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A SISYPHEAN TALE: THE PATHOLOGY OF ETHNIC  
NATIONALISM AND THE PEDAGOGY OF FORGING  
HUMANE DEMOCRACIES IN THE BALKANS

INTRODUCTION

The institutions of the international community (IC) placed in charge of implementing the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) have been engaged in the formidable task of forging a strategy to democratize Bosnia.<sup>1</sup> Setbacks, such as low refugee and displaced person returns and misbehavior on the part of some political leaders, have dampened the initial euphoria surrounding this strategy, with the IC having taken on the role of Sisyphus, the mythical hero who was condemned to spend his days rolling a rock to the top of a hill, only to see the rock roll back down to the bottom. Immersed in this contemporary Sisyphian tale of outwardly futile and hopeless country-building in a post-conflict environment, the IC is determined to overcome the conditions and forces that make its project seem absurd.

Why is the “experiment” in state-making and democracy-building such a formidable task for the IC, and for the Bosnians who are partners in this project? There is no shortage of explanations, though some may be more efficacious than others in helping us understand the challenge of democratization in Bosnia. One explanation is suggested by the numerous references to the so-called “ancient hatreds” said to be a part of the Balkan way of life. According to this view, the war that took place in the 1990s was foreordained because once Tito, the source of unity and cohesion, left the political scene, the people

of Yugoslavia would revert to their tradition of ethnic and/or religious hatred and fighting. The current difficulties facing democratization efforts in Bosnia are simply a “residue” of age-old animosities creating a troublesome situation for the IC. The fundamental weakness of this explanation lies in the fact that there is limited support for the claim that Bosnia’s history is one continuous battle. As the historian Noel Malcolm contends in *Bosnia: A Short History* (1996), this view is nothing more than a grand deception, “a myth which was carefully propagated by those who caused the conflict,” as well as a gross misunderstanding of Bosnian history by those who believed this forgery. As a result of his close inspection of the historical record, Malcolm “cannot believe the claim that the country [Bosnia] was forever seething with ethnic hatreds” (252).<sup>2</sup>

Some Bosnian scholars have also dismissed the stereotypical portrayal of the Balkans as a region of “ancient hatreds,” a place of innate pathology. The Qur’an scholar Karić (2004) writes,

The Balkans, and within the region Bosnian in particular, have known long periods of peace and tolerance among different faiths and different peoples. For five centuries, the towns and cities of Bosnia have been known for their close proximity of their mosques, churches and synagogues. Just as in Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns churches, mosques and synagogues were built close to each other, so for centuries Christians, Muslims and Jews have lived together. (53)

Likewise, Mahmutćehajić (1997, 2000, 2003, 2005), a long-time public intellectual and proponent of interreligious dialogue in Bosnia, makes it clear that ethnic and religious cultures have coexisted in Bosnia for many centuries, and on the basis of this, argues for what he calls “unity in diversity.” In other words, the close kinship between the divine traditions which make up Bosnia’s identity – Bosnian Christianity, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam, and Judaism – offer a unifying, transcendent perspective that constitutes the means by which Bosnians can come to acknowledge and respect the religious diversity as manifested in interpretations, dogmas, rituals, and symbols. At the heart of this reclamation of Bosnian culture from its medieval past, a past that presents an identity that eclipses the

accepted national categories (Bosniak, Serb, and Croat), is the work of the Bosnian poet Mak Dizdar (1917–1971), most notably his collection of poetry, *Stone Sleeper* (1999), a landmark in Bosnian twentieth-century poetry (see Buturović, 2001, 2002). It is a link between poetry and the sacred, culminating in nothing less than the unity of being, a unity that will save Bosnia, as well as the rest of the world.

Although Balkan history has not always been peaceful, its past has been no more turbulent than that of many other regions in Europe. Both Karić and Mahmutćehajić look past the alleged historical inevitability of “age-old antagonisms” to explain the tragic events that swept the region as a case of a few political leaders promoting their grand economic and political plans through the lens of ethnic nationalism with its xenophobia and chauvinism. By having placed into question the historical reality of the “ancient hatreds” thesis, the efficacy of this same thesis in explaining the IC’s difficulties in democratizing Bosnia is also placed in jeopardy.

A further explanation is suggested by the work of the British philosopher Flew (1981: 23; 1983: 36–38), who claims that there is both a contingent and necessary relationship between competitive economic arrangements and a democratic politic wrapped in freedom. As a consequence, without the sort of economic arrangements that embody freedom and a greater social and economic equality, the realization of the ideal of political democracy is said to be outside our reach. If Flew is correct, then the difficult transition from a socialist economic system to a capitalist one is partly to blame for the slow pace of democratic reform in Bosnia. Part of this difficulty has often been associated with the effect that an unequal division of income has on the creation and maintenance of rival political parties within the framework of universal adult suffrage. With regard to the post-conflict societies of the Balkans, however, economic reforms and expansion of freedoms will most likely improve the quality of material life for many Bosnians, and may lead them to become active partners in democracy-building.<sup>3</sup> Yet none of this offers a complete explanation or comprehensive remedy for the difficulties the IC faces in its promotion of democratization in Bosnia.

Problems at the institutional level, be they economic or political, deserve the consideration they continue to receive, but theorists and practitioners alike have paid insufficient attention to explaining the importance of issues that arise at the personal and interpersonal levels. One exception is the work of Bose (2002), who places the nationalist fervor and disenchantment of Bosnians against the powers of liberal internationalism exhibited by the IC's strong interventionism.<sup>4</sup> It is a dynamic relationship in which the identities, actions, and interactions of the various parties can adversely affect one another. As Bose sees it, the problem lies between the Bosnians and representatives of the IC. However, leaders of the three Bosnian national groups and the IC have pointed fingers at everyone except themselves, which indicates a certain lack of self-accountability.

Whether or not Bose's characterization of the dynamic is entirely correct is an open question, but what is not in doubt is the centrality of personal identity qua self-image or identification with respect to metaphysics, morality, politics, and society. Identity is what matters when individuals and groups of individuals face off in their everyday and not so everyday lives. Whether someone is labeled as friend or foe has everything to do with identity. Likewise, the IC's attempts to engage in conflict resolution and prevention, country-building, and the promotion of democracy in the Balkans is intimately connected to this "broadly" philosophical approach to issues of personal identity.

Although he appears to have illuminated an important problem that faces the IC, Bose fails to elucidate the intricacies of how ethnic nationalism can be such an impediment to country-building and democratization in Bosnia. Despite his acknowledgment of the divisiveness between Bosnian nationalists and the IC, he still needs to show how ethnic nationalism is bound to identity formation and why the selection of a particular ethnic nationality as a person's primary identity is not helpful in establishing and maintaining democracy in Bosnia. This is important because ethnic nationalism not only makes interpersonal relationship divisive, but it also opens the door for ambitious political leaders in Bosnia to use a variety of means, including intimidation and propaganda, to promote

xenophobic and chauvinist attitudes in order to assume control of the democratic process. In order to limit or prevent the breakdown of interpersonal relationships between people of different ethnic and religious groups, as well as to counteract the subversion of the democratic process, a Bosnian identity that embodies unity in plurality and that incorporates an understanding of democracy as a "way of life" à la Dewey (1937/1987, 1939/1988) must be uncovered and reified.

As a contribution to a new theoretical "pragmatism" that reinvigorates our ongoing attempts to transform ourselves and our turbulent world, this essay explores, first, the notion of personal and group identity in terms of ethnicity and nationalism, and the pathology that ethnic nationalism poses to democratization in Bosnia.<sup>5</sup> Second, it discusses the pedagogy of forging humane democracies in light of the IC's liberal internationalism, including top-down institutional reform, and bottom-up development at the personal and interpersonal level. Insights from the literature on identity theory, trust, nationalism, democratization, the moral circle, and the Deweyan view of democracy are integrated; conclusions suggest that the transformative process of identity formation, including the use of intercultural education and imagination, would be beneficial in broadening the understandings of Bosnians and representatives of the IC, and each other, in order to "shield" democratization efforts in Bosnia from the deleterious effects of ethnic nationalism.

#### IDENTITY, ETHNIC NATIONALISM, AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN BOSNIA

It is not difficult to understand why representatives of the IC and members of the Bosnian community see the democratization project meeting solid resistance by groups of individuals passionate about their nationalist leanings. The rhetoric, slogans, and symbolism that create tension and often incite violence between members of different ethnic groups are the most noticeable signs of obstructionism. When rhetoric and action are instantiated in ethnic political parties, the result is an

increasing rate of fragmentation that strengthens individuals' ties with their own ethnic groupings rather than society or country as a whole.<sup>6</sup> In order for democracy to take hold in Bosnia, a strong sense of trust must exist between individuals of different ethnic groups. It is only through trust that people will choose cohesiveness, inclusiveness, and fraternity, rather than exclusivity and animosity.<sup>7</sup> Inter-ethnic definitions of "trust" as "one's belief that ethnic others on average have sufficient commitment to peace and coexistence," emphasize that trust is an important feature of democratization in a multi-ethnic and post-conflict country like Bosnia (Somer, 2002: 94).<sup>8</sup> For Bosnians to reach popular sovereignty, i.e., the ultimate source of political authority, and self-rule, they must view the ethnic other as someone closer to being a friend than a mortal enemy. The other must be looked at with respect rather than contempt. The groundwork for such change must be forged by altering the ways notions of identity, ethnic nationalism, and democratization are configured in our conceptual framework or our worldview and ethos.

Central to this essay is the notion of personal identity; that is, the identity of persons or human beings.<sup>9</sup> Some may take a "strictly" philosophical approach to issues of personal identity, thereby becoming embroiled in a centuries long debate about different ontologies. A simple query into personhood that once took the form of a discourse on essences, nowadays leads to analytical discussions of numerical and qualitative identity, as well as whether to regard "What is a person?" as a satisfaction question or as a nature question.<sup>10</sup> In one sense, these are difficult philosophical problems of the traditional variety (call them "strong identity" issues), but in another sense all of this is harmless enough in the lived world, for it is here that identity is routinely understood as self-image or identification (call this "lived identity"). Yet even the self-imagery that is highly touted by many presumes an ontological context. Just what sort of thing are we?

Although humans are similar to animals insofar as they both exercise a "minimal" agency or activity that creates the means to satisfy their desires and accomplish their ends, humans differ from animals insofar as they are beings of *praxis*. The Brazilian educationalist Freire (1970) describes this distinction as follows:

Animals do not consider the world; they are immersed in it. In contrast, men emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor. But men's activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Men's activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. (119)

Human beings, thus, have agency in a "maximal" sense insofar as they "understand and transform" the world rather than simply being active in it.

It is not enough, however, merely to recognize that we are beings of praxis. To make sense of the claim that humans are "world transformers," we need to acknowledge that our desires and ends are those of subjects connected with the world in which they live. To understand the world and engage in this transformational process, we must understand ourselves in terms of our personally selected means and ends. Part of a person's identity is precisely the understanding that he/she has of himself/herself. As Taylor (1985) has observed, "human beings are self-interpreting subject" (4). Personal identity involves a process of "self-interpretation."

This understanding, however, must take into account the fact that other transformers inhabit the world. We do not live in isolation but are inhabitants of a social world. We are, in the fullest sense of the expression, social beings. Consequently, others play a significant role in identity formation. The psychoanalyst Laing (1969) explains this as follows:

Even an account of one person cannot afford to forget that each person is always *acting* upon others and *acted upon* by others. The others are there also. No one acts or experiences in a vacuum. The person whom we describe, and over whom we theorize, *is not the only agent in his 'world'*. How he perceives and acts towards the others, how they perceive and act towards him, how he perceives them as perceiving him, how they perceive him as perceiving them, are all aspects of 'the situation'. . . All 'identities' require an other: some other in and through a relationship with whom self-identity is actualized. (66)<sup>11</sup>

Taylor (1995) also emphasizes this need for others:

...discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out of isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others... My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others. (231)<sup>12</sup>

People are intense social beings with a desire for recognition and affirmation as important to human survival as food, clothing, and shelter (Gabel, 2000: 13).<sup>13</sup> As the political philosopher Berlin (1970) indicates:

It is not only that my material life depends upon interaction with other men, or that I am what I am as a result of social forces, but that some, perhaps all, of my ideas about myself, in particular my sense of my own moral and social identity, are intelligible only in terms of the social network in which I am...an element... The lack of freedom about which men or groups complain amounts, as often as not, to the lack of proper recognition... (155)

Framed in these terms, the role that others play in identity formation is critical.

This ontological designation of persons as beings who acquire their identity through understanding and transforming the world may suggest that a person's identity is constrained to the point of being *determined* by the world in terms of his/her physical environment, facticity, and social relations. However, making such an inference fails to recognize the true complexity and importance of one's lived identity – on the conviction that what makes a difference in a person's life is not so much the discourse of numerical or qualitative identity, but whether certain traits are ascribable to that person (traits such as political affiliation, ethnicity, and religious preference) by either himself/herself and/or by others. It fails to do so in three ways.

First, each individual does not simply have *an* identity but rather possesses a multitude of identities, each of which may be invoked privately and/or publicly as dominant in any given situation. As such, there is no identity that can be taken as the definitive one. Take, for instance, a young Serb woman in her 20s who is studying in the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Banja Luka. She may privilege one or more aspects of her identity (ethnicity, gender, occupation, marital status) over others at various times. She may present herself as a “Serb” in

one context, a “woman” in another, a “student” in a third, a “single person” in a fourth, and a “poet” in a fifth. In each context, she emphasizes or makes visible different aspects of her identity and thus names herself differently. When it comes time to apply for a teaching position in a Department of Literature, she may indeed privilege her identity as a poet, who has had some of her work published by Zavetine, for such an identity may strengthen her chances of being hired. Or, she may find it advantageous to privilege a combination of these such that she presents herself as a “Serb woman” or a “female Serb poet.” These are just a few of the selves of the greater “plurality of selves” that she can manifest.<sup>14</sup>

The nuances involved in personal identities in the Balkans have been explored by the cultural anthropologist Ger Duijzings in his important work, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (2000). Duijzings is one scholar who has challenged the common perception that ethnic and religious identities in the Serb province of Kosovo are clearly defined and fixed. He argues that there is much ambiguity and fluidity among these identities over a period of time. The fact that personal identity is multi-layered and that an individual can privilege one aspect at one moment and a second aspect the next moment indicates for Duijzings that identity is “conjunctural,” i.e., fluid and changeable (18).

However, the flux that is a part of an individual's “plurality of selves” is not simply a matter of the individual selectively engaging certain “selves” or aspects of the plurality while temporally discounting others. Granted, some aspects are more fixed and stable than others, e.g., gender and ethnic identities are more stable than religious and political identities. Yet even the more stable variety are subject to change. Indeed, Duijzings notes that the history of the Balkans is replete with cases of conversion and mimicry, i.e., the explicit adoption of a particular identity so as to enhance survivability, especially in times of flux and existential insecurity in the society. Sometimes these changes were done voluntarily; other times they were forced conversions, sometimes done without completely displacing the original identities, the end result being a hybridization of ethnic and religious identities (13). Such identity changes were not

uncommon in the Balkans during the rule of the Ottomans; they have continued to manifest themselves in subsequent centuries. Duijzings notes that examples of identity shifts can be found that are the result of twentieth-century political changes. In the 1970s, for example, Muslim Slavs in parts of Kosovo, such as the Prizren area, declared themselves Albanians but switched back to their original Muslim (Slav) identity a decade later when it was recognized that Serb rule might be restored (26).

Second, how one individual relates to another is not always a simple one-to-one interaction, whereby each person is identified by a proper name like Dušan, Sonja, or Haris. Although that is often the case, the interaction is sometimes associated with sortal terms, i.e., terms that designate a sort of individual. In other words, as a member of a particular group defined by a single or cluster of dominant properties to a member of that same group, or of another group, defined by a different dominant property or cluster of properties. For instance, some of us may identify ourselves as members of groups that are defined in certain ways and go by labels such as "men," "women," "adolescents," "elderly," "Bosniak," "Croat," or "Serb." So it is not always the "I" but often the "we" that is emphasized as being, for example, a Bosniak. The importance of being a member of a larger group cannot be underestimated. This is particularly clear when gender, age, and ethno-national labels are at work in peoples' speaking and writing that eventually become part of the "politics of difference."

Relating personal identity to social group differentiation in essential or relational terms raises difficult issues, however. Young examines some of these problems as they pertain to the "string of beads" theory of identity (2000: 89). According to this theory, a group is defined in terms of a set of essential properties. Consequently, a person said to belong to a particular ethnic group does so because he/she possesses the necessary properties. Of course, to identify that ethnic group requires that we have in mind the essential properties associated with being a member of that group. Given that ethnic groups are more or less discrete and are aware of and in contact with members of other ethnic groups, group identities need to be

defined in relation to members of these other groups (Erkisen, 2002: 10; Ignatieff, 1993: 22).<sup>15</sup> To identify with the group referred to as Bosniaks means enumerating the essential properties of being Bosniak, such as language, custom, or religion, and also, the essential properties of being Croat and Serb. However, to provide a positive identity, i.e., what something is, is also to offer a negative identity, i.e., what something is not, which can pose a significant problem. Inasmuch as "a defining element of each group's identity is its relationship to the land and its history," this relationship can be exclusivist, which means that one group's claims are legitimate while the others' are illegitimate (Kelman, 2004: 63). This can make conflict resolution exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish.

There are further problems that are ontological as well as political. Young notes, (1) experience informs us that sometimes persons who do not possess the necessary properties of a particular group are nevertheless identified as such by others, or identify themselves with the group; (2) persons sometimes deny that the possession of the essential properties of a particular group are significant for their identity; (3) even though individuals have the properties required to be members of a group, this does not mean they all have similar interests and agree on the means to promote their interests; and (4) the essentialist view does not acknowledge that each of us has a plurality of selves, which in this context means that social groups cut across other social groups, e.g., the group "Bosniak" is differentiated in terms of gender and party affiliation (2000: 88).<sup>16</sup> In addition, rigid conceptualization of social group differentiation creates political difficulties insofar as differences are emphasized and similarities made irrelevant or dismissed, thereby encouraging a politics of difference which creates and sustains conflict and parochialism (Young, 2000: 88–89).

Third, personal identity is self-created or self-constructed, rather than determined by the world and its physical environment, by a person's facticity, and/or by one's social relations. Although these components of human reality have constitutive effects on an individual's identity such that "identity" is what it is at least partially because of the way the individual comes in

contact with and understands them, personal identity is not determined by these components. The world's physical dimension imposes certain constraints and allows possibilities that should not be overlooked. The fact that there are landmines in pastures, for instance, poses a problem to farmers and their families, as well as urban dwellers who rely on farmers for their food. Yet these features do not determine so much as influence peoples' identities, because people *choose* the meaning they bestow on the fact that there are landmines, and also how they will relate to such a threat. It is not a certainty that the presence of mines will deter a farmer from harvesting his crop. Rather, he may simply wield his tool in a more deliberative manner. Accordingly, the farmer may choose one of a number of labels to identify himself, including "no longer a farmer" or "starving farmer" and "crazy farmer" or "adventurous farmer."

Similarly, a person's facticity and group membership do not determine in any mechanistic way a person's identity (Young, 2000: 99). A person's facticity, such as age and gender, reflects a set of constraints and possibilities, and so is relevant to the identities we choose. However, individuals determine the significance of their age; for example, whether they are proud of being in their "twilight years" and look forward to diminished responsibilities, or fearful that others will take advantage of them and so seek less and less contact with those who are younger (Sartre, 1965a, b). Likewise, a person's relation to a particular group is not simply a given, because people create their own identity, though not necessarily under conditions they choose themselves. We are all born into a situation – "thrown into the world" of history, meaning, relationships, and things – but we are agents (or "agential" beings), meaning that we can take those constraints and possibilities that condition our lives and, to a certain extent, make something of them in our own way (Young, 2000: 101). Surely, this applies to group membership as well. For example, a husband and wife who were born into Bosnian Croat and Catholic families could well have been raised within this faith tradition without ever questioning it, but simply living out their religious inheritance. In one sense, they being Catholic is a "given." In a more

important sense, their resuscitation of "The Lord's Prayer" and the "Hail Mary," as well as following the practices of attending mass and baptizing their children are clear reminders that people throughout their lives choose the sort of religious person they become and choose when they want to make a change.

It is also important to realize that a person's "otherness" or alterity in the presence of the other is of considerable importance in terms of the interaction between experience and identity. The various identities that a person has are causally related to the experiences that he/she will have such that a Bosnian who is ethnically labeled as "Serb" will face situations that are significantly different from those of a Bosnian who is ethnically labeled as "Croat" or "Bosniak." This may become especially problematic for refugees and displaced persons returning to reclaim their house or apartment if their dwelling, as well as the rest of their village, is dominated by members of another ethnic group. Moreover, a person's experiences will influence the formation of his/her identity, which explains in large measure why there is diversity among members of the same ethnic group (Mayo, 2002: 139). A positive experience may make all the difference as to whether a person will continue to choose a particular identity.

Others who discuss identity have also captured this view, although in slightly different terms. Glover (1997) refers to it as a "self-creation," i.e., identity understood qua artifact rather than qua given. Such a process of self-creation is similar to the way a novelist tells a story about a character who moves through the novel, working through a set of constraints and possibilities (18). Likewise, the "story we create about ourselves, partly by what we do and partly by how we edit and narrate the story of our past, is central to our sense of our own identity" (18).

The explanatory power and moral significance of persons creating their own identities arise in Miscevic's (1992) distinction between "the mere brute fact" of being born into a particular ethnonational group and the "endorsed" identity (243).<sup>17</sup> Although Miscevic argues against the claim that a national identity is necessary for personal identity, it remains true that national or ethnic identity is an important part of many peoples' "plurality of selves."<sup>18</sup>

Miscevic's distinction is important; although a person who speaks Serbo-Croatian and uses the Cyrillic alphabet may be identified by members of the Bosniak community as a Serb, he/she may not be aware of this Serb identification. The fact that a person is born into a Serb household is an important causal factor in conditioning that person to acquire Serb ethnicity, though it in no way signals proof of identity until that person "endorses" it. In this act of endorsement, a person "identifies" with an ethnic, cultural, or national community, which need not be "factual." A Croat orphan raised as a Serb by a Serb family, completely unaware of his factual ethnic belonging, can identify with being a Serb, although he is not one in the brute-factual sense (Miscevic, 1992: 244).

To identify with nationality N means not only that one ascribes N to oneself, i.e., believes that he/she is a member of that national or ethnic community, but that this endorsement is taken to be an effective force in one's character. It helps to explain why the person does the sorts of things that come naturally to him/her. There is a certain causal efficacy to the feature that he/she has identified with (Miscevic, 1992: 245).

In addition to this cognitive component of identification, there is a conative component. When nationality is seen as a positive force in one's life, the person develops deep emotional ties with the nationality and "cares" about its preservation. This caring for one's nationality comes into evidence when a person's nationality comes under attack from members of another ethnonational community, an attack that is often taken to be as personal, because of the strength of this identification.

Some people do not ascribe such significance to their ethnic belonging. A person born in Herzegovina of Croat parentage, who speaks Serbo-Croatian, may primarily identify himself/herself as an entrepreneur or a Bosnian, rather than as a Croat. In this case, Croat ethnicity is not considered particularly relevant as to why he/she acts in a certain way (Greenfeld, 1992: 13). Moreover, ethnic identification is situational insofar as a person can behave as an ethnic Croat in some situations, and as a Bosnian in others (Eriksen, 2002: 30). Indeed, it may seem to be more advantageous for a person running for political office in Herzegovina to appear as a fervent Croat nationalist in order

to gain votes, but disadvantageous when it comes to dealing with the U.S. ambassador in Sarajevo. The people at Alipašina 43 may not be all that sympathetic to the needs of the nationalist. However, this possibility is itself symptomatic of an underlying problem in Bosnian political life, for once a person reduces his/her plurality of selves so that his/her endorsed ethnic nationalist identity becomes the dominant feature of his/her personal identity, the person can best be characterized as a "nationalist." It is the nationalist who exaggerates the value of his/her ethnic national belonging so that ethnicity becomes the main support of his/her identity (Miscevic, 1992: 254). In a multiethnic society such as Bosnia, nationalist leanings may act as an impediment to the creation of a stable democracy.

Of course, the matter is not that simple. I noted in a previous work that the ideology of ethnic nationalism arises when there is a collective shift of identity (Conces, 2002: 285–286). Croatian, Serbian, and Bosniak nationalism are all obstructionist to the creation of genuine democracy and an open society. This occurs through the generation of xenophobia (fear of the other) and ethnic chauvinism (felt superiority over the other), which threaten a country's stability by "transforming those who are of the 'wrong' identity into second-class citizens, contrary to the notion of rights and liberties understood within a democratic framework" (2002: 286).<sup>19</sup> Cultural markers are deployed to differentiate the primary or dominant group from other groups, which are taken to be culturally inferior.<sup>20</sup> Certain differences become more pronounced, leading to marginalization, ostracism, and cultural absolutism (2002: 288).<sup>21</sup> Instead of granting others the full respect they deserve, ethnic nationalism delegitimizes the thinking of members of other ethnic groups. Results such as these work against democraticization, which requires a high degree of interaction and cohesiveness, and are in turn, dependent on mutual trust among members of different ethnic groups. Similarly, the creation of an open society is hampered because the divisiveness of ethnic nationalism undercuts the free association of individuals who respect one another's rights within a legal framework (Soros, 2000: xxiii).

What is worth emphasizing here is this indictment against ethnic nationalism, an indictment that has been sharply criti-



cized as distorting the relationship between nationalism and democracy. Although this debate is interesting, only a few points need to be noted for the purposes of this essay. First, the connection between nationalism and democracy is not something of recent origin. In fact, the eighteenth-century political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, best known for being a defender of the sovereignty of the people, made the connection in *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (1772). Acknowledging that political cohesion, which is needed for self-government, is achieved in a small city-state such as his Republic of Geneva, Rousseau sought to make popular self-government achievable within a larger context – Poland – by means of nationalism, which he thought was a profound love for the “fatherland.”<sup>22</sup>

In another and more relevant context, that of the demise of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Georgian political philosopher Ghia Nodia takes aim at those who claim that nationalism is fundamentally antidemocratic and proposes a necessary and positive relationship between nationalism and liberal democracy. This does not mean, however, that the combination of nationalism and the liberal form of democracy is the only viable one. On the contrary, a form of communitarian democracy may be more compatible with nationalism’s emphasis on collective identity – ethnic, religious, or otherwise. If liberalism acknowledges individual autonomy and the limitation of governmental authority and power, it is no wonder that nationalism may have a greater affinity to the communitarian form of democracy. Whereas liberalism treats individual liberty as the ultimate political value, communitarianism shifts that emphasis to the collective life of the community. Although the liberal-communitarian debate is an intense one in the United States and may affect the outcome of its elections and the quality of life of its citizens, it has little, if anything, to do with whether its democratic form of governance remains stable. As far as the United States is concerned, it may not matter whether liberalism or communitarianism prevails over time. Yet it is because of this very affinity, the dominance of liberalism and the resulting

denunciation of nationalism, that Nodia juxtaposes nationalism with liberal democracy.

According to Nodia, “the idea of nationalism is impossible – indeed unthinkable – without the idea of democracy” (2004: 4). No matter the continuous tension between the two, there is a kinship. His argument is interesting to the extent that it views democracy as a rational enterprise, rational insofar as it is a system of rules allowing the will of the people to be expressed, and connecting it with the nonrational phenomenon of nationalism, nonrational to the degree that nationhood is something that is not governed by objective and universal rules, but rather a matter of historical contingencies and the manipulation of political leaders. Admitting that the democratic enterprise is grounded on a nonrational foundation is not problematic for Nodia, given that such a foundation makes the former possible. The value of nationalism lies in providing the necessary political cohesion under the guise of the “nation,” which makes possible the creation of democratic, or self-determining, communities (2004: 7). Not only did nationalism provide some order in a post-communist Yugoslavia, but it created a climate for democratization in the former republics of this Balkan country.<sup>23</sup>

Nodia differs from theorists like Liah Greenfeld and Will Kymlicka insofar as he does not distinguish “civic” nationalism from “ethnic” nationalism. Both types of nationalism are said to specify boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. The former is associated with an open society, with membership not assigned according to one’s ethnicity, race, or religion but open to all those who wish to conform to certain cultural norms and to an overarching view of nation that is defined in terms of rights, liberties, and representation; and with peaceful relationships. The latter is associated with a closed society, with membership determined by one’s ethnic affiliation, and with aggressive relationships between members of different ethnicities.<sup>24</sup> Given this dichotomy, it is easy to read ethnic nationalism as manifesting the divisive attitudes of xenophobia and chauvinism. However, Nodia contends that nationalism is always ethnic, though never chauvinist. Ethnicity is the component of nationalism that needs to be “tamed.” Not

doing so “can lead to chauvinism, racism, or even fascism” (Nodia, 2004: 15).

What is important is not whether we side with Greenfeld and Kymlicka or Nodia on nationalism as possibly being ethnic and chauvinist or that nationalism can lead to ethnic chauvinism, but that there is a troublesome connection between ethnic nationalism and chauvinism (and xenophobia), such that intense attitudes of superiority and fear can marginalize, ostracize, and ultimately lead to ethnic cleansing and genocide. Not only did Bosnia and other parts of the Balkans suffer from these troubles during the 1990s, but they continue to be plagued by the divisiveness brought about by ethnic nationalism and by the political parties that promote it.

One difficulty with Nodia’s conceptual rendering of nationalism is the process by which the ethnicity of nationalism is tamed. According to Nodia, chauvinism does not arise

from excessive ethnicity but from the lack of a robust political expression for national feeling. When they have no political or institutional achievements to take pride in, people may boast instead of their inherited racial, linguistic, or cultural identities. (2004: 15)

The United States seems to present just such a case of “robust political expression,” with its broad conception of nationhood and nationalism: “national pride focuses on the ‘American way of life’, the country’s free and stable [democratic] institutions, and its role as the ‘leader of the free world’” (Nodia, 2004: 15). The ideal for Bosnia may be the populace taking pride in a “Bosnian way of life,” which would be indicative of what Kelman calls a “transcendent identity,” a larger identity that would encompass various groups under an “umbrella” identity (1999: 586). To say this may indicate a certain degree of ethnocentricity and dismissiveness but only if the assumption is made that the ethnic identities that many Bosnians have adopted are merely the result of “inheritance” rather than some sort of a selection and maintenance process, thereby making such identities less important and easier to be abandoned. On the contrary, their “Bosniakness,” “Serbness,” or “Croatness” can remain salient and fundamental aspects of who they are as

people. Indeed, as Kelman notes, the maintenance of “particularistic” identities, like the ethnonational and religious identities found in Bosnia, are important insofar as there is a need for “psychological distinctiveness” among groups (1999: 586). Furthermore, psychological research by Allport (1954) and Huo et al. (1996) suggests that these particularistic identities may not be threatened by an individual identifying with a “superordinate group” because such identities do not necessitate relinquishing strong ties to one’s subgroup. Indeed, Allport’s work on in-groups and out-groups indicates that there is no inherent reason why loyalties to one membership should conflict with loyalties to another membership. This would be true in the case of ethnic nationalism if the xenophobic and chauvinist attitudes were defused by the individual’s ability to engage in fellow-feeling with others.

Three points need to be made. First, not only are ethnonational identities composed of a nonnegotiable core, but there are elements, e.g., the territorial dimension of an identity, that can be added or subtracted such that the core is not jeopardized. Second, even if particularistic identities are important, nothing necessitates that particular ethnonational identities are the ones that are maintained. Kelman rightly notes that identities are not “inherently zero-sum,” though they may be perceived as such (2004: 65). Third, identities are socially constructed, drawing on a “variety of authentic elements held in common within a group: a common history, language, or religion; or common customs, cultural expressions, experiences, values, grievances, or aspirations” (Kelman, 2004: 65). This leaves open the possibility for identity change, and change that can come in the form of a transcendent identity that could be constructed “not in place of the particular ethnonational identities, but along side of them” (Kelman, 2004: 65). Such an identity would be reflected in discourse about Bosnia as a country inhabited by Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Croats, all of whom could take pride in their country as they listened to the Bosnian national anthem being played in Koševa Stadium in Sarajevo.<sup>25</sup> However, present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina has not “evolved” to the point where nationalism has become “supraethnic,” divorced from that

which is ethnic, chauvinist, and xenophobic. The reality of Bosnia today is that it is a plural society in which ethnic differences are magnified through the prism of ethnic nationalism, with the resulting divisiveness being furthered by political parties emphasizing certain ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia, e.g., the (Muslim) Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), and the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS).

Nodia's suggestion that the solution to Bosnia's democratization is for the institutions to be built so that there can be a "robust political expression for national feeling," and thus a sublimation of ethnic belonging into "Bosnian patriotism," seems to place too much emphasis on the top-down institutional reform, the means by which the IC is using to install a democratic form of governance in Bosnia. Although such governance is the goal that has been selected for Bosnia, top-down reform is unlikely to be able to achieve that goal alone. The ethnic conflicts that are so embedded in Bosnian society are not readily amenable to structural changes of the kind that the IC is currently implementing because such conflicts deal with identities that operate at the level of personal and interpersonal relationships.<sup>26</sup>

A similar point is made by the philosopher Sor-hoon Tan. Although the theme – the viability of Confucian democracy in Asia – of Tan's insightful *Confucian Democracy: A Deweyan Reconstruction* (2003) has nothing to do with Bosnia or the Balkans, her remarks are relevant for wherever democratization is liable to occur, whether it is in China or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Declining to blindly accept the benefits of democratization, Tan acknowledges the complications that could arise from such an endeavor:

The risk of destabilization is greatest when a country introduces Western democratic political forms without considering how these forms would interact with indigenous cultures. In a country with deep ethnic or religious schisms, political democracy could entrench and escalate conflict. Where the people have no experience of responsible citizenship, their participation in formal democracy might be ineffectual at best, damaging at worst. (2003: 205)<sup>27</sup>

In the case of Bosnia, it is the IC that is introducing a democratic political form into the former republic of Yugoslavia, a "member" of the communist bloc having little experience of responsible democratic citizenship. Moreover, the fact that the Office of the UN High Representative (OHR) has continued to use the full extent of its powers in "governing" Bosnia, including the unseating of elected presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is evidence of the difficulties that the IC and the people of Bosnia have faced in establishing political democracy. Providing the tools not only for reaching the threshold of democratization but for sustaining democratization to the Bosnians does not mean that the Bosnians will use those tools in certain ways should they decide to use them.

How are the risks involved in the process of democratization to be minimized? It is at this juncture that Tan correctly turns to the work of John Dewey. In order to move a country and its people to a democratic form of governance, i.e., political democracy, as in the case of Bosnia, changes must be made at the level of culture (Tan, 2003: 205).<sup>28</sup> This is where Dewey's idea of democracy as a "way of life," or as Tan refers to it – "democracy as a culture," comes into play. Democracy is not simply a form of government that includes an executive that is responsive to the popular will as expressed by elections, an independent judiciary, and a wide range of enforced civil liberties. For Dewey,

Democracy is a *personal* way of individual life; that it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life... Democracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature. Belief in the Common Man is a familiar article in the democratic creed. That belief is without basis and significance save as it means faith in the potentialities of human nature as that nature is exhibited in every human being irrespective of race, color, sex, birth and family, of material or cultural wealth. This faith may be enacted in statutes, but it is only on paper unless it is put in force in the attitudes which human beings display to one another in all the incidents and relations of daily life. (1939/1988: 226)

Democracy as a way of life is also normative in nature:

The key-note of democracy as a way of life may be expressed, it seems to me, as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together: – which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals. (1937/1987: 217–218)

What could be some of those values that are realized through this way of life? As Stuhr (1993) points out, they are values like liberty, equality, and justice; and it is the “recognition of the moral character of democracy [that] directs us to assess and revise institutions, practices, and social relations in terms of the extent to which they yield and embody democratic concern for the free, intelligent, and harmonious development of individuals” (48).

This conceptual expansion of democracy as a way of life is also, as Stuhr reminds us, not just another way of talking about the familiar but something that Dewey thought could be produced. Unfortunately, although there are governments that are in large measure politically democratic, including the United States, a similar claim cannot be made about “democracies of life”: “there appear to be no existing large nations, states, or cultures that significantly, much less fully, meet the criteria of a democratic way of life” (Stuhr, 1993: 46–47). How can such democracies be produced? Not only must economic concerns be addressed, such as the growing disparity between the haves and the have-nots and the all too real experience of poverty and insecurity by the have-nots, but thought and communication control need to be curtailed by taking back or reestablishing inquiry and communication (Stuhr, 1993: 51–52). This latter precondition for a democratic way of life is at the heart of any set of practices that are said to be preparatory for a group of people to become participants in a political democracy.

We find Tan advocating a process of political democratization that builds on Dewey’s view of democracy as a way of life. However, Tan’s advocacy seems to be based on the practicality of such an approach, for by gradually introducing practices over time and in various social situations and organizations, not only will the attitudes and skills needed for cooperative problem-solving as a responsible citizen be inculcated but the errors that will be made by individuals and groups will have less disastrous

effects for the country (2003: 205). Applying Tan’s reasoning to the case of present-day Bosnia, if democracy is to become a part of Bosnian society, then democracy must be perceived to be relevant to the daily life of typical Bosnians, which means in their interactions with others whether or not they are members of their own ethnic or religious group. Tan writes,

This is best done by understanding democracy as a culture, as a better way of life, where each individual has more to say in how she lives her life, where everybody has a better chance of living a fulfilling life in a flourishing community. The process of change must start at the level of how the ordinary person solves the problems she faces in cooperation with those around her. (2003: 206)

The benefits for Bosnians will become more pronounced, given that the political and economic future of the country, which includes participation in the Partnership For Peace (PfP) and membership to NATO and the EU, depends on solving problems like the administration of the city of Mostar, military reforms, and better cooperation with The Hague on the issue of war crimes, all of which are directly related to cooperation with others. Although Tan believes that such a bottom-up approach will allow people of diverse ethnic and religious communities to retain their identities while their personal commitments are made more compatible with cooperative behavior, what is discussed in the first half of this section indicates that this democratic way of life is not simply a mass of technical know-how that is simply “used” by a person, but rather it is a part of a person’s identity as a “cultural democrat.” It becomes part of his/her plurality of selves, identities that are manifested in various arenas, including the familial, the religious, and the political. It is more a matter of transforming identities such that democracy is a viable form of governance, which requires structural reforms, which must be ultimately worked out within and between persons.

Given the difficulties that ethnic nationalism poses to democratization in countries with a multi-ethnic population, it was long held that democratization would be difficult, if not impossible, to sustain in these countries. Bosnia was no

exception (see Friedman, 2001; Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972: 92, 186). However, Bose and others have challenged this view by considering a consociational form of democracy, rather than a majoritarian form, and by reconsidering how identities are understood (see Bose, 2002: 42–44; Lijphart, 1977). Although the first of these points is beyond the scope of this chapter, it must be noted that even Bose acknowledges the difficulties of a consociational democracy, which is based on equality and power-sharing between different groups via their representative elites, when it is implemented in deeply divided societies like Bosnia. As Bose notes, consociationalism excludes the recognition of some collective identities and institutionalizes such exclusion, as well as relies on elite representatives of the communities, thus promoting vested interests under the guise of group interests (2002: 43, 246–252).<sup>29</sup> In the end, however, Bose acknowledges that consociationalism may be the best framework for bringing about a democratic Bosnia.<sup>30</sup> More important for this essay is the issue of identity.

According to Bose, scholars of nationalism and national identity have moved away from the essentialist view of identity and adopted a constructionist view similar to the one offered in this essay (2002: 43). This alternative view is arguably a more realistic view of ethno-national group identities that allows us to “make such identities compatible with democracy in a multiethnic framework” (Bose, 2002: 43). The notion of a “plurality of selves,” and the possibility of influencing a person to select “Bosnian” as his/her dominant political identity and perhaps “human being” as his/her overarching “ontological” status, rather than an endorsed ethno-national identity, can aid in creating the conditions of trust important for the creation and maintenance of an open and democratic society.

#### PEDAGOGY OF FORGING HUMANE DEMOCRACIES IN THE BALKANS

The debate over how the IC should intervene in Bosnia appears to have been decided with the drafting of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Guided by a vision of liberal internationalism and

its emphasis on individual autonomy and rights, the IC has settled into Bosnia, determined to democratize the former Yugoslav republic. Recognizing it would face obstructionism by ethnic nationalists from each segment of Bosnia’s multiethnic population, the IC began its “grand experiment” in democratization as a comprehensive set of peace-building activities ranging from top-down international regulation of elections, institutional development, and economic management, to the bottom-up development of political culture through civil society-building.

Over the past few years, however, the IC has intensified its engagement by increasing its powers, particularly through the OHR (Bose, 2002: 7). This is understandable, given the divisiveness and polarization that are created by nationalists of all kinds. The OHR, through dismissing elected and appointed officials and imposing policies on institutions that cannot function effectively, has sought to exercise its own brand of democracy on Bosnia and Herzegovina. This strategy follows a logic inherent within democracy: given that democracies need strong cohesion around a common political identity, if there are local representatives who promote ethnic nationalism and who engage in the politics of difference, then national unity must be built by excluding those who cannot or will not adapt to the identity that is indicative of the most inclusive political community, and that can serve as a rallying point for national unity (see Rustow, 1999: 26; Taylor, 1999). In the case of Bosnia, then, the IC must lead the populace to “the promised land” by eliminating from the scene those elements of Bosnian politics that are obstructionist to a wider “Bosnian” identity.

As several elections have shown, however, the vast majority of eligible voters in Bosnia have not rejected nationalist candidates, and have, dismissed the IC’s coercive tactics and its message for a moderate politics (Bose, 2002: 7–8). Bose offers an explanation:

The contentious, indeed adversarial relationship between the international community and much of Bosnia’s political spectrum is therefore, actually, also a contentious and adversarial relationship between the international community and vast segments of the Bosnian electorate. (8)

The IC and its liberal internationalism have been unable to save the Bosnians from themselves.

Bose questions the feasibility of creating a market democracy in Bosnia if the IC persists in using this strategy. All of the top-down reforms, all of the dismantling and rebuilding of institutions will not be able to sustain democracy without a similar determination to work on the personal and interpersonal level. This is because (1) a crucial aspect of democratization in Bosnia deals with the fostering of mutual trust and the promotion of non-nationalist identities in the political arena, and; (2) identities are not brute-facts given by the IC but endorsed, created, and chosen by individuals in response to themselves and their surroundings. The pedagogy that must be employed is one that prompts individuals to seriously consider identities that stem from recognizing commonalities between human beings.

This is in keeping with the work of Lederach (1997), a seminal figure in the field of conflict resolution. Lederach introduces a conceptual framework that offers "a comprehensive approach to the transformation of conflict that addresses structural issues, social dynamics of relationship building, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for peace" in deeply divided and war-torn societies (21). What is important for the purposes of this chapter is the significance of relationship building that is ultimately connected to personal identity.

It is a fact that Bosnian society is a divided one, laced with interconnected and deep-rooted antagonism, fear, mistrust, and misunderstanding. Experiences of violence and repression have been widespread and often associated with some particular ethnic group, a group that may also be perceived by some as being a centuries-old historical enemy, and yet it is a group whose members have been and still are their neighbors. Lederach writes,

Although enormous pain and deep-rooted animosity accompany any war, the nature of contemporary settings of armed conflict – where neighbor fears neighbor and sometimes family member fears family member, and where each sheds blood – makes the emotive, perceptual, social-psychological, and spiritual dimensions core, not peripheral, concerns. The immediacy of

hatred and prejudice, or racism and xenophobia, as primary factors and motivators of the conflict means that its transformation must be rooted in social-psychological and spiritual dimensions that traditionally have been seen as either irrelevant or outside the competency of international diplomacy. Reconciliation, seen as a process of encounter and as a social space, [where truth, justice, mercy, and peace can be validated and joined together], points in that direction. (29)

Lederach's reconciliation framework includes "the restoration and rebuilding of relationships" (24). It is at the personal and interpersonal level of society that Lederach's framework of peace building attempts to transform conflict and effect reconciliation.

The sort of sustainable reconciliation that Lederach has in mind is intimately connected with the identities of those persons who are in the process of restoring and rebuilding relationships, for we are referring to "humans (with identities)-in-relationship." Consequently, the social aspect of human existence is of great importance in the transformation of personal identity.

The transformative process of identity formation must be promoted in ways that allow people to recognize not only that the other is deserving of dignity, but that the perspective of the other is often as deserving of respect as is their own. This process can begin to take place in the absence of any "face-to-face" dialogue between members of antagonistic groups. However, if this process is to comprise the bottom-up component of the pedagogy of forging humane democracies, then such a process will ultimately be successful within a group context, in the very presence of the other. It is in the dialogic relationship that the intimate experience between people allows the constructive present to "disable" the destructive past.

What are some specific ways in which this transformative process can be pursued in practical terms? Perhaps the most obvious way is through the use of instruction about other cultures. Although much of what we learn about other cultures is through reading newspapers, magazines, and books; watching television, viewing films, and listening to the radio; and traveling to foreign lands, an important part of this learning process is through dialogue with those from cultures other than our own. It is enhanced not only in terms of the "quantity" of

our knowledge, but also in terms of its “quality,” i.e., it is from someone who is a part of that culture and who is speaking from experience rather than from someone who is an outsider and who is simply reporting how he or she understands an alien culture. Regardless of the means of acquiring knowledge about cultures, engaging in intercultural education allows people to address the differences between cultures, but also “to see themselves in the other,” thereby allowing them to experience fellow-feeling (or empathy) with the other, and act in a more compassionate and civically responsible way toward them.<sup>31</sup>

Intercultural education is a way to “liberate us from received opinion, the sort of opinion that often divides us along certain ethnic, racial, and religious categories” (Conces, 2002: 295).<sup>32</sup> Increasing people’s contact with narratives from different ethnic, racial, and religious groups promotes a certain vision and feeling of how the world is through the eyes of the other, whether the others are Bosniak, Serb, Croat, or a member of the IC. In her insightful article entitled “Constructive Storytelling in Intercommunal Conflicts: Building Community, Building Peace,” Senehi (2000) acknowledges the enormous value that storytelling might have for bringing about social change and growth within the context of intercommunal conflict insofar as storytelling can build community through the “social construction of identity, knowledge, memory, and emotion” (103).

Storytelling is a process, however, that could result in the intensification and perpetuation of conflicts, particularly if various narratives, folktales, songs, and poems have been endowed with a nationalist identity that has been used to foster xenophobia and ethnic chauvinism by political leaders (Senehi, 2000: 103–104).<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps Vuk Karadžić’s epic song “The Down Fall of the Serbian Empire” and Petar Petrović Njegoš’s epic poem *The Mountain Wreath*, some of the highest achievements in Serbian song and literature and works that helped to develop the Kosovo myth in the 19th century, illustrate that storytelling and national consciousness have been at times inseparable.<sup>34</sup> The myth begins with historical fact: the Serb Prince Lazar and his army clashing at Kosovo Polje, the field of Blackbirds, with

the Ottoman Turkish army on 28 June 1389. From this event there develops the view of Prince Lazar as a martyr and moral victor for the Serbian cause and the battle as a triumph of Lazar’s choice of the “heavenly kingdom” over the “earthly kingdom.” It was this battle and the subsequent development of the myth and the covenant between the Serbian people, as represented by Prince Lazar, and the “heavenly kingdom” that helped to solidify Serbian national unity and that was resurrected by the Serbian political leadership, including Slobodan Milošević, in their attempt to inflame Serb nationalism for their political purposes. In the words of Milošević, during the six-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo that was celebrated in 1989, “Never again would Islam subjugate the Serbs.”<sup>35</sup>

Yet the darker side of storytelling is overshadowed by intercultural education not only in terms of an exchange of views, but also the creation of dialogue. As the famed facilitator of political dialogue Saunders (1999) notes, dialogue is a “process of genuine *interaction* through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn” (82).<sup>36</sup> Dialogue is not always easy to initiate and sustain, especially if there exists a great deal of tension between interlocutors. Saunders explains:

Dialogue begins with a period of learning to talk with civility, to pour out concerns without abuse and to listen to what others are saying. Participants slowly get to know others in the dialogue – their experiences, needs, interests, hopes and fears. Such knowledge will not come easily or quickly; all that is said will not be absorbed on first hearing. But no knowledge will be possible unless the character of genuine dialogue is understood and the practice established. (112)

Because “entering into the lives of others” is a cognitive endeavor, an exchange of views and the creation of a dialogue can also be furthered by having certain experiences. Experiencing the sort of oppression and violence, for instance, that members of a particular ethnic group suffered can help in understanding the tragic situation of others. Yet having such experiences may not be sufficient for a robust understanding and a conciliatory relationship, for unless the experience is integrated in a way

that allows the person to understand oppressive and violent situations as harmful to all persons no matter their ethnicity and religious identity, and thus in need of reduction or elimination altogether, then such experiences may only enhance divisiveness, hatred, and violence.

Another way in which the transformative process can take place is through what I call an "imaginative exercise," or what others refer to as narrative imagination or moral imagination (see Benhabib, 1992: 37–41; Nussbaum, 1997: 85–112). Imagination is much more than the fancy of a child or the unproductive musings of an adult. As Saul (2004) so insightfully points out, it is a single, though interconnected, thread of what separates human beings from other species of animal, i.e., "our ability to consider. . . [our] ability to shape events rather than be shaped"(3). Differences between interlocutors are not in short supply. Moreover, the disengagement from these differences can have quite profound consequences. As Saul notes, however,

a human who knows only his personal or local reality may be tempted into thinking that the *other*, the human across the street or in the next town or of another colour or language or social condition, does not really exist. Not as a human. . . Transcending the self is about imagining the *other*; not to weaken the self, but to be capable of reaching beyond it. (127)

In other words, it is "to transport yourself into the *other*. To imagine yourself into the *other*" (134). If intercommunal conflicts can be inflicted with animosity about the past, and if the building of more compassionate relationships, relationships that can be characterized as "non-violent, nonharming, and nonaggressive. . . [that are] free of . . . suffering and. . . [are] associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility, and respect towards the other" are desirable, then fellow-feeling or empathy might be an extremely useful approach (Dalai Lama and Cutler, 1998: 114). The ability to appreciate or to commiserate with another's suffering can be an important step in transforming one's identity.

A practical exercise that could enhance empathy takes the form of imagining what it would be like to have undergone certain experiences of others who have been oppressed, impoverished, or injured. Although such an exercise requires a

well-developed capacity of imagination, the instructional process is epistemically indispensable for increasing the depth, realism, and vividness of one's imagining what it would be like "to be in someone else's shoes."

As a limiting case of the imaginative exercise and the elasticity of human compassion, such an exercise may be of little use, particularly when an individual of one ethnic group who has been victimized is asked to imagine the suffering of a member of the group that tormented him/her. In order to at least awaken feelings of compassion in such a cold, indifferent, and angry person, it might be useful to help that person visualize a situation in which a very young child of another ethnic group is suffering and then imagine how he/she would respond to that imagining. It is by highlighting the age of the child that one can attempt to play on the notion of innocence and thus attempt to increase compassion through the use of empathy.

A second sort of imaginative exercise comes in the form of imagining "the emergence of qualitatively new desires, social relations, and modes of association" among themselves, between themselves and other oppressed groups, between themselves and their oppressors, and between themselves and the IC (Gilroy, 1993: 37).<sup>37</sup> It is a way to imagine a new Bosnia where Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, Roma, and Kosovars of all classes live and work together in the service of solidarity, friendship, harmony, prosperity, and citizenship. Greater interdependence is achieved by envisioning such a future. These groups are already intimately linked and interdependent, though in ways that are sometimes antagonistic. What is needed is a vision of a shared future that is equally supportive of human flourishing.<sup>38</sup>

Imaginings of either variety are not sufficient to bring about democratization, but they are a means to achieve change in conflictual relationships designed to do just that. Efforts to imagine a better world cannot only help members of oppositional groups to understand how they might decide what actions they should take, but also how they should prioritize their efforts and whether and when they should adopt a change of direction (Mayo, 2002: 78).



This is a pedagogy of creative identity transformation that is both ethical and demanding. Several philosophers from the East and the West, who engage in "theory of praxis," if not praxis itself, including Tu Wei-ming, Peter Singer, and Robert C. Solomon, place a great deal of importance on what has come to be known as "The Moral Circle."<sup>39</sup> As Solomon notes, "ethics is a process of enlarged awareness," i.e., expansion of the moral circle (1999: 70). If morality is, at least in part, about human relationships, and if it is also about the moral claims that others place on us, then in a world of interconnectedness or interdependency, it makes sense to conceptualize the ever-expanding human relationships and their associated moral obligations as a series of concentric circles.<sup>40</sup> A person's moral development begins early in life as he/she grows up in some sort of a "family." It is here that the person learns to curb self-interest and understands the complexities of reciprocal obligatory behavior.

The inner-most circle is composed of the person's first "intimate" relationships. As we begin to "network" and acquire various duties, our circle of moral concern grows, building on an increasing number of relationships. It begins to include acquaintances, neighbors, colleagues, strangers, and maybe even other species and "the land." The progression from the proximate kinship relations to the more distant relations to neighbors, to community, to all humanity, and to the land, as Solomon notes, has much to do with resemblance or the recognition of similarities. It is resemblance that is the key to sympathy: "we feel 'closest' to those who are (or seem to be) most like us... The expanding circle does not require a leap of reason but rather an open mind and ... a receptive heart" (1999: 71). If we accept Solomon's claim that "familiarity breeds reciprocity," then it becomes evident why the sense of social belonging that human beings strive for is what Solomon calls "reciprocal altruism," i.e., "the readiness of an individual or a group to aid another individual or group with the expectation that it will be helped in return" (1999: 73). Such readiness is a product of a person's appreciation of another's condition or plight, and the fellow-feeling or empathy that one has towards the other.

What urges and impels a person to appreciate another's condition and to engage in fellow-feeling? What leads a person from fellow-feeling to engaging in sympathetic behavior, to community-building, and to democratization? Such change is undoubtedly contingent on the efficacy of the transformative process of identity formation. Yet how is this efficacy enhanced? Lederach (1997) gives us an idea as it pertains to a conflict or post-conflict setting:

People need opportunity and space to express to and with one another the trauma of loss and their grief at that loss, and the anger that accompanies the pain and the memory of injustices experienced. Acknowledgment is decisive in the reconciliation dynamic. It is one thing to *know*; it is yet a very different social phenomenon to *acknowledge*. Acknowledgment through hearing one another's stories validates experience and feelings and represents the first step toward restoration of the person and the relationship. (26)

This is part of the approach of the Nansen Network that works to empower people to contribute to the peaceful transformation, management, and resolution of conflicts. By providing "a neutral and safe space to facilitate truthful and honest communication," the Nansen Network attempts to "break down enemy images, and through that to encourage people in conflict to gain insight into each other's positions, interests and needs" (International Peace Research Institute, 2002: 9).

It is perhaps worth noting that my primary aim in this essay has been simply to explore the relationship between personal identity, ethnic nationalism, and democratization in Bosnia, and to suggest that the transformative process of identity formation can help in shielding democratization from the deleterious effect of ethnic nationalism. For the most part, I have purposively avoided the difficulties of the intractable ideological dispute. In an earlier work, *Blurred Visions: Philosophy, Science, and Ideology in a Troubled World*, I addressed this topic and concluded that the polarization of argumentation in ideological disputes is due not only to ideological commitment (referred to as ideological intransigence), but also to the acceptance of brute evidence as a means to overcome intractability (referred to as evidentiary intransigence). Although the latter is somewhat manageable, the former is much more

difficult to contend with, making it ever so difficult to achieve a mutually beneficial resolution to a dispute (Conces, 1997). This is because polarization is detrimental to the onset of dialogue, a necessary ingredient for a mutually beneficial resolution. In retrospect, this essay can be seen as filling the gap between theory and practice that *Blurred Visions* failed to achieve. The measures here are useful means to bringing about the dialogue needed for the resolution of intractable ideological disputes whether they arise in Bosnia or elsewhere.

Regardless of whether either sort of intransigence is an impediment to the democratization of Bosnia, it must be admitted that even with regard to personal identity, there is no guarantee that any of these measures will change xenophobic and chauvinist attitudes among the people of Bosnia. In Bosnia, as elsewhere, conflictual relationships change over time because people think, feel and act differently when they have replaced the “we and they” relationship with a “we” relationship. There is an incorporation of others’ views, enlargement of perspectives, and changes in how people interact with one another. As a result, mutual trust that is created between each of the ethnic groups in Bosnia, and with the IC, will allow democratization to proceed more smoothly.

While the pedagogy traced above helps us to understand how a bottom-up development of political culture might proceed, particularly in transforming personal identities as well as developing the “we” relationship, we need to keep in mind that this process of development is part of what is meant by soulcraft, which contributes to the cultivation of democratic citizens and which is closely linked to what John Dewey meant by democracy as a way of life.

By emphasizing the top-down approach, the IC in Bosnia and Kosovo is attempting to acquire what it needs from the citizenry by dictating that it be so. Although this is a heavy-handed approach to democratization, it is not necessarily an illustration of the ethnocentrism of a form of social engineering derived exclusively from the experiences of Western Europe and the United States and then generalized to the Balkans. However, a functioning political democracy is not something that can be simply coerced, but rather it can only be achieved by

getting individuals to cooperate with one another and to get them to practice self-restraint when it comes to their dealings with others (Kymlicka, 2001: 285). In short, what is needed is the cultivation of democratic citizens. It is important for members of any democratic state, but particularly for those in places like Bosnia and Kosovo, to develop those personal qualities that are crucial to civil life and effective democratic self-government, including self-understanding, listening and critical reasoning skills, leadership, honesty, generosity, fellow-feeling, and the ability to work collaboratively (Astin, 2002: 92). It is important that citizens possess a certain character and knowledge about democratic governance that will equip them for self-rule. In a sense, it is nothing other than politics being engaged in soulcraft (Sandel, 2002: 139–140).

What is significant in regards to the work of the IC in places like Bosnia and Kosovo is that democratic institutions and the rule of law are being established in the presence of numerous obstacles and impediments, including a strong ethnic nationalist identity that pervades all strata of their societies. To counteract these problems, some work must be done in terms of moral and intellectual formation that instills in citizens a sense of commitment to rights, liberties, equality, and self-governance that will allow for human flourishing to the fullest extent possible. This is exactly what Dewey (1939/1988) had in mind when he wrote about democracy as a way of life – “the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life” (226).

Although work by NGOs, like the various centers that make up the Nansen Network in the Balkans, are instrumental in this process and should be increasingly used by governments and international organizations, another important means of achieving democratic citizenship is higher education. Higher education in the United States has focused on the acquisition of knowledge and skills like writing, reading, mathematics, and critical thinking. However, it is less impressive when it comes to developing the personal qualities that are crucial for democratic self-rule (Astin, 2002: 92). My own experience suggests that higher education in developing

and post-conflict societies is lacking in both areas, especially in terms of critical thinking and character development. Consequently, it is imperative that leaders in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans recognize that higher education is not only a driving force behind modernizing their countries, but is also instrumental in the process of democratization from the bottom-up (Conces, 2003).

### CONCLUSION

Although there is no single way to bring about democratization in Bosnia, a reliance on institution-building will likely lead to more paralysis and divisiveness. Compounding this problem is the "compression" of diverse ethnic and religious populations that the IC appears to be committed to. This means that such groups are more frequently confronted with others' "otherness." Expressions of solidarity, friendship, and citizenship within multi-ethnic Bosnia must be nurtured in order to ameliorate these harmful effects and to form coalitions across differences.

The creation of "fields of existence rather than fields of battle" must be the result of our intellectual and physical labor (Said, 2004: 141). One way to achieve this goal is by rethinking how identity, trust, and ethnic nationalism relate to democratization in a deeply divided Bosnia. In the end, this may mean a transcendent identity that moves beyond emphasizing ethnic identities as the dominant ones to an emphasis on humanness and Bosnian citizenship. It will take time, sometimes distance, and occasionally education to figure out this relationship, but it can, and must, be done. Ultimately, the problem of accounting for how and why certain people, and not others, are led to be "subjected" to certain ethnic and religious discourses and influences in the first place will need to be addressed so that we can change the difficult "reality" of our lives through concrete actions that move beyond the abstract language of the academy. If transitional justice is to become a reality in the Balkans, the people who have lived through the darkness must come to terms with the genocide, ethnic cleansing, trials, administrative

purges, refugee camps, being displaced, restitution of property, and compensation for suffering in ways that reflect a fundamental change of their personal identities.<sup>41</sup> It is a matter of how they should deal with the past.

One may infer that the greatest disappointment of this work is that it is a "theory of praxis" and not praxis itself. Śāntideva (1995), the 7th Century Indian Buddhist monk and scholar, was correct when he wrote that there is a difference "between a person who desires to go and one who is going, in that order" (6).<sup>42</sup> Consequently, it appears that I am someone who still desires to go. Yet it is the power of ideas and the practical efficacy of philosophy that leads me to conclude that work such as this can help to reconfigure worldviews and thus help to elicit the practice of peace. It is just one more way to encourage and promote a better world even if it means putting a shoulder to the boulder and following in the footsteps of Sisyphus.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> 'International community' means Western governments and multilateral institutions that are in some way controlled by those same governments.

<sup>2</sup> For more on misunderstanding Bosnian history, see Donia and Fine (1994); Gagnon (2002); Lovrenović (2001); Mazower (2002); Pavković (2000); and Rogel (2004).

<sup>3</sup> The process of economic development includes expanding peoples' freedoms. For a treatment of this approach to development, see Sen (1999).

<sup>4</sup> See also Woodward (1999: 9).

<sup>5</sup> Berke (1989) claims that nationalism is "the expression of a perverted or pathological self-absorption and pride" (258). A similar view of nationalism and the national ideology as a pathological phenomenon can be found in Tipton (1995). Although Kecmanovic (1996) argues against ethnonationalist meeting a sufficient number of criteria to be regarded as pathological, he does make a strong case for nationalism being "unhealthy" insofar as it does not promote human flourishing (181–193).

<sup>6</sup> The fragmentation that can undermine a democracy is discussed by Taylor (1992: 112–118).

<sup>7</sup> Fukuyama (1995) takes what sociologist James S. Coleman calls "social capital," that is, "the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations" to be critical to all aspects of social existence, economic as well as political (10). Social capital is dependent on

the degree to which norms and values are shared, and the degree to which individual interests are subordinated to collective interests. It is from these shared norms that trust is created, in the presence of which social capital is subsequently generated (26). According to Fukuyama, it is "the concept of social capital [that] makes clear why capitalism and democracy are so closely related," for the robustness of a capitalist economy and the efficiency of democratic political institutions require a proclivity for self-organization, which is what social capital is all about (356–357). For a further discussion of social capital, see Coleman (1988).

<sup>8</sup> According to Somer, this private trust in ethnic others is dependent on factors such as the effectiveness of state institutions that establish interethnic peace, and public discourse that helps to judge the future intentions of ethnic others (2002, 96).

<sup>9</sup> Some philosophers, such as American neo-pragmatist Rorty (1995: 51), have questioned the notion of human nature or human essence because of the suspect character of intrinsic properties. Other theorists like American legal scholar Perry (1998) and American philosopher Nussbaum (1996), however, continue to refer to the mark of human beings *per se*.

<sup>10</sup> The reader should understand the satisfaction question as the following: "What conditions does something have to satisfy in order to be a human being?" The nature question should be understood as follows: "Of what kind of stuff are human beings composed?" See Garrett (1998: 1–19).

<sup>11</sup> This requirement of the other in identity formation is referred to by Laing (1969) as "complementarity" (66–78).

<sup>12</sup> Berlin (1970) also makes this point when he writes: "My individual self is not a something which I can detach from my relationships with others. . . For what I am is, in large part, determined by what I feel and think; and what I feel and think is determined by the feeling and thought prevailing in the society to which I belong" (156–157).

<sup>13</sup> Gabel returns to this idea in the following passage: "each person wants to connect with the others in a life-giving way, to make contact in a way that would produce a feeling of genuine recognition and mutual confirmation. This desire is fundamental to being a social person, and it animates all of us in every moment of our existence" (2000: 20).

<sup>14</sup> For an account of how different aspects of the self are manifest in different situations, see Hames-García (2000).

<sup>15</sup> Ignatieff (1993) seems to make the same point in his claim that a Croat is someone who is not a Serb, but goes further when he suggests that a necessary condition for a well-defined *national self* ready to be worshipped, is the presence of the mutual hatred that Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks have for one another. If his latter claim is true, then it places a heavy burden on the IC in the Balkans to undo the stranglehold of those "ancient" and recent hatreds in order to unseat ethnic nationalism.

<sup>16</sup> Granovetter (1985) refers to peoples' embeddedness in a variety of social groups, such as families, neighborhoods, and businesses, within an economic context.

<sup>17</sup> See also Greenfeld (1992: 12–13).

<sup>18</sup> See Margalit (1997: 83). Margalit seems to capture this when he writes that "belonging to a national form of life means being within a frame that offers meaning to people's choice between alternatives, thus enabling them to acquire an identity" (83).

<sup>19</sup> See also Denitch (1996: 197) and Wimmer (2002: 199–221).

<sup>20</sup> See also Cockburn (1998: 34).

<sup>21</sup> See also Elshtain (1996: 52).

<sup>22</sup> Rousseau (1772/1986). For a clear exposition on Rousseau's discussion, see Diamond and Plattner (1994: xi–xii).

<sup>23</sup> For an account of how Yugoslavia was not primarily destroyed by rival nationalisms, but by the absence of democracy, see Karić (1994: 99).

<sup>24</sup> See Bertrand (2004: 16–17).

<sup>25</sup> This would be analogous to what takes place in the United States, except that there would be Irish and Italian American standing side-by-side as they listened to the "Star-Spangled Banner." It is important to note that the emphasis here is on being Irish and Italian, respectively. In fact, taking pride in one's ethnicity is respected and is part of a "custom of tolerance," which is part of the "American way of life" (Nodia, 2004: 15). Sublimation has worked well to make the "melting pot." In a country like Bosnia, however, there is no such pot.

<sup>26</sup> See Horowitz (1985, 2004). Although I emphasize the bottom-up approach to democratization, I recognize that the top-down (institutional) approach must also be implemented. This would be in keeping with Diamond's claim that "the single most important and urgent factor in the consolidation of democracy is not civil society but political institutionalization" (Diamond, 1996: 238).

<sup>27</sup> Tan (2003: 205). Of course, Tan is not alone. Emerson (1999: 2–3) notes that some democratic decision-making processes as well as the divisive and adversarial electoral system are reasons why peace is so difficult, including peace in the Balkans. See also Schusterman (2004) and Tan (2004).

<sup>28</sup> See also Conces (2001).

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed discussion of these problems, see Brass (1991).

<sup>30</sup> See also Reilly and Reynolds (1999), who note that "consociationalism. . . is the solution when all else fails" (31).

<sup>31</sup> I use the term 'cultures' in this chapter in the same way as Mayo (2002) to the extent that it refers to "sets of practices involving habits of interaction, communicative codes, norms of behavior, and artistic expressions – all of which express in distinct ways relatively coherent systems of meanings and values" (158).

<sup>32</sup> See also Nussbaum (1997).

<sup>33</sup> See also Senehi (1996) and Volkan (1996, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> See also Anzulovic (1999); Malcolm (1999); Mojzes (1998); and Sells (1996, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Vulliamy (1994: 51).

<sup>36</sup> See also Makua and Marty (2001).

<sup>37</sup> See also Mayo (2002: 77–78).

<sup>38</sup> A version of this imaginative exercise took place during a seminar held in Herceg-Novi, Montenegro in January 1999 and was sponsored by the Nansen Dialogue Centre in Pristina, Kosovo. According to Aarbakke (2002), it was more akin to a problem-solving seminar, the aims of which were “to create a *meeting space* for Serbs and Albanians; to *facilitate dialogue* between the participants on issues of substance and to foster thinking about *peaceful conflict resolution* that could help the participants to envisage ways of transforming the conflict through peaceful means” (41). On the final day of one of the seminars, “the participants were divided into their national groups. A facilitator ‘visited’ the Albanian group as a ‘representative of the international community’ and told them that they would never obtain independence. He apologized for this and then asked them to specify what they wanted in order to make life inside Yugoslavia tolerable. At the same time, the Serbs were given the opposite message. The facilitator apologized, told them that Kosovo was going to be independent and asked them to specify what they wanted to make life in an independent Kosovo tolerable” (42).

<sup>39</sup> See Wei-ming (1989); Singer (1981); and Solomon (1999).

<sup>40</sup> See Wei-ming (1989: 113).

<sup>41</sup> For an illuminating account of how problematic transitional justice can become, see Elster (2004).

<sup>42</sup> Šantideva (1995: 6). For an interesting treatment of what constitutes “doing” philosophy in terms of praxis and theory, see McBride (2001).

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