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Silent vs. Rhetorical Memorials

Sarajevo Roses and Commemorative Plaques

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The civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1996) began and ended with the siege of its capital, Sarajevo, during which the city suffered tremendous violence against its architecture and urban space. Traces of destruction—damaged or ruined buildings and facades, craters and pockmarks made by explosions of shells in the asphalt—represent the city’s heritage which carries the burden of the wartime events during which about 10,000 citizens lost their lives. In the context of the post-siege Sarajevo, which was transformed into an ethnically divided and purified city, the question that opens up is how to remember the victims of the contested past without impeding peace and reconciliation in the future. This paper discusses these issues through a comparison of two case studies: Sarajevo Memorial Plaques, which are vertical plates with inscriptions installed on the city’s facades, and Sarajevo Roses, which are minimalist monuments materialised by conserving multiple traces of the shellfire in the asphalt. The plaques and Roses remember the history in two contrasting ways. The plaques operate as conventional monuments which articulate a selective version of history based on a particular ethnicity. Sarajevo Roses are silent places of memory which allow passers-by to construct their personal versions of memory and multiple narratives about the city’s history. As a consequence, the argument of this paper is that, the memory of the plaques maintains collective ethnic trauma, which potentially forms the ground for future ethnic conflicts. On the other hand, Roses operate as places of urban resilience which open up the possibility of the future multi-ethnic co-existence.



At the beginning of 1990s, after a long history of multiculturalism, Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered an escalation of ethnic nationalism which led to a violent civil war from 1992–1996. The war was fought between the nationalist Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) that was fighting to divide the country, and the multicultural Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABH), including pro-multicultural Bosniak, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb soldiers, who were fighting to prevent the division. The war began and ended with the siege of the capital, Sarajevo, by the BSA, during which the city suffered tremendous violence against its cityscape and ten to eleven thousand citizens lost their lives.¹ The BSA's bombing of public spaces operated as a means of paralysing spatial practices of gathering and mixing which sustained the city's ethnic diversity.² On a number of occasions, it resulted in cruel massacres with a large number of civilian casualties, which eventually triggered the NATO bombing of the BSA positions and brought fighting to an end. The Dayton Peace Agreement was signed at the beginning of 1996. The country was internally divided into the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat controlled Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Bosnian Serb controlled Republic of *Srpska*.³ Sarajevo was ethnically divided into the Bosniak dominated City of Sarajevo and the Bosnian Serb dominated City of East Sarajevo. Some scholars argue that the agreement "institutionalized many of the national divisions that had dominated society since 1990" and left the conflict unresolved.⁴ In the context of an ongoing political struggle between exclusivist ethno-national and open multicultural national ideologies, the question that opens up is how to remember the victims of the contested past without impeding peace and reconciliation in the present and the future.

This paper explores this issue by comparing two forms of post-war urban memory in Sarajevo—Sarajevo Roses, which are minimalist monuments in the asphalt that were materialised by conserving multiple traces of shellfire on the ground, and memorial plaques which were attached to a number of Sarajevo's facades. The paper discusses their form, spatial distribution, encounter by users, and meanings with an aim to understand the ways in which they have shaped Sarajevo's wartime history. The aim is to understand the effects that they have had on the construction of post-war urban and ethnic identities in Sarajevo since 1996.

This analysis of meanings of memorials is based on a number of social and semiotic theories. Huyssen argues that, while the identity of nations that emerged in the eighteenth century was based

1. The author did not find any information about who created the inscription and what the exact intention of its meaning was, but a certain fact is that the message was approved by the Canton of Sarajevo. It is also not known whether the citizens of Sarajevo, who were stated as those who signed the message, were consulted in a public discussion in which they agreed with the message.

2. The author's analysis of data from the *Ostobodjenje* newspaper.

3. Scott, "Rhetoric and Silence," *Western Speech*, 36, (1972) 146-58 in Ehrenhaus, "Silence and Symbolic Expression," *Communication Monographs*, 55, no. 1, (March 1, 1988); 42.

4. Ehrenhaus, *Silence and Symbolic Expression*.

5. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), <http://www.icty.org/>

6. Bojan Bajic, "Srpski narod nije kriv za Markale [Serbian people is not guilty for Markale Massacre]," January 12, 2011, <http://www.banjaluca.com/blog/srpski-narod-nije-kriv-za-markale>.

7. Bajic, "Srpski narod nije kriv za Markale."

8. Bajic, "Srpski narod nije kriv za Markale."

9. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*.

10. Ehrenhaus, *Silence and Symbolic Expression*.

11. Carney, *Not Telling Us What to Think*. 12. E. Kamenica, "Ko je na redu [Who is next]," *Oslobodjenje*, September 3, 1995.

on memory about the golden age of their history, memory and identity of modern nations is increasingly haunted with trauma from wars, colonisation, and political dictatorship.⁵ According to Caruth, collective trauma is not produced by the experience of the event itself, but by the remembrance of the tragic experience.⁶ Walkowitz and Knauer argue that urban memory shapes how an event is understood. It is "the meanings that provide the sense of shock and fear" and produce traumatic effects.⁷ Depending on who authorises the interpretation of the event, "new players can be empowered while the authority of others diminished."⁸ Ehrenhaus and Carney argue that memorials construct history and collective identities in two different ways.⁹ Conventional monuments, such as the Lincoln Memorial, are usually big monumental forms with figural and textual elements that offer "an undisputable and reassuring version of the past" and block "alternative interpretations of the past, of our community and our place in it."¹⁰

On the other hand, contemporary abstract memorials, such as the Vietnam War Memorial, usually absent of rhetoric and symbolic explanation of history, which allows the audience to construct their own meanings and versions of the past. The discourse of these two types of memorials also links to Barthes concepts of "readerly and writerly texts."¹¹ The first sustain dominant ideologies by constructing unique truths, while the second escape authority by opening themselves up to the variety of interpretations.

Based on these concepts, the analysis of the paper shows that the plaques and Roses remember the history in two contrasting ways. Plaques operate as conventional rhetorical monuments which articulate a selective version of history based on a particular ethnicity. Sarajevo Roses are silent places of memory which allow passers-by to construct their personal versions of memory and multiple narratives about the city's history. The argument is that, as a consequence, the memory of the plaques maintains collective ethnic trauma, which potentially forms the ground for future ethnic conflicts, while Roses represent places of urban resilience which open up the possibility of restoring the multi-ethnic co-existence.

Sarajevo Roses

During the conflict over Sarajevo, the BSA artillery attacks left behind numerous traces of destruction in the city's urban landscape. As shells shattered on the ground, they made craters with splattering pock-marks around their edges, which created floral-



like patterns in the pavement. While the dead and wounded were lying on the ground, traces of the shellfire were filled with their blood. Due to their floral-like shape, local wartime journalists described them as the “bloody roses” or “stone roses” that flourished in the city’s pavement.¹² The blood was cleaned up, but the traces of explosions remained places of painful memories. During the siege, Sarajevans laid flowers over them and posted obituary notices on the surrounding facades in order to commemorate the victims.¹³ At the end of the war, in the second half of 1996, the traces of explosions in the ground were filled in with red resin to form more permanent markers of collective memory known to the public as Sarajevo Roses (figures 1 and 2). The idea for their design came from a professor of architecture at the University of Sarajevo, Nedžad Kurto.¹⁴ The project was approved, sponsored and carried out by the Committee for Marking Historic People and Events of the City of Sarajevo.

12. F. Kamenica, “Ko je na redu [Who is next],” *Oslobodjenje*, September 03, 1995.

13. S. Hodžić, “Bez Rijeci i violoncela [Without Words and Violoncello],” *Oslobodjenje*, May 28, 1993.

14. A. Junuzović, *Sarajevske ruže: ka politički sjećanja* [Sarajevo Roses: Towards Politics of Remembering] (Sarajevo: ArmisPrint, 2006).



Sarajevo Roses are historic markers of violence on the exact places where it happened. Kurto conceived them as commemorative objects that would be “not too much stimulating” and “not too much of a monument,” such as conventional sculptural forms from the socialist-period of Sarajevo.¹⁵ His idea was to retain the memory in the ground because, in his words, “explosions happened on the *ground*, while people lied on the *ground* or nearby, trying to hide from the grenade which was coming to the *ground*.”¹⁶ Sarajevo Roses are patched traces of grenade explosions in the ground. Although they are three-dimensional, they appear as two-dimensional as the thickness of their volume

Figure 1. (L) Sarajevo Rose in front of Sarajevo Great Park. Photograph by author (2008)

Figure 2. (R) Sarajevo Rose behind the Catholic Cathedral. Photograph by author (2008)

15. Junuzović, *Sarajevske ruže*, 98.

16. Junuzović, *Sarajevske ruže*, 98.

remained invisible below the surface. They can be mistaken for the pavement texture as they contain no symbols or inscriptions which would indicate that they are memorials. The only signifier is their red colour which connotes as if the blood of the victims coagulated on the ground. Formed through the petrification of red resin in the pavement, Sarajevo Roses are “scars” which healed “wounds” in the pavement and urban life that it carried during the siege, while retaining the signs of the wartime “injuries”.

Sarajevo Roses are multiple markers of places where the wartime violence halted everyday spatial practices of ethnic gathering and mixing (figure 3). It is estimated that around 120,000 shells fell on the city during the siege. Owing to a restricted funding, about one hundred Roses were installed on the sites of the largest massacres where shells killed three or more people. They are most densely distributed in city centre in the old Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian towns. They exist at the city’s main market, corners of the main pedestrian zone, courtyards and squares around religious buildings, where the shells halted practices of exchange of daily supplies and crowds in queues for bread and water. In the modernist Socialist town to the city’s west, they mark the markets along the main boulevard, sport courts and school grounds where grenades stopped play. Apart from indicating the places of civilian deaths, Sarajevo Roses also mark the distribution of Sarajevo’s wartime urban life. As most of the city was exposed to the BSA positions and dangerous, the wartime urban encounter was restricted to places for trade of necessary goods which were hidden behind buildings or canopies and changed their location in order to prevent being revealed and targeted. Sarajevo Roses thus testify both the wartime terror and violence and citizens’ resistance.

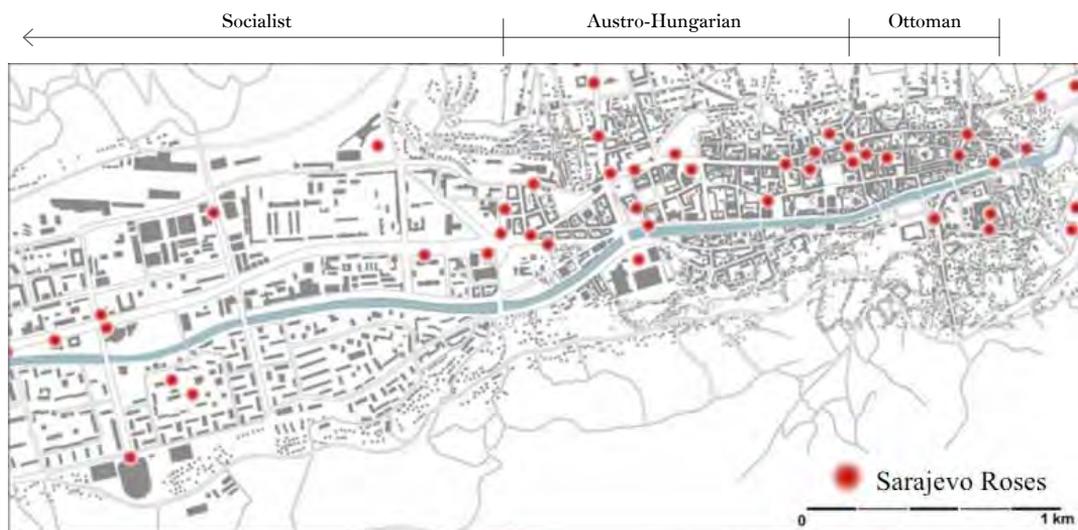


Figure 3. Spatial distribution of Sarajevo Roses. Author, 2011



Their form and distribution generate unconventional practices of encounter with urban memory. Unlike traditional monuments which dominate the surroundings and guide residents' journeys, their spatial disposition does not establish any particular spatial order, orientation or hierarchy. One cannot know where to find them as there are no maps or signs which would indicate their position in the city. Despite being on prominent locations that are potentially visible to a large number of Sarajevans and visitors, they remain within the pavement surface, unobtrusive and unnoticeable from a great distance. They attract attention in a discreet way if one perceives the contrast between their red colour and the material of the surface—either grey asphalt or white stone tiles. One can walk over them without even noticing them. Rather than intentionally, they are encountered accidentally by ordinary passers-by, while pursuing the same spatial practices that were targeted during the siege—shopping, playing, praying, and other. While the wartime violence halted these practices and denied what Lefebvre labelled as “the right to the city” that is the right to freedom, socialisation, mixing, inhabitation, participation, and appropriation, Sarajevo Roses reclaim such rights. They are memorials that do not impede the journey, but rather they invite passers-by to pause and contemplate about the history, move on and continue walking.¹⁷

Sarajevo Roses are documentary historic markers which testify about the wartime violence only with their naked presence, through silence. Kurto conceived them as markers of everyday collective suffering of “all the individuals who lived in Sarajevo during the siege. They should not have become commemoration only to those who were wounded or killed on those places.”¹⁸ However, they are ‘mute’ monuments which do not include any textual or symbolic description of what their instigator intended them to mean. The effect of their silence is what Barthes refers to as “the death of the author” that is the cessation of his control over meanings which, according to him, enables the ‘reader’ of the discourse to construct multiple meanings.¹⁹ Ehrenhaus argues that the absence of speech should not be understood as merely the refusal to speak, but rather as the encounter which invites individuals to question the meanings of silence there where we expect speech.²⁰ “What happened here?” is a common question asked by the citizens born after the war when passing by a Rose.²¹ Instead of giving reassuring answers and interpreting a particular version of history, the silence of Roses engages the audience to actively construct their own versions of the past. The existing research

17. H. Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1996).

18. Junuzovic, *Sarajevske ruze*, 98.

19. R. Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image-Music-Text* (NYC: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978).

20. Ehrenhaus, *Silence and Symbolic Expression*.

21. A. Panjeta, “Sarajevske ruže nestaju s ulica i iz sjećanja: ‘A šta je to bilo?!’ [Sarajevo Roses are Vanishing from the Streets and Memory]” *Slobodna Bosna*, April 6, 2013, http://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/6632/sarajevske_ruze_nestaju_s_ulica_i_iz_sjecanja_a_sta_je_to_bilo.html

and newspaper articles indicate that citizens perceive Sarajevo Roses as signifiers of violence against innocent people, symbols of the attack at the city, or as “unique ... marks of heroic defence” and multi-ethnic resistance.²² These are only some of the stories which illustrate that the Roses do not have a fixed symbolism but rather that they are open to multiple semantic interpretations. In the city with an ongoing conflict in the present, the memory that allows different individual versions of the past to co-exist does not impede the possibility of ethnic reconciliation.

Sarajevo Roses are also silent about the identity and ethnicity of the victims and perpetrators of violence. The residents commented that, during the siege, they did not divide themselves along ethnic lines but into “those who planted [Roses] by their innocent lives, and the survivors who watered them with their tears.”²³ This is because the shells during the siege also “did not distinguish or recognize a Muslim, Croat or Serb, or ‘Bosnian’ ... [they] killed even a stranger.”²⁴ The shells were targeting ethnic mix and heterogeneity as universal values of urbanity. Roses are cosmopolitan places of memory which commemorate victims as “members of the civil society.”²⁵ The only indicator of their affiliation is the name “Sarajevo Roses” which marks them as the signifier of the entire city. They are memorials to violence against multicultural Sarajevo as a socio-spatial assemblage of urban networks, places, flows, patterns and spatial practices that sustained encounter and mixing with others regardless of their ethnicity. Bevan argues that the BSA violence during the siege involved a strategy of “destruction of memory” which he described as “ethnic cleansing by other means”—by demolition of symbols and places which provided visible evidence of the history of co-existence of different communities in the city.²⁶ Roses prevent and invert such attempt of the erasure of the past. They are (silent) ‘words in stone’ which inscribe the history of ethnic mixing on the ground of the city.

Memorial Plaques

Simultaneously with the emergence of Sarajevo Roses, Sarajevo’s cityscape was also marked with memorial plaques (figures 4 and 5). Their installation was the official project of the Committee for Marking Historic People and Events of the City of Sarajevo, whose intention was to mark “the places on which the innocent citizens of Sarajevo got killed - were murdered.”²⁷ Plaques were installed on building facades, which an exception of one which

22. Junuzovic, *Sarajevske ruze*, 120–131. Also see: “Roses of Sarajevo,” <http://www.rosesofsarajevo.com/01bs.html>.

23. Forum “Sarajevo-x.com,” thread titled “Sarajevske ruze [Sarajevo Roses],” <http://www.sarajevo-x.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=45011>.

24. Forum “Sarajevo-x.com”.

25. Junuzovic, *Sarajevske ruze*, 95.

26. *N.B ref to be added*

27. Committee for Marking the Memory in Sarajevo, *The Decision to Erect Memorial Plaques on the Places where Innocent Citizens of Sarajevo Got Killed – Were Murdered* (1996).



stands vertically as a tablet on the ground. They are sixty centimetres wide and eighty centimetres tall white stone slabs which have a centrally positioned inscription, Bosnian coat of arms along the upper edge, and a decoration composed of branches of the Lillian flower along the left edge, the symbol of the Bosnian medieval kingdom.²⁸ The inscription on the plaque was written in the Roman script of the Serbo-Croatian language. The centrally positioned sentence, written in the biggest letters, represents the main explanation of plaque: “On this place, Serbian evil-doers (*date*) killed (*number*) of the citizens of Sarajevo.” Below this sentence is a message written in smaller letters: “Let the dead rest in peace, recite Al-Fatiha and say a prayer, remember and warn.” The bottom of the plaque has the signatory message: “The Citizens of Sarajevo.”

28. The author did not find any information about the designer of the plaques or the intentions of their design and so this part of the discussion bases solely on the observation analysis.



Figure 4. (L.) Memorial plaques at the wall of Markale Market Hall (Source: Author, 2011)

Figure 5. (R.) Memorial plaques at the wall of Markale open market (Source: Author, 2011)

In 2008, in some places, the Committee of the Canton of Sarajevo added new plaques on which the names of the victims, their year of birth and death were inscribed.²⁹ The named plaques have different forms. Some are white stone zig-zag profiled plaques with names carved on their upper sides which face the gaze of the audience (figure 4). These were installed on the walls below the existing memorial plaques. In other cases, names and dates were engraved on bronze plates that were installed on facades nearby the existing plaques. At the city’s central market, where the largest massacre occurred in February 1994, the centrally-positioned wall oriented towards the market was turned into a red canvas with the inscribed names and dates of birth of the victims (figure 5).

29. “Položeno cvijeće i otkrivena spomen-ploca na mjestu masakra u Ferhadji [Flowers Laid and Memorial Plaque Uncovered on the Place of Massacre in Ferhadija Street],” May 27, 2008, <http://www.sarajevo-x.com/bih/sarajevo/clanak/080527031>.

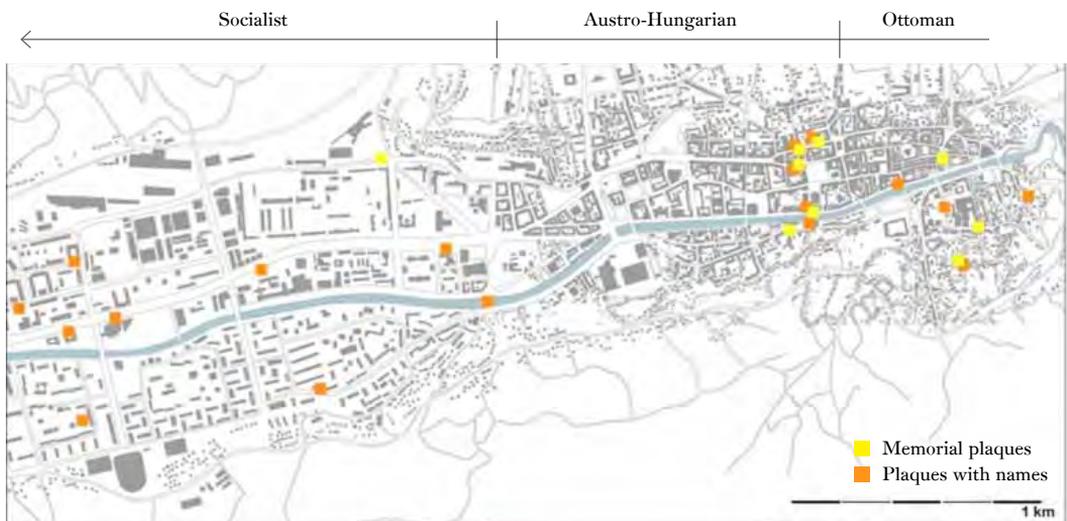
30. Committee for Marking the Memory in Sarajevo, *The Decision to Erect Memorial Plaques*.

A total of 23 memorial plaques were installed throughout the city, at the places of massacres with the largest number of casualties (figure 6).³⁰ Some of them overlap with the locations of Sarajevo Roses. Although they are less numerous, plaques are more noticeable than Sarajevo Roses as they are lifted from the ground to the level of the viewer’s eye. They were often installed on the front facades of buildings and at the entrances where they confront and impose themselves to the viewers. The centrally positioned memorial wall in the background of the main market is visible and legible from any spot within the marketplace and the opposite side of the street. The names on the zig-zag profiled plaques were inscribed on their upper sides where they are also facing the gaze of the audience directly.

31. The author did not find any information about who created the inscription and what the exact intention of its meaning was, but a certain fact is that the message was approved by the Canton of Sarajevo. It is also not known whether the citizens of Sarajevo, who were stated as those who signed the message, were consulted in a public discussion in which they agreed with the message.

Unlike Sarajevo Roses, the plaques operate as conventional monuments which include inscriptions and explicitly tell what they mean.³¹ The use of the Serbo-Croatian language indicates that Bosnians of all ethnicities are the targeted recipients of the message. The sites of the plaques’ installation were remembered as the places of “killing” or “slaughter” of a number of Sarajevo’s citizens, which happened on a particular date. The victims of violence were described as “the citizens of Sarajevo,” which indicates that the residents of all the Bosnian ethnicities lost their lives in the explosion on the site. The plaques on which the names of the victims and dates of their deaths made the gender and ethnicity of the victims more explicit, since Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Croats are distinguishable by people’s personal names. Chronological analysis of the names of the victims on the plaques in the city

Figure 6. Spatial distribution of Memorial Plaques (Source: Author 2011)



documents the destruction of ethnic mix during the siege. While, out twenty-six victims of the first massacre during the siege, fourteen victims were Bosniaks, ten Bosnian Serbs, and two Bosnian Croats, only one out of thirty-five victims of the last massacre were non-Bosniaks.³²

32. The author's analysis of data from the *Oslobodjenje* newspaper.

Apart from the victims, the plaques also give information about the perpetrators of violence. There were constructed as the subject of the main sentence of the inscription, whereas the victims are put in the place of the object of their violence. They were described by a syntagm “*Srpski zlocinci*” which the international media most commonly translated as “Serbian criminals.” More precisely, the word “*zlocinci*” is a composite of two Serbo-Croatian words: “*zlo*” meaning “evil” and “*cinilac*” meaning “actor,” “agent” or “doer.” A more accurate translation of the message of the plaque would be that, on the location where the plaque was installed, the “Serbian evil-doers” killed a number of citizens of Sarajevo which the future generations should remember and be warned about.

The meaning of the memorial plaques have caused public controversy. According to Scott, “in speaking we remain silent” too as any “decision to say something is a decision not to say something else.”³³ Ehrenhaus argues that the speech can be incomplete and selective such that it directs interpretations in one way rather than another.³⁴ The syntagm ‘Serbian evil-doers’ produces such an effect. It is an unquestionable fact that the perpetrators of violence were criminals and evil-doers of Serbian ethnicity. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia proclaimed the Bosnian Serb Army guilty for massacres in Sarajevo and sentenced its general in Sarajevo to the life-time imprisonment.³⁵ However, this was not stated clearly in the plaques’ inscription, which leaves its meaning ambiguous and opens up a question of who exactly the Serbian evil-doers are. According to Bajic, a Bosnian Serb politician from Sarajevo who is a member of a Bosnian multicultural party, such description leaves room for generalisation of the guilt as the collective guilt of the Serbian nation, whereas, in his words, “the guilt can be assigned to individuals, group of individuals, institutions, states, but not to the nation.”³⁶ He argued that, the syntagm ‘Serbian evil-doers’ is understood amongst the Serbian population as “the proclamation of the entire nation as evil and criminal, without a possibility that anybody is innocent.”³⁷ As a result, “the majority of Serbs feel that they were unjustly accused”, which, as a counter-reaction, makes them pose a revolting question “and what do they do to us?”³⁸ The effect is strengthening the distinction and division between “us” and

33. Scott in Ehrenhaus, *Silence and Symbolic Expression*, 42.

34. Ehrenhaus, *Silence and Symbolic Expression*.

35. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), <http://www.icty.org/>

36. Bojan Bajic, “Srpski narod nije kriv za Markale [Serbian people is not guilty for Markale Massacre],” January 12, 2011, <http://www.banjalukain.com/blog/srpski-narod-nije-kriv-za-markale>.

37. Bajic, Bojan, “Srpski narod nije kriv za Markale.”

38. Bajic, Bojan, “Srpski narod nije kriv za Markale.”

“them.” Also, according to Bajic, this produces material suitable for political manipulation as the pro-nationalist Bosnian-Serb politicians use this statement in their nationalist propaganda as a “proof” of the undermined status the Bosnian Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the wording of the inscription was selected and approved by the Municipality of Sarajevo, the message is equalised as the official politics of the city. Moreover, although there is no data that a public discussion was held, the inscription constructs the message as the opinion of Sarajevo’s population. As a result, the controversy about its meaning provokes ethnic contestation and problematises reconciliation.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the ways in which two different forms of Sarajevo’s post-war memorials have shaped the wartime history, and their role in the post-war politics of collective identities. Sarajevo Roses were examples of silent memorials which mark the exact locations of the wartime violence in a documentary manner. Memorial plaques were examples of rhetorical memorials which included inscriptions that constructed a particular version of the wartime history.

Referring to the way in which they construct meanings, Barthes makes a distinction between “writerly” and “readerly” texts.³⁹ The first challenge passive consumption of symbolism and invite the audience to construct manifold meanings. The second have pre-given meanings which motivate the audience to inertly consume unique truths. Sarajevo Roses operate as writerly texts. They do not have fixed meanings but rather they are open to multiple interpretations of symbolism thus resisting appropriation by distinct ethnic ideologies. On the other hand, plaques operate as readerly texts. They stabilise a particular version of history with produces ambiguous meanings that sustain ethno-nationalist ideologies. As a result, plaques extend the ethnic conflict from the past to the present.

Sarajevo Roses remember the past without trauma. Their naked presence and silence is powerful in the sense that it prevents the erasure of memory of violent events during the siege, while at the same time it does not impose any particular version of past or motivate confrontations about history. Rather, they allow multiple versions of memory and history to co-exist and thus they open up the possibility for reconciliation and re-establishment of Bosnian inter-ethnic unity. They are at once reminders of the worst terror,

39. Barthes, *Mythologies*.



death, and violence and symbols of the city's resistance to warfare and post-war resilience. Ehrenhaus⁴⁰ argues silence can also speak while, according to Carney,⁴¹ the rhetoric of silence can be seen as both intentional and political. By giving no explanation of the meaning and sense of the deaths during the war, the only universal message that the Roses' silence potentially sends is that war and nationalism make no sense and are meaningless.

40. Ehrenhaus, *Silence and Symbolic Expression*.

41. Carney, *Not Telling Us What to Think*.

On the other hand, plaques are rhetoric monuments which tell a particular version of Sarajevo's wartime history that has caused ethnic controversy. They produce trauma by an act of inscription of ethnic resentment against the others in the cityscape. In many cases, locations of plaques overlap with those of Sarajevo Roses. While the Roses remain on the ground, the plaques lift the controversial inscription of history up on the city's facades, in the level of the human's eye, and make it more prominent than the cosmopolitan memory of the Roses. In a way, they transform wartime practices of violence into post-war practices of memorialisation. The traumatic representation of the past turns the memory into a mirror image of violence which potentially forms the grounds for the conflicts in the future.