

The Second generation's imagery of the Bosnian war (1992-1995)

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Abstract: *“What became of my parents during the war?” “How did the war world look?”*

These are the questions many children of war survivors ask themselves while reconstructing their family's war past. In the absence of a coherent war narrative, children find answers to these questions in everyday exchanges with their parents. Parents' illness, flashbacks, dreams, war jokes and artefacts inform the answers to these questions. In daily interaction between parents and children, children translate the fragments coming in the form of bodily symptoms, acts of speech and artefacts into a comprehensive version of their parents' biography. The process of decoding meaning resembles the reconstruction of the meaning of a dream. Through the displacement and condensation of meaning, acts and objects introduce the various aspects of the war as experienced by each survivor. While linking these acts and objects to their own lived experience in order to grasp the war past of their parents, children of war survivors from Bosnia and Herzegovina create five metaphors of the war: a scene with no people, an attack on the family home, survival at the expense of personal integrity, a dirty job assigned to heroes and faceless horror. This paper examines the meaning of these metaphors in relation to identity construction.

Keywords: war, imagination, children, memory, identity

This article examines the second generation's imagery of war as constructed in reference to their parents lived experience. It explains how children's notion of violence, survival, relationships and loss is being constructed in the context of the war past of their parents. By examining the second generation's imagery of war, the paper promises to give insight into the question of identity formation as shaped by a troubled past. The text draws on data collected in 2012 in 26 Bosnian families of different ethno-religious backgrounds. Methodologically, it relies on the qualitative research techniques of the semi-structured family and individual interviews, and the genogram--the informed interpretation of children's drawings and participant observation.

Survivor parents' memories of war

During one of my home visits to a Bosnian family in the Sarajevo neighborhood of Švrakino Selo, a mother who had been diagnosed with depression, started complaining about her recurrent depressive states. The father, who was sitting opposite her, tried to comfort his wife, explaining that all these misfortunes were a direct consequence of the war. In answer to my question about the link between the mother's depression and the war, she made some unclear gesture around her neck. Their eight year old daughter, who was playing next to her mother, looked at her, yet trying to hide her curiosity. The mother's desire to explain what her husband meant resulted in a short pantomimic performance showing the hanging of a man followed by the word 'uncle'. Everything was done so that the girl could not see her mother's face. The child remained puzzled but did not ask any questions. The mother continued her narrative, clarifying that she had been unwell ever since the end of the war. By the end of my home visit, the daughter said she was feeling unwell too and suspected that she had caught a cold at school.

I have used this example because it beautifully demonstrates how experiences of the Bosnian-Herzegovina war (1992-5) are recalled incoherently by the survivor parents and are

not organized in a comprehensive narrative. As such they are transmitted to the second generation as fragments that come in the form of a bodily symptom, behavioral acts and war-related objects. When faced with these fragments in the framework of their daily interaction with their parents, children of survivors combine bits of historical truth with their imagination in order to create a more coherent version of history. In the example given above, the mother's pantomimic performance delivered the meaning of violence and alluded to the change the war had brought to her family and her health. Although this performance created the feeling of encountering a lived history, it was staged in silence and produced a powerful but rather puzzling effect on her daughter. On the whole, the experience of watching such a performance consisted of the thrill of pre-mature discovery of forbidden content and the suspicion that some parts of the story remained unshared. (Auerhahn and Laub 1998)

Why are children receptive of such material? In order to ensure intergenerational continuity and thus become part of a given family at a given moment, children seek information about the missing bits of their parents' past. Furthermore, children of war survivors connect to their parents by seconding the parents' feelings with regards to the loss. This is demonstrated by the illness of both mother and daughter in the example above but also by quotes from the interviews with other children such as the one of a 15-year old girl from Sarajevo: "I often post war-related songs on the Facebook wall of my dad. When I see him crying, I also cry."

Drawing on these observations, I suggest that children of war survivors struggle to reconstruct the story of their parents' war past in order to restore time continuity and develop their identity as a descendant of a given family (Bos 2003; Connerton 1989). They create their own imagery about the way the war looked, the position their parents had in it and the effect it had on people.

Children of survivors: imagining the untold

While reconstructing their family's war past, children are most concerned with violence, survival, the quality of relationships and loss. These topics position their parents' generation towards issues of heroism, betrayal, murder and suffering and provide the children with points of reference when creating their own system of values. On the whole, children present the war as an anonymous plan for destruction, the import of violence into the most private corners of the home, a fragmentizing and dissociating experience that prevents people from coming out of the war world as integrated persons, a dirty job assigned to heroes and a faceless horror that annihilates meaning and humanness. The following paragraphs discuss in detail each of these five metaphors.

The war as a scene

The image of the war as a scheme where there is no room for people is manifested in black-and-white cityscapes that are completely devoid of human beings. Such imagery is dominated by the idea of the war as a military plan that annihilates interpersonal relationships.

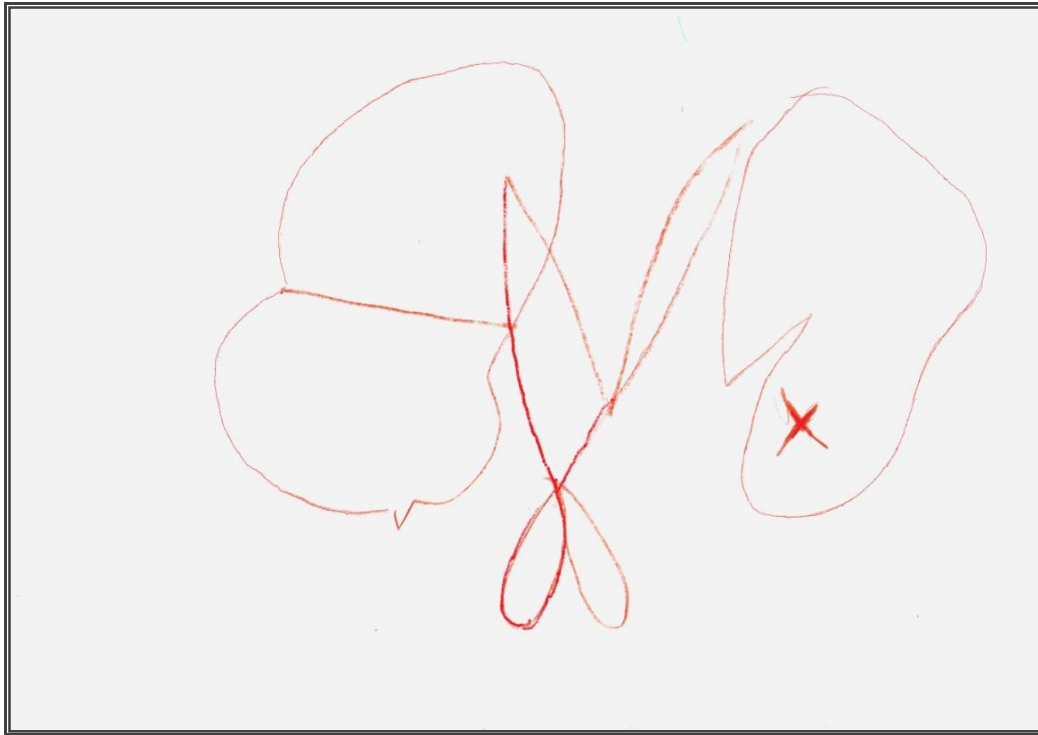


Fig. 1: Female, 6, Sarajevo.

The drawing in Figure 1 represents the map of the home country, which is being cut into two pieces: Bosnia and Herzegovina to the left (also presented as divided by a horizontal line into Bosnia *and* Herzegovina) and Serbia and Croatia to the right. The capital city of this entity is marked with a cross. The drawing is in orange pencil only. The father in this family fought at the front during the war. The dominant explanation of the reasons for the war in the family is a political one. Yet, the scars on the body of the father associate with the violent (cutting) component of warfare. The girls' narrative is the following:

The war began when some other country started (the war); they attacked our country. I will show you how. This is Bosnia and this is the other country. This is a pair of scissors that cut the country in two pieces. Just like this! The country that attacked is here (the geographical location of Serbia). This is Croatia. And this is how Bosnia is separated from Herzegovina (drawing the horizontal line).



Fig. 2: Male, 11, Sarajevo

The drawing in Figure 2 represents the city during the war. There are no people and the drawing is in black pencil only. Objects are outlined. The cityscape is dominated by the outlines of ruined buildings, exploding bombs and bullets. One building in the upper right corner is marked with a cross. The father of this family served at the front during the war. The dominant war metaphors in the family are his flashbacks, self-destructive acts, drug addiction, the veterans' gatherings and his war drawings. The father has taken his children to the mountains to show them where he served in the army. The boy's narrative is fragmented and switches from present-day reality to the reality of the war:

Normally, I draw better, but now I don't have the time. (...) Anyhow, I will try... Dad asked me to talk to you. People are hiding in shelters. These are bombs (the circles). Dad is not here; he is on the hill (fighting)... But I don't know how it looked. (...) Ah, I have to go to play football now. Dad was a very brave soldier. He has received a *ljiljan* for bravery shown in combat (medal with the Bosnian coats of arms).

Why are there no people in these drawings (see Figures 1 and 2)? Why do they represent monochromatic outlines of buildings and territories? Given children's general interest in the human figure and face, (Cox 1993; Di Leo 1983, 1973) I suggest that the representation of the violent break-up as a scheme devoid of people suggests difficulties in the interpretation of events rather than some historical truth or a difficulty in the representation of events.

Based on my therapeutic experience with children, I favor the hypothesis that the absence of people expresses children's difficulty in emotionally connecting to the subjects of their drawings and creating a symbolic representation. The difficulty in symbolizing possibly originates in the necessity to interpret the perspective of the parents who fought and suffered during the war. Thus, in order not to interpret the horror aspect of this perspective, the whole image and the story about it are denied by organizing the drawing around the non-animated world. Furthermore, in contrast to war drawings that represent people in action, such schemes avoid portraying the relationship between victims and perpetrators, thus preserving the

dignity and the goodness of the internal image of the parents. Finally, the schematic images desolate of people deliver the idea of some impossibility of seeing and being seen by the other which denies people's most fundamental expectation – the expectation of help, as there is virtually no one to respond to the victim's appeal.

The objects in these drawings are often two-dimensional and outlined in one color only. Such sketches and outlines of objects suggest the absence of meaning and feelings. Plans and schemes do not provide insight into the objects' interior, which is to say to their internal world. These simplified objects and the lack of a color scale that could be used to fill in their outline but is avoided indicate the absence of feelings and complexity. (Rorschach 1951: 98) By employing this scene scheme, children give information about how things looked, but not about how they felt. In this line of thought, schematic drawings can be seen as an expression of the external destruction and internal fragmentation their parents experienced during the war. The world of the war is seen as the collapse of the relationship between internal and external and the corresponding dismantling of people's integrity.

Why is the insight into the internal world of people avoided? Most of the drawings show closed windows, locked doors, no balconies and a lack of activities. I suggest that obtaining insight into the internal world of people during the war may reveal a scene as horrific as the war theater itself. This may indicate children's suspicion that the war had happened in the mind of their parents before it happened in the war zone. I further the idea that the schematic images of the war relate to the war's secrets and the forbidden questions children might ask.

Children's imagery of the war does not reflect their own experience but their parents' interpretation of the war. Connecting the drawings with parents' statements about "a plan for Yugoslavia's destruction" and their belief that the war befell them suddenly. I suggest that the schematic and topographic portrait of the war reflects the parents' view that the war was strategically planned by political elites and unexpected by locals. The strategy of replacing human figures with inanimate objects reflects the very nature of modern war. Some drawings are so schematic that they resemble the target seen by distant snipers or joystick pilots of remote-controlled drones that dehumanize the victim in order to inflict a higher death toll. (Sluka 2012, Robben 2012, Tambiah 1986) This is why schematic war drawings can be understood as shaped by the images of contemporary war available in film, idiom and other cultural representations. Such a connection exemplifies the interplay between private narratives of the war and its culturally constructed images internalized by children at a certain historical moment.

Attack on the family home



Fig. 3: Female, 12, Hadžići

The drawing in Figure 3 represents the family house during the war. The house is protected by a fence. All the windows and the door are closed. The girl first explains that this is how the house looked before the war, but then says that her parents are hiding inside the house until the shelling is over.

The family home drawings show the home as colorful and decorated with flowers. There are no images which directly link to the war. Yet, the theme of the family home is the second important theme in children's war imagery. Its frequent use reflects its culturally constructed significance. The house in children's drawings stands for the family home and is mostly opted for by girls and younger children (up to 12). In Serbo-Croatian language, the word for *house* (kuća) refers to both the building itself and the unit which inhabits it. (Bringa 1995: 42) Very often, the Bosnian home is inhabited by several families and symbolically represents the continuity of the family history and the connectedness between its members. Accordingly, the house in children's narratives is associated with a shelter and its destruction is synonymous to death. This is why the family house is shown surrounded by fences and walls. It has no windows and if it does, windows are protected by metal grids and are locked.

Why does the family home appear so colorful and decorated? In order to explain this discrepancy, I suggest a cultural and a psycho-social dimension to the interpretation of the house as a decorated shelter. The cultural dimension refers to the culturally constructed role of women that places them in relation to the home and the beautified. The psycho-social dimension is defined by the importance of the family home to children and particularly to pre-school and primary school children since the home represents their entire universe. Fences, walls, metal grids, and the absence of windows show the desire to protect their universe from destruction. With regards to the decoration of the home, I suggest two reasons for that: a re-construction of the parents' wartime attempt to preserve some sense of normality and an element of disguise. The preservation of normality refers to the fact that keeping flowerpots on the balcony helped people restore their sense of dignity by demonstrating their refusal to reduce life to bare physical survival. (Maček 2009: 76) By

using the flowers as some form of disguise, I mean that the house decoration in children's drawings serves as a camouflage for the horrific aspect of the war. Thus, while prettifying the facade of the house, children avoid thinking of the feelings and experiences of the people inside it. This can explain why those, who opted for the family house as a response to the task to make a war drawing, spent most of the time elaborating on the flowers.

The strategy to mask and prettify the horrific can be observed in the streets of Bosnian cities today (see Figure 4). The photograph below shows the current cityscape of Sarajevo, where a residential building - which still has the marks of shelling - is being 'masked' by graffiti and prettified by flowerpots.



Fig. 4: Sarajevo, 2012

Finally, I shall specifically focus on the walls and the grids that are meant to protect family home during the war since these are also attributes of prisons. Their extensive use suggests that in children's war imagery life preservation during the war often happens at the expense of the freedom of movement, thought and speech. These images correspond to their parents' frequent mention of the freedom they had during Yugoslavia, but lost after its breakup. Yet, there is a less obvious aspect of the prison metaphor of the war in children's drawings. Since the prison is also meant to protect society from deviancy, I speculate that the prison component in the image of the house-shelter indicates that people can protect society by isolating and locking in their own aggressive impulses.

Survival at the expense of integrity

The topic of survival in wartime is brought in by children when they try to imagine where the people might have gone if not in the streets of their home place. To my questions "Where are the people?" and "Who survives in wartime?" children generally answered that survival meant the opposite of cowardice, incompetence and social isolation. This

interpretation of survival shapes the image of the parents as skillful and brave, therefore able to survive.

Yet, the topic of survival reveals a more complex image of the survivor parent. This is due to the fact that survival is not imagined as personal integration but at the expense of it. The idea of war survivors' psychological disintegration is expressed through the image of the part-object and the narrative about the aspects of the parents' personality "that became disabled and ill," (female, 12, Sarajevo) which is to say that could not survive the war (see Figure 5).

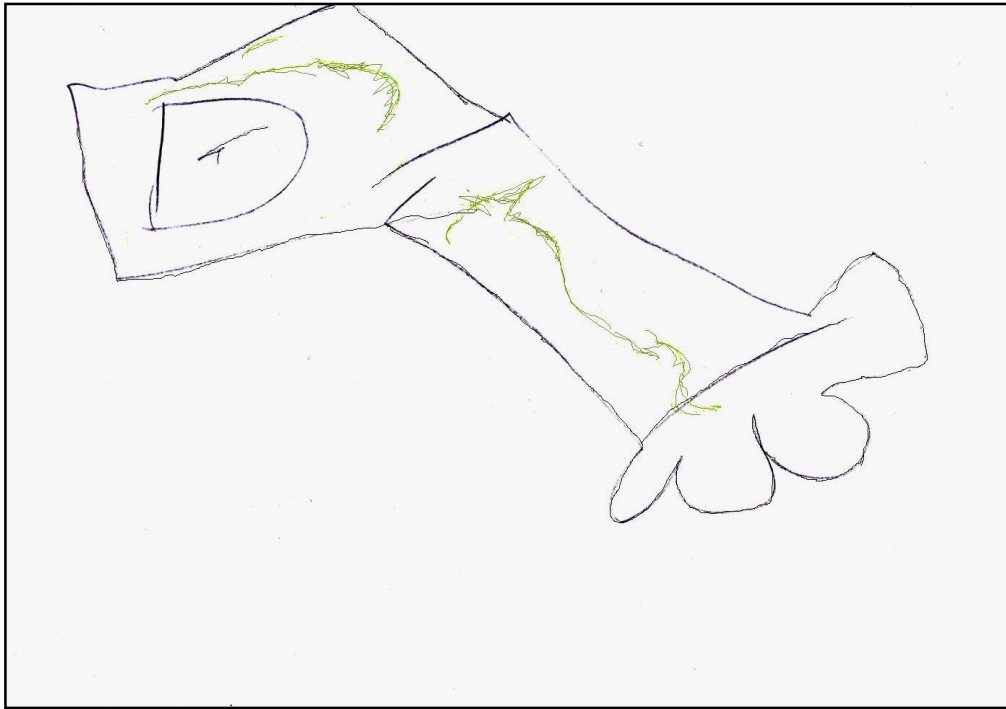


Fig. 5: Male, 11, Sarajevo

The drawing in Figure 5 represents a wartime portrait of the father. It is made in black and green pencil only. The drawing represents the father's arm and shoulder, with military embroidery on the upper part of the sleeve. The military embroidery is one of the objects which the father kept as a souvenir of his service. It is directly associated with the front. Another source of this imagery is a wartime photograph of the father in uniform with his left arm in the foreground. The boy's narrative is fragmented and each sentence refers to a different subject which is not necessarily in connection with the rest. One can re-design the narrative and still get its meaning. The narrative is the following:

Dad served in the army in the hills. I don't know how he looked. I know that there were other men in the unit. I know that the color of his uniform was green. Here it is. He only keeps the embroidery. It is in a drawer in the wardrobe. I have also seen Dad's medal. And I've seen a photograph of him, but it only shows him to the waist.

Many survivor parents experienced severe difficulties in their re-integration into society. Their post-traumatic marginalization is marked by self-harm, substance-abuse, withdrawal, feelings of helplessness, and suicide attempts. As a result, their children have experienced and internalized their parents' images as rather fragmented and disconnected. These images are constructed as never complete. I hold that post-war psychological

fragmentation feeds into children's perception of the parents as somewhat of a part-object, certain parts of whom were annihilated by the war, some were irreparably damaged, some changed, and some survived. (Klein 1946: 102) Yet, what remained of the parents does not represent him or her as they were before the war. In other words, what survived can be viewed as a partial representation of the whole, never complete and somehow disconnected. In drawings, the part-object imagery is expressed by leaving certain parts of the body outside the drawing while focusing on other parts (the arm in Figure 5). The drawing of an 11-year-old boy presented in Figure 5 illustrates the way he employs the part-object imagery in order to resolve his uncertainty about how the father looked, what he did during the war and what remained of him. The boy finds the solution to these questions in leaving parts of the figure outside the scene and parts of the action outside the narrative. He focuses on the part of the body of the father that mostly links to the war and which is best known from the pieces of clothing, narratives and photographs. In addition, since the father has been a heroin addict for several years after the war and addiction is said to have been a direct consequence of his war experience, his arms have possibly become the focus of the son's interest and reparatory wishes. The arms where the father had injected the heroin are a part-object representation of one aspect of his post-war personality: the war-related substance dependence.

A dirty job assigned to heroes



Fig. 6: Male, 8, Sarajevo

The drawing in Figure 6 presents the father who is shooting from the roof of a building against the enemy's planes (upper right corner). The mother is presented in the middle of the drawing in a red dress under the airstrike. There is another soldier to the left who is looking at the mother and shooting against a falling bomb. The father in this family has not served the army.

In children's war imagery parents were not passive victims but had a pro-active position towards the war. Normally, children's narrative about this position starts with the parents' braveness in combat and the daily supply of the home with goods. Keeping in mind the importance of the image of the father-hero to children, one can understand why most of

them explain their fathers' participation in the war with courage, patriotism and self-sacrifice. Boys in particular identify with such imagery and state that they would join the army themselves in case of a war. Going back to the drawing of the eight-year-old respondent (see Figure 6) and children's general excitement when they tackle the topic of the fighters' courage, I suggest that the heroic element in children's imagery reflects their wish to see the parents as the winners in a difficult competition. Such an image has a reparatory function since it helps children imagine that their traumatized parents *can* be admirable citizens. Second, the image of the courageous parent has an integrative function since it allows the horrific to emerge. In other words, the heroic imagery offers balance to and justification for the horrific component of the war experience.

Yet, in children's drawings the image of the hero often transformed into the one of the perpetrator. Thus, the boundaries between the heroic and the horrific aspect of the parents' participation in the war become blurred. The horrific aspect of the war links to the suspected violence in the parents' biography as demonstrated in the following quotation:

My father does not talk about the war; he has only showed me the places where he served the front. I asked him whether he had killed someone but I did not get an answer... Male, 15, Sarajevo.



Fig. 7: Female, 6, Sarajevo

The drawing in Figure 7 is said to represent the first day after the war. Yet, the narrative constantly moves back and forth in time. The building to the left stands for the family home where the girl and her mother are waiting for the father to come back from the front. The two blue windows are "so small that one can only stretch her arm outside to water the flowers." The girl draws the building and the flowers first. The flowers and the windows are elaborated with precision. She spends most of the time on the building's decoration and the garden outside. Next to appear is the parking lot in the lower right corner where three cars can be parked. It is worth mentioning that in reality the father is interested in motorsport. The girl starts from N1 and moves right to left to N3. Last she makes the figure of her father. Yet,

the figure is portrayed after my question “Are there any people in your drawing?” The narrative is the following:

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

I understand the war narrative as a personal myth of the war, therefore as a language and a communicative discourse. This is why we can examine the content of the drawing and the accompanying narrative in the same fashion that we examine the content of a myth or dream thoughts. (Levi-Strauss 1979: 22-23) Yet, the personal aspect of the myth requires that we take into account the personal cosmology of each respondent, therefore focus on the individual use of its structures. (Segal 2007:30; Kapferer 1988)

In order to acquire insight into the personal myth underlying a given drawing, I make a connection between the universal mythological themes featured in popular fairytales for children and children's imagery. I suggest that children grasp the world around them by linking mythological themes to their own lived experience. In the example above, I use the theme of the returning hero that exists in the oral tradition of many different cultures in order to illustrate the mythological grid through which my little respondent's narrative can be read. I advance the idea that there is an affinity between the father and the hero, the world of the war and the dirt, and the cars and gendered spaces of violence. It is this affinity that can help us access the metaphorical meaning of the story.

Since I interpret the material from the object relations perspective, I consider the inanimate world of the drawing in Figure 7 (flowers, cars and parking lot) to be an expression of the girl's internalized object relations. I also take into account the relationship she creates between herself and the very product of her imagination. In other words, the way the girl

handles the drawing, the precision with which she elaborates certain of its elements, the disregard of other elements, the interruptions and her exiting and re-entering the room are all key to the analysis.

The portrait of the war is created in retrospect and in constant reference to the war's aftermath. This is visible in the moves back and forth in time. Such oscillations in time signify the idea that the war can be understood belatedly and only in the context of its effects. Yet, as the narrative later shows, these effects are not always visible, and this is why they are left outside the picture (the cars at the carwash). The main theme of the narrative is that of the returning hero. Generally, this theme implies the motif of return from the uncanny where the hero was faced with the horrific but survived, and is now returning to the 'normal world.' (See also Maček 2009) The structure of the myth of the hero consists of several crucial elements: the call for heroic adventure, the journey, the hero's battle with evil that follows his descent into the underworld, the redemption of the feminine (a virgin or a female captive) and the return of the hero. As in the accounts of many other children throughout my fieldwork, the girl says that her father, who has been called out to defend his family, is now emerging from the battle as a victorious soldier. Although the six year old girl does not make direct mention of the hero's experience of the horrific, she links her father's military service to his wounded head and calls the war "an ugly thing" right at the beginning of her narrative. The redemption of the feminine is suggested by the image of the girl and her mother who are waiting for the father hero to return.

I suggest that in the story the heroic aspect of the war experience is tightly bound to the horrific. This connection is revealed through the use of the image of the dirty cars and by our previous knowledge about the hero's exposure to the uncanny as featured in the myth. A more direct link between the heroic and the horrific can be found in this narrative from a 15-year-old boy:

My father joined the army because he was a patriot. He went to the front to defend the city, his family and his friends. And also his unit... I imagine life in the unit in the following manner: first they open a map, exactly as soldiers do in films; then they look at the targets. Dad served a special unit, which means that they had the most difficult missions and had to support other units if needed. So, he saved the life of many civilians. I don't know whether he harmed anybody. But I imagine that it was horrible to see corpses.

Drawing on the conclusions above, I advance the hypothesis that the image of the hero in the girl's imagery becomes bound to the image of the horrific. Working from the hypothesis that the inanimate world of the drawing is an expression of the girl's internalized object relations, I suggest that flowers, cars and buildings stand for people and the relations between them. Mention of the cars that are still waiting to be washed suggests the post-war world's need to be cleansed of the traces of violence. This world is experienced as a place that has the potential to rebuild life (to grow flowers), but also as a place of the corrupt (it cheats people with the color of these flowers). I suggest that in the child's fantasy, the current Bosnian reality has the potential to repair the damage done by the war, but there is doubt over whether it can offer genuine reparation at this particular moment.

Faceless horror

Horror in children's drawings is represented by faceless figures (see Figures 8 and 9). These drawings represent the war as execution, imprisonment and death. It mostly emerges in

families where relatives were imprisoned, tortured or murdered and where fathers are believed to have killed during the war.

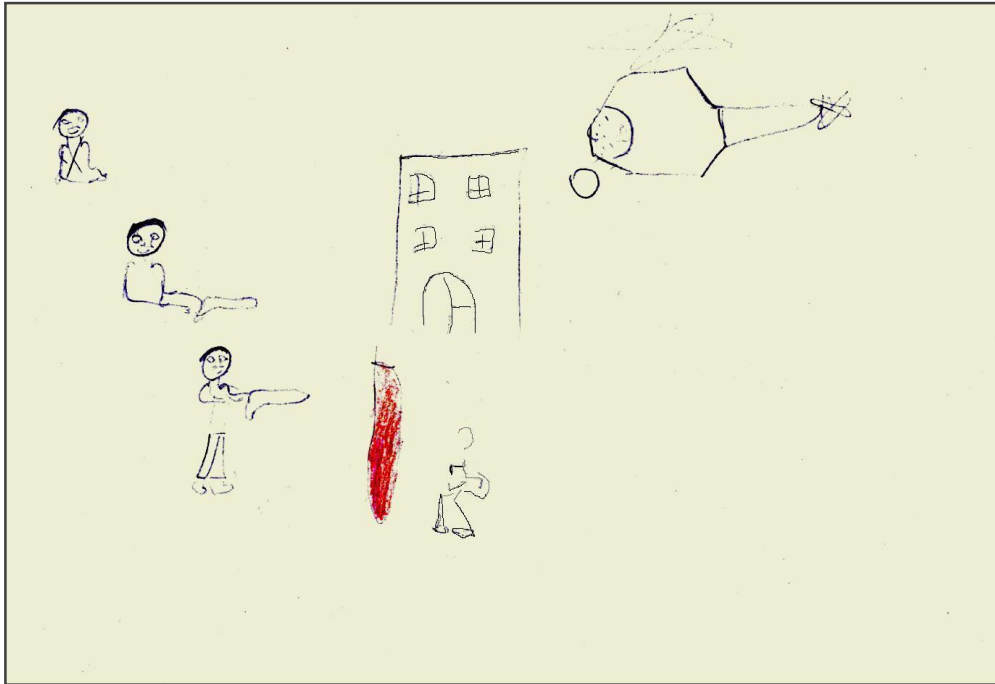


Fig. 8: Female, 8, Sarajevo

The drawing in Figure 8 represents an execution site. The man kneeling in the middle is going to be shot dead by three people holding machine guns. He is trying to hide himself behind a tree stem. In the upper right corner there is a plane dropping a bomb on a residential building. The girl is not sure how to draw the murderers and two of them are presented as part figures. The only colored object is the tree stem that stands for the barrier between the perpetrators and their victim. The girl's narrative is the following:

I don't know how to make a man kneeling. Can you help me? Just with the legs. But please do not watch while I am drawing the rest. I will show you when I am ready. (...) This is a man hiding behind a tree because he is going to be shot by these men. I don't know how to make their uniforms. They have guns. All this takes place outside the city. This is why there are no buildings... Well, maybe only one far in the background. There is an airplane and bombs are falling from it. I don't know whether the man will survive. Probably not, but he is trying to save his life. It may look stupid, but mom does not talk about the war and I don't know how it looked. The war is an ugly thing. I must wait until I am old enough in order to understand.

As the child clearly explains, horror is difficult to be thought of and the figures that concentrate the horror cannot be entirely imagined. In order to deliver the meaning of the scene the girl needs another person's help. There is an attempt to imagine how the victim must have looked immediately before the execution, but his image is impossible without some external support. I consider this an illustration of the blank spots the experience of extreme violence leaves in the memory of the witness and in the imagery of those born afterwards. The narrative is also interrupted by the impossibility the horror to be talked about since it is faceless (the victim does not have a face). Statements such as "I don't know how to

make a man kneeling”; “(p)lease do not watch while I am drawing”, and “I don’t know whether the man will survive” show the child’s uncertainty about the way the horrific looks and the effects it has. The only expression of hope where desire is focused is presented by the colored tree stem. I consider its presence as the pre-condition for the rest of the picture to emerge since it promises an obstacle to the execution. Yet, the image of the tree itself alludes to death rather than survival since it does not have a crown, but resembles a piece of dead timber. I need to point out that the drawing corresponds to the story about the execution of the uncle of the child’s mother who was taken out to the forests, tortured and shot dead by soldiers. This story has never been told to the girl, but the dominant metaphors of the impossible in her family are about stolen opportunities and deadness expressed in complaining. In her interview, the mother has repeated many times that the war had made time look backward, changed the world completely and brought loss, sorrow and poverty to people. In other words, the mother’s way of thinking about the past even without a direct reference to the execution of her uncle has shaped the discourse of hopelessness in her daughter’s war imagery.

Another confirmation of the impossibility to think of the horror can be found in the drawing of a 15-year-old girl who has represented an execution site in which her father is the murderer (see Figure 9).

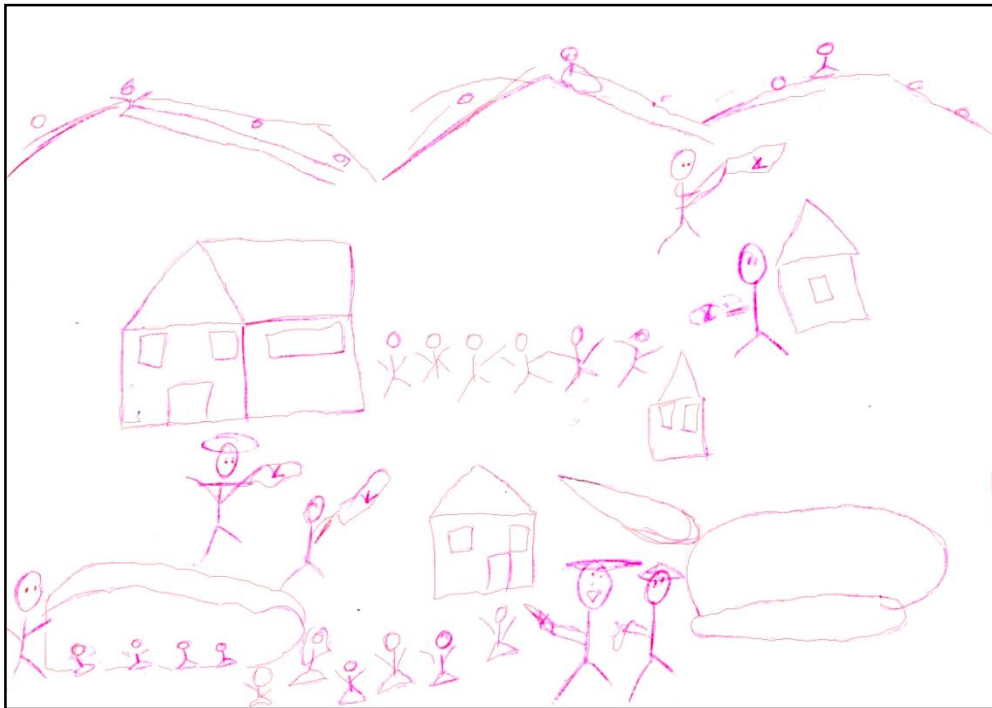


Fig. 9: Female, 15, Sarajevo

The drawing in Figure 9 belongs to a 15-year-old girl. It represents the execution of male captives and the transportation of female captives to a prison camp. The scene takes place in the mountains. The person in front of the small house to the right stands for her father. The execution site is surrounded by the tanks of the enemy troops that are positioned on the hills. The drawing is in red pencil only. The soldiers who are shooting against the captives have only eyes and the victims are faceless. Two of the people in the foreground helping the female captives to get on a bus have a smile on their faces. The father in this family served the front during the war and is suspected to have killed.

I use this drawing to illustrate that regardless of children’s age and knowledge about human figure and face, the representation of horror is not entirely possible. Human figures

are made in a schematic manner. Those who concentrate the horror are faceless (victims and murderers). It is only those in the foreground who are helping the women get on a bus who have a face since humanness, in opposition to horror, can be symbolized. I suggest that there is something in the outright manifestation of horror which cannot be handled. I would like to remind that the face of the executioner in public executions in most cultures is hidden under a hood and the victim wears a mask or is blindfolded. In psychoanalytic literature, there is a strong link between the gaze and the uncanny. Accordingly, the fear of losing one's eyes is a terrible one since it leaves things out of sight, which is to say in the domain of the uncanny. (Freud 1919) I further the idea that pure horror cannot be faced. This is why people have invented various strategies against the direct confrontation with it. The war drawings of faceless human figures can be viewed as a personal expression of this impossibility.

Conclusions

In this paper I have demonstrated that children create their imagery of the Bosnian war in the absence of a coherent narrative. They reconstruct history on the basis of the subjective interpretation of their parent's experience expressed in bodily symptoms, behavioral acts and objects. Weaving pieces of historical truth with their fantasies, the second generation reconstructs the world of the war as a scheme without people, an attack on the family home, survival at the expense of integrity, a dirty job assigned to heroes and faceless horror. The metaphor of the war as a scheme where there is no room for people is manifested in black-and-white cityscapes that are devoid of human beings. Such imagery is dominated by the idea of the war as a military plan that annihilates interpersonal relationships. The theme of the family home is mostly employed by girls and young children and presents the link between the war and the destruction of affiliation and belonging. The possible destruction of the family house is seen as synonymous with death since it uproots people from their natural surroundings. In reality, the destruction of the home was experienced by many as a symbolic social rape since – in a culture that cherished the custom of visiting others' homes – violation of this important border of privacy was felt to be a major obstacle to return. (Maček 2009: 110) Survival is the third metaphor used by children to present their imagery of the war. The fact that their parents survived and were therefore able to have children directs some children's imagery to the topic of survival and its possible implications. One such implication, which emerges in children's drawings and narratives, is survivors' psychological disintegration as a result of their experience of extreme violence. The metaphor of survival at the expense of integrity well describes the fragmentation of victims that followed their survival of horror. The next theme used by children to describe the war and their parents' position in it is the return of the hero from the underworld of the war. This theme emerges most often as children's response to the question "*Where was my father during the war?*" and expresses their desire to imagine their father as a competent and brave defender of the family. Yet, this imagery does not represent a clear-cut story of heroic deeds, but firmly binds the heroic and horrific aspects of the war experience. The hero's encounter with the uncanny is represented in drawings of shooting at the enemy but also in doubts about the murderous impulses the war evoked in everyone. Finally, the war is imagined as faceless figures and ghosts. This representation demonstrates the idea of the inhumanness of war and the respective impossibility of ascribing a face to it.

The war generation's fear of the tragic aspect of history being repeated and their preoccupation with loss evoke in the second generation sympathy for their victimized parents, but also an accusation of having robbed future generations of enjoying the possible life they could have had if there had not been a war. Both parents and children seem to construct an image of the domestic that can be good for its people at a given moment

(Yugoslavia), but cannot withstand the tests of history. The position of the second generation becomes characterized by a higher degree of ambivalence towards the self, the other and the past while they still gain their identity from this past.

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