

## FREEDOM AND FEAR

### Bulwark Hermeneutics – An Essay on the Consciousness of National Survival

The living consciousness of Croatian national survival often draws upon the bulwark concept in order to remain under the wing of tradition, to commence something or its very self. It is the fundamental concept of bulwark consciousness, the determinant and constituent of its whatness, not its subject: the bulwark resides in this consciousness and it has already become the latter. This concept is also a part of so many statements which speak of something that is given («rooted») in notions of the consciousness of the connections between the bulwark, the Croats and Croatia. In the introduction three such statements of the consciousness have been presented: Croatia is the bulwark, Croats are the bulwark and We Croats are the bulwark. In view of these statements, in the first part of this essay, the main insights into the paradox of the sameness of the people/nation (which has been borne, which is alive) and the bulwark (spacial determinant) are developed. They lead to the following fundamental hypothesis of understanding, criticism and re-description of the realm of

bulwark consciousness: at the crossroads of Croatian history, consciousness ultimately has to problematize without prejudice its somehow in-itself-articulate bulwark essence in order to open up towards historical contemporary thought considering the essence of survival and Croatian Being-in-the-World (In-der-Welt-Sein)

The interest of the consciousness of national survival for the bulwark concept and our interest in the experience of this consciousness thus fall within the environment of issues concerning the consciousness for the essence of survival and the concern for Croatian Being-in-the-World. This is the horizon in which the verb to be, in the statement Croats are (were) the bulwark or We are the bulwark, gains ontological strength. The latter opens up the problematic field of the consciousness in which the metaphorical and symbolical as if do not rule. Underneath them streams the ontological as if and the conceptuality it bears. Within the latter, the consciousness can be perceived in three modes of survival: to be in-between, to be neither here nor there and to be here for oneself.

Then, from the framework of the bulwark language field – which occurs in written formative culture – follows: first, Croats have initially, from the 15th century, been designated as a bulwark, the shield of Christianity and Christian states; second, the Croats consider themselves to be the shield and door, the bulwark and gateway, a bordering nation; third, Croatia is deemed by the bulwark consciousness as a place between worlds, between the East and West, it is also the threshold to the West; fourth, the bulwark is to its consciousness both a source of pride and rejection: it wants to be within the bulwark, but it also endeavours to re-

sist it, it does not accept being bulwark consciousness and it does not accept bulwark survival. These views and the consciousness relations participate in the formation of symbols and signs of the crystalized mode of Croatian identity; they participate also in the creation of the concepts bearing the problematic bulwark field.

Croatia is the bulwark – this is a statement the consciousness uses as an announcement and instruction in presenting itself to others in the communal Being-in-the-world. But the effects of such an instruction and announcement, in spite of their endeavour to persuade and convince another consciousness, are not guaranteed: through such utterances it is expected that they be understood with reference to the spoken but not real nature of secular communities of Christians, Europeans, »the international community« etc. In the process of persuasion and expectation, in the struggle for recognition, the consciousness creates several pretences: as if Croats were not here for themselves, but for someone or something outside themselves; as if Croats were not directed towards satisfying their own interests, but are here, fighting and dying for others; as if the indisputable merits for defending the West can overpower the leading and changing interests and cynicism of the new-world politics of the West and towards the Croatian expanse; as if there exists a desired and completely homogeneous Christian Being-in-the-World; as if the designs of a generalized being of the West have truly committed Western countries toward the Croats and Croatia; and finally: as if the gap between the generalized requirements of reason and secular interests has not been already seen and through forces of transfer conveyed to the consciousness as in

the example of the old epistle Marulić had sent to Hadrian VI in the year 1522.

In presenting the purport of the statement 'We are the bulwark', three different modes of the consciousness' survival were given:

To be in between (the East and the West, Christianity and Islam, Rome and Byzantium, Catholicism and Orthodoxism...): The consciousness had been begun in all, before it even attempted to start something. It does not relate freely with heritage and what has been inherited, and, thus, neither to itself – for it abolishes the presumptions regarding its own relation with heritage and the inherited. This consciousness is not in a historical maze of doubts and choices, but in a simplified (Cretan) maze: in it blind necessity reigns, and, accordingly, consciousness cannot be lost nor can it find itself. The consciousness' vital element of survival is the mythosphere – the autonomous speech of myth, or the ideosphere – the autonomous speech of ideology. In them consciousness satisfies its egoicity. The sphere of the myth/ideology becomes the limit of the consciousness' world.

The mode of survival to be neither here nor there has already been structured in the archetypal (mythical) Biblical stories and means: to be on the way, to surpass temptations – it is the symbolical place of the desert in the Bible, which is a place of wandering and searching, but not of bondage, it is self-temptation; symbolically it is a wall (a bulwark), but it is also a door, a gateway, and thus a symbol of transition. Here, the consciousness tests the limits of its being in-between, in it, self-reflection is put into motion and also the egoicity energetically seeking its being here for oneself.

In the limited fulfilment of its egoicity, in the mode being here for oneself, consciousness does not create a perfect sphere of mythical or ideological peace. Finding itself neither here nor there, it has experienced what it means to have been begun, what it means to be in-between. The experienced consciousness turns towards the source and the beginning. It enters the horizon of the freedom of self-commencement. In this endeavour aimed at the Being of survival and concern for the Croatian Being-in-the-World, consciousness does not attempt to leave the historical maze of doubt – for it has experienced that one cannot abandon it. The turn of consciousness towards the beginning (which is already in the consciousness as is all that has been inherited) leads to a free relationship towards heritage (i.e. towards itself!), the scientificized and democratized world. Thus, a field of recognized tension is created within the consciousness. In this field being here for oneself becomes an important act of resistance to the heritage, interiorized in the consciousness, which would suppress determination with a mythical or ideological imprisonment in the bulwark being in-between.

In the second part of the essay the author recollects an unfinished language game/story which Marko Marulić had begun in 1522. It is dominated by the tensions between the three described modes of survival. Through them penetrates the consciousness that lives within the demand of being for oneself. This testing of the consciousness is portrayed in the following contents:

Recollection of a scandal: description of the moment when for Marulić – on the occasion of the Venetian-Turkish peace treaty in 1503 – a scandal had bro-

ken out, moreover a clash between the demands of reason and the demands of national survival: in their existential imperilment the people were forced to feign friendship with the Turks in the 1503 treaty, which conflicted with the demands of reason of Christian learning.

Then, the author expounds the possibilities of reminiscent reading of Marulić's text from the epistle to Hadrian VI, regarding primarily doubts about the self-commencement of the consciousness of national survival and its concern for its Being-in-the-World.

The consciousness of concern in the maze of national survival. Here many semblances of friendship (the Turks-Venice-»our people«) were generated; archetypes, types and antitypes of friends/enemies (»frenemies«) were formed in the consciousness of Croatian national survival and are still potent; the role of fear in the consciousness and how it forms the friend/enemy is also demonstrated.

The power of fear is a formative component of the experience of the consciousness of bulwark survival: in circumstances in which the principles of reason (of Christian learning) are forsaken and there are demands for a feigned friendship with the enemies of Faith, Custom and Law of the Christian community – fear becomes autonomous and forms both the victim and the oppressor.

In the consciousness strewn with fear, figures of forced pretences and uncertain identity arise. However, the consciousness affected by the scandal of forsaken principles of reason – appearing in Marulić in 1522 – enables the problematization of the vivid and signifi-

cant: existential anxiety, apprehension and fears which permeate national survival. This is the experience through which the consciousness has to pass. The former guides it to the brink of decision.

The speech and language of the consciousness' fear for the being of survival and the Being-in-the-World of so many threats, move in a historical maze of existential doubts which the consciousness has partly already experienced: it has experienced the defection of the expected Western Christian solidarity before the Turkish onslaught and the rift in the Christian Being-in-the-World, and was left to act in the historical maze of changing orientational/deorientational intersecting points and lines: subjection to the demands of reason (Christian pure learning) yielding to the demands of survival in such a world.

In the community of fear – strained between the Turkish akins and the Adriatic Sea ruled by Venice – the consciousness emerges from the cocoon of lamentation: experienced fear directs the consciousness to the immeasurable value of life and orientates the consciousness/the people in distress; now the consciousness attempts to defend the borders of the landscape of fear before an attack of greater fear at the price of necessary pretences for which it cannot get, nor unconditionally seek, the consent of reason.

The consciousness lives out by Marulić's dictum: »We endure the trials and feign so as not to be forced to suffer even greater evil«.

Research then arrives at the following insight: fear before greater fear protects the people, and fear experienced becomes the measure for fear before fear –

permeating the consciousness of national survival; the consciousness resides in a cocoon of limited fulfilment (endurable fear); avoids the risky encounter with Absolute Fear (Hegel) in order not to lose whatever limited fulfilment it has. Such a disposition of the consciousness of Croatian national survival is exemplified in the period when *Regnum Croatiae et Dalmatiae* barely survives king Zvonimir, in an accelerated succession of catastrophic events and consequences for the Croatian ethnos, leading to a threat for identity and survival. Methodically viewed: according to Marulić the solid pole of We-Christians was attacked from within by the Venetian-Turkish 1503 peace treaty, producing a rift in the Christian Being-in-the-World. More than *Betulija*, Split, »our people«, was threatened from two sides. Fear before greater fear emerges from the insight into that divided foundation of expected security, in defense against the bursting danger from without. This is the framework of a multi-century disposition of the consciousness of national survival.

From a lamentous state, the consciousness emerges when its concern for the being of survival and its own/national Being-in-the-World has attained consciousness as the first in rank and forever the first in terms of precedence of vital national needs and initiatives. By enduring fear, anxiety, the consciousness of national survival frees itself from lamentation, and thus in its maze of survival it finally begins to exercise its own concern, which cannot be passed on to Others, for the Being of its survival and its Being-in-the-World. Our reminiscent reading endeavoured to adhere to Marulić's formative figure who from the shadow of the centuries emerges into the clear field of the consciousness of na-



tional survival, withdraws and appears again in a »dimension« of his share in the contemporary variant of the game/story he had begun: now, in it, the consciousness of national survival is concerned for its threatened Being-in-the-World as the Being of one that finally wants to be here for oneself. In as much as this want comes closer to realization, the being in-between of the consciousness of Croatian national survival will be left further in the past.