

This reading is excerpted with permission of the author from Keith Doubt's "Understanding Evil: Lessons from Bosnia (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006). The author can be contacted through email at kdoubt@wittenberg.edu

## 10. RITUALIZING EVIL

Herein lies the principle of Evil, not in some mystical agency or transcendence, but as a concealment of the symbolic order.

—Jean Baudrillard

There are many books written on Bosnia and the Balkans from historical, political, journalistic, philosophical, and sociological points of view. One such book is Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans*. It is worthwhile looking closely at Todorova's concluding sentence. While an author's last words are often the most enigmatic, they can also be the most revealing:

If Europe has produced not only racism but also antiracism, not only misogyny but also feminism, not only anti-Semitism, but also its repudiation, then what can be termed Balkanism has not yet been coupled with its complementing and ennobling antiparticle. (1997, 189)

There are problems with this concluding sentence. One is that Balkanism is correlated with racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism. The correlation is unduly negative. Racism evokes hatred, misogyny

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primitiveness, and anti-Semitism prejudice. There may be negative attributes associated with Balkanism, but that negativity does not fall into the same category as racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism. Balkanism is hardly guilty in the same way. Indeed, there may be something positive about Balkanism. It is not a pathology.

A second problem with this concluding sentence is that Todorova suggests an ambivalent relation between the Balkans and Europe. According to Todorova, while the Balkans stand parallel to Europe, they stand other to Europe at the same time. If anything, Europe uses the Balkans, not to know the Balkans, but to stipulate a knowledge of itself, that is, to define Europe. Edward W. Said calls this type of relation Orientalism: “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (1995, 3). Said then extends this point:

I do not think that this idea can be overemphasized. Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. (1995, 20–21)

Does Europe treat the Balkans “as a sort of surrogate and even underground self”? Are the Balkans exterior to Europe? Is there nothing intrinsically significant to the Balkans except to stand as “the first cause” for what is intrinsically significant to Europe?

These problems are significant, but there is an even more pressing problem in Todorova’s final statement. Balkanism, Todorova says, cannot be grasped with dialectical thought. She indicates that the complementing and ennobling antiparticle, that is, the positive notion that counters the negative one that is Balkanism, has not yet been grasped. The Balkans are esoteric; their meaning exists beyond the grasp of dialectical inquiry. Although Todorova imagines a future when the complementing and ennobling antiparticle may be recognized and perhaps grasped, she indicates that such understanding does not yet exist. We are thus forced to ask, in the context of the Balkans, what does it take

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1995: *Lessons for the Future*” in *Srebrenica and Sarajevo*, July 2005. Earlier versions were published as “Last Words / First Words” in *Odjek*.

to recognize the equivalent of the ennobling notions of antiracism, feminism, and the repudiation of anti-Semitism?

To turn the issue on its head, might Balkanism itself be a complementing and ennobling antiparticle to Europe, something interior as well as exterior, to what Europe is? Ironically enough, Todorova's concluding sentence puts the reader in a double-bind: the epistemology required for achieving what is proposed with the book's title is withheld. We cannot imagine the Balkans if their content is wholly negative in the identical way that racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism are wholly negative. Nor can we imagine the Balkans if their content is just a stipulation, that is, a stipulation of what is other to Europe; nor can we imagine the Balkans if the subject is impervious to dialectical reasoning because its complementing and ennobling antiparticle remains forever concealed.

What is to be done? Let us retract, to some degree, the critique put forth. When responding negatively to negativity, the subject and object merge; no concept is developed. Let us instead recognize that there is something positive, indeed incisive, in Todorova's concluding sentence. If Europe is the soil upon which racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism have flourished, what has flourished on the soil of the Balkans? What corresponding trope to racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism grows on the soil of the Balkans? We must first recognize this subject before we can do the even more important work of grasping its complementing and ennobling antiparticle.

If racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism are the regrettable progeny of Europe, what is the unwanted progeny of the Balkans? The thesis put forth and still stipulated at this point is that scapegoating flourishes on the soil of the Balkans much as racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism are said to flourish on the soil of Europe. Racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, and scapegoating, all four, of course, are related. They may even coincide in the same category. Scapegoating, however, is a distinct progeny; it is a child that vexes the cultural, social, and political history of the Balkans.

Scapegoating, of course, is biblical in its origins. A scapegoat is the sacrificial object, whether animal or human, through which a community seeks to purge itself of its sins. The transgressions of a community are projected onto the scapegoat. When the scapegoat is expelled or

destroyed, so are the transgressions of the community which were symbolically but superficially projected onto the scapegoat.

Concretely, there is not a difference between being a victim and being a scapegoat. Both the victim and the scapegoat suffer. Analytically, there is a difference. Unlike the victim, whose suffering may be accidental or intentional, the scapegoat takes on symbolic significance. There is a ritual that constructs a demented understanding of the scapegoat. The result is prejudice and then violence under the cloak of blind righteousness. The person who is scapegoated loses his or her voice and comes to represent something arbitrarily connected to his or her self. The person is trapped in a ritual that has biblical nuances but inhuman consequences.

Scapegoating, of course, is not generic to the Balkans. There is not even a word in Serbo-Croatian that corresponds directly to the English word. Still, much as influenza from Europe spread all too easily among the susceptible native North American population, the pathology of scapegoating spreads all too easily among the inhabitants of the Balkans. The advantage of looking to the Balkans is not that scapegoating is absent elsewhere in the world, but that scapegoating occurs there in a clear and sophisticated manner.

First, let us reconsider a previously analyzed example. In *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, Laura Silber and Allan Little write the following:

Belgrade Television was firmly in Milošević's grip. It was the ideal tool for stirring up hatred against "the enemies of the Serbian people"—first Kosovo's Albanians, then the Slovenes, the Croats, and finally, the opposition in Serbia itself. (1996, 120)

How then did Slobodan Milošević come to power? Silber and Little note this incident at the beginning of his ascendancy: "The crowd roared, screaming for the arrest of the Albanian Party leader [Azem Vlasi]. Milošević answered: 'I can't hear you, but we will arrest those responsible including those who have used the workers. In the name of the socialist people of Serbia I promise this'" (1996, 68). Silber and Little then note that Dušan Mitević, chief of Belgrade TV and confidant of Milošević, said that this was Milošević at his best.

What is it about Milošević's utterance that is so admirable for Mitević? Milošević says he will arrest those who deceive the people, who are plotting against Yugoslavia, and who have used the workers. It is

Milošević, however, who, at this moment, is deceiving the people, plotting against Yugoslavia, and using the workers. The way in which Milošević describes Vlasi is less a description of Vlasi and more a description of himself. Milošević makes Vlasi his scapegoat. By transferring to Vlasi the crimes of which he himself is guilty, Milošević becomes something other than himself. Milošević's guilt in undermining the state of Yugoslavia is transferred to Vlasi, who was subsequently put on a show trial and imprisoned. At the same time, Milošević co-opts Vlasi's innocence; he assumes Vlasi's integrity.

During such events, the Serbian people identified with Milošević; that is, they identified with what Milošević was doing, namely, scapegoating. Milošević's unchecked use of the scapegoating ritual made his power seem unassailable, not only to people inside Serbia but also to those outside Serbia. While the subjects of the ritual changed, the ritual remained the same. First, Kosovar Albanians, then Croats, then Bosnian Muslims, and then the political opposition in Serbia were cast in the same light. Other Balkan leaders learned to copy the scapegoat ritual. That is, communities who were scapegoated retaliated by scapegoating the members of the community that had been scapegoating them.

Milošević even employed this technique while standing trial at the Hague. Milošević's line of defense was that he was the sacrificial goat for the period when NATO bombed Serbia and Kosovo in 1999. Leftists such as Michael Parenti and Harold Pinter, who publicly supported and defended Milošević, also employed this line of defense. The weapon that Milošević used to destroy communities in former-Yugoslavia he cynically used to defend himself at The Hague. He put himself in the place of the victims who he himself victimized and claimed victim status.

Consider the following comment regarding Milošević between Aleksa Djilas and Tom Butler.

When our conversation turned to Milošević, Aleksa Djilas declaimed: "My position is unique in Belgrade: he's guilty, but don't extradite him!" He chuckled as he told me that Latinka Perović was "mad" at him for his stand. I asked what was wrong with handing such *djubre* ("trash") as Milošević over to the Hague. Here, the British educated Djilas shed his urbanity, spitting out his words in a manner that reminded me of his late father: "But that would make him into a scapegoat!" (Butler 2001)

Why oppose the need to arrest Milošević if he is guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide? On what basis does Djilas resist this imperative? Djilas suggests that Western leaders underestimate the power of scapegoating. He dreads its consequences because he witnessed how the scapegoating ritual was used in political discourse in Serbia so effectively. According to Djilas, the cost of not arresting Milošević remains less than the cost of arresting him: the consequences of scapegoating are too high for the Serbian nation to pay.

At a pragmatic level, events at the Hague seem to have proved Djilas right. Allowing Milošević to defend himself before the Tribunal without appropriate legal representation (Milošević is himself a lawyer) created a kind of media event at the trial. Before the Tribunal's judges, Milošević acted out a scapegoat role. Milošević constructed evidence for his case on the spot, as it were. Milošević's individual responsibility for the injustices that he inflicted on so many people and communities remained unrecognized even when directly witnessed. Before the Serbian people, Milošević became not only a scapegoat, but also a martyr, and the judicial process backfired. Milošević's untimely death before the completion of his trial confirms this reading.

While the concept of scapegoating has widely used descriptive power with respect to the discussion of evil, it is necessary to critique the limits of the concept as an explanation and expose the flaws inherent in the concept. The disciplines of psychology, sociology, theology, and rhetoric each have distinctive versions of the concept of scapegoating. It is worthwhile to distinguish these different versions and then collect their interconnectedness.

In psychology, the idea of scapegoating is used to explain victimization. As a scapegoat, an individual is treated as an object against whom the prejudice of the group is projected. The individual becomes a lightning rod for the group's hatred, which, in fact, is a self-hatred even though it is focused on another. Because the group, whether a family or a community, cannot live with this hatred of itself, it transfers the unwanted feeling to another. The transference occurs in a perverse manner in that the group's self-hatred is entrenched. Co-optation of the victim is necessary. Through the scapegoating dynamic, the group's self-hatred becomes self-perpetuating, which is why the ritual is both unhealthy and dysfunctional.

This pathology explains to a significant degree the grotesque acts of individuals and groups committing heinous crimes against Bosnian

Muslims and other Bosnians. At this point no more examples are needed.

In sociology, scapegoating is used to explain the way in which a community may attempt to establish order and tranquility. The scapegoat is an object lesson. In order for members of a society to feel secure, they ritualistically commit violence against one who has been singled out. Collectively, the members of the society inflict on one of its members what they all either consciously or unconsciously fear could be inflicted upon themselves. The group's collective anxiety triggers scapegoating, and the purpose is to relieve the group of its angst.

Although not a sociologist, René Girard is the most eloquent proponent of this theory. In *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard puts forth an eloquent account of scapegoating explicitly as a concept in literary criticism and implicitly as a sociological theory. Girard argues that scapegoating is necessary as well as inevitable in the history of a community. According to Girard, scapegoating is ritualized violence that, when done unanimously, effectively stops violence and establishes social harmony. If scapegoating is done unanimously with the consent of the entire community (the linchpin of his theorizing), it suppresses the possibility of reciprocity. "Unanimity is a formal requirement; the abstention of a single participant renders the sacrifice even worse than useless—it makes it dangerous" (1972, 100). The function of religion, Girard says, is to develop this sense of unanimity through symbolically ritualizing violence.

As a prelude to his formulation of scapegoating, Girard first articulates the state of nature that is called "the Hobbesian jungle":

The fear generated by the kill-or-be-killed syndrome, the tendency to "anticipate" violence by lashing out first (akin to our contemporary concept of "preventive war") cannot be explained in purely psychological terms. . . . In a universe both deprived of any transcendental code of justice and exposed to violence, everyone has reason to fear the worst. The difference between a projection of one's own paranoia and an objective evaluation of circumstances has been worn away. (1972, 54)

Although Girard and Hobbes have an identical understanding of the state of nature as violent, lawless, and chaotic, Girard's solution with respect to the establishment of social order is antithetical to Hobbes's.

Therefore, to understand Girard's solution, it is best first to review Hobbes's.

What is the social contract? For Hobbes, the social contract represents the birth of society. Society is created when a collection of people recognizes that life becomes peaceful when they agree to suspend their use of force and fraud against each other and when this agreement is viewed as binding. Without a social contract, life among people is short, nasty, and brutish. Violence dominates. With a social contract, violence is viewed as unnecessary—necessarily unnecessary. This recognition lifts people out of the Hobbesian jungle, where interactions remained a matter of every man and woman for himself or herself and where every man and woman engaged in the limitless, albeit self-destructive, use of force and fraud. For Hobbes, society is nothing except a cognitive construction. Society is born when people collectively recognize the inherent rationality of the social contract. As rational beings, people recognize that the social contract is a more efficient means of attaining a peaceful and safe life than every individuals' unchecked use of force and fraud.

What convinces people to accept the social contract? For Hobbes the answer is strictly empirical. There is no moral principle here. The hellish experience of a war of all against all and our primal memory of this experience compels us to accept the rationality of the social contract. The history of social violence, then, is a record of forgetting and remembering this lesson, the ebb and flow of irrational and rational conduct. Society is the birth of the distinction between complying in deference to another's potential use of force or fraud and obeying out of respect for the authority and innate rationality of the social contract. Authority here is based on the notion that a group of people (a society) collectively accepts a rule as rationally binding.

Girard has a strikingly anti-Hobbesian understanding of social order. While Girard's theorizing depicts the presocial nature of human nature even more clearly than Hobbes, it shuns the foundational principles that the discipline of sociology inherits from Hobbes. Natural right is not suspended, nor is it critiqued. Natural right is instead masked behind a vulgar notion of social right. The notion that "might is right" is implicitly preserved through society's evolution. When society scapegoats unanimously, society becomes mighty and therefore rightful. For Girard, social right develops because it is the most forceful expression of

natural right. For Girard, the primary foundation of society is its inherent lawlessness: we live in “a universe deprived of any transcendental code of justice” (1972, 54).

Girard says that violence is inevitable. Hobbes says that, thanks to the social contract, violence is not inevitable. It is true that in the state of nature violence is inevitable. It is necessary, however, to understand why violence is not inevitable in society. Girard and Hobbes each address the role of envy in recounting the origins of society. Envy, they say, is an intrinsic feature of the human species. Human beings are social; one way in which that sociability is expressed is through envy. For Girard, envy is always superior to rationality. Envy trumps rationality, which is why scapegoating rather than the social contract achieves social order. For Hobbes, rationality is superior to envy. If it were not, there would never be society. For Hobbes, rationality and envy, in fact, work together, collude together, to establish the social contract. The social contract is created not simply because of our rationality (the strict utilitarian understanding of social order) but also because of our capacity to put ourselves in the place of another. If we use violence against another, another will use violence against us. Envy, which puts oneself in the place of another, is turned into a positive rather than a negative force. Since we do not want violence to be brought to bear against ourselves, we do not want violence to be brought to bear against others. With rationality, envy is transformed into empathy. Without rationality, envy perpetuates violence.

It is therefore wrong-headed for Girard to argue that violence is imitable. Violence cannot truly be imitated. To imitate, we must put ourselves in the place of the other. Our conscience must link us to another. We imagine and anticipate what another feels. When there is this identification with the other, violence cannot occur.

Violence, of course, can be copied, and in the state of nature, violence is copied. Revenge copycats the violent deed of another. Copying occurs without identification. Copying is a natural behavior; it is not a social one because it lacks identification with another. To say that violence can be imitated is perverse and illogical; it places natural right, whether the natural right of a collective or the natural right of an individual, above social right. Social right is grounded in the trust that people imitate, that is, identify with, the rationality of the social contract.

For example, the Great Commandant, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” is a theological precept that makes violence inimitable. Likewise,

the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” is a normative principle that makes violence inimitable. The political commitment of Mohandas K. Gandhi to ahimsa as the love that brings about true social change makes violence inimitable. Gandhi knows that humans cannot inflict violence on another human being when they see that human being identifying with them and when they see that human being calling for them to identify with the one toward whom their violence is intended.

One reason that the concept of scapegoating is morally confusing is because multiple versions of the concept emerge simultaneously in scholarly discussions. While the different versions are neither independent nor mutually exclusive, their mixing can result in misunderstanding. In theology, there is also a concept of scapegoating, and this version lurks in the background of secular discussions of the phenomenon. It is important therefore to distinguish the version of scapegoating found in theology in order to separate it from the secular versions.

In the theology of the Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, God does not allow Abraham to sacrifice his son. God provides a ram as a substitute. The ram, not Abraham’s son, is the scapegoat. The parable shows God’s relation to humanity. God will not accept human sacrifices. Through Abraham, divine law becomes human law. In faithful communities, the scapegoating of human beings who are all created in God’s image is taboo.

This imperative informs not just faithful communities but any community grounded in the principle of human rights. The dividing line between a barbaric society and a civilized society is the depth of a society’s taboo against scapegoating. If the taboo is strong, there is social stability. Moral unanimity exists. If the taboo is feeble, there is anomie. Societies in which the political media and popular culture promote the scapegoating ritual unabashedly are barbaric, hardly societies at all. In such communities, the absence of a social contract is ignorantly perceived as the ideal social contract. Absolute freedom reigns with absolute terror. When societies use the scapegoating ritual to sustain social order and establish stability, human rights become nonexistent.

We have surveyed the concept of scapegoating in psychology, sociology, and theology. We have indicated how theology provides a counterversion to the concept of scapegoating found in psychology and sociology. In literature, there are stories that dramatize scapegoating. Interestingly, such stories are especially vivid in the literature of the

Balkans. Consider the Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andrić's (1977) *Bridge on the Drina*, in which there is at the beginning of the novel the gory impaling of Radosav. Andrić's latent nationalism is evident in the way that he frames and tells this tale. Radosav is a scapegoat in several senses within the novel. He is a scapegoat for the failure to complete the bequeathed bridge; he is an object-lesson to the citizens of Višegrad who observe this gruesome killing; and he is a martyr within the local Serbian community who idealize him as a Christ figure. This literary example of scapegoating is artful but morally confusing; it unclearly mixes the psychological, sociological, and theological aspects of the concept. Moreover, in every dramatic scene after this opening one, Andrić continues to employ the scapegoat structure to frame his narrative. The novel never develops from or transcends the scapegoating of Radosav, which remains the defining moment in the novel. In real life, this dramatization is dangerous; it is propaganda.

In the social sciences, scapegoating is a mechanism for expressing prejudice; in literary criticism, it is a symbolic mechanism for purging a community of dissonance and establishing solidarity within a seemingly functional community. Ironically, literary criticism's account is the more sociological. For the purging of the scapegoat to be functional, there must be identification as well as dis-identification. The scapegoat is not a stranger. The scapegoat comes from within the community. Radoslav was from Višegrad.

It is helpful now to consider the concept of scapegoating in the discipline of rhetoric because it helps synthesize the previously discussed concepts. Kenneth Burke provides a clear account of what scapegoating is for rhetoric with the notion of vicarious atonement.

As such, [the scapegoat] is profoundly consubstantial with those who, looking upon it as a chosen vessel, would ritualistically cleanse themselves by loading the burden of their own iniquities upon it. Thus the scapegoat represents the principle of division in that its persecutors would alienate from themselves to it their own uncleannesses. For one must remember that a scapegoat cannot be "curative" except insofar as it represents the iniquities of those who would be cured by attacking it. In representing *their* iniquities, it performs the role of vicarious atonement (that is, unification, or merger, granted to those who have alienated their iniquities upon it, and so may be purified through its suffering). (1969, 406)

With the concept of vicarious atonement, Burke offers a critical understanding of scapegoating. To consider an example, what sort of vicarious atonement did the Serbian nation seek through Milošević's trial? Arresting Milošević in Belgrade and transferring him to the Hague divided Milošević from the Serbian people. Milošević represented the guilt of the Serbian people; in the name of a Greater Serbia Milošević initiated, planned, incited, and carried out genocide. The division that the Belgrade arrest created initiated a curative process. In offering up Milošević as a scapegoat, the Serbian nation gave some sort of reparation. The Serbian people cleansed themselves of their iniquities against their neighbors. The reparation, however, was unreal; as Burke says, it was vicarious, and this was Djilas's prophetic point.

Milošević is a metonym for the complicity of the Serbian people in genocide. After identification has been made, the scapegoat is reified. The community then expels its fetish. If the scapegoat has been identified with the transgressions of the community, it is necessary to cast out the scapegoat. The scapegoat has become a mirror in which the community sees its negative reflection. The mirror reflects the community's guilt. The community cannot tolerate seeing itself in the mirror; the identification is too painful because the identification is innate.

Another example of this point is the release of the infamous Scorpion video through the brave efforts of Nataša Kandrić (Hemon 2005). The video films the military police from Serbia murdering six Bosnian men from Srebrenica in July 1995. It is like a home video, first showing Serb Orthodox priests blessing the men in the Scorpion militia before entering Bosnia. Later, the Scorpions are shown taking six men off a truck, forcing them to lie in a ditch and then march down a road to a field where they are shot with their hands tied behind their backs. After first shooting four of the men, the Serbian military police untie the hands of the two remaining men, who are ordered to carry the bodies into a house. After dragging the bodies through a field into a house, these two men, who were the least submissive in the group, are shot and left with the bodies of the others.

People living in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have viewed this video on television. Many Muslim families in Bosnia have copies of the tape in their homes. In a painstakingly slow manner, the video shows six men being taunted, degraded, mocked, brutalized, traumatized, and slaughtered. The Serbian militia laugh and snicker at their victims. The six men, one of whom is a sixteen-year-old boy, are objects against

whom the anti-Muslim prejudice of the Serbian militia and anti-Bosnian ideology of Serbian nationalism are projected. These men become vessels for the antipathy that the murderers feel toward not only their victims but also themselves for participating in the mass killings around Srebrenica. The men's self-hatred is projected onto their victims, who they never touch except with their boots and rifles. The Serbian military police co-opt the last two men into their own victimization. The last two men are forced to carry the bodies of the men, who they watched being slowly shot, into an empty house before being killed themselves. The homoerotic features of the home video as it pans the backsides of the men are barely concealed; these homoerotic features are peppered among the machismo displays of power that pervade the video. It is like a snuff film but, unlike pornographic movies, in which a murder may be perfectly simulated, in this video murders occur and are filmed.

In the monograph *Genocide in Srebrenica, United Nations "Safe Area" in July 1995*, Smail Čekić, Muharem Kreso, and Bećir Macić write, "Srebrenica crystallized a truth understood only too late by the United Nations and the world at large: that Bosnia was as much a moral cause as a military conflict" (2001, 269). Bosnia is still a moral cause. One way to meet our responsibility to this truism is to seek answers to the question of why the mass killings in Srebrenica were allowed to occur. As stated in *Genocide in Srebrenica*, the fundamental but inadequately answered question is, "Why did the United Nations fail to deter the Serb attack on Srebrenica and the appalling events that followed when the United Nation had a mandate to deter the Serb attacks on Srebrenica" (Cekic, Kreso, and Macić 2001, 11)?

Through an application of the concept of scapegoating, it is possible to address the moral blindness and irresponsibility of the United Nations and the international community. Were the human beings in Srebrenica sacrificed for some goal based on global politics to which the victims themselves had no relation? Why did the United Nations not deter the attack against the safe area of Srebrenica despite its promise to defend the Srebrenica civilians, a promise that resulted in the Bosnian army surrendering the heavy weapons needed to protect the area? How did the Serbian general, Ratko Mladić, blackmail the French UN officer, Colonel Janvier, so effectively at their secret meetings? What explained the power that Mladić had over the United Nations after the Serbian army seized UN soldiers? Janvier's fear was that, in the hands of the Serbian army, UN soldiers would become scapegoats. This fear

paralyzed and clouded Janvier's judgment. In order to rescue UN soldiers from this fate, the UN instead permitted thousands of civilians in Srebrenica to be substituted and mercilessly slaughtered in an utterly obscene and unconscionable manner. These civilians became scapegoats not only for Mladić and the Serbian army but also for the UN and the world at large. Mladić—with this tactical exchange—won the UN's complicity.

What was achieved on the part of Janvier through these deals with Mladić? Yes, he stopped Mladić from scapegoating UN soldiers by promising Mladić not to bomb the Serbian army in exchange for the release of the UN hostages. He, however, did not stop Mladić from scapegoating Bosnian civilians. The problem is the manner in which the UN stopped Mladić from scapegoating UN soldiers at the same time fueled Mladić's obscene use of the scapegoating ritual. The fact that Mladić could encompass the United Nations within his perverse ritual deepened his madness and enflamed his pathology.

One of the most morally egregious acts with respect to the UN failure to prevent mass killings in Srebrenica was the advice of Colonel Karremans, the commander of the Dutch forces stationed in the safe area, to the military and political leaders of Srebrenica. These leaders were told on the evening of July 10 that there would be massive NATO air strikes on the morning of July 11 to stop the advance of the Serbian army into Srebrenica. Karremans showed the Srebrenica leaders a map of areas around Srebrenica that would become a zone of death because NATO planes would destroy everything that moved in these areas. Karremans advised Bosnian soldiers defending Srebrenica to abandon their defense lines and stay clear of this area because NATO air strikes would occur the next morning. However, the NATO air strikes did not occur. The consequence of Karremans's advice was that the next day it was all too easy for the Serbian army to enter the town and commence with its genocide as the world watched.

When the Srebrenica leaders received this news from Karremans skeptically, Karremans is reported as having said, "Don't shoot the piano player" (Honig and Both 1996, 21–22; Rodhe 1997, 133). While authors writing on this exchange have noted that the Bosnian translator had trouble translating the metaphor, the terminology is cryptic even for English speakers. Was Karremans the piano player playing an out of tune piano? Was Karremans providing music, a welcomed message,

which should be enjoyed rather than killed? At this moment, evil was fully present.

While it may be impossible to provide an historically adequate account as to why this act of bad faith took place between Karremans and the Sreberenica leaders in this way and in this manner, it is possible to provide a meaningful account of the consequences of this exchange. Through this advice from Karremans, the UN tied the hands of the victims in Srebrenica for their grotesque slaughter by the Serbian army. The UN enabled the Serbian genocide because the UN itself was entrapped in the scapegoat ritual and did not know how either to escape or to stop the ritual.

It is in the interest of the UN and everyone to learn from this horrible mistake. The task now is to construct the completing and ennobling antiparticle to scapegoating, the repudiation of scapegoating, its antidote, and demonstrate how it grows in the Balkans, as well as the antidotes to racism, misogyny, and anti-Semitism grow in Europe. The writing of Émile Durkheim, in contrast to Hobbes, suggests that the notion of social right is grounded in something more than empirical experience. In his essay on the Dreyfus affair, "Individualism and the Intellectuals," which itself is a sociological critique of the scapegoating ritual in France, Durkheim writes, "And since each of us incarnates something of humanity, each individual consciousness contains something divine and thus finds itself marked with a character which renders it sacred and inviolable to others" (1973, 52). Since each individual is sacred and thus inviolable, scapegoating is taboo, necessarily taboo. Since each individual is inviolable, no individual and no community can accept the scapegoating of any individual. When one is persuaded by this principle, one recognizes that there is moral unity only when the state itself defends this conviction. Scapegoating can never become unanimous because no individual would ever consent to being scapegoated and the person scapegoated must be selected from the community. Girard's theorizing is based on an irrational fiction. What is, in fact, unanimous is the taboo against scapegoating, and this unanimity is metaphysical as well as empirical.

Durkheim demonstrates how the problem of social order cannot be resolved without reference to human rights. Sociologists borrow from the transcendental language of human rights even if they do so without acknowledging their indebtedness to this language. According to Durkheim, the social contract equally serves the interests of the individual

and society: “Not only is individualism distinct from anarchy; but is henceforth the only system of beliefs which can ensure the moral unity of the country” (1973, 50). How is it that individualism and the moral unity of the country are affirmed simultaneously? Durkheim argues that a state may never accept scapegoating as a way to establish order because, “There is no reason of State which can excuse an outrage against the person when the rights of the person are placed above the State” (46). Durkheim observes that when society “tolerates acts of sacrilege it abdicates any sway over men’s minds” (53). The transgression of this principle of governance explains the spiral of violence in not only former-Yugoslavia, but also in Israel’s oppression of Palestinians and the U.S. military occupation of Iraq.

Consider Robert Hayden’s critical discussion of the Dayton Accord in “Focus: Constitutionalism and Nationalism in the Balkans”:

The Dayton Constitution . . . gives priority to human rights. Yet these are meaningless. As James Madison notes in 1787, “In framing a government . . . the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.” (1995, 68)

Hayden’s citation to Madison is telltale. How does a government control the governed? One way in which the government controls the governed is through the use of force and fraud. Madison, however, indicates that if all the government does is control the governed, no matter how efficiently and effectively, it is not a government. Such a government can only resort to increasingly sophisticated forms of force and fraud, and this, we see, is the road to hell. The government itself is out of control.

Madison says that the government is obliged to control itself. But what obliges a government to control itself? There is only one way to oblige a government to control itself: when it gives priority to human rights. Giving priority to human rights is tantamount to the government controlling itself. The commitment to human rights obliges a government to control itself as it controls the governed. The commitment to human rights wins the consent of the governed to be governed, to be controlled, by the government. The best, the most efficient, and so, ultimately, the most rational way for a government to control the governed is for the government to respect human rights because respecting human rights wins the consent of the governed to be controlled by what controls the government.

## 11. THEORIZING EVIL WITH SOCRATIC NAIVETÉ

*But is evil then not, by its nature, an action? Not at all; action is only the type of evil happening which makes evil manifest. But does not evil action stem precisely from a decision to evil? The ultimate meaning of our exposition is that it too stems primarily from indecision, providing that by decision we understand, not a partial, a pseudo decision, but that of the whole soul (emphasis added).*

—Martin Buber

Evil is difficult to comprehend theoretically. Socrates avoided this task, and it is important to understand why. When someone knows that an act is wrong (truly knows that it is wrong), someone will not willingly commit the act. Doing wrong, according to Socrates, is a matter of ignorance and nothing else.

Socrates' refusal to theorize evil exasperated his interlocutors. In Plato's *Gorgias*, Polus asked why Socrates argued as if he were unaware of evil: "But can they not kill whoever they please, like dictators, and inflict confiscation and banishment on anyone they choose?" Socrates replied that, while tyrants do these terrible things, they are "the least powerful persons in a state. They do practically nothing that they will, only what they think best." Polus replied, "Well, isn't that to enjoy

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great power?” Socrates answered no and asked, “Do you think it a benefit when a man devoid of wisdom does what seems best to him?” Polus still objected, and Socrates became empathetic, “They don’t do what they really will. Prove me wrong” (Plato 1960, 48–50).

At the beginning of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle states the principle that sustains Socrates’ refusal to theorize evil: “Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has been rightly declared to be that at which all things aim” (quoted in Blum 1978, 1). In order for action to be action, it must aim at some good. If evil is action, toward what end does it aim? Can evil aim at some good and still be evil? To be evil, evil must aim at what is not good. Once evil becomes action, once it aims toward some good, it is no longer evil. For Socrates, the unbreakable character of this logic exonerates him from accounting for evil. From the perspective of thought itself, evil does not exist. For Socrates, it is not a serious subject.

If, however, we could report to Socrates the violence inflicted upon people and the communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, would Socrates say that Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, the individuals responsible for planning, initiating, leading, and sustaining these crimes, did not “do what they willed”? Would Socrates say that Mladić and Karadžić had “the least power” in the cities of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war?

It is worth citing *Gorgias* at length:

*Socrates:* Then when we walk we walk as a means to the good, because we think it the better course; and when we stand still on the other hand we stand still from the same motive as a means to the good. Do you agree?

*Polus:* Yes.

*Socrates:* And when we kill or banish or confiscate, if we ever do so, we act from a belief that it is better for us to do so than not?

*Polus:* Certainly.

*Socrates:* Then men do all these things as a means to the good?

*Polus:* Yes.

*Socrates:* We agreed, didn’t we, that we do not will acts that are means, but the ends to which they are means?

*Polus:* Of course.

*Socrates:* So we do not will a man's death or banishment or loss of property simply for its own sake; we will it if it brings advantage, but not if it brings the reverse. As you say yourself, we will what is good; we do not will what is indifferent, still less what is bad. Am I right, Polus, or not? Why don't you answer?

*Polus:* You are right.

*Socrates:* Then, if that is granted, when a dictator or an orator kills or banishes or confiscates because he believes it to be to his advantage, and it turns out to be to his disadvantage, we must allow that he does what he pleases, mustn't we?

*Polus:* Yes.

*Socrates:* But does he do what he wills, when what he does turns out to be bad? Why don't you answer?

*Polus:* I agree that he doesn't do what he wills.

(Plato 1960, 51–52)

Polus begrudgingly agrees with Socrates. Nobody wills to kill or banish people from cities as an end-in-itself when these things are in fact not good.

When Mladić and Karadžić walk, they walk because they think that it is good. When they stand still, they stand still because they think that it is good. As actors, Mladić and Karadžić pursue good things rather than evil things. Consider this report from Adil Zulfikarpašić on Karadžić at a joint meeting in Zvornik with the Muslim Bosniak Organization and the SDS in 1991:

That meeting was very important for the fact that the main representative of the Serbs, Karadžić, said that Greater Serbia was a wonderful dream but could not be achieved in Bosnia, that the Serbs should know that, and that real life differed from such dreams. He then said quite reasonably that in those parts of Bosnia where Serbs and Bosniaks lived together, in half of the municipalities the Bosniaks were the majority, and in the other half the Serbs, so that where the Serbs had the majority they should protect the Muslims, and where the Muslims had the majority they should protect the Serbs. The only prospect for the future lay in

living together. Even today, when visitors to the Bosniak Institute watch our video recording of that meeting they say it is astonishing the degree to which the Serbs had actually accepted the agreement and renounced the idea of Greater Serbia. (1998, 181)

Karadžić knew that what he thought best, the dream of a Greater Serbia, was not what he willed. When Karadžić said before the war in Zvornik, “The only prospect for the future lay in living together,” he was intelligent. Karadžić knew what was good. How many lives would have been saved and how much destruction would have been avoided if Karadžić had acted according to what he willed rather than what he thought best?

The mass murders in Srebrenica and uncountable other places throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina were not good. The conscience of the world knows this as a matter of direct acquaintance for which no rational proof is required. Even the superego of Karadžić knows this as a matter of direct acquaintance for which no rational proof is required.

After hearing of Karadžić’s crimes against humanity, Socrates would say, “Do you think it is a good if someone does whatever seems best to him when he has no intelligence?” Hannah Arendt would support this position. With the concept of the banality of evil, Arendt shows solidarity with Socrates’ refusal to theorize evil.

It is indeed my opinion now that evil is never “radical,” that it is only extreme, and that it possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension. It can overgrow and lay waste the whole world precisely because it spreads like a fungus on the surface. It is “thought-defying,” as I said, because thought tries to reach some depth, to go to the roots, and the moment it concerns itself with evil, it is frustrated because there is nothing. That is its “banality.” Only the good has depth and can be radical. (correspondence cited in Bernstein 1996, 138–39)

To have depth, one seeks some good. To be radical, one seeks some good. Evil is “thought-defying” because it does not seek some good.

During the war, many journalists interviewed Karadžić. The question that journalists would ask in one way or another was what was his motivation. What reasoning guided his conduct? Karadžić would say that he was doing what he thought best, say, for “his people” or a “Greater Serbia.” This response was banality: while Karadžić was perhaps doing what he thought best, he was not doing what he willed. He

knew that “in those parts of Bosnia where Serbs and Bosniaks lived together, in half of the municipalities the Bosniaks were the majority, and in the other half the Serbs, so that where the Serbs had the majority they should protect the Muslims, and where the Muslims had the majority they should protect the Serbs” (Karadžić quoted in Zulfikarpašić 1998, 181). Karadžić, however, acted contrary to what he knew.

Pundits and journalists, however, favored the contrasting position; they favored the notion that Karadžić was doing what he wanted, that Karadžić wanted to inflict mass murder and genocide upon the people and society of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thomas Cushman, for example, writes, “At base, evil is *action*” (2000, 33). Understanding Karadžić as deep rather than as banal was a better story line; understanding Karadžić as a radical nationalist rather than as a shallow politician was better news. If Karadžić were deep and radical, who could stop such a powerful man? In contrast, if Karadžić were banal and superficial, not doing what he wanted because he did not at all know what he wanted, who could fail to stop him if they would but try?

Whenever human thought seeks to grasp evil as anything more than banal, the Socratic figure haunts the discussion. Consider the following passage in *Literature and Evil* from Georges Bataille, “We explore Evil in as far as we think it Good, and, inevitably, the exploration is doomed to failure and ridicule. But this does not make it any the less interesting” (1973, 149). Socrates’ objection is embedded in Bataille’s statement. “We explore Evil in as far as we think it Good” (1973, 149). For Bataille, Socrates’ objection, however, does not hold; that is, it does not stop Bataille from conducting his inquiry even though he knows that it is doomed to failure and ridicule. For Bataille, the exploration remains interesting. How, though, is what is thought-defying interesting?

We see the postmodern retort to Socrates’ refusal to theorize evil; postmodernism says that evil is oriented. Jeffery C. Alexander writes, “social evil can be and often is sought as an end in itself” (2001, 170). To resolve the contradiction of this polemic, we could say that evil represents the good of not aspiring toward the good. For evil, the way to seek good is not to seek good, and this aim becomes an end-in-itself. Once evil, however, aims at some good, even the good of not aiming toward the good, evil is no longer evil. Evil loses itself with the will to seek good, albeit in a demented way. Evil becomes nonevil, thoughtless.

If there were truly an ontology for evil, the integrity of action would disintegrate. Consider Slavoj Žižek when he implicitly attempts to formulate evil as an end-in-itself.

Is there a specific kind of knowledge which renders impossible the act, a knowledge which can no longer be co-opted by cynical distance (I know what I am doing, but I am nevertheless doing it.)? (1996, 512)

To reframe Žižek's question, can I know that I am doing evil and nevertheless do evil? Is there a specific kind of knowledge, namely evil, that renders impossible the act? Is it possible to act without seeking some good? Žižek seeks to develop an account of evil as oriented, but he is unable to do so.

Consider again the incisive accounts of Karadžić by Semezdin Mehmedinović. Mehmedinović recalls a conversation he had with Karadžić in Sarajevo before the war:

We were in the Writer's Club one summer afternoon and he was telling me, with great enthusiasm, about a movie he had seen the day before. The movie was *Sophie's Choice*, and Radovan, speaking from the professional perspective of someone concerned with the human psyche, interpreted in great detail the various aspects of Meryl Streep's spiritual state in the scene where a German officer presents her with the following choice: which of her two children should be saved, since one would have to be killed. Underground, my hair stood on end as I remembered his rational analysis of Sophie's choice. (1998, 19)

Is Karadžić a person fascinated by evil? If he is a person fascinated with evil, at what point did he turn? Did Karadžić will evil rather than good? Mehmedinović notes, "The ghastly scene from *Sophie's Choice* was endlessly repeated in Bosnia: Karadžić's soldiers put mothers in the same position in which Meryl Streep found herself in the cinematic reconstruction of events that took place in a German concentration camp" (1998, 20).

Is radical evil possible? Can a human being do evil knowing that it is evil? Is Karadžić an evil person or a person who does not know what he wants? How this question is answered influences the decisions of the international elite on whether, when, and how to apprehend Karadžić.

If he is seen as evil, it may seem futile and vain to arrest him. If Karadžić is evil, he is incorrigible. What is the point of arresting him? It would change nothing; it could never undo what he did. The task can wait until he dies, when, of course, it would be pointless.

If Socrates were to meet Karadžić, what mirror would Socrates hold up to Karadžić to look into? Would Karadžić see himself? The approach that Socrates would undertake (as he did with Thrasymachus in “Book One” of *The Republic*) would be to persuade Karadžić that, even if he were doing what he thought best when he committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, he was never doing what he wanted. Socrates would assume that once Karadžić became thoughtful, he would agree that the sociocide referred to euphemistically as ethnic cleansing was not action insofar as action must pursue some good. The mindless murders, immense destruction, unconscionable bad faith, and unthinkable injustices that Karadžić inflicted upon people in Bosnia-Herzegovina exemplified an absence of intelligence.

Would Karadžić eventually blush in such a conversation? Would Karadžić exemplify an *individual* consciousness? In Plato’s *The Republic*, toward the end of the conversation between Socrates and Thrasymachus, we read the following:

Now, Thrasymachus did not agree to all of this so easily as I tell it now, but he dragged his feet and resisted, and he produced a wonderful quantity of sweat, for it was summer. And then I saw what I had not yet seen before—Thrasymachus blushing. (1968, 29)

Why does Thrasymachus, once he sees that he is refuted, blush? Why does he not, like Anytus in *Meno*, get angry, threaten Socrates, and walk away? Why does he not, like Callicles in *Gorgias*, stubbornly refuse to answer any more questions? Jacob Klein remarks, “What is being said in a Platonic dialogue must be watched most carefully: every word counts; some casually spoken words may be more important than lengthy, elaborate statements” (1977, 2). This statement from Klein recommends treating the seemingly superficial exchanges between Socrates and Thrasymachus as a crucial aspect of the dialogue, equal to if not greater in importance to the philosophical argument itself.

Thrasymachus’s blush is an expression of his experience upon being refuted. While involuntary, the blush comes from within Thrasymachus; it reveals him. It reveals his soul. Thrasymachus’s blush exemplifies his awareness of the contradiction between what he had been

arguing for, namely, that the unjust are not only stronger but also better than the just, and what he knows, namely, that the just are not only better but also stronger than the unjust.

Thrasymachus's blush surprises Socrates, who sees for the first time what Emmanuel Levinas would call Thrasymachus's face. It is an encounter. Levinas says, "The face before me summons me, calls for me, begs for me, as if the invisible death, that must be faced by the Other, pure otherness, separated, in some way, from any whole, were my business" (1989, 83). Thrasymachus's blush reveals his face. The blush is a demand, not a question. The blush requires Socrates to continue discussing justice for another nine books. Short dialogues are no longer sufficient. Given the responsibility that Thrasymachus's blush puts upon him, Socrates assumes a duty toward not only Thrasymachus, but also Glaucon and Adeimantus, who seek to carry on Thrasymachus's argument.

Will Karadžić blush? Many in Bosnia after suffering Karadžić's heinous crimes would say that Karadžić is incapable of blushing. Karadžić's followers, moreover, do not want their leader to be arrested and taken to the Hague because if he were to be taken there and if he were to blush, it would mean that Karadžić was not an evil man. It would mean that during the war Karadžić only did what he thought best but never did what he willed. It would mean that Karadžić did what he did with no intelligence.

If Karadžić is indeed incapable of blushing either at the Hague or anywhere else, then his crimes against humanity have so permanently damaged his soul that he is incapable of suffering a refutation. This does not mean that he is evil, at least according to Socrates. It means that he is incorrigible, no longer subject to reason and his innate desire for good. His conscience remains permanently asleep to avoid the nightmare of waking up. A Manichean lullaby, sung by followers, keeps his conscience asleep. The key lyric in this lullaby is the notion of radical evil.

If Karadžić were in fact to blush, it would put a demand upon the international community. Perhaps the international community wants to keep Karadžić hidden. Consider the "wanted posters" that dot the government buildings and public places of Bosnia-Herzegovina offering large sums of money for information leading to Karadžić's arrest. On

the posters, we see the face of Karadžić, the face of someone who never saw the face of Bosnians. Levinas says, “The first word of the face is the ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ It is an order. There is a commandment in the appearance of the face, as if a master spoke to me” (1989, 83). Why display Karadžić’s face so brazenly? If we see another’s face, we cannot kill the other. Karadžić never saw the faces of others. Why should Karadžić’s victims now have to see his face excruciatingly displayed in public places? The denotative meaning of these “wanted posters” (after the war there is now the rule of law) belies the connotative meaning of the “wanted posters” (there is still no respect for human dignity or justice).

The international community was waiting for Slobodan Milošević to blush at the Hague. The potential justice of the trial was that, at some point, Milošević would blush, however involuntarily, and the world would witness this blush. Imagine Milošević blushing on the witness stand at some critical moment and saying not only to his victims but also to his followers, “I was wrong. I am terribly sorry.” The followers of Milošević prayed that Milošević would never blush, that he would never suffer a refutation, an authentic conviction. If Milošević were to blush, his followers would have to follow suit.

Milošević’s untimely death before his trial at the Hague was completed is a tragedy. The trial lasted too long. Witnessing Milošević blush would have restored the rule of law and ensured social stability in Bosnia as well as Serbia. Such an event would have been immeasurably priceless. Nothing else could have brought peace and established justice in Bosnia so easily.

Consider now another likely and horrific ending to this history. What happens if Karadžić dies of natural causes without being brought to justice? What if he is never arrested? Will the Serbian Orthodox Church bury him? Where? Will the Serbian Orthodox Church bury Karadžić in Montenegro where his mother lived? In Serbia, near Belgrade? In Bosnia-Herzegovina? In Pale? Will Karadžić be buried next to one of the mass grave sites for which he is responsible? Near Srebrenica? Will the Serbian Orthodox Church bury Karadžić in several places repeatedly throughout Republika Srpska as it did Prince Lazar?

In 1991, Orthodox Serbs throughout former-Yugoslavia gathered to view Prince Lazar’s remains. The bones of this legendary Serbian hero were passed around monasteries in former-Yugoslavia, places that were

simultaneously claimed as Serbian lands. This event as much as anything triggered the pathos of ethnic tension. Displaying the remains of Lazar through Yugoslavia with repeated burials evoked and transfigured the ethical spirit of many, although not all, Serbian families. Through this public ritual Serbian families came to see their ethical spirit as grounded exclusively in their Serbian ethnicity. They became disconnected to their Yugoslav citizenship. What Hegel (1977, 464–82) calls the divine law of the human spirit became the dominating ethical spirit, which fermented nationalism and fueled the subsequent evil. Family and state became indistinguishable. In identifying exclusively with the ethical spirit that Hegel formulates as divine law, Serbian communities forgot their ethical spirit as modern citizens of Yugoslavia. They became blind to the complementary ethical spirit that Hegel formulates as human law. Human law, Hegel says, represents the rights of citizens and the moral authority of the state. Justice, Hegel says, is the substance of human law. Nationalism, whether Serbian, Croatian, Bosniak, or Albanian, displaces human law with divine law. Nationalism disfigures the ethical orientations of a society.

Civil society is a bridge. Civil society is a bridge between two distinct parts of society. Civil society links the family and the state, the private realm and the public domain. It is the bridge where people interact in the public domain, do commerce, maintain schools, secure marriage licenses, affirm culture, and so on. It is not a bridge between two different ethnic groups. Nationalism damages civil society.

In 2000, five years after the war in Bosnia, the reburial of the nationalistic Serbian poet, Jovan Dučić, in Trebinje, a part of Bosnia in Republika Srpska, replicates the political character and ethical pathos of the reburial of Prince Lazar in 1991. Both burials were sponsored by the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Serbian President Vojislav Koštunica attended this reburial in Bosnia-Herzegovina before ever having visited the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina as Serbia's head of state. Koštunica agreed to visit Sarajevo and meet with officials at the city's airport only after intense pressure from the international community. As the Serbian President, Koštunica is obliged to acknowledge human law before divine law, which is not to deny his right to a particular relation to divine law. It is, though, to deny his right to privilege divine law, the divine law of family customs, over and above human law, the human law of the state. It is to deny his right as a nationalist to make

family and state indistinguishable not only for himself but also for the citizens in his state.

Civil society has two important functions. It keeps the family and the state connected, and it keeps the family and the state independent. It is unhealthy for the family to be self-sufficient. The life of the family digresses and becomes tribal. It is also unhealthy for the state to assume sole responsibility for civil society. The life of the state becomes totalitarian. To be a strong bridge between the family and the state, civil society needs to be both fair and just. The family expects fairness from civil society, and fairness is represented with the good of cooperation grounded in a principle of equity. The state expects justice from civil society, and justice is represented with practices guided by truth and reason. Nationalism is dysfunctional because it makes civil society and the state one entity, and the family loses its independence.

These events sponsored by the Serbian Orthodox Church involving the remains of Prince Lazar and then Jovan Dučić usurp the ethical spirit of society. As we learn from reading the Greek tragedy, *Antigone*, the burial ritual is the one and only time that the ethical spirit of the family rightfully takes precedence over the ethical spirit of the state. Despite the harsh edicts of King Creon, Antigone must bury her dead brother. It is her duty. Nationalism, however, is an unhealthy collective sentiment because it seeks to suspend the dominion of human law, not only during the time of the burial ritual, but also during all times. Nationalism uses divine law to displace human law permanently. In doing so, nationalism destroys not only the state but also the family.

It will be a nightmare if Karadžić dies without being punished. It will be a nightmare if Karadžić is buried by the Serbian Orthodox Church in the noble land of Bosnia without first being punished. By avoiding the problem of apprehending Karadžić today, the international community creates an even more intractable problem tomorrow. When Karadžić dies, the Serbian Orthodox Church will be in control of the situation; it will use divine law to continue to exercise dominion over the state. To fail to arrest Karadžić today perpetuates a fatalism to which not only nationalist Serbs but also the international community have become fixated. The toxicity of this fatalism spreads to other regions of the world, and the situation paralyzes the future of people in Bosnia. If Karadžić is buried in Bosnia without being arrested for doing so much to destroy this country, peace will seem impossible and war inevitable.

If convicted at the Hague, as part of his punishment, Karadžić should be taken to mass grave sites throughout Bosnia and told to apologize to his victims and their families, and these apologies should be broadcast on Belgrade Television and throughout the world. It will be better not only morally but also pragmatically to apprehend Karadžić now and put him in a situation where there is the greatest opportunity for him to blush and for the world to witness it.

## 12. SOCIOCIDE: A NEW PARADIGM FOR EVIL

I have indicated my skepticism about the very idea of a *theory* of evil, if this is understood as a complete account of what evil *is*. I do not think that such a theory is possible, because we cannot anticipate what new forms of evil or vicissitudes of evil will appear.

—Richard Bernstein

During the war in Bosnia, home after home was burned. Gunners methodically shelled from the hills house after house along streets in villages, towns, and cities. Traveling through the countryside of Bosnia after the war, one still sees how immense this devastation is. Burned-out frames of homes dot the hills. Empty shells of houses are found in every locale.

Why was the violence brought to bear in this particular way against the people of Bosnia? Consider the significance of the home as recounted by the cultural anthropologist, Tone Bringa:

It often took ten to twenty years to finish a modern house. Only when we realize the amount and length of the hard work and effort which families have invested in the building of their house (and home), can we fully understand the tragedy of the systematic

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burning of homes in rural Bosnia in the war and the devastating effect it has on people. When they lose their house, they lose all they have worked for in the past and much of what they would have lived for in the future. Particularly for the man as husband and father, the house he managed to build symbolized his social worth; it was proof of his hard work and commitment to his family and their future well-being. But the house or kuća also represented the moral unity of the household and the moral quality of its members, and while men were the builders of the house, women were the guardians of its moral values. (1995, 85–86)

What did it mean to wantonly destroy so many homes? Armed conflicts have taken on a twisted orientation. Not only in Bosnia but also in Rwanda, Chechnya, the Middle East, and now Iraq armed conflict assumes a demented purpose. Not only are houses destroyed, but also the prestige of the home. Not only are women and children murdered, but also the city itself, its rituals and ways of life. Not only are a particular group of people and its infrastructures assaulted, but also its history and collective memory. Not only is a social system demolished, but also society itself. In the first case, the violence is called domicile; in the second, urbicide; and in the third, genocide. In the fourth case, however, it is necessary to introduce a new term, a neologism, sociocide.

What then is sociocide? Sociocide is an inadequately theorized concept. It is not possible to understand evil as action because, as Aristotle (1962) states, action must aim at some good. It, though, is possible to understand the consequences of evil. We cannot directly witness evil because it is empty. We can, though, directly witness the result of evil. The ultimate result of evil is sociocide, whether at the individual or collective level.

The questions to address are What is it to kill society?, Is it possible to kill society?, and What would the murdering of a society mean? Consider Immanuel Kant's idealistic understanding of states at war in *Perpetual Peace*, "No state shall, during war, permit such acts of hostility which would make mutual confidence in the subsequent peace impossible" (1917, 114). With this statement, Kant imagines that during war a state is farsighted enough to think about its future relation with its enemy and ethical enough to ensure the possibility of mutual confidence in the subsequent peace.

Bosnia's enemies conducted war in the exact opposite way. Milošević's Belgrade regime not only permitted but also planned acts of hostility whose purpose was to render trust and mutual confidence in the subsequent peace impossible. Such was the guiding principle with which violence was brought to bear against the people and communities of Bosnia. War was conducted to utterly destroy one state's relation to another.

It helps to consider the argument inverted. Hegel provides an opposing point of view of the objective consequences of war; he formulates a positive relation between war and its impact on society:

In order not to let them [families and private communities] get rooted and settled in this isolation and thus break up the whole into fragments and let the common spirit evaporate, government has from time to time to shake them to the very centre by War. By this means it confounds the order that has been established and arranged, and violates their right to independence, while the individuals (who, being absorbed therein, get adrift from the whole, striving after inviolable self-existence (*Fürsichseyn*) personal security), are made, by the task thus imposed on them by government, to feel the power of their lord and master, death. By thus breaking up the form of fixed stability, spirit guards the ethical order from sinking into merely natural existence. (1977, 474)

Hegel argues that the social function of war is to reestablish a society's solidarity. This function is not just a consequence of war, but also a cause of war. In *Habits of the Heart*, Americans are depicted as increasingly private and self-centered, lacking a sense of civic commitment and social responsibility. The authors of *Habits of the Heart* call this quality ontological individualism (Bellah et al. 1985, 143). Hegel argues that, when society is in such an anomic state, war is necessary in order to confound the fragmentation of the society and reassert the state's significance. War positively establishes that solidarity required for a society to function. When families and private communities strive exclusively after their inviolable self-existence and absolute personal security, society is threatened. According to Hegel, war shatters and repairs this negative development.

In the context of Bosnia, war served the opposite function. The purpose and the manner in which war was conducted was to destroy society. Recall what was stated earlier. From 1992 to 1995, approximately

one-quarter of a million or more people were killed; one-quarter of a million were maimed or injured; one-quarter of a million were held in concentration camps; and 2.5 million, half the population, were driven from their homes. Before the war, Bosnia had 4.5 million inhabitants. How are we to understand the magnitude of this interpersonal violence within a society? At some point, does the society in and of itself cease to exist?

Ozren Žunec, a sociologist in Croatia, studies the impact of war on society.

All wars have effects on societies. The most destructive are armed conflicts which, in addition to social losses, leave societal losses, that is, the kind of devastation of society which imperils its very survival. "Societal" . . . is a theoretical concept and relates to society as a system that enables, organizes, and gives meaning to empirical society. (1999, 96)

Previous chapters have pointed out the severe "societal" losses during the war in Bosnia. Whether addressing the latent function of ethnic cleansing, the transgression of the burial funeral, the degradation ceremony, the crime of rape, the betrayal of intellectual figures, the disfigurement of language, or the scapegoat ritual, societal losses were heavy.

James Gow states that over the course of a decade, "the committing of war crimes was the essence of Serbian strategy" (2003, 2). Gow argues, "Ethnic cleansing was not a contingent phenomenon of a primitive, or bestial, culture, but a strategy involving rational calculations and decisions on the creation and use of means to achieve the ends" (2003, 306). He recounts these horrendous war crimes, addressing from an empirical point of view the questions of who, where, why, how, and what, and interweaving the answers to these questions into an informative testimony. This approach is to depict the crimes against humanity of the Serbian project as an oriented course of action, an example of the continuation of politics by "other means." For Gow, action is the unit of analysis, and in the social sciences action is composed of five analytical elements: (1) an actor or actors, (2) a context or set of conditions, (3) a purpose, (4) a means or instrument, and (5) a normative orientation, whether morally or culturally constructed, upon which action, in this case the action of war, negatively or positively draws. For each of these elements, Gow reviews the relevant findings and surveys

the significant examples, of which there are many; he then formulates the interdependence of these five elements of the action frame of reference in relation to each other. As a political institution committed to a “Serbian project,” the Belgrade regime brought unconscionable violence to bear against the people, heritage, tradition, and communities of its neighbors.

Talcott Parsons, the sociologist who best articulated the centrality of the action frame of reference to the social sciences, was fond of citing Alfred Marshall, who said, “The most reckless and treacherous of all theorists is he who professes to let facts and figures speak for themselves” (1968, 10 n.1). Gow’s descriptions of events are shrewd and fluent; his analysis is credible and encompassing. Gow’s accounts are so incontestable that there is no room for doubt with respect to his thesis, “A strategy of war crimes defines the war” (2003, 30). Still, at a moral level, there is something unsatisfactory with this analysis. Gow inflates the rationality of war criminals like Slobodan Milošević and Ratko Mladić and exaggerates the utilitarian efficiency of their criminality. This inflation gives an illusion of credibility and sanity to the madness of these horrendous events.

According to ancient philosophers, in order for action (in this case, the action of war) to be action, it must aim toward some good. If a deed cannot be conceived of as aiming toward some good, the deed cannot be conceived of as action. If the war crimes in Brčko, Foča, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Zvornik, and uncountable other places in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were actions, toward what good did they aim? No utilitarian calculus can interpret these deeds as aiming toward some good. Metaphysically, it is a mistake to treat these crimes against humanity as anything except banal. To do more, to inflate the rationality of the events as if the actors were seeking some good, is to be co-opted by evil.

Sonja Biserko (2005), Norman Cigar (1995), Michael Sells (1996), Mirko Djordjević (1996), Sabrina Ramet (1996), and Radmila Radić (2000) have all critically described the leading role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the incitement of the Serbian people to turn against their neighbors and fellow citizens:

With Milošević’s arrival in power, the Serb Orthodox Church was returned to public prominence in order to facilitate implementation of the Serb national programme. The Church played a very

important role here, by fanning ethnic nationalism and hegemonic aspirations in the popular masses and by manipulating their religious and patriotic feelings. (Biserko 2005, 34–35)

What method of persuasion did the Serb Orthodox Church use? The intemperate use of the scapegoat ritual in political and religious discourse is the best explanation we have at this time. The Serbian Orthodox Church became the promoter of the scapegoat ritual as the dominant cultural, social, and religious motif for inciting psychological and physical violence against human beings who were not Serbs.

Walter Benjamin writes, “Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves” (2004, 255). What did the Serb Orthodox Church give the Serbian people a chance to express? It gave them a chance to express their collective trauma as victims of atrocities during World War II. The problem is that the Serb Orthodox Church gave the Serbian people a chance to express only this one thing—this sense of collective victimization—and without changing either the psychological or the sociological structure of this collective trauma (Ramet 1996). It gave the Serbian people only one way to express their collective trauma as victims in the past. This was genocide against another group of people.

In a mechanistic society, the well-being of the community takes precedence over the development of the individual. What therefore holds the society together is the solidarity of the people as a community over the solidarity of the people as individuals. As Durkheim says of mechanical solidarity, “at the moment when this solidarity exercises its force, our personality vanishes, as our definition permits us to say, for we are no longer ourselves, but the collective life” (2003, 40). This sociological notion helps describe the theological principle of *svetosavlje* (the religious rubric of Saint Sava who is the founder of the Serb Orthodox Church). As the Serb Orthodox Church pushed for a greater Serbia, they encouraged Serbian people to think no longer as individuals, but exclusively as a Serbian community. Neighbors, fellow citizens, friends, and relatives who were not Serbian were not included in this community.

Think here of the creation of Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. Are scapegoating, murder, rape, genocide, and sociocide effective means with which to establish a social entity? The creation of Republika Srpska is an empirical

test for Girard's theory on the functional power of scapegoating. Even if Republika Srpska were established with the consent of every individual in the Serbian community, this establishment is neither viable nor sustainable.

Is there happiness in Republika Srpska today? Can there be happiness in a community whenever the madness of an ethnically pure state has been institutionalized? The political and theological position of the Serbian Orthodox Church is that now it is necessary to separate Republika Srpska from Bosnia-Herzegovina and make it a legitimate part of Serbia. The de facto situation is that Republika Srpska is indeed more connected to Serbia than to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The war crimes against Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats produced the current situation, and to a significant degree the Serb Orthodox Church promoted these events.

Is *svetosavlje*, however, as an enlightened version of Serbian nationalism, a positive example of mechanical solidarity? On the surface, the answer is yes, but underneath the surface, the answer is no. Nationalism in Republika Srpska represents a negative solidarity because it is established through war crimes and crimes against humanity. To maintain this solidarity, the negativity needs to be perpetuated. The problem is that "negative solidarity does not produce any integration by itself," (Durkheim 2003, 39); Durkheim continues, "Since, moreover, there is nothing specific about it, we shall recognize only two kinds of positive solidarity [mechanical and organic]" (2003, 39). The more the Serb Orthodox Church defines the Serbian community solely through a negative relation to others, whether the Catholic Pope, Europeans, Muslims, Albanians, Communists, humanists, or atheists, the less the Serbian community is integrated.

Notice the paradox. Negative solidarity does not produce integration in that there is nothing specific about it. The specificity that the Serbian Orthodox Church claims for itself becomes insubstantial insofar as it is expressed through its antipathy and fear of what is other than itself. When the Serbian Orthodox Church defines itself in a solipsistic manner, independently of Christianity as a universal church and independently of world civilization, the Serbian Orthodox Church has nothing specific about it, despite the multiplicity of specificities that are generic to its heritage.

It is helpful now to have a clearer understanding of what sociocide is. To develop this understanding, it helps to distinguish sociocide from

genocide. The argument here is that in the war against Bosnia sociocide was the end and genocide the means. In *This Time We Knew*, Tom Cushman and Stjepan Meštrović define genocide:

Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the group. (1996, 359)

If genocide is a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of a national group, sociocide in turn is a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of the essential foundations of society. Jonathan Schell, as mentioned earlier, indicates how genocide leads to sociocide: “When crimes are of a certain magnitude and character, they nullify our power to respond to them adequately because they smash the human context in which human losses normally acquire their meaning for us” (1982, 145). What is the human context in which human losses acquire meaning for us? It is the social. When crimes against humanity are of a certain magnitude and character, they result in the murdering of the human context in which these losses acquire meaning for us. With the murdering of the social, crimes of a great magnitude can occur with impunity. Crimes assume a limitless character. The murdering of society necessarily accompanies war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; the murdering of society is not just an unexpected upshot, but a logical consequence. Sociocide goes beyond the evil of destroying individuals, no matter how large the number. Sociocide nullifies the human ability to respond to these losses in an appropriate way because it mutilates the life-world that has the power to redeem the human losses suffered.

Therefore, genocide is an insufficient term to describe the consequences of armed conflict in Bosnia as well as other areas of the world today. As powerful as the term genocide is, it does not adequately encompass the consequences of what is euphemistically called “ethnic cleansing.” Of course, sociocide is not a legal term. Nor is it a historically recognized crime for which one can be tried and convicted. Still, in Bosnia, genocide was a derivative consequence of sociocide.

By inverting Hegel’s argument on the positive correlation between war and society, it is possible to begin to formulate the markers of sociocide. One consequence of sociocide is the dissolution of the solidarity

required for society to function. Families and private communities strive exclusively after their inviolable self-existence and absolute personal security. Distrust and bad faith become the dominant orientations of human beings living together. Another consequence of sociocide is that government functions weakly, that is, bureaucratically, if at all. Social authority holds no legitimacy. It is not internalized by either individuals or groups. Another consequence of sociocide is the impossibility to restore trust and mutual confidence after the cessation of hostilities.

Žunec raises the possibility of sociocide, evoking the work of Hobbes, but he does not believe that the killing of society is truly possible:

In the terms of Hobbes' classic philosophy of society, these wars erase the achievements of the *status civilis* and mark a return to *status naturalis*. Hobbes' Warre, where civilization, culture, and *Society* itself disappear, has to be distinguished from war as an armed conflict in which, regardless of scope of loss of lives or material damage, *common Power* does not disappear . . . and where, regardless of the human toll, material damage, and social losses, there are no societal losses, i.e., there is no wreckage of society as such and all of its basic functions. (1999, 102)

Evil evokes the unthinkable. Today Bosnia is a protectorate. After the Dayton Peace Accord, the people with the most political power and legal legitimacy are non-Bosnians. Was the war in Bosnia tantamount to the wreckage of society and virtually all of its functions? Must the international community continue to stand in as the Common Power that was destroyed during the sociocidal war?

Hobbes says that the state of nature, where there is a war of all against all because there is no society, is an ideal type, a myth. It never existed in social history. As Žunec indicates, even during war society does not disappear. War may destroy the societal, but not society itself. The most telltale stories from Bosnia during the war were those that affirmed the interconnectedness that not only citizens but also soldiers from different sides maintained during the cruel and sadistic war they experienced. At negotiations, international diplomats were befuddled when leaders from opposing sides would meet in the evening and reminisce about friends, family, and good times. Many Bosnian Muslims fled to Belgrade for sanctuary. One of the most telltale moments in

Sheri Fink's *War Hospital: A True Story of Surgery and Survival* is when the physician with the nationalist Serb army, Dr. Boro Lazić, visits the hospital in Srebrenica under siege by Serbian forces to help evacuate wounded people. Fink writes,

They greet one another with a Balkan-style hug and kiss on both cheeks.

“How is it in Tuzla?” Nedret asks.

“I didn't come from Tuzla. . . .” Boro begins to explain.

“Ah, you're the Chetnik coming from Zvornik!” Nedret backs away from him in mock horror. “Fuck! My people will kill me!” He says it with a smile, and then invites Boro for a tour of the hospital. . . . “What's up, Boro? Oh, Boro, it's you!” People in the crowd turn their heads as Fatima approaches, smiling deliriously. Boro recognizes her from medical school, a kind and studious girl who used to lend him notes when he skipped class.

“What's up, Fata?” (2003, 186–87)

Hobbes says that the state of nature is too painful for the human species to endure. Life is short, nasty, and brutish for everyone. For Hobbes, the state of nature is simply a heuristic device, a hypothetical situation, to explain the origins and purpose of society. For us, too, sociocide is a heuristic device, a Weberian ideal type (1964, 112–15), to explain the demented and twisted orientation of contemporary war and to theorize what evil would be if it were action.

What happened in former Yugoslavia is that, in the interest of creating new nation-states, an attempt to kill Bosnian society was made. What was actually and successfully murdered was the Yugoslav federal state. It is not possible to be a Yugoslav today because the human context in which being a Yugoslav acquires meaning and significance has been destroyed. The question becomes whether these new nation-states that were established in this manner can become functional societies when the manner in which they came into existence was first to destroy the society that preceded them and on which they, too, to some degree, still depend today.

One overlooked casualty of the war in Bosnia was her collective commitment to a pluralistic, tolerant, integrated society. Unconscionable violence and vicious propaganda were brought to bear against her heritage, cultural convictions, social practices, and civic order, making

it next to impossible for Bosnia to sustain her multiconfessional and syncretistic-informed traditions. Tone Bringa writes,

Neither Bosniak, nor Croat, nor Serb identities can be fully understood with reference only to Islam or Christianity respectively, but have to be considered in a specific Bosnian context that has resulted in a shared history and locality among Bosnians of Islamic as well as Christian backgrounds. (2002, 31)

When one considers Bringa's statement, one understands that multiculturalism, in fact, is a misnomer for recounting Bosnia's heritage, even if the term is frequently used. In Bosnia, there were not multiple cultures coexisting in the same proximity; nor were there multiple cultures coexisting independently. There was a singular Bosnian culture that encompassed each ethnicity and several faiths. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism were synergistically interdependent. Bosnia was and still is a distinctly sophisticated society, and this sophistication provoked her enemies to attempt to murder her.

Distinguished scholars—Ivo Banac (1993), Tone Bringa (2002 and 1995), Robert Donia (1994), John Fine (1994), and Noel Malcolm (1994)—unequivocally assert that historically, culturally, and politically, a vibrant, noble Bosnian tradition exists. This tradition, however, is either overlooked because of misleading or inadequate education, or denied because of hostile political agendas, whether local or international. What Rusmir Mahmutćehajić (2000) calls the denial of Bosnia occurs frequently in scholarly and policy discussions. Nationalist intellectuals in Belgrade like Dobrica Ćosić and Mihailo Marković helped start the war against Bosnia by intellectualizing as if a Bosnian society never existed. This nonrecognition of Bosnia was given prominence in the local as well as global media. Robert Kaplan's ill-informed description of the area as "a land of ancient hatreds" in *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* confused President Clinton and contributed to his halting policy decisions toward the evil occurring in Bosnia (Cooper 1993).

As Andras Riedlmayer's research for the Hague Tribunal incontrovertibly demonstrates, the evil of ethnic cleansing was to eradicate as completely as possible the evidence of Bosnia's heritage. The point was to destroy not only Bosnian communities (small villages, towns, and cities) with mixed populations but also the cultural material (libraries, bridges, mosques, churches, schools) that bore witness to the legacy of

Bosnia's multinational heritage. What happened in Bosnia is not just genocide, the willful destruction of the essential foundations of one particular community or group of people within a society. Of course, genocide is a distinguishing feature of the violence brought to bear against Bosnia. What happened in Bosnia is also described as sociocide, the murdering of a progressive, complex, and enlightened society in order that a regressive, simple, and bigoted society could replace it. A nation-state with a shallow, one-dimensional sense of solidarity could not be established in Croatia or Serbia when a superior model of solidarity based on pluralism and inclusiveness existed on its borders. When Serbia and Croatia were established as homogeneous nation-states based on one dominant ethnicity, the social solidarity of Bosnia, which belied the nationalistic ideologies of her neighbors, was a threat. Ivo Banac affirms this point:

If Bosnia were a collectivity of separate entities, then it would have been a mini-Yugoslavia. But it is not that. Bosnia is a historical entity which has its own identity and its own history. . . . I view Bosnia as primarily a functioning society which Yugoslavia never was. My question is how does one keep a complicated, complex entity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together? (1993, 138–39)

What was it that made the Jerusalem-like configuration of faiths in Bosnia—Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Judaism, and Islam—vulnerable to the nationalism of her neighbors? What was it that made Bosnia's enigmatic mixture of epochs, including a distinctive, vibrant, and understudied medieval period from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire starting in the fifteenth century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the nineteenth century, and communist Yugoslavia during the twentieth century, defenseless in the face of national-state building based on a monolithic ethnicity? When one recognizes the principled, progressive character of Bosnia's tradition, recounted eloquently in the leading scholarly works on Bosnia, one would predict that Bosnia would be the last place where ethnic cleansing could have occurred with such viciousness and sadism. Within Yugoslavia, Bosnia served as a compelling model of civic order, a model that surpassed the formal model within Yugoslavia itself. Croatia and Serbia could not become the modern nation-states they wanted to be without first destroying the contrasting and threatening model on their borders.

While Bosnia is typically depicted as unconnected to Europe or undeveloped in relation to other European countries, her heritage of a pluralistic, tolerant, and open state, with a complex but singular cultural tradition, serves as an unrecognized exemplar for the European integration taking place now.

Before 1992, in the area called Republika Srpska, which is now a politically isolated part of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina more connected to Serbia than to Bosnia, there were more than six hundred mosques. These were humble but majestic houses of worship constructed through the centuries with a distinct Bosnian rather than Arabic architecture. Traveling from Dubrovnik into Trebinje in 1937, Rebecca West writes in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia*:

We saw the town suddenly in a parting between showers, handsome and couchant, and like all Turkish towns green with trees and refined by the minarets of many mosques. These are among the most pleasing architectural gestures ever made by urbanity. They do not publicly declare the relationship of man to God like a Christian tower or spire. They raise a white finger and say only, "This is a community of human beings and, look you, we are not beasts of the field." (1948, 271)

Trebinje is now a part of Republika Srpska, where these mosques that West saw in Trebinje no longer exist. They were all destroyed after 1992 during the war. With a small degree of Serbian prejudice, West miscalls Trebinje a Turkish town when it, in fact, is a Bosnian town. West, however, astutely formulates the cultural significance of the minarets she saw, a significance shared by Bosnians, whether Muslim, Christian, or Jewish: "This is a community of human beings and look you, we are not beasts of the field" (1948, 271). Despite international pressure, hardly any of the six hundred mosques destroyed during the war in Republika Srpska have been rebuilt. The nationalistic leaders who planned and carried out ethnic cleansing in Bosnia remain in control of this region; these leaders dread the revival and recovery of the society they so ruthlessly murdered. They continuously co-opt the goodwill of international actors and leaders, who seek their insincere cooperation in a futile attempt to rebuild Bosnian society. These leaders abhor the idea of an open society within which Bosnian traditions can be revived.

The tragedy of Bosnia is that there is indeed a trans-ethnic history and a trans-ethnic culture, but today there are no viable or functional trans-ethnic institutions to support and sustain them. Tito's communism was a modern institution in which Bosnia's heritage of trans-ethnic values lived and also developed, albeit within certain limits. The best Yugoslavs, it was often said, were Bosnians. If Bosnians internalized Tito's notion of Brotherhood and Unity more easily than others, it was because Bosnians had already internalized a historical and deeper principle. Today international agencies working in Bosnia inadvertently assume a shallow, instrumental, and legalistic relation to Bosnia after which it is difficult for Bosnia to reestablish the trans-ethnic institutions it needs; the result is that Bosnia's trans-ethnic traditions, cultures, and histories are at risk.

It is helpful, therefore, to clearly distinguish sociocide from decolonization. When nationalism becomes militant, it vainly describes itself as decolonization. As Fanon (1968) describes in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the reasoning of nationalism is that the colonizers, the settlers, oppress the native community. The propaganda of Serbian nationalism constantly evokes the time of the Ottoman Empire when the empire colonized the Balkan communities they conquered. To overcome the past oppression of the Ottoman Empire, which ended over one hundred and fifty years ago, Serbian nationalism now justifies its violence against former citizens and friends in contemporary times. From the warped viewpoint of Serbian nationalists, ethnic cleansing is unfinished decolonization, however irrationally, ahistorically, unethically, and anachronistically conceived.

First, what is decolonization and how does it contrast with sociocide? Fanon writes,

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth, whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon . . . . Decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men by another "species" of men. (1968, 35)

Notice how sociocide is different from decolonization. If decolonization is "the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men," the replacing of the colonizers' species with the natives' species, sociocide is the destroying of the human species altogether, not only within the victims but also within the perpetrators.

It is necessary to turn to the classic writing of not only Karl Marx but also Émile Durkheim to understand what is meant by human species. For Marx, there is one species of men and women, not two or three or a thousand but one human species-being that is inherently universal and free:

Man is a species-being, not only because in practice and in theory he adapts the species as his object (his own as well as those of other things), but—and this is only another way of expressing it—but also because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a *universal* and therefore a free being. (2004, 33)

It is easier to understand what Marx means by human species-being if we replace species-being with soul. Consider the transliteration: human beings are soulful not only because in practice and in theory they adapt the soul as their object but also because human beings treats themselves as the actual, living species, as universal and consequently free beings. Replacing species-being with soul makes Marx's formulation more accessible.

Marx, of course, would object to inserting the word soul for species-being. At the same time, Marx would want to preserve the metaphysical significance of "soul" albeit within the context of a natural ontology and empirical epistemology. With Marx's notion, we have a clearer understanding of what sociocide is; it is the destruction of the human species-being such that it is essentially no different from the species of other animals. As a consequence of sociocide, the human being is "immediately identical with its life activity" (2004, 34). Like the animal, the human being does not distinguish itself from its life-activity. "It is *its life-activity*" (Marx 2004, 34).

Durkheim is clearer on this subject. He rejects Marx's sophistical notion that man is the measure of all things. In his formulation of the human species-being, Durkheim asserts that, while the measure of man is something other than man, what is other to man is neither strange nor foreign to man:

Man's characteristic privilege is that the bond he accepts is not physical but moral; that is, social. He is governed not by a material environment brutally imposed on him, but by a conscience superior to his own, the superiority of which he feels. Because

the greater, better part of his existence transcends the body, he escapes the body's yoke, but is subject to that of society. (2004, 79)

After sociocide, after the murdering of the human species-being, the bond that human beings accept is physical, not moral. The characteristic privilege of men and women together is lost. After sociocide, human beings are governed only by the material environment and recognize no conscience other than their own. Human beings bear the body's yoke alone.

After the destruction of society, there are, of course, people, and there are, of course, people living in groups. If society no longer exists, what orientation structures the commonality of people living together? In a natural state, life is governed randomly. While randomness may be able to explain the natural order, can it explain the social order?

Anomie means that there are no social ends. Social action therefore cannot be oriented. Indeed, there cannot be social action. In the state of anomie, there are no ends from which to choose. Without the possibility of choice, action is impossible. It does not exist. The foundation for forming and carrying out decisions, for choosing between alternative ends, does not exist. If action does not exist, there can be no sociology. Sociology loses its subject and itself.

Randomness is the orientation after the death of society because randomness is the orientation of the state of nature, and randomness can neither sustain nor structure the social. Talcott Parsons argues that non-randomness must explain action and thus social order:

For if ends are a factor at all, it must, empirically, make a difference which of two alternative ends is pursued. To pursue one of two alternative ends involves choice between them. But if the relation between these two ends is purely random there can be no choice, or rather the choice itself must be random, a result of chance. As has been noted the concept of randomness in general has no meaning, except that it is the very definition of "meaninglessness." (1968, 231)

When ends do not exist, the pseudo-end of randomness defines the situation. Randomness, however, is no end at all. In inferential statistics, this is known as the null hypothesis. The shelling, the sniping, and the killing in Bosnia were done in decidedly wanton ways to create a sense

of madness among the victims. The orientation of the violence was not to be oriented. The meaningfulness of the crimes was not to represent something meaningful.

Durkheim decries the horrendous character of a life with no effectively functioning society:

The most blameworthy acts are so often absolved by success that the boundary between what is permitted and what is prohibited, what is just and what is unjust, has nothing fixed about it, but seems susceptible to almost arbitrary change by individuals. . . . It is this anomic state that is the cause, as we shall show, of the incessantly recurrent conflicts, and the multifarious disorders of which the economic world exhibits so sad a spectacle. . . . That such anarchy is an unhealthy phenomenon is quite evident, since it runs counter to the aim of society, which is to suppress, or at least to moderate, war among men, subordinating the law of the strongest to a higher law. To justify this chaotic state, we vainly praise its encouragement of individual liberty. (1964, 2–3)

Can this be? Can society be killed? Wherein lies the resilience of society? Society is based upon nonempirical phenomena more than modern sociology might care to admit. Just as there can be people living in a group after the death of society, there can be society after the annihilation of its living members. Society's material culture can continue to bear witness to the society that no longer is embodied by living people. Such is the case of the Beothuks (Red Indians) in Newfoundland, Canada. Individuals from this native community were murdered; diseases from Europe killed the rest. The genocide the Beothuks suffered was total. None of their relatively small population survived. When one visits Newfoundland, however, one witnesses that they still exist not just empirically through their remains and artifacts, but also metaphysically through the mere saying of their name and the telling of their story among those now living in Newfoundland (Marshall 1996).

The Dayton Peace Accords stopped a horrible war; it was an historic event. The Dayton Peace Accords, however, is now used as another weapon in the hands of nationalist politicians who want to kill the Bosnian spirit and the country that cherishes this spirit. The longer Bosnia remains divided as two autonomous entities, the more likely the desires of nationalist politicians on all sides will be realized. The longer Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić remain un-arrested, the more likely their

goal of destroying Bosnia will be achieved. In *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of "Ethnic Cleansing,"* Norman Cigar concludes his study by pointing out the broader significance of his subject: "Ultimately, the greatest cost of genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina may well be to the world's value system. In moral terms, this case implies a disturbing vision of the future" (Cigar 1995, 200).

The conclusion of Cigar's book constitutes the beginning of this one. When society accepts genocide as an efficient means to a particular end, the predictable consequence is sociocide.

## *Epilogue*

### *Lilies*

In both field and mountain the white lilies  
    have bloomed  
So in field and mountain the lily seems to  
    speak  
In mount and dale every lily  
Seems to blaze  
And when so pensive among the blooming  
    flowers  
You silently  
Pass  
Maybe like me you think of those  
Who passed silently by here  
Before you  
Among the blooming white flowers  
Wondering just as you do  
What are these white  
Lilies  
Are they someone's rejoicings  
Or  
Wailings  
The signs of those who once passed  
In these pathless regions and  
Hopelessly  
Trod  
In search of white flowers

—Mak Dizdar  
Translated by Omer Hadžiselimović