

THE BRIDGES OF MY MIND

My generation was brought up on the myth of the bridge. We overestimated its significance and its power – we always preferred the title of the French translation of Ivo Andrić's most famous novel, *Il y a un pont sur Drina*, to the rather dry English one, *The Bridge over the Drina*. The last series of wars in the Balkans, however, have demonstrated quite persuasively that bridges can perish both literally and metaphorically. And when a soldier killed the Old Bridge in Mostar, many of us felt that much more had crumbled into the Neretva than just a few stones from the 16th century. But, at least the event rid us of an illusion.

Now we know that, for a bridge to be a bridge, two sides are needed. And when both sides retreat, there is nothing to be built between them. No degree of force can make up for the lack of a voluntary coming together.

Somewhere in my mind I continue to build bridges. But now I am aware that the bridges I am building are just my ways of getting around bad experiences and disappointments. I expected from the old bridges to help me to master space. The new bridges of my mind are helping me to master time. And that makes all the difference.

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