

Đejmi Hadrović

## **Human and Its Disintegration in Contemporary Society**

*"Mr Locke, there are perfectly satisfactory answers to all your questions, but I know you don't understand how little you can learn from them. Your questions are much more revealing about yourself than my answers will reveal about me."* **Interview clip from The Passenger 1975, Michelangelo Antonioni, UK.**

A scientific abstract can be perceived as a realm in which an author is expected to compress up all academic ballast produced so far that hardly anyone will read it. It becomes a space that looks like an advertisement in a TV- commercial, where you have only five seconds to convince your audience that the next few paragraphs are those they wish to devote half an hour of their existence. Presumably, what you will read in the following lines will not change your life drastically but I can assure you will need to fasten your seat belt and get ready because it's going to be a hell of a journey, or more likely a ride with a bike. No, in fact as we say in Bosnia, you will go on foot!

The text in front of your eyes is supposed to talk about the latest work made by Jusuf Hadžifejzović, titled »Museum of Discarded Objects 2019« at Charlama Depot in Sarajevo. Although the author of this text is not entirely sure if the written text is a linguistic depiction of his work per se or if it is rather about how the author of this article perceives Jusuf's artwork. Whether the author of this text exists or not, whether he/she is dead as Roland Barthes would say or if the writing subject constantly disappears as Foucault would phrase it, the author of this text does not know it either. Maybe this text was written by Slavenka Drakulić, or dead souls lying on someone's bookshelves. Perhaps we would agree with Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, that one has no thoughts of their own, but only an accumulation of all societal constructs. But, when I saw the exhibition of the Museum of Discarded Objects by Hadžifejzović, only one thing was certain: the sentiments of melancholy provoked by the art piece were mine!

The exhibition consists of objects and items collected in a *longue durée* process that has been discarded, left behind, forgotten, or put away as the artist himself would claim. The second part was bequeathed to Jusuf by his friends, colleagues, and visitors to the Charlama Depot Gallery,

whom he invited to contribute things that are no longer of use to them. In a presentation of his work moderated by Prof. Dr. Marina Gržinić at a recent conference titled CRITICAL INVENTORY - Towards a Methodology of Contemporary Art History, conceived by Noit Banai and Gregor Pirgie in Vienna, Hadžifejzović denoted this aspect as follows: *“There are donors who have brought things that remind them of bad memories, remind them of people and events, and there are others who wanted to show objects from the past that they are proud of since they link them to a better period of life.”*

Following the turmoil of the '90s that led to Yugoslav's dissolution entailed a transition from Communism to Capitalism which subsequently induced the proliferation of a brutal new era best described as turbo-capitalism and turbo-fascism, that were actualized by the highest political instances and »their« state apparatus.

Commodity fetishism indicates the state of social relations in capitalist market systems. Social relations are managed by goods; people are connected through goods. People only see things, in terms of goods that can be bought, goods provided by capitalism. Humans nowadays no longer crave for tranquillity, empathy or meeting of minds, but prefer the latest version of I-Phones and expensive cars. We are dominated by the products we buy. It is essential to recognize that, as a result, relations between people have been alienated, and people are putting goods inbetween mutual relations. Eric Fromm magnificently has outlined in passages: *»Modern man's happiness consists in the thrill of looking at the shop windows, and in buying all that he can afford to buy, either for cash or instalments. In a culture in which the marketing orientation prevails, and in which material success is the outstanding value. «*

We can withstand low aesthetic standards, which is why we encounter kitsch as one of the distinctive faces of capitalist culture, an environment characterized by the rapid rise of consumerism and the commercial system of social intervention. The main purpose of the so-called cultural machinery is instant momentum, which as a consequence quickly turns into boredom. The cultural industry fights against the thinking subject - the subject legitimizes the existing position and does not resist. The aim is to preserve the collective status quo and the apathetic nature of the individual, to avoid any encounter for social agitation that could inspire better social order.

Kitsch suggests a poor or less quality of products, which makes previously expensive goods commercially available in favor of quantity. Commodities represent an escape from the banality

of mundane routine, so people's need is based on boredom and encourages the consumption of rapidly satisfying products.

Turbo - capitalist society fetishizes the disposable, which means the frequent occurrence and replacement of various standardized forms where the market is filled with repetitions. The society of the "spectacle" subconsciously negates everything that borders with avant-garde and scepticism to current socio-political issues.

Jusuf Hadžifejzović in his latest masterpiece Museum of Discarded Objects creates an unexpected twist of the narrative where dramaturgy remains classic but the suspense is omnipresent in the instance you enter the gallery room and stumble upon the mise-en-scene. Hadžifejzović brilliantly breaks with the existing academic underestimation of the masses in different tastes, styles and attitudes as something that is predestined to a low and inferior status not only in aesthetics but also in the social sense. As Raymond Williams separates the divisiveness between the social exclusivity of high cultures and cultures as a whole way of life: *"Culture is not elite - as one that is separate from ordinary people..."*

All in all, Hadžifejzović is a new Sarajevian epitome for a bricoleur. The French word bricolage denotes the hobby of a home-maker who, through ingenuity, improvisation and commitment, solves the problems that arise in his daily life. The work is a contingent result of all the random occasions on which the stock could be restored, enriched, or preserved through the remnants of the previous assemblies. It is defined by the fact that the elements are collected and preserved following the principle that »this will come in handy.«

*»I wonder if the viewer has the feeling that he/she becomes a part of the exhibition in a way that he/she becomes a discarded, disposed subject in a museum of discarded objects?«<sup>1</sup>*

#### **LITERATURE:**

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**Papić**, Žarana, "Europe after 1989: ethnic wars, the fascisation of social life and body politics in Serbia", *Filozofski vestnik, Special Issue The body*, Marina Gržinić (Ed), Ljubljana: Institute of Philosophy, ZRC SAZU: 191-205, 2002.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY:**

The Passenger, Michelangelo Antonioni, UK, 1975.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Jolly, colleague of Đejmi Hadrović, Whatsapp conversation, 2019.