sides, cultural ministries on all administrative levels in B&H as well as the entire cultural sector in this country, are the key stakeholders in the process of the future cultural policy formulation. Question why is B&H ten years after the end of the war still missing the public debate about the cultural policy/strategy maybe can be answered by simple comment of Dorota Ilczuk, Polish analyst of cultural policies in former-communist countries. She argues that maybe both of the stakeholders- government and cultural sector- are not aware of their role in the process of cultural strategy formulation. My position today is that the request for the beginning of the process of interactive cultural strategy formulation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be immediately put in the public agenda. This request has to come from the «bottom-up» direction- from the cultural sector itself.

Evaluation of the characteristics of both stakeholders will give the arguments for my thesis.

Characteristics of governments and their cultural departments on all administrative levels in B&H can be summarised as follows:

- Governmental offices responsible for culture- in total 13 Ministries for culture have all the characteristic of Minzberg’s “closed machine bureaucracy organisations”. According to Minzberg, American guru of organisation’s theory, government machines are isolated from reality, closed, ignorant, old-fashioned, non-transparent, corrupted and non-effective. Innovative forces for change don’t exist in these organisations. Lacking an ideology, vision, commitment, human spirit and energy, government machine bureaucracy is not able to perform simple turnaround because this process has to change the entire system of norms, mentalities and behaviour. Rationality that stays behind the government machine bureaucracy organisation and its tendency to isolate itself from the external perturbation in order to keep the control is manifested outside as the ignorance toward inclusion or consultation of the people from the field in the strategy formulation process. To be innovative and versatile, this strategy formulation process has to include new, fresh ideas from the outside of government machine organisation. Findings from the interviews with the key players from the Bosnian cultural field confirm the following: The governments who are the main stakeholders in the process of cultural strategy development don’t do their job- they ignore to communicate with the cultural operators from the field, they isolate themselves from the external influences trying to preserve the status quo remained from the socialist system, they privatise their public offices and without transparency and any criteria distribute public budgets for culture.

Characteristics of cultural sector in B&H can be summarised as follows:

- Cultural sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina today is extremely fragmented and completely focused on day-to-day survival. So called "project-culture" widely promoted after arrival of numerous international organisations to B&H, inaugurated a short-termism among majority of emerged cultural organisations financed by international donors. Not a single cultural organisation in B&H can imagine their position in next five years; they are even not sure that they will exist in next season. These newly established innovative and vivid initiatives, often called "an independent cultural organisations" that based their character on financial, artistic and decision-making/management autonomy from cultural Ministries in B&H, faced the "existence-threatening position" after sudden and unexpected withdrawal of international financial support for culture after year 2000. On the other side, public institutions of culture- especially 7 national cultural institutions remained from the former system- are brought to the same, existence threatening position by the Dayton accords which removed the culture from the national domain and distributed the authorities and budgets on the levels of entities and cantons. Lack of agreement among cantons and entities about the acknowledgment and financing of 7 national cultural institutions brought these institutions on the edge of the existence. In the case of both, independent and public institutions for culture, crisis is culminating in this year without any sign of positive change in near future. Is possible to change this state of apathy, hopelessness, pessimism, chaos and depression that marks the current atmosphere among cultural operators in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Situation would be much more simple in the case of culture being a part of EU accession criteria for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and if the needs for the reforms in the cultural policy field would be created from "above". Since this is not the case (although some European cultural advocacy organisations lobby for this criteria at this very moment), it is logical to expect that the characteristics and behaviour of closed government machine bureaucracy will remain in the future. Therefore, the impulse for turnaround- an immediate change that will bring cultural field in to the slow process of renewal has to come from the outside of governments.

Platform for collective action of cultural sector in B&H

Key players from the cultural field in B&H interviewed for this report agrees- SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE to change government's position in cultural strategy formulation and this action has to happen in the political venue! This collective anger has to be articulated and focused with an aim to produce the optimal results. Creation of the platform for cultural sector action represents the important step in the bottom-up process of cultural strategy formulation.

My thesis is that cultural sector, united and organised in the advocacy network organisations has to act towards governments' and make the pressure on them to start the process of cultural strategy formulation. Network organisation with its non-hierarchical and horizontal structure and democratic decision-making based on the examples of European cultural advocacy networks is the model that should be tested in present Bosnian circumstances. This organisation would gather cultural organisations, initiatives and individuals interested to become its active member.

Public debates, media campaigns, lobbying of political parties in the period before the elections, creative expression of citizens' activism (through street theatre, concerts and demonstrations), combined with serious analysis of cultural legislation, proposals of new and innovative policies, would be the advocacy instruments of such an network organisation.

I am sure that identified collective interests of the cultural operators and organisations in the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina can overcome all the divisions and animosities among them. Better overall position of culture in our society, adopting of new definition of culture which doesn't understand it only as "elite culture", education of young and new audiences, more money for culture, promotion of emancipatory and European dimension of culture, fostering interregional and international cooperation through culture, branding Bosnia and Herzegovina as "the creative country", etc. might be some of future collective interests of cultural field in B&H articulated through activities of future advocacy network organisation.

First steps towards the establishing of the future cultural advocacy network organisation that would lobby for the collective interests of the entire cultural sector in B&H should be undertaken by the cultural operators themselves. Charismatic leadership and the willing to collaborate is crucial in this process which will help re-establishing of new ties and trust among cultural organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina divided in the long and exhausting battle for survival in the brutal phase when capital is accumulated.

Tanja Miletić-Oručević

"Theatre Art and Local Community in Bosnia – Closures and Openings"

It could be stated that in 2005, ten years after the end of the war, theatre art in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in deep crisis, crisis on all levels – playwriting, production and management, audience etc. Professional theatre houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffer from many various problems; some of them are directly dependent on political and financial circumstances but others are more dependent on non-efficient efforts made by theatre houses themselves in direction of local community, artistic environment and whole society. There have been some voices that forced development of film industry in the country and in region is influencing negatively theatre environment, using and engaging modest human resources, but that issue is not relevant for this analysis.

The main aspect from which I would like to analyse the causes of overall crisis and try to define some possible ways out of it is the question of impacts between theatre and community in both directions. Which are the forms of influence of the society to theatre houses, to their repertoire, casts, artists, travels, etc? Is there a pressure made by political structures to theatre houses, and which forms of pressures exist? Which are the legislative procedures of political impact to management of theatre houses? Is there real communication between theatre and its audience? Do theatre houses tend to communicate to their viewers in any other way but through selling tickets? How about traditional agent between theatre and audience – the critics? What is the present state of critics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and does it fulfil all its traditional functions? On the other hand, which is the present condition of theatre audience in Bosnia and Herzegovina? How did the dramatic changes of social structure in towns affect the theatre audience? What are their tastes and their education level? How do the theatre houses respond to, evidently, significantly reduced level of education and interest among (the potential) audience? Are there any plans and initiatives among Bosnian theatres in order to improve co-operation with their local community?

The title of my research - "Theatre and local community(ies) in Bosnia and Herzegovina" - implies that the structure and identity of local community in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not the self-understandable term in usual sense of democratic society; for various reasons, from political ones, through sociology to cultural structures, all kinds of nets and forces gathering people within the local community seem to be vanishing. The doubt expressed in the title, is a question if the only way to understand local community in

contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina is to accept separated and isolated groups, primarily of ethnic identity, but sometimes also defined on other exclusive pairs, political islands (entities, cantons), social groups, distinction between “the centre” (Sarajevo) and “the periphery” (rest of the country), not even to mention traditional social divisions based on gender, age, economical status, etc. It is obvious that the starting point for such a research, identifying the links and misunderstandings between theatre art and local community, must be a try to take a look at the state of overall activities within the local community, in the sense of so-called grass-roots democracy, and also of eventual work of individual activists, and further on, understanding of “*public opinion*” rather in the sense of common interest of the community, formulated through some public discourse, than (as mostly in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina it is being interpreted) opinions and views of individual opinion-makers and influential persons, distributed widely through mass-media.

Analysing public language / informing and commenting of three theatre events in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2004 and 2005 (Festival in Jajce, Festival in Bihać and theatre critics of a repertoire play in Sarajevo) I defined, among others, several acute symptoms of political and social, and indirectly than also artistic, crisis of theatre in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Intense politicisation of theatre life, always with damage for quality and artistic level, and usually understanding politics as primitive “equality of national / ethnic interests” and model of “equal representativeness”;
- False continuity of theatre institutions, based again not on artistic quality, but on repeating / resurrecting empty myths and rituals of socialistic era, in name of “continuity of culture”;
- Brutal and primitive commercialisation, first accumulation of capital in area of culture; treating theatre art as pure goods, valuating it in commercial terms, without any understanding of complicated mechanism of theatre institutions within cultural society, its mission and management models;
- Problems of meritocracy; lack of knowledge present in theatre life, especially visible in area of theatre critics.

The huge importance of the above mentioned issues for the theatre art are not implied by the social nature of any art; it is extremely important to stress that theatre, far more than any other art form, is profoundly marked and defined by its nature of gathering of human beings, nucleus of society. Besides, not so faraway historical experience says that theatre used to be important arena of social and political processes. One of the most significant acts of beginning of the latest war at the Balkans (and, nevertheless, it is very strange that nobody ever seriously analysed that incident from that point of view) was the guest performance, again at JDP, of Saint Sava, produced by National theatre in Zenica, when right wing Serb nationalists were trying by all means, from singing church songs, to threatening with guns, to stop the actors from playing what they considered the inadequate story about the saint Sava. So, we do have direct experience of theatre being very serious and important political, sociological, not to mention esthetical and spiritual fact; is it than too pretentious to expect from contemporary, XXI century to be so, or to accuse him of failing its mission if it does not try so?

In trying to identify examples good practice in theatre life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, some traces lead more into direction of non-institutional or half-institutional practices of new kind, with innovative concepts and different approach. Such initiatives often lie somewhere in sphere between civic initiatives (in sense of organising and managing; it is important to stress that such initiatives are rarely or never financed by public / state budget) and professional theatre work (in terms of approach, methodology and engagement of subjects). An example of such work is Centre for Drama Education B&H based in Mostar, organisation implementing innovative methodologies of applied drama (such as psychodrama, TiE and DiE methodology, Forum Theatre / Theatre of the Oppressed etc.) and, what is interesting for this analysis, using it for some time in community work of different kind – from more traditional work with children and youth, to applied / therapeutic projects with vulnerable categories of citizens and means of

social / political action. Nevertheless, we should not forget that 13 years ago theatre life in Bosnia and Herzegovina was interrupted by awful war; searching for solutions of the crisis in our theatre, we can not pretend that those 13 years did not bring many new ideas in artistic “outside” world, but we have to be able to make effort to “jump over” these 13 years and find ourselves in contemporary European and world theatre / artistic community.

Damir Arsenijević

“Poetry of differences in Bosnia —‘denying the dominant a monopoly of plausibility’”

My position today is that a particular strand of contemporary poetry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *poetry of differences*, can be viewed as a dissident agency that holds emancipatory potential for imagining the social, political and cultural landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an inclusive and polyvalent network. My position will not be elaborated at great length, but will make the case for a liminal conception of contemporary poetry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, arguing that this liminality, or in Homi Bhabha’s term, this ‘in-between’ space, is a site in which a much needed political, social and cultural transformation can occur.

In the sphere of culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ethno-nationalism has had a strong articulation since the late 1980s. It has dominated the construction of historiographies of literature boxing it in ethnic categories. The ultimate way in which nationalism recruits the literary to achieve its ideological aims is, maybe, best illustrated in what Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek calls the ‘poetic-military complex, personified in Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian-Serb poet warrior’. In the ethno-nationalist discourse, under the guise of ‘difference’, texts are constructed as ‘monoliths’ and ‘sources of ethno-national values.’ This resonates with what Balibar has termed ‘meta-racism’ which perceives cultures as fixed entities, and creates a fantasy (or a narrative) of ‘great national poets’ and institutionalised literature that perpetuates the fantasy of a ‘nation’ and its symbolic ideological structure.

‘In an old joke from the German Democratic Republic’, writes Žižek,

‘a German worker gets a job in Siberia; aware of how all mail will be read by censors, he tells his friends: “Let’s establish a code: if a letter from me is written in blue ink, it is true; if it is written in red ink, it is false.” After a month, his friends get the first letter written in blue ink: “Everything is wonderful here: stores are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and property heated, movie theatres show films from the west, there are so many beautiful girls ready for an affair – the only thing unavailable is red ink...’

‘Is this not’, remarks Žižek, ‘how ideology functions? We “feel free”, now as then, when we lack the language – “the red ink” – to articulate our un-freedom. It is the basic task of critical art and culture to provide the red ink.’

Although nationalism is a dominant discourse, Bosnian literary space is by no means homogenous. According to some theorists of the post-socialist culture, what emerged after the collapse of socialism in former Yugoslavia, was ‘a postmodern megaculture’ in which, multiculturalism and transculturalism exist together with ‘local and regional political totalitarianisms and (religious) fundamentalisms.’ There are, broadly speaking, two literary scenes in Bosnia today, ‘one is the state scene, official and institutional and the other is virtual and non-institutional’. And it is precisely this non-institutional, critical literature, this

‘red ink’ of Bosnian poetry to which *poetry of differences* belongs. This “poetry of differences” is also *poetry of the margins*. Such poetry is at the centre of social changes that are opening Bosnia up to difference; it is anti-utopian and incredulous towards the meta-narratives of ethno-nationalism, neo-liberal transition as well as to more generic and better established macho- and hetero-normative values. In a context where macho and hetero are the norm, and socio-cultural and political factors are inhospitable to plurality and difference, marginalised groups have few outlets to participate openly, constructively and on equal terms in the transition of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a postmodern society.

Due to time restrictions I will here only briefly mention one strong case to illustrate the point. The poem, written by Ferida Duraković, is entitled ‘Oleni, djevojčici bez ikoga, tužbalica’. It is a powerful critique of a post-war transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is being enacted through the ab/use of the female body via the capitalist ‘free-trade’ in human beings. Olena Popik, 21 years of age, Ukrainian, mother of a 3-year old, victim of people-trafficking in the Balkans, forced to work as a prostitute, sold, re-sold and exchanged several times between mafia ‘owners’, died in Mostar in November 2004 from Aids. In the media, Olena became the trope of the illness itself; she was a foreign element in the Balkans and there were even some claims that she deliberately infected ‘our’ (Balkan) men. In the poem, Olena is shown as locked in the (male) metanarratives of Islam, Christianity, Orthodox Christianity, Judaism and transition, which but undermines all narratives that pretend to offer ‘stability’ and ‘security’ for and to women.

Poetry of differences holds a potentiality for the transformation of the present in the articulation of minority and dissident histories. Poetry of differences introduces the ‘contingencies’ and ‘contradictions’ of minority voices thus problematising monolithically constructed ethno-national Bosnian and Herzegovinian literary space. The poets engage in an ironic and critical problematisation of social values. They, thus, in a deconstruction of the masculinist normative, *construct* an alternative discourse, giving testament to the hybridity of Bosnian and Herzegovinian tradition. Poetry of differences offers no neat solutions—there are no single and simple conclusions; it rests on problematising, rather than securing a comfortable secure escape from social problems. Cultural invisibility and marginalization in is not unique to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The margin is a site of crucial potential for agency for social change. Therefore, poetry of differences carries a potential to re-imagine society and culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina along lines that include otherness and difference. Writing from a privileged, marginalized position gives the poets writing poetry of differences space for empowerment. Poetry of differences is a critical voice—it articulates our un-freedom, showing us precisely – here and now, in Bosnia and Herzegovina – how un-free we are.

My main argument is for the strengthening of a political critique of culture. Its political allegiance is explicit; the aim is to encourage the discussion on a potential of a particular subculture—the writing of the margins—that, nowadays, offers probably the most effective critique of the male-centric dominant ideologies in the Balkans, whether they are ethno-nationalist or some sort of amorphous, all-encompassing neo-liberal capitalist. I also want to point out that political allegiance alone, however, is not enough, unless it is complemented by concrete material practice. Subcultures are a site of effective dissident strategies in relation to dominant ideologies in the Balkans. Ethno-nationalism is not as explicit as it used to be during the wars in former Yugoslavia, yet, researchers discussing literary production are still drawn back to it. Indeed, when discussing the field of cultural production in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fact that ethno-nationalism is treated as something so natural is the main indicator that it is still the overall dominant ideology in this country. Another fact that should not be neglected in any analysis of the cultural field in this country is that this dominant ideology plunders any subculture in order to secure its plausibility, its appearance of a cohesive narrative. That is how, using the discourse of ‘difference’, ethno-nationalist elites have created different ethno-national literary canons in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is the strength of active dissident subcultures that they deny ‘the dominant a monopoly of plausibility’, cutting across and traversing the entrenched political divides. The disturbance by dissident subcultures of a naturalising ‘monopoly of plausibility’, such as is claimed by the dominant, should

always be amplified and accentuated in order for a political critique of culture to have any effect. In the context of the Balkans, it is the only possible way, where un-freedom still looms large, to resist complacency and the further depletion of the political power of the subordinated.

DISCUSSANTS:

<p>Edina Husanović Discussion on Cultural Advocacy Networks</p>
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Independent cultural organisations and cultural projects that have been formed in B&H and other ex Yugoslavian countries during the 1990s have all had one defining factor: they were all financed by international funders, rather than national and local governments. These organisations were financially autonomous from the government, but the question is whether these were really ‘independent’ organisations. The proliferation of cultural projects in Former Yugoslavia in the late 90s was the direct consequence of international policy of promoting transition to market economies, executed jointly by EU, CoE, UN, individual European governments, and NGOs. One of the main goals of the policy has been to promote structural change in cultural field of Former Yugoslavian countries. Introduction and support of cultural networks within and between ex Yugoslavian countries was seen to help the de-centralisation of the previous system.

However, as we saw in Aida Kalender’s presentation, there has not been any significant change in the government offices responsible for culture – ‘they isolate themselves from the external influences trying to preserve status quo remaining from the socialist system’, and without transparency distribute public budgets for culture.

But in the light of the fact that independent cultural organisations in Bosnia have been operating for some ten years or more, it is worth examining their contribution to the present situation. Why hasn’t there been more of an impact from the new independent cultural organisations on the structural and policy changes of the cultural sector in B&H?

What is going to be cultural network advocacy strategy that is really going to affect the change in the government machine? Is this new system going to be truly transparent and inclusive? Will it truly include cultural organisations from all parts of Bosnia, rather than, as it has been the case previously, remain limited to Sarajevo context? How is it going to keep its independence, in the light of fact that it is going to be internationally funded? How is it going to overcome the problem of short-termism that is afflicting almost all internationally funded projects in B&H?

A recently conceived government-led cultural youth project in Tuzla – NOVA ENERGIJA (‘New Energy’) is an example of a charismatic leadership of a young town mayor of Tuzla. The project has been initiated with the aim of connecting young Bosnian cultural producers living outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the young cultural producers inside Bosnia and Herzegovina. This project has worthy aims, but what is really innovative about NOVA ENERGIJA is the fact that the local government is taking positive steps to initiate a partnership between local youth cultural organisations. Despite myriad of other problems associated with this project (patriarchal and prescriptive attitude of local government, provincialisation of government cultural strategy, isolation from other Bosnian cities and cantons, especially with the entity of Republika Srpska), this example shows a pro-active government that takes responsibility for culture and young people. The turn-around in the behaviour of the local government was

not affected from the outside, but from the inside, by the election of a ‘culture-conscious’ and forward thinking mayor.

In the end I would like to point out another obstacle for creating integrated cultural policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina: **the incongruity between the international political influence and international cultural policy has to be addressed before any changes in cultural field are sought.** Bosnia and Herzegovina has been carved up by the Dayton Accord in 1995 by ethnic lines ignoring the multicultural and multi-ethnic essence of this country. Nowadays artists from the different entities are directed by international sources to make cultural links with each other, despite the fact that the country remains politically and constitutionally divided.

Šejla Šehabović

Discussion on the critical problematisation of cultural praxis, and the institutionalisation and organisation of cultural policy

What became obvious from what we have heard today, is that there are several problems whose identification has to be done before we take any steps into developing self-sustainable, organised system, framework or a network, a hub of resources for the way out of the “status quo” state in Bosnian culture, ten years after Dayton. I would underline two of the problems that all the panellists were mentioning in their papers:

- A chaos in the institutions of culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina (on economic, ideological and organisational level) and
- A lack of any critical problematisation of cultural praxis.

My research mainly discusses ideological use of oral tradition in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but has to do in many ways with contemporary Bosnian culture. Just like our panellists said, I have found that so far, institutional politics considering literature in general, especially oral literature tradition, in the area of culture and education never had a critical approach. Problematizing “great national stories” can bring us to the new way of imagining culture and public life of Bosnia and Herzegovina – oral tradition, especially lyrical one, has a special sensitivity to gender issues, which has been undermined and never used (not that it has never been abused!) as a potential of Bosnian culture. A research of historical patterns which bring us to today’s autistic society has a potential to involve strengths of academic life – a new approaches of using this material of culture in opening institutional (especially educational and artistic) frame to progressive praxis.

As Aida Kalender said, external support is essential in order to bring out the strengths of Bosnian society towards the emancipatory policies in our culture. A chaos in the institutions that are supposed to take care about Bosnian culture and public life is going side by side with lack of critical approach. What we need nowadays is institutionalising marginalised cultural critic, such as, for example, feministic approach. I believe that what Damir found in contemporary Bosnian poetry of marginalised voices, can be applied to the cultural critic: those who are neglected and abandoned have the strongest potential of problematising cultural issues and developing a space for cultural production.

This has to do with a statement that I have read from Tanja Miletic's research about theatre and local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Bosnian society has no bounds between cultural production and community. Something which, like Tanja said, was traditionally the agent between cultural production and community, nowadays is a non-organised and inactive system which is supporting cultural institutions in reproducing the same pattern. Therefore, I believe that the first steps into developing emancipatory policy of Bosnian culture must be taken in a organising an institutional framework that will deconstruct a present institutions of culture. Ten years after Dayton we have to deal with 1) bringing cultural institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina to do what they are paid for and 2) organising a network of individuals working in field of cultural production and theory which can give us critical problematisation of cultural praxis. I strongly believe that the keywords of this process are: institutionalising and organisation.

Damir Imamović

Discussion on culture and Emancipation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the country for which the Dayton agreement provides a framework, relationship between culture and politics never fails to confuse us. Hoping that «emancipation» is a concept central for any just politics, I would like us to question a relationship between emancipation and culture.

There are two main strands of emancipatory strategies in Bosnia&Herzgovina and they are both visible (though again in a confusing way) when the question of culture is discussed. I would propose the following distinction:

1. Emancipation in a narrow sense as emancipation from rigid ethnic/national conception(s) of culture towards some kind of civil society of a liberal type

This type of emancipatory claims takes on the ethnic/national exclusivity as a main problem and no 1 target of any emancipatory efforts. They struggle against rigid nationalists, want to work on Bosnian & Herzegovinian identity, dream about a «Bosnian nation» above all particular ethnic identities, work on a new Constitution and mostly remain blind towards majority of other requests for recognition. Representatives of this point of view in many cases still opt for some kind of traditional values, request «normal», «habitual», «transcendental», «true» Bosnia&Herzegovina, etc. Many of them seek for some source of identification other than ethnic/national, be it regional etc. Their main paradox is that «French republic» type of a set up asks for a one common identity – citizen of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bosnian, Bosnian Republic, one nation of equal citizens, etc. Precisely that is lacking and the recent war was fought along that line.

2. Emancipation in a wider sense, or radical emancipation

Emancipatory claims of this type radically question one-sided critique of ethnic nationalism. They go further from a mere critique of nationalism that led to the recent war and deals with issues that are common to all mechanisms of social exclusion.

Although representatives from the second group would criticise a point of view of those from the first as still being too obsessed with ethnic identities, this first type of emancipatory claims still have rights to call

itself «emancipatory» when compared with rigid nationalists whose main agenda is keeping the country divided along the lines established by ethnic cleansing.

General feeling is that representatives of the second group are radically left. If the first type of emancipatory claims would work, representatives of that conception would become conservatives and those who opt for radical emancipation would become a true left. Then we would have a situation in which one might say that conservatives speak of common good and left speaks of differences.

But, in this political set-up the state is not functional and they are not sure what they are fighting against. Paradoxically, extreme left sometimes speak of things that keep us together and conservatives admit differences.

How does the culture come in play here?

Art of politics in B&H is radically forbidden by the set-up of Dayton Constitution. It is more true and obvious as the time goes by. In the years after the war, we still had some voices in parliamentary life of the country who tried to work out of the nationalistic set-up of the country (those efforts were of course paradoxical, say «Republicans» led by Stjepan Kljuić were actually a Left when compared to ruling SDA-SDS-HDZ coalition). But most of these voices were domesticated by the Dayton framework of the country (along the same line: Stjepan Kljuić is today an adviser to Ivo Miro Jović, Croatian, i. e. HDZ representative in the Presidency).

The only field in which emancipatory concepts (in both above mentioned ways) are still alive is the field of cultural production. Artist in B&H are the only ones who are not obliged to politics, only they possess the «language», the «red ink» mentioned by Damir Arsenijević.

An example of political engagement – Dubioza Kolektiv : «Fighting with wisdom for Bosnian Kingdom»!

This statement by a band Dubioza Kolektiv had a lot of resonance in B&H. When we analyse it, we see that it definitely goes in the first group of emancipatory claims. The band Dubioza Kolektiv clearly states several things:

1. They want *to fight for something*, they are not a music group concerned only with circulation of their CDs and money they can make
2. They want to fight *with wisdom*, they are aware that what they want to achieve takes time, patience, wits. Generally – it takes wisdom!
3. They want to fight for *Bosnian Kingdom*. The «Bosnian Kingdom» brings in mind medieval kingdom of Bosnia, land of «bogumiles». It can be interpreted in different ways – as a nationalistic statement, as an expression of once existing unity of B&H, etc.

Other artists in B&H have other agendas in their work, many of them explicitly political (Šejla Kamerić, Andrej Đerković...). Some of them think seriously along the lines of one of those emancipatory claims mentioned above, some of them are actually extremely nationalistic and in the lack of official «states ideology» accept national identifications and pursue it in their work (in that way, work of Omer Pobrić on *sevdalinka* also has a strong political background).

Emancipation/politics/culture

Viewed as a whole, thinking of those who produce culture had to change after the fall of socialism. Some of them pursue some kind of emancipatory strategies, some of them stick to their ethnic/national identities,

but in general – we must be aware that they finally started having political agendas other than those they were obliged to believe in by the country's political constitutions. There are several distinctions we have to point out here:

1. Many producers of culture (artists, intellectuals, journalists, actors, film makers, etc.) do not use their artistic freedom and still go along the line of some vague political framework of ruling parties. They call it emancipatory having in mind that «their people» is finally free to have its own cultural production.
2. Some of them use the freedom to send the message but their message is still bound to main political divisions of the last 20 years (they mainly fall into the first type of emancipatory claims)
3. Some of them radically question the entire political framework (they mainly fall into the second type of emancipatory claims). They are very few of producers of culture who have awareness of such a radical outreach. They are usually intellectuals in touch with trends of international theory and a very few artists who are radical enough to explore on the other side of ethnic divisions.

All of these distinctions are provisory and should be debated upon.

Chair:

Jasmina Husanović

(Lecturer in cultural studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla. She holds a BA in Politics with International Studies from the University of Warwick UK, as well as a PhD from the Department of International Politics, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK. Her doctoral thesis was on the topic "Recasting Political Community and Emancipatory Politics: Reflections on Bosnia". Her research interests span some universal issues in political philosophy, sociology and cultural studies, viewed through Bosnian optics. She is the President of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Research, Art and Civic Engagement "The City".)

Keynote Speaker:

Nikola Kovač

(Former Ambassador; currently professor of literature, University of Sarajevo)

Presenters:

Aida Kalender

(She is a journalist and an art manager from Sarajevo. She produced the wartime radio show "Rock Under Siege" at the Radio ZID Sarajevo and published many articles on cultural subjects in magazines and newspapers in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Ljubljana. She was professionally active in the Obala Arts Centre in Sarajevo for a number of years, and was the manager of a cultural NGO Action in Sarajevo. She also organized various concerts, seminars, conferences and projects in the field of cultural production and alternative youth culture/music. She is currently studying for an MA degree in Art and Media Management in European Context at the Utrecht School of Arts (HKU). Her research interests include various topics concerning the development of cultural industry and related youth initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.)

Tanja Miletić-Oručević

(Her undergraduate degrees were in comparative literature and in intermedia directing studies. She holds an MA from the Department of Theatre Directing Studies of the State Theatre Academy (PWST) in Krakow, Poland. She directed around 15 professional theatre plays in Krakow, Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla and Mostar (amongst the more prominent ones are "Snake Skin Shedding" written by Slobodan Snajder, "Shopping & F***ing" by M. Ravenhill, "Cleansed" by Sarah Kane, Feral Tribune Cabaret, etc.). She teaches the course in Acting at the Department of Theatre Arts at the Faculty of Humanities, University "Dzemail Bijedic" Mostar, as the senior assistant and the coordinator of the Department. She translates various literary works from English and Polish language into local languages.)

Damir Arsenijević

(He obtained a double First Class BA Honours degree in English and International Relations from De Montfort University in Leicester, UK and was the first recipient of the Michael Cunningham Memorial Award for his undergraduate dissertation in the area of conflict resolution and peace studies. He continued on to postgraduate studies in international relations, and received a Master's degree with distinction for his thesis, which studied the role of international organisations in promoting democracy in Kosovo. Currently, Arsenijević is an AHRC doctoral candidate and a visiting lecturer in the School of English at De Montfort University. His area of research is the relationship between Bosnian poetry and politics from the late 1980s to date. He is a published translator of poetry, literary theory and essays on cultural studies from Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and English.)

Discussants:

Damir Imamović

(He graduated in philosophy and sociology at the University of Sarajevo, where his dissertation dealt with the experience of the strange in the philosophy of E. Husserl. He is a translator of various works in the area of humanities and social sciences from English and German. He is also a musician with a particular interest in 'sevdah' music. Currently, he works as the editor of the Buybook edition of philosophy books "Bricolage", as well as the manager of the Buybook programme for the development of public dialogue "Inter Nos".)

Edina Husanović

(She is an artist and researcher based in London. Edina Husanovic is an artist and researcher, born in Bosnia and based in London. In 2000 she graduated from BA Honours in Fine Art (Sculpture) at Sheffield Hallam University, and in 2003 she completed MA in Cultural Policy and Management at the same university. In 2002 she did field research in the Balkans exploring artists' attitudes to the EU policy of promoting cultural networks between artists from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. Currently Edina Husanovic is working as a lecturer at London College of Fashion, while turning her artistic focus to producing work through drawing and dance performance. She is also an activist in a number of projects and networks of artists in the South-Eastern Europe, Bosnia and the UK.)

Šejla Šehabović

(She obtained her degree in literature from the Philosophy Faculty, University of Tuzla, and is currently doing a Master's degree in Literature in Postmodernity. She is a member of the editorial board of the journal for critique and art of theory Razlika/Difference, and is a regular contributor to the electronic journal for literature and art Treci trg. Her research interests include literary history and feminist studies. Her poetry and short stories have been published in various magazines and books in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. Her literary work received many accolades and she has been a recipient of various prestigious prizes and awards throughout the region and internationally, in the sphere of literature and poetry. She works as a teacher of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language and literature in the High Grammar School "Ismet Mujezinovic" in Tuzla, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Art, Research, and Civic Engagement "The City".)