

Date: 19.02.2016

Subject: Public announcement

FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE MEDIA

*International symposium on THE AESTHETICISATION OF POLITICS AND THE
POLITICISATION OF AESTHETICS*

to mark the publication of Rusmir Mahmutćehajić's book, *Andrićevstvo: Protiv etike
sjećanja*.

Tuzla, April 2, 2016

The University of Tuzla is pleased to announce that it will be hosting an international symposium on *THE AESTHETICISATION OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICISATION OF AESTHETICS* on April 2, 2016, to mark the publication of Rusmir Mahmutćehajić's book, *Andrićevstvo: Protiv etike sjećanja [On Andrićism: Against the ethics of memory]*. The symposium will take place in the A2 amphitheatre of the University of Tuzla's Faculty of Philosophy (Str. Tihomila Markovića, no .1), to start at 10:00 a.m.

Professor Mahmutćehajić's book is the first sustained investigation of Ivo Andrić's deployment of the aesthetic stance to sacralise an anti-Bosnian politics of division and denial of social pluralism and to render it beyond discussion. Professor Mahmutćehajić explores the ways in which Andrić created an image of Bosnia that claimed to express an inner, essential truth and came to be treated as more real than the reality itself. He also looks at how and why the high-priests of literary nationalism have developed the cult of Andrić, placing any discussion of his politics under aesthetic taboo, as though literary skill were the same as moral rectitude and political wisdom. Finally, he looks at how this creates an ethics of memory whose goal is the obliteration of fundamental moral and political truths.

The aim of this symposium is to initiate scholarly discussion on this aestheticisation of politics and politicisation of aesthetics and how the Southern Slavic peoples relate to the past, present and future of their own cultures through the exemplary canonisation and dogmatic use of Ivo Andrić's fiction in nationalist approaches to Bosnia and denial of the country's culture of social pluralism.

In the 20th century, political ideologies and the political movements founded upon them sought ways to aestheticise themselves, as well as different ways to politicise aesthetics itself. In a number of cases, these endeavours succeeded in assuming a programmatic

aspect, with disastrous consequences for the consciousness, attitudes and behaviour of individuals, but even more so for collective sentiments and political movements built on them. These phenomena have been interrogated, albeit rarely, from a philosophical perspective, particularly with regard to the impact of various forms of racism, orientalism, nationalism, fundamentalism, communism and other forms of ideological interpretation on the shaping of the political orders. Their influence has been and continues to be present in the political, cultural and economic life of the Southern Slavic societies and states, but it has hardly been investigated as a contributing factor to their cultures of political intolerance and division. They formed an important element of all the Southern Slavic nationalisms and the processes whereby they were transformed into other types of totalitarian world view and order, including communism. They survive in the nationalisms of the present day.

Perhaps the most challenging examples of this are the ways in which the fictional narratives in the works of Ivo Andrić have been interpreted within and transposed upon a framework of programmatic anti-Bosnian ideology, with the systematic undermining that involves of any possibility of plural society outside of the nationalist ideologies and their simulacra. The organiser of this symposium believes these ideologies and aesthetic programmes should be approached patiently and analytically in order to interrogate them in a spirit of scholarly responsibility with a view to deconstruction of canonised wisdom in favour of social pluralism and a politics of respect for difference and for the right to it as crucial preconditions for social stability and the enjoyment of human dignity.

The symposium will be organised around two thematic panels:

1. The ideological use of the literary works of Ivo Andrić as an image of Bosnian reality; and
2. General questions of social plurality and how to recognise and develop it within the framework of the European future of the states of South Eastern Europe.

The symposium will be open to the media and interested members of the public. Some thirty scholars and writers from the country and abroad are expected to participate.

Yours faithfully,
Rectorate,

Chef de cabinet of the

Dževdeta Mujović-Mujkić