

Original scientific paper

Received: 10 October 2014 / Accepted: 1 August 2015

UDC: 355.01:316.356.4(497.15) / DOI: 10.11643/issn.2217-995X151SPY50

Images of War: The Place of the War Past of the Parents in the Second Generation's Identity*

KALINA YORDANOVA**
University College London, UK

Abstract: Memory is an organizing phenomenon for both individuals and societies. Memory allows us to organize our past, foster an identity and ensure our belonging to a group¹. Memory plays a central role in the shaping of contemporary identities because it helps us re-construct our identity in relation to our past and other people's past. How does the memory of war shape the second generation's identity? By using data collected in 26 families of war survivors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, this paper examines how the identity of the second generation is being shaped by their parents' war experience.

Keywords: war, memory, identity, Yugoslavia, transmission

Introduction

This paper examines the identity of the second generation in relation to their parents' war experience. It argues that war memory transmission affects identity formation by adding a high degree of ambivalence towards the self, the domestic and the past. By methodologically combining anthropology and psychoanalysis, the paper demonstrates how children reconstruct the war past of their parents out of the bodily symptoms, the acts of speech and the art objects their parents produce. Ultimately, children reconstruct the war past of their parents in order to gain the identity of a descendant of a particular family at a particular moment. During this process, the second generation creates several metaphors of the Bosnian war (1992–1995): a plan put on paper, an attack on the home, survival at the expense of personal integrity, a dirty job assigned to heroes, and faceless horror. These metaphors shape the identity of the second generation by tightly binding the heroic to the horrific aspect of the war.

1 Connerton 1989; Halbwachs 1950.

* A manuscript was submitted for publication in *Journal of Regional Security*, based on original research. A different article by this author based on the same research was published in *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 33(1), 2015.

** *kalinajord@yahoo.com*

Research Methodology and Setting

Research Methodology

The paper draws on the data collected during my fieldwork in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2012 in 26 families of war survivors of different ethno-religious background. The research methodology combines the qualitative techniques of the semi-structured interview (with genogram and life line), the informed interpretation of children's drawings and participant observation.

The blending of psychoanalysis and anthropology provides the basis for a unique set of research techniques. This represents the major methodological contribution I made by my study. As historian Alon Confino points out, the academic interest in the area of memory studies has inspired research in various subfields but also led to the fragmentation of the subject without much reflection on method.² This is why I try to overcome the field's methodological fragmentation by suggesting an interdisciplinary and original set of techniques with an already tested validity.

The semi-structured interview with life-line and genogram,³ used with adult respondents and specifically focused on the topic of the war, gathers information about personal interpretations of violence, loss and survival, family relations and history, health issues, the Yugoslav past, and the meaning of children to their parents. It also consists of topics spontaneously brought up by the respondent in order to give insight into currently pressing issues. Normally, the interview opened with an autobiographical section addressing the question '*Could you please tell me about the most important events in your life?*' This autobiographical account gave information about the respondent's life trajectory exactly the way he/she reconstructed it. Thus, for instance, some respondents opted for a chronological overview of their biography while others started with the most recent or most traumatic events. The question about the family's history, which is essential to the research of transgenerational phenomena, was studied with the help of the genogram.⁴ The genogram or the family tree reflects family patterns, secrets, myths and the quality of relationships. It is widely used in family therapy and system theory-informed research studies.

The informed interpretation of children's drawings⁵ is a projective method which aims at the free expression of feelings and experiences. The drawings are accompanied by a narrative which presents the child's interpretation of what is being represented in the picture. Since I was interested in children's imagery of the war and their parents' position in it, during my conversations with children I asked them to produce a portrait of the

2 Confino 1997, 1387.

3 Bernard 2006, 210–251; Thompson 1935, 309–324.

4 DeMaria, Weeks, and Hof 1999; Schutzenberger 1998; Epstein, Baldwin, and Bishop 1983.

5 Cox 1993; Di Leo 1983; 1973.

war as they imagined it, as well as two family portraits that presented the family before and after the war. After the child was presented with the drawing materials, I gave the instruction which included two questions: 'Can you draw your home place/city during the war?' and 'Can you draw your family before and after the war the way you imagine it?' The latter was meant to trace the change in parents' personalities due to their war experience. Normally, the child was invited to stay with me for about one hour, produce drawings on a given topic and discuss the drawings with me. Some children preferred to talk while drawing, while others created the narrative after they finished their drawings. I tailored my involvement to the individual approach of each child to the task. I asked questions if something was unclear. In order to get an idea about the transgenerational construction of the war narrative, I asked the children who in their family spoke about the war more openly and who kept silent, with whom they spent their time and to whom they felt most connected to, and finally, where they looked for information about the war. In a couple of families, either the child felt safer in the presence of the parents, or the parents did not want to leave their child alone with me. In these families I agreed that the parent could stay with us but I later took this presence into account while analysing my data.

In this paper I shall discuss the method of interpretation of the drawings separately because its highly subjective nature raises the question of the method's reliability. In the section *The war as a dirty job assigned to heroes*, I provide a detailed account on the use of drawings in previous research. Just for the sake of clarity, I shall point out that the interpretation of a drawing resembles the interpretation of a dream or a myth since it explores the use of the mechanisms of condensation and displacement, manifest in metaphors and metonymies.⁶

Finally, the use of anthropology suggests the method of participant observation⁷ which I employ in order to situate my analysis in the specific Bosnian post-war context. It allows me to investigate the memories of war as shaped by their specific cultural context. Through participant observation I have examined the verbal and non-verbal interactions within the family and between family members and their environment. The method gives an insight into the most intimate corners of family life at the playground, at cemeteries, at veterans' gatherings and celebrations, during family shopping and anniversaries. It broadened my perspective on respondents' habits, views and interests and the way these were being shaped by social and cultural demands.

The data gathered through the above presented methodology has been analysed by using content analysis and a close reading of the interview transcripts. While analysing the drawings, I focused on composition, colours, the pressure of the pencil against the paper and the presence or absence of certain objects and people. Thus for example, the size of the human figures, the colour of their clothes, the time spent on each figure and the attention paid to detail informed my analysis of the quality of the relationship with

6 Laplanche and Pontalis 1973, 123.

7 Bernard 2006, 342–387; 413–451; Loizos 1994; Ellen and Ellen 1984, 13–35.

the person represented. While analysing the narrative which accompanied the drawing, I considered slips of the tongue, wording, vocabulary and the use of foreign or untypical phrases.

The Setting

The group of my respondents consisted of 26 families of war survivors of different ethno-religious background. The adult respondents were between 34 and 55 years old. Children were between 5 and 15. In terms of career and employment, in 4 of the families parents had well-paid jobs or ran their own business. In 5 families both parents were unemployed. The rest of the informants were employed in state administration or worked as unskilled personnel such as cleaners, guards and salesmen. Regarding family structure, 4 of the families were single-parent families in which the children (or the child) lived with the mother. In one of these families the parents were divorced while in the other 3 the father had died. In 14 families the interviewed child was the only child. In 2 families there were 3 children. The rest had 2 children. In terms of gender, out of the 40 children I met, 18 were girls and 22 – boys. In terms of location, 21 of the 26 families lived in the city of Sarajevo and 5 families lived in the neighbouring municipalities of Tarčin, Vogošća and Hadžići. Most of the respondents experienced the war in Sarajevo. About one third of the families experienced the war in other places but moved to Sarajevo and the three neighbouring municipalities in the aftermath of the war.

Survivor Parents' Experience of War

Key Theories and Concepts

In order to ground in theory my conclusions about the intergenerational transmission of experience and identity formation, I use the Object Relations School of psychoanalysis, cultural anthropology and Holocaust studies. The key concept which helps us understand the present-day phenomena in post-war societies is *transgenerational transmission of trauma*. From what we know about the transgenerational transmission of experience, children of survivors develop somewhat of an ambivalent identity. Psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan uses the example of a Vietnam veteran to show how the identity of the next generation is being shaped by the mental image of a heroic but sadistic ancestor. This ambivalent identity is also encouraged by the parent's own ambivalence to his children of whom he says the following: *'I don't really like my children. I am glad that the older is now away from home. The twins get on my nerves.'*⁸

Earlier scholarship sheds more light on the process of memory transmission which shapes this kind of identity. In 1988 Haydee Faimberg coined the concept of *the telescoping*

8 Volkan 2014, 4.

generations to denote a particular mechanism of identity formation.⁹ According to her findings, children of war survivors negatively identify with their parents by always struggling to become what their parents could not and restore what their parents have lost. From a cultural point of view, the *telescoping of generations* is what consolidates children's identity as Armenian, Bosnian, Jewish or other. Yet, this identity is ambivalent: it consists of sympathy for the generation of the parents for their suffering, but also an accusation of having robbed future generations of the life they could have had if there had not been a war.

In addition, the past of the whole group or society can feed into the ambivalence of individual identities. Vamik Volkan, Gabriele Ast and William Greer suggest that the respective large group's traumatic past adds more ambivalence to the representations of the self. This happens rather unconsciously during the socialization of children by evoking the past generations' difficulty with mourning losses, humiliation and injury to the group's self-esteem.¹⁰

Since the previous paragraph suggests that ambivalent identities are tightly linked to unresolved loss and complicated mourning, I shall briefly explain this link. To do this, I draw on Sigmund Freud's seminal paper *Mourning and Melancholia* which distinguishes between the normal process of mourning a loss and its complications in melancholia.¹¹ The distinguishing mental features of melancholia, Freud argues, are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches. This crucial characteristic of the complication of the mourning process, which provides the basis for the construction of ambivalent identities, is namely the element of self-reproach. This is to say that in melancholia the lost object has been incorporated into the ego and then criticized. This forms somewhat of a melancholic identification with the lost which is of a highly ambivalent nature. The lost object or person is both loved and hated. It is namely this ambivalence which does not allow letting go of the loss. Thus, parents who were never forgiven or dead relatives who disappeared and did not allow the living to properly separate from them persist in the memory of the living as unresolved relationships that feed into ambivalent identities.

In order to understand how individual experiences of violence are being transmitted to the next generation in a specific cultural setting, we need to consider the interplay between individual memory and official history. According to the existing literature, history is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress it. The resultant tension between memory and history is resolved in the promotion of certain memories at the expense of others.¹² In her book *Life and Words: Violence and the*

9 Faimberg 1988.

10 Volkan, Ast, and Greer 2002, 42.

11 Freud 1917.

12 Das 2001; Nora 1989.

Descent into the Ordinary, anthropologist Veena Das gives an example of history being resolved in the promotion of certain memories at the expense of others. She convincingly demonstrates the dynamics of the political use of memory and the consequent cleavage between memory and history. Das describes how the official discourse in India and Pakistan after the Partition focused on abducted and raped women, completely excluding the sexual violation of men. The political implication of this strategy was that the nation was constructed as masculine.¹³

Drawing on the above presented theories and studies, I argue that in cultural and political settings where individual memories are not congruent with official history, survivor parents resolve the conflict between the need to communicate their past with their children and the necessity to oppose the official discourse by displacing the autobiographical account from the domain of language onto the one of the act. This means that memories of war violence are being preserved not only in narratives, but also in acts and objects (developing an illness, producing war-related art or visiting places that link back to the war).¹⁴

The Bosnian-Herzegovina experience

Why are the experiences of the particular Bosnian-Herzegovina war (1992–1995) recalled incoherently by the survivor parents? According to my findings, there are four reasons for the war generation's inability to produce a consistent war narrative in the first person. First, at the onset of the war people denied many of the warning signs, making the war seem an overwhelming and surreal event which is impossible to describe to someone without such experience. Second, the ambiguity of the parents' experience of war, which originates in shifts between the positions of victim, murderer and witness,¹⁵ complicates transmission since there is no clear-cut narrative about the war in the first person singular. This means that parents often cannot tell a clear-cut story in the first person because they have to touch upon painful and unresolved memories of their own position in it. Third, the experience of extreme violence challenges the war generation's capacity to comprehend and integrate what they have lived through. The blank spots that emerge as a result stand for interruptions in time continuity, identity and relationships. They represent the unthinkable piece of the war experience.¹⁶ Finally, survivors' inability to produce a war narrative in the first person is shaped by the wider context of polarization and profanization of the issue of war.¹⁷ The clear-cut discourse on victimhood that has emerged in Bosnia and Herzegovina denies the complexity of the topic and leaves out the politically incorrect narratives. Here I use the notion of the clear-cut discourse in

13 Das 2007, 13.

14 Bloch 1998; Freud 1914.

15 Stewart and Strathern 2002, 1–15.

16 Garland 1998, 98.

17 Das 2007, 13.

order to denote the politically promoted and rather simplified version of the past, not the individual histories of violence which remain rather ambivalent and more complex.

Children of Survivors: Imagining the Past

Since children need to be part of the history of a given family at a given moment in order to acquire identity and legitimacy for their claims,¹⁸ they actively seek information about the missing bits of their parents' biography. Furthermore, they often connect to their parents by seconding the parents' feelings with regards to the loss.¹⁹ This is demonstrated by the quote from the interview with a 15-year old girl: 'I often post war-related songs on the Facebook wall of my dad. When I see him crying, I also cry.' Finally, children's desire to belong to a wider community motivates their interests in the community's war history.²⁰

What are the images of the Bosnian war children reconstruct in order to grasp it? How do they imagine the war their parents were part of? My research shows that the children of survivors reconstruct five different images of the Bosnian war:

- a scheme with no people,
- an attack on the family home,
- survival at the expense of personal integrity,
- a dirty job assigned to heroes,
- faceless horror.

These five images of the war as imagined by children correspond to their parents' interpretation of heroism, betrayal, violence, murder, and loss. Children's war imagery shaped their parents' interpretations shapes on its turn the second generation's system of values. In the next paragraphs I shall focus on the metaphor of the war as a scheme since it reflects the reconstruction of the past of a given family as shaped by the wider social and political context at most.

The War As a Scheme

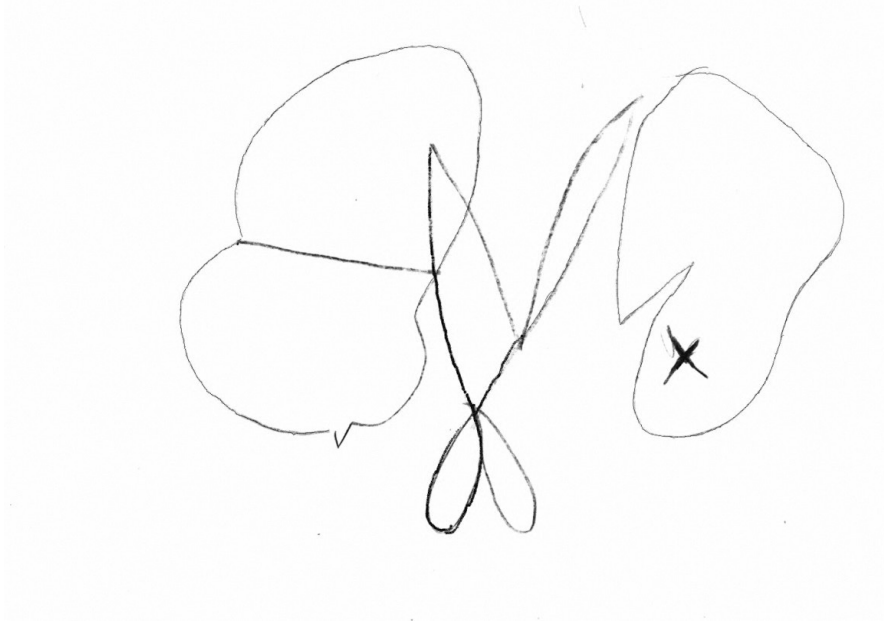
In order to give insight into children's imagery, I use the projective method of the informed interpretation of children's drawings. The method externalizes the internal world of the child and shows its relational and emotional dynamics.²¹ All children were offered the same set of colour pencils and an A4 sheet of paper. The colours used in the drawings are their own preference.

18 Bos 2003.

19 Faimberg 1988; Volkan 2001.

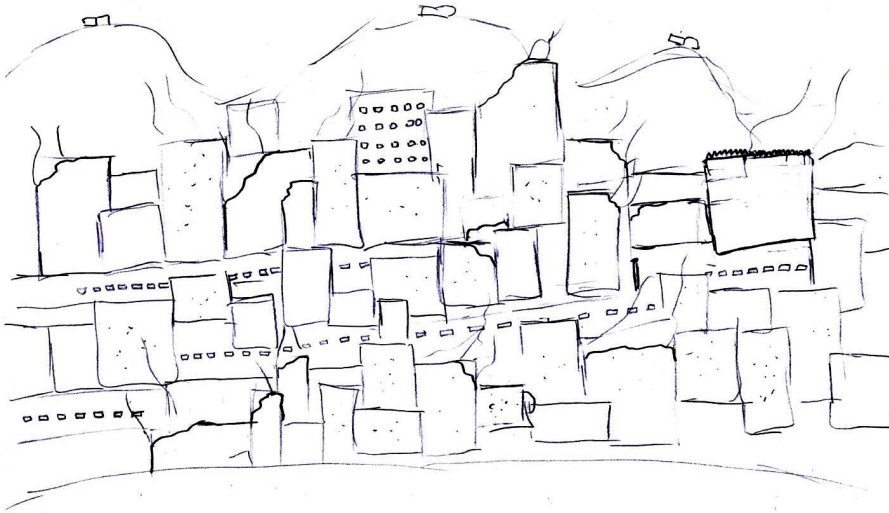
20 Connerton 1989.

21 Cox 1993; Di Leo 1973; Rorschach 1951.



Female, 6, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

*The drawing represents the map of the home country which is being cut into two pieces: Bosnia and Herzegovina to the left (also presented as divided by a horizontal line into Bosnia **and** Herzegovina) and Serbia and Croatia to the right. The capital city of this entity is marked with a cross. The drawing is in orange pencil. The father in this family fought at the front during the war. The dominant explanation of the reasons for the war in the family is a political one. Yet, the scars on the body of the father associate with the violent (cutting) component of warfare. The girls' narrative is the following: 'The war began when some other country started (the war); they attacked our country. I will show you how. This is Bosnia and this is the other country. This is a pair of scissors that cut the country in two pieces. Just like this! The country that attacked is here (the geographical location of Serbia). This is Croatia. And this is how Bosnia is separated from Herzegovina (drawing the horizontal line).'*



Male, 14, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The boy explained the absence of human figures in his drawing by the fact that people were hiding inside the buildings or had fled the country. Yet, he could not construct a story about how, when and where did people go. Keeping in mind children's knowledge about their parents' experience of war, their references to characters featured in war films and the general interest of children in the human figure and face.²² I suggest that the absence of human figures in these drawings signifies difficulties in interpretation rather than some historical truth or difficulties in representation. The absence of people expresses children's difficulty in emotionally connecting to the topic of their drawings. So, why are there no people in these drawings? Why do they represent monochromatic outlines of buildings and territories?

I suggest that these visual representations can be understood in the context of contemporary war. They resemble the two-dimensional image seen by distant snipers and drone pilots rather than a battlefield as known from the previous wars. Such visual representations speak of children's inability to get insight into the internal world of the war generation. The image of the war as some outlines of buildings excludes the possibility of reflection on feelings (no people, no colour and no action). In other words, emotion is being split off and thus controlled.²³ The schematic images show the interplay between the private levels of war experience transmission and the social ones available in film, idiom

22 Cox 1993; Di Leo 1983; 1973.

23 Rorschach 1942 [1951], 98.

and other cultural representations.²⁴ Second, the visual representations of inanimate objects spare the insight into the most horrific bit, and namely the violent destruction of people and land on the one hand and the parents' position in the conflict on the other (all the positions - victim, perpetrator and witness - are unacceptable for children since they compromise the reliability of the internal parental image). Furthermore, the schematic image of the war speaks of no connection between objects on the one hand, and between the world inside the buildings and the one of the war outside, on the other. This may be related to the dismantling of society and relationships in wartime but also to the children's attempt to 'repair' the damage done to their parents by isolating and protecting them from the horrors of the war at least in their imagination. Next, the inability to construct a meaningful story about the war in first person and the corresponding fragmented representations of it are an expression of the difficulty of the victims and their children to get insight into the question '*What becomes of people during warfare?*' and ultimately '*What became of my parents during the war.*' This interferes with the reconstruction of time continuity and personal integrity in the aftermath of violence.

Moving to a social level of interpretation, I suggest that the lack of contact between objects and the absence of the human figures allude to the annihilation of the whole social network in wartime. The impossibility to see the other and to be seen by the other denies people's most fundamental expectation - the expectation of help. This expectation is denied because there is virtually no one to respond to the victim's appeal. In conclusion, I suggest that the cityscapes desolate of people in children's drawings are an expression of the loss of meaning and the destruction of the social fabric. They represent a dramatic split between the external world and the guarded internal realm with no connection between them.

Yet, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina included face-to-face fighting too. This means that in families where the memories of violence come from the direct exposure to the aggression of a visible other, we could rather expect a different type of war drawings (see *The war as a dirty job assigned to heroes* section). Still, even when referring to face-to-face combat some respondents share that they were not able to see the enemy since the enemy soldiers were wearing masks or fighting took place during the night. A certain degree of anonymity of violence and lack of response can be also applied to the experiences of war which include disappearance of relatives and secret execution or torture sites.

Finally, in order to support my argument about the central role of contemporary war phenomena to children's imagery of their family's war past, I shall bring evidence from my work with Syrian child refugees. Eight-year-old R from the Syrian city of Qamishli came to see me in the clinic at a refugee camp where I am working as a psychotherapist. The boy said he wanted to talk to me but without his parents being present. In the course of the consultations, he made a series of drawings representing his destroyed school, the

24 Sluka 2012; Robben 2012; Tambiah 1986.

family apartment, busses, borders and police officers. During our last session he produced a map-like drawing of a border check point.



Male, 8, Qamishli, Syria

The drawing represents the place where R's family was interrogated by the police after trying to cross the state border illegally. R told me that he was very frightened and had got lost in the forest. For half an hour he did not know where he was and what had happened to his parents. He was found by an Iraqi refugee and brought to the check point where his family was being questioned by a police officer. Later I learnt from his mother that she had been hit by a border police officer. This is what terrified R most and frightened him into running into the forest.

R could not organize his narrative without creating a map which located his experience in space. There are no people in the drawing. For R, thinking of his parents as helpless victims was impossible. He told me that what he was most worried about in the forest was whether his parents were alive or not. The difficulty in symbolizing his experience came from the necessity of seeing the world from his parents' perspective. He struggled not to think of how frightened and desperate his parents must have been, and organized his drawing around the non-animated world. Thus, he somehow preserved his parents' dignity and goodness.

Contemporary War and Symbolization

Psychoanalysis argues that when an object (of desire) is given up, it is replaced by a symbol which acts as a bearer of its meaning.²⁵ Thus, the integration of the experience of loss (of the object of desire) is expressed through a process of symbol formation. In other words, the symbolic representation of the experience allows further use of this loss as a concept for the purpose of more sophisticated thinking processes. This symbolic representation also motivates reparation, since it opens space for reflection on the subject's responsibility regarding the loss.

Loss during contemporary war has different consequences. Contemporary war is characterized by large-scale destruction, anonymity of violence, fragmentation, an increased sense of insecurity and competition over resources which are vital to the existence of larger populations. The alleged precision of modern warfare increases the number of civilian deaths and the scale of destruction. The anonymity of the perpetrators makes meaning-making during contemporary war and its aftermath almost impossible. Contemporary war reveals a world of terror and fragmentation in which there is no clear boundary between friends and enemies: old enemies are now friends, old friends could be enemies and there are enemies on the inside.²⁶ Contemporary war does not necessarily mean heroic death in combat. Contemporary war is often fought by oligarchic states over exclusive control of economic resources and their distribution.²⁷ It is based on a dialectic of competition, control and self-protection which aims at deterritorialization and corporatization of nation states along kinship and religious lines. This increases insecurity in ethnically heterogeneous territories. Bearing the above in mind, I argue that while the normal process of integration of the loss allows for the creation of symbolic representations and meaning,²⁸ contemporary war results in the breakdown of the symbolic function. Loss-related feelings remain out of reach and the traumatic parts of experience cannot be transformed from raw sensory data into a symbol.

Victims' experiences are recalled incoherently and remain unsymbolized. These experiences are not thinkable-about and storable.²⁹ In this respect, contemporary war seems to be working towards the erasure of experience rather than leaning from experience. The absence of a meaningful symbolic transformation of experience manifests in schematic monochrome visual representations devoid of people and action. These visual representations resemble the war terrain as seen by distant snipers or drone pilots rather than the battlefield as known from previous wars. They are not a product of symbolic transformation of experience, but are a repetition of the traumatic moments that could only be known, but not reflected upon in retrospect. In conclusion, I argue that such a

25 Segal 1957, 392.

26 Segal 2007, 43.

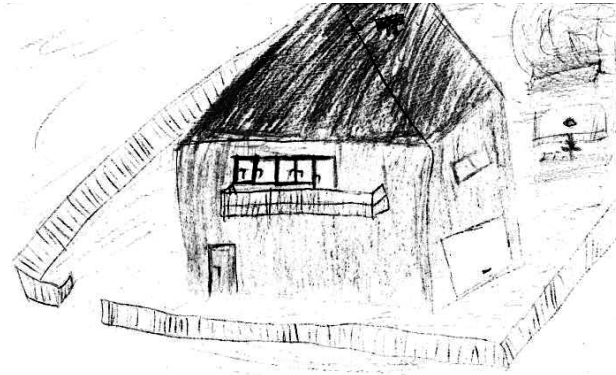
27 Kapferer 2005; Nordstrom 2004.

28 Klein 1930, 30.

29 Ingham 1998, 98.

way of 'remembering' the past works towards the erasure of experience instead of towards the integration into the rest of the victim's biography. What is being transmitted to and imagined by the next generation is rather about gaps and absences than meaning-making.

The War As an Attack On the Family Home



Female, 12, Hadžići, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The family home is the second important theme in children's war imagery. Its frequent use reflects its culturally constructed significance. The house in children's drawings stands for the family home and is mostly opted for by girls and younger children (up to 12). The word for *house* (kuća) refers to both the building itself and the unit which inhabits it.³⁰ Very often, the Bosnian home is inhabited by several families and symbolically represents the continuity of the family history and the connectedness between its members. Accordingly, the house in children's narratives is associated with a shelter and its destruction is synonymous to death. This is why the family house is shown surrounded by fences and walls. It has no windows and if it does, windows are protected by metal grids and are locked.

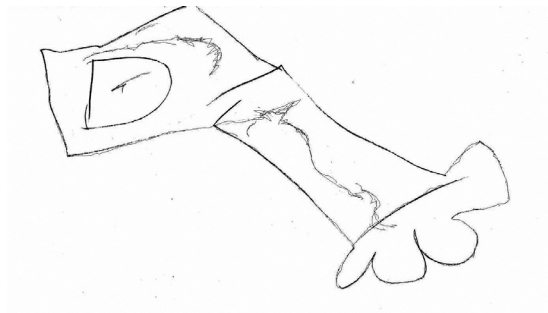
Yet, the family home appears very colourful and often decorated with flowers. In order to explain this discrepancy, I suggest a cultural and a psychological dimension to the interpretation of the house as a decorated shelter. The cultural dimension refers to the culturally constructed role of women that places them in relation to the home and the prettified. The psychological dimension is defined by the importance of the family home to children and particularly to pre-school and primary school children since the home represents their entire universe. Fences, walls, metal grids, and the absence of windows show the desire to protect their universe from destruction. With regards to the decoration of the home, I suggest two reasons for that: a re-construction of the parents' wartime attempt to preserve some sense of normality and an element of disguise. The preservation

³⁰ Bringa 1995, 42.

of normality refers to the fact that keeping flowerpots on the balcony helped people restore their sense of dignity by demonstrating their refusal to reduce life to bare physical survival.³¹ By using the flowers as some form of disguise, I mean that the house decoration in children's drawings serves as a camouflage for the horrific aspect of the war. Thus, while prettifying the facade of the house, children avoid thinking of the feelings and experiences of the people inside it. This can explain why those, who opted for the family house as a response to the task to make a war drawing, spent most of the time elaborating on the flowers.

The War as Survival

The topic of survival in children's war imagery reveals a complex and ambiguous image of the parent. This is because survival was often possible at the expense of the psychological integrity of the parent. This means that after the war, many people developed psychological conditions and were absorbed with their own issues which made them emotionally distant from the other family members. In my interviews with children, illness was often linked to their idea of the damaged and therefore vulnerable body of the parents whose health issues have become of enormous significance to the whole family. Their emotional withdrawal from the family life and their physical absence from the home during hospitalization and medical treatment fed into children's imagery of the war as an attack on their parents' physical and psychological integrity. Thus, illness and fragmentation in the imagination of the second generation are often felt to be omnipresent and are used to explain past, present and future problems.



Male, 11, Sarajevo

The drawing of an eleven-year-old boy illustrates the way he employs the part-object imagery in order to resolve his uncertainty about how the father looked, what he did during the war and what remained of him. The boy finds the solution to these questions in leaving parts of the figure outside the scene and parts of the action outside the narrative.

31 Maček 2009, 76.

He focuses on the part of the body of the father that mostly links to the war and which is best known from the pieces of clothing, narratives and photographs.

Disintegration as a major change that the war brought to people originates in the children's knowledge about and imagery of the disabled parts of the parent's body, wounds, scars and tattoos that are meant to cover the scars or mark significant wartime events. The metaphor of the war as an attack on the physical and psychological integrity is also rooted in the part object imagery of the dead, which is nourished by the memory of bones, personal belongings, pieces of clothing, single photographs and documents associated with the missing. As a result, the parents are often thought of as a wounded head, a tattoo or drug addiction; the dead are reconstructed on the basis of the last seen or described part of their body, an item or a photograph. History becomes reconstructed as a part object imagery of destroyed schools, abandoned houses, desolate streets and mass graves. In sum, the metaphor of the war as an attack on the people's integrity fosters the image of the post-war world as fragmented and disconnected.

The War as a Dirty Job Assigned to Heroes

For children and particularly for young boys, it is essential to imagine the father as a hero who participated in the war for patriotic reasons. Yet, in many drawings the image of the hero transformed into the one of the perpetrator. This makes the boundaries between the heroic and the horrific aspect of the parents' participation in the war look blurred. The horrific aspect of the war links to the suspected violence in the parents' biography as demonstrated in the following quotation: *'My father does not talk about the war; he has only showed me the places where he served the front. I asked him whether he had killed someone but I did not get an answer..'* (male, 15).



Female, 6, Sarajevo

The drawing is said to represent the first day after the war. Yet, the narrative constantly moves back and forth in time. The building to the left stands for the family home where the girl and her mother are waiting for the father to come back from the front. The narrative is the following: 'There was Yugoslavia and it fell apart. The others attacked us and there was a war. There was a war in Sarajevo too. I was not born then... I don't know whether I can draw a picture of how Sarajevo looked during the war, but I imagine that it was all destroyed. There were no buildings. Well, maybe just few. (She starts drawing) Like this one. It has windows. Well, maybe the bombs destroyed the windows. Maybe our flat was also bombed. This is the flat of my father's parents. They lived here. Dad went to the front. And he was wounded exactly on this part of his head (She is touching her head to show me the place where the father was wounded). But he is not ill or disabled. There are flowers at the balcony... And this is a small window. It is so small, that one can just reach out to water the flowers with only the hand outside of the window so that nobody can shoot him dead. Oh, I wanted to make this flower purple. This pencil seemed purple, but it is blue; they cheated us (prevarili su nas)... Soldiers don't like flowers, but I am putting the flowers here, because I don't want to think of the war only; I prefer something more beautiful. All this takes place after the war when soldiers are coming home. So, the war is over and this is on the day after. People had already grown up flowers and there is a parking lot. There are no cars parked. On the second day after (the war) all cars have gone to the carwash because they got dirty, but they could not wash (during the war) (auta su pobegli da se peru; nisu mogli prat' u ratu). Not only because they did not have water... This is the day after the peace, so the carwash is very busy: the cars have to wait in front and they cannot come back to the parking lot. This is dad here. Today the war is over and all soldiers are going back home. The war has finally ended. He is coming back and the two of us would not let him go to the front again ... The two of us are me and mom. Mom and I will hug him and will not let him go there again (tata ide kući; mama i ja ću ga zagrliti i nećemo ga pustiti opet da ode).'

Since the interpretation of symbolic drawings and narratives always runs the risk of speculation, I will explain how I approach the material. The analysis I offer in the following paragraphs is based on techniques and methods of interpretation used in anthropology and psychoanalytical research and therapy. Apart from the elements of the drawing already discussed, I take into consideration the associative chain and the affective background of the narrative.

We need to understand the war narrative as a personal myth of the war, therefore as a language. This means that I examine the content of the drawing and the accompanying narrative in the same fashion that I examine the content of a myth or dream thoughts. In order to ground my idea in theory, I use Claude Levi-Strauss's seminal text *Myth and Meaning*.³² I opt for this classic text since the validity of the method of interpretation which it discusses has been tested in the empirical setting of research and therapy. In sum, the hypothesis I employ argues that images borrowed from experience can be put into use in order to illustrate a thought. In this process it is not just the image but the structure of

32 Levi-Strauss 1979.

the narrative with the metaphorical meaning of the objects and the relationship between them that delivers the core idea. The metaphorical meaning is accessible because of the affinity between the chosen object (the car in the parking lot) and the kind of problem which is being illustrated (a gendered space).³³ Such affinities allow the de-construction of the personal myth in order to acquire insight into its symbolic content. Yet, since I am aware of the main critique of structuralist analysis as a type of analysis that disregards personal cosmology, I employ the idea of the use of myth as a general framework of analysis while taking into consideration individual modifications of the myth and its meaning. In other words, I draw on Levi-Strauss's idea of the myth as language while focusing on the individual use of its structures.³⁴

By using the mythological theme of the returning hero, I argue that the child's imagery the heroic aspect of the war experience is tightly bound to the horrific. This connection can be revealed through the use of the image of the dirty cars and by our previous knowledge about the hero's exposure to the uncanny as featured in the myth. The mention of the cars that are still waiting to be washed suggests the post-war world's need to be cleansed of the traces of violence. This world is experienced as a place that has the potential to resurrect life and grow up flowers, but also as a place that cheats people with the colour of these flowers. This may signify that in the child's idea that the current Bosnian reality has the potential to repair the damages done by the war, but there is a doubt whether it can offer genuine reparation at this particular moment.

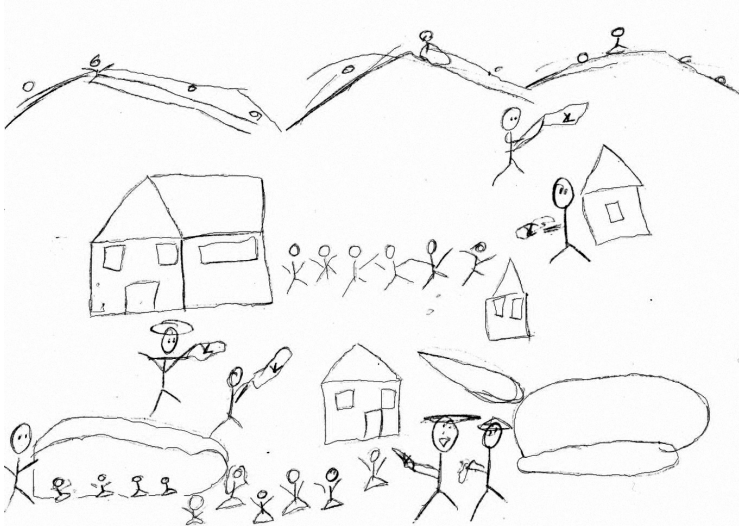
The War as Faceless Horror

Horror in children's drawings is represented by faceless figures. These drawings represent the war as execution, imprisonment and death. It mostly emerges in families where relatives were imprisoned, tortured or murdered and where fathers are believed to have killed during the war.

The metaphor of the war as faceless horror is presented by the drawing of a fifteen-year-old girl from Sarajevo who drew an execution site in which her father was the murderer.

33 Levi-Strauss 1979, 22–23.

34 Kapferer 1988.



Female, 15, Sarajevo

The drawing represents the execution of male captives and the transportation of female captives to a prison camp. The scene takes place in the mountains. The person in front of the small house to the right stands for her father. The execution site is surrounded by the tanks of the enemy troops that are positioned on the hills. The drawing is in red pencil only. The soldiers who are shooting against the captives have only eyes and the victims are faceless. Two of the people in the foreground helping the female captives to get on a bus have a smile on their faces. The father in this family served the front during the war and is suspected to have killed.

Regardless of children's age and knowledge about human figure and face, some representations of the most moments of the war are not entirely possible. In these drawings, the human figure is rather schematic and victims and murderers are shown faceless. This manner of presenting the war suggests that something in the outright manifestation of horror cannot be handled. It is helpful to refer here to public executions and think of the common practice to cover the face of the executioner with a hood and the face of the victim with a mask. Bearing in mind the link between the gaze and the uncanny in psychoanalytic literature,³⁵ I further the idea that pure horror cannot be faced. In one way of another, the most horrific bits of the parents' traumatic past, which do not allow for a meaningful symbolic transformation, leaves children with a feeling of nameless dread and the corresponding absence of symbolic representation.

35 Freud 1919.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to demonstrate that children struggle to imagine the past of their family in order to locate themselves in time and relationship. In the absence of a coherent narrative about the war, they re-construct history on the basis of the subjective interpretation of their parent's experience expressed in act and object. As a result, children re-construct the violent break-up of the former federation as a scheme with no people, an attack on the family home, survival at the expense of integrity, a dirty job assigned to heroes, and faceless horror. I argue that these themes represent an attempt to understand the world of the war in the context of a given family, time and cultural milieu. Shaped by projections, parents' subjective interpretation, politics, and the dominant discourses in society, the war imagery of children helps them understand and make sense of the past. The cultural setting plays a central role to the process of the reconstruction of the family's past. The images and the metaphors of contemporary war available in idiom and film additionally shape the process of memory transmission. The routinization and internalization of violence which transformed soldiers into cleaners of human terrain and turned victims into moving targets feed into the visual representations of the war past of the family as simplified one-colour images which speak of the devastation of meaning and relationships. Furthermore, in many drawings, particularly in the families where the father participated in the war, the image of the father-hero represents the connection between the heroic and the horrific. Thus, the imagery of the second generation of their parents' past is not manifest in a clear-cut narrative but in fragmented and often faceless visual representations of the confusion of the heroic and the horrific.

References

- Auerhahn, Nanette C. and Laub, Dori. 1998. "The Primal Scene of Atrocity: The Dynamic Interplay Between Knowledge and Fantasy of the Holocaust in Children of Survivors." *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 15: 360–377.
- Bernard, Russell. 2006. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Bloch, Maurice. 2005. *Essays on Cultural Transmission*. Oxford: Berg.
- Bloch, Maurice. 1998. "Autobiographical Memory and the Historical Memory of the More Distant Past." In *How We Think They Think: Anthropological Approaches to Cognition, Memory, and Literacy*, 114–127. Oxford: Westview Press (Perseus Books Group).
- Bos, Pascale. 2003. "Positionality and Postmemory in Scholarship on the Holocaust." *Women in German Yearbook* 19: 50–74.
- Bringa, Tone. 2004. "The Peaceful Death of Tito and the Violent End of Yugoslavia." In *Death of the Father: An Anthropology of the End in Political Authority*, edited by John Borneman, 63–103. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Bringa, Tone. 1995. *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Confino, Alon. 1997. "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *American Historical Review* 102(5): 1386–1403.
- Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cox, Maureen V. 1993. *Children's Drawings of the Human Figure*. New York: Psychology Press Ltd.
- Das, Veena. 2007. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. London: University of California Press.
- Das, Veena, ed. 2001. *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering, and Recovery*. London: University of California Press.
- DeMaria, Rita, Gerald Weeks, and Larry Hof. 1999. *Focused Genograms: Intergenerational Assessment of Individuals, Couples, and Families*. New York: Hamilton Printing Co.

- Di Leo, J. 1983. *Interpreting Children's Drawings*. New York & London: Brunner-Routledge.
- Di Leo, J. 1973. *Children's Drawings as Diagnostic Aids*. New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers.
- Ellen, R.F, ed. 1984. *Ethnographic Research: a Guide to General Conduct*. London: Academic Press.
- Epstein, Nathan B., Lawrence M. Baldwin, and Duane S Bishop. 1983. "The McMaster Family Assessment Device." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* (9): 171–180.
- Faimberg, Haydee. 1988. "The Telescoping of Generations:—Genealogy of Certain Identifications," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (24): 99–117.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1919. "The Uncanny." In *Collected Papers* 4: 238–407 [1959] (trans. Alix Strachey). New York: Basic Books.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1917. "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (14): 237–258.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1914. "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (12): 145–156.
- Garland, Caroline, ed. 1998. *Understanding Trauma: A Psychoanalytical Approach*. London: Karnac.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992 (1950). *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ingham Graham. 1998. "Mental Work in a Trauma Patient." In *Understanding Trauma: A Psychoanalytical Approach*, edited by Caroline Garland, 96–108. London: Karnac.
- Kapferer, Bruce. 2005. *Oligarchs and Oligopolies*. New York: Begrhahn Books.
- Kapferer, Bruce. 1988. *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance, and Political Culture in Sri Lanka and Australia*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Klein, Melanie. 1946. "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (27): 99–110.

Klein, Melanie. 1930. "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (11): 24–39.

Laplanche, Jean and Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand. 1973. *Language of Psychoanalysis*. London: The Hogarth Press.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1979. *Myth and Meaning*. New York: Schocken Books.

Loizos, Peter. 1994. "The Confessions of a Vampire Anthropologist." *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures* 3(2): 35–38.

Maček, Ivana. 2009. *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime (Ethnography of Political Violence)*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nora, Pierre. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* (26) (Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory): 7–24.

Nordstrom Carolyn. 2004. "Invisible Empires." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* (48)1:91–96

Robben, Antonius C. G. M. 2012. "The Dead of Night. Chaos and Spectacle of Nocturnal Combat in the Iraq War." in *War, Technology, Anthropology*, edited by Koen Stroeken, 33–44. New York: Berghahn Books.

Robben, Antonius C. G. M, and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco. 2000. *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rorschach, Hermann. 1942. [1951]. *Psychodiagnostics: A Diagnostic Test Based on Perception*. New York: Grune and Stratton INC.

Schutzenberger, Anne A. 1998. *The Ancestor Syndrome: Transgenerational Psychotherapy and the Hidden Links in the Family Tree*. London: Routledge.

Segal, Hanna. 2007. *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. London: Routledge.

Segal, Hanna. 1957. "Notes on Symbol Formation." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (38): 391–397.

Sluka, Jeffrey. 2012. "Drones in the Tribal Zone: Virtual War and Losing Hearts and Minds in the Af-Pak War." In *War, Technology, Anthropology*, edited by Koen Stroeken, 21–33. New York: Berghahn Books.

Sorabji, C. 2006 'Managing Memories in Post-War Sarajevo: Individuals, Bad Memories, and New Wars,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (12): 1–18.

Sorabji, C. 1995. "A Very Modern War: Terror and Territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina." In *War: A Cruel Necessity?: The Bases of Institutionalized Violence*, edited by Robert Hinde and Helen Watson, 80–95. London: I. B. Tauris.

Stewart, Pamela J. and Strathern, Andrew. 2002. *Violence: Theory and Ethnography*. London: Continuum.

Tambiah, Stanley. 1986. *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy*. London: The University of Chicago Press.

Thompson, Paul. 1935. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Volkan, Vamik, D. 2014. *Animal Killer: Transmission of War Trauma From One Generation to the Next*. London: Karnac.

Volkan, Vamik, D. 2001. "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity." *Group Analysis* (34): 79–97.

Volkan, Vamik, D. 1998. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. New York: Westview Press.

Volkan, Vamik, D., Gabriele Ast, and William Greer. 2002. *The Third Reich in the Unconscious: Transgenerational Transmission and its Consequences*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

