

“The accent is what makes the difference between us”

A similar channel to the MTV is showing videoclips on high volume. The bar, near to a railroad, embellishes this deserted landscape in Bacevici (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The bar's weak light is the only thing which bright this night. Quite similar to a dirty side motel, only few people have the courage to sit in one of its chairs to drink the last *pivo* (beer) of the day.

“I was playing in the garden with other children when, suddenly, a man said to my parents that we should go somewhere else for a while”. Maja Andric is Serbian. She shifts nervously on her chair when she remembers the day she left Bacevici for the first time, on 5th April in 1992, at the beginning of the war. The seven days that the trip should last turned into seven years. She was eight. Now she's 28 and works as a nurse at the hospital of the Croatian town. During the war she changed schools five times and always felt out of place. “The other children always looked at me as if I were a stranger, someone so different from them”. She studied in Nebesije, located in a Serbian region called Trebinje, but she never felt at home.

Sitting by her side, Damir Bukvarevic's story starts a little bit differently from Maja's. “My father was killed on March of 1992. He was a policeman and he knew too much”. Despite the music's high level Damir's voice sounds clear, direct and strong. Since he's working as a translator, his Spanish is almost perfect, the same as Maja's. She learned the language when she worked as a cook for the Spanish Army.

“When my father was killed, I back went back to Tuzla, a village near my hometown, Kalesija”. Damir made those trips when he was 10. Now he remembers those trips at the age of 29 as a lawyer, policeman and Muslim. On the 2nd of May in 1992, the Serbian Army entered into his hometown and buried absolutely everything from them, including jobs and electricity. “There were no people, no birds”, tell us Maja. When her family finally came back to their hometown, she had already made friends in Nebesije so she tried to start a new life, once again, during another year. Damir talks about that. “That is why nowadays religion is so important. When the war was ongoing, you had nothing and nobody, so the only thing you could do was ask for God's help.

The night is becoming darker while the singers are still singing on the TV. Bacevici is divided into two parts as Mostar is: one is Serbian and the other one Croat. Before the war, “you didn't care about religion, you didn't make any difference between ethnic groups”, Maja remembers. But today is different. “Two months ago, I as having coffee with a friend when suddenly the police appeared and told us to leave the place immediately. A group of Croat people wanted to attack Muslim people. How can be no hate in this place when there are people who teach their children to hate each other?” says Maja angrily.

These some examples are not always as extreme as this one. Maja tell us another one: one day her father went to the bakery and asked for a *hyeb* (bread in Serbian). The shop assistant was ashamed because she didn't understand what he meant until he asked for *kruh* (bread in Croat). These kind of differences are bigger in little and remote towns. Meanwhile, in the big cities like Mostar or Sarajevo there is a normal coexistence between all the inhabitants.

Damir has clear thinking: "The day we finally realise that together we are stronger than divided, that day we will live again in one country". Maja nods beside him. "The accent is what makes the difference between us". He thinks that the solution for the country is the creation of employment. "When you are not starving, it is more complicated being manipulated". But for Maja the remedy is something foggy and far away because she is aware that there are areas where the nationalism still exists. The only point of view they agreed on is what it is because it "is what the politicians want".

Despite it being summer, the temperature is enjoyable and the environment calm. Sometimes the whistle of the train resounds. The sound, short and intense, breaks the silence of the landscape. Inside the bar, the singers are still shouting on television. "The music was the first thing which crossed ethnic barriers", says Damir. If so, let the music play.