

## IMAGE, EUROPE, DRAMA

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**Abstract:** By questioning the ways in which a supra-national European identity can be created in an environment of globalization, this article starts with the thesis that this concept faces problems which must be resolved first and foremost at the national level. By problematizing multiculturalism as a “utopian theory” which does not solve any problems at the practical level, and by viewing interculturalism as a potential danger to “smaller” cultures, this article identifies what it is that hinders the possible acceptance of the idea of a Europe without borders by analyzing plays by Goran Stefanovski. In four of his plays, *Euralien*, *Hotel Europa*, *Ex-Yu*, and *Goce*, Stefanovski criticizes Western Europe, on the one hand, for constructing a problematic Other, imposing a visa regime, and contributing to its marginalization, and the Balkans on the other, for mythologizing its nationally-romanticized narrative. The paper sheds light on the fact that the acceptance of a common (shared) European identity, a necessity which propagates itself amidst conditions of globalization, is dependent on the ways in which Europe will resolve its problems, such as the marginalization of the Other, way of thinking in binary oppositions, like old/new Europe, rich/poor Europe, and especially (talking about Balkan countries) the phrase South-East Balkan.

**Key words:** image of the Other; globalization; multiculturalism; European identity; the problematic Other; marginalization; national romanticism; drama; Goran Stefanovski.

Regardless of whether or not we agree that globalization refers to a totality of tightly connected cultural and economic context, or, if we believe that through the globalizing process global connectivity intensifies and becomes more frequent, the fact remains that globalization has an exceptionally significant and tremendous influence on the countries of the so-called “First World”, or, the countries whose goal is to be included in the so-called “Old” or “Core” Europe (cf. Levy et al. 2005).

Certainly, the globalizing processes are primary factors in the harmonization of the cultures in these countries, and in creating the conditions for these cultures to be constructed in terms of the aesthetic, ethical, political, social, etc., principles of the countries of “Old” Europe. Thus, the cultures of the “smaller” Other are faced with a choice: embrace the ideology of the stronger or remain “outside” of Europe. In claiming the right to “develop” (read: hegemonize) the cultures of the “smaller” Other in the name of “progress” and “civilization”, so-called “Old” Europe provokes an insurmountable clash. Multiculturalism, although in and of itself a controversial theory, has proven itself, in practice, to be one of the greatest assets in defusing (or rather—masking or hiding) these conflicts. As Mark Poster states, “(...) multiculturalism is a process of subject constitution, not an affirmation

of an essence. As the second media age unfolds and permeates everyday practice, one political issue will be the construction of new combinations of technology with multiple genders and ethnicities. These techno-cultures will hopefully be no return to essence, no new foundationalism or essentialism, but a coming to terms with the process of identity constitution and doing so in ways that struggle against restrictions of systematic inequalities, hierarchies and asymmetries" (Poster 1995,42).

Perhaps this is why, particularly after the statement made by German Chancellor Merkel, namely that multiculturalism is dead (BBC, 17 October 2010), it seems that multiculturalism is definitely proving to be just another "utopian theory" (Lewis 2008). In the global plethora of the discursive formations comprising the current post-condition, the processes of globalization intertwine with neo-colonialist urges, economic problems clash with eco-theories, new national identities combat cosmopolitanism, neoliberalism faces up to human rights questions, and the status of the individual stands against the status of the grand narratives. The emerging relations of mutual co-dependence and antagonism are therefore inevitable. Unquestioningly, the vast majority of discourses celebrate the interaction between the various cultures. On the other hand, the increase in intercultural communication, ushered in by the media and contemporary technology, and placed within the context of the globalizing processes and the unequal power shared between cultures, economies, and societies, seems to simply widen the gap between "Authentic Europe" and "The Other Europe", "The New Europe", etc. Moreover, the inevitable hybridization of cultures, is, from time to time, felt and interpreted, as an attack on one's own culture and identity.

At the same time, faced with the inevitability of a globally connected lifestyle, whereby the diverging, sometimes isolated, cultures interconnect, become hybridized, and unified, each with an underlying desire to safeguard a part of their own distinct authenticity, the question arises as to in what way the slogan "Europe without Borders" could become a successful fictional narrative. If it is becoming increasingly clear that multiculturalism cannot be a theoretical benchmark against which a shared European identity is to be forged, since it does not provide for conflict resolution in practice, there is an ever present need to discern new directions.

This kind of a dilemma is additionally complicated by the fact that there are national cultures which belong to Europe historically and geographically, but are not members of the European Union. If we are to consider Macedonia for example and the idea of a common (shared) European identity then the following question arises: how can contradictory feelings about belonging to Europe be overcome so that the EU is not a dividing line between Europe and the desire that the country's singularity be recognized not as something "archaic", "barbarian" or "uncivilized", but as a distinction which contributes to the cultural wealth of Europe itself?

Macedonian culture expresses itself through at least two perspectives. The former is associated with the position of distancing itself from practicing the declarative multicultural concept of Western Europe, a practical failure, through an auto-imagological understanding of its own culture as the iconic cradle of (European) civilization. The latter is centered on the position of belonging, while examining the inconsistencies which make it impossible for the idea of a shared European identity to be realized. Both positions are the consequence of the feeling of Otherness. Here, it is important to emphasize that there is nonetheless an

awareness of belonging to Europe both within Macedonian cultural tradition and certainly within the Macedonia of today (Cf. Pavlovski and Pavlovski 1993, 1998).

One of Macedonia's most prolific and established playwrights, Goran Stefanovski<sup>1</sup>, takes on the challenge of considering these dilemmas in an artistically conducive way, particularly in two of his pieces, namely *Euralien* (1998) and *Hotel Europa* (2002), two of his most famous plays at the end of 20th and beginning of 21st century. I shall now examine his work more closely.

Instead of celebrating Europe's past or the over-emphasized Europhobia, Goran Stefanovski, opts for a road less traveled in his critical attempt to evaluate Europe's ways. Ever the original creator, he criticizes Europe for its relationship with those entities that are not to be found in Old, New, Western, Authentic Europe, i.e., that part of Europe which makes him feel like the Other in Europe, and he does so in order to shed light on the Otherness that Macedonians (or the Balkans generally) are forced into.

*Euralien* is a play that was commissioned by Intercult based in Stockholm, Sweden. Let us for a moment imagine the following: it is 1998 and Stockholm is the cultural capital of Europe. Goran's play is seen by the cultural and political elites of the city and the state, by guests from other parts of Europe, no, rather, guests from the European Union, who can travel freely using their ID cards. The audience is greeted with one of the author's introductory remarks<sup>2</sup>: "The audience, as they enter, will be given passports of a generic, (other) i.e. non-European Union, country, and in the course of the event will be treated as non-EU citizens, i.e., as "others" or aliens. They will be stopped at "Fortress Europe" borders, asked to fill in visa forms and will sample various forms of "alienation at first-hand". In this way the audience will get an insight into and experience of how sad and funny it is to be a citizen of the "other" Europe today. (...) On their way out, the audiences will be given new visas to put in their passports: towards a new, utopian, chauvinist-free Europe!" (Stefanovski 1998, 2).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Goran Stefanovski (Bitola, 1952) is a Macedonian playwright, who graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Philology in Skopje. He studied Dramaturgy at the Academy for Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, where he obtained his Masters (thesis title: "Stage Instructions as the Basis of the Dramaturgy of Samuel Beckett"). He worked on the drama desk at TV Skopje, and later on, as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Philology in Skopje. In 1986, he became Professor of Dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje. Currently, he works and resides in London. He is a member of the Macedonian PEN Centre, of the Macedonian Writers' Association since 1979; and of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts since 2004. His works have centered round the social and political problems in the Former Yugoslavia, and their ramifications in Europe as a whole. He has written scripts for a number of productions, dealing with issues of migration, social conflict, post-communist transition and multicultural identity. Notable works include *Јане Задрогаз* (*Jane Zadrogaz*, play, 1974), *Диво месо* (*Wild Flesh*, play, 1979), *Лет во место* (*Standstill Flight*, play, 1981), *Hi-Fi* (*Hi-Fi*, play, 1982), *Дупло дно* (*False Bottom*, play, 1983), *Тетовирани души* (*Tattooed Souls*, play, 1985), *Чернодрински се враќа дома* (*Chernodrinski Returns Home*, play, 1991), *Гоце* (*Goce*, one-act play, 1991), *Сараево* (*Sarajevo*, play 1993), *Ex-Yu* (one-act play, 1996), *Euralien* (1998), *Hotel Europa* (2000), etc.

<sup>2</sup> In the same play, Stefanovski also addresses the anticipated make-up of the audience: "One third of the target audience will be immigrants from various countries living in Sweden, one third will be general theater-goers and the final third will consist of young people" (Stefanovski 2010, 33).

<sup>3</sup> Here and bellow, the English translations of the original Macedonian citations come from an authorized English scripts that Goran Stefanovski sent to Mishel Pavlovski.

It is no accident that Stefanovski gives his audience “other” passports, “other”, referring both to the countries outside the EU and to the notion of Otherness. The visa regime for the Balkan countries was discontinued merely two years ago. What is more, Macedonian citizens, for example, still need a visa to enter the UK. The process of obtaining the visa and the visa itself did not only help separate “real” Europe from the countries which “are not Europe”, but branded the passport holder individually as well as collectively as one who lacks the EU symbol. Thus, Macedonian citizens would also officially become the Other, namely, they would be stripped off the opportunity to establish their own identity within the framework of the European one.

But, for Goran Stefanovski, the process which allows the creation of the confrontational “us”/ “them” binary with such ease is no stranger to the Balkans either. In 1996, he would engage with (or more precisely—he would attempt to summarize) another grand narrative called “brotherhood-unity” to examine the mechanisms used to construct the Other as a threat, as a danger, but this time, inside The Balkans’ own (Balkan) milieu.

The impetus he requires to question further his own cultural position is the period when the former joint state, Yugoslavia, was disintegrating. This was a period when the new Balkan identities were being constituted, or when the old identity matrixes were being re-structured. It was also a time when a sleuth of authors, theorists, and other “policy makers” found themselves inside a particular kind of void: the old Yugoslav-Marxist-Socialist aesthetical, ideological, philosophical, political foundations (identification pillars) were being ripped up, while the new ones had either not yet been fully accepted or were alien-like, foreign, “strange”.

On that note, Stefanovski’s *Ex-Yu* (1996), is a play created within a different kind of a cultural context from the one it refers to (the play was conceived of and completed in Canterbury, UK). In turn it allows Stefanovski to part ways, once and for all, with the remnants of the confusing loss (or better, transformation) of identity, caused doubtlessly by the break-up of Yugoslavia. If for the Yugoslavs (or, if you will, “Yugoslavs”) the 1991 conflict came as a shock to the hitherto close/familiar (or: “close”) identities, in the 1996 play, Nikola (a character), calmly, even cynically, would accept violence as a necessity, and with it the ultimate need to contrast “us” versus “them”.

MAJA: Did you kill anyone?

NIKOLA: I did not allow anyone to kill me. (Pause.) Everyone killed everyone.

MAJA: My father did not kill anyone.

NIKOLA: That’s right. Your father did not kill anyone. (Pause.) Or, any **other**.<sup>4</sup>

MAJA: And them, the enemies we killed? Didn’t we once live side-by-side? How did that cute phrase go—“Brotherhood-Unity”. Then, we were all one and the same. They were like us.

**They were us** (Stefanovski 2010, 21; my own translation).

Here, we can see a reflection of the processes which were (all) ongoing not only in the culture of Macedonia, but generally speaking, throughout the former Yugoslavia. On the one hand, Nikola directs his criticism against favoring one’s own culture and nation, against the uncritical insistence on the relevance of the national narrative which simply compels the

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<sup>4</sup> The emphasis is Stefanovski’s.

creation of Nikola's xenophobia for the Other. As Stefanovski put it, it is the creation of a xenophobia against "those who were once us", which follows the same principle and logic as the visa regime found in *Hotel Europa*.

## Ex-Yu

NIKOLA: Do you know that their toes are webbed? Like ducks. Have you heard about that?

MAJA: No.

NIKOLA: They are not fully developed like we are. They are a primitive bunch. I am glad that we got rid of them (Stefanovski 2010, 21; my own translation).

## Hotel Europa

ANGEL: Passport!

The Drifter gives him her documents. The Angel closes the door of the cupboard like a counter window. Pause. The Angel opens up the window again.

ANGEL: Is this your photograph? Is this your hair? Your nose? Are these your eyes? Is this your signature? Your visa is invalid. Your passport is out of date. Who are you? Where are you going? What do you want? Anything to declare? Open suitcase! (Stefanovski 2000, 18).

By contrast, in Stefanovski's *Hotel Europa* we find him examining the conditions closely connected to globalization.

SOCIAL WORKER: (An energetic, intelligent, young woman.)

My name is Eurydice. Nomen est omen. I was destined to be married to Europe since birth. I am a social worker. I'm only a supply worker here. Otherwise I'm a student of sociology. I love my work. Although I can see lots of injustice. I can see greed and exploitation. I can't start to tell you what goes on in here. Undercover, you know. I believe in Europe as a common home for all. *A Europe in which the lamps of hope will be lit again, in our lifetime*. I'd love to go to Brussels and see the European politicians in the flesh. And tell them a few horror stories.

*In the nightmare of the dark*

*All the dogs of Europe bark,*

*And the living nations wait*

*Each sequestered in its hate.*

We mustn't let hell happen again. We've seen it all before. We have no excuses. What shall we tell our children if we let it happen again? That we didn't know? Well, we do know. *Je regrette l'Europe aux anciens parapets! (I pine for Europe of the ancient parapets!)*, as the poet said: We must bring back the *age of chivalry!* We must put an end to *the sophisters, economists, and calculators*. *Oui, c'est l'Europe, depuis l'Atlantique jusqu'à l'Oural, c'est l'Europe, c'est toute l'Europe, qui décidera du destin du monde.* (Yes, it is Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, it is Europe, it is the whole of Europe, that will decide the fate of the world.) Do you understand what I'm talking about? (Stefanovski 2000, 28).

The Social Worker's<sup>5</sup> monologue portrays/reflects the two positions/attitudes/styles that Goran Stefanovski adopts both towards the globalizing processes and the relations forged within Europe itself; namely, the relations between so-called "Old" and "New" Europe.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be pointed out, once again, that the author's note describing the Social Worker as "an energetic, intelligent, young woman" is not provided in vain.

Here, on the one hand, the author celebrates European globalization, seen as the idea that Europe is home to each and all. The quotations by Arthur Rimbaud<sup>6</sup> and Charles de Gaulle<sup>7</sup> tend not only to portray the image of a *true/real* Europe, but also to place Stefanovski and his own culture within the European cultural context. Goran Stefanovski celebrates this kind of Europe, a global home to all of its citizens, here and “**now**”.

The Social Worker’s monologue brings us to the second aspect of the globalizing processes at play in Europe; in other words, Stefanovski criticizes globalization which produces marginalized groups. In *Hotel Europa*, “Old” Europe is dealt with viciously, exposing its pomposity and elitism, its rejection of the Other and its acceptance of only those “high” values which are deemed “natural” for the “refinement” of such a Europe. This is the Europe the play commences with:

BELLHOP: (Very old man, finicky in his manners, well dressed, naturally elegant.) I apologize for this mess. Such idiotic overbooking. Mind you, it’s not that it hasn’t happened before. They get it painfully wrong at Reception sometimes. We’ll try to straighten things out. But there is only so much a man can do. I shouldn’t take things so personally. But I take pride in my work. I am the only one here with any qualifications. I come from a family with a long tradition in fine hotels (Stefanovski 2000, 27).

The play, therefore, begins with an image of a Europe bound by tradition, one which views the immigrants as chaos-mongers; a Europe which looks to tradition to claim the right to call its truth the only viable truth. Henceforth, “the right” to claim its own auto-imagological depiction of the “true” and “doubtless” and “real” marginalization of the Other. Even if we think that such logic has already been surpassed, since it belongs to the old-fashioned bellhop, this logic proves to be quite alive and well in the further unfolding of the plot, particularly in the Caretaker’s discourse, and Stefanovski’s description of his demeanor as “young, cocky, very short hair, well built up”.

CARETAKER: Dead beat fuck-ups. Gimps. Gonners. Jerks. Bums. Flim-flams. Fallen off the back of a lorry. One of these days they’ll wake up dead. How many unemployed in this country? Millions! And the government gives accommodation and cash to whoever comes under a truck. We work our guts off to make a living; they want everything for free overnight. Bloody mongrels. They multiply like rabbits. They stink (Stefanovski 2000, 30).

The elitism of this “high” culture is projected through the character of the old Bellhop, and in turn the globally mediated mass culture is represented through the character of the Bellhop. They (the two Bellhops) in fact portray one and the same vision of Europe—a vision which divides the continent into two different, irreconcilable inconsolable parts: a “civilized” one and the “barbaric” other. What has changed is the style; the process remains the same. The old European colonial culture, which re-packages hegemony as kindness, transforms elitism into a xenophobic, neo-colonialist culture with media-produced values. The elitist Euro-centrism and global media culture constructs the East and the Balkans as a problematic

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<sup>6</sup> The first quote comes from Arthur Rimbaud’s poem “The Drunken Boat”. It was first translated into Macedonian (from the French original) by Dushan Tomovski (*Kulturen Zhivot*, 1-2, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> A famous saying attributed to Charles de Gaulle, uttered on November 25th, 1959, in Strasbourg.

European Other, hence an unwanted/undesirable part of Europe (see Georgievska-Jakovleva and Pavlovski 2009).

In its own right, such simultaneous processes result in an already familiar impulse, to glorify and mythologize its own heroic past, which is perhaps one of the greatest obstacles in accepting the idea of a European over-the-national identity. The nationalist romanticist idea, taken as compensation for the processes of marginalization and Otherness, will clash with the globalizing processes which impose the need to construct an European identity. In *Hotel Europa*, this clash is represented as a direct physical encounter:

HUSBAND: (SINGS A DRINKING SONG. THIS IS JUST A SUGGESTION. HE WOULD MOST LIKELY BE SINGING A LATVIAN<sup>8</sup> TUNE.)

So we'll drink-a-drink-a-drink/ To Lily the Pink-a-pink-a-pink/ The savior of the human race/  
She invented medicinal compound/ Most efficacious in every way!

WIFE: Where have you been?

HUSBAND: Fighting for Latvia!

WIFE: Again?

HUSBAND: These bastards asked me where I was from. Latvia, I said! Where the fuck is that, they said? I'll show you where it is, I said! (HE SHOWS HIS HEART) Here! I said. This is where "the fuck" it is I said! And fuck you too! Next thing I know – I'm fighting these six big motherfuckers.

WIFE: That's what happened last time.

HUSBAND: Exactly.

WIFE: Every time you come home drunk, you've been fighting for Latvia.

HUSBAND: Our enemies are many.

WIFE: Must you fight them all? (Stefanovski 2010, 92).

In order to further elucidate the matter, let us return to 1991, the year when Stefanovski wrote the play *Goce*, defined as "A Theatrical Impression of the Last Minutes in the Life of Goce Delchev" based on its extended title. In it, and not just because of the main character<sup>9</sup>,

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<sup>8</sup> In the Macedonian version here and below the term *Macedonian*, *Macedonia* is used. In the English copy I have Latvian, Latvia is used.

<sup>9</sup> **Delchev, Goce**, born as Georgi (Kukush, Aegean Macedonia, 1872-Banica, Sersko, 1903), was a Macedonian nationalist leader and revolutionary, ideologist and organizer of the Macedonian national and revolutionary movement from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a teacher and vojvoda [militia leader]. He completed his elementary education in his native town, and continued with his secondary school education in Thessaloniki. As a young cadet of the Military Academy in Sofia, he secretly attended socialist group meetings and disseminated socialist literature, he was consequently expelled from school. In 1894, he began work as a teacher in Shtip, where he befriended Dame Gruev, who at the time was a member of the Central Committee of TMORO [The Secret Macedonian Revolutionary Organization]. During the time of his frequent sojourns throughout Macedonia, he worked hard at establishing an organizational network of healthy and strong bases, committees, and militia troops for the TMORO Organization and he took part in the Thessaloniki Congress of TMORO (1896). Together with Gjorche Petrov, he wrote the draft version of the Constitution and the draft version of the Rule Book of TMORO. From then until 1901, he was the representative of the TMORO Organization in Sofia. He fought a long and hard battle with the Vrhovists [Pro-Bulgarian Supremacists]. He advocated that the liberation movement should develop independently, into one that would revolutionarize the Macedonian masses, no matter what their creed or ethnicity. He systematically prepared TMORO to win political autonomy for Macedonia.

Stefanovski recalls the Macedonian national narrative. The parallel with Kole Chashule's<sup>10</sup> play *Darkness* (1960) is evident in the character of the Young Man (in the case of Chashule), and the Boy (in the case of Stefanovski). There is one "minor" change—Goran's Boy is no killer. In *Goce*, the killer/traitor is the character of Komitata, one who symbolizes the experience, virtue and struggle of the Macedonian people in their pursuit of freedom. Only through this laconic characterization of the protagonists can we see not just the difference between the two plays, *Darkness* and *Goce*, but also in the latter, Stefanovski's relationship to history and the heroic magnification of the past.

Using a national narrative, Stefanovski, however, constructs history in such a way that it speaks about the present, in order to share its message with contemporary generations. For Stefanovski, treason is not a problem which follows Macedonians as evil fate throughout history:

KOMITATA: They threatened my children's lives. They swore to burn down my house. I told them where we would be spending the night. (The Boy throws himself on the Komitata).

GOCE: Leave him be. He's but a vessel. Strike the hand that is chasing us.

KOMITATA: Condemn me, teacher.

GOCE: I forgive you. A great misfortune seems to have come upon you, has it not? Do you know how to cook an eel in ashes? (Stefanovski 2010, 13-14; my own translation).

The play finishes with a short monologue by Goce, where "the future generations" are being summoned, whom we can easily recognize as the author's contemporaries, and who are asked to respect tradition and abandon empty rhetoric. The monologue finishes on a final outcry: "Keep abreast your name and roots, so that you may know who you are, no matter where life may take you. Love thy country. So that it may love you in return." (Stefanovski 2010, 14; my own translation).

The "minor" change in Stefanovski's text in fact produces a serious critique of the national-romanticist ideas under present conditions. In today's global world these ideas can only cause clashes and result in violence. If a national culture cannot establish its authenticity/identity through a glorification of the heroic past, which in turn causes violent

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<sup>10</sup> **Chashule, Kole** (1921-2009), a Macedonian revolutionary, dramatist, storyteller, novelist, journalist, diplomat, and academician. He participated in the armed uprising of the Macedonian people on 11 October, 1941. He was sentenced to death by the Bulgarian occupation forces. After the liberation, he was the editor of several magazines (*Nov Den*, *Sovremenost*, *Razgledi*); director of several cultural institutions; and a civil servant. He was the on the Yugoslav Consul in Canada, and the Ambassador to Bolivia, Peru and Brazil. He was one of the founders of the Macedonian Association of Writers, and later on its President. He was a member of the Macedonian PEN Centre, an Honorary Member of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts from 2003 onwards. His dramatic output marked a turning point in Macedonian dramatic production, marking a shift towards modernity. *A Twig in the Wind* (1957) was the first Macedonian play to treat the issue of contemporary migration from a psychological perspective. His play *Darkness* (1960) introduced so-called political theatre. He was primarily interested in the motif of national dark spots and political intrigues inside the Macedonian national-liberation movement. In his prose, his interest was engaged by patriotic themes. For Chashule, writing was a revolutionary act, a social engagement in the name of "battles which last forever". Other more notable plays include *Game or Socialist Eva* (1961), *City Clock* (1965), *Whirlpool* (1966), *Musical Score for a Miron* (1978), *Judgment* (1978), *Zhitolub* (1981), *Divertissement for a Strez* (1967, 1990).



acts, then the question remains—how are we to love our motherland, i.e., how are we to safeguard authenticity? What follows is a dialogue between the Boy and Goce, where Goce takes on the role of General Danail Nikolaev.<sup>11</sup>

BOY: (...) You desire rivers of blood and mountains made of corpses. While we wish to live and grow. You know nothing about us; do not interfere. We do not need beneficiaries; we do not need masters.

GOCE (as the General): You talk nonsense! You are not aware of the international situation. (...) We will decide when the time is ripe for action. Understand? Ours is the final world. Otherwise...

BOY: Otherwise?

GOCE (as the General): We will annihilate you!

BOY: Either you us, or we you.

GOCE (kisses him on the forehead): All your answers are correct. You've learnt all of your lessons! (Stefanovski 2010, 11; my own translation).

If the false patriotism which produces violence has been inherited from the Enlightenment-spawned national-romanticist idea, the need for new ideas would strike us as being of the utmost certainty. Such needs are chiefly contained inside the ideas of forgiveness, clemency, and the principle of love (to each other or to one's country, either way), which instead of marginalization in turn produces equality.

The plays are mostly populated by sad-looking, grotesque, and most of all, marginalized characters. These include: smugglers and corrupt customs officers, common prostitutes and frightened boys, angels playing the role of crossing guards and homeless women without visas. The "elite" Europe is gone, as is the "ancient" Balkans. The glitter and glory of the European metropolises is gone, and so is the stern wisdom of the saints on the Macedonian icons. All of these are products of the current logic of succession and fortification. Nonetheless, in these plays by Goran Stefanovski, if I may introduce a paradox, it is Europe that is celebrated, and not the European Union; and certainly not the bureaucrats in Brussels. Not a single part of her is celebrated, not "the most civilized", nor "the richest", nor "the cradle of civilization" for that matter. What is celebrated is Europe's diversity.

And the question remains: does globalization connect/link cultures? That is, do the globalizing processes, at least in Europe, enable cultures to connect by constituting a shared European identity?

It seems that Goran Stefanovski does not offer a one-sided answer. Through the processes of globalization, which are a staple of today's life, it becomes apparent that the contemporary world is in need of re-positioning. Henceforth, neither Western European marginalization (the visa regimes, the constituting of the problematic Other), nor the Balkan national-romanticism will be able to create the new values which will ensure the fulfillment of an integrated Europe. In imagining these new values, we chance upon the following question too: how will Europe protect itself against the imported baseness and poverty when it already has plenty of its own? How will Macedonian defend itself against the unequal treatment? The

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<sup>11</sup> A Bulgarian general who took part in the Serbo-Turkish War, the Russo-Turkish War and the Serbo-Bulgarian War. He was Emissary of Ferdinand I of Austria, and Bulgaria's War Minister during the Balkan Wars.

way in which Europe (and this refers to Europe as a whole, and not just the EU) responds to the challenge set will determine the success of the narrative called Europe without Borders.

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