Human Rights Poetry:
On Ferida Duraković's *Heart of Darkness*

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> And you,
> if you don't know how to rejoice,
> rejoice in the skill of one who does!
> My precious one,
>
>   nothing is good out there:
> neither place, nor time, nor action.
> But must one respect that old dramatic
> unity? A walk is for something else.
>
> —Ferida Duraković, from "Morning Glory, Sarajevo"[1]

We might approach the question of what human rights poetry is by asking another question: how does a "walk" become legible as an alternative to global capitalism? This substitution of human rights poetry with a "walk" implies that the frameworks within which these terms can be substituted— human rights and global capitalism—are mutually enforcing narratives. In the transition to post-socialism, a period that is marked by the disappearance of an alternative to global capitalism, human rights discourse presents multilateral intervention as an option that remains when there are no alternatives, a form of reparative justice. As Bob Meister notes in *After*

Evil, the fall of communism marks the correspondence between the emergence of human rights and the emergence of the world community. Further, Meister describes how the breakup of Yugoslavia reframed human rights as an ethical project rather than a political discourse that transformed "Auschwitz-based reasoning into a new discourse of global power" (3). As Meister argues, the function of human rights in this transitional period was to extend the "reasoning" of Auschwitz to the "discourse of global power." Notably, the logic of reparation relies not just on the extension of reason, but on assumptions about psychological processes of identifying, witnessing, and working through. In fact, these assumptions continue to inform our understanding of both human rights and intervention, while at the same time providing us with the terms for thinking about the disappearance of alternatives to global capitalism. Considered in this way, *human rights poetry* is critical of the discourse of human rights—the reparative framework of Euro-American human rights, which congealed around psychoanalytic theories of projective identification predominant in the postwar.

The conflict—and uneasy resolution—between the bolstering of state power through human rights discourse and its role as a force of opposition against injustice is perhaps most easily perceptible in human rights poetry, in which the human voice, the poetic speaker, is predictably set up as a witness. Looking at how poetry comes to occupy and is occupied by the figure of the witness allows us to see how the psychological processes of projective identification, upon which witnessing is based, inform the production of justice as human rights. The ambiguities of witnessing have been theoretically grounded in Holocaust testimony, predominantly in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony*, in which witnessing is conceptualized through a crisis of literature, "insofar as literature becomes a witness" (xviii). Despite this discourse, human rights assumes this literary function of witnessing, as the terms of Carolyn Forché's anthology *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness*, make explicit. Here, victim and listener merge in the experience of witnessing in order to "co-own" the atrocity (Laub 57). But I think that human rights poetry can be read in ways that more aptly configure the problem of the subject of human rights as an "other" of Europe.[2] United Nations (UN) intervention in the former Yugoslavia, in "non-European" Europe, reflects the limits of the discourse of human rights understood through the processes of identi-

fication implied in the co-ownership of the atrocity and the common task of witnessing. If the discourse of human rights offers the promise of performing justice through the process of witnessing, human rights poetry can, in contrast, be seen to raise questions about when and how the injustice of the victim can be realized as justice.[3] One of the primary ways that it raises this question is by emphasizing the insolubility of the other of Europe in the figure of the witness.

The problem of reading others, which has to do with reappraising the distance and difference between victims of human rights violations and those who see or listen, involves the aggressive disidentification of victim and addressee rather than a unifying identification of victim and witness. Such a disidentification, however, does not follow from the logic of projective identification, which is marked by an intensification of the reparative logic of identification via intervention. Referring to how the imperative for intervention in Yugoslavia deferred the post-Cold War *Pax Americana*, Denise Ferreira da Silva and Paula Chakravartty write:

> That peace could not begin to materialize, as the Cold War was followed by two simultaneous shifts that rendered the human a global (racial) signifier: first, the elevation of the human rights framework into the new global ethical program, and second, the emergence of a new principle for international relations, which allowed for the use of force to stop humanitarian crisis. (371)

When Silva and Chakravartty identify the emergence of "the human" as a "global (racial) signifier," they do not mean to indicate that the human is a universal signifier that now occupies a global and increasingly homogenous stage, but to identify the way that the term "human" is qualified via global (or ethnic) racial differentiation. This helps us to see that the term "human" functions as a signifier of not universality but globality, of race, emphasizing the fact that human rights post-1948 have been phrased and implemented in a way that has little to do with the narratives of what Joseph Slaughter calls an "abstract 'universal' personality" (43). Slaughter and other scholars who write critically about human rights tend to focus on a definition and identity of the human person without examining the projective dynamics of identification involved in the constitution of an

"other."[4] Slaughter's proposal that human rights implies a gap "between what everyone knows and what everyone should know" can only go so far as to identify the "rightless" as "creatures who lack what the incorporated citizen-subject enjoys" (43). In response to this critical position, which identifies how human rights literature can raise questions about those who are excluded and in the process dehumanized, Silva and Chakravartty draw attention to the way that its perspective on human rights and the accompanying ideology of aggressive intervention prefers questions about abstract personhood. Rather than interrogating the means by which human rights distributes ideas about globality and race, these questions perform a critical logic that maintains a projective model of identity: the human as universal or abstraction and his/her excluded others.

I propose that projective identification functions to assure that the discourse of human rights continues to reproduce and to safeguard the desires of the European subject. After briefly describing the psychoanalytic models that inform my reading of the centrality of projective identification in witnessing, I'll discuss the Bosnian writer Ferida Duraković's collection *Heart of Darkness* in order to show how poetry raises questions about the primacy of the projective model and the testimonial function of human rights literature. Duraković's foregrounding of the eventuality and inevitability of victimhood through the terms of waiting displaces an easy identification between victim and listener, between speaker and addressee. The indeterminacy of the poetic "I" helps us to think how poetry written under the sign of human rights in the post-Cold War era challenges the global reparative model of witnessing. Poetic nonintegration, a term that emerges from my discussion of psychoanalysis, refers, then, to the limits of transforming victims of injustice into subjects of justice. Poetic nonintegration represents not a solution to the problem of the subject, but an alternative to the logics of disintegration and integration that govern our thinking about the post-socialist transition.

Psychoanalysis and Projective Identification

Before discussing the poetry of Duraković, it's necessary to explain how the psychoanalytic notion of nonintegration informs an approach to the disidentification of speaker and addressee. Although the reparative gesture that founds the logic of human rights intervention purports to rec-

ognize the other, the implementation of this recognition operates via intervention in a territory, region, or geographical space. For example, intervention in Kosovo was often phrased as the rewriting of the environment as a potentially therapeutic space—a notion encapsulated in the phrase that identified the goal of NATO in Kosovo: "Serbs out, peacekeepers in, refugees back." This process of creating a potentially therapeutic space requires that the environment is presented as requiring or potentially benefitting from intervention. This process describes the way in which the Balkans, as a geographical entity, as an environment, is understood through the terms of ethnic conflict to be a space that "rejoices" in its own destruction.

First, it is important to see how projective identification falls short in its capacity to explain the rewriting of the other as therapeutic environment. How does the dynamic of projection—which explains the psychological process of splitting, in which a subject displaces his/her own negative affects onto another—explain the relationship between Europe and the others of Europe and, in particular, the Balkans? Although other aspects of the formation of identity have been discussed exhaustively by postcolonial theorists and in human rights literature, I find that projection retains its power as an uncritical explanatory force—potentially as a metaphor—of sociological relations of otherness. In the Balkans, projection explains the post-socialist problem of integration through recourse to the Balkans' historical position as the repressed threat of disintegration. Following this logic, the "barbarianism" of the Balkans is produced through the process of European civilization. As Tomislav Longinovic argues, "Yugoslavia is the skeleton in the closet of Europe, a place where the otherness-that-creates-me is repressed, sanctioned, and bombed" (47).[5] Longinovic's logic takes up those critical positions that unpack the "metaphorics" of the Balkans (Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* [59–60], or Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić's *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*) and that establish Balkanism as a discourse beset with the critical problem of "writing back" to the West.[6] Although I don't dispute this logic *per se*, my approach to the question of the Balkan subject is different. I consider how both Balkanist criticism and the discursive forms it critiques assume that something integral about Europe is repressed—and therefore, reflected, refracted, or made visible—in the representation of the Balkans. Inevitably, it seems, the logic of projec-

tion reproduces the process of integration as a problem for the Balkan sub-
ject that reveals something about the compromised power of Europe.
Thus, the knowledge that is produced about Europe reproduces the Balkan
subject as a problem at the same time that it continues to valorize what can
be known and the questions that can be asked about Europe.

Étienne Balibar, in his description of the Balkans and its constitution as
the exceptional space of Europe, raises questions about Europe's civilizing
mission, claiming that the conflicts in the Balkans mark "a sort of cold war
after the Cold War" (167). The wars in former Yugoslavia echo with
Auschwitz's "never again," a phrase that implies the inherence of bar-
barism in European civilization. This critical viewpoint locates the
Balkans as a space—a "place, time, and action"—that has something to
say about Europe itself. This critique analyzes United Nations and United
States interests in intervention to arrive at a central attitude toward what
comes to be called "aggression," identifying "ethnic aggression" as bar-
barism, a way of differentiating it from the aggressive action of interven-
tion.

In the context of the former Yugoslavia, Todorova notes how the
Balkans, as understood by "the civilized world," bore out this equation be-
tween aggression and barbarity; as the projection of a certain idea of re-
gression, Todorova notes how "balkanization" became "a synonym for a
reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian" (3). Dis-
puting this tendency to read the Balkans as ontologically defined by an at-
tachment to the past, and therefore as perpetually regressive, she claims
that the Balkans exist "somewhere between barbarity and civilization"
(180), emphasizing their role as a vanishing mediator. Balibar also draws
conclusions about "local projection," in which the Balkans provide an in-
stance for reflecting Europe back to itself.[7] These classifications of the
function of the Balkans in relation to Europe remain limited in describing
the relation of barbarity because they turn to the idea of "projective identi-
fication," which is based on a negative identification of ethnic aggression
as meaningful for European self-understanding.

In the post-Cold War era, the defensive use of aggression becomes
more pronounced as it comes to define the ideology of intervention. In this
scheme, complicity re-emerges to define the parameters of action and in-
action through the figure of intervention in the new world order and the
emergent conceptualization of a global system defined or marked by the

construction of the term "humanity."[8] As Meister notes in *After Evil*, the fall of communism in 1989 marked the emergence of human rights discourse as the predominant framework of this new order; above all, this framework involves what Meister calls the shift in "once divided societies from a moral psychology of struggle to one of reconciliation" (8). In discussing this "moral psychology of reconciliation," which he sees as an extension of post-Auschwitz reasoning, Meister describes how intervention now emerges from the identification of "bystanders" with victims; he criticizes the way that this alignment obscures the role of "beneficiaries," so that "beneficiaries can identify themselves as bystanders who would have been opponents if only they had known" (215). Meister's project attempts to show how discourses of recovery, which take form as the discourse of human rights discourse, preserve the integrity of the beneficiary at the expense of struggling for the justice of the victim. Meister uses Melanie Klein's concept of projective identification in order to theorize a non-totalizing ethics, that is, an ethics that does not rely on "treating the other as an extension of self" (149). He also relies on British psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott's identification of the limitations in Klein's theory; namely, that for Klein, projection does not do enough to "distinguish the real externality of others from the internal objects whom we fantastically destroy" (147). Coming out as critical of projective identification, then, he turns to Emmanuel Levinas's notion of "substitution," formulated through the figure of the hostage, "to suffer *for* another (that is, in *place* of another)" (Meister 149, emphasis original), an act that is premised upon disidentification with the other.

What stands out about this process of disidentification, as Meister describes it, is the way that projective identification continues to be assumed as underlying the political process. Levinasian substitution, or "putting oneself in the place of another," might begin by acknowledging separation, but it still imagines access to the subjective position of the other as part of the very possibility of thinking about ethics as politics.

The assumption of this continuity, despite the discontinuity, between subject and other often appears unproblematic because it tends to be used in a critical fashion. In psychoanalysis, however, the limits of projection help to render perceptible how this primary state of object-relating takes place between an individual and an environment, which only later cohere into the positions of subject and other. Hungarian psychoanalyst Michael

Balint presents this state in his theory of primary love, as does Winnicott in his account of nonintegration. Both assert the primacy of aggression and disidentification. Balint conceives of primary love as characterized by the destruction of needs, desires, and interests, a state of object-relating in which one partner requires all of the love. Similarly, what Winnicott calls nonintegration supposes a fundamental aggression as entirely unconcerned with an other, a state, that is, which precedes human relationality.

One of the significant contributions made by a psychoanalytic logic of nonintegration to this reparative project is the reconfiguration of this primary relation as taking place not between a self and an other, but between a self and an environment. Thus, despite the fact that projection is usually put forth in order to view European subjectivity in a critical manner, the model cannot adequately account for the conflation of subject as other and environment, which is the operative racialized logic of Europe in regard to the Balkans, as Todorova points out in her discussion of how the "geographic appellation" of the Balkans comes to occupy the imagination of Europe (7). The logic of nonintegration might help us to think about what Todorova refers to as the conflation of both geographic and cultural signification (21), which is analogous to the construction of the other as environment.

The scene of nonintegration captures this problem of primary relation while also presenting the pitfalls of using the Balkan subject in an exemplary way, since the terms of refusing the world that this subject puts forth are not the same as the terms that are used to read the subject. Poetic nonintegration emphasizes this disjuncture; it takes up the problem of the Balkan subject seeking estrangement from its European other. Like Duraković's speaker's divestment of the coordinates that identify her as the center of "place, time, and action," nonintegration invites thinking about the destabilization of the self, or the subject, in relation to its environment.

In psychoanalytic literature, integration is seen as part of the developmental process, but Winnicott suggests that, outside the Freudian logic of integration/disintegration (in which civilization is constantly threatened by disintegration), nonintegration involves tolerating a "non-purposive state," a state of relaxation or formlessness that is as much a part of the healthy personality as a developmental stage or characteristic of the schizoid personality. In "The Concept of a Healthy Individual," Winnicott notes how tolerating disintegration "in resting and in relaxation and in dreaming"

(29) allows what he calls in *Playing and Reality* a "sort of ticking over of the unintegrated personality" (78). Winnicott develops his observations about nonintegration as the condition for creative rearrangement by describing a relationship with a patient that allows him to see the value of the process of "searching for a self," after which, he writes,

> [S]he said the very words that I need in order to express my meaning. She said, slowly, with deep feeling: "Yes, I see, one could postulate the existence of a me from the question, as from the searching." She had now made the essential interpretation in that the question arose out of what can only be called her creativity, creativity that was coming together after relaxation, which is the opposite of integration. (86)

Winnicott emphasizes the patient's ability to create her own image of herself by allowing herself to tolerate a state of formlessness in which others do not define or identify herself for her. This creative act yields the postulation of "the existence of a me," a type of subjectivity that can result from nonintegration but that does not derive from the normative process of integration and the organization of defenses around disintegration. Winnicott describes how such a state requires the "reflecting back" of a statement or question on behalf of the analyst. Such a "reflection" is precisely what initially seems to be too intentional, but as Winnicott notes, this reflection allows for the subject to regard the negativity that constitutes its coherence into an "I."

What Winnicott calls our attention to in his discussion of subject formation is the contrast between reparation's overcoming or sublimating of destruction (especially destructive wishes toward an other) and nonintegration's capacity to "get to" these destructive wishes. In "Aggression, Guilt, and Reparation," he writes,

> Naturally the fact that the patient was becoming conscious of the destructiveness made possible the constructive activity which appeared in the day. But it is the other way round that I want you to see just now. The constructive and creative experiences were making it possible for the child to get to the experience of her destructiveness. (121)

Although reparation, which here is denoted as the "constructive and creative experiences," is usually perceived as an outcome of the consciousness of destructiveness and its overcoming, Winnicott suggests that reparation is less the aim than a symptom of the process of nonintegration. Being able to "get to" the experience of destructiveness is not a mark of one's relation to others, but constitutive of the very production of oneself in an environment, constitutive of externality. He writes, again: "By contrast it is a failure of integration when we need to find the things we disapprove of outside ourselves and do so at a price, this price being the loss of destructiveness which really belongs to ourselves" (117). In this passage, Winnicott highlights how projection, which fulfills the "need to find the things we disapprove of outside ourselves," arises contingently as an expression of failed integration. From Winnicott's perspective, projection is compensatory, making up for the loss of destructiveness. Reparation, as an extension of this process, does not signal the overcoming of aggression but registers destructiveness. The value of reparation lies not in "correcting" destructive impulses or the sublimation of aggression; rather, the registration of destructiveness implies that one is able to take on feelings of destructiveness and, therefore, that the "not-me" refers not to projected "others," but to a realm of disavowed feelings and objects.[9]

While Winnicott describes how nonintegration replaces projection as a primary mechanism, he does not include consideration of the environment in his discussion of nonintegration. Balint goes a step further to approach the environment's agreement with this emergent self. In *Thrills and Regressions*, he notes that though projective identification can "explain why the individual should *feel* that his environment agrees with, and even rewards, his aggressiveness directed against it," it does not "help us to understand the fact that the environment really *does so*, and still less why this queer object relationship is mutually satisfactory both to the individual and his environment" (21–22, emphasis original). Balint points to the problem of assessing the reality of this agreement from the perspective of the environment. Whereas projection and projective identification register the feeling of agreement as a kind of hunch or suspicion, and use that still small amount of uncertainty to locate the critical force of projection, from the point of view of the unintegrated environment, such agreement is posited or seen as a given, allowing access to the instability of the destructive impulses and their role in forging mutual satisfaction.

Balint theorizes this environmental "agreement" as a relationship "in which only one partner may have demands and claims; the other partner (or partners, i.e. the whole world) must have no interests, no wishes, no demands, of his or her own" (22). He describes this as a state of "complete harmony" between the environment and an individual, but it becomes evident in this discussion that the proposition of such an environment—one that, as he says, "offers possibilities of limited regression" (22)—relies on imagining as non-existent the wishes and demands of the world. Here we can also note that Balint's implication of an equation between "the other partner" and "the whole world" might help to explain the logic of primary love, which requires, as a kind of pre-step to the "agreement" of the environment, the casting of the other as environment.

While Winnicott imagines nonintegration as an aim of therapy and a countermeasure to "magical destruction," insofar as it is a state that one can, in the best case, "yield to" in order to deal with "the shock of recognizing the existence of a world that is outside . . . magical control" (85), he also identifies the problem of what to do with the inhering negativity of unintegrable experiences. Balint, who describes the coercion involved in enforcing "agreement" with this negativity, suggests the value of unintegrable experiences, which can prevent the closure of agreement. Such experiences—we might think of Duraković's "a walk is for something else"—defy the prescriptiveness of those models that seek to explain them; they resist reflection but require reflecting back, in order not to be lost. Endless waiting, protracted dying, never-ending war: these are post-socialist object worlds, in which incidents of aggression have taken shape in the shadow of threats of "disintegration"—"ethnic cleansing," aggression, so-called civil wars, new Cold Wars.

Human Rights and Poetry

As noted above, the terms of human rights have often been understood to be produced through narrative and to require narratological means of accounting for the self; this semblance of genre is built primarily upon understanding the legalistic aspects of human rights, many of which depend on an individual's construction of himself or herself as a victim of suffering. This dependence has led to the significance of what Sidonie Smith and Kay Schaffer call "life narratives" in establishing human rights (3). As

Slaughter explains in *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*, the genres of the common "humanistic social" vision of human rights law and of the *Bildungsroman* contain a "shared image of the human person" (4). Unlike the narrative form associated with the instantiation and justification of the subject of human rights, then, poetry can be seen to call into question the process through which a human person is identified as a subject of human rights. To be clear, I'm not so much distinguishing the genres of poetry and human rights as identifying the questions that arise within poetry, especially assumptions about the expressive function of the poet's voice to testify to abuse, about an ambivalence shared in both the construction of the lyric speaker and the subject of human rights.

Poetry extends or generalizes about the function of witnessing, which refers to the capacity to transfer knowledge, to make legible the (bad) experience of the non-European in the framework of the European human person. Christopher Merrill's introduction to *Heart of Darkness* exemplifies this relationship when he describes how Duraković remained in Sarajevo during the 1992–1996 siege "in order to bear witness to what became the central tragedy of the post-Cold War era" (12). From this perspective, the poetry of Ferida Duraković presents the construction of the innocent civilian, figured as the victim of both human rights abuses (a victim of Serbian aggression) and intervention (a victim of European Union integration). Duraković's *Heart of Darkness* contains poems ranging from before Tito's death in 1980 to after the Siege of Sarajevo, and is seen as bearing witness to the effects of "ethnic conflict" as tragedy in providing an account of atrocities. This function has bolstered the recognition of authors such as Duraković as upholding fundamental human rights, including the freedom of expression, as her membership in the Bosnian-Herzegovina PEN International Center demonstrates.[10] But this rather straightforward reading of the social function of *The Heart of Darkness* avoids some of the more complicated constructions that emerge in the poems, especially their depiction of waiting for death, of potentiality, as itself a form of aggression. Duraković's own prescience also complicates this function: the poems that most explicitly appear to witness were in fact written before the wartime siege itself. How are we to read a witnessing that occurs before the fact? How are we to read the "inevitable" outcome of the transition to post-socialism *before the fact*?

Duraković's poetry presents waiting as its central figure and experience. Waiting signals a mode of being in transition that supposes its immanence, as well as a futurity in which both the best and the worst can be assumed. In approaching the term as a metaphor, then, I'm interested not in how the experience is essential or inherent in the experience of the Balkans, or to affirm this metaphorical description as being centrally descriptive of a place, but rather, in how waiting, and the disidentification that it proposes between witness and victim—counterintuitively, through their blurring—reflects on the mutual construction of the scene of witnessing and the construction of the Balkans as environment.

In Duraković's poetry, we can see how the violence and threat typically assumed about the combatant experience are embedded in a civilian experience of waiting for death. In the poem "Paper Tea" (1986), the experience of waiting for death reflects the language of intervention and rescue that becomes predominant in the discourse of human rights. Duraković writes,

> It's not something you die of—
> waiting for evening to fall,
> huddled around yourself
> like family in a dining room.
> Real people die of something else!
> On the shores, in the fields,
> in the jungle—
> of water,
> of thunder, of tiger.

The poem depicts a distinction between death that is "real" and death that is "everyday," between death that can be expected through an encounter with "reality" and death that comes to an individual who is simply "living." The invocation of opposition is ironic, but the terms of the irony are less clear. Reading the poem in the context of the Balkan wars, such irony seems to characterize the state of being under siege and the experience of waiting as a figure of this new warfare. Although announced as a negation, as "not something you die of," this negative structure is affirmative of a new way of dying, a way of dying that precedes the aggression that characterizes human rights intervention after the fall of communism. What Du-

raković seems to describe is the attenuation of life in 1980s Yugoslavia—marked both by Yugoslavia's self-identification as a "non-aligned" state and by the explicit US policy to reintegrate Eastern Europe in a market-oriented economy.[11] These policies, however, only extend the "market liberalization" that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded from Yugoslavia as a condition of loans.[12] As others have argued, Yugoslavia's non-aligned status enabled access to loans from both blocs and also opened markets sooner, indicating that the split identification between communist politics and capitalist economic policy characterized Yugoslavia well before the post-socialist period. From this perspective, waiting as a form of dying seems to entail this experience of being situated between unviable alternatives, and thus the erosion, the wear and tear, of this position is what makes dying unreal.

In the ambivalent vacillation between first and second person, particular and universal, "Paper Tea" seems to follow the format of a testimony made by a witness to this atrocity, a witness who identifies—problematically, as Meister claims in his description of mock reparation—with the victim. But we can conceive this vacillation in yet another way. This poem represents waiting as attenuating the experience of atrocity, as itself a less real atrocity, and in addition, as complicating the line between victim and observer, cast as potential forms of one another. The observer who waits for "evening to fall" is also a potential victim of a "real" death. Blurring these distinctions, the poem raises the question of how the individual human in a state of victimhood can imagine a transformation of him or herself from an object of injustice to a subject who has been treated justly.

A partial answer to this question comes in how the speaker of Duraković's poem wishes for a state of absolute victimhood, a state indisputably external—as in, a death that comes from outside. In "Paper Tea," the death that "real people" die is external, or becomes figured as an environment: "on the shores, in the fields, in the jungle—of water, of thunder, of tiger." Here victimhood is indisputable; the speaker imagines no such death for herself or for her addressee. The death that the speaker depicts is neither aggressive nor perpetrated, except as metaphor:

> But wait a while. Summer evening
> will start to fall over town,
> over things, over us.

> We shall drown sorrowfully,
> flooded with sleep.
>
> You'll wake up, dust on our desk.
> Yet the better ones will die
> of something else: on the shores,
> in the fields, in the jungle—
> of water, of thunder, of tiger . . .

The poem describes how the evening "will start to fall," engulfing "town," "things," "us." From this figurative death, however, "you'll wake up," remaining split off from "us" to witness a death brought about by time, by waiting. To what extent does the irony involve the idea that waiting is equivalent to dying the death that "real people" die, or dying the death that "better ones" will die? The comparison awakens the fantasy of an external death:

> And you—you'd end your life
> by a tiger's skin flashing
> in the darkness!
> Nicely and quietly;
> no bleeding, no screaming . . .
> The way it's done in the books . . .
> As on the wing of the Snow Queen . . .

This death, a death that is an account of disappearance, points to a contradiction in the function of witnessing and thinking about witnessing in relation to death. Witnessing that eschews its moral function and fantasizes about the nature of the external threat, as books might do, reinscribes morality as an aesthetics—"nicely and quietly; / no bleeding, no screaming"—that is resolved in metaphor. And metaphor provides an ultimately dissatisfying resolution to Duraković's speaker because it continues to push forth the terms of splitting (into real/not real) that the poems ultimately critique. The wish for absolute victimhood exposes not just the futility of this wish, but the desire that underlies it as well, a desire that is negative: not to be the witness of another's death, not to be the projected other of another's destructive project, and by extension, not to be the projected other of the Soviet bloc, of Europe, of US economic policies—that

is, not to be integrated, but also not to be seen as the threat of disintegration upon which another's integration is premised.

Written in 1986, "Paper Tea" can be seen as a critique of witnessing-to-come, a critique that emerges obliquely through the presentation of domestic death as in need of the aesthetics of witnessing. Waiting is not witnessing; *Heart of Darkness* presents waiting as a counter-experience because it reveals the absence of object, of victim, to be witnessed. Considering "Paper Tea" as a reflection on the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia may seem anachronistic, but those conflicts that marked the 1990s with their destructiveness nonetheless are some of the conflicts that it represents, albeit perhaps in a non-linear fashion. "It's not something you die of—" confounds the idea that a worthier cause necessarily occasions the things of which "real people die" rather than a form of death specific to the experience of civilians who occupy a space of interiority, not "on the shores, in the fields, in the jungle," but "huddled around yourself / like a family in a dining room." The predominant conflict that the figure of ironic waiting evokes is that of the experience of dying, and the death that comes from waiting, versus the value of "real death."

This conflict, then, maps onto the split between "two currents" (5) of human rights discourse that James Peck delineates in *Ideal Illusions: How the US Co-opted Human Rights*: the first, the American view, conceives human rights as civil and political rights, which can be understood in terms of "individual freedom," and the second conceives human rights as socio-economic, as basic needs associated with revolting populations and resistance along with global economic inequality (6). "Real death," which makes operative the terms of victim and perpetrator, is cast oppositely to the experience of dying qua waiting, which functions via a deprivation of basic needs. This distinction between the civil/political rights of the individual and the social/economic needs of people, often invoked to criticize the erasure of the second kind of right, can also be considered within the logic of nonintegration to highlight not just the exclusion of the socio-economic from the realm of human rights, but the obverse. As Umut Özsu argues in his recent commentary on the problems of the Canadian Human Rights Museum, every instance of civil or political violation implies a racialized socio-economic violence.

Does ironic waiting, then, have something to say about the non-aligned state's position in the twentieth century, whether between the blocs or, fur-

ther back, as an object of processes of liberal modernization that sought to build the nation-state, to "reconcile majoritarian ethnic rule with guarantees of individual rights" (Mazower 116)? Following this understanding, the post-socialist emergence of "ethnic aggression" is an effect of a long process of modernization, in which the coherence of the nation-state and the idea of individual rights—imposed during both the Balkan Wars of 1908 and 1914, and World War I by the Great Powers (Austrian Empire, France, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom)—was not only increasingly intolerant of minorities, but antagonistic to the formulation of rights that challenge economic inequality. The repression and assimilation of ethnic minorities, and also, as Sean Gervasi has argued in "Germany, U.S., and the Yugoslav Crisis," economic policies functioning as "external forces of destabilization," have thus marked the construction of nation-states in the Balkans, before and after World War II. Durakoviċ's notion of ironic waiting, however, helps us to see that these external forces are more than economic policies that IMF restructuring, neoliberal policies, or German and US machinations have imposed based on the ideology of the "free world." These "external forces" operate not in isolation as economic policies, but in combination with the enforcement of rights as an expression of political and civil freedom. The logic of projection produces an ideological analysis of US imperial power and its destructiveness, but misconstrues human rights poetry within the narrative of neoliberalism. While economic destabilization was the outcome of external processes, ironic waiting poses the question of destabilization from the perspective of the environment, as an intentional destruction of a way of life, via the deprivation of basic needs.

In its presentation of the wish of a victim to be another kind of victim, Durakoviċ's poem provides a way of thinking both about the desire for alternatives (to market-driven economic development) and about the intolerance for the figure of the non-real victim within the regime of witnessing, as enforced by the ideals of human rights discourse as well as the aggressive policies of economic intervention. The non-real victim does not need post-socialism to confirm its death; the poem registers the death of the communist subject less as the inevitable death of the ideals of communism than as the destruction of resistance, as a death that has already taken place. Balint's model of primary love illuminates how "external destabilization" registers the intolerance and destruction of the interests, wishes,

and demands of the "other partner," and enables conceptualization of this relationship from the point of view of the environment. He emphasizes not only the agreement of the environment but also its capacity to "rejoice" in its own destruction.

Duraković's poem "Morning Glory, Sarajevo," written in the years before the Siege of Sarajevo between the period of 1986–1991, more explicitly presents ironic waiting as a relation of witnessing before the fact. The poem recounts, in several stanzas, the observations of the town by a plural speaker ("we watch it from above") and raises the problem of how to love (within) that which destroys. Here, witnessing, not waiting, is ironic, seen, logically, to take place on the other side of the shadow cast by waiting:

> How important it is to rejoice.
> In everything! To accept even
> a closed door as a gift!
> And you,
> if you don't know how to rejoice,
> rejoice in the skill of one who does!
> My precious one,
>
> nothing is good out there:
> neither place, nor time, nor action.
> But must one respect that old dramatic
> unity? A walk is for something else.
> To go through mists with closed eyes,
> like in the war, toward the sun,
> to the hill above the town,
> to the tower.
> If you are ever
> happy in this town, call me:
> the presence of a witness
> is vital for history.
>
> In this town, in a cracked earthen bowl
> from which tenderness and stench pour out,
> in this incredible town there are trees
> which, oh, joy, I say, grow toward the sky
> like nowhere else!

The poem seems to present an attitude of uncritical optimism as a means of inhabiting a world in which nothing is good. In this schema, an experience of happiness would warrant calling a witness, presumably because such experiences are scarce or would otherwise be unbelievable. But rather than arguing for the power of optimism or the fleeting nature of joy, these lines situate witnessing in relation to joy. That rejoicing would require a witness, to begin with, emerges from the imperative to rejoice in everything. What kind of witnessing is needed when something happens all the time? This question resonates with Balint's proposition that rejoicing is an extreme form of agreement, that it signifies a point of agreement between individual and environment, and functions as a total identification. The situation reflects the terms of witnessing aligned with post-Holocaust testimony, in which victim and witness are unified, or function as a unit vis-à-vis witnessing. If the joy that is referred to here indexes reparation, the capacity of an individual to "get to" destructive feelings, might the poem then suggest that witnessing is not able to register these destructive feelings, that it relies on a presentation of the victim whose happiness or sorrow takes shape without ambiguity?

This irony also complicates the poem's representation of joy and rejoicing as responses to the sentiment that "nothing is good out there." These feelings are not optimisms that invite one to ignore what is near, the stench and the tenderness of "reality"; these register the distance necessary to attain "that old dramatic unity" from the coordinates of the real. In answer to the question of whether one should respect this unity, the speaker proposes that "a walk is for something else." The poem presents joy as an alternative to witnessing this unity. The poem continues to describe experiences that destabilize the unity because they call into question her function as a "witness":

> They are beating a man behind a railing
> on the stairway.
> A child goes through the red light
> like a lunatic through life. Trees in the park
> tremble because they are deciduous—
> all of them do not depend on me.
> Not even love: it comes with the winter
> because it seeks a warm lair.

> It dreams of something else while passing
> through cold offices, waiting for a trial,
> a wedding, a residence certificate . . .

In this passage, the speaker conjures a series of things that do not "depend" on her, but that she perceives from the perspective of a detached observer. The detachment does not protect her or enable her witnessing; instead, the "I" eschews her function as a witness to place, time, action. In this sense, "all of them do not depend on me" is a statement utterly critical of the view that the human individual is either produced by or corresponds to the environment, instead suggesting that like dream states, the environment maintains a relationship to basic needs that eschews human intention. "Not even love" is organized around individuals, or produced by them, but "comes with" because it seeks something else, dreams of something else. Here the terms of basic needs—"cold offices, waiting for a trial, a wedding, and residence certificate"—organize affect as an environmental factor, not a human one. The poetic speaker's incitement to "rejoice" in the feeling of being "hurt by everything" implies that rejoicing is not about repairing hurt, but that like hurt, rejoicing and loving both seek their own ends, ends that defy the human terms often associated with them.

An Environment Waiting to Be Destroyed

We can now return to the question: How does the rewriting of the environment as a potentially therapeutic space destroy the possibility of subjectivity outside the paradigm of witnessing? Unlike writers of the poetry of witness, Duraković concerns herself with the question of how to conceive a human being as a victim of its environment, which is the question that spans both human rights discourse and emergence of a new world order. In this regard, her poetry exposes how arguments about the propriety of witnessing miss the point that critical reflection on violence seeks to make. In construing the Bosnian as victim, these arguments overlook what it means for a people to be identified co-extensively with their environment. She describes the effect of this identification in "A Writer Perceives His Homeland While a Learned Postmodernist Enters His Town," written in Sarajevo in 1993. This poem alludes to the intervention of Jean Baudrillard, whose 1994 essay "No Reprieve for Sarajevo" (revised and re-

published as "The New Victim Order" [1995]) presented Bosnians as victims who could teach a Western audience about the inadequacies of compassionate witnessing through their own example. In the essay, he describes how the "people" of Sarajevo "are in the absolute need to do what they do, to do the right thing." He continues, "They harbour no illusion about the outcome and do not indulge in self-pity. This is what it means to be really existing, to exist within reality."

Baudrillard's casting of "reality" as that which dictates what one needs to do absolutely, and the noble-savage idea of the "really existing" reality of the people of Sarajevo, pushes toward an identification of a "reality" that the people of Sarajevo and Europe share. Of reality, Baudrillard writes, "We have got only one." Like the merging explicit in the act of witnessing, in which speaker (victim) and witness co-own the atrocity, Baudrillard's version of reality enforces the strictures of projective identification: "Victim society as the easiest, most trivial form of otherness. Resurrection of the other as calamity, as victim, as alibi—and of ourselves as unhappy consciousness extracting from this necrological mirror an identity which is itself wretched" ("New Victim Order" 137). Baudrillard is suspicious of the process that he describes—which elevates victims of injustice into subjects of injustice, as a people who "do the right thing"— because the process of identification yielding a "wretched" identity for the "other" produces the European "unhappy consciousness," the foundation of those processes of compassionate witnessing of which he is most critical.

But what does it mean to posit the "truth" of having only one reality in the context of a critique of the new world order? That reality, which Baudrillard identifies as the reality of the new world order, turns on the twin ideologies of what he calls "victim society" and the discourse of human rights. He writes:

> One sees how Europe is disintegrating just as the discourse of united Europe flowers (exactly as the situation of human rights is worsening just as the discourse on human rights is proliferating). But this is not even the fine point of the story. The fine point is that the Serbs, as carriers of the ethnic cleansing, are at the apex of the kind of Europe in the making; because the "real" Europe that is being made, is a

white Europe, a Europe "made" white, integrated and
cleansed, in the moral sense, in the economic sense, and in
the ethnic sense. This Europe is being made victoriously in,
and in that sense, what happens there is not an untimely oc-
currence on the way towards a pious and democratic Eu-
rope, which does not exist, but a logical and ascending step
towards the New European Order, itself a branch of the
New World Order, whose distinctive features everywhere
are white fundamentalism, protectionism, discrimination
and control. ("No Reprieve")

What Baudrillard gathers in these lines, even as he is wary of the promul-
gation of white Europe, and of the New European Order, are the con-
stituent features of a shared reality. In this exposure of Serbian aggression
as now the actualization of projective mechanisms, Baudrillard attempts to
confer agency upon the suffering Bosnians. But the logic that underwrites
this argument can only critique the New World Order to the extent that it
sees that order as an inevitable or unavoidable reality.

If we imagine the reality of the new world order as instead a vision of
primary love, what might we perceive? Balint's suggestion that environ-
ments constructed around primary love do not just agree with, but "rejoice
in," their destruction raises the question of where the desire of a repressed
or excluded subject lies. The experience of ironic waiting, which Du-
raković describes, figures the subject's relation to itself as an already de-
stroyed subject. Poetic nonintegration, the other side of this process of pri-
mary love, is the attempt to represent this experience of non-negativity in
the destruction as a subject: the point at which the subject experiences its
assimilation to the environment.

In "A Writer Perceives His Homeland While a Learned Postmodernist
Enters His Town," Duraković points to this moment of identification with
the environment, the way it is assumed and overlooked. She writes,

You are an unreliable witness,
a biased one besides. So that is
why the Professor came, Parisien
from head to toe: *Mes enfants*, he started,
and his fingers kept repeating: *Mes
enfants, mes enfants, mes enfants . . .*

In the Academy of Sciences
wise grey heads could only think about
his screamingly white shirt. *Mes enfants,*
Europe is dying here. Then he arranged
everything into a movie, images,
great words like *histoire*, *Europe*,
responsabilité, and naturally,
les Bosniacs. So this is the way
to look into the face of history,

not like you: in crude irresponsible
fragments, in a sniper shot which stabs the skull,
in graves already covered with tireless grass . . .

Here, the "great words" comprise "dramatic unity": *histoire* (time), *Europe* (place), and *responsabilité* (action). The extra term "naturally," *les Bosniacs*, renders such unity the effect of this definition. Duraković's poem locates the process that Silva and Chakravartty describe, in which the racial subaltern is written as "*naturally* (morally and intellectually) unable to thrive in the modern capitalist configuration built by Europeans and their descendants everywhere" (365, emphasis original). In the production of the "unreliable witness" in the former Yugoslavia, the human in need of the protection of human rights acquires her humanity on the basis of being cast as an effect of a "problem *caused* by the racial other" (364, emphasis original). So we can see that beyond these projective terms, the destructive aspect of the process involves the production of *les Bosniacs* as persons.

Baudrillard's identification of the Serbs as the aggressors of Europe draws a line of continuity between ethnic aggression and the unity of Europe, identifying these forms of aggression as part of the New European Order, and presenting the unfolding of events in Sarajevo as "a logical and ascending step," a narrative that leads uniformly and inevitably in only one direction. Duraković's intervention, then, is to illuminate the pretension of both of these forms of witnessing. The speaker notes the condescension in his infantilization of those he addresses, *mes enfants, mes enfants, mes enfants,* but the narrative that he provides, and its cinematization, is what Duraković's speaker contrasts in a sarcastic tone with the "unreliability" of her addressee as witness. Duraković delimits

the terms of his narrative: in "irresponsible fragments," as "a sniper shot," on "graves already covered with tireless grass." She depicts a historical sequence composed of fragments whose aesthetic attempts to repair the destruction that they present. If these can be considered component parts of the shared reality that Baudrillard presents, their construction of this place depends upon their writing out of the second person, the fallible witness, the one who waits endlessly.

Duraković's intervention in Baudrillard's depiction helps us to think about the way that this destruction of the Balkans takes place as an effect of his critical narrative. In Baudrillard's narrative, no space is given to a discussion of the basic needs of the Bosnian people, and yet they can't be discounted by simply asserting the inevitability of their destruction. The situation that Duraković presents in the poem—both Europe's dying and knowledge about its dying—accounts for the additional destruction of the very desire for an alternative account of this narrative. For Duraković, there is no shared reality. Human rights poetry aims at writing in those necessities and preferences of the subject that the process of establishing knowledge displaces in aesthetic fragments. The legitimacy of this subject is not to be found in a logic of reparation, in which the potential transformation of injustice into justice relies on psychological processes of projection and witnessing, but rather through the destruction that results from this primary identificatory love.

Notes

1. Thanks to Ferida Duraković for her correspondence regarding the original Serbo-Croat terms and her comments on their translations.

2. The 2014 "Human Rights Risk Index" Map identifies the top ten offending nations as Syria, Sudan, DR Congo, Pakistan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Yemen, and Nigeria.

3. For a model of human rights poetry that challenges ideas about witnessing, see Aaron Bady's "'It Continues Not to End': Time, Poetry, and the ICC Witness Project."

4. In their recent edited volume *The Meanings of Rights: The Philosophy and Social Theory of Human Rights*, Costas Douzinas and Conor Gearty, for example, identify a set of four paradoxes that organize the essays, paradoxes that tend to reproduce this split

rather than rethink the logic that produces it. Similarly, Renata Salecl, in *The Spoils of Freedom: Psychoanalysis and Feminism after the Fall of Socialism*, explains how Freudian and Lacanian processes of identification expose the inadequacy of humanist compassion and identification with victims. Finally, in *Reading Humanitarian Intervention*, Anne Orford discusses the role that psychological processes of identification play in the fantasy of humanitarian intervention; see especially "The Constitution of the International Community: Colonial Stereotypes and Humanitarian Narratives" (158-85). A noted contrast to these approaches can be found in Peter Fitzpatrick's essay, "Terminal Legality? Human Rights and Critical Being."

5. Milica Bakić-Hayden's concept of "nesting Orientalisms" reproduces the mechanism of projection down the line.

6. In his introduction, Dušan I. Bjelić writes, "First, the Balkans may reclaim their representational concreteness; second, the Balkans may be known through what Michel Foucault calls "subjugated knowledges" (7). I also have in mind Nataša Kovačević's discussion of Slavoj Žižek's problematic understanding of the Balkans as a "symptom of the New World Order" (165).

7. As Balibar writes in *We, the People of Europe?: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship,* "This is why I have suggested that in reality the Yugoslavian situation is not atypical but rather constitutes a local projection of forms of confrontation and conflict characteristic of all of Europe, which I did not hesitate to call European race relations" (5, emphasis original).

8. See Noam Chomsky, *The New Military Humanism*.

9. See Blanchot's discussion of Winnicott and Serge Leclaire in *The Writing of Disaster*. Blanchot usefully claims that Winnicott's understanding of nonintegration (Blanchot does not use this term) is "only an explanation, albeit impressive—a fictive application designed to individualize that which cannot be individualized or to furnish a representation for the unrepresentable" (66).

10. Duraković received the Vasyl Stus Freedom-to-Write Award from PEN for Heart of Darkness.

11. See Michael Chossudovsky, "Dismantling Former Yugoslavia, Recolonizing Bosnia-Herzegovina," a version of his chapter on Yugoslavia in *The Globalization of Poverty and the New World Order*; see also John Norris, *Collision Course: NATO, Russia, and Kosovo*.

12. According to Chossudovsky, by 1981, Yugoslavia had 19.9 billion dollars in foreign debt.

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