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Urbicide in Bosnia

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Introduction: Ethnonationalism and the Violent Destruction of Bosnia

The 1992–5 Bosnian war was characterized by a sustained assault on the civilian population of Bosnia, their culture(s), and their urban environment(s). This intentional violence against the civilian population of Bosnia captured, and defined, the political imagination of those who observed, or intervened in, the conflict. Indeed, the emergence of "ethnic cleansing" onto the agenda of international politics during this conflict represented a recognition that the violence witnessed in the former Yugoslavia was directed primarily at civilian populations. Some of those observing, or involved in, the conflict, contended that so-called "ethnic cleansing" comprised an instance of genocide perpetrated, largely, though not exclusively, by the Bosnian Serbs upon Bosnian Muslims, or Bosniacs (Sells, 1996: 10).[1] Despite the politically contested nature of the definition of the violence against the civilians of Bosnia – whether or not one refers to it as ethnic cleansing, or as genocide – a dynamic can be seen in the violence (Campbell, 1998a: 109–10; 2002: 154–7).

Raphael Lemkin defined genocide as "coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves" (Lemkin, 1944: 79). The 1948 Genocide convention defines genocide as "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group" (Andreopoulos, 1984: 229–33; see Shaw, this volume). "Ethnic cleansing" is characterized by this genocidal logic insofar as it represents an attempt to erase from a given territory national/ethnical/racial/religious groups that, through their existence, contest the claims of ethnonationalists to territorial self-determination on the basis of ethnic/national homogeneity. That is,

insofar as ethnonationalists can erase plural identities from territory then they can claim it as their own. The Bosnian war was thus constituted by a genocidal violence – (euphemistically) defined by those who intervened in, or observed, the conflict as "ethnic cleansing" – that comprised the removal or erasure of all heterogeneous identities.

Ethnonationalism is predicated on such political violence. Its program of the erasure of heterogeneous identities demands violence due to the heterogeneity of existence. This was particularly the case in Bosnia, a country with an evident historical record of heterogeneity and plurality. As Robert Hayden notes:

> Heterogeneity was concentrated in the central part of the territory of Yugoslavia [in particular] the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina [and those areas bordering it]... In these parts of Yugoslavia, the idea that the Yugoslav peoples could not live peacefully together was empirical nonsense. It was perhaps because these regions constituted living disproof of [ethno]nationalist ideologies that [they] have been the major theatres of... war. (Hayden, 1996: 788)

Hayden cites the degree of "intermarriage" in Bosnia, and the number of citizens preferring to classify themselves as Yugoslav rather than by ethnic origin, as evidence of this heterogeneity in Bosnia (Hayden, 1996: 788–90).

Ethnonationalism works specifically, then, to destroy (and thus deny) heterogeneity, in order to advance a claim for national self-determination predicated on ethnic homogeneity. The dynamic of ethnonationalism is threefold: political discourses legitimate the notion that heterogeneity is both threatening and unnatural, elaborate grievances felt by an ethnic group purportedly as a consequence of this heterogeneity, and deny a history of heterogeneous coexistence; political violence is mobilized to destroy heterogeneity and legitimate claims to territorial self-determination; ethnic homogeneity is consolidated and the notion of ethnic separateness is thus naturalized.

This dynamic is readily observable in the violence against the civilian population of Bosnia. However, violence was not only directed against the population of Bosnia, but also against their culture(s) and urban environment(s). While the violence against people captured the political imagination of those who intervened in, or observed, the conflict, it was only one aspect of the ethnonationalist dynamic. Ethnic cleansers have a genocidal impulse to destroy the record of coexistence with other ethnic/national groups. In Bosnia it was necessary, therefore, to deconstruct a heterogeneous and plural culture in order to destroy all record of coexistence (Riedlmayer, 1994: 16). This plural/heterogeneous culture was not just represented in mixed marriages, neighbors of different ethnic origin, or those who declared themselves Yugoslavs rather than Bosnian-Serb/

Croat/Muslim. It was also represented in the material cultures within which everyday lives were lived.

That this is the case can be seen in the manner in which ethnonationalists targeted the cultural symbols of Bosnia. These symbols were not merely symbols of specific ethnic groups, but also of a heterogeneous Bosnian culture: a culture that spoke not just of the presence of a specific ethnic group, but of historical coexistence (plurality/heterogeneity) being the norm in Bosnia. This destruction of culture can be seen in a number of events, including (though not restricted to) the destruction of the National Library (plate 8.1) and Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, the shelling of the National Museum in Sarajevo, the destruction of the Stari Most (or Old Bridge) in Mostar (plate 8.2), and the widespread destruction of mosques and churches across Bosnia (Riedlmayer, 1994, 16–19; Coward, 2002: 29–33).[2] Insofar as these symbolic buildings remained standing, they belied the ethnonationalist notion that ethnic/national groups could not (and thus should not) live together. This destruction was, therefore, an integral part of the dynamic of political violence in the 1992–5 Bosnian war.

However, it is not only symbolic buildings or significant elements of Bosnian cultural heritage that were targeted for destruction. The urban fabric of Bosnia came under a relentless assault. As Nicholas Adams (1993) notes, along with "mosques, churches [and] synagogues," "markets, museums, libraries, cafes, in short, the places where people gather to live out their collective life, have been the focus of... attacks."

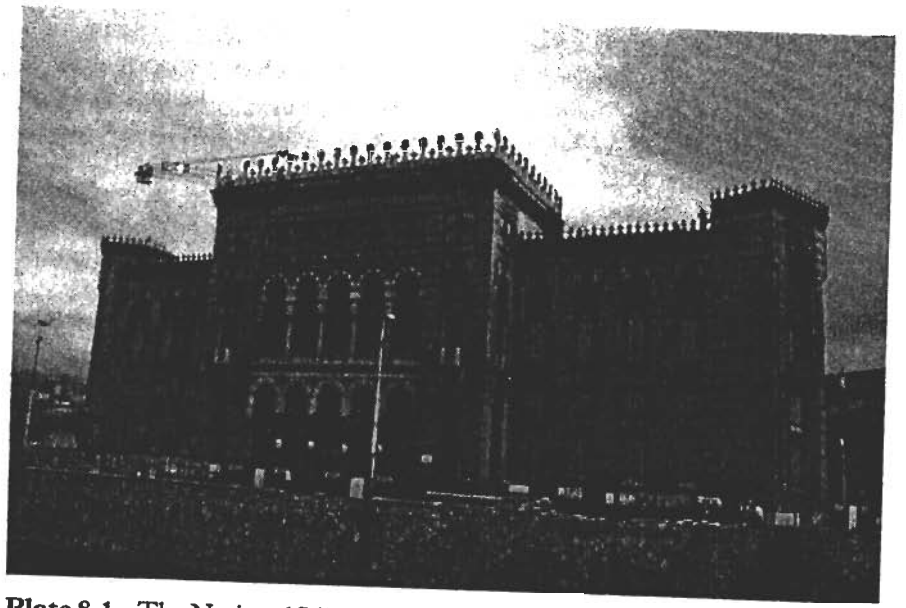

Plate 8.1 The National Library, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 1997. The library was targeted by Bosnian-Serb gunners on August 25, 1992. Some 1.5 million volumes were destroyed (see Reidlmayer, 2002: 19). Image © Martin Coward.

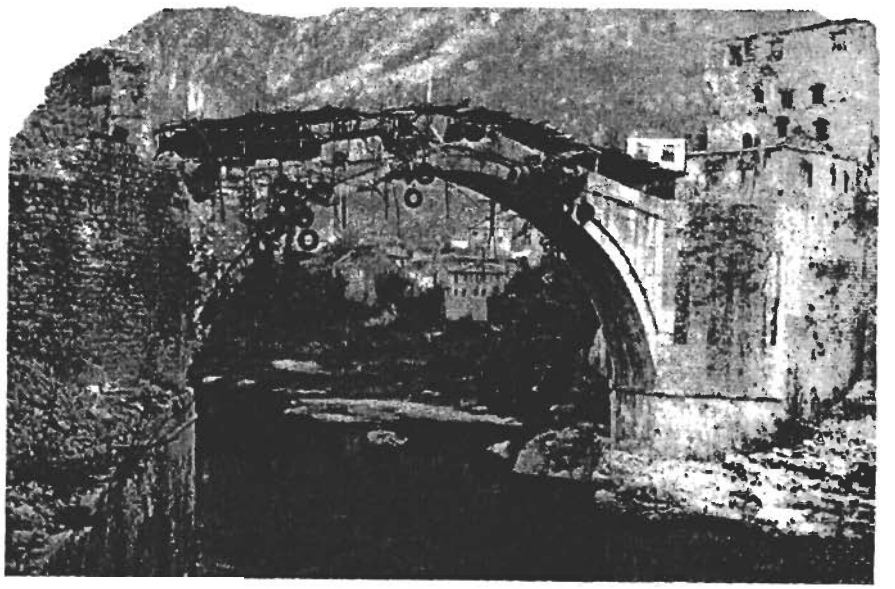

Plate 8.2 The Old Bridge (Stari Most) in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Old Bridge was shelled first by Bosnian-Serb troops and then by Bosnian-Croat troops (who finally destroyed it at around 10.15 a.m. on November 9, 1993). An ultimately unsuccessful attempt was made to protect the damaged bridge by hanging tires around the stonework. Image © Nigel Chandler/Corbis. Used with permission.

Early in the conflict a number of architects had noted the widespread, and yet intentional, destruction of the urban environment. They referred to this destruction as "urbicide" (see *Warchitecture*, 1993; *Mostar '92 – Urbicid*, 1992). It appeared to these writers that a phenomenon was emerging that was not properly accounted for in the prevalent modes of analysis of the 1992–5 Bosnian war. Insofar as the violent logics of genocide/ethnic cleansing dominated the political imaginaries of those who sought either to intervene or understand the conflict, the problematics that shaped both understandings of the war itself and concomitant attempts to provide humanitarian assistance or negotiate settlements were predicated upon images and events concerning the destruction of human life, the displacement of individuals or groups, or the misery that human hatred can bring about. In short, understandings of, and interventions into, the Bosnian war were refracted through an anthropocentric political imaginary that concentrated on the death of civilians and the destruction of the symbols they held dear (mosques, monuments, cultural heritage).

The rubble of the Bosnian urban environment has been similarly seen through the lens of anthropocentrism. The destruction of the urban fabric of Bosnia has been interpreted as a phenomenon contingent to, and thus dependent upon, the violence perpetrated against the people of Bosnia. Thus the rubble of Bosnia is an element of genocide or war, rather than a phenomenon in its own right (Shaw, this volume). And yet we should be wary of "thinking in terms of 'collateral damage,' incidental to the general mayhem of warfare" (Riedlmayer, 1995). The urban fabric of Bosnia was targeted deliberately, a fact attested to by the manner in which the violence against the architecture of Bosnia was disproportionate to the task of killing the people of Bosnia.

"It is the expected thing to say that people come first," notes Adams. "And they do, but the survival of architecture and urban life are important to the survival of people" (Adams, 1993: 390). The widespread destruction of urban fabric is the destruction of a *common, shared* space. Insofar as the dynamic of ethnic cleansing is that of the carving out of separate, ethnically homogeneous and self-determining territorial entities, it comprises a denial of common space through a destruction of that which attests to a record of sharing spaces – the heterogeneity of cultural heritage and the intermingling of civilian bodies. And yet the fundamental question for Bosnia is that of sharing a common space. Insofar as this is the demand made upon all those who observe, intervene in, or live in Bosnia, it can only be achieved if a common, shared space exists. And thus the question of the destruction of urban environments, or urbicide, cannot be allowed to be subordinated to questions of ethnic cleansing/genocide.

In this chapter, therefore, I will address the widespread destruction or urbicide to which Bosnian towns and cities were subjected. I will outline a conceptual understanding of urbicide and the role of such destruction in the politics of ethnonationalism. It will be shown that the urban destruction that characterized this conflict cannot be understood according to extant explanations. This necessitates the introduction of the concept of urbicide. Urbicide will be defined as the destruction of the urban insofar as it is the arena in which an encounter with difference occurs. I will then argue that, in Bosnia, urbicide was part of the ethnonationalist program to eradicate difference in order to create and naturalize the idea of separate, antagonistic, sovereign territorial entities.

Urban Destruction and its Interpreters

Given the scope of the destruction of urban environments during the 1992–5 Bosnian war, there have been a number of attempts to understand this violence and its place within the dynamics of this conflict. Within these responses to the destruction of urban fabric in Bosnia, it is possible to identify three common (though not self-consciously defined) interpretive themes. According to these interpretations, urban destruction can be understood as (a) collateral damage or military necessity, (b) the destruction of cultural heritage, or (c) a metaphor for certain concepts or values. I will briefly outline these three interpretations. I will show that these interpretations fail to grasp the meaning of the wholesale destruction of the urban environment and thus necessitate the introduction of a concept that grasps what is at stake in such violence. Urbicide represents precisely such a concept. This examination of conventional interpretations of urban destruction will, therefore, set out the need for an outline of the conceptual contours and political logic of urbicide. (On the notion of a "political logic" see Coward, 2002: 35–7.)

Collateral damage and military necessity

Perhaps the most conventional interpretation of the devastation of the urban environment in Bosnia conceives of the destruction as either collateral damage or as the result of militarily necessary actions. "Collateral damage" refers to "incidental casualties and... property damage" that result from military action (Rogers, 1996: 15). Collateral damage "occurs when attacks targeted at military objectives cause civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects" (Fischer, 1999). Of principle importance in understanding the idea of collateral damage is that it is an unintended (or incidental) consequence of military action. Even where a military action is clearly seen to risk such destruction, in order for any resultant destruction to be classified as collateral damage it must be assumed that the resultant destruction was, despite the risk, unintended.

The destruction of buildings in Bosnia could thus be seen as incidental to the military action undertaken in the 1992–5 war. According to such an interpretation, bridges, mosques, and churches, houses, public buildings, and so on, would have been unintentionally destroyed in the course of legitimate military actions. Given the nature of the combat in the Bosnian war (a large part of which was in urban environments), it could be argued that military action risked, but did not intend, the incidental destruction of the urban fabric. This argument would depend upon the idea that the military actions in which such incidental damage occurred were seeking legitimate military gains and, while risking urban devastation, did not intend this to occur.

Such an idea introduces into the interpretation of urban destruction the idea of military necessity. "Military necessity" can be broadly defined as "those measures which are indispensable for securing the ends of the war,

and which are lawful according to the modern laws and usages of war" (Lieber, quoted in Rogers, 1996: 4).[3] In the case of the 1992–5 Bosnian war, it could be argued that certain buildings were lawfully destroyed in order to achieve certain military ends. The clearest case in which such an argument might apply is in relation to bridges.

Bridges are often destroyed in military conflict and are commonly taken to constitute a military (as opposed to civilian) object. A bridge, it is argued, comprises a link in logistics networks. In order to weaken the enemy, or achieve the objectives of war, it is legitimate to attack the logistical structure that supports an opponent's war effort. The destruction of a building (a bridge) that might only seem to have incidental military use, can, therefore, be justified as militarily necessary.

Such an argument was prominent during the NATO bombardment of Serbia in 1999. In April 1999, at the beginning of its military action against Serbia, NATO destroyed a number of bridges, including road and rail bridges across the Danube in both Novi Sad and Belgrade. Air Commodore Wilby justified the destruction as militarily necessary, noting that "bridges... have been selected because they are major lines of communication and... affect resupply of... troops [the Serbian military or the MUP (Serbian special police units)]... So... I would say... that all our targets have been justifiably... military targets" (NATO, April 6). The destruction of bridges and other buildings in Bosnia could, similarly, be justified according to the logic of military necessity. That is, the argument could be used that the buildings destroyed represented elements in logistical networks, and, hence, militarily legitimate targets.

Neither of these interpretations seems very satisfactory, however, in the context of the 1992–5 Bosnian war. Though they may offer superficial justification for the destruction of *certain* buildings, they do not adequately account for the widespread destruction of urban fabric. The argument that this destruction comprises collateral damage sustained in the pursuit of legitimate military objectives can be easily refuted through the findings of the *Information Reports on War Damage to the Cultural Heritage in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina*, delivered to the Council of Europe's Committee on Culture and Education by the Parliamentary Assembly Sub-Committee on Architectural and Artistic Heritage. In respect of the destruction of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, for example, the fourth *Information Report* notes: "it is fair to presuppose that the shelling was carried out to plan: the Institute was directly targeted" (Council of Europe, 1994). In relation to the destruction of the minarets of mosques in Bosnia, the first *Information Report* notes: "It may have been inevitable that mosques in a military 'front' zone would be hit, but it is highly doubtful that a minaret can be brought down with a single large caliber shell, which implies a certain amount of deliberate targeting on these structures" (Council of Europe, 1993). That

the urban fabric of Bosnia was deliberately and not incidentally targeted is confirmed by the conclusion of the fourth *Information Report*: "the small historic core of Mostar... was clearly targeted by the heaviest guns available to the HVO [Bosnian Croat army/paramilitaries]" (Council of Europe, 1994).

If the destruction of the urban fabric of Bosnia cannot be understood as collateral damage, can it be seen as militarily necessary? This argument is even easier to refute than that of collateral damage. For the destruction of all of these buildings to have been militarily necessary they would have had to have played some form of role in the logistics networks of the various armies in Bosnia. There are instances in which such arguments may be credible. For example, the destruction of the central post office in Sarajevo, or the modern road bridges over the Neretva in Mostar, could be seen as attacks on legitimate military targets.

However, the destruction of urban fabric is more widespread than these key buildings. Buildings of no military significance were regularly and deliberately shelled. Moreover, the shelling covered a wide variety of buildings: housing, public institutions, cultural monuments, utility buildings, open spaces. In *Just and Unjust Wars* Waltzer talks about strategy as "a language of justification"(Waltzer, 1992: 13). We could see military necessity in a similar light. Claims that the destruction of a target was militarily necessary are *post hoc* narratives that seek to justify the destruction. In cases such as Sarajevo's central post office or the Neretva road bridges, such narratives are convincing, since they can align themselves with the commonly understood meanings of what constitutes a military object or a military objective. However, in the case of the destruction of the urban fabric in which so much damage was done to buildings that could serve no such purposes, such narratives do not really serve to justify or explain the destruction of the urban fabric.

The destruction of cultural heritage

The second of the three interpretations of the destruction of urban fabric that I want to examine arises in relation to the destruction of the cultural heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Accounts of the destruction of cultural heritage see it as an element of ethnic cleansing, or the attempt to remake "Bosnia-Herzegovina as a series of small, pure ethnic states" (Council of Europe, 1994). Cultural heritage is destroyed because it represents heterogeneous identities and thus what must be destroyed in order to achieve the aim of ethnic purity in a particular territory.

Andras Riedlmayer's work provides a particularly cogent example of an interpretation of urban destruction through the framework of extant

understandings concerning the protection of cultural heritage. Riedlmayer argues that although our attention focuses on the people of Bosnia, "we should also take a look at the rubble." This rubble, he argues, "signifies more than the ordinary atrocities of war... Rubble in Bosnia and Herzegovina signifies nationalist extremists hard at work to eliminate not only the human beings and living cities, but also the memory of the past" (Riedlmayer, 1994: 16). This elimination of the memory of the past, argues Riedlmayer, is an integral element of ethnic cleansing. Riedlmayer argues that though "we are... told that 'ancient hatreds' are what fuel the destruction... this is not true": the museums, libraries, mosques, churches, and monuments "speak eloquently of centuries of pluralism... in Bosnia... It is this evidence of a successfully shared past that the nationalists seek to destroy" (Riedlmayer, 1994: 16). It is the nature of the ethnonationalist project, the project that gave birth to ethnic cleansing, that drives this destruction.

Ethnonationalism seeks to naturalize the idea that the so-called "ethnic" groups in Bosnia are fated to live separate existences. The myth of "ancient hatreds" installs the idea that ethnic groups were always distinct and in antagonistic relationships. Ethnonationalist ideas of separation and ethnic purity are the logical outcome of the acceptance of this idea. However, such ideas are simply the myths on which the ethnonationalist edifice is built. Indeed, as I have noted, Bosnia has a long history of pluralism and coexistence between these supposedly distinct and incompatible ethnic groups (Hayden, 1996: 788–90). The urban environment in cities such as Sarajevo and Mostar are testament to the pluralism/heterogeneity of Bosnia. The coexistence of Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and vernacular buildings is a constant reminder that the nationalist project of ethnic separateness is a present-day fiction belied by the past. Thus, to paraphrase Riedlmayer, ethnonationalists sought to destroy evidence of a successfully shared past in order to legitimize a contemporary goal of ethnic separateness.

This account seems to get closer to the theme of the destruction of the shared spaces of Bosnia-Herzegovina than the interpretation of destruction as the result of either collateral damage or military necessity. Indeed, this account understands the destruction of certain buildings as part of the logic of ethnonationalism that has at its heart the destruction of the conditions of possibility of pluralism, key among which is the evidence of coexistence provided by the built environment of Bosnia.

However, this account suffers from its focus upon the symbolic cultural heritage of Bosnia. In other words it focuses only upon the buildings whose loss is judged to be a cultural loss. This means that the buildings for which concern is shown are those that were striking examples of a particular cultural influence upon the pluralist history of Bosnia. Ancient mosques, National Library buildings, and 400-year-old bridges are the subject of this account, as it is these that are the symbolic reminders of the pluralist

culture of Bosnia. However, the destruction of the urban environment is more widespread than these symbolic buildings. Indeed, it encompasses buildings that have no distinctive cultural value, or are of indistinct cultural provenance (the bland modernism of the Unis Co. tower blocks in Sarajevo are an example; see plate 8.3).[4] These buildings could not really be said to represent the cultural heritage of Bosnia. And thus the interpretation of urban destruction as an attack on cultural heritage provides only a partial (though striking) account of the destruction of the urban environment in Bosnia.

Plate 8.3 The Unis Co. buildings, next to the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 1997. These buildings also provide the front cover picture for Silber and Little's *The Death of Yugoslavia* (1995). Image © Martin Coward.

Signs of Balkanization

The third and final interpretation of urban destruction that I want to examine does not treat the ruins in themselves as material symbols of a culture, but, rather, as signs evocative of ideas and values (concepts). This interpretation is, therefore, a *semiotic* understanding that treats the destruction of buildings as a sign that refers to a concept.[5] This interpretation also focuses on the destruction of symbolic instances of cultural heritage and is best seen in responses to the destruction of the Stari Most – or Old Bridge – in Mostar.

For observers of the 1992–5 Bosnian war, the ruined Stari Most (and the rubble of Bosnia in general) signified in graphic fashion the *Balkanization* of Bosnia. According to Der Derian, "Balkanization is generally understood to be the break up of larger political units into smaller, mutually hostile states which are exploited or manipulated by more powerful neighbors" (Der Derian, 1992: 146–50). The destruction of the Stari Most gave such an idea exemplary form. That is, the destruction of the last remaining bridge between the two halves of Mostar was performed by a group manipulated by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and effectively sealed the creation of two mutually hostile entities (east and west Mostar).

The division of Bosnia into ever smaller, homogenous ethnic territories was clearly represented in the gulf opened up between the two banks of the Neretva River by the destruction of the Stari Most. However, the Balkanization that this sign represented had an additional stratum of meaning. The destruction of the elegant Ottoman bridge not only signified the violent social and political fragmentation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also the supposedly "Balkan" character of the violence by which this fragmentation was being achieved. That is, this destruction confirmed the stereotypes that observers held of those who were executing this Balkanization.[6] In this way the fallen Stari Most came to represent the savagery and barbarity of the Bosnian war: the failure of (European) civilization to extend into the Balkans. This idea framed the political imagination of those observing the conflict. Talk of "ancient animosities" was given new life by this supposed sign of ferocious barbarity. Leaders of Western, "civilized" nations threw their hands up in despair, reasoning that intervention was futile insofar as the inhabitants of Bosnia did not seem (given such acts of destruction) to share even the basic values of civilization. It was therefore argued that the various factions at war in Bosnia should be left to fight this conflict out among themselves.[7]

The problem with this interpretation of the rubble of Bosnia is that the destruction is not treated as an event worthy of attention in its own right. Rather, the rubble is appropriated as a sign connotative of a more general concept. While urban destruction may serve as the sign for several concepts, noting this does not get us any closer to understanding the meaning of the destruction of urban fabric. Which is to say that the destruction of shared space may become the sign that frames certain political imaginaries in relation to this war. However, we deny ourselves crucial political possibilities if we simply accept those significatory stories, since we accept that this destruction is interesting only insofar as it connotes the dissolution of political communities or the savagery of this fragmentation.

Urbicide

The partial and flawed nature of the three interpretations of the destruction of urban fabric in Bosnia reviewed above suggests that the destruction of urban fabric in Bosnia should be treated as a conceptual problematic in its own right. In a publication entitled *Mostar '92 – Urbicid* (1992) a group of Bosnian architects highlighted the need for addressing urban destruction as a conceptual problematic in its own right.[8]

It is necessary, therefore, to inquire into the meaning of the term "urbicide" (the Anglicization of the Serbo-Croat *Urbicid*). Urbicide derives its meaning from the collocation of "urban" with the epithet "-cide." Taken literally, urbicide refers to the "killing," "slaughter," or "slaying" of that which is subsumed under the term "urban" (OED). At stake in the meaning of "urbicide," therefore, is what is to be understood in the concept of "the urban," what it is that is destroyed in this act of "killing the urban." "Urban," derived from the Latin *urbanus*, refers to that which is "characteristic of, occurring or taking place, in a city or town" (OED). The experience of city life, or "following the pursuits [and] having the ideas or sentiments . . . characteristic of town or city life" comprises urbanity (OED). It is important to note the way in which urbanity derives its meaning through an opposition with a rural way of life.[9] Examination of this opposition will reveal the principal distinguishing feature of urbanity.

According to the opposition urban–rural, the city represents modern progress, while rural life is taken to exemplify the constraints of tradition that modernity is supposed to sweep away. Durkheim, for example, claims that "nowhere have the traditions less sway over minds. Indeed . . . cities are the uncontested homes of progress; it is in them that ideas, fashions, customs, new needs are elaborated and then spread over the rest of the country . . . No ground is more favorable to evolutions of all sorts" (Durkheim, 1933: 296). This urban–rural opposition echoes with early sociological attempts to grasp the phenomenon of modernity. Such attempts oppose the supposed organic unity of traditional, premodern societies to the heterogeneity that is associated with capitalist modernity. Tönnie's

concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, for example, exemplify this opposition (Karp, Stone, and Yoels, 1991: 8–12). Where *Gemeinschaft* represents premodern social order, *Gesellschaft* represents the modern, specifically capitalist, social order. *Gemeinschaft* represents a homogeneous feudal order "bound by shared values and... traditions," *Gesellschaft* refers to a social order characterized by "heterogeneity of values and traditions" (Karp, Stone, and Yoels, 1991: 9).

This idea of *heterogeneity* is also at stake in the concept of the urban, or urbanity. In "Urbanism as a way of life," Louis Wirth argues that it is the size, density, and heterogeneity of the populations of cities that constitute "those elements of urbanism which mark it as a distinctive mode of life" (Wirth, 1996: 190). Despite naming three factors that characterize urbanity, it is heterogeneity that is its principal aspect according to Wirth. Indeed, the size of an urban population is pertinent insofar as it leads to a greater number of different identities and associations and thus heterogeneity of tradition and belief. Moreover, density of the urban population is important insofar as it is gives rise to a greater frequency of encounters between these heterogeneous traditions and beliefs. *Heterogeneity*, then, can be said to be the defining characteristic of urbanity.

Thus, if we identify urbanity as entailing, principally, heterogeneous existence, we can say that the destruction of urban life is the destruction of heterogeneity. The destruction of urban fabric is, therefore, the destruction of the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity. What is at stake in urbicide – the destruction of the buildings which establish common/shared spaces in which plural communities live their lives – is thus the destruction of the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity.

Before moving on to examine the political consequences of this destruction of the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity, it is necessary to delineate the manner in which urbicide consists of two distinct phases. It is in this respect that there is a certain kinship between urbicide and genocide. In defining genocide, Raphael Lemkin argued that this "practice of extermination of national and ethnic groups" can be understood as consisting of two distinct phases. First, the "destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group" and second, "imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor" (Lemkin, 1944: 79).

It is the manner in which genocide is directed at the destruction of a national group that is its defining feature. This defining feature led Lemkin to conclude that in genocide, violence "is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group" (Lemkin, 1944: 79).

The concept of "genocide" thus entails *an understanding of destruction in relation to that which is destroyed*. It is implicit in our understanding of killing as part of the logic of genocide that we do not simply see the killing of *each* individual as a *means* to the end of extermination. In fact it is not *extermination* – however (in)complete this may be – which defines genocide.[10] Rather, what we understand to be the meaning of "genocide" is played out in *each and every* death, *each and every time*. Since genocide is enacted in each and every death it expresses a relation between what is destroyed and the meaning of destruction that is other than the simple death of the individual. It is integral to our understanding of "genocide" that we recognize what "it" is that is destroyed, and the meaning of the destruction. In genocide "it" is a member of a national or ethnic group and the destruction has the meaning of the eradication of this group.

It is precisely here that the simultaneous kinship and difference between urbicide and genocide can be noted. Like genocide, urbicide derives its meaning from the relationship between the destruction and what "it" is that is destroyed. However, what "it" is that is destroyed is distinct from that which is destroyed in genocide.

If we draw on the previous definition of urbicide, it is possible to outline the relationship of destruction to that which is destroyed that gives urbicide its specific conceptual logic. Put simply, urbicide entails the destruction of buildings and urban fabric as elements of urbanity. Buildings are destroyed because they are the condition of possibility of urbanity. Since urbanity is constituted by heterogeneity, urbicide comprises the destruction of the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity. Moreover, this destruction is, like genocide a two-phase affair. First, the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity are destroyed, followed by the imposition of homogeneity.

Having thus outlined the conceptual contours of urbicide, namely that it comprises a destruction of the buildings as the conditions of possibility of heterogeneity in order to establish homogeneity, it is necessary to set out the political consequences of my argument.

From Agonism to Antagonism: The Politics of Urbicide

In order to understand the politics of urbicide in Bosnia it is necessary to understand what is at stake in this destruction. If the above outline of urbicide is correct, buildings were destroyed in the 1992–5 Bosnian war insofar as they were elements of urbanity. Insofar as heterogeneity is the defining feature of urbanity, urbicide comprises the destruction of buildings as the conditions of possibility for such heterogeneity. It is possible, therefore, to say that it is heterogeneity that is at stake in urbicide, in the destruction of each and every building. I would like, therefore, to turn my attention to the stakes of urbicide: heterogeneity.

The heterogeneity at stake in urbicide might better be described as an "agonism." The common, shared spaces of urban environments are the condition of possibility for the agonistic coexistence of identities. The concept of agonism is developed by William Connolly in his discussion of "agonistic democracy." "Agonistic democracy," according to Connolly, "affirms the indispensability of identity to life, disturbs the dogmatization of identity, and folds care for... diversity... into the strife and interdependence of identity/difference" (Connolly, 1991: x).

For Connolly, agonism refers to the manner in which existence is a network of relations between identity and difference. Identities never exist in isolation from a constitutive otherness, or alterity, against which identity is defined. Self, according to Connolly, is constituted in relation to the non-self by constituting limits at which the self ends and the other begins. In this sense, however, such identity is constantly contested by alterity. Difference threatens to undo efforts at self-identity or presence, by contesting the boundaries of the self, the points at which self is differentiated from its other(s). This contestation constitutes existence as a continual performance of identity in relations to its other(s). Insofar as this performance takes place in the context of difference (many performances of self in relations to many others), existence is heterogeneous.

Insofar as existence is characterized by agonistic heterogeneity it is characterized, to borrow from Foucault, by "reciprocal incitation and struggle... a permanent provocation" (Foucault, 1982: 222). That is, alterity provokes identity into defining its boundaries, as it is only through the definition of the borders of identity/difference that identity can perform itself. Moreover, these borders are constantly contested by alterity and must be reperformed in order to maintain the presence of identity. Tone Bringa notes that everyday Bosnian life prior to the 1992–5 war was an agonistic existence in which identities of any kind were formed in relation to the continual provocation of difference (Bringa, 1995).

It is this provocation that ethnonationalism seeks to eradicate. Ethnonationalism seeks to establish identities free of any relation to difference: ethnically pure, homogenous identities that do not have to exist in a relationship of provocation with their others. Indeed, ethnonationalism denies the existence of a relationship between itself and others. This denial is the basis on which ethnonationalism exists, since to admit of such a relationship would be to admit to a heterogeneity (or plurality) that would radically contest the program of ethnic separateness and purity that ethnonationalism represents.

Urbicide thus comprises a denial of the agonistic heterogeneity that characterizes urbanity. It is this denial that comprises the principle political aim of ethnonationalism. The destruction of urban fabric transforms agonistic heterogeneity into the *antagonism of separate ethnicities*. That is, urban

destruction transforms the agonistic provocation (and interdependence between identity and difference) into the stalemate of antagonism. Antagonism has the appearance of a stalemate between opposing parties that, were they not in a confrontation, would be able to exist without each other. It is this appearance of separateness that ethnonationalists intend to create through urbicide.

Urbicide carves out the urban environment into enclaves in order to deny the agonism of urbanity. In so doing, urbicide creates antagonistic enclaves. Urbicide is thus a crucial element in the self-justifying logic of ethnonationalism. According to this circular logic, the product of urbicide (antagonistic enclaves) is the justification for the act of urbicide (the creation of ethnically homogeneous territorial entities). The antagonistic enclaves that give ethnic separateness the appearance of being natural, are the "mystical foundation of authority," or justification, for the ethnic homogenizations of ethnonationalism of which urbicide is a central aspect.[11] The event of urbicide (the denial of agonism) is thus founded on its result (antagonistically separate enclaves) in a self-referring cycle.

As I noted above, urbicide transforms agonism into antagonism in two phases. In the first phase, agonism is destroyed through the widespread destruction of urban fabric. In the second phase, ethnic homogeneity is established through the constitution of remaining urban elements as separate from, and antagonistically related to, any alterity. In particular, two distinct types of urbicidal logic occur. First, there is the razing of cities and towns (or areas within those urban environments) such that (the possibility of) alterity is eliminated. Second, there is the division of cities and towns such that agonism can be transformed into antagonism.

Urbicide is thus responsible for the emergence of either dead zones or zones of separation. In Mostar, for example, a zone of separation was created along the confrontation line, a wide straight boulevard, that served to carve the city into two antagonistic enclaves and give the impression of ethnic separateness (Plunz, Baratloo, and Conrad, 1998: 62–9). Furthermore, in towns across Bosnia, ethnonationalists destroyed the houses of those they had displaced with dynamite or by burning. This action (which continued after the end of the war) eradicated the traces of alterity from the ethnonationalists' statelets (International Crisis Group, 1997).

Concluding Remarks

The politics of urbicide can thus be summarized as follows. Urbicide is the destruction of urban fabric insofar as it comprises the conditions of possibility of urbanity. Urbanity is characterized by an agonistic heterogeneity in which identity is constituted in relation to difference. Urbicide, in

destroying the conditions of possibility of urbanity, denies such heterogeneity. This denial is accomplished by transforming agonism into antagonism and thus giving the impression of having dissipated the relationship of identity to difference. Only in this way can the ethnonationalists who practice urbicide create the fiction of ethnic separateness/purity on which their statelets are founded.

Notes

1 "Bosniac" is more adequate in describing those who were the victims of the genocidal violence of the Bosnian Serb Army and militias than the somewhat mistaken designation of "Muslim." "Bosniac" can be defined, following Sells, as "all residents of the internationally recognized sovereign nation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, regardless of their religious affiliation, who consider themselves Bosnian, that is, who remain loyal to a Bosnian state built on the principles of civic society and religious pluralism" (Sells, 1996: xiv). Just as the Jews were not the only victims of the Holocaust, so those who could be identified as Muslim were not the only victims of the Bosnian Serbs. Indeed, in most discourses "Muslim" is deployed as a catch-all category for all those who found themselves to be opposed to, victims of, or excluded from, the Bosnian-Serb ethnonationalist program. See also in this regard Bringa's comments on the evolution of *Bosnjac* identity (Bringa, 1995: 34–6).

2 The destruction of the Stari Most was one of the most prominent images of the 1992–5 Bosnian war. This Ottoman bridge was deliberately shelled until it collapsed on November 9, 1993 (see Coward, 2002: 29–33).

3 The laws and usages of war of concern for the argument in this chapter are principally, though not entirely, contained in the 1949 Geneva Conventions (and their 1977 Additional Protocols) and the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property (see Roberts and Guelff, 2000: 195–405, 419–512).

4 See *Warchitecture* (1993) for further examples of the modernist/vernacular/everyday buildings destroyed in the shelling of Sarajevo.

5 For an account of semiology – the scholarly study that defines the *semiotic* – see Culler (1986: 90–106).

6 Regarding the manner in which "Balkan" stereotypes define perceptions of the character of various Yugoslavs, see Bakic-Hayden and Hayden (1992) and Todorova (1997).

7 This view can be seen in the words of a spokesperson for the American Republican leadership, who stated: "I see no reason to send young men over there to lose their lives over something we can do nothing about. These people have been fighting for centuries." ("The Silent Opposition", *New York Times*, November 27, 1995; quoted in Campbell, 1998a: 52).

8 Extracts of this publication were published as "Mostar '92 – Urbicide" (1993).

9 This opposition is explicit in Louis Wirth's definition of the urban experience; cf.: "The city and the country may be regarded as two poles in reference to one or the other of which all human settlements tend to arrange themselves" (Wirth, 1996: 190).

10 Indeed, "although Lemkin's conception included the physical extermination of targeted groups, this was, in his view, only the *most extreme* technique of genocide" (Orentlicher, 1999; my emphasis).

11 On the "mystical foundation of authority" see Derrida (1992). I would like to thank David Campbell for pointing out the manner in which the enclave serves as the ground on which ethnonationalism, and thus urbicide, is predicated.

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