

## Željko Mardešić's approach to the phenomenon of hate

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*By his sensitivity to the occurrences of hate and by his courage to say it in a plausible and non-offending way, Željko Mardešić is more an exception than a rule in the spiritual milieu of Croatian culture and religiosity. This paper focuses on a short writing in which Mardešić confesses to his silence about hate. It analyses the meaning and nature of hate in an attempt to show what lies in the unsaid background of Mardešić's confession. Leaning on Heidegger and his understanding of emotion as opening the world, the author examines, through Mardešić's metaphors for hate – framework and air, the characteristics, scope and time of appearance of major waves of hate in society. Comparing hate with contempt and anger the author also shows the basic intention of Mardešić's writings on hate: exiting the framework for hate and creating a framework for forgiveness. This clearly shows Mardešić's position in society as well.*

Keywords: hate, contempt, anger, forgiveness.

At the beginning of the last decade, Mardešić wrote his confession about hate in a column in *Svjetlo Riječi*.<sup>1</sup> The text is short. Succinct. In it he only calls hate by its name. He does not describe it. What is more, Mardešić points to a game of hiding in which scientific or ideological jargons serve as a shelter where we are not obliged to call things by their names. We know hate too little, thinks Mardešić. Of course, he does not mean the scope of human knowledge about this phenomenon. He means the everyday and established knowledge of hate in our specific society. It is poor and inadequate. In other words, hate in our relations can also spread because of insufficient knowledge about it. More-

<sup>1</sup> Željko MARDEŠIĆ, *Odgovornost kršćana za svijet*, Sarajevo – Zagreb, Svjetlo Riječi, 2005, 11-14.

over, hate has also imposed silence about hate. The confession about hate is Mardešić's breaking of silence about it. By breaking the silence he does not let it spread further. Mardešić confesses that he was wrong. He thought that keeping silent about hate would help the young state. He was wrong. Keeping silent about hate does not help anyone. It is hate itself that benefits from keeping silent about it. Unnamed hate is more effective than a named one. Tacit hate spreads more readily. Its cold comes from not being uttered. It freezes the words and freezes the relations. By keeping silent about hate we cannot free ourselves from hate. Silence feeds it. Mardešić does not mean just any silence. He does not mean the silence of the haters who thus serve hate, the silent hate that contemplates how to destroy another. He means the silence of non-haters who decline to talk about it, those who do not want it, yet keep silent about it. The silence of good people makes room for hate. This is why it is necessary to speak up. Good people who are not taken with hate should talk about it. This is why Mardešić's talk about hate is his confession about keeping silent about hate. His personal and public confession about hate unsaid. Not the hate of haters who keep silent to hide their hate, but the hate that good people observe and choose not to name. Mardešić is not posing indirectly as a good man here. He has no intention of showing the difference between him and the people filled with hate. On the contrary! Keeping silent about hate does not make him a good man, and this is why he regrets his silence and his resort to the cunning of circumvention. The moment of the confession is the moment of regret of keeping silent about hate. Sometimes, it seems that Mardešić's confessions are not only the need to come clear before himself, but perhaps also his will to help others do the same. Indeed, Mardešić shows on his own example what is not good in society. With his confession he shows how it could be different.

Mardešić uses two metaphors in speaking about hate. Hate is a framework.<sup>2</sup> Hate is also the air that we breathe. We could translate the word framework with horizon. In both metaphors we notice the comprehensive character of hate. It is not only there at some places. It constitutes the framework for everything just like the horizon draws the ultimate boundary of our world, and it fills the entire space just like the air fills our world. Two metaphors. One about the horizon as the ultimate boundary, and the other one about all-pervasiveness. These two metaphors relate to two things connected to hate. Hate opens the world by showing its reach. It is a way of relating to and understanding the world. It is capable of sneaking into all pores of society unobserved. It permeates everything and constitutes the general atmosphere of society.

<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of *The first framework for forgiveness* Mardešić directly invoked a novel by Ivan Aralica, *Framework for Hate (Okvir za mržnju)*. In doing it, as Ivan Šarčević aptly noted in a discussion at the symposium on Željko Mardešić on 17 June 2011, he chose not to mention the author in order to avoid the temptation of placing anyone within the framework for hate (conf. *Svjedočanstva o mirotvorstvu*, Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2002, 91).

Where is hate? It is where people, words, economy, politics, social life are. Hate fills the space between people and the people themselves. It fills the public space and acting space. The space between people is the space of the public, activity and plurality. Hate annuls plurality by equalizing people, it poisons the public and directs action.

Hate was dealt with by philosophy, psychology, social sciences. Today, thinks Mardešić, we cannot overlook the biological roots of hate and hereditary sources. However, prior to placing hate within the scope of a science and try to explain where it springs from and why, hate needs to be described.

Hate belongs to the basic emotions, the feelings. Starting from the understanding of feelings as a way to open the world, we need to ask ourselves how does hate open the world. This is not readily understandable. Most often we understand hate as detrimental passionate energy destroying both the one being hated and the hater himself. This is also how Željko Mardešić understands it. However, hate can also be understood in another manner, so as to offer an opportunity to more clearly understand the force of hate Mardešić sensed without considering it his task to describe it.

It is the intention of this paper to show the structure of hate, describe its basic features so that from this description we may better and more clearly understand its mode of appearance, observe the time when it appears, present the reasons for its appearance at particular times, and deduct how Mardešić, even without describing hate, was sensitive to its appearance. He called himself a believer and particularly sensitive to any form of hate.<sup>3</sup> He knew that the hate of the believers was the worst kind of hate. Frequent encounters with human faces disfigured with hate made him sensitive to hate and nudged him on to shout from the rooftops.

Hate opens the world. With this we are leaning on Heidegger who saw a way to open the world in emotions, right next to language and speech. Much wider and deeper than by knowledge, the world is opened by emotion. Heidegger says that the opening potential related to knowledge is too short compared to the one related to emotions.<sup>4</sup> This view will help us see hate as the basic emotion that opens the world, has its own language and manner of speech. Mardešić's text lets you sense how he came close to such an understanding but did not name or present it.

In emotion, or mood, Heidegger saw the basic way of how the world was open to us. Not some details in it, but the world in its entirety. Emotion always relates to the world as a whole. How one feels is how one sees the world. Fear, for instance, makes the whole world a possible source of fear. Heidegger will

<sup>3</sup> Conf. Željko MARDEŠIĆ, *Svjedočanstva o mirotvorstvu*, 7. Mardešić enumerates personal, family, class, national and religious types of hate, pointing out that religious hate is the most dangerous of all because it is absolutely opposed to love that is the ultimate goal of religion.

<sup>4</sup> Conf. Martin HEIDEGGER, *Being and time*, (translated by Joan Stambaugh), State University of New York, 1996, 127.

make use of the experience of anxiety to point to the possible experience of everything, the experience that poses the metaphysical question.<sup>5</sup> »The world of the happy is quite different from the world of the unhappy.« says Wittgenstein<sup>6</sup> in a direct reference to the state of man that affects the world and its boundaries. Emotion is a relation to the world as a whole. It is the assumption that the state of the world can affect us. Being affected is in itself a prerequisite to man's concern and assuming responsibility.

Emotion is not feeling in contrast to reason. Emotion includes a rational view of the world as well. Every relation to the world is coloured by emotion. Even *vita contemplativa*, a purely theoretical view of the relations in the world, is always in some sort of emotion. In antiquity, *Theoria* was understood as a *peaceful* way of observing things.<sup>7</sup>

Since being affected is the basis for emotion, it is then clear how the first research in emotion did not appear within psychology, but within rhetoric, the ability of relating to something that does not concern us. Heidegger understood rhetoric as » as the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of being-with-one-another «.<sup>8</sup>

In *Being and Time* Heidegger analysed anxiety as an example of emotion. In the wake of Mardešić's metaphors of framework and air we are to analyse hate as a basic emotion.

Hate never comes by itself, suddenly, without reason. The emergence of hate is an important moment. It reflects what came before, but above all what constitutes it. A good literary example of a description of hate can be found in the novel *Death and the Dervish* by Meša Selimović. This text describes very accurately the emergence of hate and its essential characteristics. The protagonist is dervish Ahmed Nurudin. He lost his brother Harun. The responsibility for his death lies with the muslim, a district prefect, towards whom, at one point, Ahmed begins to feel hate.

»This was the happy moment of my transformation.

I was looking after him, as if glowing with new fire, from within, at his strong neck, his slightly bowed shoulders, his stout figure, and I did not care if he was going to turn around, I did not care if he would look at me with a smile or contempt, it did not matter, he was mine, I needed him, I tied myself to him by hate.

I hate you, I whispered passionately turning my head. I hate him, I thought looking at him. I hate, I hate, this one word sufficed, I could not utter it often enough. It was sweet, young and fresh, buxom and wistful, like love's yearning.

<sup>5</sup> Conf. Martin HEIDEGGER, Was ist Metaphysik?, in *Wegmarken*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, 111-112 where Heidegger understands withdrawal of the being as a whole in a rush of anxiety as an extraordinary moment at which in the experience of nothing the question about everything is sensed.

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Zagreb, Moderna vremena, 2003, 6.43.

<sup>7</sup> Conf. M. HEIDEGGER, *Being and time*, 130.

<sup>8</sup> Conf. M. HEIDEGGER, *Being and time*, 130.

He, I would say to myself, not letting him go away from me, not allowing myself to lose him. He. Like one thinks about a darling girl. I would sometimes let him go away from me, like a game, just to be able to follow his tracks and draw near him again, to get him in the crosshairs of my eyes. All that was disjointed in me, confused, strewn, all that sought an exit and solution, calmed down, quieted down, gathered strength that kept growing.

My heart found a support.

I hate him, I whispered in a trance walking down the path. I hate him, I thought, offering the evening prayer. I hate him, I almost said it aloud on entering the tekke.

When I woke up in the morning, hate was waiting fully awake, its head up, like a serpent coiled in the convolutions of my brain.

We shall never part any more. It has me, and I have it. Life has got meaning.

Initially, I enjoyed the dreamy trance, like the first moments of a fever, I found that black, terrible love sufficient. It almost looked like happiness.

I became richer, more focused, more noble, better, even smarter. The lost world came to peace in its bed, it re-established relation to everything, freed itself from the dark fear of the lack of meaning of life, the desired order was looming before me.

Back, sickly memories of the childhood! Back, slimy powerlessness! Back, the horror of not finding my way! I am no longer a skinned sheep driven into thorny bushes, my thought is not blindly feeling around in the dark, my heart is a steaming pot in which the inebriating potion is cooking.

I calmly and openly looked everything in the eye, fearing nothing. I went wherever I thought I would see the muslim, or at least the tip of his turban, I waited in the alley for the kadi and walked after him, looking at his narrow bent back, and I would leave slowly, alone, exhausted with hidden passion. If hate had smell, there would be a smell of blood behind me. If it had colour, a black trail would remain after my feet. If it could burn, flames would flare from all my openings. I know how it was born, and when it grew stronger, it did not need any reason. It became the reason and purpose in itself. But I did not want it to forget the beginning, so as not to lose its force and heat. Nor to neglect those to whom it owed it all, and to become everyone's. May it remain faithful to them.«<sup>9</sup>

This is a description of the birth of hate and a description of hate itself. Hate begins as conversion happens. It is not a change of opinion, but a change of the way of life, the form of life. There is a transformation and it is accompanied by joy. Meša Selimović first describes the closeness. Hate emerges as passion. Ahmed Nurudin tastes it in language and in body. It is close to him, he cannot stop uttering its name and he feels it the way a girl feels in the first rush of carnal passion. Hate is the focus on the one I hate. The focus occupies the entire consciousness. Hate endures. It is not accidental and short-lived. Hate draws into identity the one it hates. It constitutes the identity. It determines the daily schedule. It brings clarity in life and relations. Hate gives meaning to life. It has time and can wait. It is self-sufficient.

<sup>9</sup> Meša SELIMOVIĆ, *Derviš i smrt*, Sarajevo, Svjetlost, 1990, 242-243.

Hate is the force that connects. It ties the hater to the one he hates. It connects people in a paradoxical way. It ties the man taken with hate to the one he hates.

With the rise and deepening of hate the life's forces are increasingly focused on the subject of hate, on inflicting damage or simply on the destruction of the one being hated. Hate is not irrational. Anger or fury may be irrational, but hate is cold, calculated, rational. It plans, schemes, waits.

To understand hate it is primarily necessary to understand its role and occurrence in society. And this appears relevant to understanding Mardešić's writings about hate. Hate is mostly related to the feeling of subordination.<sup>10</sup> I hate someone who is superordinate to me. Hate will intensify if it is someone who used to be subordinate and is now superordinate. Contempt, on the contrary, occurs with someone who feels superior. Hate looks up above, and contempt looks down below. Someone is above me who should not be there. This is why hate is directed above. Hate thus appears a double danger. It is focused on its subject and wants to destroy it. However, its subject being above, all the hate that is spat out can fall back on the one who hates. Contempt does not fall back on the one who despises. He can despise constantly and feel safe. If the tables turn, then the one who used to despise turns all his emotions into hate. Contempt is easily turned to hate.

This time of changes in society explains why hate is emerging with all its might precisely when social roles are no longer clear and clearly divided. When historical processes open the possibility to exchange roles, from privileged to subordinate and from subordinate to privileged, hate becomes the driving force from below, and contempt turns to hatred for fear of losing privileged position. This is way hate is also directed against other hate. Motives are different, but the explosive power of hate is the same. It feeds on itself and on the hate of another. Two conflicting hates are multiplied and grow drawing strength from the juxtaposition.

This shows how hate discloses people's inferiority, subordination and powerlessness. Hate is capable of mobilising the powers of the helpless to defend himself and fight the feeling of helplessness. Hate thus gathers powers against the feeling of helplessness and the one who is the source of such feeling. Hate is potentially violent. It actually intends to destroy the one it hates. With this, hate also has a protective social role. It is directed outwards and driven by the will to destroy its subject, and it is directed inwards through the will to create inner agreement.

Mardešić very often describes the state of a divided society.<sup>11</sup> A society divided into groups shows two effects in relation to hate. Hate holds a group

<sup>10</sup> About hate and contempt from the aspect of social position conf. Christoph DEMMERLING, Hilge LANDWEER, *Philosophie der Gefühle*, Stuttgart – Weimar, J. B. Metzler, 2007, 295-299.

<sup>11</sup> The two writings: The First framework for forgiveness, and The Second framework for forgiveness, in *Svjedočanstva o mirotvorstvu*, 91-121.

together and is directed towards another group. Inwardly it functions cohesively. It focuses, creates tension, directs. Like a bow that needs tension and direction. Hate offers all this. The internal tension, focus and external target. Hate has the tendency to draw others into its spin. This is how it grows and becomes stronger. Hate grows by sharing. In addition, the growth of hate and the increase in the group cohesion means the growth of readiness for violence. It can be just verbal. Newspapers are teeming with hate, for example. Mardešić very early and very precisely observed the opening of the newspapers to hate. In this context it would be important to note how and when the newspapers lost contempt and let hate in. The transformation of contempt into hate is the exact moment of the reversal of social roles.

Contempt and hate meet and interflow at the moments of great social changes. Contempt is a feeling of moral superiority. It is not shown directly, it builds in the background. Hate is more direct. It is directed at another. It focuses on another. Contempt passes another by. It overlooks him. Hate binds. The one who hates is bound to the one he hates. Does not leave him. Watches all his moves. Does not lose sight of him. Hate is intense focus on the one who is hated. Contempt circumvents another. Contempt does not recognise another. It does not consider him equal in value and rights. He who shows contempt circumvents, chooses not to see, ignores the despised.<sup>12</sup> Hate has the drive in itself to destroy the opponent, whereas contempt has the drive to socially exclude the adversary. He who shows contempt wants to make the adversary non-existent and contemptuous. He who hates wants the adversary to disappear. Hate wants physical death. Contempt wants social death. Contempt knows no way to reconciliation. Hate can turn enemies to adversaries, and adversaries to recognised partners. Contempt knows no such metamorphoses. In Mardešić's writings there is always some hope and confidence in the possibility of good. When he speaks about hate, his writings end with hope that is capable of surpassing hate.

This is a sign that Mardešić felt hate, the condition of the despised, much stronger than contempt, the condition of the superordinate. His discourse about hate unsaid emerges from the subordinate position of the religious in society. Mardešić could not be readily put in the position of one showing contempt. And it would be difficult to imagine his regret for contempt unsaid. It is also noteworthy how hate can be reversed into liberation from hate. This is why Mardešić speaks about the framework for forgiveness. Instead of the framework for hate, a framework for forgiveness should be put in place. The horizon pictured by hate should be turned into a horizon marked by forgiveness. This is the task of the Christians world-wide.

<sup>12</sup> The phenomenon of the invisible people. Conf. Axel HONNETH, *Unsichtbarkeit. Stationen einer Theorie der Intersubjektivität*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 2003.

Contempt can turn to hate when social conditions change. The ones who were subordinate lose their position. They used to despise and make the despised socially invisible. Now they get in the position of the subordinate. With this they fall into hate. Until that moment, they contemptuously circumvented the adversary. Now they want to destroy him with hatred. The despised used to be humiliated. They were filled with hate. Now, with the change in social relations, they have become the hated. They have become the target of the hate of the once superordinate who used to show contempt. The hate they are now exposed to is a sort of recognition to them. Now they can turn from haters to despisers. To them, changing from the despised to the hated is achievement. They were not recognised, and now they are. They climbed on the social ladder. To the one who used to show contempt, the change to hate is a loss. He loses his sovereignty and the only thing left to him is hate. However, hate is a sort of recognition, and it can happen, unless there is physical destruction, that in the long term the relation to the hated turn into a relation to an enemy or rival.

If we compare hate with anger, we shall notice that Aristotle was right in differentiating between anger that is always directed at an individual for the sake of specific things from hate that is possible against a type, a group, irrespectively of whether there is a personal relation involved. Anger is driven by pain and suffering, whereas hate is driven by evil. Anger disappears with time, and hate endures. The one who is angry wants the cause of his pain to suffer pain himself. The one who hates wants his adversary to disappear. The one who is angry can feel compassion, the one who hates does not feel compassion.

Since society taboos keep hate in check, it is not spoken about. But it is omnipresent. To break the silence about hate, primarily among the believers, became an imperative to Mardešić.

Hate is investment of all the might one has. The one who hates invests all his might against the one he hates. Hate is directed, but it can also target the unknown, persons who are not nor have ever been close to me. It is possible if to me another is the holder of power. It is possible to hate someone with power without being in his vicinity. Hate runs deep and lasts long. Because it lasts long, it becomes one of the elements from which a person forms his own life. Hate, therefore, belongs to the important elements that make someone's life. »Hate is a historical aspect of human life – like the facts of birth, character, conversion, passion, love, work, sickness.«<sup>13</sup>

Mardešić was a keen observer of the conditions in society. And he spoke of the framework for forgiveness. The framework should be understood as the general horizon within which all social relations develop. The general framework of hate is fatal to society. It will always be able to bring in the poison of destruction into every pore of society. However, the framework is not easy to

<sup>13</sup> Aurel KOLNAI, *Ekel, Hochmut, Haß*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, 2007, 102.



replace. There is an inevitable question that Mardešić asks towards the end of his *Second framework for forgiveness*: »How do we get out of the framework for hatred and enter the framework for forgiveness?«<sup>14</sup> Of course, Mardešić has his answer. It is short: young people, wise people, good people. These are his three ways out of the framework for hatred and into the framework for forgiveness. Or in another words, it is a matter of changing the outlook: the attitude of hate into an attitude of forgiveness.

It is necessary to note that this includes the horizons of thought and relations and how Mardešić sees hate and forgiveness as interchangeable relations. Both hate and forgiveness can apply to an individual and to groups, the one as the other are the basic attitudes. Bottom line is that Mardešić, in his *Confession about hate*, aims at the change of attitude of an individual, a conversion. When he speaks about young people, however, it is impossible to expect conversion to youth. Speaking about wise men, it is impossible to expect conversion to wisdom. Wisdom is something to be awakened to. Conversion is possible in speaking about good people. Only a converted person is a good person.

Young people are more inclined to see the world outside the framework for hate. Hate emerges in the process of growing up and maturity. You do not become wise by a decision. What is more, the process of conversion also includes the long period of maturity and search that could not be called wise. However, a converted person is ready to listen to a wise person. Conversion to goodness is an ever-present requirement.

Hannah Arendt spoke about forgiveness and promise as ways to relate to the future that is not yet there, but within which we build support for human relations through promises, and through forgiveness change our view of what in itself is unalterable.<sup>15</sup>

Hate is a relation to the past and present. In this it does not differ from forgiveness, because forgiveness, too, is a relation to the past and unalterable. Hate is active and wants to respond to the past in the present. Forgiveness is also an active view of what was. Mardešić does not speak of hate because of the phenomenon in itself, but because he encounters it in following why the processes or reconciliation and forgiveness are not developing. He recognised the pedagogy of Christianity: »It is better to discover good than to fight evil.«<sup>16</sup> In this he differs from the political pragmatics that »sees evil everywhere, spreading hate and despondence«.<sup>17</sup> In hate Mardešić discovers an obstacle to forgiveness and reconciliation. However, he does not describe hate, he describes social processes that develop by following the logic of hate. Long-term hate piled up over time creates resentment. It always reappears in the most difficult and

<sup>14</sup> Mardešić, *Svjedočanstva...*, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Conf. Hannah ARENDT, *Vita activa*, Zagreb, August Cesarec, 1991, 190-199.

<sup>16</sup> Mardešić, *Svjedočanstva...*, 64.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

hardest of times and brings back and revives evil from the past. It is, therefore, important to step out of the framework for hate and enter into the framework for forgiveness.

Stepping out of the framework for hate, to which Mardešić strived and for which purpose he wrote his *Confession about hate*, could be defined thus: discover good and name evil. Do not keep silent about hate. Building democratic society without permanently privileged and permanently subjected groups. In the Church, be attentive to one's own role in the petrification of unjust relations, in particular being sensitive to the inclination towards the privileged. Join ranks with the subordinate and subjected and together with them dissolve the poison of hate through the power of forgiveness. Learn being good in evil times. Do not feed hate. One's own or another one's. Raising awareness that it is always possible to be hit by hate without reason. It is always possible for a person to find himself in relations where he is being hated for no reason. This does not mean that hate is unfounded, it means that the hated is not the reason for hate. Have shelters from hate. They are important human relations: friendships, good people and the basic human activities: loving, conversing, reading. Show the signs of good independently of hate and its logic.

Reading Mardešić's notes about hate we can see that he cares much more about really stepping out of the framework for hate and entering the framework for forgiveness, than describing the phenomenon of hate. This shows that Mardešić, at the time of writing his *Confession about hate*, already left behind any career aspirations and invested all his capabilities in peace.

Ante Vučković

*Pristup Željka Mardešića fenomenu mržnje*

Sažetak

Željko Mardešić je, po svojoj osjetljivosti na pojave mržnje i po svojoj hrabrosti da to kaže na uvjerljiv i neuvredljiv način, prije iznimka nego pravilo u duhovnom obzoru hrvatske kulture i religioznosti. Ovaj se rad zaustavlja na jednom kratkom tekstu u kojem Mardešić ispovijeda svoju šutnju o mržnji. Analizira značenje i narav mržnje nastojeći pokazati što se sve krije u neizrečenoj pozadini Mardešićeva istupa. Oslanjajući se na Heideggera i njegovo shvaćanje čuvstvenosti kao otvaranja svijeta, autor kroz Mardešićeve metafore za mržnju, okvira i zraka, istražuje obilježja, domete i vrijeme pojavljivanja snažnijih valova mržnje u društvu. Uspoređujući mržnju s prezirom i srdžbom autor pokazuje i temeljnu nakanu Mardešićevih tekstova koji spominju mržnju: izlazak iz okvira za mržnju i stvaranje okvira za opraštanje. Kroz to se jasno pokazuje i Mardešićev položaj u društvu.

*Ključne riječi: mržnja, prezir, srdžba, opraštanje.*