

Remembering the 1992 –95 War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Case of Sarajevo

Roses

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Acknowledgment

I still remember the email that I had sent to Professor Birtek asking him to allocate some time to meet a student from Bosnia and Herzegovina interested in the graduate program offered by the Sociology Department. The meeting, which was supposed to be an introductory one, lasted almost two hours. I have to say that this meeting introduced me to the pleasant and productive atmosphere present in the Sociology Department at all times.

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ABSTRACT

Remembering the 1992 –95 War in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

The Case of Sarajevo Roses

by

Azra Imamović

This work explores acts of public memory and analyzes commemoration practices surrounding the Sarajevo Roses, shell holes filled with red paint located in the streets of Sarajevo, with additional reference to the commemoration practices in Potočari (Srebrenica) and Kovači (Sarajevo). The work looks at how historical discourse intermingles, clashes and merges with the memory-work at the commemoration sites. The research is therefore based on exploration of commemoration sites and memories that current residents of Sarajevo have in relation to the Sarajevo Roses. The analysis of the memory work point to a difficulty in appropriation of the memories related to Sarajevo Roses, i.e. the absence of any group who could claim them in their recollection of war memories.

KISA ÖZET

1992-1995 Bosna-Hersek Savaşı'nı Hatırlamak:

Saraybosna Gülleri Örneği

Azra Imamović

Bu çalışma kamu hafızasıyla ilgili faaliyetleri araştırmakta ve Potoçari (Srebrenitsa) ve Kovaçi'de (Saraybosna) gerçekleştirilen anma törenlerine ek olarak, Saraybosna sokaklarında kırmızı boyalı betonla doldurulmuş bomba çukurları olan "Saraybosna Gülleri" etrafında oluşan anma merasimlerini analiz etmektedir. Çalışma, tarihi tartışmaların anma alanlarındaki hafızayla nasıl karıştığını, çatıştığını ve birleştiğini incelemektedir. Dolayısıyla araştırma Saraybosna sakinlerinin Saraybosna Gülleri'yle ilgili hatıralarının ve anma alanlarının keşfedilmesine dayanmaktadır. Hafıza çalışmasının analizi Saraybosna Gülleri'yle ilgili bir benimsenme problemine işaret etmektedir. Yani, savaş hatıralarının arasında onları sahiplenecek hiçbir grup bulunmamaktadır.

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List of Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
F BiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
RS	Republika Srpska
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
IC	International Community
ICTY	International Crimes Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia

Pronunciation Guide

The following consonants are read as stipulated below:

Čelik is pronounced as ch in *chair*.

Kuća is pronounced as ch but a *bit softer* than stipulated in the *chair*.

Džem is pronounced as j in *Jack*.

Đak is pronounced as j but a *bit softer* than stipulated in *Jack*.

Šala is pronounced as sh in *shiver*.

Život is pronounced as j in the French word *Jacques*.

Car is pronounced as ts in the English word *tsar*.

The remaining letters in the alphabet are pronounced as they are written.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to look at the acts of public memory and analyze the commemoration practices surrounding the Sarajevo Roses, shell holes filled with red paint located in the streets of Sarajevo¹ with additional reference to the current commemoration practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina generally. The research aims to look at accounts emerging in public memory and ways in which they affect existence of the present narratives about the war. The research points to the complexity of appropriation of the Sarajevo Roses by analyzing accounts of the informants interviewed in the course of the research.

Therefore, it can be said that this research is undertaken as an exploration in the imaginary that usually remains invisible space of war memories present in the life of each citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each one of us living either in or outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina has created his/her own perception of war events, which has greatly affected and still affects the way we think and act today. The dominant political groups and media have contributed to the active presence of war in our lives, victimization of particular groups and the creation of a need to blame the others. The '*divide et impera*' politics has moved from war attacks to assemblies and parliament. We speak of reforms and a brighter future, but the burden of war memories, lack of

¹ See Figure 10.

reconciliation and readiness to speak about our past experiences greatly affect the way we think of war.

In a society, where the change from a socialist regime has been brought about by a horrific war, ethnic cleansing and with the arrival of a new society with claims of democracy, one feels the urge to ask the questions – how do we remember yesterday, events that took place before yesterday, and how will we remember yesterday for the sake of the future. Such a motivation becomes both personal and academic in nature and I am compelled to explore the processes related to war memories.

Having this in mind, I try to explore options and opinion, to find a ground for identifying some similarities appearing in these processes, to contextualize them and provide the voice for those we have rarely heard from in the public discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ordinary citizens. What are their stories and narratives, what can they tell about the war and the ways in which it should be commemorated? How are their experiences of war reflected in commemoration sites and what are the processes that could be identified in this exercise of rethinking through the war?

For that reason, commemoration sites provide a fertile ground for exploration of these processes, their intermingling, struggling or merging taking place in the public sphere and contributing to the appearance of a new, hybrid creation that immediately returns to the public sphere to affect those that already exist. This thesis aims to explore processes that seem to be emerging from the accounts provided in interviews in the course of this research and look at ways and extent (if any) in which past and present intermingle today.

In that regard, the first chapter tries to introduce the reader to the ways in which the recent 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is presented in the public

sphere. The chapter explores the ways in which war is remembered in major dailies, presented through movies and in textbooks currently used in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, this chapter provides background information on how this research was undertaken, i.e. its methodology.

While the first chapter tries to contextualize issues related to remembrance of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the second chapter, on the other hand, attempts to provide a theoretical framework related to the importance of memorial sites in the process of remembering. It tries to look back at the memorials in the past and their role today and also to explore the relationship between history and memory. At the same time, the chapter tries to contextualize memorials in this relationship between memory and history and to present some of the major commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The third chapter provides an introduction to the phenomenon of the so-called Sarajevo Roses and tries to present some of the mysteries related to their existence, i.e. the creators of the Sarajevo Roses. The mysteries presented in this chapter have made this topic a process of discovery for the researcher, an endeavor where new questions seem constantly to arise making it more interesting and yet more difficult to complete.

Some of these questions and research results are presented in chapter four. This chapter elaborates findings of this research. It explores when the interviewees first noticed the Roses and their perception of the creators of the Roses. Following that, this chapter provides presentation of accounts that have appeared around the Sarajevo Roses in the course of the research. Thus, it analyzes the various aspects of remembering the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Sarajevo Roses and presents the problem of appropriation of the Sarajevo Roses by its current residents. When compared

to other commemoration sites, the Sarajevo Roses are faced with the absence of any groups who can claim their memories in the recollection of war experience.

Chapter 1

Memories of the Recent War in Bosnia and Herzegovina

This chapter aims to present some basic information about Bosnia and Herzegovina today and will also explore how the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is remembered in the daily newspapers, popular movies and textbooks. The chapter will attempt to explain to the reader why the exploration in the memory of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is significant at this point in time.

As a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina I am interested in trying to research the memory of the recent war, particularly as so many issues were left open and unresolved as of the Dayton Peace Accord.² In Remet's words "rather than representing the product of a soundly researched collective effort to engineer stability and lasting peace in the area, it (the Dayton Peace Accord) represented, on the West's part, merely another in a continuing series of efforts to find not the most efficacious instrument to achieve the stated goals of policy, but the "cheapest one."³ Similarly, Omer Ibrahimagić, professor at the Law Faculty in Sarajevo also heavily criticized the role of the international community and the Dayton Peace Accord in 1996 stating that the construction of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Daytonian structure) "has no scientific or theoretical explanation"⁴

This unresolved legacy of the war could be seen as one of the reasons why all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina struggle to reconcile the conflicting results of the war with the need to think towards what they see as the brighter future of the

² Dayton Peace Accord is the name of the agreement which brought to an end 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

³ S. P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*, Westview Press, 2002, p. 277

country. Therefore, it is important to analyze how this legacy of war affects the everyday life of ordinary people and explore memories of the recent war present in the public discourse through daily newspapers, movies and textbooks.

The 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord. The Accord was negotiated by representatives of the parties involved in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the neighboring Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The peace agreement established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state comprised of two Entities, the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), each with a high degree of autonomy.

The agreement includes the State Constitution and other provisions designed to build a peaceful, stable country. The Accord assigned 51 % of the territory to the Bosnian-Croat Federation which was created in 1994 after the forces of Bosnian army and forces of Bosnian Croats had been involved in a bloody conflict throughout 1993 and spring 1994. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly decentralized and it consists of ten cantons⁵ (smaller administrative units), which are responsible for education, health, social welfare and many other issues.

The remaining 49 % of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina were assigned to Republika Srpska⁶, which is highly centralized and all decisions are brought by a

⁴ O. Ibrahimagić, *Bosna i Bošnjaci nakon Dejtona*, p. 159

⁵ It can be roughly estimated that the population in five of these Cantons is predominantly Bosniaks, while Croats make majority in three Cantons. Population in two of these Cantons is mixed and some of these administrative units experience serious political problems between the two ethnic groups.

⁶ One needs to note that Republika Srpska is quoted in almost all documents as Republika and not as a Republic. Government of the Republika Srpska tended and still tends to describe the RS as an independent state. Therefore, in order to distinguish between the Republic of Srpska, which could be perceived as a state and Republika Srpska as an Entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the latter formulation is used by the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

centralized government. The territory of the Republika Srpska includes several former United Nations Protection Areas, small towns that were considered to be the safe havens, i.e. areas under protection of the United Nations forces during the war. Most of these areas in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina consequently fell into the hands of Bosnian Serbs and more than 8.000 men have been reported missing in the area of small town Srebrenica while mass graves are still being exhumed particularly in this area of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to the data presented by Vladimir Žerajavić⁷, the distinguished Croatian demographer, in the years of 1992-95 some 215,000 persons died in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the dead were about 160,000 Muslims, 30,000 Croats and 25,000 Serbs. Žerajavić's calculations show that only about 2,000 Muslims were killed by Croatian forces; the remaining 158,000 died at the hands of Serbian forces. He also estimates that out of 30,000 Croats, 2,000 were killed by Muslims and about 28,000 by Serbian forces. Out of 25,000 Serbs who lost their lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he estimates that about half of them were killed by Muslims and half by Croats. In addition to the dead at least 1,000,000 people have been expelled out of their homes although some estimates go as far to estimate that there were around 2,7 million refugees.

Additionally, the International War Crimes Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia has been established to process persons indicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide for the first time after World War II in Europe. Judgments have already been passed for cases of rape, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity at this court and intense negotiations are taking place between the international community and

⁷ S. P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic*, p. 239

domestic authorities that Bosnian and Herzegovinians courts commence trials for war crimes.

Having in mind all stated above, it could be argued that although the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended almost nine years ago, the battles from the field have continued in the political domain and the country continues to be largely dependent on the heavy presence of the international community. Dominant narratives that have contributed to the beginning of the war, still affect the way in which the war is presented today. Needless to say, such narratives presenting the war are created for each of the ethnic groups separately.

Dominant narratives of Bosnian Serbs claim that the past war has been a civil war. Serbs have been under attack and threatened during the past regime, particularly by attempts of Croatia and Bosnia to secede from former Yugoslavia. Now, Serbs have liberated themselves from the domination of the unjust communist regime and the dream of 'brotherhood and unity' present in socialist times was never existent according to this narrative. In an ideal world, the Entity of Republika Srpska would be a part of Serbia and special connections need to be established with all other Orthodox countries. This narrative also sees this entity under constant threat from the other two ethnic groups and the international community. The international community is perceived as favoring Bosnian Muslims and Croats at all times, while Serbs have been the victims of unjust policies of the international community for centuries.

At the same time, Bosnian Croats point out their pureness and uniqueness after numerous attempts over many centuries that tried to assimilate them. Their history has shown that they were not as much exposed to the 'barbarian influence' of the Ottoman

Empire and therefore their European Catholic culture and purity is supreme to the two other ethnic groups. Dominant narratives of Croat people describe the past war as an aggression from the Serbian forces. This narrative also perceives Bosnian Muslims as a threat to their uniqueness. Any attempt for joint projects or endeavors is seen as an attempt for assimilation particularly given the fact that Croats are the least numerous ethnic group in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia seems to be perceived as a homeland more than Bosnia and Herzegovina. The international community is perceived as favoring Bosnian Muslims' attempts for further unification.

On the other hand, dominant narratives prevalent among Bosnian Muslims emphasize how for centuries, they had peacefully coexisted with the two other ethnic groups. One of the narratives claims that Bosnian Muslims originate from the church called the Bogumils, a very active heretical medieval church in this region. Despite the numerous attempts to be claimed by either Croats or Serbs as members of their ethnic groups, Bosnian Muslims have tried to maintain their unique identity and to defend it against the assimilation attempts of the two ethnic groups. The war has been perceived as a ruthless aggression on this ethnic group and continuation of numerous assimilation attempts while the international community is viewed as willing to negotiate with war criminals while forgetting justice and victims.

The international community, on the other hand, tends to perceive the war as the unfortunate event claiming that the truth needs to be told and that the war criminals need to be charged for their crimes. At the same time, the international community tends to avoid any definitions that would be used to describe the past war as either the aggression or the civil war but in most cases refers to the past war in Bosnia and Herzegovina with terms 'war' or 'past conflict' only. However, the use of such

terminology is also problematic as they are seen as an attempt to avoid any taking sides by using artificial terms.

Given the conflicting results of the war and the present victimization narratives present among all ethnic groups all of which are currently clashing in the public discourse, I have explored memories of the war among Bosnian Muslims⁸ in this research. Bosniak⁹ politicians claim that, for the first time, they live in a state where they are considered to be equal to two other ethnic groups. The 2001 Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina stipulates that members of each of the three constituent people (i.e. members of the ethnic group) are equal in their rights throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁰

Although the Decision has been a great achievement on the part of politicians, it is necessary to keep in mind that the legacy of the recent violent war and the consequent electoral victories of nationalist parties still prevent the possibility of reconciliation and acceptance of existence of these separate narratives. Therefore, one is reminded on an almost daily basis that post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina had been the product of the intense negotiation of the international community and not the willingness of all three ethnic groups to reach consensus to build a stable country. That is why everyday life bears the heavier burden of the need to prove the uniqueness of each ethnic group. This, in turn, can be used to justify that forms of segregation or assimilation practices commonly found in, for example, the education system of Bosnia

⁸ The interviews in this research were mostly carried out with Bosnian Muslims.

⁹ One needs to note that the term Bosniaks was introduced in 1993 through a decision of a Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina to refer to Bosnian Muslims, who were able to declare themselves in the past as muslims (members of religious community) or as Muslims (members of the ethnic group) as opposed to Croats and Serbs (members of the ethnic groups) who were referred to as Catholics and Orthodox members of religious community, T. Bringa, *Biti musliman na bosanski način*

¹⁰ www.ohr.int

and Herzegovina are considered acceptable given the enormous differences existing between the ethnic groups.

Having this in mind, it is not surprising to see that reinvention of the past can be easily identified in the academia and the press of all three ethnic groups. In most cases Bosnian Croats and Serbs copy the master nationalistic narratives from Croatia and Serbia, which perceive others as aggressors and enemies.¹¹ However, Bosnian Muslims have invented the theory of continuity which tends to explain the existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina from medieval ages until contemporary times despite Serbian and Croatian nationalism.¹²

Therefore, in what may seem as major disarray in the country one finds it worthwhile to examine emerging narratives of the memory of war and to explore how these narratives exist simultaneously, interact and/or collide and conflict with each other to affect perception of national identity among Bosnian Muslims. In other words, it is important to examine how does a state such as Bosnia and Herzegovina with two entities, ten cantons, three members of a rotating presidency, 1.000.000 refugees and displaced persons, heavily influenced by the policy of the international community promote the remembrance of the war.

Additionally, it is important to analyze how the war is remembered in a city such as Sarajevo, the capitol of the post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina, which endured three years of siege. Sarajevo, which has been largely perceived as the multi-ethnic community, is now facing the problems with the return of Serbs and the need to

¹¹ These processes have been extensively described by many authors such as Ivo Banac, Michael Sells, in their books on nationalism among Croats and Serbs. See M. A. Sells, *The bridge betrayed : religion and genocide in Bosnia*

describe the war as the aggression by Serb criminals.¹³ As opposed to Tuzla¹⁴, which publicly commemorates the anniversary of war events, even the beginning of the siege in Sarajevo receives considerably less attention in the wider public and the media.

This conflicting legacy is no doubt both traumatic and problematic in terms of designating what a group needs to remember – is it the genocide, defense war or ethnic cleansing that we need to remember or is it all of these? In this work, the research on the memory of war will be undertaken by studying the commemoration sites, particularly paying attention to the so-called Sarajevo Roses. Sarajevo Roses are shell holes filled with red paint to commemorate sites in which people were killed by a shell during the 1992-95 siege. In order to introduce the reader with the issue of Sarajevo Roses and commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in general, I will therefore speak about the methodology of the research in the following section.

Methodology of the Research

The research was undertaken between the fall of 2002 until early spring 2004 by conducting individual interviews in order to get a better insight on how citizens of Sarajevo shape their memories in relation to the Sarajevo Roses.

The informants were chosen randomly - some of them were personal acquaintances, while some friends helped solicit persons willing to talk about their experiences. The only criterion applied in the selection process was the fact that the informants must be currently residing in the area of Sarajevo. In total, 22 persons were

¹² This idea was presented by professor Mustafa Imamović at the conference titled “Conceptualizing BiH history” held in Braunschweig, Germany, September 2003.

¹³ The inscription commonly seen in some commemoration sites. See *Figure 12*.

interviewed including the local city officials and Nedžad Kurto. The persons interviewed differed in their age, work experience and gender. Some of them had remained in Sarajevo during the siege, while others were either in other towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina or outside the country. As mentioned before a large majority of people were Bosnianks although the perception of their ethnic identity differed to a large extent among the informants¹⁵.

Almost everyone was interested in talking to me about their experience and only two persons refused to be interviewed. One of them was a pensioner whose son was killed by a shell while the second person was a personal friend who did not feel comfortable about talking since he might, as he described be 'too open and say things that he does not want'. While in the former case, it was clear that strong emotions prevented the man from giving an interview, in the latter inability to deal with the past seemed to prevent my friend from talking to me.

The interviews themselves took place in a variety of locations: restaurants, homes, and offices - wherever seemed to be the most appropriate at the given point in time. The interviews usually lasted between three-quarters of an hour to an hour depending on how eloquent the informants were. Most of the interviews were individual although on two occasions I interviewed two persons at the same time. On both occasions, one of the informants would provide a response to the question and then the second one would also proceed with providing a response. A setback of such an approach was that in some cases the second informant tended to agree with the first

¹⁴ Tuzla is a town in the located in the North West of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 25 May 1995, tens of young people were killed in the pedestrian zone of Tuzla.

¹⁵ Among informants, only one girl was wearing '*nikab*' while the other informants were a group of both practicing and non-practicing Muslims.

response even though they could expand and sometimes provide very elaborate responses. Bearing that in mind, I tried to avoid such a practice and attempted to carry out individual interviews during the research.

In general, all interviews took place in a very pleasant atmosphere. The informants were eager to provide answers to the questions. The questions asked in all interviews were similar in terms of content. One of the first questions required the informants to state when they had first noticed the Sarajevo Roses. Then they were asked to describe their initial reactions about the Roses and what they had thought about them, their presence and shape. The informants were also asked to comment on how they perceive the Roses today, to describe their relation to the war and elaborate on what they thought was the role of the Roses in the past and the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In some cases, the informants provided their responses while implicitly asking me whether the responses they provided were good or asking me to comment on what they have just said. While responding to such questions, in which I was becoming the informant, I tried to balance my responses by saying that each of their responses has greatly contributed to my research. In such a situation, I started questioning my own position in the research.

As a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina and someone who had been there during the war times, it is hard to pursue a research that will be completely 'objective.' My whole life experience has been embedded in the culture of this country, which has affected the way I think or act upon different issues. However, the academic experience supplemented with a vast body of literature and notions acquired in the education

process contributed to what I see as a possibility of reflection in the attempt to analyze the processes that are shaping up in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

And while it is easy to write scholarly papers on this issue, it was a different experience having to respond to the informants while trying to provide positive feedback and encourage their responses without trying to affect the way in which they would respond. In many cases, I seemed to have been expected to agree with the informants and to say that what they were thinking was good. However, I had to explain that the research was not aimed at identifying rights or wrongs of one side. Therefore, in several cases I was able to observe suspicion on the part of the informants. Although I was welcome to conduct all interviews, which might have been due to the fact that I was considered as someone who shared their ethnic background, experiences and who was interested in their opinion, in those brief moments, I somehow felt a suspicion which might have been a consequence of the fact that I was perceived as someone studying outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, a person exposed to what is usually described as an 'over-liberal' opinion. Although this feeling was never communicated between us, it also provided another insight to the research.

This experience contributed to awareness of the post-conflict context in which the research is undertaken and my own experience and perspectives brought into the research. In that sense, I was able to be aware of the strong feelings informants expressed but also of the fact that I tried to observe their memories from a different, scholarly perspective. In several cases, I was questioning whether it was a good idea to conduct the research on such an emotional topic; will I be criticized for writing about my own people if they disagree with the arguments that I am presenting. The attempt of trying to balance these two perspectives required awareness that my conclusions are

indeed affected by both the context in which the research was undertaken, my past war experience and the current scholarly perspectives. All of these intermingled to provide what I think is an interesting contribution to this work and one needs to be aware of them while reading through it.

In addition to conducting interviews, the research included explorations of newspapers, articles and internet sites in order to obtain more information about current commemoration practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This included periodical review of the newspapers *Dnevni Avaz* and *Oslobođenje* in 2003. At the same time, I established contacts with representatives of local authorities from Sarajevo Canton and the Fund for Protection and Maintenance of War Cemeteries. All of these activities contributed to creation of a thick 'research diary' folder used to elaborate on some of the points presented in this research.

An additional activity included the search for the Roses in streets. On several occasions, I walked for hours through the streets of Sarajevo in order to identify the location of as many Roses as possible. Even when I thought that I had identified all the Roses I would still walk along the streets of Sarajevo and notice a new Rose in an unexpected location. Therefore, search for the Roses proved to be a very motivating experience connected with my regular, everyday activities. In that sense, the Roses were a silent reminder of the undertaking whose purpose was to identify processes taking place in the post-Dayton Sarajevo.

All of these activities took place during 2002/03 simultaneously with my visits to places such as Srebrenica, Foča, Vitez, etc. which provided a useful insight to commemoration practices in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, my focus, in analyzing the commemoration practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been

to look at the coverage of these subjects in daily newspapers. In the part that follows, major findings on how the war is presented in major daily newspapers will be elaborated upon.

The War in the Daily Newspapers

In this part of my work I present an overview of the major newspapers published in Bosnia and Herzegovina in spring 2003. The newspapers researched included Sarajevo-based *Dnevni Avaz*, which some tend to see as the Bosniak-oriented newspaper. It also included analysis of the articles, which appeared in *Oslobođenje*. *Oslobođenje* is perceived as the pre-war best newspaper and was also recipient of the prize for the best newspaper in the wartime. The research also included articles from *Večernji list*, Croat-oriented newspapers and *Nezavisne novine*, liberal newspapers published in the Republika Srpska.¹⁶ It is striking to notice that articles are published on this issue of commemorating the war on an almost daily basis.

Two major dailies *Dnevni Avaz*¹⁷ and *Oslobođenje*¹⁸ reported on the commemoration marking the 11 years since the massacre in Ferhadija (the main street in Sarajevo) in which 26 people were killed and 108 people wounded while waiting in a queue for bread. *Oslobođenje* presented facts about casualties while stating that the delegation from Sarajevo Canton had visited the site laying the flowers, saying the *Fatiha* prayer and honoring the dead with one minute of silence. The newspaper brought a short statement of a woman survivor (Serb ethnicity) who was injured in the attack and a

¹⁶ Although there is another newspaper in the Republika Srpska "*Glas Srpske*", this newspaper was not used for the research, as it was generally difficult to obtain this particular newspaper in Sarajevo.

¹⁷ *Dnevni Avaz*, May 28, 2003, Granata s Trebevića ubila 26 ljudi u redu za hljeb, p. 26

¹⁸ *Oslobođenje*, May 28, 2003, Sjećanje na ubijene, p. 13

statement of a man named Ahmed Belan who was saving the wounded. He said "*I was saving the wounded. I cannot forget what had happened on that peaceful morning. It is like I am seeing the dead again.*" On the other hand, Meliha Alić, the President of the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly stated, "*it can be forgiven but it cannot and must not be forgotten*". A similar article appeared in *Dnevni Avaz* commemorating the same event and the 27 May 1992 shelling when '*war criminals shot the shell from Trebević mountain killing citizens of Sarajevo*'. In this article emphasis was placed on the account of the survivors, while the article also reported on the statement of the Cantonal Assembly President. It is possible to note here that accounts of the survivors emphasized memories related to that event 11 years ago. On the other hand, the Cantonal Assembly President focused her speech on a phrase very often heard in the public statements by Bosniak politicians nowadays '*it cannot and must not be forgotten*'. The phrase has somehow gained a prominent position in the public discourse and, it may be even argued, an important aspect of the public memory on recent war.

It must to be noted that similar information appeared in the liberal newspaper *Nezavisne novine* published in Republika Srpska, albeit with less coverage. The widely read *Glas Srpske*, a conservative newspaper from Republika Srpska, reported nothing on this event. *Večernji list*¹⁹, the predominantly Croat based newspaper, reported that a delegation from the Sarajevo Canton, city administration and Center municipality brought flowers to commemorate 17 people, who were killed and many others who were wounded while waiting in a queue for bread in the besieged Sarajevo.

It is interesting to note that throughout newspapers monitoring this was almost the only coverage of commemoration practices which occurred across entity borders and

in non-Bosniak-oriented newspapers. Although the coverage in both *Večernji list* and *Nezavisne novine* was not overly extensive and was presented in the form of information rather than reporting, it can be seen as a positive step forward in presenting war-related events that affected other ethnic groups in the recent war. On the other hand, it is possible to note that both *Oslobođenje* and *Dnevni Avaz* focused their reports on the accounts of survivors and the speech of a local politician, i.e. emotional and psychological accounts and communicating of the political message.

Dnevni Avaz also reported on the commemoration taking place on the Mehmet-Paša Sokolović Bridge in Višegrad²⁰, where the survivors and family members threw three thousand roses into the Drina River. The event was to serve as a remembrance of the 1992 events in Višegrad, the town located in eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, when bodies of those killed were thrown into the river so that they would not be identified. Amor Mašović, one of the leading forensic experts involved in the exhumation of mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a member of the F BiH Parliament stated, “*with this commemoration, we wish to remind on all killed Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to remind Serbs that they reside on massive fields of death where Bosniaks were killed.*” A similar article appeared in *Oslobođenje*²¹ as well. *Oslobođenje* additionally reported that survivors from this area required immediate arrest of persons indicted for war crimes. Interesting to note, there was no coverage of this event in Croat and Serb based newspapers on this event.

¹⁹ *Večernji list*, May 28, 2003, Bolno prisjećanje Sarajlija, p. 4

²⁰ *Dnevni Avaz*, May 26, 2003, Tri hiljade ruža za tri hiljade ubijenih Bošnjaka, p. 3

²¹ *Oslobođenje*, May 26, 2003, Fatiha i ruže za žrtve, p. 3

Another article which appeared in *Dnevni Avaz* was about the commemoration of eleven years ago - the attack to the Hospital for NewBorns.²² The article reported on students, who brought flowers to commemorate the event. Article reported how the attack took place on a crowded hospital while evacuation was taking place and included an account of a mother who delivered her son 11 years ago.²³ The article also noted that responsible officers would be charged for those attacks. Although there was no coverage of this event in other newspapers it could be noted that this article pointed out several issues – the need to maintain remembrance of the war in the public sphere by inclusion of younger generations, i.e. students and the justice that needed to be done towards survivors. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the previous article was on the same page as an article discussing the reconstruction of the mosques destroyed in the recent war in the area of Republika Srpska. The article placed the emphasis on reconciliation process between the two ethnic groups (Bosniaks and Serbs) by stating that religious institutions point to peaceful co-existence of people with different ethnic backgrounds.

Namely, during the war 618 mosques²⁴ were completely destroyed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Banja Luka, which is now considered as the main administrative center of the Republika Srpska, 32 mosques were destroyed including the Sahat Kula. Ferhat-Paša Mosque was one of the oldest mosques in Banja Luka. It was built in 1579 and was under protection of UNESCO. It was destroyed during the war and its stones were used to build the roads in Republika Srpska.²⁵ Commenting on attempts currently

²² Author does not possess the information whether similar article appeared in *Oslobođenje* the same day.

²³ *Dnevni Avaz*, May 27, 2003, *Osoblje je u panici trčalo noseći bebe u podrum*, p. 25

²⁴ URL link: <http://www.rijaset.net/rijaset/porusenedzamiye.htm>

²⁵ URL link: <http://www.rijaset.net/rijaset/banjaluka.htm>

made to reconstruct the mosque, *Dnevni Avaz* reported that “*Ferhat Paša mosque is a symbol of reconciliation in Banja Luka and Bosnia and Herzegovina and cooperation between Christianity and Islam in Europe.*”²⁶ Similarly, the same newspapers²⁷ reported that a request has been filed for reconstruction of the Aladža mosque built in 1550/1²⁸ located in Foča, the Eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina also located on the territory of the Republika Srpska. While the latter articles seem to point to the importance given to reconstruction of religious institutions in the process of encouraging return and reconciliation, the former articles placed its emphasis on public commemoration and need to punish perpetrators for their crimes.

It is also interesting to note that *Dnevni Avaz* reported briefly on Hambarine, *šehid mezarlik*, located in Republika Srpska, stating that this is most likely the only commemoration site for Bosniaks in Republika Srpska. This *mezarlik* is made of six marble stones, which contain the names of 314 civilians killed either at home or in one of the numerous concentration camps located in this area. At the memorial, there are also the names of 11 officers who fought in the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁹. This article was concluded with the statement that “*family members of the deceased visit this and similar sites regularly regardless of the season of the year and weather conditions.*”³⁰ In this article it is possible to observe the emphasis on the commemoration site to Bosniaks built by Bosniaks in Republika Srpska and the need to maintain continuous remembrance emphasized by ‘*regular visits regardless of the*

²⁶ *Dnevni Avaz*, May 28, 2003, Ferhat-pašina džamija je simbol pomirenja, p. 4

²⁷ *Dnevni Avaz*, May 14, 2003, Islamska zajednica uputila zahtjev za rekonstrukciju, p. 7

²⁸ URL link: <http://www.rijaset.net/rijaset/foca.htm>

²⁹ The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation), Army of Republika Srpska (Republika Srpska) and Croat Defense Council (Federation) were the names of military forces which were involved in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

³⁰ *Dnevni Avaz*, April 22, 2003, Da se ne zboravi, p.14

season of the year and weather conditions.' This article focuses on commemoration practices in Republika Srpska, whose authorities are very often perceived as ignorant in acknowledging war crimes that took place there, it also creates a framework of commemoration practice for Bosniaks in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the other hand, it is also possible to note that newspapers mention the globalization aspect in relation to the remembrance of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In its section on cultural affairs, the newspapers *Oslobođenje* reported on photograph exhibition of Sarajevo twin towers destroyed during the siege with an aim to establish a parallel between the September 11th 2001 and the 1992-95 siege of Sarajevo.³¹ The article notes the fact that all photographed faces have masks similar to the ones worn during the New York and Washington attacks. It states that "*these masks have symbolic meaning of protection against evil which we have been exposed to during war times in Bosnia and Herzegovina*" The same issue of *Oslobođenje* reports on the concert commemorating the victims of Srebrenica³². Interestingly, the director of the Sarajevo philharmonic orchestra makes a similar reference mentioning that "*in addition to the musicians from Sarajevo philharmonic orchestra there will be seven to eight New York musicians. In this way we want to make a connection between the tragedy that had happened in Srebrenica in 1995 and the one in New York on 11 September 2001.*"³³

Finally, newspapers also voice the dissatisfaction of veterans with the way in which the recent war has been commemorated. The title of the article which appeared in *Dnevni Avaz* "*Bosniak Politicians Accept Forgetting*"³⁴ brought a statement from the

³¹ *Oslobođenje*, April 01, 2003, "Sarajevski blizanci" u Francuskoj, p. 20

³² It is estimated that around there are around 8,000 missing persons in Srebrenica.

³³ *Oslobođenje*, May 25, 2003, Koncert u znak sjećanja na žrtve Srebrenice, p. 19

³⁴ *Dnevni Avaz*, May 14, 2003, Bošnjački političari pristaju na zaborav, p. 11

president of the Union of War Veterans, who state that authorities should undertake efforts to commemorate events from the past war in a manner similar to the commemorations following World War II³⁵. Additionally, the president of the War Veterans accused the politicians of accepting all impositions coming from the international community³⁶ and called upon local politicians to cease being marionette puppets, who care only about driving expensive cars and having air-conditioned offices.

It can be noted that coverage of war-related or commemoration events is present in newspapers on an almost daily basis³⁷, but neither *Dnevni Avaz* and *Oslobođenje* covered extensively events related to commemoration practices of Bosnian Serbs or Croats in the researched period. If there was coverage of the events related to two other ethnic groups it was presented briefly and as an information only. Majority of accounts in *Oslobođenje* and *Dnevni Avaz* present the war as an aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Emphasis of those articles is placed on the accounts of survivors. Statements by officials mostly talk about the need to continue public commemoration and the need to remember events so that they would not repeat again. Younger generations are also included in commemoration practices, but these small acts, are perceived as dissatisfactory by the war veteran associations. Newspapers seem to point to the need to establish a framework for commemoration of Bosniaks (Višegrad or Hambarine) throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also make connection with world events by attempting to bring the war (Sarajevo siege and Srebrenica massacre in particular) in connection with events such as September 11th 2000.

³⁵ Annual commemorations were organized in every town marking its liberation and numerous gatherings on the sites where partisan Tito forces defeated Nazis (Kozara, Sutjeska, etc.)

³⁶ This in particular refers to the fact that the past war is not referred to as the 'aggression committed by Yugoslav Army Forces' but just as 'the war'.

The War in Movies

On the other hand, when analyzing movies it needs to be noted that several movies appeared depicting war-related events in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, "Welcome to Sarajevo" describes hardships of life in the besieged Sarajevo as presented by the international journalists, who were reporting about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The movie describes the true event, the attempt of the British journalist to evacuate underage children from the orphanage in Sarajevo to Italy and to find parents of the girl named Emira, who he wants to adopt. Orphanage is constantly being under fire and shelled, has neither water nor electricity and, after several attempts, the journalist succeeds to evacuate children to Italy by linking with an international non-governmental organization. However, major portions of the movie describe the life of ordinary people of different ethnic backgrounds who help the journalist to identify Emira's mother. The movie presents everyday life in the besieged city without water and electricity: burning books to make the apartments warm, contest for the Miss of Sarajevo, search for food, death of close friends and passersby. The story is intermingled with statements of high-ranking officials from the international community, who criticize journalists for high profile reporting and emphasize that there are many other places throughout the world, in worse position than Sarajevo was at time³⁸.

Maybe one of the best known is the movie "No-Man's Land" who got the US Academy Award. "No-Man's Land" speaks about the group of Republika Srpska

³⁷ *Oslobođenje* reports in one day on Sarajevans commemorating Tito, the leader from socialist times and also about remembrance of victims from Kozarac, Višegrad and Tuzla event. *Oslobođenje*, May 26, 2003.

military troops and Bosnian Army soldiers who are lost in the no-man's land between the lines of the Army of Republika Srpska and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The soldiers are trying to get the United Nations forces to rescue them, as they are afraid of shelling from both sides. The main emphasis of the movie seems to be the incompetent role, which the international community has played, the role of the international media and the suffering of ordinary citizens who got involved in the war by accident. The location where specific events in the movie takes place is never mentioned in the movie as it is deemed unimportant – it takes place at no-man's land and could be anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The movie talks about the character of the war in only one scene where it shows the report of the international TV broadcaster. The report shows the scenes of shelling of Sarajevo, shattered buildings and wounded people while citing the well-known statement from Radovan Karadžić³⁹ *“do not think that your actions [i.e. referendum for independence carried out by the BiH presidency in 1992] will not cause the war in this country and maybe cause that Bosnian Muslims disappear.”*

Similarly, the movie produced last year named “Fuse” talks about post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina by presenting a small town for the upcoming visit of the U.S. President to this town. The movie is a reflection of the war events and presents the human tragedy. The main characters of the movie have lost some of their closest relatives whose presence is still felt in the movie by appearance of the deceased son to the father. Although the movie does not deal with the character of the war it shows the

³⁸ This is a statement of the former UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Gali.

³⁹ Radovan Karadžić was the war leader of Bosnian Serbs and the most wanted suspect by the International Crimes Tribunal in Hague. The Republika Srpska authorities as well as the authorities of the Serbia and Montenegro claim to have no information on his current residence.

suffering of everyday life in a post-war and ethnically mixed society and the life in a small area influenced by the corrupt international community.

Every movie highlights life's uncertainties, breaking of traditional norms of life and the human aspect of the recent war, i.e. presentation on how the war affects ordinary persons. All three movies point to difficulties a person is faced with during or after the war emphasizing only the fact that the war affected everyone's life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conflicting role of the international community and how the life in Bosnia and Herzegovina today means living with the past war on a daily basis. On the other hand, newspapers tend to focus more on sensations, i.e. newsworthy aspects of reporting on the war. Thus, there is a need of newspapers to emphasize public commemoration events and make connection with global events and war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that way, newspapers lose the opportunity to present an in-between space which is very much present in each of the movies. In that sense, movies tend to offer more possibilities for rethinking the past war experience, while newspapers tend to present only newsworthy accounts.

The War in Textbooks

Attention should also be paid to the presentation of the war in textbooks. The recently completed textbook revision process undertaken by the Entity Ministries of Education and facilitated by the international community in 2003 served as a necessary interim measure in ensuring that the education children in Bosnia and Herzegovina receive is free from political, religious, cultural and other bias and discrimination and

respects the rights of all children.⁴⁰ According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by education officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this process included revision of current textbooks, supplementary textbooks and workbooks from the national group of subjects (language and literature, history, geography, religion, knowing nature/society) that were currently in use in all primary and secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Geography experts identified that textbooks did not use Bosnia and Herzegovina as the main reference point in presentation of the teaching content but that Croatia and Serbia were rather used as main study subjects in the textbooks used by Bosnian Croats and Serbs. At the same time, experts agreed that the terms: “aggression”, “inter-entity” or “civil war” should be replaced and the term to be used is “war” only and that both versions of the name should be presented for those towns that changed their name during the 1992 – 1995 war.

History experts agreed to present the past war in chronological order with no explanations provided next to the dates. It can also be argued that the nationalism and the legacy of the war has affected one-sided representation of historical events from perspective of only one constituent people (presented in either a victorious role or as the victims) and biased representation of historical content, particularly the recent war (population migrations or suffering of people in particular).⁴¹

⁴⁰ OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Memorandum of Understanding on the Re-Establishment of the Inter-Entity Textbook Review Commission*, Sarajevo, March 2003. OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina facilitates and coordinates the education reform process in the country, and 12 Ministers of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina signed in Sarajevo on 05 March 2003.

⁴¹ OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Report on the Work of the Textbook Commission*, Sarajevo, July 2003, p. 7-9

Although the textbook review process was envisioned to be a short term process it pointed to the problematic issue of one-sided, biased representation in the history and language and literature textbooks. The textbooks commission experts from these two groups were not able to resolve this issue in a satisfactory manner as there was no readiness from any sides to agree with the interpretation of the others and this issue appeared to be both political and academic in nature.⁴²

Having in mind the presentation of the war in the daily newspapers, movies and textbooks it is possible to conclude that the legacy of the war is still a problematic issue present in the public discourse. At the same time, it is possible to draw the parallel between the ways in which the war is presented in both newspapers and the textbooks. Both of these media present the dominant narratives of the war, textbooks even more so as they are subjected to the approval procedure from the Ministries and their content is much more difficult to change. On the other hand, statements from survivors, unions of demobilized soldiers and movies point to somehow displaced narratives of war focusing on accounts of ordinary citizens, their sufferings, hardships and dilemmas experienced during the war and ways in which these groups deal with the past today.

As the main focus of this thesis is the way in which the siege and the past war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is dealt with through the commemoration sites, it is now necessary to turn to the importance of memorial sites in the process of remembering. Therefore, the following chapter will attempt to create a theoretical framework for this research.

⁴² Ibid, p.10

Chapter 2

Importance of Memorial Sites in the Process of Remembering

This chapter will provide a theoretical framework for the research of memorial sites and their importance in the process of remembering. The chapter will also introduce and address issues related to the commemoration of the past war in Bosnia and Herzegovina by analyzing dominant discourses that could be identified in the process of the monument buildings in the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. By doing so, this chapter will attempt to offer an explanation as to how the theoretical analysis will be applied through the prism of the monuments currently present in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Monuments

For the purposes of the work it is important to analyze the definitions of the monument and see how their role in the process of remembering is perceived. According to Winter, whose book focuses on the aspects of mourning of the Great War, great emphasis in the monuments of that time is placed on aspects of grief and mourning. He states that “war memorials were places where people grieved, both individually and collectively.”⁴³ That is why, in his words, “to understand war memorials is to see more clearly how communities mourned together.”⁴⁴ It is then possible to claim that monuments in his view have a psychological role which enables both individuals and communities to come to terms with and overcome the trauma of loss experienced in war times.

⁴³ J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 79

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 79

At the same time, Sturken notes that “monuments and memorials can often be used as interchangeable forms, but there are distinctions in intent between them.”⁴⁵ According to Sturken, “monuments are not generally built to commemorate defeats; the defeated dead are remembered in memorials. Whereas a monument most often signifies victory, a memorial refers to the lives sacrificed for a particular set of values. Memorials embody grief, loss, and tribute. Whatever triumph a memorial may refer to, its depiction of victory is always tempered by a foregrounding of the lives lost.”⁴⁶ In that sense, she makes a distinction between memorials and monuments based on their victorious aspect or the aspect of lives lost in the tragedy. According to Sturken, distinction between memorials and monuments is based on the connotation that their shape and messages convey to visitors, which means that memorial will embody messages in honor of the dead. On the other hand, the main emphasis of the monument will be placed on victorious role while human loss seems to be less important.

Young distinguishes a memorial from a monument only in a broader, more generic sense. In his opinion, monuments refer to a subset of memorials; the material objects, sculpture and installations used to memorialize a person or thing. However, he treats “all memory-sites as memorials, the plastic objects within these sites as monuments. A memorial may be a day, a conference or a space, but it need not be a monument. A monument, on the other hand is always a kind of memorial.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic & the Politics of Remembering*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997, p. 169

⁴⁶ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic & the Politics of Remembering*, p. 169

⁴⁷ J.E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meanings*, Yale University Press, New Heaven and London, 1993, p. 4

Such purpose of both memorials and monuments offers a possibility of analyzing commemoration sites in a broader context, by looking at ways in which commemoration practices transmit their messages about the event. In that sense, all monuments and memory sites can become memorials. It does not seem to be important whether a particular monument signifies victory but rather that it is a *plastic* object, whose existence can be subjected to interpretation.

While it is important to analyze monuments in the light of their mourning function or to distinguish between the role of monuments and memorials based on their emphasis on victory or human loss or grieving, I will, for the purposes of this work, analyze monuments and commemoration site in the light of Young's definition. In that sense, this research attempts to analyze the Sarajevo Roses, which commemorate the siege of Sarajevo. Their locations throughout the city of Sarajevo tend to oppose the usual perception of the monument therefore becoming an object that can transmit their message everywhere and at any given point in time.

Koselleck also argues that "more than anything else, memorials erected permanently testify to transitoriness."⁴⁸ It could therefore be claimed, as argued by both Young and Koselleck, monuments in the course of time tend to acquire new meanings which can sometimes contribute to the continuation of prevailing, dominant narratives but can also change them by distorting their initial meaning and creating new ones. In that sense, it could be claimed that monuments become a subject in itself that testify not to the event they commemorate, but to their *constant ability to change* the message that they are supposed to convey. Therefore, it could be also important to analyze the role of

⁴⁸ R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History – Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2002, p. 288

monuments in the past to see how this transitoriness, as Koselleck defines it, has been reflected in the past.

Monuments in the Past

Keeping the memory of the dead and the commemoration of human loss and suffering seems to be one of the prominent roles of memorials and monuments when analyzing their role in the past. In the nation-states of 19th century, many memorials erected at that time tend to signify the role of the newly formed nation states and in many cases bear great resemblance throughout Europe⁴⁹. This is particularly well described by Koselleck who focuses on describing the resemblances and patterns that can be identified among memorials in the post-French revolutionary period. In doing so, he presents the findings on how the role and commemoration of the dead changed throughout the time by presenting the shift from monuments depicting emperors, great warriors to monuments focusing on ordinary citizens. To explain this phenomenon he uses the term 'democratization of the death' and explains it as the tendency to that "equality in death is revoked in favor of an equality safeguarding national homogeneity: it is the homogeneity of the living and the survivors in their particular political grouping. The construction of memorials takes place through political entities that by this very act define themselves against others."⁵⁰

Therefore, Koselleck's work is significant in the sense that he points out how the underlying messages of memorials change.⁵¹ He analyzes and elaborates how the role of memorials changed in different time periods throughout Europe and provides an

⁴⁹ Koselleck, R., *The Practice of Conceptual History – Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, p. 295/6

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 314

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 289

insight into why and how the role of memorials has fluctuated with different political and power regimes, among different social groups and in different times. In the course of his analysis, he comes to the conclusion that the only identity that remains at the memorial sites is the identity of the dead with themselves. Namely, as the political and social identifications continually change, the attempt to visually capture and permanently fix the meaning of monument leaves the deceased permanently alone without anything else.

In order to analyze this transitoriness of the monuments, one can also connect Kosellack's analysis with the commemoration sites erected after World War II in Bosnia and Herzegovina and after the recent 1992-95 war. Although this work places emphasis on the commemoration sites in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is important to keep in mind that there is a difference between memorial sites commemorating the past war and World War II related events in this region. In the latter, the emphasis of the newly created socialist state is obvious together with the victorious spirit of the partisan forces over Nazis. After the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and due to the change in political system, these commemoration sites remain forgotten and displaced. They are only intermittently mentioned in the media when the former partisans gather to commemorate battles of World War II. Their meaning becomes less relevant for young generations, who tend to see this period as a distant past and in some cases as the rule of dark and undemocratic forces.⁵²

On the other hand, most commemoration sites from the recent war tend to attract much more attention by all three ethnic groups. Generally speaking, they tend

focus on victimization and patriotic war led by each one of the three dominant ethnic groups. Needless to say, majority of commemoration sites attempt to present what they perceive as the only true description of the past war. For example, the monument erected in the shape of cross, Catholic symbol, to fallen Croats in the area of Vitez in Central Bosnia talks about 'Muslim siege.'⁵³ On the other hand, a monument to Serbs in Foča/Srbinje in Eastern Bosnia talks about 'homeland war fought by Serbs'⁵⁴ while commemoration-plaques erected by Bosniaks talk about 'aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Such emphasis of commemoration sites from the recent 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be brought in connection to the role of monuments based on Winter's description of the role of the monument, who concentrated on the importance of memorials and the 'healing' aspects for community.⁵⁵ On the other hand, one can argue that such presentation of events could be brought in connection with the necessity to present monuments as means which enable preservation of ethnic unity by explaining 'true' events that happened to a particular ethnic group during the past war.

On the other hand, the recent interest in researching the importance of memorial sites in social sciences points to the turn in perception of the role that memorials play, which will be elaborated in the part that deals with the description of the memorial sites today. The interest is clearly seen in the increasing number of articles

⁵² Some prominent politicians tend to describe the past communist regime in that way. See Figure 1 and 2. Photos of the Sutjeska monument and the adjacent museum.

⁵³ See Figure 3. Monument in the village of Ahmići near Vitez. The inscription states *During the 316 days-long Muslim siege of Vitez, 653 Croats were killed. Dear Lord, let them rest in peace.*

⁵⁴ See Figures 4 and 5. Monument to the fallen Serbs erected in the center of Foča where atrocities against then town majority Bosnian Muslims were committed. The inscription erected below the monument states *To Serb heroes and other war victims, who gave their 646 lives for Republika Srpska during homeland war from 1991 – 1995.*

⁵⁵ Jay Winter in his book emphasizes that memorials play primarily a psychological role, i.e. contribute to deal with grief and eventually help the healing of survivors and war victims.

that could be found on this subject in the early 90's and later⁵⁶. One needs to note, however, that this turn in perception was part of a broader movement criticizing the essentialist perspective stemming out of modernization theory. The movement or the 'turn' as it was referred to in some academic circle was revisionist in nature. It tended to analyze history, literature and other writings from social sciences while pointing to oversimplification in analysis of certain processes and to complexities, which were ignored in these writings. This in turn, led to creation of oversimplified and inaccurate conclusions.

Memorial Sites Today

While memorial sites still signify and commemorate war events and human loss, their role in many post-modernist theories becomes concentrated on their importance in constructing collective memories of the society and ways in which commemoration sites communicate with survivors and family members of the deceased. It could be therefore argued that memorials seem to be lying in a very sensitive, easily alterable space where their shape and form seem to offer a very fertile ground for numerous interpretations of the event they commemorate. Although in many cases interpretations seem to be geared towards dominant social discourses it can be argued that this process of alteration of meaning through the commemoration sites contributes to creating a very blurred boundary between the different groups in the process of remembering. The purpose of this work is actually to look at the Sarajevo Roses in particular by analyzing this process of alteration of meaning that takes place at those sites.

⁵⁶ See for example V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt, *Beyond the Cultural Turn – New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. by V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt, University of California Press, 1999.

While in the past and in the modernity-based theory the borders between the experience offered by memorials for society and survivors seem to have been much more easily drawn, a tendency has grown towards an attempt to avoid providing a stable, one-truth-for-all interpretation. As Koselleck mentioned the solitude of the 'deceased with themselves'⁵⁷ does not mean that memorial sites are denied the meaning that was provided in the past. It rather means that memorials open up a space for the clashing, intermingling, disappearing and creation of new narratives. In that sense, this work attempts to explore blurred boundaries that appear in the process of remembering of different social groups and new narratives that emerge in this space. This process, I tend to think, can even be perceived as an imagined stage for realistic theater play in which events take place before spectators, who can at any point in time become actors as well.

However, one needs to be cautious when saying that the identity of the dead remains with themselves. This does not mean that narratives of politics or power are avoided in the contemporary memorial sites although Koselleck points out that the capability of memorializing the dead eludes the language of political sensibility.⁵⁸ Narratives of powerful political groups are still present in emerging discourses among social groups, they clash, intertwine, produce new interpretations and bring significant new roles to the memorials. For example, World War II commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina have acquired new meanings after the recent war and in some cases, even the World War II veteran associations are split along the ethnic lines⁵⁹. In that sense, these memorials begin to provide new insight, raise dilemmas and activate the

⁵⁷ R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 325

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 325

⁵⁹ Following the recent war, World War II associations from the Republika Srpska carry the entity prefix while the Federation one are still called BiH World War II associations.

process of re-thinking World War II events in the context of the contemporary society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even while they retain the power of dominant narratives, memorials continue to construct and reconstruct the collective memories of the society. For that reason, memorials become an important subject for analyzing the politics of remembering.

This process is what Young defines as a complex '*texture of memory*'⁶⁰ which confronts us with many inconsistencies, doubts, and questions instead of an easily prescribed meaning of the memorial site. Young argues that every "memorial text generates a different meaning in memory" and defines '*texture of memory*' as exploration of the kind of meanings and principles around which memory telling about Holocaust museums and memorials is organized. In my opinion, the '*texture of memory*' can refer to the subtle threads that compose the process of remembering and compare it with the hand-made embroidery composed of complex threads making a unique creation even though there can be attempts to influence the pattern of embroidery by more experienced handcrafters. In the process of creating this unique piece of art, the texture of memory becomes what I refer to as an imaginary stage open for creation of new narratives, a complex process of individuals and groups subjected to influences of dominant groups, marginalized groups and individuals. This '*texture of memory*' and the fluctuant imaginary space of interpretations is one of the main focuses of this thesis.

In this space, it is possible to pose the question as to what are the collective memories and are they, just as Young claims the 'collected memories'⁶¹ of society and how these 'collected memories' create the narratives of collective meaning for particular

⁶⁰ J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory : Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, Preface VIII/IX

social groups and then become collective memories. In that sense, it is important to analyze the role of dominant political discourses and art in their attempts to create collective meanings for memorials.

Memorials – Politics versus Art/Counter-Monuments

Although memorials play a role in constructing memories of social groups, their role has also been to communicate a political message to the citizens it was built for. The power of the state in uniting its citizens by building enormous statues and monuments with battle- and victory-like themes has been apparent in many former socialist regimes. In these cases, art was largely ignored while a purely political message was promoted.

That is why once the political context changed in socialist regimes many memorials from the past period were forgotten. One of such examples is Hungary where numerous figures glorifying great socialist times were removed and placed in a huge statue park on the periphery of the town. However, despite the publicity given to visits to such a statue park it can be still claimed that these statues remain ‘under erasure.’⁶² When collected together in a statue park all these monuments are re-contextualized to communicate the message about the character of the regime which focused on building huge statues of communist heroes, comrades and thinkers. At the same time, original locations in parks where these monuments used to stand for decades are now empty for ordinary citizens. In my opinion, the void gains new and shifting meanings. Such

⁶¹ Young defines collected memories as many discrete memories that are gathered into common memorial spaces and assigned common meaning. Ibid, Preface XI

⁶² In his article Richard Esbenshade addresses issues of memory, history and national identity in postwar East Central Europe. Although he mostly focuses on the collective and national memory offered by two prominent dissident writers, the introduction of his article elaborates on the removal of sculptures of well Marx, Lenin, generic worker heroes and others explaining how empty pedestals contribute to their looming in the memories of local people who had grown used to them. See, R. S. Esbenshade,

decontextualization of monuments contributes that monuments from the communist times acquire new meanings about the meaningless of the past regime for visitors from Western European countries. At the same time, the removal of the monuments from their original locations could contribute, in my opinion, to the wider presence of those monuments in the memories of Hungarian citizens (particularly those living in disadvantaged positions now) rather than through their very physical presence. Those monuments may actually become an idealization of a time when people had social security.

A similar attempt to glorify the role of the state (or the statesman) was the Victory Arch⁶³ built in Baghdad in 1989 to commemorate the 'victory' in the Iraq-Iran war. The monument additionally glorifies Saddam Hussain and the role he had in liberating Iraq.⁶⁴ While the memorial site in Hungary emphasizes that socialist statues acquire new meanings in a different spatial ordering of a new park, the Victory Arch remains in its place as a witness to the time of Saddam Hussain⁶⁵ and the regime present in Iraq. One can argue that the role of these, once well-known sites, becomes displaced with the change of political context. Their appearance is charged with new meanings, which affect the process of remembering and forgetting the regimes in place regardless of whether the monument was physically removed.

"Remembering to Forget: Memory, History, National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe" *Representations*, V.0, Issue 49, 1995.

⁶³ The President's forearms and fists, sixteen meters in length burst out of the ground like gargantuan bronze tree-trunks and rise with their firmly grasped sword to an apex forty meters above the ground. War debris in the shape of five thousand Iranian helmets taken fresh from the battlefield are gathered up in two nets which are torn asunder at the base, scattering the helmets around the points at which the arms rise from the earth. S. Al-Khalil, *The Monument: Art, Vulgarly and Responsibility in Iraq*, Andre Deutsch, 1991, p. 3

⁶⁴ The role of this monument is particularly described by the previously described book from S. Al-Khalil, *The Monument: Art, Vulgarly and Responsibility in Iraq*, Andre Deutsch, 1991.

⁶⁵ Information obtain by a Senior Sky News Correspondent currently stationed in Baghdad in an informal interview in Dubrovnik, Croatia, May 2003.

At the same time, one can identify a similar process - taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the role of many monuments from socialist times has changed with the appearance of a new political system. Sutjeska⁶⁶ used to be a well-known World War II commemoration site in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the vicinity of the enormous Sutjeska monument depicting the passage through the liberated canyon one can observe a small statue of Draža Mihajlović. Draža Mihajlović was a leader of Serb nationalist Chetnik movement for the kingdom of Yugoslavia in World War II. The movement fought against the partisans and is now described as the movement which fought for Serb people. Although this statue is small and built under the trees it still points to the fact how the monument in Sutjeska acquired new meaning after the past war just like the Victory Arch or the statute park in Budapest. Sutjeska is now a site where the monument was erected to a man against whom the deceased buried at the site fought.⁶⁷

In these cases, political message of a memorial becomes yet another mechanism of exerting power over individual citizens as Foucault would claim due to the fact that imposing a new spatial ordering in the environment can contribute to exerting power and securing the position of the dominant regime. Although dominant political forces affected the building of monuments in the above mentioned examples it is clear that by acquiring new meaning memorials transcend the message even after political changes. In this process, however, it is important to analyze how those political

⁶⁶ Monument in Sutjeska (Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina) was built to commemorate 3,000 partisans who died trying to break the siege of German forces around the mountain of Sutjeska.

⁶⁷ Visit to Sutjeska was paid in the early summer last year. Although photos of the monument are attached to this work (*Figures 1 and 2*), I was not able to take a photograph of monument to Draža Mihajlović due to security concerns.

messages transform and change over time and how legacy of the former regimes affects the existence of monuments today.

Despite the clearly political message that the above memorials communicated to the visitors, the work of artists and their perception of the commemorated event can also greatly affect construction of meaning created around the commemoration sites. Not only can they affect construction of meaning, but they also contribute to the creation of new narratives and increasing public debates on the processes of public commemoration. Usually quoted example is the case of Maya Lin, the creator of the famous and controversial Vietnam memorial shows how the work of artists succeed in transmitting, or better to say, arousing debates about the Vietnam war.⁶⁸ This monument is built in black granite in the shape of the letter V. It opposed all previously built monuments that glorified the soldiers and hence caused many debates in the public at the time it was built. At the same time, the monument attracted numerous visitors who left objects and flowers near the monument.

Similarly the work of the Alfred Hrdlicka known as the *Monument against War and Fascism* or the 'street-washing Jew monument' which is located in central Vienna's Albertinaplatz further shows how the artistic worth can raise issues of political and historical significance. The monument is located in the street of Vienna and presents a Jew washing the street as a punishment.⁶⁹ It can be argued that the presence of the monument in the everyday context, i.e. Vienna Albertinaplatz, helped contextualizing the Holocaust events from a different perspective. Therefore, the role of these memorial sites needs to be considered as a very important one given the debates that arise around

⁶⁸ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, & the Politics of Remembering*

⁶⁹ J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, p. 104

the way in which they commemorate particular events. By raising debate, memorials contribute to the way in which social groups and, hence, the overall society will remember events they commemorate.

Such role of memorials in which they present an incitement to the public memory is particularly apparent through the counter-monuments that Young describes as “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being”⁷⁰. Just opposite of the traditionally conceived role of monuments, the counter-monuments remember only their own relationship to events by challenging the idea of monumentality⁷¹. An example of such a counter-monument is given through the so-called sinking monument, which was built to commemorate the Holocaust. The monument itself was built as a long pillar, which sunk every month until it finally disappeared in the ground. In the meantime, the site and the monument became a place in which numerous messages were communicated and written by citizens. By disappearing in the ground, this monument succeeded in pointing out the fragility and temporality of our memories. Its brazen existence spurred more discussion and raised more questions about the Holocaust and its meaning.

By doing so, this counter-monument (and counter-monuments in general) tend to avoid clearly spelled out political messages. They rather seem to reflect on the meaning of the event that an individual member of the society has by raising questions and by activating the thinking process about the event as we know it or as we remember it. That is how counter-monuments manage to create new meanings by distorting the dominant narratives and affect creation of new narratives around the site in question. In

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 27

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 31

that sense, their purpose is not to provide prescribed meaning for the site in question, but to provide the space that would initiate the reflection on the meaning of the memorial and the event it commemorates. In that sense, the role of art in my opinion is an important one given that the work of artists plays a significant role as to how monuments will be perceived and what narratives would be created around them.

As part of this thesis some commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be analyzed in order to see what messages are being communicated to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through commemoration sites and the influence of powerful political discourses and art in the commemoration sites. Additionally, the research would attempt to answer whether memorial sites present an incitement to public memory-at-work⁷² and if so, how that is being done. If commemoration sites do not challenge the public memory, but serve to justify the dominant narratives of powerful social groups it needs to be explored why that is happening and how could such processes be further explained. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyze new narratives and political messages that are transmitted thorough the Sarajevo Roses. It can be claimed that the Sarajevo Roses attempt to challenge the traditionally conceived perception of the monuments. When compared to other commemoration sites mentioned in this research, the Sarajevo Roses do not focus on transmitting prevalent messages of the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. As shell holes filled with red paint, they rather seem to emphasize their own relationship to events by challenging the idea of monumentality⁷³. However, before paying more attention to Sarajevo Roses it is necessary to analyze the

⁷² For the purposes of this work, public memory is defined as an imaginary set of narratives that affect explanation of series of events that have taken place in the past and also manage to shape up the opinion regarding current events in the society for a conception of the future.

⁷³ J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory : Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, p. 31

relation between memory and history and how the role of monuments are intertwined with these two concepts.

Monuments – Memory versus History

Having in mind that one of the greatest roles of memorials is to evoke memories on a particular historical event, the message memorials attempt to transmit also needs to be in line with historical interpretation(s). A particular historical event has caused the erection of a particular memorial with a task to commemorate the event, or the 'historical moment' for remembrance for the current and future generations of any particular society. Historical moment or the history refers to what is known as a science created in the 18th century. Such history tends to interpret events from the perspective of dominant groups claiming objectivity in representing 'truth' and implying progress, which means that all societies follow the same path towards modernity by applying the principles of rationality and progress.

On the other hand, memory as described in this thesis is considered to be a process of remembering, rather than a fixed meaning. Recollection of our past experiences in relation to a particular event are influenced and, in some cases, distorted by representations such as presentations and/or interpretations of that event by media, political discourses and other powerful social groups. For that reason, the field of memory is diverse and fluid, in the sense that everybody can remember events that happened in the past. However, despite its fluidity and proliferation of new meanings certain memories become privileged in relation to dominant history writing. Interestingly enough, one can also claim that in this process memory itself becomes a

construct, which can play an important role in how the meaning of a particular memorial sites is conceived.

In the past history was idealized as true and impartial. It means that it was often forgotten that history included accounts about the past, which perceived events from a particular perspective.⁷⁴ In that sense, the phenomenon of patriotism can serve as a good example which points to partiality in history as emphasized by Lowenthal. It is interesting to note that almost all history textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina speak about 'conquering other territories' and 'being assimilated by others' and never about *assimilating others* and *being conquered*. In that sense, one can quote Lowenthal stating that "meticulous objectivity is history's distinctive noble aim, and this aim can never be achieved."⁷⁵ Objectivity means that history would be able to provide a copy of what happened in the past. However, due to the process of selection, alternation and the invention⁷⁶ of new meanings, which are attached to events in the past, history becomes "a view, not a copy of what happened."⁷⁷

In this process of becoming a view, history also becomes something that ultimately means *more* than the past. In Lowenthal's words

History is *more* than the past because it deals not only with what took place back then, but with myriad consequences of events that go on unfolding beyond their participants' lifetimes. History is not just what happened at the time but the thoughts and feelings, hunches and hypotheses about that time generated by later hindsight – makes chaos into order.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ D. Lowenthal, *Past Is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 106

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 106

⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that Lowenthal compares history to heritage stating that history like heritage is scolded for swerving from the true past – selecting, altering, inventing. Therefore, just like heritage, history cannot help but be different from, as well as both less and more than, the actual past. Lowenthal, D., Ibid, p. 112

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 112

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 114/5

Having in mind the above stated it is clear that history is subjected to many influences. Consequently, in an attempt to make order out of a chaotic series of events historical narrative indeed becomes a view rather than a presentation of what happened. Additionally, being able to claim truth, history has been affected by power relations.

Consequently, what we observe is the history created by scientists and not the inviolable identity of their origin, but the dissension of other things.⁷⁹ In this case, one can claim that the historical relation between memory and history was such that history dominated the discourse. History froze the work of memory and acquired the shape of untransformed facts that bore the authoritative weight of truth. In that sense, counter-memory⁸⁰ offers the possibility to question the dominant discourse and power relations while unmasking the single, true, certain explanations and offering pluralism of true (un)certain explanations. Counter-memory presents a construct that offers transformation of history, offering it subjective plural identities.

Counter-memory creates a possibility to see the proliferation of new meanings coming from different perspectives, challenging what may have been perceived as the only possible view of the event. Therefore, counter-memory enables us to identify the complexity present in the process of remembering. Each of the narratives emerging is important, it provides a new insight which may contribute to the creation of a more complete perception of the past events. Even so, the counter-memory is always an ongoing process, which is continually being questioned and challenged.

⁷⁹ Bouchard, D. (Ed.) *Michael Foucault: Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michael Foucault*, Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 142

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 161

Counter-memory in that sense enables us to see alternatives and challenges to traditional views of history.⁸¹ One of the examples that offer an insight into new alternatives of historical discourse is Minh-ha's "Grandma Story" in which she puts strong emphasis on the oral dimension of storytelling in juxtaposition to written sources (that she also equates with Western sources). She writes about multiple storytelling in which "story and life merge, the story being as complex as life and life being as simple as a story."⁸² In her work, memory is life itself, it is not reduced to play a mere role of a representative of certain events in which the storyteller offers us his/her own interpretation. In her work memory and history are at play - memory is life, it is complex but its complexity enables us to see the uniqueness of life stories. The importance of the life story is not reduced to the narrative of the storyteller but becomes a narrative in itself in which 'truth' is revealed.

Additionally, the alternative relation between history and memory is possible to observe in Elisabeth Tonkin's book "Narrating Our Pasts". In this book, the author presents us case studies on oral history from Yorubaland in South West Nigeria, Benin and from a small polity in Liberia. She is concerned with the representation of pastness through the oral forms in contrast to the presentation of pastness in written records.⁸³ Not only does Tonkin enable us to see the shift in dynamics and a different perspective on the interaction between memory and history but she also shows us the ever-changing character of the sites of memory, whose character differs with new time frames and new audiences.

⁸¹ Davis and Starn suggest by using a term counter-memory that memory operates under the pressure of challenges and alternatives. Davis N.Z. & Starn R. "Introduction", *Representations*, (0): 26, 1989, p.2

⁸² Min ha T.T. (1989), Woman Native, Other Indiana University Press, p. 142

For that reason, it is possible to conclude that the relation between history and memory is dynamic and interdependent. Needless to say, this relation to a great extent enriches our view towards both history and memory and their abilities to shape dynamic discourses full of controversies and possibilities for alternative understanding of our past. For the purposes of this work, this work will also explore how this relationship between history and memory functions in commemoration sites, and what processes are taking place in commemorating particular historical events.

Memory affects all awareness about our past as “through recollection we recover consciousness of former events, distinguish yesterday from today, and confirm that we have experienced a past.”⁸⁴ Memory can be personal and collective, it has many forms that can confirm to our experience.⁸⁵ Memory is a construct, which can also affect the way in which history is written, regardless of the nature or the value of memorial knowledge. In that sense, their relation becomes an ambiguous one as history relies on memory and “extends and elaborates by interpreting relics and synthesizing reports from past eyewitnesses.”⁸⁶ According to Lowenthal, memory validates personal identity and history perpetuates collective self-awareness. On the one hand history is collective, while memory is individual. Historical knowledge endures, making it also less open to alteration than memory even though history is continually revised to take account of subsequent events and to make it comprehensible for new generations.

⁸³ E. Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: Social Construction of Oral History*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 3

⁸⁴ D. Lowenthal, *Past Is a Foreign Country*, p. 193

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 194-206

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 206

Davis and Starn argue that the relationship between history and memory today is based on emphasizing their interdependence⁸⁷. This interdependence between history and memory enables the creation of new discourses and alternative ways in which memory and history interact together in the public sphere.

It needs to be noted that Norra points out that today memory has become a site, where “memories converge, condense, conflict, and define relationship between past, present, and future...because we no longer live in a world suffused with memory of fully committed to overarching ideological narratives.”⁸⁸ Therefore, the public sphere bursts with the present converging, conflicting, intermingling narratives questioning dominant ideological narratives. That is why Huyssen argues that historiography has “grown more skeptical of nationalist framings of its subject matter, ... today’s critical memory cultures, go a long way to provide a welcome impetus for the writing of history in a new way and thus for guaranteeing a future of memory.”⁸⁹

For that reason, it needs to be concluded that the relation between history and memory is dynamic based on numerous interactions in the public sphere. New constructs of memory-work provide new incentives for writing and rewriting of historical discourse thus creating a possibility to reflect about the past. This relationship may also be explored at the commemoration sites where the historical discourse is presented through commemoration sites confronts memory work.

⁸⁷ N. Z. Davis.& R. Starn, “Introduction”, *Representations*, (0): 26, 1989, p. 5

⁸⁸ N. Z. Davis.& R. Starn, “Introduction”, *Representations*, (0): 26, 1989, p. 3

⁸⁹ A. Appadurai (Ed) *Globalization: A Special Issue of Public Culture*, Duke University Press, 2001, p. 36

Monuments as 'les lieux de memoire'

It can be claimed that monuments are *les lieux de memoire*,⁹⁰ sites between memory and history. They are located on the imaginary intersection in which memory and history of the modern nation state intertwine, merge and therefore affect creation of a new narrative, which attaches a new interpretation(s) to the site. These sites of memory "are created by a play of memory and history, an interaction of two factors that results in their reciprocal overdetermination."⁹¹ The first characteristic of the sites of memory is our will to remember. On the other hand, the intervention of history, time and change makes these sites hybrid and mutant. According to Norra, these sites exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis and the "endless recycling of their meaning."⁹²

In this capacity for metamorphosis, it is possible to observe the new relation between memory and history. The memory rises to the top of historical discourse, dominating, but not attempting to destroy history. Rather memory creates an alternative perception of events. As mentioned before, history was considered to offer explanations of events from a particular point of view. Such explanations, in modern nation states, were dominated by the hegemonic discourse of modernity, progress and rationality. Their goal was to ensure the perpetuation and maintenance of the national dream at all possible costs. On the other hand, memory is embedded in real life experiences, flexible and dynamic subjected to influence of anyone, anywhere enabling numerous proliferation of meanings which become a construct in itself. . Therefore, by being the

⁹⁰ P. Norra, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*", *Representations*, (26), 1989

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 19

⁹² Ibid, p. 19

embodiment of memory, the sites of memory or *lieux de memoire* can also transmit messages of subalterns, question the dominant narratives and historical continuity. The memory work has a central place at these sites as it “remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting”.⁹³ Therefore, it is possible to claim that commemoration sites become sites of memory as they enable constant re-thinking and contribute to the creation of new meanings in relation to the event they commemorate.

In commemoration sites as *lieux de memoire* history inevitably finds itself embedded in power relations transmitting the message of the most influential groups. This message becomes interwoven with the memory work of individuals (becoming in this way a part of collected memories that acquire collective meaning). Additionally, this will of individuals to remember past experience is also mingled with the intention of the society to preserve the historical moments for future generations. However, in this struggle it is necessary to find a way to deal with the history and our own memories – between the two constructs, i.e. it is necessary to find ‘meaning of working through the past’.⁹⁴ “Meaning of working through the past” calls upon the reconciliation between irreconcilable feelings about the past that are subdued and sublimated and inevitably present in the everyday life because of the inability to deal with the past.

For that reason, it is possible to claim that the process of memory-work at commemoration sites enables us to find a way of working through the past, thus contributing to the establishment of new discourses in the society. Memory seems to become a somehow publicly open process of commemoration, which may enable the

⁹³ Ibid

search for the meaning by working through the past. Similarly, Young claims that even the public debate that arouses around monument building contributes greatly to the reshaping of memory and of war experience. Additionally, Young⁹⁵ notes that erection of a monument can be deeply embedded and dependent on the existence of narratives in society. Therefore both monuments and the phenomenon of public memory can be seen as dynamic processes which can contribute to the coming to terms about the past, thereby enabling us (or society) to live with the past.

For that reason, this thesis will attempt to identify the ways in which commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina enable search for 'the meaning of working through the past' by trying to explore new narratives emerging at the commemoration sites and ways in which they create alternative discourses. The thesis will also attempt to elaborate whether and how these sites try to freeze meaning or create heterogeneous interpretations due to their various forms. In that sense attention will be paid to distinguishing monuments and counter-monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and how the latter destabilize meaning of other monuments.

Commemoration Sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina

As stipulated in the introductory part of this work, the main focus of this thesis will be to identify emerging narratives around the commemoration sites of the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Sarajevo siege in particular. This part of the thesis will present some commemoration sites present in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The thesis will try to analyze how the processes of clashing and intermingling historical

⁹⁴ T. W. Adorno, *Critical Models – Interventions and Catchwords*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 89

discourses and past experiences contribute to the creation of new narratives that give another meaning to the past war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular to the siege of Sarajevo. In that sense, the goal of the thesis is to look at “the acts of public commemoration in which the shifting discourses of history, personal memory and cultural memory converge.”⁹⁶ In addition to looking at acts of public commemoration to observe how shifting discourses converge, the thesis will also attempt to explore how they diverge. This will be done by looking at commemoration sites in an attempt to analyze how commemoration sites are subjected to the interpretation of our own memories. The role that the memories play at the commemoration sites is of extreme significance as memory-at-work-there confirms our past experiences, shapes them, adjusts and accommodates them and finally influences our new perceptions.

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is particularly worthwhile analyzing this recollection and the perception of the past experiences. Some of those experiences have become the ultimate symbol of the war (events of Srebrenica signify the suffering for Bosniaks, events in Vukovar in Croatia suffering for Croats or events in and around Sarajevo sufferings for Serbs) while other events seem to have been neglected. For example, siege of Sarajevo receives far less public attention nowadays and is very rarely a subject for media reporting.

Implicitly, this research would also attempt to explore why is this invisibility taking place - does it play witness to the inability of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society to reconcile the narratives of the three ethnic groups and create a closure for such war events. It is therefore necessary to analyze what is the meaning working through the

⁹⁵ J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory : Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*

⁹⁶ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic & the Politics of Remembering*

past for the particular groups in the society. One also needs to look at dynamics and context in which certain events get promoted, thus acquiring power of influencing the public sphere, while others remain displaced.

In that sense, it will be explored how discourses of dominant political groups play a significant role in commemoration sites. Some of memorials currently found in Bosnia and Herzegovina seem to promote the narratives of victimization among particular ethnic groups thereby perpetuating imaginary narrative of people that have been subjected to subordination in the past centuries.⁹⁷ It could be claimed that reinvention of the past focuses on recalling past experiences, on who we think we were despite the fact that the reality might be quite opposite to that perception.⁹⁸

Memorial becomes a tool for reproduction of messages that are in the interest of powerful, dominant groups represented by politicians, clergy, and others. Through our membership in religious, national or class groups⁹⁹ we are able to acquire and recall memories. This is apparent in memorials found in Foča, Vitez and other towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Foča, the Serb dominated town in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, where mass atrocities have taken place among Bosniak population there is a monument in the center of the town erected to commemorate '*Serb solidiers in their fights for Serb homeland*'. Similarly, memorials erected to commemorate Croat soldiers stipulate that Croat solidiers fell in defending their country. Interestingly enough, the inscription of the former is written in cyrillic identifying homeland as '*otadžbina*' (the Serbian variant of the local language) whereas the latter is written in Latin script and the terms '*domovinski rat*' and '*domovina*' (the Croatian variant of the local language) describe '*homeland*'

⁹⁷ See Figures 3 and 4.

⁹⁸ This is also mentioned by D. Lowenthal *Past Is a Foreign Country*.

and 'patriotic war'. In that sense, the shape, the script and the language point the necessity of memorial sites to emphasize differences and promote the tool for our identification with the memorial. The cross-shaped memorial, the particular script version and the language tell the person why she/he is different from his neighbor, promoting segregation and eliminating the need for rethinking such commemoration sites.

However, despite the recollection of memories affected by dominant narratives in the society, this thesis will attempt to explore how are commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina enable to create the possibility of working through the past. By analyzing commemoration sites, the emphasis of the research is placed on the language of remembering, creation of a new space for rethinking the process of remembering. This work then analyzes fluidity and distortions that appear in this space.

When looking at distortions, transformations and alterations in the process of remembering the war and the Sarajevo siege in particular, public remembrance of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be analyzed by applying the concept of screen as described by Sturken.¹⁰⁰ According to this author, the concept of screen is considered to project a perception but is also an object that hides something from the view, which means that one needs to search for the hidden, suppressed meaning of what seems to be obviously in front of us. In that sense, the concept of screen is taken from Freud¹⁰¹ - it provides one with a possibility to analyze the processes that are hidden behind what seems to be so obvious to us. For that reason, it could be claimed that commemoration

⁹⁹ J.E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, p. 6

¹⁰⁰ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, & the Politics of Remembering*, p. 163

¹⁰¹ S. Freud, *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1975.

sites become places that project the message of current public opinion. However, they also serve as sites in which the historical events that society is not capable of reconciling become ignored and forgotten. In that sense, it needs to be explored what kind of new meanings could be identified when analyzing the Sarajevo Roses through the concept of screen.

Although the memory-work remains largely individual¹⁰² it can be argued that the same processes of remembering take place at the commemoration sites where memories are recollected in order and formulated in such a way as to present a coherent whole for social groups. In that sense, these processes¹⁰³ can be adjusted by any group be they families, political parties, ethnic groups or survivors' associations, etc. As Lowenthal claims, "we need other people's memories both to confirm our own and to give them endurance and they are therefore continually supplemented by those of others."¹⁰⁴ In that sense, the 'collected memories' acquire the collective meaning applicable for all, which can then also be subjected to interpretation by all. The process of acquiring collective meaning is affected by the presence of memories, which become so powerful to become a part of collective meaning.

The influence of history, media, political forces and other dominant social groups can therefore affect the collective meaning, but at the same time each one of these groups can influence alterations in that meaning. The role of the media is particularly important in that sense, given that media can communicate messages of all persons that consider that their voice needs to be heard. However, in addition to

¹⁰² Lowenthal elaborates how the memory-work is restricted to an individual, who cannot share his/her memory work unless his/her memories are recalled and interpreted by that very individual. D. Lowenthal *Past Is a Foreign Country*

¹⁰³ M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

promotion of certain groups, their suppression can as well affect these processes and contribute to creation of a distorted perception of an event. For that reason, it can be claimed that commemoration sites enable presence of narratives at one place simultaneously. Therefore, they can contribute to further recollection of memories and creation of new meaning as stipulated in previous paragraphs. Some events continue being remembered, while the others will likely be forgotten and displaced.

What are the narratives that current citizens of Sarajevo create around the Roses through their memory of the events that had taken place in Sarajevo? How is public memory on the war in Sarajevo reshaped through the Roses? What are the “textures of memory” that are subtly hidden from our immediate view and ability of perception? These issues will be explored in the course of this research. However, before turning to that issue it is necessary to explore one of the most dominant commemoration sites, memorial in Srebrenica and the Kovači memorial located in Sarajevo.

Commemoration Sites in Srebrenica and Kovači

Memorial at Srebrenica – Srebrenica is a small town in Eastern Bosnia. During the war it was surrounded by forces of Republika Srpska and in 1994 United Nations proclaimed this area a Safe Zone, meaning that the citizens of this town would be guaranteed protection by the UN Protection Forces. However, in July 1995 the forces of Republika Srpska entered the city and before the eyes of the UN took hostage unarmed civilians. It is currently estimated that there are 7,500 missing men (ages 15-60) whose bodies have only recently started being exhumed. It is assumed that a large

¹⁰⁴ D. Lowenthal, *Past Is a Foreign Country*, p. 196

majority of those missing have been murdered. Around 2,500 persons from this area have been exhumed and the DNA identification process is ongoing. Women and children were forcibly expelled from that area to northern parts of Bosnia. The place is often referred to as the Holocaust site of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to the Dayton Peace Agreement the city is located on the territory of Republika Srpska. Despite many political, security and other problems faced by returnees in the town and the slow rate of return, the survivors of Srebrenica have initiated the process of building a memorial complex on the site where the mass murder took place. The members of this association offer the following the description of what the visitor should see at this site.¹⁰⁵ The aim is that

When this foreigner comes back to Potočari (name of the site) he must, instead of the cornfield, see ten thousand white marble tombstones. He has to lose his breath before this sight. He has to enter the building of the Memorial complex, to see in the cinema hall in order to see a documentary on genocide. He has to visit the photo gallery and see the photographs that testify about atrocities committed. He has to visit the archive and see the documents that testify about cowardice, indifference, conspiracy, complicity and prejudices of the UN Protection Forces members and other international organization from the democratic and human part of the world. This foreigner must go back to his/her own home country and tell what he saw in Bosnia, in Potočari near Srebrenica. This site has to make him think. He has to understand what took place here. He has to understand who was who. This site must be a symbol of what happened there just as Jasenovac (major place of WW II atrocities in Croatia), Auschwitz and other similar places. So that it is never forgotten. That is when we will cope easier with pain. We will live easier with our neighbors and with ourselves.”

The High Representative expressed his hope that the “emerging memorial will be a beacon for all those, who remember this day in two words - never again” during the speech marking the 6th anniversary of the event. It was the High Representative who

¹⁰⁵ The text particularly refers to the foreigner in this publication. Foreigner to them is seen as the representative of the EU who denied the genocide in Srebrenica for a long time.

designated the specific boundaries of the Potočari site in October 2000 for the burial and commemoration of the victims of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre¹⁰⁶. In order to organize and focus the development of the site, the Foundation for the Srebrenica/Potočari Memorial and Cemetery was created and registered¹⁰⁷. The Memorial Foundation Governing Board decided on the design and layout of the designated land in Potočari and two burial ceremonies have already taken place in the course of the past year. The funds for the memorial have been raised by various donors such as embassies. Even the telecom company got engaged in a very well organized campaign so that citizens could donate the money to the memorial complex by simply placing a call from their phone. The high-tech technology played a role to the commemoration practices as well. Around one thousand people (989 is the current figure) have been buried in the past years in two separate ceremonies that could be mostly described as religious based.

The Memorial Complex was opened in the fall of 2003 and Bill Clinton, the former president of the United States, was invited to speak as the honorary speaker. He spoke with the Bosniak member of the BiH presidency and a 19-year-old girl who was left without both parents and two younger siblings when she was only ten. Currently, it is expected that additional 120 identified bodies¹⁰⁸ will be buried in the beginning of the spring.¹⁰⁹

It needs to be noted that the process of memorial building has mostly been driven by the women's association of the Srebrenica survivors. The international community expresses a great concern for the memorial in Potočari and high-ranking

¹⁰⁶ Office of the High Representative, 19th Report of the High Representative to the Secretary General of the UN (24 February – 11 June 2001), Sarajevo, 2001.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ *Dnevni Avaz* reported on this issue on 27 February 2004.

representatives of the international community always attended burial ceremonies. At the same time, some of the former nationalist politicians who were in power when the Srebrenica massacre took place showed no interest in even visiting this site.

Memorial Mezarlik at Kovači - Graveyards for fallen soldiers can be found in almost all towns throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina for all three ethnic groups. The largest number of fallen Bosniak soldiers was buried at Kovači near Sarajevo (around 1.500).¹¹⁰ At this site, one also finds graveyards of soldiers from the Ottoman times. The Cantonal Assembly of the city of Sarajevo¹¹¹ approved the Decision to build a *şehid* memorial complex at Kovači which should be a memorial complex devoted to all 'defenders' of a free Bosnia and Herzegovina. The memorial complex should include *nişans, mescid, turbe, teki*, amphitheater and the museum. The complex should be built in 11 phases and according to the words of the authors "experience, one should undergo, needs to inspire the spirituality of the visitor and needs to guide him to conceive the God and to make his belief towards One Truth stronger."

On the other hand, the official from the Fund for Protection and Conservation of Cemeteries of Fallen soldiers in Sarajevo found the architect's plan very problematic. He described it as a '*conspiracy against Islam*' as the current plan to build the memorial complex seems to, in his opinion, clearly contradict traditional Sunni Muslim traditions.¹¹² The Fund official identified many insufficiencies in the plan of the memorial complex and claimed that the plan itself should undergo the administrative

¹⁰⁹ See Figures 6, 7 and 8.

¹¹⁰ It needs to be noted that the first *şehid mezarlik* in the territory of the Republika Srpska was built on 20 July 2003. Although the memorial contains inscription for 314 killed civilians it also contains the names of 11 soldiers from the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Dnevni Avaz*, February 26, 2004.

¹¹¹ The Canton is the administrative unit in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is equal to *ilce* in Turkish.

¹¹² See Figure 9.

procedures again. The fact is further complicated that the building of memorial center was supported by the prominent and at that time leading party among Bosniaks which is now in opposition in the parliament and that it seems that the Foundation that is in charge of this project opposed it from the very beginning.

However, despite the controversies surrounding the Kovači memorial complex, its status changed after the death of the first president of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović who was buried there. Hundreds and hundreds of people visit his grave and an honorary guard secures his grave. Plans on how to design the commemoration site for Alija Izetbegović have already emerged.

These two commemoration sites have been selected because of their prominence in the public sphere. Much attention has been paid to these two issues including extensive campaigning such as exhibiting posters, billboards in the streets and using a telecom company. I have also noted the advertisement from the telecom company that interested citizens can now donate funds for construction of the Kovači memorial (in a manner similar to Srebrenica last year) by placing phone calls to a particular number again.

Both of these sites commemorate human loss, which can be compared in several ways. Both commemoration sites are built to commemorate Bosniak men. Srebrenica memorial is built to commemorate atrocities committed against unarmed men in the former UN protection zone, while Kovači emphasize the defense war fought to defend Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, both of these contain Islamic-

related elements in their construction and are frequently visited by survivors, family members and even more so in the case of Potočari.¹¹³

On the other hand, Potočari memorial is built with the support from the survivors and the international community, while building of the Kovači commemoration sites is a process driven by local authorities. Each anniversary of the Potočari massacre is commemorated in attendance of high-level representatives of the international community and thousands of people¹¹⁴ who come to mourn for their relatives or friends. On the other hand, Kovači memorial has only received huge media coverage during the burial of Alija Izetbegović.

As mentioned before, one may argue that both commemoration sites are erected to commemorate the loss of Bosniaks albeit from different perspectives. The Potočari memorial commemorates enormous human loss of civilians at the site and the inscription at the monument carries the simple message of the *reis* 'may Srebrenica happen to no one, never and nowhere.'¹¹⁵ In this site, local politicians emphasize the need to punish the perpetrators for atrocities committed in Potočari. On the other hand, Kovači commemoration site is built to commemorate the Islamic component of the soldiers who died fighting to defend Bosnia and Herzegovina from aggression. It needs to be noted that despite the emphasis on Islam there are several non-Muslim soldiers buried in Kovači.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Many women from Srebrenica say that at least after the burial their family members cannot be placed in the category of missing persons any longer. Their graves are identified and they know where to come and pray for them.

¹¹⁴ It is estimated that approximately 10.000 – 15.000 attend the annual commemorations in Potočari every year although some estimates go as far to estimate 20.000.

¹¹⁵ See Figure 7.

¹¹⁶ Interview with the Cantonal Fund official, late 2002.

Due to their prominence in the public both of these sites emphasize that the war has become a symbol of suffering of Bosniaks during the past war. Srebrenica and Potočari emphasize the past exodus and continuation of that suffering today by attempts of survivors to help identify mass graves and missing bodies. Srebrenica is a symbol of the failure of the international community to stop the mass killings in this place and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in general. The only objects one can find in Srebrenica are *musala*, monuments and tombstones. Although there will be a memorial complex built in Srebrenica,¹¹⁷ this simplicity strikes a visitor who is left to think about ordinary people who lost their lives there. On the other hand, Kovači presents us with the heroic image of the brave Muslim soldier who has fought to defend the country during the ruthless aggression. His devotion to God and the home country makes him ready to defend his countrymen from the evil attacking the country.

However, what both of these sites tend to displace are the narratives about the lives of the deceased, wounded and displaced in the urban areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They do not focus on the sufferings one underwent during the war, killings in the streets and years of deprivation. It seems as though both Kovači and Potočari are becoming a frozen symbol of a time that is behind us and should be commemorated. On the other hand, the question remains how much do these sites manage to enable us to work through our past. It is clear that they remind us of the past by projecting particular messages about the war and about the need to discuss the war but it is hard to tell how will they enable us to live with our past. Srebrenica emphasizes patience or *sabur* of survivors, the need for others to acknowledge sufferings while Kovači points to the need

¹¹⁷ Memorial complex will be built in the premises of the former aluminium factory where people were killed.

to remember the aggression and those who fought on our side and were killed, but never killed for the just cause.

However, in order to see how is the war described in the urban areas it is necessary to turn to the issue of the Sarajevo Roses in order to see what are the messages they project and what they tell us about the past war in Bosnia and Herzeogovina.

Chapter 3

Sarajevo Roses - Filling Shell Holes with the Red Paint¹¹⁸

This chapter will further elaborate on the phenomenon of the so-called Sarajevo Roses that are present throughout the city of Sarajevo. It will explore issues that the presence of Sarajevo Roses raises about the past war and will also present how local officials explain the Roses nine years after the war. Additionally, this chapter aims to explore how the creator perceives the Roses in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As mentioned before, the Sarajevo siege does not have a prominent role in news reports today. The media usually report on the issue in April when the siege began in 1992. From time to time, brief information on erection of commemoration plates for killed civilians throughout the town can be noted and seen in the newspapers. On the other hand, emphasis in media is placed on Sarajevo as a cultural center, capitol of Bosnia and Herzegovina, praised for multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism. At the same time, news tends to ignore the surprisingly low figures of Bosnian Serbs who return to their pre-war residences and the fact that Sarajevo is an administratively divided city¹¹⁹.

On the other hand, towns like Tuzla commemorate shelling during the war and commemoration events tend to be given more prominence than the Sarajevo ones. Although one can identify numerous small-scale commemorations throughout Sarajevo this press coverage is mainly presented in the form of information in the newspapers and has rarely been the subject of reports in big TV stations. However, one can find no coverage on the subject of Sarajevo Roses, their existence or their character.

¹¹⁸ See *Figure 10*.

¹¹⁹ Although the downtown and the majority of the town belongs to Federation, certain settlements such as Dobrinja and outskirts of the town are bordering with the Republika Srpska. In some instances, two buildings across the streets are located in two Entities.

“Sarajevo Roses”, filling shell holes with the red paint

It is really difficult to establish when the Sarajevo Roses appeared for the first time. It seems that they suddenly became a part of the post-war city, which was heavily destroyed during the longest siege of any European town. It should be noted that an estimated 100.000 shells landed in Sarajevo during the siege from 1992 – 1995. Estimates also reveal that during that time around 30.000 people were injured and, of them 5.000 were children. The siege that lasted for almost a thousand days left the majority of urban infrastructure destroyed and caused a large percentage of the domicile population to leave Sarajevo for the third countries throughout the world. However, despite the hardships survived during the siege it was said that hope had never left the city of Sarajevo – cultural and entertainment festivals were initiated during the siege, supported by many international journalists; artists voiced their concerns in an attempt to call for peace; children went to schools organized in basements of large apartment buildings, etc.

Regardless of the numerous events organized to oppose the horrors of the war, the signs of destruction were apparent in Sarajevo. Almost ten years after the war, numerous buildings still remain unreconstructed; despite the fact that large amounts of money were invested in the reconstruction of the main pedestrian streets and other major public and apartment buildings. If one is passing the beautifully reconstructed buildings of the Central Bank in Sarajevo one is faced with ruins stretching along the street.¹²⁰ The scene seems as though the buildings in the destroyed city are speaking for themselves,

¹²⁰ See Figure 11.

signs of a dreadful time, remains that become a reminder of the events that had taken place.

In such an environment carrying the apparent signs of loss and destruction, one can also observe a Sarajevo Rose – the phenomenon of filling/painting shell holes with the bright red paint. Together with many buildings, which remain in urgent need of construction, the function of the Roses seems to be a reminder about the recent past although the city has dynamically changed over the course of last years.

An ordinary by-passer can assume that the Roses indicate the sites where shells landed, mark locations of explosion and places where citizens of Sarajevo were most likely killed. However, no written comments accompany the sites so making any conclusions on the nature of the sites and the messages they communicate can be rather amorphous and may lead to asking more questions than actually offering answers. The Sarajevo Roses can mostly be spotted along the main streets of Sarajevo, although to the ordinary citizen there seems to be no order to how and where they are located. Some of the Roses can be found near the main State Hospital, near the Holiday Inn hotel (during the war also known as the Sarajevo sniper alley), or in residential parts of the town.

It needs to be noted that only the traces of shells which landed on the ground were painted, while such signs cannot be identified on the nearby residential or public buildings. However, many buildings or city walls carry the memorial plaques with what appears to be an almost identical message throughout Sarajevo that reads: *"On this site, Serbian criminals (date) have killed (indicates the number) citizens for Sarajevo."*¹²¹ At the same time, it is possible to see nameplates with the names of killed students and

¹²¹ See Figure 12.

teachers¹²² installed in front of schools, universities, post offices or other public companies. Nameplates are made in a uniform manner – golden shiny plate with the name of the person, year of birth and death. Below the name of those persons who received awards for heroism during the wartime, one can see a small sign representing the lily.¹²³ In some cases, one can find an additional message just stipulating that the people whose names are mentioned lost their lives during the aggression by Serbian forces in 1992- 1995.¹²⁴

As opposed to these traces that speak about the commemoration of those who have been associated in some way with the institutions that commemorate them, the Sarajevo Roses remain a quiet symbol of the events during the siege. Their appearance offers no explanation as to when they appeared. They just seemed to have arrived and remained as part of Sarajevo. Although at first, these sites drew notice due to their red bright color and the recent memories of the war, their visibility was soon replaced with increased visibility of newly reconstructed buildings that seemed to have gained more attention by the ordinary passersby.

It is difficult to conclude whether some of the sites, where Sarajevo Roses were previously located, have been removed due to reparation of sidewalks. Official authorities claim that this never happened. Therefore, citizens can just rely on their not too consistent memory to recall whether some of the Roses used to be there or not. This phenomenon along with additional ‘mysteries’ that seem to accompany the Roses makes them a subject worthwhile analyzing.

¹²² See *Figure 13*.

¹²³ Golden lily was the highest award for heroism in the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina under control of Army of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹²⁴ See *Figures 14 and 15*.

Being located on the ground, it remains unclear to an ordinary by-passer who created the Roses and how or when they were installed on the ground. There are no messages accompanying the Roses, just their bare presence of what one can identify as a red sign that is most likely filling out the crack of the explosion. Apparently, such sign can be associated with the war and make one conclude that the red hole represents the site where a shell had landed. If the Rose gets noticed and becomes a subject of contemplation, one can be left there analyzing as to what the Rose represents, what it tells about the war, about the deceased, about the survivors and the city itself. That is why it can be claimed that the Sarajevo Roses communicate their message quietly, in a very subtle manner.

Subtle Language of the Sarajevo Roses

Having in mind that the Roses carry no specific messages and that little attention is provided to them in the public discourse, it could be claimed that their very presence affects the process of creation of individual memories that can easily disrupt dominant narratives. It could be stated that the Roses “assert individual narratives, strands of cultural memory that disrupt historical narratives. They resist history precisely through their obscurity, their refusal to yield specific meanings.”¹²⁵

Therefore, numerous questions could be raised regarding what appears to be a street-symbol and numerous responses could be received with each one of them being authentic and truthful. Some Roses currently show signs of decay as the bright red color

¹²⁵ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic & the Politics of Remembering*, p. 176

disappeared from many¹²⁶ and they often become puddles during rainy days. Despite this, it can be argued that the particularity and uniqueness of the Roses described above makes them a valuable tool in analyzing the accounts that arise around the memory of war in Sarajevo. Sarajevo Roses offer, in my opinion, enormous potential in explorations of 'textures of memory' – consistencies and contradictions in the creation of collective meanings. Having in mind the above stated, it could be claimed that the Roses allow us to reflect on our memory as "instead of allowing the pasts to rigidify in its monumental forms, we [would] vivify memory through the memory-work itself – whereby events, their recollection, and the role monuments play in our lives remain animate never completed."¹²⁷

In that sense, the Roses become the sites, at which it is possible to explore the relation between history and memory, how history and memory converge at the sites where the Sarajevo Roses are located, where in Lowenthal's terms boundaries between memory and history become shadowy.¹²⁸ Memory is inescapable and prima-facie indubitable; history is contingent and empirically testable. Events of historical importance tend to be a subject of public discussion. Therefore, it is interesting to question how memories arising around the Roses blur this borderline between history and memory into a very sensitive, almost an invisible one in which it is hard to distinguish between history and our own memory.

Therefore, it could also be argued that the 'concept of screen' could be applied in the analysis of the Sarajevo Roses. Concept of screen defines the projection of our past experience so that their presence is invisible to us, but still affects the way in which

¹²⁶ See Figure 16.

¹²⁷ J. E. Young, J.E. (1993) *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meanings*, p.15

we remember. At the same time, it needs to be analyzed how the Sarajevo Roses speak about the 'democratization of the dead' elaborated by Koselleck, and how can accounts surrounding the Sarajevo Roses be compared to other commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It needs to be noted that even the name of the Sarajevo Rose can become a subject of analysis. The rose denotes a flower which in many cultures is identified with feelings of love, and could be challenged with the Sarajevo Rose whose red color seems to be the only indicator of a possible relation to the rose as the association with affectionate feelings of love. At the same time, the red can also signify blood, strong feelings of hatred, victory or heroism. Additionally, symbolism of the shape can be the subject of further analysis, which could be contradicted with the uneven shape of the Sarajevo Rose spreading not as a circle but usually in one direction.

In addition to the symbolism that the name of the Sarajevo Rose can signify, locations and temporality of the Roses are also topics important in the analysis of war memories. As stipulated previously, the Roses are mostly located in the most traversed streets of Sarajevo which secures them the possibility of being noticed by the greatest number of people.¹²⁹ On the other hand, their positioning on the ground without particular messages around them enables them to be a part of everyday life of anyone living in Sarajevo.

The temporality of being present 'here-all-the-time' can cause memory to fluctuate at any time during the day eliminating hence the need for one to go visit any institutionalized types of imposed remembrance such as museums. To be prepared for

¹²⁸ D. Lowenthal, *Past Is a Foreign Country*, p. 187

¹²⁹ See Figure 16.

the narrative that the Rose offers –one only needs to look down and notice the Rose – no preparation is needed for the messages that the Rose provides. This is further exaggerated by the fact that the location of the Roses cannot be foreseen by an ordinary by-passer thus increasing the potential of memory work at any site. The inability to assess where the location of the next Rose can also stimulate memory work and cause raising questions at any time of the day to the relation of the Rose, to its location, the city and its citizens to the recent war.

Recently, one of the Roses has been mentioned in the media, i. e. the Rose that was installed on the site where the Markale (market place in Sarajevo) massacre took place during the war will be replaced by a monument to the victims. However, despite my numerous calls I was not able to get more information from the Cantonal official, who was not available to provide information to me.

However, the question that arises is whether the Sarajevo Roses are more an impediment rather than an incitement to public memory.¹³⁰ The question needs to be asked given the ignorance of the media in relation to the Sarajevo siege and the neglect of the Sarajevo siege in public spheres over the past couple of years. This is particularly the case given the difficulty with which the multi-ethnic citizenry of the city of Sarajevo is left to cope with the history of siege as the capitol of Bosnia and Herzegovina that needs to be considered as the town which welcomes all three ethnic groups. The memories of war are confronted with conflicting accounts of Serbs who claim that siege

¹³⁰ J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, p. 27

had never happened.¹³¹ The need to remember the siege seems to be confronted with the need to reconcile these conflicting accounts and live peacefully.

The Roses project and hide their message at the same time, simultaneously disturbing the present narratives surrounding these commemoration sites and remembrance of the 1992-1995 war, allowing the space for re-thinking about the war. It therefore needs to be explored whether the Roses could be seen as counter-monuments or commemoration sites whose presence affects the way in which the memories of war and war experience would be reassessed. Thus, it would be worth to analyze whether the Roses are “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being.”¹³² That means that it is necessary to explore whether and to what extent the Roses manage to challenge the people to a discussion about the war, how they affect the memories of war, how the Roses enable the search for the meaning in working through the past.

Sturken claims that counter-monuments emphasize the temporality of our experience and invite the existing public debates to be raised around them. It could be claimed that the Roses manage to successfully pose the questions about the war even though they seem to have been placed in a vacuum and politicians have paid little attention to them. In the course of this research, it needs to be explored whether and how the Roses emphasize the temporality of the experience of an ordinary citizen.

¹³¹ At the trial in Hague, Milošević “presented the witness with his theory that there was no siege of Sarajevo. Serbs were fighting from the areas they inhabited, while Muslims fought from their territory. Milošević presented the witness with his theory that there was no siege of Sarajevo. Serbs were fighting from the areas they inhabited, while Muslims fought from their territory.” Coalition for International Justice UN Official Says Serbian Support Made Sarajevo Siege Possible, 2003 URL link: <http://www.cij.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewReport&reportID=449&tribunalID=1>

¹³² J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory : Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, p. 27

Additionally, this work will also attempt to analyze accounts emerging around the Sarajevo Roses in order to see whether they could be “ultimately a process of legitimation” having in mind that “the memorial lies at the center of a struggle between narratives.”¹³³ When compared to other memorial sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular to the commemoration sites in Potočari and Kovači, the Roses stand out in several aspects. The Roses seem to offer no initially imposed meaning except for the association that the shell had landed on the ground. On the other hand, the idea to build memorial complex in Kovači is to commemorate deceased soldiers and defense war while the Potočari memorial symbolizes testimony of the genocide and the failure of the international community to stop the mass killings in Srebrenica.

At the same time, the Roses commemorating the sites where shells landed places therefore the emphasis on individuals as members of civil society as opposed to the ‘*šehid mezarlik*’ in Kovači where emphasis is placed on Islamic elements and aggression carried out by the Bosnian Serb forces. Together with other commemoration sites, the Sarajevo Roses commemorate war events although there are no official commemoration ceremonies as it was presented in the first chapter. Therefore the commemoration of the Roses receives much less media attention when compared to other commemoration sites. That is why it could be argued that the Roses may not necessarily represent, what I would call, the institutionalized signs of remembrance that are possible to observe in the cases of Potočari and Kovači.

One might argue that the reasoning behind this is that the Roses do not commemorate the soldiers or the incomparable loss of human life such is the case of

¹³³ M. Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, & the Politics of Remembering*, p. 177

Srebrenica, but rather now just present isolated sites of the capitol of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is rushing towards a brighter future and hence, has no time to deal with its past. Consequently, that might lead to the lesser involvement of the official authorities from the urban planning offices.

Official Account

According to the official sources of the Cantonal Office for Urban Planning and Development,¹³⁴ the Canton approved the project to fill the shell holes with red paint after being approached by a group of citizens. However, due to the large number of shells that landed during three years and the lack of funds that that were possible to allocate from the Cantonal budget, a criterion was created to mark only those sites where more than three people were killed. It is estimated that around 100.000 shells landed on Sarajevo during the 1992-1995 war and approximately a hundred spots were chosen along the main streets and they remain today.

The canton official did not know whether the group of citizens initiating the project were the survivors, family members of the deceased or what was their affiliation. The group was identified as the association of citizens, but additional details were unknown to the cantonal official. I was advised to get in touch with the professor from the Faculty of Architecture Nedžad Kurto, who supposedly possessed more information on the origin of the Roses. Although the officials of Sarajevo Canton recognized the need to repair the Roses, the reconstruction of these sites cannot take place due to, as I was told, the lack of funds.

¹³⁴ Interview conducted in late 2002. Notes in the possession of the author.

It needs to be noted that nine years after the siege of Sarajevo it was almost impossible to obtain more information on the origin of the Sarajevo Roses from the local authorities. Having in mind that around 30.000 Sarajevans were hurt in the course of three years, (one of four Sarajevans was either wounded or killed during the siege)¹³⁵ it remains a mystery to explain how the history surrounding the erection of the Roses is missing in public administration offices. The event itself took place eight years ago but public officials did not remember the causes of this process, i.e. who and why initiated the process. The most difficult thing to believe was the fact that public officials were not even able to point to the documents I would need to search for.

Nedžad Kurto – the Creator of the Roses

As mentioned in the statements of cantonal officials, Nedžad Kurto is considered to have initiated the process of marking the sites and installing the Roses where the shells had landed. He works as a professor of esthetics and history of architecture at the University of Sarajevo. In the interview¹³⁶ with him, professor Kurto described how he came to the idea to create the Roses. He never mentioned any associations as opposed to the cantonal officials who were referring mostly to the group of citizens. Even in responding on the involvement of any associations his response was very vague. Therefore, the memory and elaboration of the sites referred only to individual memory of professor Kurto and his own insights that led him to propose the creation of these commemoration sites.

¹³⁵ F. Šišić et al., *Ratna hirurgija: za studente medicine i stomatologije*, Institut za naučno-istraživački rad i razvoj Kliničkog centra Univerziteta, Sarajevo, 2001.

In words of Nedžad Kurto, the idea to create the Sarajevo Roses came from the notion of collective suffering. In his opinion, every site in Sarajevo presented suffering of the people who had decided to stay in Sarajevo and suffering was the integral part of everyone's life during the siege of Sarajevo. Lives of the people in Sarajevo were committed to waiting in queues for bread or water on a daily basis. Therefore, the Sarajevo Roses presented not only commemoration to those that died, but also to all of those who devoted their lives to the suffering of living in Sarajevo. In that sense, the Sarajevo Roses seem to commemorate the siege, human suffering and, even more importantly, helplessness to do anything to stop any suffering while keeping the concrete traces of the death.

Nedžad Kurto elaborated that the intent of the Sarajevo Roses was to present the drama of everyday life during the war, the drama of people who were quietly standing in lines waiting for bread or water when a shell would explode . He clearly wanted to avoid any personalization of any particular sites. His intention was that the Sarajevo Roses sites become signs that talk about all individuals living in Sarajevo during the siege. They were not supposed to be the commemoration to only those who were wounded or killed at these sites. Initially, professor Kurto wanted to use some kind of special stone red glue so that red traces filling the shell holes become the integral part of the ground by sticking in the asphalt. He stated that it was possible to observe that many of these red traces were broken today as the special rock glue was never ordered and applied.

In addition to using special rock glue, the initial idea was to surround the red traces with signs of gray feet marking the number of people that died in a particular site.

¹³⁶ Interview conducted in the spring of 2003.

These feet were then supposed to show the extended effect of the site with the purpose of making the whole scene more dramatic. In his description of the initial idea, Nedžad Kurto particularly emphasized the role of the light, which was to attract the attention of the passersby. However, he elaborated that although local officials had welcomed his ideas they did not ensure that the Roses are created as they were initially designed and therefore, the Sarajevo Roses remained without any additional marks today.

The idea to create the Roses appeared to Nedžad Kurto after the massacre that took place in the Markale market place in February 1994. It is important to note that while telling this Kurto never referred to the actual year but rather referred to the event and to his memories of that site. Although he was not personally present when the shell landed and killed around fifty people in that site, he noted how he saw all personal belongings left and gathered in one spot by the market employees. This scene showed him how the people who were killed in this site devoted their personal lives¹³⁷ to the place and context in which they lived. This devotion and reduction of human life to suffering only gave Nedžad Kurto the idea that these sites should be commemorated in order to remember everyone that lived at that particular time in Sarajevo.

Nedžad Kurto explained that he did not want to make some grandiose, soc-realistic monument that would talk about the place. He was rather willing to show how explosions¹³⁸ happened on the *ground*, while people were laying on the *ground* or near it, trying to hide from the shell that had landed on the *ground*. Therefore, the ground in Kurto's perception had a very symbolic meaning and the commemoration needed to be

¹³⁷ During the interview he referred to the term as 'people devoted their identities' '*ljudi su posvetili svoj idenitet*', in which he mostly referred to their personal lives and therefore the term identity was replaced with personal lives.

¹³⁸ Kurto avoided the term 'explosions' and just referred to this event as 'this' or '*ovo*'

located on the ground. However, the role of light in attracting attention of the passersby to the ground would be essential in this process according to Kurto.

In the opinion of Kurto, the Roses are to be considered as having documentary significance, therefore they can disappear at any point as it is not necessary to maintain them regularly. He elaborated how the intention of the Sarajevo Roses was not to be overly stimulating and too much of a monument. Kurto rather emphasized that the intention was to attract, in a discrete manner, the attention of those who already knew what these sites are about and Roses should be noticed by individuals at random.

Therefore, everyone discovers Roses at the different point in time. I personally discovered the Roses back in 1996 when I noticed one of them in the street opposite of the Presidency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The shock of the first experience and understanding that the traces of an explosion were marked resulted in some sort of ambivalent feeling that was followed with the conscious intent to find more similar sites. In the beginning the sites also served to explain and communicate to visitors to Sarajevo our own story about the war experience.

At the same time, I was told by Nedžad Kurto that the Roses should communicate to Bosnians¹³⁹ and be a warning that Bosnians should be less trustworthy in their relationships to others. Although he did not specify whom these others were, one could imply that Kurto was referring to the members of two other dominant groups, i.e. Croats and Serbs. Therefore, it could be implied that the Roses presented specific media created to be part of everyday life. Kurto wanted to create them in the simplistic form

¹³⁹ Prior to the war, the term Bosnians was used to describe all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless to the ethnic group they belonged to. Today, however, the term is mostly disliked by the Bosnian Croat and Serb nationalist parties as it, in their opinion, points to the assimilation of these two ethnic groups.

without the need to glorify anything but to emphasize the horror of explosion, the singularity of the event and the human suffering which cannot be confronted by traditional means.

As seen the origin of the Roses, as presented by the local officials, was initiated to commemorate events and everything that happened to *citizens of Sarajevo*. However, the origins of the Roses itself remain enigmatic in the account of local officials. As noted before Kurto placed his emphasis on the sufferings of *individuals*, who decided to stay in the besieged Sarajevo. In his opinion, the Roses are not the attempt to glorify but to commemorate survivors and their sufferings during the siege without trying to erect an enormous monument. In the next chapter, I will present the accounts of my informants to convey how they see Roses as part of their remembering the war, as well as living in Sarajevo today.

Chapter 4

Research and Elaboration

Past chapters have described some practices as to how and in what ways is the 1992-1995 war remembered and commemorated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, the previous chapter has provided an introduction to the topic of the Sarajevo Roses, while this chapter aims to present accounts surrounding the Sarajevo Roses. This chapter aims to analyze the aspects of remembering of the war through the Sarajevo Roses and to identify what are the most prevalent accounts present in memories of the people and how they reflect, distort, and merge with the dominant narratives present in the society. In that sense, this chapter points to complexities of appropriation of memories related to the siege of Sarajevo.

The chapter enables us to see what informants think about the time the Roses were created. Additionally, the chapter provides the analysis of the symbolism of the Sarajevo Roses as seen by the participants of the research. The main part of the chapter presents the findings of the research and identifies the accounts present in the memories of the siege of Sarajevo. These accounts are described under the following headings:

- The Roses point to the human suffering;
- The Roses point to the victims or 'us';
- The Roses talk about Sarajevans;
- The Roses point to the persons that shelled the city;
- The Roses speak about the war;

- The Roses point to *'this really happened to us'* account;
- The Roses point to *'this needs to be remembered'* account.

When Were the Roses Created?

Posing a 'when' type of a question seems to be easy in the everyday context. We provide answers as to when we arrived somewhere, when the theater play started, and many more. In the everyday life, not much attention seems to be paid to responding to the 'when' type of questions because we rely on our memory of what had happened in the past. However, when is always a problem as many issues seem to mix and blend in responses to this type of questions opening up possibilities for new interpretations as each of responses can differ, pointing, in this case, the difficulty in an attempt to contextualize when the Roses were created.

However, the question on the creation of the Roses was a first question in the attempt to address the informants in the interviews, as their responses would start with a description of the initial perception of the Roses in the everyday context. However, responses to this question provided a very interesting insight. As it will be seen in the continuation of the chapter there is no contextualization of the memory with the Sarajevo Roses as there does not seem to be a single group which appropriates the Roses as something that particularly belongs to them. It actually seems as though the city can only appropriate the Roses.

For that reason, this subheading provides the responses from the official sources presented earlier in the work, i.e. Cantonal officials and Nedžad Kurto as well as the responses of the informants who were interviewed. Representative from the Cantonal Office for Urban Planning claimed that the Roses were created immediately after the

Dayton Peace Agreement was signed (late 1995), while the responses received during the interview almost eight years after the war emphasized that people's memories in relation to the creation of the Roses were rather blurred. Responses of many informants differed when stipulating the year in which the Roses had appeared for the first time. This can be partially elaborated by the fact that not much attention was paid to the Roses recently and also with the fact that compared to some other commemoration sites Sarajevo Roses were rather neglected. It can also point the difficulty in appropriating the Roses when there is no one to perceive/appropriate them as commemoration site, which belongs to them.

Nedim, a 36-year-old lawyer told me that the first time he noticed the Roses was right after the war or some time in 1997. Almira, the chemistry student, stated that she first noticed these signs in either 1997 or 1998. She denied any possibility that the Roses could have been created at any time during the war. Senad, the army officer, noticed them in either 1996 or 1997. Fikreta, a 65-year-old retired citizen of Sarajevo, whose husband was killed by a shell, thought that the Roses were created in 2001. Hašmeta, a 72-year-old woman, noticed them right after the war. Many people, who arrived to Sarajevo after the siege, thought that they had come into existence after the war. Azira stated:

I arrived to Sarajevo in 1996, but I am rather positive that there were no Roses at that point in time. However, I am not even sure when I first saw them, but I remember seeing this red mark one morning in front of the market store. I remember it was spring of either 1997 or 1998. In any case, I am sure that they were not there before or during the war.

In this sense, it could be claimed that the interpretation of the appearance of the Roses comes after the fact of their creation, i.e. that the idea related to creation of the sites appeared, in each of these cases, after the initial perception of the sites. As there was no media campaigns on the issue at the time of their installation, the memories of individuals becomes blurred. Given their 'silent' appearance on the streets, they started being 'caught' by the wandering perception of individuals walking along the streets of Sarajevo during their lunch-break or a visit to the bank in the context of everyday life. The Roses became noticed since they caused emotional reactions, but clear remembrance of the date was absent or missing given the fact that many people did not notice them during a commemoration event or during an activity which needed to be remembered. In that sense, memory related to time in which these sites were created was, to a certain extent free to shape up based on memories connected to some other, more important event, which was accompanied with the identification of the Roses.

What seems to be interesting in all of these accounts is not the year that people recall, but rather the fact that all of them seem to think that the Roses were created after the war. This might not be surprising for the citizens of Sarajevo, who have remained in the city, being able to observe the process of installation of the Roses. However, it is interesting that even the people coming outside of Sarajevo have claimed that the Roses were created after the war.

It can be argued that this strict distinction rejecting a possibility of being created during the war, but only *after the war* allows for establishing a clear line in terms of past and present. If the Roses were created after the war then they clearly imply that the war belongs to the past, to something that should be 'commemorated'. In that sense, it is possible to observe what Lowenthal describes as our deliberate distinguishing

between the here and now from bygone things while disregarding that segregation¹⁴⁰ and conflation are in continual tension, i.e. that “the past has to be felt both part of and separate from the present”. Therefore, it could be concluded that informants tended to stipulate that the Roses were created after the war as this enables the clear distinction between the past and present. Similarly, rejecting the possibility that the Roses might have been created during the war (as happened in several cases) furthers this divide to distinguish past from the present and vice versa.

At the same time, these inconsistencies point out that memory of any given situation is multiple and as Norra and Davis state “that its many forms *are* situated in place and time from the perspective of the present”¹⁴¹. Each and every account brought into perspective a different history related to the very creation of the sites. Interestingly enough, only Adnan, a 31-year-old Sarajevan, mentioned that

I remember that the issue of commemoration and marking those sites where the shells had landed during the war was discussed even during the war.

I would tend to claim that stipulating that the Roses were installed after the war also helps the informants to shape up the clear borderline between the war and post-war times. This is important to notice because the border between pre-war times and the beginning of the war was also obvious during the war. In these accounts, everything that had happened before the war was assigned to an identity which did not belong to a person any longer. In this case related to creation of the Roses, it is possible to observe similar processes. Commemoration of the war during the war times cannot even be taken into consideration because even the idea to commemorate needs to belong to the post-

¹⁴⁰ D. Lowenthal, *Past Is a Foreign Country*, p. 186

¹⁴¹ N.Z. Davis & R. Starn, “Introduction”, *Representations*, (0): 26, 1989, p. 2

war period. However, this is problematic as the post-war period points that there is no clear answer to the question when the Roses were created. It shows that the contextualization of the memory with the Sarajevo Roses is difficult, as there does not seem to be the group, which reminds us on the presence of the Roses. It actually seems as only the city can only perform that role, remind us on the Roses or appropriate them. The absence of appropriation by any group is also present in elaboration on the creators of the Roses.

Multiple Creators of the Roses

In the previous chapter, I have pointed to the fact that the responses related to the year in which the Roses were created differed. In this part of the work, I will present the findings and discuss who is perceived as the creator of the Roses. Similarly, a variety of responses were in relation to the potential creator(s) of the Sarajevo Roses, as was the case with the variety of responses heard regarding the year in which the Roses were created.

Generally, the informants were not able to precisely tell where the idea of the Roses came from or who had created them. Some people foggily remembered articles in the newspapers. However, they were not able to tell when and in what newspapers they read those articles.

Based on the information they possessed the informants were not able to identify the creators of the Roses. Their responses seemed to be in many cases based on guesses, i.e. presumptions as to who might have initiated the instalment of the Roses. At the same time, the main dilemma during the interviews was focused on whether the Roses were installed by a group of citizens or by the official authorities.

Nedim explicitly rejected the possibility that the Roses might have been something initiated by the citizens themselves. In his opinion, the installment of the Roses presented a good opportunity for local authorities to earn money. He explained that the Roses provided a good opportunity to raise funds from public revenues. Half of this money could be spent on a small-scale project such as the Roses, while politicians, who invented the need for this project in order to do money laundering, could spend the rest of public funds. Therefore, the Roses were just a great cover for the corrupted authorities to earn more money from public funds. Nedim stated

Now, you tell me ...why are they (the Roses) needed? They are just a good cover up for them to earn more money. Who cares about those Roses? I am sure that they got 100.000 marks but spent only 10.000.

Similarly, Mersiha and Merima, both coming from outside Sarajevo thought that the process of installment of the Roses was initiated by the official authorities of Sarajevo Canton. Hašmeta, a 75-year old Sarajevan agreed with the opinion of Mersiha and Merima in this regard. However, none of them emphasized the financial aspect. Hašmeta stated

No, the Roses were not created by anyone, but the Canton. They (Cantonal officials) were the ones who thought of this idea and initiated it. There was no self-initiative in this regard.

On the other hand, Fikreta, a 65-year-old Sarajevan whose husband was killed during the war stated that she was fully convinced that the Roses were created by survivors, i.e. civilian victims of the war. She said

Those sites were marked to know and remember where the massacre took place, to show who was killed here and when. So, it was survivors who decided to start this up by approaching the Canton.

Almira and Dželma stated that they were clueless and had no idea who could have created the Roses. To them this was not even important, what mattered was the fact that the Roses were there to commemorate those sites where the shells had landed. Hazim and Halima stated how, in their opinion, it did not matter who had created the Roses, as they did not consider them particularly important.

It has already been presented in the course of this work that Šefik from the Sarajevo Canton stated that the process itself was initiated by the group of citizens who approached the Canton. On the other hand, Nedžad Kurto, the creator of the Roses had never mentioned any group of citizens in this process. During his interview, he rather spoke about his idea to create the Roses and the support of the Canton in this respect.

The variety of responses in this regard also offers the possibility of reaching several conclusions. Based on the responses received, one is able to observe that different actors are identified as creators of the Roses and also the difficulty of making any generalizations regarding the creators of the Roses. Each of the accounts identified in this process provides a specific message that also speaks about our perception of who is responsible for commemoration. Therefore, the lack of any generalizations again points the fact difficulty in appropriating the Roses and emphasizes the complexities in each of the accounts when it comes to the perception and memories of individuals in relation to the Roses today.

Many informants stated that they perceived local government as the creators of the Roses. This fact can be interpreted as the tendency of many citizens in former

socialist regimes to identify almost all actions present in the society as an initiative coming from the government authorities, a tendency that simultaneously ignores civil society actors. The account that presents survivors as the creators of the Roses also stipulates implicitly that the survivors could have only installed the Roses in cooperation with the Cantonal authorities. There was not much elaboration by Fikreta as to why the survivors were considered as creators of the Roses, just a clear conviction which allowed no space for further inquires.

In addition to Fikreta's response, no informants identified civil society organizations as the creators of the Roses during the interviews. This can also contribute to the analysis of how important is the role of citizens' associations in the eyes of ordinary people and the role that they can play in the public sphere. In that sense, their responses contributed to the myth that 'nothing can be done without the government'. At the same time, these responses consequently advanced the perception that 'the government officials do the project' and earn money for themselves.

In general, it is really difficult to make any conclusions related to people who had no idea who the creators of the Roses were. These informants stated that they considered it unimportant to know who created the Roses. To them, the most important thing was that the Roses point to past events, which can be remembered by everyone. For that reason, the Roses enable the researcher to observe shifting discourses appearing in relation to creation of the Roses, but also to the new meaning of the Roses with every new account. Therefore, the perception of the Roses is a complex texture of memory whose existence in the public sphere may be hindered with the fact that there is no group appropriating them – be that the survivors, veterans, citizens of Sarajevo, etc.

In addition to these 'simple' questions related to identifying the date and creator(s) of the Roses, a more complex issue should be addressed: the symbolism of the Roses, i.e. their relation to and the connotations of the name, shape and color when compared to the real flower.

Symbolism of the Sarajevo Roses – Their Relation to the Name, Shape and Color

This part will elaborate how the informants perceived the symbolism of the Sarajevo Roses and how their relation to the name, shape and the color could be elaborated in their opinion as well as in the opinion of Nedžad Kurto.

According to Nedžad Kurto, the idea of the Sarajevo Rose is related to a family garden (*bahçe*), in which it is possible to see roses. In his description that could be interpreted as 'nostalgic', Kurto described that the rose usually signifies something beautiful in the family garden. At the same time the experience of the family garden enables the person to particularly pay attention to each flower, watching how petals of the rose spread and turn into a beautiful flower. In the words of Nedžad Kurto, the spreading of the Rose is somehow related to the shape in which the shell explodes. Therefore, it is an interesting combination to analyze how these two notions compare semantically.

If red, the rose is a flower that symbolizes love and passion. However, the Sarajevo Rose signifies blood and emotions of loss, grief and human pain. Similarly, the petals of the real rose spread more or less symmetrically, while the Rose created by a shell explosion is asymmetrically spreading in one direction only. However, the

comparison with the shape and connection to the color emphasizes the relation of the Sarajevo Rose to the real flower, at least in the words of Nedžad Kurto.

Generally speaking, not much has been stated by the informants in relation to the name, shape and color of the Roses by the informants. It seemed as though the name of the Rose was taken literally and accepted without much contemplation about possible relation to the flower. This can be explained with several reasons. Most of the informants stated that the name of the Sarajevo Rose derived from its color and shape. However, more significance was given to the color than the shape of the Rose. This might be explained by the fact that the color rather than the shape of the Sarajevo Rose seem to have attracted the attention of the passersby when walking through the streets of Sarajevo. One can additionally argue that the name of the Sarajevo Rose consists of the term 'Sarajevo' as well and that more attention is given to the term 'Sarajevo Rose' rather than to the meaning of the word 'rose' itself.

An interesting account was noted from Nedim, who was not able to see why the Roses should be called that way. In a highly emotional account, he rejected any similarities and associations between the real flower and the Sarajevo Rose. On the other hand, Mersiha, the medical school student, stated that more attention should be given to the shape when compared to other characteristics of the Rose. Merima, a 33-year-old administrative worker, stated that she did not find any significance in relation to the symbolism of the Sarajevo Rose. However, Senad, the army officer gave an interesting elaboration of the symbolism of the Sarajevo Rose. He stated that

The flower is usually identified as a motif in the presentation of human sufferings. Therefore, we (the Former Yugoslavia) were not able to resist the

memorials in the shape of the dying flower of Jasenovac¹⁴² or the dying poppy in Karlovac. The rose has been selected since our people know what this symbolism of using the flower motif presents ... However, the shell does spread like a flower.¹⁴³

While the shape of the Roses had clear relation to other commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Senad's words, other informants did not perceive how their shape could be relevant. Anida, the student who did not notice the Roses in the past four years of her student life in Sarajevo, stated

I have never noticed anything that points to what you describe to the traces of the shell explosions. Maybe, if posters were put up for someone that comes from another place... so that we know that it is also for us. Those who were here know about it, they don't need to be reminded of the war.

It was already noted that the Markale Rose is likely to be commemorated in a manner different to other Roses and that there would be a prescribed message of the local authorities that would accompany the Markale Rose. In any case, although it can be claimed that the presence of the Roses could be made more prominent by placing additional commemoration plates, messages and posters, it is precisely this absence that facilitates the process of remembering. The absence of any messages allows the possibility for memories to resurface freely and at any point in time. Any messages at the commemoration site would mean an attempt at potential institutionalization of such sites and our memories.

¹⁴² The concentration camp in the World War II located on the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Croatia.

¹⁴³ In Bosnian language the word *cvijet* means flower, while spreading of the flower is described as *rascvjetavanje* and has the clear association to the flower itself.

One can agree that the Sarajevo Roses can be described as ‘counter-monuments’ by stating that bare presence of the Sarajevo Roses and the absence of any messages enables rethinking of the memories present in the public sphere. Their form which is untypical of other commemoration sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina create a possibility of questioning the way in which the war is remembered and war events commemorated. Hence, it can be argued that the form of the Sarajevo Roses opens up a space for reflection on the war experience and creation of alternative accounts on how the war is remembered. Similarly to the sinking monument, the presence of the Roses and their gradual disappearance enables the possibility to question the past experience every time one perceives the Rose. It enables the possibility to think who were the imaginary creators of the Roses, when they created them – hence questioning the narratives such as, for example, present in the case of Kovači.

The forthcoming subheadings present how the war is remembered and re-thought through the Sarajevo Roses.

Roses Point to the Suffering

One of the most prevalent accounts related to the Roses points to the sufferings endured during the siege of Sarajevo. The notion of the suffering has usually been described as lack of water, electricity or lack of basic food supplies. The continuous deficiencies of all basic supplies were connected with the continuous threat of potential shelling, which meant that a shell could land and take away someone’s life at any given point in time. Additionally, the people that had lived in town had no information as to what was going on in the world and despite the heavy presence of the United Nations troops they were exposed to shelling and shooting. However, the worst thing was that

hope, which existed in the beginning of the war, that something would be done to protect what people perceived as European civilization and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, slowly disappeared in the period of over three years.

Nedžad Kurto elaborated that the Roses pointed out to suffering and hardships experienced in the longest siege of any European city since World War II. As mentioned before, his description of this suffering was related to the fact that people during war times neglected ideas, ideals they had in peace time. Therefore, the identity of people as human beings was reduced to the necessity of bare survival.

However, attention needs to be drawn to another phenomenon that I will call the 'gradation of suffering'. The 'gradation of suffering' presents the term which the informants used to describe their opinion and elaborate their scale as to why more attention is given to Srebrenica Potočari site than to the Sarajevo Roses. Mersiha stated

The bigger human tragedy took place in a smaller place. Of course, the tragedy cannot be compared – whether it is bigger, stronger - by assessing what had happened...we seem to create some internal scale of sufferings, that the event in Srebrenica was bigger.

Semir, the medical school student, said

Both of these are important but Srebrenica somehow points to this great scale of suffering our people were exposed to.

Anida also stated

Srebrenica is given more prominence than any other site and while it needs to be given more attention, other sites and places that were shelled should be mentioned as well.

This gradation points to how social meanings are attached to the sites in Srebrenica and Sarajevo. Srebrenica is a place where civilians, mostly men, Bosniaks of all ages (between 3 and late 80ties) were brutally murdered with their bodies dislocated in the mass graves while the United Nations troops did nothing. On the other hand, the siege of Sarajevo seems to be perceived as a horrific past event from which new and modern Sarajevo raises again. Srebrenica is the place of suffering and sorrow where displaced families of the deceased do not want to return. Sarajevo, on the other hand is the capitol of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the biggest city, which aims to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment for all. Therefore, the Roses are skipping from the real life of Sarajevo as they are no longer needed for the imagined myth of what Sarajevo wants to be today.

At the same time, this gradation of suffering points that recollection that takes place today is influenced by the impact of the event and many people seem to forget smaller-scale incidents. More attention seems to be given to certain sites where an event is assessed as the more horrifying and more brutal act naturalizing attention provided to certain commemoration practices and neglecting others. This is further exaggerated by the role of media. We have seen some of these practices presented in the first chapter of this work elaborated on the presentation of the war events in the daily newspapers, when no coverage was provided to the Roses in the research period.

Roses Point to the Victims or "Us"

It is of great importance to see how the memories presented through the Sarajevo Roses point to the victims of the war in war-torn Sarajevo. For that reason, I will attempt to analyze the accounts identified during the interviews in order to see in how they

reflect the dominant narrative of genocide against Bosniaks. Additionally, it is necessary to see who the informants in the research perceived as victims.

It needs to be mentioned that during all interviews, the informants referred to the people who shelled the city – some people referred to them as ‘*chetniks*’ some as ‘*they*.’ While elaborating who ‘*they*’ are in the interpretation is also important and will be addressed under the following heading, this part will elaborate what presents ‘*us*’ or the victims in the case of the Sarajevo Roses and how this dichotomy in relation to ‘*them*’ and ‘*us*’ could be analyzed.

Sturken claims that the important role of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was the contribution to construction of the identity for the veterans. Given the fact that the Roses are neglected in the public discourse, it needs to be analyzed how the identity of the survivors, i.e. the citizens of Sarajevo has been created in a post-war environment. Additionally, it is also important to take into consideration the opinion of people currently living in Sarajevo, who might have spent the war in other towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina or as refugees in foreign countries. These accounts will assist in analyzing how the groups perceive themselves in the post-war period and in determining the extent to which the dominant narratives as presented in the case of Kovači, for example, are reflected and distorted in these accounts.

The opinions heard during the interviews differ and Bosniaks were presented as victims in some accounts. Fikreta stated:

Of course, Serbs and Croats suffered but it is known that it was Bosniaks who suffered¹⁴⁴ the most.

¹⁴⁴ In Bosnian language, the word *suffer* also refers to the notion of being killed, but it does not have such a hard connotation as the word *kill* or *murder*.

Senad stated:

*The whole war and shelling pointed out to the fact that this was the eighth genocide against Bosniaks.*¹⁴⁵

This and similar accounts are very prevalent among Bosniak politicians and the 'eighth genocide' against Bosniaks became a new myth introduced in the history textbooks. On the other hand, most accounts in the research stipulate that those who had remained in Sarajevo were described as the main victims. Other accounts state that victims are civilians without any specific reference to the ethnic background of those who were killed just because they had happened to be at those locations at that particular point in time.

Hašmeta stated:

Shells did not land on Bosniaks only. Three people have been living in our state prior to the war: Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. When a shell lands it does not select who's a Serb, Catholic or who is going to be killed - who's unlucky gets hurt and who's lucky avoids it.

Mersiha said:

This was a war against civilians. I always remember the statement of Radovan Karadžić¹⁴⁶ who said that one people would be led into complete destruction and the war presents clearly the implementation of that idea. Who are those people?

¹⁴⁵ The narrative of the eight genocide appeared in the Islamic Community Magazine for Former Yugoslavia in 1991. This narrative presents that genocide has been the integral part of the history of Bosnian Muslims in the Slavic countries in the past three centuries. The causes of the genocide were explained as ideological, but also as a fight for territory and destruction of an ethnic group. M. Imamović & S. Čekić *Historija genocida nad bosanskim muslimanima*, Centar za istraživanje ratnih zločina i zločina genocida nad muslimanima i KDM Preporod, Zenica, 1994.

Those are the ones that felt like Bosnians who did not have the same ideas as those who had started the war.

Therefore, it could be claimed that description of the victims does play an important part in how one remembers the war and what kind of a narrative is going to be formed based on that perception. If a victim is simply any person then it could be claimed the war in itself was not a war against Bosniaks only but against all of those who were '*for a unified Bosnia and Herzegovina*'. It could also be described as the wish to present Sarajevo as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural city at all points in time, as opposed to the claims of Bosnian Serbs and Croats that Sarajevo is an ethnically-pure city. However, if the shells landed to kill Bosniaks then these sites acquire a different meaning which can play a prominent role in the continuation of further victimization of Bosniaks which was described in one of the interviews '*the eighth genocide against Muslims*'.

As Hašmeta mentioned the life of someone who was killed by the shell could have been the life of anyone who had chosen to remain in Sarajevo: be that person a Serb, a Croat or a Bosniak. Therefore, the Roses refer to all citizens of Sarajevo since they presented a threat to all of them. This was particularly explained in Adnan's interview as well, as he specifically stated that each and every person had suffered from shelling. He added that all three ethnic groups had lived in Sarajevo and were equal victims of shelling. These explanations refer to the everlasting myth of multicultural Sarajevo, which ignores the fact that a significant number of Bosnian Serbs did indeed leave the city during the war. Additionally, this account emphasizes an important point

¹⁴⁶ Radovan Karadžić was the president of the wartime Serb Republic. He is currently indicted for war crimes by the International Crimes Tribunal in Hague. Mersiha referred to his statement in the BiH

that the war was fought and affected all civilians without any specific reference to their ethnic background.

Although in the words of Semir, the medical student, the shells destroyed everything they touched, their main goal was to '*eliminate the human forces*', i.e. ordinary people, particularly given the fact that Sarajevo was bombed with shells that did not harm buildings but were mostly intended to kill humans. Therefore the main purpose of the shelling of Sarajevo was to victimize and humiliate everyone who chose to stay. In his opinion this process of intimidation was aimed at endangering the psychological as well as the bare physical existence of the individual citizens of Sarajevo at that time. Consequently, this led to the increasing number of people who had left the city, were separated from their families, or had their close relatives and family members injured.

Although the narrative of the 'urbicide', the systematic destruction of the city, the city buildings and urban way of life¹⁴⁷ is present, it needs to be seen whether and to what extent the Sarajevo Roses could be seen as presenting '*urbicide*.' Although Semir mentioned that many buildings were destroyed during the siege and that urbicide took place in Sarajevo, he just implicitly enabled to conclude that the Sarajevo Roses point out to urbicide and enormous destruction of the physical environment in Sarajevo during the siege.

All of these accounts again point to complexities related to remembrance of the Sarajevo Roses and point that there is no one group left to appropriate the Roses and say

parliament before the war.

¹⁴⁷ In the book on the lives and memories of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Weine states that "it is true that their (Sarajevans) exodus was not so forced as that of the villagers pushed at rifle point onto a bus, but in way it was just as inevitable. S. M. Weine, *When History Is a Nightmare: Lives and*

what they mean for their identity. Rather, some accounts strongly reflect the rhetoric of a dominant nationalist party that victimizes Bosniaks, which can be seen in Norra as an attempt of nation-state remembrance in these accounts. Although it is a fact that the largest number of people who were killed or expelled from their homes were Bosniaks, this account aims to strengthen this idea while ignoring the need for reconciliation.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, it is possible to observe presence of a narrative that promotes a civil society perspective, claiming that all civilians were hurt in the course of the Sarajevo siege. It is important to point to elaboration that victims were those 'who felt like Bosnians and Herzegovinians.' the population which is perceived as extinct after the war when everyone seem to be firstly the member of the ethnic group and then the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, as this group is no longer there then they cannot be the ones appropriating the Roses as they are no longer there and it is not necessary to give them prominent role in the public life.

It is possible to notice the influence of power relations in these accounts. Powerful groups, such as a dominant Bosniak nationalist political party, promote the victimization narrative giving more prominence to sites such as Potočari, while neglecting the Sarajevo Roses. The Sarajevo Roses could be perceived as contributing to raising questions that provide no clear-cut responses in terms of the victims in Sarajevo during the siege.

It also needs to be noted that in the case of Potočari women play an active role in the process of building the commemoration sites. However, the inscription on the

Memories of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1999, p. 58

¹⁴⁸ It needs to be taken into account that all three dominant nationalist parties present similar attitudes in this regard.

monument in Srebrenica emphasizes only their traditional role as presented in *reis'* words "*may mothers' tears become prayers.*"¹⁴⁹ Memorial site in Kovači accentuates the role of men only. However, in the case of Sarajevo Roses it is difficult to establish who victims on the site were. The victims could be equally men or women. However, given that in many cases, men were recruited to army lines one can also assume that there was a greater likelihood that victims are women. The Roses in many cases speak about waiting in lines for bread and water activities which can be usually associated with women and not only men. It is difficult to argue that Roses are displaced from the public sphere due to the gender aspect. However, if one analyzes current memorial sites it can be easily noted that there is almost no mention of women and their suffering in the war. It is thus still possible to claim that the gender factor may play a role in the displaced position of the Roses today.

Finally, as the victims were citizens of Sarajevo, one needs to analyze how the Roses speak about the citizens of Sarajevo as the war in this respect acquires a local perspective. This issue is addressed under the following heading.

Roses Are about Sarajevans

Narrative of a hometown such as Sarajevo observed in some interviews becomes predominantly present in remembrance of the war – Sarajevo is presented as the victim city while other towns and their sufferings seem to be largely ignored. While the situation in Sarajevo was clearly unique when compared to other towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the siege of Sarajevo was still a part of the overall war during the three-year period. Although many people including children got killed in other places outside

¹⁴⁹ See Figure 7.

Sarajevo, events in other towns are degraded in their importance and Sarajevo becomes the heroic, undefeated city that managed to survive without anyone's help. It needs to be noted that such a situation was due to the fact that the research itself was locally based. None of the informants coming from Sarajevo mentioned events that took place in other parts of the country, apart from Srebrenica massacre, which may have been mentioned due to the enormity of the crime and media attention.

Secondly, the local account of heroic Sarajevo seems to be shaped on opposites: urban versus rural, good versus evil. These dichotomies then point to the possibility of a certain interpretation, in which the definition of 'urban' represents a modernized, liberal person, not afraid of changes. Needless to say, 'rural' represents the opposite of that, i.e. a nationalist, backward and conservative person and implies a set of characteristics such as bad personality and willingness to kill innocent people. At the same time, good people are victims while bad ones are perpetrators. Almira and Azira both referred in their interviews to this, stating that the urban population was the one suffering during the war. Almira additionally stated that 'they, from the hills shelled us'. The way in which the war and both victims and perpetrators are described point out to possibility of acquiring overly simplified psychological characteristics.

Roses Point to the Persons That Shelled the City

Although not clearly implied in my questions, this aspect always came up during my talks with the informants. The armed forces that shelled the city were the members of the former Yugoslav People's Army and local Serbs that were recruited to the ranks of the Republika Srpska Army. However, the informants always referred to the forces in

terms of the personal pronoun '*they*' or '*them*' naming them very rarely. Even when named, they were called *chetniks* (paramilitary armed forces of Draža Mihajlović in the World War II loyal to the Serbian king whose forces eliminated non-Serb populations in the area of former Yugoslavia).

This issue of the attacker appeared to be important for several reasons. Firstly, it points out to the fact that the memory of the war always exists in relation to the one who attacked you personally. As these memories of war are still emotional it might be understandable as to why these forces are described as *chetniks* and not under their official name. Additionally, this term was also used in the wartime propaganda.

However, it is more interesting that informants describe the Republika Srpska forces as '*them*'. By doing so, it is made clear that the Republika Srpska forces are not foreign to us, they are someone we know (as when two friends refer a third, there is no need to repeat his/her name, they know who they are talking about) from our neighborhood, but also someone excluded from our community. Having this in mind along with the fact that victims were described as almost all citizens of Sarajevo, it could be claimed as a reason that the ethnic identity of the perpetrators is not mentioned in these cases as much. Their identity is known to the victims, the survivors know them how they think and what they want. Yet the survivors are angry and do not want to name them, but just to refer to them and mention them as someone who is there, but the survivors would rather like not to see.

One needs to keep in mind that all informants made a distinction between the *Chetnik* forces, which were considered to be military forces that shelled and attacked the city. On the other hand, the term 'Orthodox Christian' referred to the people of the same ethnic group who chose to remain in the town. It needs to be noted, however, that,

depending on the context, the term 'Serb' was used interchangeably to describe any of the mentioned terms. The notion of the term changed depending on the context and the use of any term made it difficult to point simply at the persons/forces who shelled the city. However, interpretation of any term is dependent on the context and time in which conversation is undertaken and sometimes, even of gestures that the informants can use. Such complexities point to the numerous possible interpretations, which make it impossible to make a simple conclusion on who are perceived as the responsible ones for the siege.

What Are Roses Saying About the War?

This part further elaborates on the prominent accounts that emerge in discussion about the Sarajevo Roses. However, before addressing that issue under the following heading, accounts of the past war currently prevalent in Bosnia and Herzegovina among all three ethnic groups in relation of Bosniaks need to be kept in mind. The dominant discourse present in almost all spheres of life among Bosniaks presents the 1992-95 war as the genocide against Bosniaks committed by atrocious and heavily armed Serb army forces upon innocent Bosniak civilians. Ethnic cleansing was carried out in many parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and victims were mainly Bosniaks. Given the fact that the country was attacked by heavily armed forces from another country¹⁵⁰ the act of aggression was undertaken against an independent state. For that reason, the defensive war was led by the Bosnian Army. It needs to be remembered that the conflict between the Croat and Bosniak forces is also presented as victimization of the Bosniaks.

On the other hand, Croats also claim that aggression was committed by the Serb army forces although their account focuses additionally on the crimes that were committed by both Bosniaks and Serbs on the Croats. The dominant account among Croats also characterizes the war as aggression against a sovereign country by the Serb armed forces. The most dominant narrative among Serbs presents the war as the war between three warring fractions in which all three sides are equated with each other. This account also claims that the much emphasized aspect of the 'brotherhood and unity' (predominantly mentioned by the Bosniaks) was a pure lie and the war was an evidence of such a premise.

Roses Point to the 'This Really Happened to Us' Account

An important aspect of the remembrance of the Roses points to the fact that the informants have emphasized that the Roses serve to explain to 'others' (people coming from outside Sarajevo, particularly foreigners) what happened in Sarajevo during the war and I will now attempt to address that issue.

Many informants felt that the Roses contribute to portraying the accurate presentation of the 1992-1995 war as the ethnic cleansing of majority populated Bosniak areas was denied by many European countries and the war was described as a civil war by many of them. Therefore, the informants perceive the Roses as a tool which is possible to use to convince anyone coming outside of Sarajevo that the killing of innocent people did indeed happen even if it was already proven by numerous political statements, actions etc.

¹⁵⁰ Given the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed independence and was recognized by major international players such as United States, United Nations, etc. the forces of the Former Army of

Dželma stated:

I don't notice them any longer, but they are important for foreigners. For them to ask and for someone to tell them - 14 people got killed while waiting not because they were Muslims but because they have stayed in the city. And had the Roses not been there, they wouldn't have known what had happened, they wouldn't ask and nobody would tell them that they were killed while waiting for the bread.

Hašmeta stated:

They are important for someone coming from a different place. This provides an idea on what people went through in Sarajevo, the ones who had survived the war. They are scared of the Roses and when they see them they see how awful it was.

The phenomenon of 'overemphasizing' the role of Roses to the others needs to be further analyzed particularly given the fact that two informants did not notice the existence of the Roses. One of the logical questions can be whether it is more we who need to reassure ourselves that the ethnic cleansing of the Bosniak population cannot be denied any longer by anyone coming to Sarajevo. Therefore, the myth is created that we need the Roses for others, while in reality we need them for ourselves. We are not able to deal constructively with the past and therefore we speak about their importance for others and not for us. In that sense, it is possible to see that the role of the Roses could be seen through the concept of screen, as the Roses in this case, project and hide certain messages from our view. It is projected that the Roses are needed for others, while the fact that the Roses are needed for local people is hidden from our view.

Merima, 34-years-old employee for one of the international organizations stated for example:

War is everything you see in this town. Everything speaks about the character of the war. Something horrible had happened and god-willingly won't be repeated. The war is mentioned on a daily basis. We say - we are okay, we are fine. Seven years have passed and we cannot really be commended in saying that we have digested the war experience, got it over with.

Secondly, non-Sarajevans come and go, but Sarajevans remain there and regardless of the fact that the Roses, among other things, point to the fact of the weak and inefficient help of the United Nations they also point out that 'our suffering' was acknowledged. Official sources claim that around 100.000 shells landed in the period of three years on the city. During that time, many people were faced with the official stand of the United Nations, which claimed that helping to stop the siege would be outside of their mandate to facilitate deliveries of humanitarian aid. Secondly, the Serb side denied that anything similar to a siege existed while, on the contrary, they claimed to be under siege and victimized as well. Azira noted:

The Roses tell them that they didn't help us that they denied the difficult situation in which we had been.

Everyone seemed to approve of the existence of the Roses since they tell others that the shells were landing and shelling was not some kind of science fiction story. The Roses ensure that the people, who pass near a Rose, realize that someone had passed along that same path three, four, five years ago and the shell had killed them. Dželma stated:

The difference is that you see them (the Sarajevo Roses) every day while the visit to the commemoration site is a special day. At least, when I go to a graveyard I need to be emotionally prepared, because that simply would not be the day as others while this (the Roses) are here every day and nothing is changed.

Semir pointed out:

Foreigners will see it; everyone who's educated and informed on the events in Bosnia and Herzegovina knows that it talks about the war.

According to the accounts in the research, it can be concluded that the significance of the Roses lies in what informants see as their testimonial value. The past war experience continues to be present in the lives of ordinary people, but their presence is more tied with the message they communicate to people who had not been to Sarajevo, who had participated in what the accounts see as the denial of the siege and the war.

Roses Point out "This Needs to Be Remembered"

Almost all reports pointed out that the Roses point to the need that the war needs to be remembered which is in line with the dominant narrative mentioned previously in the research '*remember the war so that it is not repeated*'. This issue seems to be worth of further analysis for several reasons. As Hašmeta, a 75-year-old woman stated we need to remember the war but as long as we have the Roses, dealing with the war and reconciliation cannot take place. She said,

I really would like them to remain where they are, regardless to the fact that I personally do not consider myself as a nationalist. I believe in Allah and respect other religions as I respect my own. On the one hand, the Roses should remain

where they are and on the other hand we will never have peace as long as they are present.

This account talks about the need to deal with our past, while working through it. Therefore erasing the Roses in a symbolic way would equal to denying our own past – if we erase them, the war is pushed away rather than dealt with in a systematic manner. The society cannot cope with this huge task. Secondly, as mentioned in two interviews the existence of the Roses should be emphasized by adding more colors as though the emphasis of the color would increase their presence and importance in everyday life. Adding more color would also increase our capacity to remember the past continually. It would also eliminate current possibilities of forgetting/denying the past which is currently the case. Accounts of majority of informants pointed that the war needs to be remembered while neglecting reflective engagement of dealing with the past war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. .

However, in the opinions of many, Sarajevo Roses are there to show the next generations what happened and to show those who were not here during the war that it happened. Today, children do not go to visit museums, which commemorate the past war but might only attend commemoration events generally characterized by the speeches and presence of local community.

Conclusion - Sarajevo Roses and Politics of Remembering

The aim of this research was to explore commemoration sites and memories that current residents of Sarajevo have in relation to the Sarajevo Roses. I have tried to do so by looking at relation between history and memory and by analyzing accounts that have

emerged in the course of the research. The research has been expanded to include the comparison of the two additional commemoration sites in Potočari and Kovači in relation to the Sarajevo Roses.

Having that in mind, it could also be concluded that the Roses do not project messages similar to the ones in Potočari and Kovači. There is no clearly established narrative defining the creators of the Roses as it is the case with the two commemoration sites. While Potočari and Kovači underline the notion of collective suffering of one people, the Sarajevo Roses actually project different messages in that regard. The victim in the case of the Sarajevo Rose is an unknown person, citizen of the town, a man or a woman from an unidentified ethnic group.

Thus, it could be argued that the Sarajevo Roses introduce the aspect of citizenship more than the Potočari and Kovači commemoration sites and distort the account of the nation-state-like memorial sites. This is apparent when one is analyzing the various interpretations of the victims during the siege of Sarajevo. The only clear message that the Rose carries is that a victim on the site could have been any one citizen of Sarajevo.

The analysis of the memory work at these sites point to a difficulty in appropriation of the memories related to Sarajevo Roses, i.e. the absence of any group who could claim them in their recollection of war memories. The exploration in the *'texture of memory'*, i.e. in meanings and principles around which memory telling is organized, points to pluralities of meanings in the case of the Sarajevo Roses.

Namely, the most important conclusion that this research could yield based on many diverse responses during the interviews is that appropriation and/or contextualization of memories disappears if there is no one to claim those particular

memories. While Norra claims that today “memories converge... and define our relationship between past, present and the future”¹⁵¹ in this case we see that there is no contextualization of the memory when the subjects (who are supposed to remember the events) disappear. In other words, there is no memory if there is no one to remember it. In the case of Roses, we have seen numerous examples throughout the work, such as, the absence of plaques accompanying the Roses, the multiple creators of the Roses, the ambiguity regarding the time when the Roses were created, differing interpretations of who the victims were, which point to the fragile and unstable meanings of the Roses.

Therefore, as long as identity of those that are supposed to remember remains problematic, the subject of memory work remains unstable itself. Thus, it faces us with many inconsistent memories about the Sarajevo Roses. Memory becomes loose and a valid question in this case would be – who is the subject or who are the persons supposed to remember the Sarajevo Roses? This displacement of subject may be due to problematic ethnic lines (both among Bosniaks and between Bosniaks and other ethnic groups), but may as well be a consequence of the fact that Sarajevo as a city does not point to a single and agreed upon subject of its own. Do we recognize as citizens of Sarajevo only Bosniaks, only those ones who feel like Bosnians, the ones that lived in the city during the siege?

I would tend to argue that the displacement takes place due to the fact that Sarajevo as a city does not have an agreed subject. We have seen that there are many interpretations defining who the Sarajevans are. Having in mind these numerous interpretations it is also possible to claim that there are no Sarajevans as long as there is no presumed consensus on what makes up a Sarajevan. This absence of collective

¹⁵¹ N. Z. Davis & R. Starn, “Introduction”, *Representations*, (0): 26, 1989, p. 3

perception of Sarajevo-ousness or (absence of any particular group claiming dominance in defining it) prevents the possibility for any one individual to remember the Sarajevo Roses. Therefore, as long as there is no such identity the dream of Sarajevo is no longer possible. Thus, Sarajevo Roses become something like a dream. They seem to challenge their own existence and the idea of monumentality among other commemoration sites and become a counter-monument.

It seems as though the Roses could only survive if we 'add more colors to them' or emphasize their existence in the public sphere by placing commemoration plaques, etc. However, I would tend to argue that this emphasis would not have as a consequence dealing with the past but rather its denial as the Roses would then become a monument among other others. However, if experience of the past war and memories related to it are denied then perhaps the Sarajevo as a capitol of Bosnia and Herzegovina will rise again.

Considering that there are no plaques accompanying any of the Roses, it is difficult to articulate who the Roses belong to or do not belong to. Do they belong to city administration or to any one individual living in Sarajevo? It may be argued that therefore one can observe different views in the presented accounts who name city administration or survivors as creators of the Roses.

While this subject and many others remain unresolved, the deceased are left with themselves¹⁵² and there is no one person/Rose that deserves more emphasis than the others. At the same time, it may be argued that the Roses can have the ambivalent role in enabling one to '*work upon the past*' due to the difficulty to establish the subject in appropriating the Sarajevo Roses. While the Roses clearly point that anyone and

everyone can remember anything and everything they also point that it is not possible to have fruitful and productive process which leads to effective dealing with historical processes if you do not have an agreed subject to appropriate it.

Thus, the analysis of the memory work in the case of Sarajevo Rose point to a difficulty in appropriation of the memories. It can also be argued that this research also shows that memory (the one with a defined subject to remember it) needs to be structured and only then can it be consumed by others. This also means that the Roses need to be appropriated if they are to be remembered. Interestingly, the Roses carry potential of being appropriated by narratives which would differ from the ones currently present in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such narratives might point the possibility to think about the past from another perspective and therefore go beyond dominant ethnic narratives.

That is why it may be important to consider the significance of the future presence of the Sarajevo Roses. The need for the future presence of the Sarajevo Roses as emphasized by some informants conflicts with the reality that some participants of the research do not know anything about the Roses. The need to remember Roses, to emphasize their existence is contradicted with the everyday life in which memories of war become displaced when compared to the immediate need to deal with the present. Therefore, the meaning of the Sarajevo Roses for the second generation will also be a subject that would require exploration as to how the new generation will construct their perception of these events and appropriate their constructs. However, the question that one should ask is - will the Sarajevo Roses remain in the streets of Sarajevo for the second generation?

¹⁵² R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History – Timing History, Spacing Concepts*

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- 2) Dnevni Avaz, 22/04/2003, "Da se ne zaboravi".
- 3) Dnevni Avaz, 14/05/2003, "Bošnjački političari pristaju na zaborav".
- 4) Dnevni Avaz, 14/05/2003, "Islamska zajednica uputila zahtjev za rekonstrukciju".
- 5) Oslobođenje, 25/05/2003, "Koncert u znak sjećanja na žrtve Srebrenice".
- 6) Dnevni Avaz, 26/05/2003, "Tri hiljade ruža za tri hiljade Bošnjaka".
- 7) Oslobođenje, 26/05/2003, "Fatiha i ruže za žrtve".
- 8) Dnevni Avaz, 26/05/2003, "Tri hiljade ruža za tri hiljade Bošnjaka".
- 9) Dnevni Avaz, 27/05/2003, "Osoblje je u panici trčalo noseći bebe u podrum".
- 10) Dnevni Avaz, 28/05/2003, "Granata s Trebevića ubila 26 ljudi u redu za hljeb".
- 11) Dnevni Avaz, 28/05/2003, "Ferhat-pašina džamija je simbol pomirenja".

12) Oslobođenje, 28/05/2003, "Sjećanje na ubijene".

13) Večernji list, 28/05/2003, "Bolno prisjećanje Sarajlija".

Web Sites:

- 1) <http://www.cij.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewReport&reportID=449&tribunalID=1>
- 2) www.ohr.int
- 3) www.oscebih.org
- 4) www.rijaset.net/rijaset/porusenedzamije.htm
- 5) www.rijaset.net/rijaset/banjaluka.htm
- 6) www.rijaset.net/rijaset/foca.htm

Photographs:

Note: All photographs (except of the design of the Kovači memorial) were made by the author of this work.

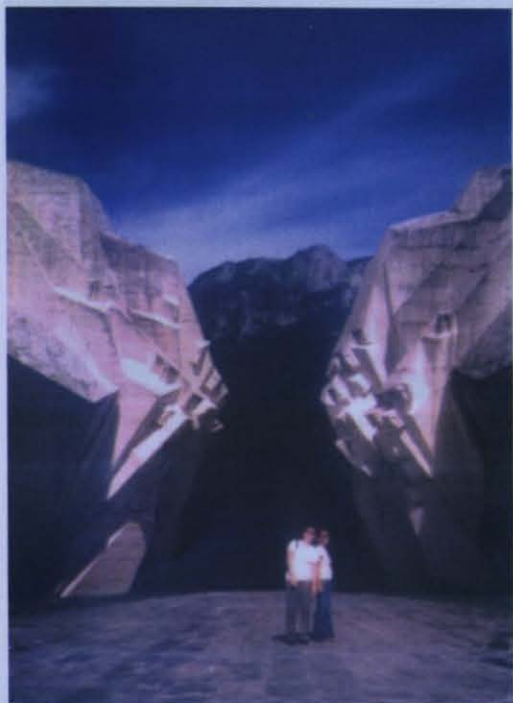


Figure 1. Monument in Sutjeska, Eastern Bosnia



Figure 2. Interior of the Sutjeska museum



Figure 3. Monument in the village of Ahmići near Vitez



Figure 4. Monument in the center of Foča.

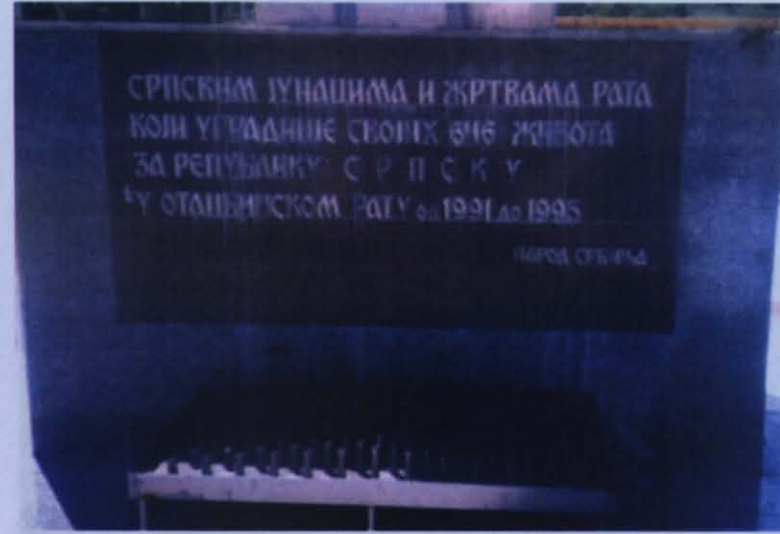


Figure 5. Inscription at the Foča monument.

Figure 6. Photo of mass funeral prayer in Srebrenica, July 2001



Figure 6. Monument erected by the international community in Srebrenica. The inscription simply states *Srebrenica 1995*.



Figure 7. Monument erected by the Srebrenica survivors. Inscription written in English, Bosnian, Arabic state:

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate! We pray to Almighty God, May grievance become hope! May revenge become justice! And mothers' tears may become prayers that Srebrenica Never happen again to No One anywhere! – words of Raisu-l-ulema Srebrenica Prayer 2001



Figure 8. Photo of mass *cenaze* prayer in Srebrenica, July 2003.

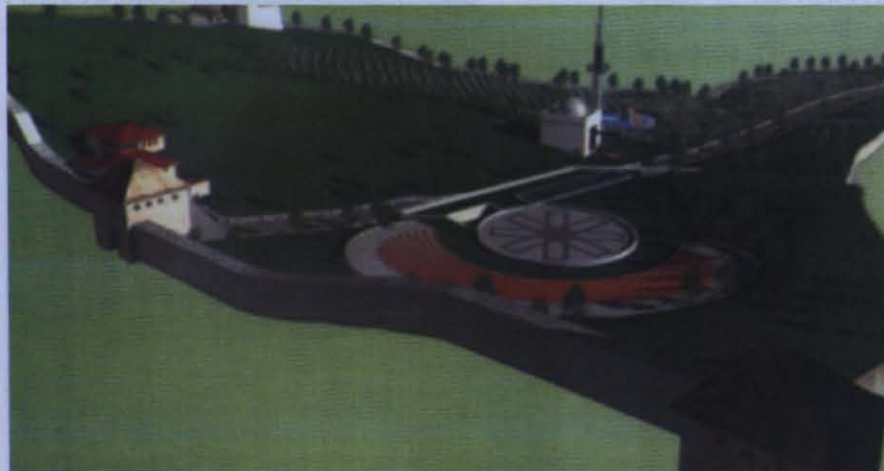


Figure 9. Design of the Kovači memorial complex

Figure 12. The plate located in down-town Sarajevo. The inscription says: On this site, Serbian criminals have killed 8 citizens of Sarajevo. Peace, mutual eternal silence. Say Fatiha prayer and pray. Remember and Warn Citizens of Sarajevo.

Figure 13. The plate with names located in the down-town Sarajevo.



Figure 10. One of the Sarajevo Roses (circled) located in front of the National Museum, Fall 2003



Figure 11. The view of downtown Sarajevo opposite the recently renovated Central Bank, May 2004



Figure 12. The plate located in downtown Sarajevo
The inscription says On this site, Serbian criminals have killed 8 citizens of Sarajevo. Peace, rest and eternal silence. Say Fatiha prayer and pray. Remember and Warn. Citizens of Sarajevo.



Figure 13. The plagues with names located in the downtown Sarajevo.



Figure 14. Inscription at PTT office in Sarajevo. inscription states *For eternal remembrance and victims of aggression on the state of BiH and the city of Sarajevo.*



Figure 15. Monument in front of Veterinerian Faculty in Sarajevo. Inscription says *During aggression (1992 – 1995) students, workers and have lost their lives. Not to be repeated and not to be forgotten.*



Figure 16. The Rose in the most fluctuant pedestrian street, Ferhadija, downtown Sarajevo.