

IN MEMORIAM



Professor Dušan Kecmanović, MD, PhD
(1942 – 2014)

(Member of International Editorial Board of Psychiatria Danubina)

Dušan Kecmanović, one of the most renowned psychiatrists from the Western Balkans region died suddenly in Sydney, Australia on April 6, 2014. Kecmanović was Professor of Psychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Sarajevo, a member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry, and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Dušan Kecmanović was born in Belgrade in 1942, and lived in Sarajevo from 1945 until the war broke out in 1992, when he emigrated to Australia. After graduating from the prestigious Classical Gymnasium, Kecmanović completed his medical degree and Master of Science at the University of Sarajevo, which was soon followed by his specialisation in psychiatry at the Psychiatry Clinic in Sarajevo. In 1975 he obtained his PhD at the University of Belgrade, with the thesis titled "Towards a theoretical and methodological conceptualisation of socio-psychiatric activities."

Kecmanović's first book "Between the normal and the pathological" (1972), a collection of essays, drew considerable attention among psychiatrists and has had a number of editions. Early in his career, Kecmanović was interested in social psychiatry. He was a lead investigator in a number of research projects in social psychiatry. One of the projects resulted in the establishment of a Register of psychotic patients in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1975 he published the book "Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Sociology", which soon became an important text in all university centres in Yugoslavia. His research in social psychiatry was published in journals such as *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *World Journal of Psychosynthesis*, *Naše teme*, *Sociologija*, *Encyclopedia moderna* and *Socijalna psihijatrija*.

Later, his research interests moved towards topics related to the role of psychiatry in society, the nature of mental illness and ethical dilemmas in psychiatry. This research was published in *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* and *Schweizer Archiv fuer Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, *The Psychiatrist*, and *Psychiatria Danubina*, among others.

Kecmanović also devoted much attention to psychiatric education. He was the editor of four textbooks in psychiatry. One of them, the two-volume "Psychiatry" published in 1989, included contributions from fifty-nine authors from all university centres of the former Yugoslavia.

In the second half of the 1990s, Kecmanović became interested in the psychological aspects of ethnonationalism. He published extensively in this area, in the popular press and the scientific literature. His books - "Ethnic Times", "The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism", "Rational and irrational in ethnonationalism", and "Psychopolitics of hatred", made an important contribution to the understanding of ethnonationalism.

During the last ten years, Kecmanović returned to the core topics in psychiatry and metapsychiatry. He continued to examine the ontological and epistemological questions of mental illness. His critical insights in the conceptual and practical aspects of diagnostics and treatment of mental illness were published in journals such as "East Asian Archive of Psychiatry", "Dialogues in Philosophy, Mental and Neuro Sciences" as well as in his most recent books: "Psychiatry in critical mirror", "Controversies and Dilemmas in Contemporary Psychiatry" and "Psychiatry against itself".

The death of Dušan Kecmanović is an irreplaceable loss for psychiatry. The legacy of his work will continue much beyond this region.

Slobodan Loga