Chapter 8
Resisting the Culture of Trauma in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Emancipatory Lessons for/in Cultural and Knowledge Production

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Life is governed through a *culture of terror as usual* (Taussig 1984, 1992).[1] This sentence, I believe, aptly metaphorises the material experience of precarious subjectivities caught in multiple complex emergencies affecting lives, labour and thought today, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). Michael Taussig's term *terror as usual* is understood as something that, through its 'irregular rhythms of numbing and shock', constitutes 'the apparent normality of the abnormal created by the state of emergency' (Taussig 1992, p. 12). In B&H, this state of *terror as usual* is created, on the one hand, by the effects of the war, and especially traumas related to the continuous state of emergency related to the excavations of mass graves and ongoing traumas related to the missing persons, and, on the other hand, by the continuous appropriations and governing of both the dead and the traumas of the living for the benefit of ethno-nationalist, neoliberal politics. Mass graves become the sites of continuous production of 'human waste' that in turn becomes a site of governing the living.

According to Michael Taussig, to 'understand our reality as a chronic state of emergency, as a Nervous System', is to recognize its 'terror as usual', visible in the 'the political Art of the Arbitrary' (ibid., 13, 11, 2) as a nexus of 'illusions of order congealed by fear' (ibid., p. 2) and reproduced through an overarching obscurity between order and disorder, rule and exception. This 'apparent normality of the abnormal created by the state of emergency' (ibid., p. 13) underpins arbitrarily the core of social experience in B&H for more than two decades, with unrelenting intensity and worsening political, economic and cultural-symbolic conditions of life for its citizens. The past two decades have undoubtedly brought forward new forms of global governance that accompanied wars at the turn of the twenty-first century, forming a complex 'development–security terrain' and its multiple emergencies (Duffield 2001) which pose serious challenges to emancipatory politics.

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[1] I refer here to the terms 'culture of terror' and 'terror as usual' as developed in the inspiring anthropological works by Michael Taussig. See Taussig 1984.

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Various colonising structures and agents within this development–security complex in B&H navigate the playing field embellished with banners of reconciliation and reconstruction, peace and development. These have also framed it as a place 'transitioning' to 'something', whilst undergoing post-atrocity, post-Yugoslav, post-war, post-socialist, post-conflict, post-Dayton ordeals. B&H has become a stand-in for a community in need of intervention until order is restored, and such intervention presumes various 'gifts' handed to the country by the 'international community'—democracy, capitalism, justice, peace, and so forth. It is worth mentioning that the wave of 'postisms' attributed to the operative discourses of governmentality and practices of statecraft in B&H has been matched in the field of action by a team of 'neo's' (neoliberal, neocolonial, neoconservative, neofascist, neoracist).

A particular implosion of 'gifts' and the projects and ideals of freedom, equality and justice (Balibar 1994)[2] they rest upon, as well as the emergence of a distinct security–development terrain, can be traced in the political economy of remembrance and witnessing, and the overall politics of loss and affect in B&H and its region. In this regard, a spectre haunting this chapter is a series of personal stories and collective endeavours to intervene in and through knowledge production into this context which turns everyday life into *terror as usual*. Thus, this chapter reflects, first, on the ways terrors and traumas are incorporated in the institutional and everyday politics, by examining practices of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) and its relation to the people, the state and the politics it serves. Second, this chapter also focuses on the possibilities for the emancipatory politics that resists the politics of terror as usual and strives for the politics of hope. Such politics of hope is found in the intersections of critical pedagogies of academia, arts and activism as collaborative sites of production of a different kind of knowledge. Some interesting projects of solidarity and hopeful politics give us an opportunity to rethink new modes of struggle against inequality, and reclaim critical pedagogical conditions and visions of transformative politics.

My insights here are based on extensive individual and collaborative research, fieldwork and activism in the past 20 years through several formal and informal projects concerning the politics of witnessing to trauma in B&H, former Yugoslav region and internationally, where various materials, corpora and methods of research have been used (individual interviews, focus groups, archive research, print and electronic media, textual analysis, participant observation). Perhaps, the key lesson of this personal and collective engagement has been to respond to the following imperative: to position themselves critically in their academic and public work demands from scholars to engage in a specific 'art of diversion, which is a return of the ethical, of pleasure and of invention within the scientific institution' (de Certeau 1984). Producing such a setting, however, is a matter of collective intellectual and political enterprise and creative work in the horizon of hope, solidarity and social change. In these collaborative cooperatives of critical knowledge production, one must find a response to the emergency-induced hysterias, numbness or acceptance around us,

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[2]Or what Étienne Balibar calls the proposition of égaliberté, equaliberty. See Étienne Balibar 1994.

fighting against resentment, envy, nostalgia and despair as the predominant affective mechanisms of the culturalised governance of terror and trauma and regimes of knowledge that accompany them. What follows is a contribution in this direction: a reflection on the governing of terror and trauma, as well as on the emancipatory potential in particular interventions against this governance of life and death.

A broad theme of many academic and activist platforms, concerned with the politics of terror and trauma, has been a critique of specific technologies of culturalised governance of life in B&H, going hand in hand with productive public interventions concerning the politics of abject, atrocity, trauma and terror in the past two decades. In my own work, I have engaged with practices and discourses critical of the statecraft behind the 'transitional justice' industry and institutional and symbolic regimes of governing the persons 'missing' materially, socially or politically, the dead and the living, their symbolic geographies of loss and remnant inscribed in a *no man's land* between *mass grave* and *ghetto*. The symbolic geographies of violence and terror are hard to 'illustrate' despite the abundance of empirics—they are, however, perpetually lived in the bodies of those caught in the vortex of various operative discourses, narratives, regimes and technologies of governance, squashed in the clinch of ethno-nationalist and neoliberal forms of authority operative in the public spaces of B&H. It is an apocalyptic sight, considering a perpetual loss of human bodies, capacities and material resources spiralling down for more than 20 years.

In the foggy business of *terror as usual,* new heuristic tools are required to discern those operative technologies of governing people (codification in science, law and identity politics) and the ways in which they permeate everyday life experiences, cultural production and forms of life in B&H. How then, through knowledge production as public activism, are we to challenge the institutionalised imaginaries which quilt around signifiers and materialities of 'mass grave' and 'ghetto', as metaphors for human waste produced by identity politics, both globally and in the post-Yugoslav context? Critical lessons of the politics of witnessing to trauma of 'the missing', which emerge from this context, should come from fieldwork engaging with the emancipatory gestures that think and act against the traumatic technologies and regimes of power in (inter)national politics, enacted in B&H, and globally. How are we to contextualise important practices in the field of knowledge production, critical pedagogies, art and social activism, which radically question the merging of ethno-nationalist and neoliberal regimes of power and violence into ethno-corporate regimes, through specific post-atrocity orders of governance and their colonisation of the whole spheres of public and everyday life? This chapter starts from the assumption that the field of cultural production and knowledge production is a battlefield for the public good. It has transformative potentials for the politics of hope, rejecting the foreclosure of the horizons of possibility and plausibility, and resisting the very politics which produces this foreclosure—the terror of racist, colonial and patriarchal technologies of the human, exemplified at the level of everyday life.

Governance of Affect and Abject in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ghettoes and Mass Graves as Everyday Life and Terror as Usual

In 2008 and 2009, as part of collaborative research and activist platforms and projects in the region, I have tried to engage critically with the particular regimes of governing the trauma of missing persons by analysing the areas of work conducted by ICMP under the headings of 'telling the story of a mass grave' and 'mapping a genocide' as stated in the ICMP factsheet at the time.[3] Doing the ethnographic work, which navigated several ICMP's facilities and processes of identification of missing persons, meant witnessing to the near-abject experiences where hard science of ICMP's identification process engages with the politics of terror materialised in mass graves. Behind the screens and languages of forensic sciences as the leading engine in the service of truth and justice, with special projects such as the Forensic Database Management System (FDMS), we undergo a peculiar undoing of our own humanity and politicality, for what we witness is terror which reeks of our ongoing subjection and dehumanisation. Whether it is in the visceral response to the odour in the storages and halls of Podrinje Identification Project Mortuary in Tuzla,[4] in the words and images that oversaturate us in the Lukavac Reassociation Centre or in the laboratories, offices and computers of the Identification Coordination Centre,[5] we see how our losses and our remains are being tabulated and indexed in the world of new forms of political authority managing atrocity.

My archive of stories and resources still awaits a systematic articulation, and I will here only sketch out a particular instance. As a researcher, you are, for instance, given a tutorial in the FDMS, a part of the so-called Bosnian technology of DNA identification (as it is referred to in relevant research), a software produced by local ICMP IT staff and invented module by module, as a response to the challenges of identification in B&H. This is now a global technology for identification of persons killed by political violence or natural disasters. Folders open up, named by the name of the country affected, containing subfolders entitled 'blood' and 'bone', storing the DNA markers of the dead and the living family members which are codified through a chain of letter and numbers, a barcode, specific to each individual. A hyper-scientific language processes the horror of mass graves and human remains in former Yugoslavia through barcodes and collectively stores them in folders: *B&H blood, B&H bone, Kosovo blood, Kosovo bone, Croatia blood, Croatia bone*. Above the computer, you see a plate decorating each work station and office desk—with

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[3]Retrieved in 2008 from ICMP's website, http://www.ic-mp.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/fact-sheet-eng1.pdf. It is worth quoting some of its list items here:
Science in Service of Truth and Justice: Forensic Sciences
Telling the Story of a Mass Grave:
A Profile of the Missing
Irrefutable Evidence of Identity
Public Involvement: Civil Society Initiatives
Special Projects: Mapping a Genocide; Paths to Reconciliation
Finding Long-term Solutions: Institution-Building.

[4]http://www.ic-mp.org/facilities/podrinje-identification-project-pip-mortuary/.

[5]http://www.ic-mp.org/resources/photos/a-brief-look-at-icmp-dna-identification-process/.

name and position of employee, his/her photo, and a graph of their DNA. These are the people handling the FDMS, forensics implemented to counter the effects of political violence, to the highest international and global standards. The 'home made' forensic identification of blood and bones in the countries of former Yugoslavia is done at a fraction of the cost a foreign, professional software company would ask for. This is a technology which is 'so cool and so cheap' as I was able to hear an ICMP official say repeatedly to international officials visiting their facilities (its cost efficiency being measured in 'Euros per [dead] head'). FDMS surely represents an excellent tool from the perspective of international humanitarian management, forensics or bioinformatics, as the work it does is scientifically and technically admirable. This technology produces particular knowledge, techniques and political effects around us that are not just about the supreme ethical gesture of identifying the missing persons and 'bringing them back to their family and closest ones through the means of science', as the usual ICMP discourse goes, for we are far from the 'truth and justice' being delivered to the remnant community.

How science is put in the service of truth and justice in the public arena by the national and international post-conflict regimes governing grief, trauma of loss should be a matter of closer scrutiny. In B&H, the ongoing crisis still surrounds the material abject of the catastrophe in the 1990s. The materialised remnants of genocide are part of the ongoing trade in the politics of memory, dominating the public sphere. Rampant political economies that serve the very same projects that produced violence, that destroyed, impoverished and ghettoised lives reveal today unquenched appetites for power amongst both the old and new elites and institutions which manage trauma and govern destitution. Their symbolic order is embroidered with diligent work on identity, culture and religion, and blood and territory, through various forms of populist ethno-nationalism as well as neoliberal multiculturalism. Life is stripped of political or economic relevance at everyday level, and turned into a permanent security issue, while death and loss and their resulting and ongoing traumas are turned into the items of governance of everyday life.

To understand both the governance of trauma and the terror as usual as universal predicaments in B&H politics, one must realise the common goal of various strategies of statecraft, or sovereignty, through the mechanisms of exclusion and segregation, on the one hand, and appropriation and politicisation, on the other. And, one must look at their outcome. The outcome of the terror as usual is an aggregation of lives in ghettoes. What better example for a ghetto ending in mass graves than the infamous category of international protection—'safe zones' / 'safe areas' in the 1990s war in B&H, or simply Srebrenica. Today, almost two decades after Srebrenica, ghettoes in B&H do not result in mass graves but contain masses of lives and multitude of experiences with intensified 'levels of blight, poverty and hardship', by being reduced and relegated to 'the status of a social anomaly and being deprived of control over one's collective representation and identity', (Wacquant 1993) as well as one's bare life and livelihood. Deployed as a strategy of 'tying the undesirable to the ground', and with the task to immobilise and confine,[6] ghettoisation is a process constitutive

[6]Bauman 2001. There is, according to Bauman, a difference between the true ghettos (denial of freedom and security, such to peripheries populated by the poor, and the false 'voluntary ghettoes' safeguarding freedom and security, such as the EU.

to the 'waste-disposal mechanisms' that operate over the living bodies and lives of those who are no longer useful to state, to capital, to nation (ethnic group, etc.) (Bauman 2001, p. 120), resulting in destitution.

The outcome of the governance of trauma and its scientific, mathematical, sanitized technologies of excavations of mass graves is production of political discourses and practices of commercialization and appropriation of the missing dead and the loss and grief of the living, for the benefit of ethno-corporate statecraft, nationally and internationally. The twin faces of trauma and destitution are the common grounds for the perpetuation of ideological myths and construed threats behind ethno-nationalist, as well as neoliberal–multiculturalist politics which share many interests in the contemporary political and economic governance of life, through its inscription into 'normal' order and 'natural' territory. The citizens and their remnants in Bosnian and Herzegovinian ghettoes are produced by the trauma of sovereignty constitutive to various practices of governmentality, whilst a materialised ideology of the sovereign fantasies to render society and life governable is normalized on the level of everyday life. Resisting the governability with its sovereign fetishes is a question of political life or death for those whose bare life as labour power is violated into human slum and violence overtaking the field in public instantiations of affect and abject.

If *ghetto* is a metaphor of human life governed as social and political waste, and produced by spatialized violence of slum, alienation and politics of inequality, another dominant cipher of this politics of abject, *mass grave* is a metaphor for the absolute human waste, for dead bodies produced by specific political projects and violence masked in the phantasm of identitarian orders. In the identification processes of missing persons in former Yugoslavia, the postmortem waste in a mass grave is associated with concrete political and social meanings, which re-inscribe it into the symbolic order and political projects at stake, and do so through the languages of law, science and ethnicity/religion. The political economies surrounding mass grave multiply if we also understand it as a metonymy of the post-atrocity order in B&H. In other words, governing technologies and authorities emerging after mass atrocity can be viewed as a specific instantiation of the politics of trauma, even when it comes as the gift of therapeutic/transitional justice through legal, administrative or scientific means. Such attempts to master 'trauma time' through managing 'its affects', as *the political* time *par excellence,* take various institutionalised forms in the arena of international justice. However, institutions acting punitively towards the violations of freedom and security internationally are in a poor state and often in a serious crisis of legitimacy (Wastell 2010).

When confronted with the wasteland produced through genocide and the actualised ideology of reconciliation, we must rethink the governing of (post-)genocidal trauma in the politics of missing persons as something which currently goes hand in hand with the very politics of terror as usual, and identification based on blood and bone of ethno-national kinship. This is 'what the facts mean' in B&H. The politics of missing persons enacted through the work of ICMP is also a specific instantiation of the politics of trauma in the guise of 'therapeutic/transitional justice'. My

studies of the politics of witnessing in the language of law, art and science[7] have charted some ways of contextualising and empiricising global administration, management and codification of trauma, as an attempt to think and act against the new/old (inter)national forms of political authority within operative economies of loss and dominant politics of memory.

Thus, symbolic geographies of DNA technology and forensics, as well as narratives of justice and reconciliation at political and societal level, share a dominant mechanism of governance: the management of affect and indexation of its abject results in post-atrocity settings. They rest on specific illusions fortified by fear, specific decontextualisations and depoliticisations evident in practices and institutions of international jurisprudence. The paradigm of therapeutic governance of trauma which contains the categories of transitional and restorative justice has been rightly criticised in scholarship for its disconnection from the political, and reduction on the language of law, bureaucracy, administration, science and identitarian politics, and its tendency to obscure or culturalise the problem of the political origins of violence. When science and law—rationalisation and order—are put in the service of truth and justice, the emergent strategies of social repair in the aftermath of atrocity, built on the discourses of human rights and humanitarianism, reveal the actual nature of the relationship between states and their citizens in moments of crisis and disorder (Wagner 2008). Studying the ICMP means telling the story about reinserting 'the missing back into the embrace of the state or nation' that will insert them right back into identitarian political trades, and building 'mechanisms for tabulating losses and indexing post-disaster/post-conflict political will' (ibid., p. 255).

I have shown elsewhere how a deep suspicion of all processes outside the law of science leaves the space of the extralegal to be occupied by the mobilisation of affect through mythologisation, denial, technicalisation, bureaucratisation or medicalisation, entrenching narratives of national loss or triumph in the public sphere that obscure the question of political origins of violence, as well as avoid responsibility for the 'repair' of destroyed sociality.[8] Reducing politics to administration, pathologising communities and failing to condemn, delegitimize or overthrow violence in the very foundations and conditions of society have resulted in all-encompassing demoralisation of political subjects navigating the reconciliation and development terrain in the previous decade (for more information, please see Pupavac 2004, 2005). Additionally, a treacherous concept of 'national kinship' (and the idea of imaginary continuity between power, right to territory and historical authority) (Petrović-Šteger 2008) has suffused the international paradigm of transitional justice, including the production of 'expert knowledge' in the sphere of 'rule of law', 'reconciliation'

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[7]Jasmina Husanović, *Između traume, nade i imaginacije: Kritički ogledi o kulturnoj produkciji i emancipativnoj politici*. Belgrade 2010; Jasmina Husanović, 'Ka emancipativnoj politici svjedočenja: politika nestalih kao vladanje traumom kroz kodifikaciju, matematizaciju i depolitizaciju', public lecture presented *at Mathemes of Reassociation* exhibition, October Salon, 28 August 2008, Belgrade; Husanović 2009; Husanović 2007.

[8]Jasmina Husanović, 'Ka emancipativnoj politici svjedočenja: politika nestalih kao vladanje traumom kroz kodifikaciju, matematizaciju i depolitizaciju'; Jasmina Husanović, 'Etičko-politička zaviještanja lica i ožiljaka: bosanske priče i traume kao imenice ženskog roda u množini'.

and 'trust-building' initiatives. Identitarian terror in this symbiosis of neoliberal and ethno-nationalist regimes obscures the fact that the terrain of B&H continues to be a laboratory for the 'punitive regulation of poverty' and 'punitive politics of marginality' (Wacquant 2011) in the neoliberal age, with an ethno-corporate twist.[9]

How, then, to think and resist politically the culture of trauma compounded by the everyday terror as usual? How to produce critical social practice? This task demands from us further work and new forms of cooperative efforts in public spaces of thinking and acting nationally and internationally, by bringing together critically important instances of knowledge production, social activism and art in the form of public classrooms and interventions. Certain gestures and interventions in the field of art, theory and activism can anchor us in this regard, through hopeful imaginaries and solidarities necessary for transformative actions and subjectivities concerning the terror of inequality in a society organised through the logic of poverty, corruption and banality (Sullivan 2002). The argument is that critical knowledge and cultural production have to face the abject behind violence and exploitation hidden in the cloaks of ethno-capitalism, through affective politicality and commonality, through vigorous work on the emergence of agents, solidarities, visions, means and spaces necessary for the politics of equality, through the inventive art of the ordinary, in the face of terror.

On Critical Pedagogies, Art and Social Activism: Interventions Towards Hopeful Politics

In the academic sphere that suffers from the usual symptoms of post-atrocity order, evident in various public institutions (including universities), a challenge to talk and 'teach' about subjects such as the culture of trauma or the politics of terror, without perpetuating the same logic of violence, remains unanswered. What, indeed, can be seen as emancipatory in knowledge production, when the social logic of commodification extends to all common goods, including knowledge, using strategies of ghettoisation to govern precarious life and its labour power necessary for production and consumption? The position of students and critical educators in public universities, which are caught in the ethno-corporate matrix of feudal struggles in heartless institutions (Flecha 2008), attests both to the precarization of cognitive labour and our capacity for public collective action and to the management of 'us' as precarious subjectivities in the public sphere and labour market. In the complex

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[9] 'Ethno-corporatism or ethno-materialism refers to a group or groups of people unified by a common corporate or material culture but displaying distinct characteristics of an ethnic group. A definition for an ethno-corporate identity would be based upon the conflation of user or customer culture (including brand or trademark loyalty) with decidedly-ethnic overtones (marriage within the culture, ethnic self-classification based upon user or customer ancestry, etc.); as a result, an ethno-corporate identity would not be exclusively based upon ethnic ancestry but also upon corporate or material usage, sponsorship and adherence'. Retrieved from http://en.anarchopedia.org/ethnocorporatism, 8 March 2012.

emergencies besetting the academic knowledge production and its agents, neoliberalism once again appears as a 'theatre of cruelty' (Giroux 2010, pp. 49–70), a mode of biopolitical governance through cultural politics that produces 'new forms of subjectivity and particular forms of conduct' through its own 'cultural politics of subjectification and self-regulation' (ibid., p. 51). In the academic spaces intersecting B&H, neoliberalist governance comes in a double act with another theatre of cruelty, ethno-nationalism, which has already produced ethno/religious identity-based forms of subjectivity and ensuing forms of conduct, leaving devastating consequences for the horizon of education.

What has to be stressed is that neoliberalism (as well as ethno-nationalism), in B&H and beyond, has become a pedagogical force that threatens any critical thought and action, mobilising all pores of everyday life to 'legitimate its norms, values, institutions and social practices' and normalize its regime of common sense and reductive notion of political rationality (ibid). Therefore, 'neoliberalism has to be understood and challenged as both an economic theory and a powerful public pedagogy and cultural politics' (ibid., p. 61) which violates and exploits in the actual contexts of precarity our universities, workplaces, streets, communities, etc. in order to dissolve our capacity for political action (Touraine 2001). Neoliberal, ethno-nationalist and racist public pedagogy and cultural politics is evidently on the increase in the post-national Europe too, dissolving our capacities for transformation. Many transversal practices, subjectivities and emancipatory potentials resist this dissolution, reclaiming transformative politicality and sociality in the public field, at the intersections of art and knowledge production, social activism and critical pedagogies. As Giroux's imperative goes:

> Under the reign of neoliberal globalization, it is crucial for intellectuals and others to develop better theoretical frameworks for understanding how power, politics, and pedagogy as a political and moral practice work in the service of neoliberalism to secure consent, to normalize authoritarian policies and practices, and to erase a history of struggle and injustice. The stakes are too high to ignore such a task. We live in dark times and the spectre of neoliberalism and other modes of authoritarianism are gaining ground throughout the globe. We need to rethink the meaning of global politics in the new millennium and part of that challenge suggests the necessity to 'recognize that equality and freedom, class and culture, as ineluctably linked.' Doing so offers educators and others the possibility to take new risks, develop a new vitalized sense of civic struggle, and exercise the courage necessary to reclaim the pedagogical conditions, visions, and economic projects that make the promise of a democracy and a different future worth fighting for (Giroux 2010, p. 66).

What can be our lessons in this direction? Lessons from the experience of actual struggles to repoliticise the current governance of trauma and logic of commodification; lessons of working in social institutions in the hands of the ruling regimes; and lessons of intervening into the knowledge production on the margins, in the interstices escaping the political/economic rationality of 'recognizable deliverables' and 'usefulness' present in dominant matrices of governing? What is the position of these valuable remnants of subjectivities, sites and struggles that hold emancipatory potential? I repeatedly take as a starting point Frank Seeburger's insight that 'it is only as such remnants, or at that level of ourselves where each of us is just such a good-for-nothing, ready-to-be-discarded remnant, that we can be encountered in

our pure singularity, our "ipseity"... to distinguish it from our "identity", which is always a matter of social construction and ... "symbolic investiture"' (Seeburger 2010). Only through the struggle with and within this 'remnant position' can we realise the traumatic fact that we are always already human waste, whose economic and political value is that of 'usable bodies', objectified through fears of having no protection by state/nation/capital, staring in the face of the political art of the arbitrary (Mezzadra and Neilson 2003). Bare life as labour power, precarity and migration, violence and waste are the facts of our everyday life, in the clutches of the dominant political imagination whose hidden ciphers remain wavering between ghetto and death, between 'safe zones' and mass graves.

Perhaps, then, it is time to put the spotlight on the *ipseity* of our labour: to start from the very capacity of the body exploited for the purpose of profit to catch the threads of emancipatory politics. In the context of our plunging transition, for the bodies and for the remnants of our sociality, politicality and solidarity, where and when do we dare ask about the economies and geographies of exploitation surrounding remnants of genocide? Recycling bodies and erasing bare/precarious life as a trade in humanness/humanity around us are *difficult questions*. And how to deal with the abject/affect which floods over in excess when we unravel the stories and uncover the political economies around us?

The answer to the politics of atrocity, racism, inequality and terror will *not* be found in the institutional academic space. Rather, the focus of our attention has to be specific critical and social spaces and practices that produce hope, equality and justice, as indications of affirmative and universal politics of new subject. We witness those spaces emerge in a triangle of art, knowledge production and activism (see more on this in Husanović 2010) at the locations where we produce *theory in art, art in theory and school in both*.[10] We find them in critical interventions by a new wave of public workers engaged in the field of theory, art and activism in post-Yugoslav spaces, whose work is underexplored in current academic research (Husanović 2011).

In this sense, interventions by *Kooperativa Front Slobode* (Cooperative Freedom Front) and *Grupa Spomenik* (Monument Group) artist–activist–theorist groups dedicated, amongst other things, to investigating the politics of memory of the war(s) of the 1990s have been particularly significant and productive. Their work on the politics of memory and genocide investigates limit points of a range of discourses: science, law, forensics, bureaucracy and their repoliticisations in theory, art and activism. An example is the engagement with the issue of missing persons in the *Mathemes of Reassociation,* a series of public events in the region and internationally, which were instigated by the fluctuating group of artists, theorists and activists from the post-Yugoslav region, Grupa Spomenik (Monument Group), in the period 2008, 2009 and 2010. In various contexts and formats, the *Mathemes of Reassociation* attempted to produce a public classroom in a new way, undoing the coordinates

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[10] 'Theory in art, art in theory, school in both' is a concept developed within the *Yugoslav Studies Platform*, developed by a group of organisations and individuals during the Konjuh Plenary Session, July 2009.

of what has been set as possible or impossible, engaging disparate audiences as producers of knowledge, whilst exploring the issue of missing persons and the work of ICMP.[11]

For example, several interactive public performances in Banjaluka during the Spaport Biennial of contemporary art in 2010,[12] engaging with selected works of poetry, autobiography, theory and contemporary art, attesting to the possibility of a different idiom in which we can speak about come into solidarity and act upon our political affects encircling the most traumatic points of current social reality. Most importantly, it produced a circulation of knowledge as transformative social practice, and facilitated future collective efforts passing far beyond the boundaries of the event itself. To tell a simplified story about them would be superficial, at least, since the concepts and politics behind them demand a thorough explanation for each particular event. What is sorely missing is a detailed study of these complex interventions, including a thorough engagement with the archive of audiovisual and electronic records of these events, their preparatory and aftermath processes, as well as thorough research work with and amongst the actors involved in these events. It is, however, a task beyond the scope and aims of this chapter.

The imperative remains, nevertheless, to continue the search for a community of equals that intervenes into difficult subjects through a reinvented classroom as activism, or activism as a classroom. Those interventions, which include a common work of artists, theorists, students, activists, citizens, are an act of knowledge production where we build the stage to 'frame the story of a new adventure in a new idiom. The effect of the idiom cannot be anticipated. It calls for spectators who are active interpreters, who render their own translation, who appropriate the story for themselves, and who ultimately make their own story out of it. (...) What had to be done was a work of translation, showing how empirical stories and philosophical discourses translate each other. Producing a new knowledge meant inventing the idiomatic form that would make translation possible' (Ranciere 2010). The task is clear: We have to 'get our hands dirty' finding the forms of action which engender the political subjects struggling for equality today, and we have to do some radical groundwork precisely at the sites of greatest antagonisms, there where the emancipatory potential shines through. The field of knowledge production is certainly one such site.

Authentic political interventions opposed to the culture of terror are those practices that set up the possibility of political subject which traverses ventriloquism of the official politics and public and their continual blood-hounding ideological operations for the purpose of further impoverishment of the public good. Testifying collectively to the potentiality of a promising politics includes particular strands of

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[11]For more information on Grupa Spomenik and *Mathemes of Reassociation*, please see http://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com/.

[12]For more information on the event, please see http://www.protok.org/Spaport/spaport.htm. See also, http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/i-forgot-remember-forget/where-everything-yet-happen.

academic, cultural, activist and artistic production which share a particular peda-
gogy. They testify to and resist violence/terror by turning experiences of trauma into
critical insights of hope (Felman 2002), by attributing creative ability to the loss,
(Eng and Kazanjian 2003) and through insisting on the emergence of emancipatory
political subject in relation to the dominant (inter)national regimes of governance
and accompanying forms of political authority. In our own ghettoes—taking shape
in particular laboratories of 'hegemony, neoliberalism, rise of fundamentalism and
fascism, masculinization, ethnicization, racialization and militarization of the world,
as well as (feminization of) poverty' (Mohanty 2002)—there are still many things
that propel us, affirming the postulate 'I revolt, therefore we are . . . still to come'
(Kristeva 2002).

When working with people in the art of the ordinary on making the impossible
possible, one becomes acutely aware of the multiple dimension of the loss of social-
ity/politicality, with voicelessness which results with invisibility of political subject
of change. In this sense, the emancipatory charge, with various degrees of political
visibility as a resource of critical knowledge and social practice, is reclaimed by
the engagements of artists, theoreticians and cultural workers in B&H, in the post-
Yugoslav region and beyond. New optics and registers of intelligibility in the field of
art and cultural production often intervene in emancipatory ways against the biopo-
litical interests in relation to colonialization of history and future, of the experience,
the body, humanity and everyday life. These new radical social imaginaries exhibit
a particular politics of witnessing that navigates the triad of bare/precarious life—
sovereign power—the biopolitical *nomos* of the new empires around us. They also
oppose the confiscation of experience and memory, resisting that which constricts
critical thinking and intellectual life today.

There are several questions still to be asked. How do these emergent social imagi-
naries and political gestures struggle with the 'loss of the ability to speak, or the loss
of the capacity for language, which means in turn the loss of belonging to the world
as such' (Marazzi 2008)? In which direction do they modify this loss in order to bring
us together, 'communify' us (ibid) against the identitarian politics, through *new* lan-
guages of political action and *new* collectivities? How do these voices and subjects
probe the paradoxical im/possibility of justice, coping with the critical traumatic con-
tents of political reality, since 'it is always from the face, from responsibility for the
other, that justice appears' (Levinas 1998)? The language of art offers radical kinds
of witnessing to trauma that at the same time reveal the contingent nature of the forms
of political and social organisation. The politics of affect here strikes directly at the
very political sovereignty of the nation-state as a mask for the reorganisation of old
and new elites. In this unstable field of oscillation of culturalised political emotions,
what counts as transformative? I imply that a certain practice has an emancipatory
charge only if it responses to the loss of the capacity for language (i.e. of belonging
to the world and a way of life) in such a way that it rejects the language of sovereign
biopolitical power; if it turns loss into something that brings us into communality
through affirmative political imaginary against the perpetuation of the politics of
atrocity that produces human waste; if it offers cultural readability, intelligibility of
the 'proper places' and 'proper language' (see also Athanasiou 2008) intended for

those excluded/included from the *res publica* through political violence, corruption, impoverishment and banality.

Where and what is the place of academia and academics in contributing to such politics of hope? Let us assume that the evidence of the virtuosity of our labour force (as the *cognitariat*) is the public intellect as the main productive power. But, in the context in which this public intellect is pressed by the nationalisation or etatisation, with the authoritarian transfer of the potentials of intellect to the administration and its power (the hypertrophied growth of administrative apparatuses as the opposition of cooperation), does our virtuous conduct not become universal servile work, while we drift apart and personalise our own subjections instead of finding common solidarities (Virno 1996)? One symptom of this general diagnosis is the situation in institutionalised academic spaces in B&H suffocating the public intellect by tramping the virtuousity of its labour force and by betraying the struggle for public good such as higher education. Is it, then, that the only subversive act is the one which institutes the non-governmental public sphere as a community apart and as such requires collective defection from the statecraft apparatus, alliance of the general intellect and political action, and movement to the public sphere of intellect (Virno 1996)? The issue of public good and the commons in the sphere of knowledge production demands all our inventive capacities and virtues calling into question the very coordinates of political life and everyday realities of our public institutions. Perhaps, it is through disobedience and immoderation of demands (for instance, cooperatives which bring the academia to the public) that we can respond to social and political antagonisms by a gesture of exodus (traversal) that disorients the opponent, through the act of collective imagination that gives expression to the abundance of knowledge, communication and acting together, whilst rejecting the transfer to the power of sovereign imagination (ibid., p. 213–221).

Only interventions and platforms which 'think' commonality and solidarity *differently*—in the context of the technologies governing the humanness, the management of the human and the production of human waste through political, economic and social violence—can engage with the scar of the mass grave against the perpetuated terror of inequality in everyday life, through hopeful politics. Such trajectories and networks of hopeful politics should revolutionise our lenses and senses because their engagement with the questions of abject, affect, revolt and collectivity today brings into the field of visibility and intelligibility the very question of emancipatory politics after the catastrophe of experience that overcame us in recent decades.

Therefore, the coming critical pedagogies should focus on the practices of cultural criticism and analysis that engender classroom as 'an emancipated community, which is in fact a community of storytellers and translators' (Ranciére 2007). There is a strong legacy in the former Yugoslav region of actors and spectators in a communal space of knowledge production, transforming the relationships of inequality into a community of equals. However, their work on producing knowledge in an emancipatory classroom has to be furthered. In this respect, it should be wedded to complementary strands of feminist theory, cultural studies, psychoanalysis and post-colonial theory, which have produced emancipatory public classrooms as a critical practice beyond the conventional models of knowledge transmission. These

imply a cooperative learning process outside the traditional walls of institutionalised classroom culture, which is practice-oriented, non-authoritarian, building on the experiences, insights and affects around texts and stories of everyday life, its practice and politics. At the same time, such a social movement in the field of knowledge production must be the site where we resist the politics of terror as usual, the governing of trauma and loss and the logic of commodification and exploitation of dead and living, by undergoing ideological inoculations, reclaiming the means of knowledge production and assuming a different relationship to labour necessary for social change. The conversations have to bring together a complex world of audiences, their stories, passions and experiences into a public classroom framed as a community of equals, where together we produce maps of knowledge and action, articulating a triple search: for the subject/agent/collectivity; for the space of intervention and for the vision-imaginary of change.

The question for all of us is utopian, of course: Which of our own material experiences of life (as the combination of intellect, work and action) affirms the subject, space and imagination of emancipatory politics today, and how? Today in B&H, to engage in a knowledge production that may claim an emancipatory potential to reclaim politicality and sociality set against violence, exploitation and alienation requires confronting material experiences of perpetual terror and hopeless politics of loss by inventing a public language of hope. What can lead us in this direction are new public languages of communality and hope in various circles of emancipatory knowledge production and collective action, in the region as well as globally (Arsenijević 2010; Arsenijević et al. 2009; Husanović 2009, 2010). Interventions in hopeful politics produce collective spaces of knowledge production, where teachers and students become both actors and spectators transforming the relationships of inequality into a community of equals. What has to be brought into this space through classrooms in community as academia is a complex world of experiences, interests and passions we share when resisting exclusion, exploitation and domination in all its forms: poverty, patriarchy, racism, ethnocentrism, elitism, colonialism, homophobia, capitalism, etc.

The important gestures in the area of cultural production and public acts which arrive from multiple trajectories in the region of former Yugoslavia and internationally deal with some of those difficult questions—as a community of equals, in solidarity through their struggle for the public good, and as an emancipatory public classroom in the aftermath of the catastrophe of experience which has been striking us during the past decades. Such living spaces of solidarity in cooperative knowledge and creative collective public action is where our critical energies must fully focus today in resisting the ideological lies constitutive of the official institutional spaces of education in schools and universities. In other words, knowledge must be reclaimed as public good, against its further depletion, commodification and exploitation. Producing critical insights and acts in the politics of abject, affect, revolt and collectivity, against material conditions and symbolic geographies of terror as usual, is hard labour and everyday practice that requires the commons/communality in heartless institutions and regimes of governance around us.

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