(Still) Telling War Stories: How Bosnian and Herzegovinian Tour Guides Use 'War Tours' to Contest Understandings of the 1992-5 Conflict

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Declaration I, undersigned Freya Cumberlidge, candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Central European University's Doctoral School of political Science, Public Policy and International Relations, hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. This dissertation contains no materials previously published by any other person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference and that no part of the thesis is infringing on any person's or institution's copyright. I declare that this dissertation is based exclusively on my own work and independently conducted research.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Bosnian and Herzegovinian tour guides utilise so-called 'war tours' to contest international understandings of the 1992-5 conflict. It considers these tour guides as knowledge making experts regarding the conflict, asking how International Relations might learn from their practice. In doing so it explores tourism as a unique site of quotidian knowledge making between the *international* and the *local,* suggesting that IR should use it to expand its registers of readable knowledge. The thesis focuses on the more experiential, embodied and affectual nature of knowledge produced within the tourscape to consider what knowledge this might generate that academia may not. To study this phenomenon, the thesis adopted an ethnographic approach, walking with the guides along their routes to understand their practices *in situ*. This ethnographic element, it was argued, is core to understanding the tours as they are so rooted in the embodied and the experiential. With focus resting on how exactly tour guides used their tours as knowledge making spaces, attention was directed more towards the processes of knowledge making than the actual content of the tours, to look at the myriad of strategies guides may use to make knowledge between themselves and participants. As is shown across the thesis, whilst knowledge making is in no ways guaranteed, given certain approaches and attunings from guide and participant alike, this knowledge making may happen. Thus, the work concludes that BiHian war tours should be read as spaces of knowledge making by scholars of International Relations.

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Introduction

> *When people come they ask "Where is the trouble?" but they're in Sarajevo. They see peaceful, beautiful Sarajevo but it's like they believe the war is still happening somewhere else off screen. Like even to this day Bosnia is divided into safe zones and unsafe zones... We can't really blame them though, the world doesn't know so much about Bosnia. But maybe they could Google us before they arrive.*

These words, spoken by Jasna, a Bosnian and Herzegovinian tour guide with over a decade of experience guiding tourists around Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and the Balkans as a whole, speak to the tension at the very heart of my thesis. Evidently there is some knowledge of the 1992-5 conflict among visitors to Bosnia and Herzegovina but equally as clear, is that this knowledge is more than likely incomplete or in certain cases, entirely inaccurate. Given insights such as these and my own observations across 30+ tours in Sarajevo, Mostar and Srebrenica, a curiosity about BiHian war tourism transformed itself into a far more concrete question: 'How do BiHian (war) tour guides use their tours as spaces to contest international knowledge of the 1992-5 conflict?'. It is this question that my thesis seeks to answer, exploring the processes of knowledge making present within the tours to better understand what the guides may teach us within International Relations about the formation of conflict knowledge and likewise, how this knowledge might be communicated and shared with others.

Whilst, of course, there is far more to the country than its recent history of conflict, the remainders of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been so neatly cleared away as they have in other areas of the region. From the ancient Bogomili, to its rich and varied Ottoman heritage, to the stunning natural surroundings, these sights often give way to or find themselves interrupted by the more visual remnants of conflict so that, in the case of tourism in BiH, war is never far away. As Jansen argues,

> The war that propelled the country into the global media spotlight is slowly becoming 'history' now. This means, among other things, that different actors on the domestic

> and international front, in their attempts to represent the war in historical terms, aim to impose their version of these events (Jansen 2007, 193).

As such, a cottage industry of sorts has arisen within the general tourism landscape; one which specialises in 'war tourism.' In these tours, participants are taken around a particular area and told often deeply personal stories of the conflict. Stories shared in the spaces where they first occurred function to make the tours immersive and 'real' to the audience as they stand where it really happened; an experience only heightened if hearing it from someone who was really there. The guides therefore must be thought of as expert 'gatekeepers' of knowledge regarding the conflict, as the narratives they tell and the ways in which they tell them likely have a foundational impact on their understanding of the conflict. In being there with those who experienced the conflict, tourists gain a deeply relational and embedded knowledge of conflict that serves, in many cases, as something of a unique selling point of each and every tour. It is not simply that as a visitor one learns about the conflict. What gives the tours power and interest is often this connection with lived experience and the affectual resonances this produces. Such a process is also what makes them interesting to the study of International Relations, as they represent a different way of making knowledge about conflict, one that is far more relational and physical than the one found within traditional spaces of academia.

In this way the tours go beyond more traditionally defined 'dark' tourism sites such as museums or memorials where death is mediated, ordered and explained (Biran, Poria, and Oren 2011; Lennon and Foley 1999). They enter into what some classify as 'darker' tourism, where one visits the sites upon which atrocities occurred, sometimes stepping on to the battlefield or into the site of destruction (W. F. S. Miles 2002). These darker sites are often more complicated as they are sites in which death directly occurred and which may not always have the 'mediated' element of museums (Iles 2012). Although, in certain cases, like that of concentration camps or Choung Ek (The Killing Fields, Cambodia), there are museum elements where visiting and witnessing is

encouraged as part of a still controlled and mediated experience (W. F. S. Miles 2002; Tyner, Alvarez, and Colucci, n.d.). These sites are at the same time situated 'outside' of one's daily experience, specially demarcated zones of 'darkness.' The same cannot be said for BiH and the war tours of Sarajevo and Mostar where conflict histories butt up against everyday life, reading the past on top of the present. The city and its exploration become (for some participants) attractive because of its association with dying and death, with war tourism becoming a key sector of BiH's tourism economy.

I therein posit the idea that in visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina, tourists come to interact with it in a specific way and through a specific lens that I label the tourscape. In conceptualising the tourscape, I understand it as a specific way of occupying or inhabiting the cityscape as part of the touristic experience. In doing so I am not seeking to argue that tourists occupy the city in a way that is necessarily entirely inaccessible to local communities or even that their experiences and reflections would be entirely unique to their identity as tourists, but there is however I feel, and as I will explore, something which distinguishes the touristic inhabitancy of the city from others who occupy it more permanently. I follow Edensor's ideas regarding the ideas of separate 'rhythms' of occupation of the city space according to occupation and endeavour. As they argue, these rhythms might have 'junctures' with others but represent specific and unique ways of occupying the cityscape that may not always be transferrable outside of those occupations (Edensor 2010, 69–70). Naturally, I am not the first to argue that tourists and visitors often experience a city differently to those who occupy the space in a more permanent way. As Lisle discusses, there is something of a divide or boundary between the tourist and the local that is often simplified down to an idea of known and 'other' with tourism structured around the getting to know (but not quite) of this other. With tourists often projected as experiencing a city through a degree of separation, in the city but not quite of it, there is a suggestion of the presence of a specific tourscape within the

cityscape that serves as a way to demarcate this perhaps invisible boundary between tourist and local.

With tourism accounting for roughly 6% of the Bosnia and Herzegovina's GDP (Messerli and Bakker 2021) and the proportion of non-Balkan tourists growing year on year, demand for 'war tours' catered to international tourists is only increasing (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023). Whilst historically, visitors to the region may have come for Bosnia's natural beauty or for family reasons ('Bosnia and Herzegovina - Tourism Investment Brief' 2019), the last decade has seen a pronounced shift in the make-up of visitors to BiH, with an increasing number of tourists coming from Western Europe, North America, and Australia (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023). Whilst still primarily regionally driven, this internationalisation of tourists, coupled with certain demographic factors (many international guests are 30 and under and were not even born before, let alone taught about the 1992-5 conflict) means there is less familiarity with the region and so tour guiding plays an increasingly significant part in educating guests about BiH's history.

As Blom argues, tourist experience, and tour guides in particular, often become emblematic of an entire country, so that where guides take tourists and what (as well as how) they tell them about these places often establish a foundational understanding of a space (Blom 2000). It is an idea I observed the guides to be deeply conscious of, as one guide put it: 'I might be the only local that they have the opportunity to meet. Imagine having that burden on yourself' (Alma). They acknowledge the responsibility of guides to show something of their world to visitors, acting 'kind of like an ambassador', as this might be 'the only 3 hours [tourists] spend here' (Alma). Tour guides are both a first and last port of call for visitor understanding, creating an experience for the visitor as this could be the only opportunity to do so. As guides themselves are well aware, they 'are what make [their] tour special' (Faris), rather than simply the tour itself. The very person, not simply the

space, becomes a key hallmark of experiencing the city/place and introduces an idea of individuality within the tourscape as a space. This personalisation becomes something of a unique experience for each visitor as they visit certain spaces with a particular guide, hearing their personal narrative. It is not just about being in the city, but about how one experiences that *being* in a way that is often mediated or performed but that nevertheless, frames the city in a certain way because of certain actions or interventions. The tourscape is not necessarily a standard experience; it goes some way to try to capture the way in which the cityscape is mediated for the specificities of the touristic experience.

I therefore consider these war tours to be core sites of knowledge making regarding narratives of the 1992-5 conflict, somewhat unique in their ability to bring personal/local experience to a more international audience. For scholars of International Relations and those looking towards processes of (conflict) knowledge making, they represent a relatively organic process of knowledge making, situated somewhat outside of the academe, often directly contesting the knowledge said academe produces. By 'organic' I mean to say that the coming together of *local* tour guides and *international* guests occurs not at the impetus of a researcher or an organisation focused on making a shared knowledge of conflict, but rather, happens independently (and perhaps in spite of) these scholarly efforts. It is not so much that the researcher has to create these moments of interaction but rather, that they are out there and ripe for study, should scholars of International Relations choose to direct their focus there. Considering increasing calls coming from many post-colonial scholars to diversify the discipline and attend to expertise situated beyond the ivory tower, Bosnian and Herzegovinian tour guides with their expert knowledge (and oftentimes personal experience) of the 1992-5 conflict seem well poised to respond to such calls. As such, this thesis explores how exactly they make this knowledge, looking less so about what they say but rather, how they say it, to consider the lessons BiHian tour guides might teach us in IR about knowledge making more broadly.

It is in understanding this process of knowledge making that the thesis has most to contribute to the sphere of knowledge and IR. In undertaking an ethnographic study and building rich descriptions of these processes into my empirical chapters I did not seek to paint broad brush strokes and make more general assumptions but rather to examine in detail how I observed knowledge making as being constructed by the guides within their tours. It is in this thick description where the knowledge making becomes apparent. With so much of the knowledge made within the tours being physical, embodied and affectual, going beyond the narrative itself to understand guide and guests' positioning within certain spaces is crucial to understanding how the tours operate as knowledge making spaces and this I felt was best achieved by adding more to my description, rather than paring experiences down to quotable moments.

In spending time in the minutiae of the tour experiences, as ethnography allows for, we as a discipline of IR can better understand the nuances of how knowledge of conflict is formed: the harmonies and contradictions and how this knowledge is made over and over again, almost the same but not quite as the narrative builds and emerges. As the empirical chapters show, each guide has their own approach to tour guiding, knowledge making and knowledge of the conflict, just as they each have their own personal experiences of conflict. In collecting and dialoguing between these experiences this thesis shows the depth of understanding that tour guides and the touristic experience might bring to understanding conflict. Lessons which interpretive IR may learn from in understanding how it is the conflict is first and foremost experienced and then secondly, how the narrative of conflict is formed in the aftermath and the processes through which this is communicated, making new knowledge between guides and their participants.

Of course, and as I will explore across this thesis, this knowledge making is in no way guaranteed but, as a result of its reliance upon affect and individual interaction, is highly contingent on both guide and guest and the histories and experiences they bring with them to the tourscape. Whilst I

do believe the guides are very intentional in establishing their tourscapes as spaces of knowledge making, they must perform a balancing act between entertainment and education, between comfort and discomfort. The knowledge they share has the potential to upset certain understandings, so that the tours may be understood as potential spaces of knowledge making but not solely devoted to such an endeavour. The narratives of conflict that guides craft are carefully structured and directed to produce particular understandings and experiences for their guests. They are certainly designed as affective spaces with the capacity to 'change' tourists' understandings (depending upon the knowledge of BiH and the conflict that they bring with them) but are in no ways assured (Noy 2004). As a result of my own experiences, first as a guest and later as a researcher, I argue that the tourscape has the capacity to create knowledge of conflict within its participants, although this is in no way a given. Still, the existence of this potential makes them a worthy site of study, particularly within the IR that I find myself in, that is so concerned with expanding its boundaries and understandings beyond its traditional scope.

Tourism and Knowledge Making in International Relations

Taking as my key premise, that the (war) tour guides of Bosnia and Herzegovina are producing knowledge about conflict that often stands in contention to certain established narratives, it is of great utility to trace where this knowledge may fit and how it can be seen as already 'readable' through the lens of IR scholarship. Whilst historically IR may have been the home of the study of high-level diplomacy and lofty ideas regarding the nature of 'the international' within the upper echelons of power (and power hierarchies) and producible only by those within said upper echelons or the scholars who studied them. It has now undergone multiple shifts in terms of its very 'what' to the 'who' may produce IR knowledge, constantly expanding in form, subject and creator. As a result of such vast expansion, contemporary scholarship may encompass anything from children's books (Grayson 2013), to quantum mechanics (Der Derian and Wendt 2020), to diaries (Curtis, Ebila, and Martin de Almagro 2022), to quilt making (Andrä et al. 2019). It is

therefore helpful here to more clearly embed practices of tourism within this vast nebula of knowledge production.

Tourism as a site may actually rest quite happily within more everyday understandings of the international. As Enloe, speaking with a far wider school of feminist thought, argues, the 'mundane matters' to those concerned with the study of politics (2011). It matters because it is through quotidian and everyday interactions, that far larger structures reveal and enact themselves as 'the kinds of power that were created and wielded—and legitimized—in these seemingly "private" sites [is] causally connected to the forms of power created, wielded and legitimized in the national and inter-state public spheres' (Enloe 2011, 447). To avoid or ignore the study of the everyday would therefore be to ignore how knowledge actually functions. Speaking to such an idea, the work of Davies and Niemann, drawing on Lefebvre, calls for the inclusion of the everyday in to understanding how it is we 'know' the world, that is in my case, our knowledge making (Davies and Niemann 2002). In particular, they champion researching sites of leisure such as tourism. In incorporating these sites into the vernacular of IR they argue not simply that IR itself becomes more expansive and representative, but likewise that these sites may speak back to IR and its theorisation. With regards to my own study, I see the war tours of Bosnian and Herzegovinian tour guides as representative of a different way of forming knowledge about conflict and therefore set out to study them as such.

Indeed, for many years tourism scholars have investigated the potential of tourism to bring about new shared cultural understandings between previously unknown groups, and of particular relevance to my study, how it has the potential to inform understandings about conflict. The literature is broad and deep situated across multiple sites and forms of knowledge production from museums (Lennon and Foley 1999; W. F. S. Miles 2002), to guided tours (Freire-Medeiros 2009), to monuments (Azaryahu and Foote 2008; Salazar 2009). Such studies cement the idea of the

tourscape as having the potential to shape, craft and (re)define a narrative of conflict but they are sites that have only more recently been given more attention by scholars of IR. See for example Selimovic's interrogation of memory sites in BiH (Selimović 2019) and Forde's article on the politics and staging of the rebuilding of Stari Most in Mostar (Forde 2016). What is interesting to me however is that the majority of these studies have found a home for themselves in tourism studies, reflecting a certain disciplinary segregation. Tourism's capacity for knowledge making has been framed mostly as a matter of interest for tourism scholars, and not those in other disciplines. With IR's push towards the quotidian and a desire to seek out new ways of practising knowledge making, it seems appropriate to me to draw from the work tourism studies has already done and bring this into the fold of International Relations.

As such, the ability to conceive of tourism as a site in which IR 'happens' becomes easier to envisage. Tourism studies has already established a solid theorisation of touristic spaces as sites of potential cross-cultural understanding among 'ordinary people' (Tonnaer, Tamisari, and Venbrux 2010; Bruner 2005). The majority of the works posit that, whilst never fully guaranteed, understanding depends on the receptiveness of guest and the openness of host. It argues that there is potential within tourism to create a space of shared cultural understanding and to impart knowledge, often through seemingly intangible affectual linkages. Indeed, this has been theorised more specifically regarding the BiHian space looking at communication and interaction between BiHian hosts and diaspora tourist 'returnees', framing the emancipatory potential of such interactions for sharing and spreading knowledge of conflict (Čaušević and Lynch 2009). As Čaušević and Lynch detail, this is not always a comfortable process given the tension between familiarity and differences in diaspora and 'home', but they nonetheless confirm that this knowledge making is possible. While museums are perceived as more likely sites of knowledge sharing (W. F. S. Miles 2002) and definitively reflective of global power structures (Tidy and Turner 2019), the entrance of interactional human dialogue is sometimes framed as having the potential

to 'corrupt' this knowledge exchange by both parties. This is often framed as a matter of potentially insurmountable expectation, wherein because visitors 'expect' a certain narrative or hosts 'expect' a certain attitude, it is unlikely that genuine knowledge sharing can occur, as too much is being done by both sides to de-familiarise the 'Other' in these interactions (Alneng 2002).[1]

As Shepherd argues, however, some of this fear regarding the corrupting influence of 'others' is based more on what they label an 'anthropological' approach to assigning blame or harm in practices where two cultures come together, than in focusing on the potential successes of this coming together (Shepherd 2002, 192). Perhaps yes, one may not learn everything about another perfectly, but within this space there is still some potential for knowledge sharing. Just as there are no guarantees in the classroom that students will actually learn, we still continue to aspire to educate within these spaces (hooks 1994, 8) and so too is this the case for touristic interactions. As Shepherd shows, however, this potential is reliant on a more even playing field wherein both host and guest uphold a certain agency within their interaction so that a sense of mutual understandings, rather than exploitation or purely entertainment may occur (Shepherd 2002, 195).

In doing so, Shepherd alludes to the differences in touristic practices and the importance of consent and agency in allowing for what they feel to be a more sincere and successful knowledge sharing. Take for example Brazilian favela tours, as Rolfes (2010) shows, in simply visiting and taking pictures tourists learn very little about the spaces and primarily reinforce negative stereotypes. However, as Freire-Medeiros (2009) demonstrates in their work on more engaged and embedded tours, where tourists are guided and meet with locals, there is both the potential to learn and likewise, change one's attitude towards these spaces. In the tours Freire-Medeiros studies,

[1] Whilst I personally tend to avoid usage of the concept of the 'other' as I believe it overly alienating and exoticising of human experience I use the term when others do as this is how they have theorised and thought about their ideas. This is not to condone or to condemn the phrase's usage by other scholars but merely to mark that it is not a phrasing I will rely on or return to across this text.

tourists are given the opportunity to be directly affected by a space in a way that is more marshalled and considered. They are not left solely to their own devices but instead guided in their understandings, demonstrating the importance of considering tour guides as expert knowledge makers whose practices could be studied to understand how knowledge making is crafted in tourism settings. Of course, guests may be entertained by their interaction either way, but they must likewise understand that they have gained something more from the interaction for knowledge to have been imparted (Freire-Medeiros 2009, 581); a lesson I consider to be equally applicable to the tour guides of BiH. Tourism åhas the potential to function as a site of cross-cultural exchange and understanding, but this is more likely when all parties are, firstly, given the opportunity for interaction, and secondly, willing and open to such exchange.

Tourism, (Post-)Conflict and Knowledge in International Relations

Such hopes, wherein tourism may connect two different parties with differing views or experiences of the world finds a perhaps unexpected (though as I will explore below, not entirely unexpected) connection between tourism and post-conflict literature, particularly regarding peace and reconciliation efforts. In fact, tourism specifically has been proposed as a potential area in which previously warring parties may come together to create a new shared understanding and dialogue of conflict (Ashworth 2015; Guasca, Vanneste, and Van Broeck 2022; Čaušević and Lynch 2009). This possibility, it is argued, is normally reliant on a relative level of structural stability within the conflict affected space, so that people may now have more space to address 'psycho-social' aspects of the consequences of conflict (Guasca, Vanneste, and Van Broeck 2022). The idea, explored in BiH and interrogated by Aussems (2016), posits that given sufficient willingness of participants, there is some potential for tourism to act as a site of peace building and shared memory conciliation, that is, the making of shared knowledge about the space (Aussems 2016, 243). Ultimately however, this is incredibly dependent on what stories are told, who is narrating them, and likewise, who is listening to this. As Aussems demonstrates among ex-combatants in BiH, a

more shared collective and ambiguous suffering is more likely to succeed than a narrative which apportions blame to a particular party. Group cohesion is only likely if participants have some sense of safety or security guarantee among perceived 'others' (Aussems 2016, 248). Even if these conditions are met there still remains a lack of guarantee of the success of the operation, but as Aussems' observations show, some degree of reconciliation and shared understanding may develop. Tourism therefore becomes a fruitful site to study the formation of conflict narratives in the post-conflict space, making the BiHian war tours of my thesis a prime site of research within International Relations.

Whilst it is a generally accepted maxim within tourism studies that tourism contributes to peace, as Bechmann Pedersen (2020) and likewise Farmaki (2017) show, relatively little has been done to conclusively 'prove' this in any way and it is often more of a taken for granted idea than an evidenced process. In fact, depending on the circumstances, Farmaki argues tourism may either 'inhibit', 'subserve', or 'mediate' peace (Farmaki 2017, 528), thus leaving the importance of tourism in peacebuilding as inconclusive at best. As the almost overnight explosion of October 7th tours designed to foster American support for the Israeli state's occupation and genocide of Gazans shows, tourism may also be used to prolong, rather than prevent conflict (Rosen 2024). It is a lack of conclusiveness which Lisle, in perhaps the most comprehensive linking of tourism, IR and conflict to be found today, likewise recognises and responds to, arguing that the connections between tourism and peace are somewhat flimsy as they rest 'on a number of highly problematic assumptions' (Lisle 2016, 6). In particular, they highlight the erroneous beliefs that there is some kind of distinct boundary (either social or temporal) between war and tourism (as evidenced by Rosen's above cited piece) and that tourism is able to address and create peace out of the multiple antagonisms of conflict (Lisle 2016, 6–8). As these scholars argue, the connection/guarantee of tourism as a peacebuilding tool is tenuous or under-explored at best. However, as a result of its proclivity within these discussions, this could not be ignored.

Instead, and of more relevance to my own study, Lisle opts to focus upon teasing out the prolific similarities between war and tourism in solidifying certain cultural and international relationships and identities, that is, the knowledge we hold about a place. Tourism is a site where (post-) conflict narratives are formed and entrenched and thus important to study, to observe the processes of this narrative formation and crystallisation. In particular Lisle focuses on how a neo-colonialist idea of domination and otherness is shaped through the two, so that tourism may have the potential to reinforce unrepresentative images of a space (2016, 5). Lisle explores how soldiering and tourism overlap to reconstitute each other, and draws out how tourism can, as an 'aftermath' of violence, help to solidify and shape the narratives of these conflicts, primarily in the hands of those doing the tourism/soldiering (2016, 7). While somewhat counterintuitive to the thinking of my study; that tourism provides a space in which to counter dominant international understandings; what Lisle crucially explores is that these tensions not be thought of as a 'reductive account of power relations' (2016, 5) that reduce tourist/tourism provider experiences to 'monolithic modes of authority' (Lisle 2016, 5). Instead they suggest that the multiple 'asymmetrical logics' (Lisle 2016, 5) be explored to understand the ways in which tourism can be thought of as producing difference. In taking a somewhat negative approach to tourism and touristic interventions Lisle's work reflects the scepticism towards tourism within anthropology and anthropological approaches to tourist studies that see it is as some kind of invasion or 'diluting' , rather than accepting the enduring presence of tourism and the survival of culture perhaps in spite of all this (Shepherd 2002, 184). What sets Lisle apart, however, even in still pursuing this more negative approach is the expectation of nuance and the potential for tourism to cause change and transformation even if they focus on the negative aspects. They nonetheless open the door to the idea that tourism may be a space in which to construct knowledge of a country, and it is this idea that my study pursues.

In part, such a reading is produced as a result of who Lisle has chosen to interrogate in their study of connections between conflict and tourism. It is not tour providers, but instead, tourists (acting as quasi cultural diplomats/soldiers) that Lisle's study focuses on and there is, therefore, an inevitable tendency to prioritise the role of this key actor, that is the tourist/international force in the touristic interaction. As MacCannell (2016), but likewise the collective volume *Transformational Tourism: Host Perspectives* (Reisinger 2015) shows, this forgetting or de-centring of the host in writing about tourism is not unusual, but crucially, leads to an often skewed understanding of what is going on in tourism, in particular, regarding who benefits or loses and how. As a result, while Lisle may focus on the relationship between tourism and conflict knowledge production (Lisle 2016, 69–213), their attention rests more on tourists that tour guides, skewing the significance of the guides by mostly ignoring guide agency regarding narrative control or destination development.

While Lisle leaves the relative lives and agencies of tourism providers somewhat under/unexplored, in Daigle's *From Cuba with Love* (2015*)* one finds a relative *gap filling* in what tourism providers may feel about the Othering tourism supposedly produces (see Urry 1990, Wearing, Stevenson, and Young 2009) and their capacity to resist or contest it. It is within Daigle's work that much of the complexity regarding tourism, IR, and contestation that I wish to discuss can be found, already well ordered and thought through. Daigle's work focuses on the concept of *jineterismo* in Cuba to show, in many ways, how unsuccessful such a concept is at describing the lived experience of the many Cubans folded under such an umbrella. *Jineterismo* as Daigle (loosely) sees it, is a practice (usually assumed to be undertaken by young female mulata Cubans) of dating/sleeping with/striking up relationships with foreigners in order to gain access to money/goods/luxuries either not available within Cuba or out of reach of that of the average Cuban.

They explore how *jineterismo* is deeply connected with the sexualisation and exoticisation of women's bodies (and particularly darker skinned bodies) in the Cuban context, both as something built by a colonialist idea of good (white) and bad (non-white) that has become coded into Cuban social hierarchies, but likewise how this framing has been played up and enforced by external visitors seeking a slice of the 'exotic' and 'sensual' local. An expectation has been built around Cuba and particularly Cuban women that many tourists come seeking to 'fulfil,' therein harking back to ideas found in the works of Lisle (2016), Alneng (2002), and Urry (1990) regarding the pressure of the tourist gaze to inscribe particular readings onto locals. However, what Daigle explores is the relative impossibility of fulfilling such a role and how locals who may be classified as practising *jineterismo* contest it. In Daigle's framing *jineterismo* simply does not exist and does little to capture the lived experience of the women it is supposed to describe, but nevertheless, such an idea persists in the minds of both Cuban and international society. As such, their work provides key insight into how it is that locals may, even when seemingly occupying this imposed 'role,' contest said role by personifying a more reflective and fleshed out individual. Daigle presents tourism as a potentially contestational space, much as I will explore with regards to conflict tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, expanding the geographical and topical readability of such an argument.

Whilst the circumstances of the people in Daigle's work and that of the tour guides in BiH resist direct comparison as a result of the gulf of difference in lived experience between the two, what the work does offer is a way of punctuating the actions and supposed agency of marginalised actors in a global capital system. At first, the so-called *subjects* of study find themselves somewhat boxed in by particular framings. For the women in Daigle's piece their overt sexualisation is connected with ideas of colonial racism that black or mixed raced women are inherently sexual and likewise *bad*, therein *deserving* of historic acts of rape and continued imagery as beings somehow destined for a life of sexual proclivity. In the case of BiHian tour guides, this overt violence against one's

body is not so relevant, however, as the Kušić, Lottholz and Manolova show, ideas of a North European hierarchy, that marginalise and subjugate have also found footing in the Balkan region. As they state:

> Southeast Europe has been marked by historical legacies of domination whereby the region has been treated either as vassals of the Ottoman empire, satellites of the Soviet-bloc, or poor neighbours and members of the European Union (EU) – experiences that underwrite the region's entrenched state of (semi-)peripherality and its contemporary manifestations. These are constituted in both material and ideational dimensions. In the former case, peripherality refers to a politico-economic integration on unequal and exploitative terms and the resulting dependencies. In the latter, it is engendered in essentialized representations of inferiority that are reproduced in both global imaginings of the region and in its own subjectivities and positionings (Katerina Kušić, Lottholz, and Manolova 2019, 7).

As the trio show, sometimes this marginalisation references a perceived 'less than' Europeanness, whereas at other times this marginalisation is connected with the Ottoman legacies of the nation and the somewhat erroneous idea of BiHians being the only Muslims in Europe. Or instead, a belief is promoted of the supposedly 'warlike' nature of the Balkans that does much, as Todorova argues, to obscure the warring tendencies of almost all of Europe prior to (and even after) the Treaty of Westphalia and instead creates and enforces an 'Othering' identity upon the region (2009). What such thinking does, is place the people of BiH, much like the Cubans in Daigle's writing, as marginalised even within their 'own' space. Therefore, when certain visitors come, they often bring with them either conscious or subconscious framings of the citizens of the nation positioned in a more globalised hierarchy, so that tourists negotiate BiHian's identity not just in relation to the nation but to wider international ideas.

Chapter Overview

As such my thesis explores how IR might view Bosnian and Herzegovinian war tours, tour guides, and visitors to the region as part of the process of knowledge making in their own right. Having now rooted the thesis within IR as a discipline, the following chapter sets out my theoretical

framework. Given that this thesis establishes the guides as knowledge makers, I explore what is currently understood as knowledge within IR to position the tour guides and their tours as organic instances of the expansion of knowledge production that many post- and decolonial scholars call for. A knowledge that is often in contention with the knowledges it seeks to address, where discomfort is present as a result of such interactions and upsettings of established, and therefore comfortable, narratives. I focus on calls from post-conflict scholars who highlight the importance of seeing those with conflict experience as experts to better understand and communicate knowledge regarding said conflict. I thus position the guides as expert knowledge makers on the subject of the 1992-5 conflict and present the tourscape as a knowledge making space. The theoretical framework explores how IR scholars understand knowledge by rooting this within the specific context of the tours as commercial leisure spaces, examining the guides' conceptions of knowledge making, and situating them within wider ideas of knowledge making practices.

Having established this theoretical grounding, the following chapter sets out my methodological approach to exploring the tours as knowledge making spaces. As I have adopted an ethnographically inspired approach, I discuss the relative harmony of such a method with the nature of tourism, which is itself deeply embedded in visiting and observation. I consider the suitability of walking methodology to my study and discuss in more detail how the embodied nature of my research and of the tourist experience is integral to understanding the work of the guides. The final section explores the challenges of how to communicate this embodiment through writing and explains why I settled upon the use of extended vignettes to best express my fieldwork experience. I therefore consider the very process of drafting and writing as part of my research methodology to better elucidate from where the ideas discussed in my empirical chapters originated and how these thoughts developed over time.

Preceding my empirical chapters is a brief framing chapter regarding popular narratives surrounding contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conflict itself. Given that the guides often position their narratives in contrast to or alongside pre-existing knowledge of BiH, it makes sense to briefly map and summarise what the guides perceive these narratives to be, therein gaining a better sense of how it is they position their tours and what knowledge they suspect tourists may bring with them. I therefore design this chapter around ideas I heard from the guides regarding narratives tourists came with, interweaving these with other significant texts and analyses of discourse of the 1992-5 conflict, and of BiH more generally. The chapter therefore discusses four key themes: that of the Balkans as a violent space; the Balkans as still unsafe; Bosnia and Herzegovina as ethnically divided, and finally; Bosnia and Herzegovina as an Islamic country. These were the most popular framings I heard from guides or observed in my own research, and thus require exploration to cement the context in which the tours occur, so that the work of the guides to contest certain narratives can be accurately positioned and understood by the reader.

Having established these narratives, the thesis then moves into empirical analysis. With each chapter being made up of a number of vignettes that retell the narratives and experiences I participated in as a result of my fieldwork, I craft a wider re-telling of the practices of knowledge making I witnessed when there. The focus of these empirical chapters lies not so much in what they tell us about the events of 1992-5, but rather, in understanding the process of how tour guides dissipate their narratives. Many, many people have already written on what happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina during that period so I see little value in providing my own additions to this. If anything, I agree with the words of one guide that such discussions are potentially 'over-researched' (SF2) and so for this reason, as well as the fact that such narratives are not mine to tell, I focus upon how the guides make knowledge of the events of 1992-5, as such practices hold wider resonance for how we in IR might also study and educate on conflict.

In the first empirical chapter *Knowledge that Destroys, Subverts and Destructs* I examine how guides utilise their tours to directly contest and often discredit what they perceive to be inaccurate knowledge regarding the conflict. In these scenarios knowledge making is not necessarily about adding to, but rather taking away from certain understandings. I explore the strategies used by guides to make this contestation in some way *palatable* to tourists so that their tours do not feel like attacks, but rather create an environment in which they might contest (mis)understandings through humour or trickery to do this un-making of knowledge.

From here the second empirical chapter *Knowledge that Builds and Enriches* looks not to unmaking, but rather to strengthening narratives of conflict by adding greater detail and understanding to pre-existing knowledge of conflict. As such, it looks at how guides utilise their tours to flesh out understandings using, for example, physical space to make real and concrete certain understandings. It considers how the exertion of the tourist body is used to make knowledge that is not simply ephemeral but likewise, physical. Finally, it also considers the use of artefact and prop within the tours to understand a further aspect of physicality (in this case materiality) within the tours and how this contributes to knowledge making by adding visual and physical elements that narrative alone may be unable to express.

The final empirical chapter *Knowledge that Interprets and Connects* then looks to how knowledge of conflict is overlaid into the present day to both historicise and contemporise its impacts. Guides ask tourists to read the tourscape not so much as historic setting, but rather as a quotidian and ordinary "lived in" space where certain impacts from conflict may still resonate, but which should no longer be thought of as solely readable through the lens of conflict. Such a chapter brings the thesis to a close as we end not on what BiH once was, but instead, what it is now. As perhaps best illustrated by the quote that opened this thesis '*When people come they ask "Where is the trouble?" but they're in Sarajevo'* (SF2).

Finally, in the conclusion I bring what has been explored within the empirical chapters back to IR to understand what it is the discipline might gain by interacting with the tours as sites of knowledge making. I argue that the tour guides are knowledge makers in their own right who do not need this to be *recognised* by academics to make it true but instead, should be thought of as co-collaborators in better understanding how narratives of conflict are shaped internationally. They are deliberate creators of knowledge making spaces that bring about a knowledge of conflict that is not just rooted in information but in feeling and sensation. Spaces where the touristic setting does not hinder knowledge making, as some might presume, but actively facilitates and encourages it. The guides create a knowledge of conflict and of Bosnia and Herzegovina that often stands to contest previous understandings of conflict, which is not always comfortable, easy, or guaranteed, but instead highly dependent on the interactions between individuals. This knowledge making nonetheless persists in its potential so that, whilst we may never truly presume that knowledge making will happen, we may be hopeful that it might. The guides are experts in creating these productive spaces of discomfort, marshalling and conducting both bodies and minds to make the tourscape into spaces of knowledge making.

I thus end with a call for IR to engage more deeply with tourism as a site of everyday international relations, placing IR not in the hands of diplomats or scholars but between everyday people where knowledge is made and shared between them. I have learnt so much from the guides of BiH and I can only hope that others in turn will visit and experience these moments of knowledge making.

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Building from the work of Daigle and Lisle which embeds my thesis and the study of (war) tourism within IR as a whole, this chapter establishes the theoretical grounding for why I consider BiHian war tours as spaces of knowledge making. The pair are of course, not the sole entities speaking of tourism as a space in which IR *happens* but, as I hope my conversations in the previous chapter demonstrated, they speak to the core ideas with which this thesis is concerned, namely how the interaction between guide and guest might shape understandings and knowledge of a place. In this way, my arguments follow the logic of Gregory Fayard who argues that one finds 'multiple models out of which a nation becomes international, aggregated through tourism' (Fayard 2023, 11), which is to say that tourism helps to shape a particular knowledge of a country and its history.[2] What is of particular note in Fayard's piece is their discussion of the role the diaspora and diaspora visiting plays into cementing these ideas (Fayard 2023, 508–10), much as Čaušević and Lynch explore in the BiHian context (Čaušević and Lynch 2009). Both agree that the diaspora is often a key conduit for building a sense of national identity 'abroad.' However, both also introduce a caveat that this authenticity and connection comes with said diaspora's connection to 'home' and the knowledge they gain in visiting. The knowledge making is still very much reliant upon connection between individuals and place, with tourism providing the space in which this occurs. As is clear even within such a brief overview, there is much to root tourism in processes of knowledge making in IR.

I therefore explore within this chapter what knowledge making means (to me) in the context of IR and the current rise in discussions on the nature of 'knowledge' within the discipline. I look at what 'knowledge' is within IR and further explore who gets to 'make' this knowledge and how it is they might do so with a particular focus upon (post) conflict affected spaces. Having established my disciplinary assumptions, I then go on to explore the specific context of the tours as

[2] Fayard's piece in particular looks at how tourism is used as a form of nation branding. Whilst I could also have followed a similar line of argument, given how concerned the tours and tour guides are with international perceptions of BiH as a whole, I instead focus on how the guides use their work to make knowledge about conflict. Of course, there is a large amount of crossover and national identity is part and parcel of the picture, but it is not my sole focus.

commercial leisure spaces and the impact of this upon knowledge making. From there I then examine how it is that the tour guides themselves conceive of knowledge and, as a result, where they fit given the understandings I have previously mapped out.

Stated briefly, and as I will explore in far greater detail below, I consider the work done by guides in their tours as being representative of an organic form of knowledge making regarding the 1992-5 conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a knowledge which often stands to contest more internationalised framings of the conflict (which I will explore in the framing chapter) and therefore stands as a concrete empirical example of the calls made by many post- and de-colonial scholars, both globally[3] and regionally,[4] that in listening more carefully and taking account of lived experience and local perspectives we may all gain better understandings and valuable insights into the phenomena which we study. I take the approach to knowledge which conceives of it as relational, in that the knowledge making must occur between people, which in turn builds and fosters a relationship of entanglement between them, and that this relationality is made up of contestational and affectual moments that shape how knowledge is both made and received. I likewise assume that there are no prescriptions as to who may or may not make knowledge and the form that this knowledge comes in.

Building from this, and as I shall explore further below, I define the tourscapes of the guides as knowledge making spaces which they use quite deliberately to contest perceived inadequacies in international narratives regarding the 1992-5 conflict as many tourists 'just don't know the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina' (Dino). These tourscapes should thus be thought of as knowledge making spaces and as a result, are of great utility to those of us wishing to know more about how non-traditional, informal and non-scholarly knowledge about conflict is articulated. They

[3] See for example (Shilliam 2013; Sabaratnam 2017; Bliesemann De Guevara and Bøås 2022; Andrä et al. 2019)
[4] See for example (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a; Stavrevska et al. 2023; Gržinić 2019)

demonstrate the agency at play in such an undertaking and the importance of reading and understanding these spaces as sites of knowledge making because of both, the organic insights they generate regarding how BiHians understand and communicate their experiences of conflict, and how these insights may be received by the international community. In this way I focus not on what knowledge is being shared in the tours, although is certainly present in my empirical chapters, but instead on the processes through which the guides share, create, and articulate knowledge. Much has already been said about the events of the 1992-5 conflict, not least by the guides themselves so this thesis does not attempt to (re)articulate this knowledge, but rather to focus upon the strategies and devices used by the guides to share it. With my focus resting on knowledge as being relational, affectual, and contestational it is important to tease out how this might manifest within the specific context of the tours. In order to do so however, I must first begin by defining knowledge as I see it in International Relations and so it is from this point that the chapter proceeds.

Knowledge in Internation Relations

Given that in its current moment, IR is experiencing something of a boom in scholarship on knowledge and the ways in which this knowledge is made, it bears teasing out what I understand by knowledge making within the context of this thesis. Indeed, in IR's near constant state of ontological insecurity, it is not simply useful, but necessary.[5] Calls to expand understandings of knowledge and knowledge making within International Relations are near ubiquitous in certain areas of the field, particularly within discussions regarding the role of post and decolonial thought on who is granted authority to speak and more crucially, be heard (valued). Multiple voices, such as Sabaratnam (2011), Shilliam (2015), and Mignolo (2012) argue that in broadening understandings of what 'knowledge' is, the discipline of IR would do better in its efforts to

[5] See for example ((Dyvik, Selby, and Wilkinson 2017; Grenier, Turton, and Beaulieu-Brossard 2015; Corry 2022)

understand the world it claims to interpret. As such, I find this approach of great importance to both, my work and my own way of looking at the world, and have chosen to adopt this mode of thinking. Post-colonial scholars such as those above argue for more inclusion of local and grounded voices of those who have lived the phenomena we seek to discuss, arguing that first hand testimonies are valuable, not simply because of what can be analysed from them but as knowledge made in its own right (Danielsson 2020; de Guevara and Kostić 2017; Kurowska and Tallis 2013). This mode of thought is therefore of great utility when thinking about the value of the war tours of BiH within academic discourse, which are, as I will demonstrate below, emblematic of the kind of knowledge such calls seek.

Though I make use of post- and decolonial knowledge making theory within my work, it bears beginning with a key caveat regarding this usage. Both I and other scholars of the Balkans, perhaps most comprehensively discussed in the dVersia special issue on *Decolonial Practice and Theory in Southeast Europe* (Gržinić 2019), do not seek to draw direct comparison between the experiences of citizens and nations formerly and formally colonised by Western European states beyond its shores. The gulf of experience between these spaces is vast both, historically and in present day, and so there is little value or honesty in direct comparison. Instead, as the dVersia special issue articulates, because of shared 'historical legacies of domination,' it is possible to 'dialogue' between these spaces (Katerina Kušić, Lottholz, and Manolova 2019, 7). In 'dialoguing' one is able to acknowledge difference whilst likewise seeing how 'decolonial thinking can be helpful in appreciating the region's imperial and (quasi-)colonial legacy, in analysing contemporary forms of domination, hierarchy and resistance, and for identifying their corresponding practices of complicity and collaboration' (Katerina Kušić, Lottholz, and Manolova 2019, 8). While the circumstances of postcolonial scholars' knowledge making and subject matter are not directly comparable to the circumstances of knowledge making in the Balkans or more specifically the BiHian space, like all good scholarship, the thoughts and ideas of find themselves applicable

beyond the circumstances of their initial utterance. I will return later to speak more specifically about knowledge making in the BiHian space but for now I felt it important to clarify that in leaning on and in to post/de-colonial ideas I am using these ideas as a mode of thinking through knowledge making that stands in conflict with/to contest more dominant narratives. As a result, there is no richer source of scholarship than that produced by post/de/anticolonial thinkers.

The work of decolonial thinkers influences not just my theorisation of knowledge but likewise the terms I use to discuss it. In writing I have made a deliberate decision to speak not of knowledge production which, as Shilliam argues, by putting the emphasis on production, places knowledge within a neoliberal framework of hierarchy and domination, where the sole purpose of knowledge is to be used, applied and, to an extent, exploited (Shilliam 2015, 24–25). Whilst I am sympathetic to critiques that production is not always a neoliberal form, what I do find very useful in Shilliam's thinking is the way in which they have operationalised different forms/modes of knowledge to distinguish between them, with different vocabularies that may cement the work of the guides as occurring outside of certain institutional structures. To distinguish between knowledge produced inside and likewise outside of the academy, Shilliam speaks of knowledge *cultivating,* and sometimes, as per my own terminology, *making*. In doing so Shilliam argues, knowledge is cultivated by those who 'inhabit' the space of knowledge making and creating the knowledge for themselves to form a more empathetic and relational form of knowledge (Shilliam 2015, 11). Shilliam's idea of knowledge cultivation for cultivation's sake may however, ring less true within the more transactional context the guides operate in and thus I use 'making' to distinguish between these two environments, using making to suggest a liminality between production and cultivation. As the guides discussed with me, there is something of an in-betweeness in their own understandings of their work with many speaking of its transformational educational potential alongside its life sustaining financial (and even personal) qualities. I therefore do not see the tours as 'fitting' either within Shilliam's ideas of cultivation or production. In choosing to refer to knowledge making,

rather than production I hope to ground the space in which guides make knowledge of and for themselves, which they choose to share with others. Knowledge for both Shilliam and I is a relational process of forming knowledge between peoples for the sake of creating these relationships of understanding, it is a much more affectual process not simply about producing the knowledge itself (as regrettably so often happens in academia) but about sharing it with others.

This is not to say that traditional scholarship is not without its merits. I am, as Edkins puts it, 'entangled' within such forms (Edkins 2013, 282), enamoured by the processes of creation and making of knowledge and the coming together of the academic community. But I am equally as enamoured with the possibilities and experiences of knowledge making I have encountered beyond academia and am grateful to be part of a wider scholarly community that thinks likewise, thereby opening space for more different forms and practices within the academy.[6] Whilst I realise that for some, such a position does not go far enough and leaves us still, as Shilliam (among others) points out, trapped within the confines of these neoliberal modes of production, I would rather seek to foster this community of those who think otherwise from within, than to find myself entirely outside of and apart from the world of academia.

In thinking with Shilliam and bringing in Arlene Tickner (2003), I feel their writings have great utility in opening the door to think of the tours as knowledge making spaces within the confines of IR and yet not so traditionally *of* IR. As Shilliam argues, much of academia has built itself up on the idea that there is a superior knowledge that can be somehow reached and as a result the knowledge produced by those who have attained this level (academics) is somehow better and more reliable than others. This has therein left academia to cast aside or simply study/interpret

[6] In particular, I would like to thank Taraf Abu Hamdan and Antonio Salvador M. Alcazar III for forming the South/South Movement where I found a space in academia to be both within and outside of it. I am, in their words a fellow 'traveller', understanding both the impossibility and necessity of looking for knowledge otherwise, to expand what, who, and how we see(k) knowledge (Abu Hamdan and Alcazar III, n.d.).

'first order' knowledge not as knowledge making but rather only as a subject of study (Shilliam 2014, 353). As Tickner then argues, these structures created the original dominion and marginalisation so that they are hardly apt conditions for speaking within (Tickner 2003, 307). It is not simply a case of occupying pre-existing places and forms of knowledge but instead expanding the site and space of IR to include these voices in their current form, so they are not lost to the colonising 'otherness' (Shilliam 2015, 7–8). Thus, knowledge is not always easy or comfortable but instead may rest on an upsetting of accepted values or status quos, to offer up something new and different to the viewer/learner.

As such, the logic for including the tours as spaces of knowledge making grows ever stronger given, as the guides state (and as I will explore more in the following section), the inadequacy of both scholarship and the media to reflect the nature of their own experience. Sometimes the guides claim, false information is spread by 'people writing on blogs who haven't even come here' (Dino) and sometimes it is a case of the media coming to tell 'the usual story' rather than looking round at what's actually happening (Tarik). Instead, through creating the tours in their own form, guides are able to express a knowledge that they in particular feel academia and the media cannot, a knowledge which is not reliant only on the use of 'stereotypes' (Dino). It is not just in their form but likewise in their content that the tours offer up a different type of knowledge to tourists, a type that both the guides and I consider to be well suited to contest the dominant 'stereotypical' narratives the guides have identified. The tours thus offer a response to Julian, Bliesemann De Guevara and Rehead's concerns not simply regarding the lack of substantive inclusion of 'local' voices in post-conflict and peacebuilding literature, but also as to how these perspectives may be found and engaged with (2019). This knowledge comes not at the behest of policy makers, but rather originating from so-called conflict-affected parties themselves. The tours are not responses to academic discussions or generated by them, but rather exist alongside them and thus, are not necessarily part of the structures of domination that had previously excluded them. They are, as I

argued in the introduction, a form of *organic* knowledge making that is not reliant upon the researcher to observe or validate them as knowledge making, but rather exist as such independently.

As I have previously discussed, there has been a vast expansion in IR scholarship as to what is now being read as a form of knowledge through which we might understand the articulation of International Relations. As Weldes, speaking about including fictional literature as part of the readable canon of IR argues, it is 'by examining the relations between the discourses of globalisation and science fiction, we can begin to understand how globalisation is made meaningful' (2001, 649). Their arguments stretch the bounds of readable texts in IR to include literature as a site at which global politics *happen* and thus render visible the processes which IR purports to study. It is an exploration taken further in texts such as Dauphinee's *Politics of Exile,* wherein literature is not just the site of the study of IR, but its very form (Dauphinee 2013). As Edkins argues, in support of such literary projects,

> *The Politics of Exile* challenges the comfortable and comforting world we have made - our world as academics in particular - and the separations we have produced in creating it. It points to the possibility of an international relations that is creative in another, more challenging, sense - as an unashamedly aesthetic practice: a practice that intervenes in the partition of the sensible and enacts another politics' (Edkins 2013, 292).

Where Dauphinee's writing inhabits a grey area between fiction and auto-fiction, as Edkins et al. explore both in this introductory paper and in their wider practice, IR has seen a vast expansion in the kinds of literature it may read itself in, not so much Dauphinee's autofiction, but instead autobiography itself (Edkins et al. 2021). Telling stories, particularly stories in which the speaker and the listener become entangled within a history (as the guides do within their tours), does, Edkins argues, 'more.' It does more because the stories 'draw out the complex and ambiguous mutual constitution of selves with others, of present and past, of person with place, and bring into sight worlds that academic argument sometimes seems to function to conceal' (Edkins et al. 2021,

604). Telling stories create a sense of discomfort in challenging the status quo, not more of the same but instead something (completely) different. This discomfort thus acts as a moment of knowledge making as it challenges and contests previous understandings and replaces it with a new perspective, a richness not previously found. In my case, such arguments offer a compelling justification as to the inclusion of the narratives of the guides given the richness these scholars believe present within the telling of stories.

Indeed, it is not just other forms of written knowledge which are now included within the canon of International Relations but wider creative, visual, and even sonic practices. Taking such discussions more into (and yet also outside of) the Balkan region and Bosnian and Herzegovinian space, projects such as Aida Šehović's *Što Te Nema?* (as discussed by Dženeta Karabegović (Karabegović 2014)) and Ronald Panza's *The Art of Peace* (as discussed by Lydia Cole and Stefanie Kappler (L. C. Cole and Kappler 2022)) show both the political power of artistic endeavours and likewise, the ability of International Relations to reflect on and learn from them. In *Što Te Nema?* Karabegović discusses how we might study diaspora mobilisation as expressing itself and expressing the diaspora politically through art projects such as the public making and presentation of coffee, in the traditional Bosnian way as Šehović does. The art installation at one glance expresses something words alone may not be able to by drawing attention to absent (here read murdered) coffee drinkers, and is rendered political both as a result of its engagement with genocide and the way it invites viewers to reflect and share upon it (volunteers go up to audience members to both tell them about the Srebrenica massacre and also to ask them to reflect upon it). As Karabegović highlights, this reflection is not always easy or comfortable but in creating such moments between viewer and volunteer, space is given to making knowledge between the two. Cole and Kappler meanwhile read Panza's soundscape as an auditory expression of peace and how it expresses ideas of conflict, its memory, belonging and reconstruction so that the project is understood as both creative and political simultaneously. Both projects situate the knowledge

gained from attuning to these alternative forms of knowledge making as firmly part of the canon of IR therein showing the utility of the tours as BiHian knowledge spaces if they are read as such.

Post-conflict scholars and those working in post-conflict spaces have likewise taken this 'alternative' affectual approach to knowledge generation to heart as a way to express the seemingly *inexpressible* nature of conflict. Taking for example, what I group together as the Stitched Voices Collective (Andrä et al. 2019; Bliesemann de Guevara and Krystalli 2022; de Guevara and Kostić 2017) working on knowledge and needlework, who have created and argue in support of the use of textiles to express

> knowledge that does not 'fit' and is not 'easily assimilable' (Lehrer and Milton 2011, 8). Conflict textiles unsettle mainstream Western academic notions of epistemic authority in matters of war and militarized violence, they challenge what knowledge of these matters is about, and they invite us to reflect on how we come to know war and militarized violence. (Andrä et al. 2019, 361)

as this knowledge would be otherwise unreachable. They highlight the often uncomfortable nature of the knowledge itself and the way discomfort, so ambiguous and personal, can be expressed and felt, making knowledge through an affectual resonance rather than through direct statement of fact. Although not constructed within the established scholarly format, the textiles echo the call to expand our registers of knowledge beyond the book. This too is what the war tours offer; a knowledge without introduction, research question, argument and conclusion which perhaps as a result of this absence, nonetheless conveys so much to their audience.

In this way, the collective prompt discussion as to the very nature of knowledge, particularly regarding conflict, as the textiles are separate from the accountancy of war into mere numbers, dates and statistics. As one guide notes when discussing the number of deaths as a result of the Sarajevo siege (they place it at over 11,000, official numbers vary between 9-14,000), they are always surprised/horrified that some tourists ask why the number was not higher, 'Like they think

there should have been more death or that it could have been worse. How can you even ask that?' (Ibro). What such a viewpoint fails to understand is the climate of terror the siege created and how its impact cannot simply be boiled down to numbers alone. If we focus on numbers, what the guides but likewise the needlework project show, is that we do not truly understand the events that they connect to. Both instead draw on more affectual ways of knowing. Certainly, in hearing 'the facts', one has information about the conflict, but whether this can transpire into understanding is a very different thing. Affect and emotion are for this guide a key part of gaining knowledge about the conflict as without it, one lacks, the guide feels, a real sense of understanding. In my conception of knowledge what is required is some form of emotional or affective component if it is to be representative of that which it purports to represent.

As Andrä et al. posit, supporting the arguments of the above guide, these alternative forms of (knowledge) making, despite the ambiguity of their form/content, still hold a power to convey knowledge of conflict through what they call an 'affective resonance' that speaks beyond the scholarly or even narrative form (Andrä et al. 2019, 353). This 'affective resonance' is the potential for the textiles to not just impact a viewer, but perhaps to 'transform' their understanding. As Andrä et al., but likewise Bliesemann de Guevara and Krystalli track, this transformation in understanding is not purely theoretical but also emotional and marks a shift from the absorbing of information into its transformation into knowledge as a richer emotional level of understanding is brought to the receiver. Where a history book or official report might note the statistics of the conflict, in being present in the above guide's tour, tourists are brought into an understanding of what the reality and feeling behind such statistics meant to the people experiencing conflict. I see the tours as creating an 'affective resonance,' establishing knowledge not so much as factual, but rather as affectual, thus becoming a valuable component in the study of what constitutes *knowledge* of conflict.

To further solidify what I mean when I say the tours have an affectual resonance I turn to both Ahmed as well as Gregg and Seigworth's understandings of affect to clarify how the tours *work* as affectual spaces that create moments of knowledge making. As Gregg and Seigworth argue, 'affect is in many ways synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*' (2010, 1) like the spaces which the tours provide between guide and participant, it is based on a relationality. Likewise the ability of the tourscape as a space to make knowledge is dependent upon 'those intensities that pass body to body… in those resonances that circulate about, between and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds *and* in the very passages of variations between these intensities and resonances themselves' (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, 2). Affect cannot necessarily be captured but is instead felt and absorbed, contingent on interaction and relation rather than strictly dependent upon a particular content or narrative. It is not so much, as the Stitched Voices collective argue, that the tourscapes are guaranteed spaces of knowledge making, but rather that they hold the potential capacity within them.

Indeed, and as the Gregg and Seigworth above and Ahmed both argue, their affectual resonance is often a question of 'what sticks' (Ahmed 2010, 29). Whilst, much like Gregg and Seigworth, Ahmed argues for an idea of affect that occurs between bodies and their resonances, they also speak of the 'stickyness' of objects,[7] therein allowing the tourscapes and the narratives of the guides to be read within this potential 'stickyness,' or affective resonance. As they argue, the stickyness is not guaranteed but when it occurs this likewise does not happen in a vacuum as 'a sticky surface is one that will incorporate other elements into the surface' (that is past histories and experiences) so that 'what makes something sticky in the first place is difficult to determine precisely because stickyness involves such a chain of effects' (Ahmed 2004, 90). Those within the space carry with them certain histories and understandings that impact upon how the 'object' moves them. Thus,

[7] That is objects in the sense of anything that is not the body, allowing for narrative, space, or things to be consumed within such an understanding

depending on who is present, different aspects of the tours are likely to 'stick' differently so that we cannot and must not pinpoint one particular point, aspect, or element as where the knowledge making through affect occurs, but should consider the tours in their totality.

The stickyness is key to understanding the knowledge making component of the tours; that their knowledge making does not rest or rely on conveying as much information as possible, but instead centres around notions of what might stick. Taking for example, the narrative of a former soldier-turned-guide Faris, who speaks about holding a siege line. One might learn the geography of the siege, the routine of a soldier, but when you stand with them and they point at the house they were stationed at and then where the first family lived (the house next door), I could not help but shudder. As Highmore puts it, 'the affect gives you away' (Highmore 2010, 118) as you realise with much more than just your mind, but the physicality of your body, what the siege and the defence of Sarajevo *meant*. To my mind stories like these 'stick' far more than learning the precise coordinates of the siege line. The tourist experiences the 'object', the narrative of the tour, as affectual not simply because of the object, but as Ahmed argues, 'because of "'whatever" is around that object, which includes what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival' (Ahmed 2010, 33). We as the tourist *know* the siege happened, that this guide was a soldier, that they are showing us their history and that of the city and so the tours create an affectual resonance as they are embedded within the "whatever" of both the guide and the city itself.

As Mc Morrow highlights the importance of affect is in its happening in and around the body, as 'bodies are not mere receptacles within which emotions are housed, they are (inter)active and influential through their relation(s) with affect' (2019, 21). For Gregg and Seigworrth, affect is about the 'ebbs and swells of intensities that pass between "bodies"' (2010, 2) which therein marks out the tourscape, through its affectual resonance, as a different mode of learning and knowledge making from that of more traditional written or visual materials, or even the classroom space. The

tourscape is deeply physical and thus the impact of it upon the body must be accounted for, not just in what is understood but likewise in what is felt. The affective bodily element of the tours is part of their knowledge making as knowledge is not created solely within the mind but within the body as well. Affect is useful for understanding what the tours do that goes beyond traditional understandings of knowledge making, and for embedding this process in a more sensational and intangible realm. However, in affect, as Highmore argues, the point is not necessarily to 'know' exactly what has happened to the body and disentangle this, but instead, to allow the entanglement to remain, the stickyness to stick, and read through and with this (Highmore 2010, 119). Rather because the affectual resonance will resonate differently within each body (depending on, as per Ahmed, what it has brought to the situation), we must understand the tours as contingent spaces of knowledge making not just because of the information they share, but also in terms of what sticks and resonates within that particular body.

What this means is that in understanding the tours as spaces of knowledge making, we must conceive of knowledge as going far beyond the factual and as rooted in the experiential, the emotive. However, as Ahmed likewise warns, this does not necessarily mean we should reify this affectual knowledge. As they argue, drawing from Swan, there has been an 'emotionalisation of society' in which 'emotions are imagined to provide a privileged source of truth about the self and its relations with others' and there is a 'perceived growth in the range and intensity of emotions and emotional expressions in the public sphere' (Swan, 2008: 89 in Ahmed 2004, 116). Whilst I would like to argue that the tour's affectual resonance marks them out as significant and important spaces of knowledge making, I would nonetheless like to stress that this is not the only, or the most important form of knowledge making but rather, that the tours are interesting in their ability to generate *this* kind of knowledge.

It is a knowledge however, and as I have already argued, that is deeply contingent upon the listener and their propensity to *be affected* for as Ahmed also argues 'Certain (gendered, raced, sexed) subjects accordingly become the objects of others' affective responses' (Ahmed 2004, 123)). In other words, only some speakers are given the privilege of having their knowledge attended to in both, the traditional and the affectual sense and this is often dependent on the wider sense of connection or openness to it that a particular visitor may bring with them. Often this connectivity, as O'Sullivan and Krulišova argue, is reliant upon finding the right language to speak across supposed differences and to have one's voice recognised as a voice (O'Sullivan and Krulišová 2023). Even then however, as Kurylo, speaking about Ukrainian knowledge production in the aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion states, there remains a need in IR to find 'the 'right' theoretical and ideological language' (2023, 686) when speaking about the events and traumas of conflict. Not every expression of such an experience is so equally well-received. It is, Kurylo alleges, not important just to think about what one writes in IR, but also to consider the tone and language used to express it. Indeed, as both Kurylo and the Yugoslav Women+ collective discuss, there is a perceived need that somehow those who have experienced conflict must still be '*objective*' in the knowledge they produce about it (Kurylo 2023, 690; Stavrevska et al. 2023, 3).

I do not wish to present an idea that *I* believe it is important for those who make knowledge about conflict drawing on personal experience should speak objectively. As the Yugoslav Women+ make clear, such a need is both paternalistic and unhelpful, serving to dismiss a person and their knowledge before even receiving it (Stavrevska et al. 2023). There is now a rich vein of scholarship within IR (which is somewhat playing catchup with sociology and feminist theory), to argue that feeling and emotion are actually key to understanding of politics and the political, so that supposedly *un*objective personal knowledge should actually be at the heart of, rather than sidelined

or dismissed within International Relations as a discipline.[8] As Freeman says they 'want to write about politics as something people do, to describe a politics grounded in human action and interaction – in the gathering and meeting, talking and writing of embodied and situated human beings' (Freeman, n.d.). As the above guide's quote regarding how tourists ask how 'only 11,000' (Ibro) were killed in the siege shows, a focus solely on objective facts belies much of the story and knowledge behind them, the relationships and embodiment that Freeman highlights. It is not that facts are without educative merit, but rather that a focus solely upon facts leads to a deficit in understanding of the stories that hide behind them.

As those writing in the 2021 JIRD special issue on Uses of the East in International Studies argue, pushes towards objectivity when speaking about conflict is not the only way in which scholars from South Eastern Europe and the Balkan space find their knowledge marginalised within academia. These spaces have traditionally been seen, as Mälksoo argues, as "almost the same but not quite' Other of Europe', so that those producing knowledge within said spaces have often been forgotten or left out, their knowledge dismissed as of not quite the same calibre as that in *the West* (2021, 812). The same is argued by YW+ who say that

> 'scholars of and from the post-Yugoslav space in IR are subject to *bounding*, by continuously being questioned about their biases due to the perceived proximity to the region, and *domaining* by certain expectations about the knowledge we produce and our knowledge claims being at best perceived as particularistic' (Stavrevska et al. 2023, 10)

That scholars from the region, many of whom have done everything 'right' as far as the Western academy is concerned, integrating themselves within it (Stavrevska et al. 2023), face pushback on their knowledge making outputs allows us to better understand the context in which the guides make their knowledge. If even those within the system struggle for recognition, where might the

[8] See for example (Åhäll 2019; R. Krystalli and Schulz 2022; Tripathi 2022; Penttinen 2013; Koschut 2020)

guides find themselves? As Todorova tracks in their work on *Imagining the Balkans* (and as will likewise be expanded on within my framing chapter), pejorative stereotypes regarding the Balkan region do not exist solely (or even they say, primarily) within academia, but also find far more popular and journalistic expression (Todorova 2009, 19). Thus, it is not only to be expected that the guides may face a dismissal of their knowledge from the academic sphere but potentially also from tourists themselves as a result of the prior writings on the Balkans they have likely been in contact with.[9] Of course, as the work of the guides and likewise this thesis seeks to show, this dismissal is possible to overcome, but it must nonetheless be acknowledged that this is the kind of climate in which the guide's knowledge making takes place.

Indeed, Gilbert takes this one step further when investigating the rhetoric of NGO and aid workers in 'post-conflict' BiH regarding the 'intervention encounters' that make up the realities of international intervention (Gilbert 2020, 29–30). Whilst not directly concerned with knowledge making about BiH, the work inevitably addresses knowledge authorities regarding who (supposedly) knows best for BiH and why. With the international community itself often serving to reinforce negative stereotyping regarding BiHians' ethnicity, this in many ways allows the international community to better position itself as neutral and fair and thus best placed to know about and tackle the issues the country faces (Gilbert 2020, 78–80). Such voices imply that in order to understand itself, BiH requires outside assistance and facilitation, therein denying the agency of BiHians to address their own problems, or even to know what these problems might be. As such, BiHian knowledge is positioned as secondary to the international, and it is in this climate which the guides find themselves speaking to their audience. The knowledge of BiHian's therefore has great value as it speaks to both outside of, but likewise directly to the international academic core.

[9] Hansen for example has dedicated an entire book to the tracking of how these pejorative discourses of the Balkans have taken root in both governmental and quotidian spaces (Hansen 2006). Likewise, one does not have to look far in 'popular' journalists' contemporary writings on the conflict in Bosnia to see where brute-alising discourses take place to render Balkan subjects less worthy of producing knowledge (Glenny 1992; Kaplan 1994; Bowen 2006).

This potential to make knowledge represents not what the international wants to see, but rather a knowledge that may better reflect the experiences of those previously studied but without voice.

Further solidifying Gilbert's arguments, Bougarel, Helms and Duijzings make a similar case about the proclivity and potential inaccuracy of many international knowledge claims regarding the conflict, speaking of 'the disconnect between 'top-down' political analyses and what we and other researchers were seeing 'on the ground'' (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a, 14). They raise something of a puzzle regarding the persistence of such framings, and as Sorabji demonstrates, this is often down to a question of access, rather than competence. In their piece, *Managing Memories in Post-War Sarajevo*, Sorabji works and speaks with 'three real-life Bosniacs' who, they argue, 'are no less conscious than the anthropologist of the implications of imparting or not imparting information to the young' (2006, 3). It is not that the words of BiHians do not have value, that is patently obvious, but rather that the external (published) sphere is less accessible to them. What the tours and the tourscape offer is rather a space that *is* accessible. It is a space in which BiHians may make knowledge that, as Bougarel, Helms and Duijzings further argue, 'provides for a more nuanced and holistic understanding of local contexts and is better able to represent the complexities of everyday life' (2007, 14). As 'by describing local conditions along with the experiences and strategies of the actors involved, this approach allows for a disengagement of scholarly analysis from various agendas (whether 'local' or 'Western') and a deconstruction of the essential bias through which Bosnia has often been represented and understood' (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a, 14). The tours are a disengagement (or even perhaps, a deliberate move not to engage with) traditionally scholarly forms and practices, representative of the 'more nuanced and holistic understanding of local contexts' (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a, 14) argued above as essential for bridging the disconnect between international understanding and local realities.

There is therefore, a substantial politic behind who is *permitted* to speak and, more crucially, be heard about conflict and likewise in what manner. As Julian, De Guevara, and Redhead plot, there has historically been an erasure of the voices of those who have experienced conflict within the research and policies supposedly targeting them (2019, 211). As they explore however, there is not just a moral imperative to include these voices, but likewise a scholarly one as 'these experiences enrich our understanding of conflict and improve peacebuilding and aid work' (Julian, Bliesemann De Guevara, and Redhead 2019, 211). As the trio, much like those above note, 'the local' (and by extension their knowledge) whilst much feted in 'the West' does not, on closer inspection appear to have much voice. A challenge remains for those in academia as to how to meaningfully and substantively include these voices (Julian, Bliesemann De Guevara, and Redhead 2019, 213; Stavrevska et al. 2023, 8; Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a). The challenge, to be clear, is not that the knowledge of those impacted by conflict is not useful to those studying it, but rather that those studying conflict have not taken meaningful action to include it as such.

I believe an interesting response to these questions of what substantive inclusion may look like comes from a number of feminist works wherein participants in the study were listed as co-authors. They were listed because the 'lead researcher' understood them to be as integral to the knowledge making process as they themselves were, in particular Carlen et als' *Criminal Women* (Carlen et al. 1988) and Fine et als' article on *Participatory Action Research: From Within and Beyond Prison Bars* (Fine et al. 2003). In such cases however, the co-authors were co-*authors* in a much more traditional sense of the word, working collaboratively with the researcher(s) in the writing process. In my case however, the entirety of this work is my own and the vignettes serve as retellings of the events as they happened to me, so that I am very much the sole *author* of this piece. I find the notion raised by Smith in Miles et al.'s piece about the potential to 'replace the notion of author all together with 'contributor', in a format resembling film credits (Smith, 1997)' an intriguing one. But as they warn, this may lead to a process of 'diluting' or obscuring the contributions of certain individuals over

others (S. Miles, Renedo, and Marston 2022, 2552). With the writing of this thesis being entirely my own I am, in the traditional sense, the only author but I consider the guides as co-collaborators within this research process.

For me, and as I will explore more in my methodology section, substantive inclusion is also about how much voice is shown and taken. In writing vignettes, rather than making use of selective quotes in the body of my own arguments, I aim to foreground (in an undoubtedly small way) the depth of the guide's knowledge and how it is they go about demonstrating this within the tourscape. In this way I hope that their voice and inclusion may be thought of as substantive. Being limited be the institutional constraints of the thesis as an object I cannot list my participants as co-authors or even as co-contributors, as regulations state it must be a single authored publication. It is however, a best practice I would like to highlight and so when considering the words of the guides across this piece, I ask you to think of them as experts and, to a great extent, co-authors. Their knowledge is not so much 'local' knowledge but quite simply a 'knowledge' from which I have learnt and worked with as I might any other academic text.

In coming to establish the guides as knowledge makers within International Relations this section has first established what is meant by knowledge making and why such a framing has been selected as preferable to knowledge production, but with an acknowledgement of the commercial gains of tourism that do not make the tours a solely cultivational endeavour. As such, I loosely follow Schatz's definition of knowledge, that it is 'coproduced in unique, often fleeting, power-laden, and deeply context dependent relationships. It is more than subjective, it is intersubjective, co-constituted by a variety of subjects engaged in a thicket of multiple, overlapping forms of communication' (2009, 15). As I have also shown, such a process of knowledge making is not always easy or comfortable and so the contestational nature of the knowledge the guides produce cannot be ignored. In making something 'new' they upset a status quo (both in form and content)

and so this discomfort is in many ways key to understanding their knowledge making. We have likewise come to understand the tours as different from academia but no less valuable as a site of knowledge making. It is a site in which the guides find their knowledge mediated by external perceptions and expectations regarding their identities, both as those who have experienced conflict, but likewise as originating from South Eastern Europe. Situating the guides as knowledge makers thus places them in contention with scholars who have *traditionally* been considered as knowledge makers on the region. Although, as the work of Julian, De Guevara and Redhead's shows, this does not mean they should not be considered as knowledge makers but rather, it is the responsibility of the academy, if it wishes to overcome the 'disconnect' that Bougarel, Helms and Duijzings highlight (2007, 14).

Knowledge and Tourism

Whilst we have already discussed the importance of knowledge as an affectual space more generally, this affective nature of travel and personal interaction has more contextually been explored within tourism literature which looks at how travel may 'change' a person (Noy 2004; Bruner 1991; Selimović 2019). It hits upon the capacity of travel, when participants are open, to transform and therein bring a new knowledge of a particular space or event, and often how it is precisely these experiences which tourists seek out. As articles such as Noy's highlight (2004), this 'affective resonance' of Andrä et al. (2019, 353) is actively sought out by travellers who feel the need to experience or learn something over the course of their travels. Of course, not every traveller is looking for this 'transformation' but for certain subsections, notably backpackers, who often make up a good majority of the tours which BiHian tour guides lead, this transformation is seen as key to the experience. This is something guides are often very aware of, intending for the knowledge made in their tours to change participants understandings. As one guide told me, their aim is that tourists go away remembering that 'the war in Bosnia is over', as they know that what they do 'changes people' (Dino). In this way, they offer to a challenge to the omission of Daigle

who did not account for an idea that tourists would be open to the contestations of local actors regarding how they are perceived internationally.

Many tourism scholars in fact argue that this affective resonance, the ability to be *changed* within the tourism encounter, is what marks certain experiences out for the tourist and what gives them value. As d'Hauteserre argues, 'the destination has to provide, according to Steiner and Reisinger (2006), some form of "existential authenticity" that tourists can be affected by and respond to with their own' (d'Hauteserre 2015, 85). Stated even more strongly they argue that 'the goal of economic acts or events [within tourism] is to excite as much intensity as possible on bodies by tugging at or awakening feelings and desires through the senses, a form of affect' (d'Hauteserre 2015, 82). If these are absent, they say, the tourist does not get the same level of satisfaction or enjoyment from their visiting. As Rokka et al. likewise demonstrate, if no form of affectual atmosphere is created, or rather, there is insufficient atmosphere, tourists may leave disappointed or seek such stimuli elsewhere (Rokka et al. 2023). Whilst both articles and also Duff make clear (d'Hauteserre 2015; Duff 2010; Rokka et al. 2023), there is no set way to do this and it is deeply contingent on the willingness of all participants to make it so. They nonetheless agree that the creation of an affectual space dramatically impacts upon tourist's reception of their visiting experience and ability to interact and immerse themselves within it.

I therefore argue, given my own experiences of 'change' within the BiHian tourscape and my observations, that the guides seek to foster (either consciously or unconsciously) this affective resonance through the creation of an 'affective atmosphere' using both narrative and space (Anderson 2009). Dark tourism landscapes, with their history of death are, as Martini and Buda argue, more susceptible/receptive to the creation of these affective atmospheres which 'elicit strong and complex reactions by their nature' (2020, 679). The creation of the affective atmosphere is in many ways core to their reading as sites of significance and therein developing an environment

in which knowledge about the conflict and the site may be made. As Duff, following Casey's conceptualisation of 'thick' and 'thin' places, argues, thick places forge 'a series of affective and experiential connections in place' marking them out as significant, creating memory and belonging and allowing for the potential for them to have 'meaning' unlike 'thin places' which 'lack the 'rigor and substance' and hold 'no memorable or resonant command' (Duff 2010, 882). The tourscape, out of necessity, must be *thick* to hold experiential value to tourists, and this thickness in turn imbues these spaces with the ability to function as knowledge making spaces. The thickness is about connection and meaning making for those present within them. As Tucker and Shelton state, 'it therefore seems reasonable to suggest that the particular affect or mood created through the tourism delivery of affective tourism narratives could, potentially, (re)set tourists' orientation to the future and hence their way of engaging with the world' (2018, 73), therein creating the potential space for knowledge making.

Whilst this process may, as Martini and Buda highlight, involve 'modifying, engineering, and manipulating places to develop a coherent narrative that re-orients and artificially organizes the event of death or disaster to be fruible to tourists' (Martini and Buda 2020, 686). This does not mean, as Lisle rightly counters, that the 'tourist responses to sites of atrocity are any less complex' (Lisle 2004, 15). As I will return to later, just because a certain narrative is selected and presented, occurring within the touristic setting, it does not leave participants less susceptible to moments of change or meaning making. As Lisle also argues, 'tourists are perfectly aware of the society of the spectacle – that [they] know the world is mediated and commodified for their consumption', but nonetheless, they can come into the space and learn and be affected by it (Lisle 2004, 15). Just because a certain affectual atmosphere is created to stimulate the touristic experience, this affectual resonance may actually aid, rather than inhibit the process of meaning making, as tourists invest themselves, both in mind and physical body, into the space and its narrative, regardless of the mediated nature of this.

Thus, while some scholars critique the idea of knowledge sharing as possible within the touristic environment because of its commercial nature, this is not a viewpoint I share. As Singh argues, tourism, when money is ignored, is often (erroneously) thought of as having a negative influence on locals and their culture (2015). They argue that if money is thought of as the only positive benefit of tourism, many scholars ignore that so much labour is only valuable to the labourer because of its capital generating properties and fail to explore beyond this. Tour guides, much as any other profession, choose to do this, often with an aim to making money. If we are to stop at 'money' in tourism, Singh argues, 'the true transformative nature of tourism' is 'cloak[ed] or mask[ed]' (2015, 62), so that while we acknowledge capital and its influence, we must likewise look further and beyond to see more of what occurs in host/guest interactions. As Daigle shows in the complexity of interactions between Cubans and visitors (2015), money is just a starting point to this interaction, and as a result, should be interrogated but not considered as of sole importance. For Daigle, there is much more at play, and so too is this the case for Singh. So much more lies beyond the site of pure exchange and so this too must be considered in compiling a greater sense of what is really happening when tourism *happens*, namely the transformational potential that Noy hints at as being a space in which knowledge is shared and made (2004) .

In understanding this, there is much to be gained from Shepherd's more general examination of the links between tourism and the commodification of culture (Shepherd 2002). In their work they examine fears that tourism has the power to variously 'dilute culture,' commodify an abstract concept of 'culture' which places value on a set of intangible/non-existent narratives which relate more to ideas of experience than a 'meaningful' interaction with said culture. They highlight a perceived binary between the 'unreal' tourist experience and 'real' culture, rooted in ideas of perceived 'authenticity.' An authenticity they argue, that has very little bearing on the programme delivered or the nature of the attraction itself. Instead, what is argued is that tourism by and large

is simply another form of 'commodification' of culture in the same way that any culture is consumed, any 'hierarchy' of consumption is impossible as all consumption is commodification, and thus the potential for knowledge sharing is not necessarily diluted as a result of the touristic context.

Such ideas are problematised by studies like Salazar's *Imaged or Imagined? Cultural Representations and the "Tourismification" of Peoples and Places* (Salazar 2009). 'Tourismification', that is the commercialising, commodifying and 'performance' of a particular culture, they propose, lessens cultural pride and reduces identity to an 'attraction.' In doing so, the individual providing said cultural experience, may potentially experience alienation to or bastardisation of the cultural 'product' they provide. Whilst it gains economic significance, its social or knowledge based intent is lost (Salazar 2009, 49). Salazar discusses the reliance cycle that tourism creates wherein certain performances come to be expected by tourists and so must be offered by provider. A dependency relationship between particular performances and economic prosperity is established, so that even if it is not a 'true' representation of culture or of self, certain performances must be enacted if the experience is to be viewed as 'real' by the tourist audience.

Direct parallels can of course be drawn between this and the BiHian 'war tours' wherein, to continue making money and attracting visitors, certain performances of conflict *must* be performed meet demand. Taking just one example, there is a guide Anis, who leads tourists along the 'siege lines' of Sarajevo, at one point lifting up a stone to reveal a mine underneath it. They have, they claim, reported this to authorities but nothing has been done about it. If we are to take them at face value, they continuously return to this spot with their visitors, disturbing the mine on a daily basis. Even after having seen this the best part of a decade ago and reflecting on it since, I am still unsure as to whether this is a genuine unexploded mine or a prop (particularly given assertions made that Sarajevo has been completely demined ('After 20 Years, The City of Sarajevo Is Mine-

Free' 2021)). The display is what Massumi might call a 'sign-event' featuring a 'dynamical object' where the significance of the event rests less on its so-called *reality* and more on the impact or the feeling it creates in those who '*Experience'* it; its affectual resonance of the 'nervous body astartle,' wherein it's reality or non-reality is less important than the sensations it produces (Massumi 2010, 64). Ultimately, war is what tourists have come to see (and to feel), and so war, in some form or other as this thesis will explore, is what they must get. There is every potential within the tours, particularly in instances such as this, that what is presented to tourists is not so much a *reality* but rather a representation, presented as *fact,* but perhaps less factual than one is led to believe. As has been previously stated, the guides should not be assumed as perfect knowledge makers but rather providing a far more complex interaction between guests and the history of conflict than might be initially assumed.

This perception of insincere transfer of knowledge, where knowledge imparted via tourism is somehow less 'true' or 'meaningful' than when imparted in other contexts e.g. the classroom/in books, is as some scholars explore, not so clear cut. Instead, there is a tension present between tourist expectations and experience that is often rooted in different cultural understandings of a particular event. In the case of Vietnam, tourism scholars such as Alneng (Alneng 2002) or Henderson (Henderson 2000) explore how tourism plays an important role in solidifying, sharing, and shaping narratives of conflict, not simply in nation, but likewise internationally. They explore how the Vietnamese tunnel tours present a narrative of the conflict that may often be tailored to suit particular viewpoints. It is a narrative more likely to tell the story guests expect to hear, rather than one that might challenge their understandings, as I argue the BiHian tours do.

As Alneng shows, the presence of the international (that is international tourists) may actually have the potential to redefine the history of a space, altering it to better suit the external (here read American) view of the conflict, rather than local understanding of it. In Alneng's case, the

international as a sphere has contested and reshaped the Vietnamese understanding of the conflict (in its museums and visitor sites at least) to impose a certain narrative upon the places that is deemed as more appropriate by that international community. Henderson takes the idea further to show the importance of striking 'balance' between the two (local and international) to provide a 'satisfactory' experience for all parties that is not simply concerned with the relaying of knowledge about the conflict but likewise how visitors feel and 'enjoy' such a process. Within this process of 'enjoyment' there is also the potential for tour guides to relay and shape tourist ideas about conflict, although this is mitigated or influenced by the performative enjoyment factor of the tourist experience. Such ideas pick up on the multiple tensions of thinking of tourscapes as sites of knowledge making but also point to a key justification of their study within IR, that they are spaces of interaction, contestation and creation of certain narratives of conflict that IR too is deeply concerned with.

All this being said, what cannot be forgotten however, in discussions of the commodification of memory and trauma, is the agency of the provider themselves, something which Shepherd discusses and which I would like to return more to here. Tourism is not just about the consumer, but also the provider. Guides themselves are actors and controllers of narrative (Newlands 2014). They are gatekeepers to knowledge of the space so that their narratives direct and control the understandings of their tour participants and the tourscape in which they are situated. What must be questioned therefore, is what narratives guides choose to tell, what do they highlight and how do they convey it? What is the impact of a generalised history of a space in comparison with the small and the personal? And if, when the personal is included, how does one navigate ideas of the commodification of one's own memories – particularly if they are so based in trauma, as with the war tours. In answering such questions it is useful to turn to the wealth of literature on use of 'survivor stories' in Holocaust death camps (Beech 2000; Edkins 2001; Kushner 2006). These personal stories, it is argued, make the experience and knowledge gained by participants more 'real'

and more relatable; they are the embedded and rooted knowledge of Shilliam and other decolonial knowledge makers. When a narrative is delivered by a person who *lived* it said narrative is ascribed with greater authenticity and considered more meaningful by tourists/visitors who participate in the tour (Carter-White 2009). Salazar's fears of commodification are superseded by a need to witness and to have one's narrative heard so that what is highlighted as key in such sites is not their commercial aspect but instead, their educational and restitutive powers.

Knowledge and the Guides

Understanding the academic context in which the guide's knowledge making takes place I think it equally important to establish how it is the guides see themselves and their tours as knowledge makers/knowledge making spaces. Whilst I may have chosen the particular phrasing of knowledge maker, it is not as though the guides do not regard themselves as educators or teachers. In fact quite the opposite and, as I shall explore within this section, this is something I heard time and again from them. Within this section I thus explore the ways in which the guides understand themselves as knowledge makers and how their own histories and positionalities shape this in the eyes of their audience. I then look at how the guides themselves consider the context of the tourscape as influencing the way they make knowledge and how it is received. Finally, I look at how, given my own understanding of knowledge as affective and relational, the guides understand their tourscapes as affective spaces with the capacity to 'change' tourist understandings of the conflict.

There are multiple ways in which the guides articulate themselves as knowledge makers in both traditional and non-traditional senses. In the first, the vast majority of them are well educated, holding bachelor and sometimes master's degrees in subjects they see as relevant to their profession, if not, as directly instructive. Many cite both a love of and professional training in history, political science or sociology. As one guide Ibro, says this is part of the 'perfect combo'

for being a guide (they also cite a love of showmanship and dislike of formal office settings). As another argues 'you have to be intelligent' to be a guide because of the demands of the job and the unexpected nature of many a tourists' questions (Jasna). Furthermore, because, as they argue, Bosnia is 'over-researched' mostly for 'bad things' you have to know what is being said to counter this (Jasna). In their view, being uninformed makes you a poor tour guide. What one guide notes however, despite being assured of their intelligence, is that they value the importance of 'being the first to say I don't know' because there is an important aspect of trust and 'honesty' in tour guiding and making knowledge (Ibro).

Whilst many referenced the importance of this formal education, just as many and invariably the same people also cited its paucity and the importance of learning beyond the classroom. As quite a few guides told me, even BiHians are rarely taught 'our own history' and then 'nothing about the war' (Dino).[10] Instead they spoke of both the importance of their self-education, just 'reading and reading' (Sanela and Ali), and likewise learning from the guiding community itself. As more than one guide told me, 'all my knowledge is gained through working with people' (Amila), or that it was through 'the older guides' (Alma) that they learnt their craft. They understand their peers as knowledge makers not just for the tourists but for themselves, and also the importance of knowledge making as a collaborative community act, not as something done entirely alone.

Their knowledge as guides rests, as many of them argue, not simply on 'knowing the facts' (Haris) or even on the stories they have to tell, but importantly, on their ability to read people. Whilst of course being personable and liked is important in their role as tour guides, creating enjoyable experiences for their guests and the ability to read people was also interpreted by some guides as essential to the knowledge making process. As one guide told me, 'you have to understand a guest'

[10] Of course, part of this is also due to the relative ages of the guides, many of whom were in school as the conflict was happening or adults living through and taking an active part in it, making historicisation all but impossible.

if they are to understand your message, as 'you'll see it all on their face if they're happy or not, if they understand' (Faris). Such readings I would argue, are part of a wider relational and affectual sensitivity, so that this affectual nature of knowledge within the tourscape is understood as inherent not just by me, but also by the guides themselves. This ability to communicate and communicate well is, another guide argues, essential to their role, 'you have to normalise, find a vocabulary communicate' because otherwise, they say, tourists won't 'understand' what they tell them (Nejla). As the guides understand it, knowledge making is not contingent solely upon content but likewise in its delivery so that the guide's conduct forms a key part of the knowledge making process within the tourscape.

This is perhaps why certain guides bristle against the idea that the craft of a good tour is about 'just telling the facts' (Jasna), as anyone might look them up, but which leaves so much left unsaid and unfelt. Instead, what this particular guide says they show their audience is the 'soul' of Sarajevo, captured in the BiHian word *ćejf* (Jasna). Difficult to precisely translate, it is something of the easy-going, open enjoyment of the people of Sarajevo and the city itself. It cannot be fully explained or taught but instead should be felt. In many ways we may conceive of *ćejf* as a kind of affective value or, as per Anderson, 'atmosphere' (Anderson 2009). If you know *ćejf,* the guide says, you know Sarajevo (Jasna). Knowledge and understanding of the city is more than knowing its dates or its landmarks, it is the feeling it gives you, the way it affects you. And key to experiencing that is being there and feeling it for yourself. Travel and tourism to the city is perhaps the only way to open up this feeling (you cannot read or even watch *ćejf* and know it) and explains the tours' utility as a space of knowledge making but likewise the uniqueness of that potential knowledge. The tours are mobile yet situated, oral and visual, so that their audience receives far more knowledge of the space, subject, and place as they feel it with their own bodies and hear and feel emotion from their guide. They are ultimately affective spaces with *ćejf* exemplifying such ideas. Knowledge within the

tours is thus about far more than information, it is about the feelings and experiences that build into something more.

Beyond these ideas of practice and craft the guides also position themselves as knowledge makers based around their own personal histories and experiences. Their identities as BiHians, or in many cases, as those with direct experiences of conflict are essential to this positioning. Tourists, they say, want the 'real' experience and one guide's history as a soldier makes their tours all the 'realer' (Faris). For another it is not simply important that personal experience makes the tour real but rather, that through telling personal stories the tour itself 'really works' (Dino) as a knowledge making space. As many guides explained to me, if they were to 'just tell the facts' it would be no tour at all (Nejla). In fact, many cited their personal connection to the space as core to creating knowledge. Whilst they might be able to go to Spain and tell someone 'all about the history and the culture' it would just be telling 'the facts' and would not be at all like if a Spanish person were to do it (Mak). This is not to say however that all guides must come from BiH to be good guides or knowledge makers. As one guide who is not originally from the region shows, you have to 'earn' the trust of tourists (Ali) that you do have local knowledge and are part of the local community. You cannot just parachute in and tell the story, you need at least to have some kind of 'connection' to the space because if you 'don't enjoy the city how can we make others enjoy it' (Nejla). A sense of local grounding and connection is key to establishing the tourscape as a knowledge making space the majority of guides argue.

It is often not simply a case of saying so, but is also reflected in their practice. Many guides do not do tours, not simply outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also in cities in BiH that are not their own. For some it is a practical point that there is 'too much history' to learn or that it makes them too tired to do the day trips (Dino). Or that in the case of Srebrenica, they find the space itself too emotionally draining. However, for other guides, knowing the importance they place in having a

sense of the place and its 'soul' to making their tours impactful means they do not feel the same connection or potential to build that in tourists (Jasna). Whilst according to the state they have passed the exam to allow them to guide in these spaces, the exam is, this guide claims, not enough. Many therefore work with 'local' guides, in this way creating more meaningful and knowledge filled spaces but also acting to build community, and crucially, as one guide told me, so as not to 'steal' the job of another (Dino). Many guides spoke of the importance of having connections across BiH and of sharing the responsibilities of guiding across the country not simply to make the experience 'best' for the tourist but also, for BiH as a whole.

Moving towards thinking about the content of the tours, the balancing of tourist expectation with desires to make knowledge about the conflict is something the guides are very conscious of. They argue that no one comes on holiday 'to cry' (Faris), so that whilst they wish to educate about the conflict, there are limits to this within the tourscape. Discomfort and upset is part of the knowledge making process, but it cannot become totalising as that, guides argue, turns people off and away from the tours as they lose a sense of interest and investment. There is a balance to be struck between knowledge making and entertainment. Whilst this stress on enjoyment and not telling too dark a story may seem a little galling given the war tours' subject matter, the guides realise this 'enjoyment' as an important aspect of the knowledge making process. Being sad all the time on the tour is not conducive to people wanting to learn more or to understand. As guides stressed, a monotony of sadness also is not reflective of the war time experience where still people laughed and enjoyed themselves in spite of conflict (Faris and Dino). It is not that they shy away from the uncomfortable or upsetting but rather that they understand some stories as inappropriate within the tourscape. As one guide told me, they could tell stories of 'Serbians slitting 50 throats in a row, of them raping women' (Dino) but they never do as it 'isn't nice' for both the tourists and also for them as a guide, and importantly, out of respect for those who experienced the conflict. The tourscape is a curated space of knowledge making where the guides do not simply share everything

they know but think carefully about what stories to tell (or sell) and why; in this way demonstrating the deliberateness of the formation of the tourscape as a space of knowledge making.

Returning back to ideas discussed in the previous section regarding tour and authenticity, this curation of a particular knowledge does not, I argue, hamper the knowledge making potential of the tourscape. To think of the tourscape as the only space in which selective narratives are told would be something of a misconception. It is impossible to tell every story all of the time and this is the reason why certain classes or books or news reports focus on particular stories, events, editing out certain parts to retain a core narrative. It is impossible to tell every or even a fraction of all the stories, if you did that, you could be talking 'about the war for five days without stopping' but still, you might not have told the 'important facts' (Faris). Thus, there is a curatorial necessity to the guide's selectivity that is not unlike the editorial process of a book or a news report. It is not the full story that is important but rather, as war correspondent Jeremy Bowen puts it *the message* one wishes to convey:

> For a journalist who wants to get on the main television news bulletin most nights of the week, that very often meant finding stories that were so compelling that they could not be ignored, about dead people, how they died, and what that did to the people who were left behind. But reporters in wars also have to remember that editors and viewers get exhausted and bored by åthe stories of unrelenting misery that never change and never get better. So you need to find stories that can be uplifting, because in wars you can see the best as well as the worst of the human spirit in the same moment and sometimes even in the same person (Bowen 2006, 150).

News reports can be selective and also evasive of some of the suffering of war and so too, are the guides above in their construction of certain narratives. Much like Bowen, they understand the importance of balance and of curation not as a way of ignoring certain events, but rather to allow for a larger story to be told. Much like news reporting creates knowledge of conflict in a particular way, so too do the narratives of the guides.

In creating these curated spaces of knowledge making the guides also emphasise the power of the physical space of the tourscape as part of the knowledge making process. At one point for example I was speaking with a guide about my discomfort in visiting Srebrenica as part of the tourist experience, expressing reservations about visiting in such a capacity. They understood my trepidation but likewise said that it was still a place they did encourage some of their participants (but not all), to go to. As they said 'Srebrenica can be a place to go if it's somewhere that you learn. It's a powerful space to learn in' (Dino). What such an exchange demonstrated to me was that this guide at least (and they were not alone) did not necessarily draw a line between appropriate and inappropriate sites of visiting, but rather focussed on the nature of the guest who would visit. As they made clear to me, Srebrenica could be a powerful place of learning but it was not one that they expected all to be equally understanding of. Whilst they understood the affective nature of the space, the exchange also demonstrates the importance of not considering all interactions as a priori sites of knowledge making, reflecting a certain contingency between guide and the guest themselves within the knowledge making space.

In highlighting this, the guides likewise understand and articulate the affective nature of the tourscape. In fact, this affective nature of knowledge making within the tours is something many highlighted as key to their value as knowledge making spaces. After all, 'when people start to believe, you see it' (Faris). The guides know that their tours function as transformative spaces of knowledge making that have the power to affect their visitors because they see it every day and work hard to make it happen even with 'the difficult ones' (Jasna). It is not so much that this changing of minds happens accidentally but rather that it is a very deliberate construction. As the guides know, they are 'ambassador[s]' (Dino, Alma and Amila) for Bosnia and Herzegovina and likely 'the only Bosnian a tourist will meet' (Haris), so that in making their tourscapes into deliberate spaces to 'change people's minds' they are working to change their minds often about the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Amila told me,

> 'We are ambassadors'. 'We are the real ambassadors of the country and the city'. 'Jane from America won't meet the Bosnian ambassador, she'll meet [me] whose job it is to make her the star of the show. I might be the only local that they have the opportunity to meet. Imagine having that burden on yourself. What you said is the image they'll have about your city, your country. I have to make it the greatest hour ever. I have to give them the wish to come back again. It's my like '5 minutes of fame' to make them love your country. They might not come back but I have to make them say to their friends 'you have to come here'. It's a responsibility' (Amila).

They know themselves to be knowledge makers with the power to change guests' understandings of conflict and so deliberately construct themselves and their tours as such.

This is why I write about and theorise the tours primarily as spaces of knowledge making as the guides know themselves as knowledge makers. As one guide noted, even if I were to write down everything verbatim, I still would not be able to recreate their knowledge making as 'you won't be able to capture me – I'm what makes my tour special' (Faris). The guides recognise independently how they make a unique knowledge that defies perfect retelling. In doing so they subvert Shilliam's notion of a 'priestly caste' of knowledge makers (Shilliam 2013) who, in interpreting the evidence before them, make it into a better 'knowledge.' As this guide believes, they are the authoritative voice in this scenario, positioning their knowledge making as unique to them and as a result, defying reproducibility. As such, I do not claim to write anything novel or ground-breaking about what happened during the 1992-5 conflict, but instead, simply draw attention to how there are spaces beyond the walls of academia or the media, which defy standardised forms of written knowledge sharing, in which we, should we go to find it ourselves, might learn more. Instead, I write about the process, as I observed it, of knowledge making more generally, leaning on examples of the knowledge the guides share within their tours about the 1992-5 conflict. What I trace is the process of knowledge making, rather than the knowledge itself, as that is not mine to claim.

The body of this thesis explores the various strategies the guides adopt in order to make knowledge of the conflict between themselves and their tour guests. As has been interrogated here, the relationality of knowledge within the tours forms a key aspect of their impact. Thus, the means of forming this relationship must be accounted for and explored in order to understand how knowledge making 'works' within BiHian war tours. Likewise, given the situated nature of tourism and the capacity of the space (alongside the relationships formed between guide and participant) to affect tourists and therein generate moments of knowledge making, this too must be explored in relation to the content of the tours itself. It is for this reason that the next section explores not simply my methodology as an ethnographic practice, but also its role a situated practice through walking to account for this affect and this relationality. I have here grounded knowledge making theoretically but within my methodology chapter I bring this theory into the physical space, exploring how affect and knowledge are not just learnt or heard, but rather felt within the tourscape.

Methodology

Introduction

With my study's focus on tourism and the importance this places on visiting and being situated within a particular space, I naturally chose to adopt an 'ethnographically inspired' research process given its affinity to wider touristic practices. During the course of my stay, I spoke with 20+ tour guides from across Bosnia and Herzegovina, aged between 19 and somewhere in their mid 60s, with a fairly even gender balance, although overall I did speak with more women than men. As is evidenced by their ages, not all the guides with whom I spoke had firsthand experience of the conflict, however all had family experiences or connections and had grown up in the environment of post-conflict BiH (bar one foreign-born tour guide). Interview and tour times ranged dramatically depending on their availability and our own personal connection so that some conversations were little more than an hour, whilst others took place over days. By adopting the approach to research that I did, I gave myself (and my participants) the ability to discuss things at their own pace and discover not so much what I wanted to know, but rather what they wanted to tell me.

Whilst given the relatively short duration of my stay – roughly 8 weeks – and its multi-sited nature – Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Mostar – I feel it would be disingenuous to call my research stay an ethnography, particularly given Vrasti's fears regarding the over-instrumentalisation of ethnography by International Relations (2008). I nonetheless maintained an ethnographically inspired approach across my research practice. In this way I undertake a project that makes concessions similar to those made by Carabelli and Deiana (2019), that appreciates the difficulties of 'understanding' spaces during relatively short research stays but nonetheless proceeds with an assumption that there is always space to learn within that time.

If I thus begin from the premise that what I do is not fully ethnography, this does not mean I have abandoned or eschewed its practices within my own research. In fact, I have attempted to be as ethnographic as possible, following what Schatz (among others) labels an 'ethnographic *sensibility*' wherein I might, as they put it, transcend 'artificial distinctions between fieldwork and deskwork, between research site and site of analysis.' Where one 'avoids reducing ethnography to the *process* of on-site data collection. *Sensibility* implies epistemological commitments that are about more than particular methods' (Schatz 2009, 6). In formulating how it is that I have done this, I split this chapter into three different segments, considering how ethnography interacts and inspires each of them within the confines of my project. The first section addresses issues regarding ethnography and access to the field, looking at how I prepared myself for research, with special focus placed on research ethics. The second considers ethnography as a process, looking more as to what I did in the field and the hows and whys of this, presenting my practice of walking interviews alongside, and in comparison to, more traditional interviewing and participant observation (or lack thereof). It centres my actions around the idea of 'walking ethnography' a specific practice within ethnographic studies that seeks to account for the embodied experience of place and people's occupation of it, centring this experience, much like tourism does. Finally, I consider ethnography as a form of processing, thinking through speaking and writing as method in and of themselves and how one might convey ethnographic experiences, particularly such bodily ones, to those who have not experienced them.

Ethnography as Access

Throughout the entirety of my research process and even in the infancy of planning my PhD project I understood ethnography to be very much at the heart of this. This was not only as a result of my previous experience using ethnographic practice within my MA but also due to the way in which, if done well, ethnographies can provide sensitive and innovative portrayals of particular experiences, societies or individuals, which shift the boundaries of research away from

researcher/researched and in to a more collaborative process (Stacey 1988). From both a personal and ethical standpoint ethnography seemed to me a far more appropriate form of research, allowing me to foreground the guides as knowledge makers and collaborators within my own study. As a project devoted to the study of knowledge making and in particular, a knowledge not necessarily previously situated within traditional practices or canons of knowledge making, ethnography thus provides an ideal mode through which to undertake my study.

As knowledge making is such an amorphous process, the scope and scale of ethnographic fieldwork likewise aided me to being open to what Fujii labels 'accidental ethnography,' where one encounters unexpected research moments (2015). Given that I was following my hunch that war tourism was a space of contestational knowledge about the 1992-5 conflict, ethnography allowed for ideas to percolate and form and for me being attuned to finding knowledge and knowledge makers not within a strict confine, but within my broader environment and experience. Any interaction I had might have the potential to inspire me. I could be walking along the street, sat in a café, deep in an interview, or paddling in a lake and all the time, my research would be with me so that I did not stop and start (although certainly and necessarily there were times when I stepped away) but was continuously enquiring and discovering. Ethnography gave me the freedom to do this and consider my situatedness and embeddedness part and parcel of the research process, being attuned to the arrival of particular affective resonances as and when they occurred.

This experiential nature of ethnography also forms something of a harmony between my subject and practice. As a project focussing on tourism, which is itself, deeply concerned with the power of the affective experiential, ethnography, with its shared focus on the experiential allows for an easy merging of research subject and method of inquiry. As Noy argues for backpackers, experiencing a place can 'really change' the attitudes and perspectives of the tourist as they come to believe they understand lives previously alien to them (2004). Of course, a similar case is made

for the logic of ethnography. As a result, ethnography presents itself as both a logical and perhaps more naturalistic way of studying the knowledge making I wished to observe. This comparison is however, something of a loaded linkage when one considers both practises in wider capitalistic and global networks (as also discussed within the previous theory chapter). The belief that short visits might allow one to 'discover' the reality of a place is often connected by researchers in both tourism (Haldrup 2011; Maoz 2005) and ethnographic methods as a kind of colonial conceit (Carabelli and Deiana 2019). One flies in, takes possession of a certain 'knowledge' of a place and flies out again able to pick up and go without perhaps truly understanding what the lived experience meant (Carabelli and Deiana 2019, 100). In fact BiHian writers such as Kapetanović are explicit in their connection of tourists and researchers, linking them as two sides of the same coin that extracts from BiH, be it research material or pleasure, whilst potentially doing more harm than good (2022, 48).

In preparing for my entry to the field I was therefore mindful of such warnings and spent valuable time considering the project's ethical implications prior to visiting. Much like Shepherd, I do not believe all tourism or all research to be inherently bad, as some may frame it, but instead, as deeply contingent and often impossible to place within such binaries as *good* or *bad* (Shepherd 2002). As one of the guides pointed out to me, Bosnia is often 'over-researched' and 'mostly for the bad things' (Jasna) and so I hope to negotiate this by focussing not so much on a more voyeuristic display of the guides/BiHian's experiences of conflict but instead on the work it is that the guides do. I never sought out the most agonising stories or looked for the goriest details of conflict but instead opted to focus on their practices of storytelling and knowledge making rather than a sensationalising of the tours' content. I am conscious that such a separation may be a conceit, but I am hopeful that upon reading, the guides with whom I spoke and worked will not view this project as one of the 'bad' or 'harmful' ones, although I can of course, never fully guarantee this.

With regards to the formalisation of my ethical practice, although not a university wide regulation when I went on fieldwork, I nonetheless completed Central European University's 'Ethical Research Checklist' (found attached in Annex 1) and signed this off with my supervisor. Regarding procedure, this was as far as I could go as, at the time, CEU lacked sufficient capacity to offer a full ethical review board to PhD students.[11] Due to the nature of ethics by formulaic review,[12] I did not and do not now feel that this institutional process provided me with sufficient ethical training, the sum total of which consisted of half of one lecture plus an additional voluntary workshop. It is therefore, far more pertinent to look at the work and research I did independently of this process to better understand the ethical implications and mitigations I undertook in preparation and within the field. I simply make note here that all institutional ethical guidelines were followed, no matter how minimal.

Instead, the majority of my ethics training came from what I read and discussions I had with others, particularly within Elissa Helms' *Ethnographic Insights* class. It was in these, more chosen spaces that I was given the time to consider the ethics and implications of my research and the ethics of ethnography. I find that the position of the guides as people who choose, for a fee, to speak about their own experiences of conflict somewhat complicates ideas of where to situate them when considering the ethics of working with them as a group. On the one hand, many of them are people who have experienced conflict and trauma and so one must be sensitive to literatures regarding re-traumatisation,[13] which caution against the supposed 'necessity' of interviewing victims of conflict or trauma without giving anything back or providing any care or

[11] I am encouraged to see that this is changing within the university, but I still think it a valid critique to make regarding the vulnerabilities I believe it created both for me as a researcher and certainly for research participants of studies across the university. An ethics review is sadly no guarantee of good practice, but it should still be part of all studies where scholars seek to gain knowledge from others.

[12] For more on this see: Fujii 2012; Daigle 2015; Kapetanović 2022.

[13] Some organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina for example, have taken the decision to no longer allow researchers to interview certain people as they find the questions to be repetitive and unnecessary (see Helms' discussions with Jasna Zječević in *Innocence and Victimhood* (Helms 2013, 25–28) and so instead provide recorded interviews which researchers may access instead. See for example Srebrenica memorial and wider discussions in Lai 2022.

healing as a result (Wood 2006; Carabelli and Deiana 2019; Dauphinee 2007). However, one must consider that the guides choose to speak about conflict and do so with many people day after day and so one cannot ignore their free will and right to expression in all of this.

As previously covered in both my introduction and theory section regarding the impacts of commodification in tourism there is also a complication of how to understand the agency and subjecthood of the guides when placed in a wider global context where jobs are scarce and one's personal stories of conflict becomes the unique selling point that allows one to have a successful career in a largely stagnated economy. However what cannot be ignored is that these people are professionals, who have chosen this career for themselves and should be respected, rather than infantilised for it. As Lai argues, we must not assume all BiHians to be *a priori* victims (Lai 2022, 177), but rather be sensitive to their own self-understandings and, as so many of the guides told me, they are anything but victims (Sanela, Ibro). I treat the circumstances of my engagement with guides in BiH much as Krystalli does with their interlocutors in Colombia, as a 'complex dynamic' that neither 'fetishizes' testimony as a way to find release not dismiss this storytelling as retraumatising (2024a, 74). Rather I understand that in each interaction, these meanings and feelings are shaped anew and it is my duty as researcher to be attuned to this.

I have therefore opted to frame and interact with the guides primarily as professionals who spoke about conflict, taking their decision to operate within the tourism industry as one made of their own volition and therefore to be respected as such rather than seen as some kind of forced choice. Every guide is an expert in this own craft and, more formally, holds at bare minimum a Bachelor's degree and often multiple others so this claim to knowledge and their position as a knowledge maker is both formal and informal. From an ethical standpoint this was also a great advantage as the majority of people I spoke with were well versed in research practice and ethics, understanding

what I would be doing with the information I gathered and what the potential outcomes and (lack of) benefits were.

Likewise, when asking questions of them, I did not ask about their own experience of conflict but rather, how they dealt with conflict in their professional capacities. I did so not simply out of a sense of purpose, as I had come to speak with them in their capacity as knowledge making professionals but likewise, as Kapetanović rightly argues, because researchers must exercise caution and sensitivity. 'Researchers should remain aware that they are not mental health professionals and that their contact with interview partners, as it deals with psychological trauma, may open more issues than one interview can resolve' (Kapetanović 2022, 56). Concurrently however, I was also sensitive to Lai's message about involuntarily ascribing all those who have experienced conflict as 'vulnerable' and therein denying them a certain agency to define their own status (2022, 177). In keeping the division between work and the personal I allowed for more focus upon the expert nature of their identities and to frame them as such. This divide between work and self was not always a perfect distinction to maintain as the relationships I developed in some cases were far more friendly than purely professional, but I was always clear never to pry into personal experiences of conflict out of a sense of voyeurism (although as Dauphinee notes, this is something of an impossibility when conducting field research, particularly in conflict and post-conflict spaces (Dauphinee 2007, 22)). I tried always to keep our conversations within the realms of their profession whilst still making space for more personal, relational interactions about their wider lives and experiences, as I had come to know many of them not just as tour guides but as whole people (Carabelli and Deiana 2019).

Very practically I was also able to pay guides for their time at their standard rates, making our interactions feel less extractive and also, on their side, more quotidian as they conducted a kind of 'personalised' tour with me as they might with other visitors, rather than a free research interview.

Whilst some may highlight a fear that in certain contexts, payment can lead to incentivisation (Bøås 2022), I do not believe the guides to be operating in highly dangerous environments, as was the case with Bøås' interlocutors, and instead think paying them is something of a moral obligation given the time and effort they spent talking to me (Warnock, Taylor, and Horton 2022). I continue to bring family and friends back, directing them to certain tours, guides and spaces and maintain a connection with many guides so that I hope they too may benefit in some way from our connection as I have undoubtedly benefited from knowing and learning from them.

Finally, as I believe it important to create some kind of accountability within the research process, I left every guide with a copy of my supervisor's email and institutional profile, as well as that of another supervisory panel member who speaks fluent BCS. I instructed my interlocutors that if they did not feel comfortable with my research or actions but likewise did not want to say this to me, they could contact these people. Nobody did, however I think it important that our interlocutors are able to follow the chain and understand I was not just a sole researcher but liable and accountable to far larger bodies that they too have the right and ability to interact with.

This does not mean however, that everyone I interacted with was necessarily, happy to see me. There is, as Lai writes, something of a 'research fatigue' in Bosnia and Herzegovina so that many know the rules of the game (only the researcher really benefits) and yet there remains an expectation that BiHians will give up their time to serve this higher purpose of 'research' (2022). One guide was even prepared to use this against me. We had without doubt one of the most interesting conversations I had in BiH, talking in a café for well over three hours but right from the start they were clear to tell me I could not 'use a single word' of it. BiHians by in large are well aware of how little personal gain arises from being a research subject. No matter how one frames this relationship as co-constitutive or mutual learning, there is a deep level of comprehension that research primarily benefits the researcher, rather than those being researched. In the actions of the

person above I think we see a move to resist or fight back against this, but it also points to a real understanding of the nature of research, particularly in such an over-researched state like BiH and with regards to the topic of conflict/post-conflict experiences. Research can be, as de Guevara and Kurowska show (2020), both a site of success and of failure and by in large, I would say the guides were deeply conscious of this.

Ethnography as Process

My presence in the field came within an unusual time period so that the work I had hoped to perform when first conceiving of the project was not quite what happened by the time I arrived. Just as I was readying myself to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina, having started to plan routes, make contacts and get organised, the corona virus shut down all of Europe. Unclear as to how long this would last, I reached out to guides and guiding companies via email, hopeful that I might at least be able to speak with them over Zoom or Skype but not a single person replied. Instead, as with the rest of the world, I found myself waiting to see when things would open up, hopeful for sooner rather than later.

Whilst the vast majority of us were impacted in some way or another and my research project is surely not the only one to be delayed, I think it important for me to speak about it specifically as it had a dramatic impact on the ethnography I performed. I ended up going the summer after, as the world began to open up, and travel was once more possible in mainland Europe. However, numbers were still very much down and the main tourist hotspots were all but deserted in comparison to 'normal' tourist numbers. In part it was a huge boon to me as for many guides I was their first (re)introduction to tour guiding after the best part of two years off; I was lucky to get their full attention and also, a large amount of enthusiasm that they might return to their work. Whilst this was wonderful as I could take time with them without feeling like I was diverting them from more lucrative interactions, it was also a little limiting. I had intended for the majority of my

research to be based around participant observation, looking at how guides educated others, the strategies they adopted for different guests and their levels of knowledge and openness to knowledge. Instead, I was more often than not the only participant, so my approach shifted, focusing on the processes of knowledge making I observed and which were used upon me. There were only a few other tours I shared with another person so that through dearth of participants, I have had to become my own interlocutor.

Whilst I still attempted for the guides to give me tours as they would any other visitor, ignoring my status as a researcher, the one-on-one nature of these interactions destined this approach to failure. The vast majority of guides tailor their tours to suit the group/individual in front of them, conversing and interacting so that if I had played at what I guessed an average tourist might know, the whole thing would have become artificial and unreal, perhaps even farcical. Instead, most of the tours I went on became far more of a conversation, something between interview and tour, the nature of which I will discuss later in the 'walking method' section. I also conducted a number of more static interviews in coffee shops, shisha bars and holiday camps so that alongside walking interviews, I also interrogate *traditional* interviewing as a format. What I did not do, despite my hopes to, was conduct many participant observations. There were only three tours I went on accompanied by others (and of those three, two only had one additional person) and so, much as I would have liked to have seen the processes of knowledge making in action across groups, I can only really speak about my own experiences with the guides. Almost everything had to be one-on-one (bar some small group interviews) and so my chosen methods reflect that (forced) choice.

Interviewing

Somewhat predictably, given my choice to adopt an ethnographically inspired methodology, much of the time I spent with the guides was in the form of interviews. Most of them were conducted in semi-public spaces so I did not record them, both out of practicality given the surrounding noise

levels, but also comfort as most of my interlocutors said they did not want to be recorded. Our conversations took the form of a semi-structured interview wherein I came with a number of guiding questions and themes, but largely let the conversation take its course, picking up on things I found interesting but also having the guides ask questions of me and my research. As Daigle argues,

> There is a power relationship inherent in interviewing, and particularly in interviewing vulnerable individuals, with one party demanding and the other providing information. This almost unavoidably extractive and "colonial" relationship behooves the ethnographer to be mindful about taking a reflective and self-critical approach to interviewing.[43] It is not enough, as Daphne Patai argues, to assume that a feminist or antiracist standpoint will act as a safeguard against exploiting others: it is a "messy business" from beginning to end.[44] To mitigate these problems as much as possible, I worked with my informants to make our experiences reciprocal and conversational. Many interviewees asked me questions, which I always answered, and these often turned out to be as interesting as the questions I asked them (Daigle 2015, 20–21).

It was a logic I followed within the field and which also generated the same kind of interest for me. Although not every guide was so interested in this sense of collaboration (some just wanted me to ask my questions and be done), it was in these more reciprocal conversations that I often found the ability to dig deeper and discover things I had not considered or even thought of. By giving space for both of us to think through and respond my interviews oftentimes took unexpected and sometimes perhaps unnecessary turns but this also created a sense of ease and more balance between us. This meant that many of my interviews stretched to roughly two hours in length, reflecting the detail and diversity of subjects we covered. Semi-structured interviewing provided me with a richness and depth, whilst still maintaining something of a structure/purpose that unstructured interviews may not always afford, so that they were one of the best ways for me to conduct my research project.

Walking as Method

A number of my interviews were not so much traditional interview but, as a result of the nature of the tourscape, became what are often referred to as 'walking interviews' (Evans and Jones 2011). As Evans and Jones argue, this does not mean simply that the format of the interview is transferred across into a more mobile context, but instead due to the unique nature of walking and the way it spatially embeds both interlocutor and researcher, certain information is generated that would not be possible solely within the sedentary interview (2011, 850). Whilst this may seem somewhat obvious, considering that spatially motivated narratives are something of the bread and butter of tour guides in particular, it nonetheless bares teasing out to theorise what exactly it is that walking does and what specifically this helped generate with relation to my project. As a result, it is pertinent to explore not just the walking interview but likewise walking methods more broadly as both came to shape my project and understanding of the research.

In this section I thus explore the walking method more broadly to understand what it is that my spatially embeddedness leant to the research as a whole, as I believe this to be an important component of the experience. That I was there, in these spaces, walking them, shaped how I came to understand both my own research and the narratives of the guides themselves, rooting them in an embodied sense of knowing, allowing space for the affectual. In doing so I also come to explore the walking interview more specifically, thinking more deeply about the intersection between myself and my interlocutors within space and what this did to shape the research, understanding how this information interacted with my more stationary interviews and the different strengths and weaknesses of both. I do not wish to give an illusion that in walking I simply toured with the guides and that in sitting, we discussed more of their business and craft as no such binary emerged. Instead through understanding more of the walking interview as a process I hope to elucidate why these interviews revealed more than simply ideas about the place in which we found ourselves. This was of course, an important aspect but often walking allowed for a transcending of the

traditional interview space and its confines to produce something far more fluid and it is this fluidity and richness that I will explore.

Beyond this synthesis between touristic practice and walking as method, as Pink argues, walking methods are intrinsic to much ethnographic practice, part of the living and doing together, what they label the 'emplacement,' (2008, 175) that makes up the sum total of ethnographic research. It is part and parcel of ethnography but likewise, as Ingold and Lee argue, may sometimes go unnoticed if not specifically considered as generative. As they argue, for one to practice a walking method, one does not just walk but instead 'walks *with'* one's interlocutor (Ingold and Lee 2006, 67), creating a relationship between researcher and interlocutor. In coming to create a shared occupation of space that even if, due to the very nature of interpersonal relationships and the individuality of the self, one is not able to fully understand or grasp the interlocutor's understanding of, one comes to share in. As the guides themselves are aware they are what 'make their tour special' (Faris) so whilst I can never truly capture this sense of self, in walking *with* I may come at least to share in something of the environment and its essence if not its totality.

As Ingold and Lee argue, if one is to practise a walking method one must focus

> on the *relationship* between walking, embodiment and sociability [that] is crucial. That is, we do not assume *a priori* that walking affords an experience of embodiment or that social life hovers above the road we tread in our material life. Rather, walking affords an experience of embodiment to the extent that it is grounded in an inherently sociable engagement between self and environment (Ingold and Lee 2006, 68).

In my case this sociability of walking was intimately connected to my experience of the research space and what it was that I learnt from the guides. Thus, being attuned to this experiential nature becomes a core part of my actual research. I learnt what I learnt through walking around particular places with the guides, having them share their stories in situ. Therefore, if I am to comprehend their narratives and the knowledge they make, I must also comprehend the space in which that

knowledge was made. Each of these elements, our presence, our embodiment, and how we interacted becomes a key node in the making of knowledge within the tourscape so that the walking method becomes an essential tool in understanding this. I likewise understand the experiential as deeply interconnected with the affectual so that in attuning to experience, I also attuned to when spaces of affect were created or entered into.

Walking thus illuminates and prompts for this relationship between researcher and interlocutor as one enters into the 'rhythms' of the other person (Edensor 2010; Pink 2008) and demonstrates how walking, and in particular the walking interview goes beyond more static relations between interlocutor and participant. It is all very well, Edensor argues, to speak with others and gain a sense of their life in this way, but through the rhythms and embodiment of walking, one may gain an understanding that is otherwise not possible (2010, 69–70). One can speak about a certain event or place and learn something of it, but in being present and doing that walk with an interlocutor, a new dimension is opened up. This new dimension incorporates and comes to understand feeling, emotion and the very affective atmosphere around a place (both physically and cognitively), that otherwise would not be open or available to the researcher, much as Haldrup likewise argues is the case for tourists (2011). To give a sense of this in the BiHian context, one might listen to stories about running from snipers in Sarajevo but how this is understood when you run, as the guide's mother ran, between two buildings, is an entirely different form of understanding.

As Edensor argues, due to its rhythms, walking produces a distinctive relationship between those walking and the place they inhabit. Thus, in theorising this walking and making it an explicit part of the methodology I am better able to consider what this texture does as a form of knowledge making. In the case of the tourist, Edensor states, these rhythms of visiting enmesh themselves within a wider cityscape so that even unintentionally or unwittingly the tourist collides with the everyday and mundane rhythms of the city as they make their way through it (2010, 69–70). Guides

act as shepherds and creators of these rhythms so that the very experience of tourism and the knowledge produced within the tourscape in many ways, can only be experienced through undertaking them, that is, through walking these same routes. Walking thus becomes a key methodological and academic experience within my research project as 'the walking body weaves a path that is contingent, and accordingly produces contingent notions of place as well as being always partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place' (Edensor 2010, 70). My own physical presence shapes what I learn and likewise allows me the potential to understand what it is tourists might learn, not simply in narrative but also in affective embodiment. The walking method thus becomes core to my understanding of the very nature of tour guiding.

An important caveat however, as to where my own research experience may be thought of as diverging from the touristic, even though I was participating in tours with tour guides, comes in where I stood in relation to the guide within our tours. Whilst I had hoped to be part of a larger participant observation, following along with the group behind, instead I was alone. What this meant is that I mostly walked alongside the guide, keeping step and following a more implicit path and rhythm. Whilst of course it was still the guide who led me to places following their paths, there was less of the shepherding that I think is apparent within larger tour groups. As such, I could share much more in the gaze and space as my body followed the rhythm of the guide (Ingold and Lee 2006, 79). Whilst the narrative shared with me did not necessarily differ, the way I experienced it was, I suspect, more intimate and more immediate than the standard tourist experience and so the walking method, with its focus on relationality and embodiment likewise becomes key to drawing this out. I believe with our closeness there was more space for the generation of affect as our connection was more pronounced. This is not to say that these affectual moments are not possible in larger groups, but simply that I suspect our proximity and the intimate nature of the tours I went on as being more affectively generative. As I will explore in later chapters, my occupation of space in relation to the guides formed a key part of how I understood some of their

narratives so that my physical closeness (compared to a normal tourist group) also comes into play as part of the knowledge making experience.

This being said, and as indicated by Edensor's presentation of tour guides as 'shepherds,' I believe walking does allow one's interlocutors more input and perhaps even control within the research process. It forms something of 'a breakdown in the researcher/participant binary, as the participants become experts on their own lived experiences of the space, and can take the researcher by the hand and lead them on' (Moles 2008, 37). In walking a route chosen by one's interlocutors, you as a researcher are better able to access what your interlocutor feels to be important, rather than forcing moments of significance into research. The information you gather comes to you more organically so that we might be better able to think of our participants as knowledge makers and creators, rather than responding solely to our prods and probes for information. As Moles argues, 'once this is acknowledged, and even celebrated, the data produced can be understood as a political action; a way of knowing and of producing knowledge that is actively engaged with' (2008, 37). In practicing a walking methodology, I could better align my research practices with my epistemological approach, seeing the guides not as research subjects but instead, as creators of knowledge and experts in their own experiences. The walking method allows them to express and control for this, even if it must be acknowledged, at my own auspices, and better places them as shepherds of knowledge within the research space.

In feeling these feelings, both physical and cognitive I must also, through walking, address my own presence within the research. When I walked, *I walked*, no one else was doing this (bar my interlocutor beside me) so that in adopting this methodology I can understand the role not just of my mind as an interpreter of narrative, but also my body as a feeler and embodier of research and the affective processes it underwent. This acknowledgement of my own presence is of twofold importance within my project. Firstly of course, as due to my own ontological position I consider

it impossible to separate myself from the research (in mind or body). Just like the guide who speaks about how they are 'what makes my tours special' (Faris), I too am what makes my research *this* research. I bring my own perspectives and constrictions to the piece that uniquely shape what I have produced. I have felt it in my own body and so I form something of both researcher and participant within the research. Secondly, only I can know how I felt in those moments or spaces and so I am my best witness within the research process. I write myself because I am the only one I know, and in using a walking method I may express this knowing, not just in my mind, but in my everything, in my 'feet, ears and skin' (Ingold and Lee 2006, 72).

Walking is also, finally, a wonderful way to relate to other people, to learn from them in a way that is more relaxed, more natural and often more welcome, working around some (but certainly not all) of the discomfort of more traditional research methods. One is no longer sat face to face with one side asking questions and the other responding to them in a much more forced interaction. Instead one wanders (or to use Moles' phrase 'bimbles' (2008, 34)) together in a much more social and seemingly relaxed environment and this was certainly something I found to be the case within my own research stay. Whilst my more static interviews were certainly generative, it was in walking with others, seeing their side of the city and feeling the space together that I felt most immersed, most in touch with them and quite frankly, most interested. In feeling it all and feeling together I came away with something far richer and so I found the walking method key to my research experience.

All in all, I participated in twenty walking tours/interviews, of which eight were accompanied with sit down interviews and nine traditional interviews. The vast majority of my walking interviews took place in Sarajevo and Mostar, and whilst many of my discussions in Srebrenica encompassed some kind of walking, this was far more piecemeal. Instead in Srebrenica I spent most of my time with my interlocutors in cafes, at the Memorial or in cars between places, so that my research

looked much more like 'going along' associated with ethnography than perhaps the walking method entails.

Ethnography as Processing

In coming to write up what I learnt when visiting and walking with the guides I, much like Youatt often found myself 'following more than a few tendrils and paths of walking thought, with each step connected to previous steps, sensing and making sense of surroundings along the way' (2022, 3–4). It was therefore, less careful and regimented sorting of the data that led me to my insights, but instead something far closer to Narayan's (among other ethnographers) ideas of repeating and reshaping, seeking out what, more than anything, compelled me (Narayan 2012).

In writing about how to write an ethnography, Narayan asks (and answers) their readers:

> What makes a good story? Obviously, this is a matter of taste (both personal and cultural), but I usually think in terms of intriguing characters and shifts in awareness or power relations. Contradictions and conflicts push change, from within or without. A story doesn't need to be told chronologically, or in complete detail; what's omitted, or withheld for a time, may be as significant as what's included. You can select key scenes and play with their order: written time can move backward or sideways or advance in leaps (Narayan 2012, 13).

And it is largely through this frame of mind that I approached my own work. I looked for the stories that interested me, that left me unsure of what to make of them, sometimes even the ones that unsettled me. As Sara Ahmed would put it, I looked for '*what sticks*' so that to name this process as a process might seem somewhat doubtful (2004, 44). Beyond the act of reading and re-reading my transcripts there was rarely anything systematic about how I worked with the material I gathered. Instead, my 'process,' if I am to call it that, was something far more amorphous, relying on speaking with others about what I had seen and had heard, letting repetition and the passage of time allow things to crystallise. More than anything I believe that in speaking about working and walking with the guides my ideas came to form.

Much as Strausz discusses the benefits of writing and re-writing as a means to understand one's ideas (2018), in my case I found myself deeply reliant on talking. It was in speaking about my research with others that I often came to discern what was interesting or important as I reached for the stories that might captivate my audience's attention. As Ingold argues 'telling a story is not like weaving a tapestry to cover *up* the world, it is rather a way of guiding the attention of listeners or readers *into* it'. I worked out how to bring others into my research through telling stories, often finding that in the telling, experiences that had previously gone unnoticed in me came to life. Much as through writing stories of their lives Shambhawi Tripathi (2023) and Roxani Krystalli (2024b) (to name but two) found more political inspiration and clarity, so too did I in speaking about my experiences with other. For example, and as you will see in the chapter *Knowledge that Disrupts* I only became conscious of the ways in which gendered power structures impacted my research as a result of an off-hand comment in my panel that sparked their attention. In deciding about what I might share I thus practiced a form of active listening, attuned to both myself and those with whom I spoke to better understand what resonated.

The challenge therefore arose as to how to convert these spoken moments into writing. Narrative form certainly loomed forever on the precipice of my thoughts regarding how it was that I would write about knowledge making in BiH, particularly given how the knowledge came to me in the form of speaking and story-telling. However, it was not necessarily a form I thought worked for the way I thought about my project. Certainly, I find narrative writing such as Dauphinee's deeply compelling (2013) and as Dauphinee has shown with regards to speaking about post-conflict experiences of BiHians, it can be a powerful tool to better allow emotion, impression and story-telling in to academic craft.[14] But at the same time, and as with any other form, narrative has its

[14] Although not all agree – see Kušić and their discussion of how the novel renders Balkan subjecthood largely invisible (2021).

limitations and for me, I do not think the narrative form would allow me to fully express the process and processing of my fieldwork in a way that felt true to my experience. I find narrative to blur and intertwine the research, the researcher and the researched (both people and spaces) in a way that often leaves one feeling less temporally grounded as one is suspended within the narrative and its directions, or to return to Youatt's words 'tendrils' (2022), that rely far more on the shaping of the writer than the utterances of one's interlocutors.

Instead, I settled upon using vignettes to express my experiences, finding their utility multi-fold. By vignettes I mean that I convey my lived experience of the tours through extended anecdotes that I then explore, opening up my own thoughts only after, rather than within these experiences. Each of my empirical chapters is constructed under the same format wherein I begin with establishing what I understand to be the kind of knowledge under discussion in each chapter and then immediately launch into one of these vignettes. Whilst varying in length each is roughly a page to a page and a half and is an uninterrupted account of what I experienced within the tour or interview with the guide. It is only once done that I enter into their analysis bringing together theorists, other guides, and my own voice to embed an understanding of these stories within a wider process of knowledge making.

In this way my process follows much the same structure as McCluskey in their exploration of far-right sentiment in Swedish villages (McCluskey 2023). Although they label their vignettes as 'scenes', they likewise demonstrate the value of allowing the 'scene' itself to play out and for analysis to follow, so that one's reader may understand at once the setting and then, subsequently, the analytical understanding of it. As they argue, citing Rampton et al. 'there is instead always 'open movement between theoretical, descriptive and interventionist work' (Rampton el al., 2015, 21 in McCluskey 2023, 39) and the positioning of the vignette alongside analysis draws this connectivity to light. Analysis and vignette work together, rather than interrupting each other. Or as Højer and

Bandak put it, the combination of the two points to 'a 'lateral' rethinking of the relation between the particular and the general, ethnographic material and theoretical reflection' (Højer and Bandak 2015, 7) . Each of my chapters thus consist of 2-3 vignettes exploring (but not limited to) strategies of knowledge making relating to the theme of the chapter. I have found it to be the most compelling, but also the most coherent way of being able to share both my own experiences of the research process but likewise, my understandings and interpretations of them.

As Demetriou argues, 'the vignette, in ethnography hovers between authenticity and performance: its "descriptive" style speaks to the authenticity of field research, yet this is in tension with the literary presentation that makes a text compelling' (2023, 210). In such a statement they capture both the power and the danger of the vignette. In one form at least it allows for a rich and detailed presentation of an experience but at the same time, this must be understood as a creation of the author, rather than the interlocutor about whom the vignette is written. They later go on to explore, through the medium of film vignette, how these vignettes allow us to 'wonder' 'about the visibility of the camera to the subjects, the relationships indexed by rare glances toward the lens, the proximity of observer and observed' (Demetriou 2023, 214). I find such a wording to perfectly capture the art of how it is that I have crafted these vignettes. They are an artificial recreation of the experiences between myself and the guides that I hope brings a rendering of depth to my research process but at the same time, is reliant upon a dual suspension of disbelief and deep engagement by the reader, that they understand themselves part of, yet likewise abstracted from the scene. The vignette is my own creation but in many ways, it is the closest I can get myself and likewise my reader to my research experience whilst no longer being there.

In this sense, there is also a messiness and a discomfort to be found within the vignettes as they may only go so far in expressing what I at one point felt but also what, at this later writing stage, I wish to express. As the Yugoslav Women+ Collective explore in writing using vignettes, they do

so as 'these "mixed forms" speak to both our bodies and our minds, and allow us to ground ourselves in our experiences' (Stavrevska et al. 2023, 5) and in this way we might understand the vignette as better expressing the embodied nature of my research and material. Within this embodiment, and contained within my analysis also comes something of the 'discomfort' and vulnerability that I felt in researching and writing (Stavrevska et al. 2023, 5), written into the moment as I attempt to capture not just the important *facts* of my interactions but rather, the totality of the experience and what it meant to be there in those moments. It is in forms like the vignette, that as Jansen also highlights, that such expression might be more possible (Jansen 2007), therein supporting my choice of methodology.

These vignettes, whilst capturing fairly small moments of interaction are interspersed and intersected by my analysis, using the words of other guides and theorists to embed them within a discourse of knowledge making around conflict. In analysing the vignettes, I work towards building a greater picture of how I observed knowledge as being made within the spaces of war tours, looking at both what is said and how. What I show is something of the complexity of these processes of knowledge making between guide and tourist, how ephemeral and unreliable they are, for there are no guarantees of creating knowledge between people by simply placing them together in the same space (hooks 1989, 32; Freire 2000). As already discussed within my theory chapter, any knowing is contingent on the listener and their interpretations of it, so that it is near impossible to truly guarantee or understand exactly how another individual receives and interprets the knowledge shared with them. What the vignettes seek to capture is something of this uncertainty but also likewise, the moments of connection, to build an understanding of where and how knowledge making may potentially occur.

As Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, and Redhead argue, 'local people's experiences of conflict must be included in conflict analysis because… these experiences enrich our understanding of conflict

and improve peacebuilding and aid work' (2019, 211). Whilst the trio speak to more practical concerns than those which my thesis might address, I nonetheless believe their message an important one. Crucially they argue for the **substantive** inclusion of local experiences in conflict analysis, not their 'mere recognition' (Julian, Bliesemann De Guevara, and Redhead 2019, 211) as otherwise one merely perpetuates the 'privilege of outsiders' (Julian, Bliesemann De Guevara, and Redhead 2019, 213) regarding who might speak with authority about conflict. In thinking about what this may look like within my own project, I consider the vignettes, with their more detailed inclusion of the guides' words and experience, to go at least some way towards a more substantive practice of working with local experiences of conflict. In not reducing their narratives down to *key quotes* where the stories behind them are deconstructed and decontextualised I hope to foreground their position as knowledge makers by showing the richness and depth of the knowledge they make within their tours. I am however deeply aware, that the research and my authorship does still place me within the position of power regarding the knowledge displayed within this thesis, but I hope that the richness the vignettes provide serve to show the guides as knowledge makers and me as a learner within our context in BiH.

The vignettes therefore reconstruct my experience of fieldwork where I adopted an ethnographically inspired approach, going to the field not looking for a particular answer, but instead, waiting to see what arose as guided by my interlocutors, the holders of knowledge within the space. I understood only over time what seemed salient or seemed to connect across the narratives. I think this very practice already speaks to an idea of the tours as spaces of knowledge making because I myself learnt and attained knowledge from them. I do not believe myself unique or the only one capable of doing so within these spaces and so the very nature of my fieldwork and the writing of this manuscript denotes a certain confirmation of my central thesis, that the tours are spaces of knowledge making, with the complexity of my experiences providing just one example of how this knowledge making may occur. With this being said however, the vignette is

concurrently almost entirely unable to capture the embodied nature of my experience. I cannot make you as the reader feel as I felt in either my mind or my body in those moments. I might describe them but all I might ask of the reader is that they might empathise with me and my position in the moment of description and likewise in the writing. I found the vignette to come the closest to being able to do this, but I likewise acknowledge its limitations or perhaps even, the impossibility, of its ability to convey the embodied and affectual knowledge I gained within the course of the tours.

Nevertheless, it is for the above reasons that I have decided to present my empirical chapters as a series of vignettes followed by analysis and connection with the wider arguments of this thesis. Because this is exactly how the thesis as a whole has revealed itself. I begin from the narratives of the guides, the experts on their situation, subject, and practice, listening and considering, slotting what I heard today with discussions from yesterday, two days ago, last week, forming an analytic and connected picture in my mind long before I had approached the business of writing up. My ideas crystalised slowly through listening, thinking, and speaking about my experience, directly inspired and connected to the narratives, thinking inductively. Therefore, the vignettes must come first, and the analysis after as the analysis rests upon the narratives of the guides for direction, much as my fieldwork and project as a whole have unfurled. The vignettes are, in Højer and Bandak's understand, an *exemplification* which 'circumvents the distinction between the horizontal and the vertical by claiming that effective examples (i.e. exemplars) are ones that manage to theorize or assemble what lies beyond them by elucidating connections, evoking trains of thought, and persuading audiences' (Højer and Bandak 2015, 7). The vignettes are one guide's story, rather than an amalgam of many and so while not representative of the many different ways in which guides do go about making knowledge, they are still sufficiently applicable and nuanced to speak to the wider concept, because this is how I found them revealing themselves to me.

Framings of the Conflict, BiH and the Balkans

Introduction

Framings of the violent events in BiH between 1992-5 are diffuse and diverse, connected to a particular understanding of the conflict, its aggressors, ethos and origins. Often it is characterised as an 'ethnic conflict' (Cermak 2016; Gutman 1993) and for some, such tension is rooted in ancient history (Kaplan 1994), for others this 'ethnicised' discourse and operation of war can be viewed as an insincere tactic, used by elites to promote disorder (Lovrenović 2016; Hansen 2006, 112). For others still, ethnicisation does little to understand the nature of the conflict (Choi and Deiana 2017), ignoring its lived realities (Dauphinee 2010; Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007b; Baker 2015) and the ever-shifting nature of alliances and the interference of outside powers, peoples and nations within the region at that time (Sheftel 2011). Yet further, there are readings of the conflict as a civil war, an international failing or an attempted genocide (Lovrenović 2016; Hansen 2006). Some of the guides even say it should not be referred to as a conflict or a war at all, but rather as an 'aggression' to avoid ideas of equal parties or joint willingness to fight (Haris, Jasna). All of which is to say, that understandings of the 1992-5 conflict are not fixed or concrete and thus I will use the following chapter to explore a little of the popular framings of the conflict and likewise the region, as suggested to me by the guides and my own research.

What can be said without so much contestation is that a mass conflict took place on the soil of Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992-5 (and in some places on into 1996) resulting in the displacement of roughly 1.2 million people, some internally, some within the region and others further abroad (International Crisis Group 1997). In the period, it is estimated that 250,000 people died or went missing, with many left unaccounted for today (Tabeau and Bijak 2005). Across the conflict multiple acts of evil, well beyond what is supposedly *acceptable* within the theatre of war were committed with some, such as the massacre of men and boys at Srebrenica, now

internationally certified as an act of genocide. The city of Sarajevo experienced a siege of 1425 days, resulting in the deaths of roughly 10,000 (Tabeau, Zoltkowski, and Bijak 2002) and the destruction of $18.5 billion dollars worth of property (Sito-Sucic 2006), including museums, galleries and BiH's national library, destroying many of the oldest (and irreplaceable) texts and artefacts relating to the region (Riedlmayer 1995). I present these facts simply to clarify both what I define as the conflict period when referring to it across the piece but likewise, the scale of events and how it is I see them.

As I will explore across the thesis however, facts sometimes do not tell the whole of the story and thus, given that I will speak about how guides use their tours to contest certain framings of the conflict and the country, I must establish these framings before going on to deconstruct them. Whilst initially I had thought to focus solely upon framings of the conflict, these framings are often tied up in discussions of both the country and also the region more broadly so that the framings themselves have a certain amount of both temporal and spatial flexibility. Because my focus rests on the work of the guides and the work they claim to be doing against certain narratives it is from their words that this chapter begins. Whilst there has been much foundational work done on crystallising popular narratives around the BiHian conflict, most notably within the discipline of IR, Lene Hansen's *Security as Practice*, I will use this work in support of the words of the guides, rather than having it be my primary focus as it is the guide's role as knowledge makers that I wish to foreground.

This chapter reflects what I observed to be the most (un)popular international framings of the conflict according to the guides, supplemented by the work of other scholars and my own research on the popular culture surrounding both the country and the conflict. More often than not, there was something of a convergence between the words of the guides and the scholars who have also chosen to write about narratives of the Balkans and in particular the 1992-5 conflict so much of

what I write within this chapter will be familiar to those who already have some knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The chapter is thus intended to clarify what understandings of the 1992-5 conflict guides feel to be present within their audience and to avoid the sin of assuming that those understandings would be familiar to all reading this thesis.

In particular, this chapter presents the *negative* framings guides shared with me as my focus in the body of the thesis rests upon the contestation of these. As Todorova argues, 'it is not an overstatement that the popular image of the Balkans has been inscribed in a similarly popular, and often vulgar, interpretation of several families of ideas, revolving around the notions of race, progress, evolution, culture and civilization' (2009, 132), so that it has, regrettably, not been difficult to compile such a chapter. As many of the guides told me, they feel a deep regret that BiH is so well known for war and suffering (Haris, Dino, Amila, Sanela), that tourists come asking 'where is the trouble' (Jasna). However, at the same time, they are not surprised given the nature of the media produced about BiH that is shared outside of the country (Sanela, Jasna, Amila, Dino). Thus, these negative framings are somewhat ingrained into tourist expectations so that they must be explored and understood if we are likewise to understand the motivations and processes of the guide's contestation of them.

Much as I explored within my methodology chapter regarding how it was that I made sense of my research to determine what to focus upon and write about in the body of my thesis, the selection of these narratives follows a similarly inductive reasoning. I cannot claim to have systematically gone through and coded each and every one of my interviews but rather, through reading and re-reading them time and again, alongside wider scholarship, certain framings crystallised as more popular and more prolific than others. Thus, in this chapter I will explore four key framings: The Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina as violent; Bosnia and Herzegovina as (still) dangerous;

Bosnia and Herzegovina as ethnically divided and finally; Bosnia and Herzegovina as an Muslim country.

The Balkans as Violent

The idea of the Balkans and of Bosnia and Herzegovina as violent was one of the most popular (and here I mean in terms of frequency of occurrence) framings I heard guides refer to regarding tourist expectations prior to taking a tour. As numerous guides conceded, what other frame of reference might a tourist have if all they know of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina is 'about the war' (Sanela, Faris, Dino, Jasna, Amila, Ali).[15] Perhaps, a few guides noted, tourists might also know that it was here that Gavrilo Princip shot Archduke Franz Ferdinand (Dino, Amila) but even then, there remains a connection of the country with violence. War they say 'is pretty much it' (Amila) when it comes to the sum total of knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina that tourists bring with them.

As the guides point out, this obsession/focus on war and the violence of Bosnia and Herzegovina is often reinforced by popular culture on the region so that at first glance, one is given no other options but to see the Balkan region as violent because there are no other stories out there. When one looks at movies, TV shows or recent literature produced about Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost all of them are centred upon the recent conflict be it *The Cellist of Sarajevo* (perhaps the most popular book about BiH in the past 15 years), *The Land of Blood and Honey,* directed by Angelina Jolie and telling a fictionalised tale of a woman in a 'rape camp' falling in love with her captor, or *Quo Vadis Aida* the BAFTA winning and Oscar nominated film about a woman working as a

[15] I have to confess that this was also a framing I myself fell into. On my very first tour as part of my fieldwork Haris my guide, in response to my question about what tourists knew about BiH before they arrived, turned to me and asked what I knew. A little flustered at having the spotlight turned on me, I said 'about the war' and then embarrassed to confirm both their and my suspicions, went on to say something about the Haggadah and the Bogomili but it was already clear that conflict was also my frame of reference in this context.

translator during the Srebrenica genocide. As Baker observes, 'films, musicians and books that fitted existing Western expectations of the Balkans were also more likely to sell well abroad, and this economic incentive contributed to what Dina Iordanova termed 'consenting self-exoticism' within the region [399: 56]' (2015, 125), so that such projects create and sustain violent connectivities of the Balkans by feeding into demand and thus fuelling expectation.

As one guide Edin, speaking about *Quo Vadis Aida* said to me, films like this frustrate them because 'the way the story is told it's like the Bosniaks slaughtered the Serbs the day before so it's natural they would want revenge. But they're getting revenge for something 700 years ago'. It frustrates them they say because they 'know that people in the West that watch those movies, they will trust it. Because you trust movies in the West. You'll think it's true like when you watch Schindler's List and believe it all' (Edin). The narrative of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a site of violence is something of a fixed marker in popular culture so that anything that does not confirm such assumptions is seen as wholly outside the norm. It is a practice, another guide argues, that is likewise affirmed by the media as well, with journalists coming to 'follow the usual story' (Tarik) so that rarely is new knowledge produced about the region but instead, the same 'stereotypes' (Sanela) and 'pre-judgements' (Ali) are repeated over and over again.

Whilst *Quo Vadis Aida* was released in this millennium, as Hansen has explored, such framings of the Balkans as a (perpetually) violent space are in reality, deep set, often tracing their origins back to late 19th and early 20th Century travelogues. These often drew connections between the Balkan's supposed lack of 'civilisation' and its warlike tendencies (2006, 97), rooting deep what Todorova (among others) classifies as a 'balkanising' narrative that has become a 'a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian' (2009, 3). The classic source upon which so many draw, most notably Robert Kaplan in their much decried *Balkan Ghosts*, is that of Rebecca West's *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon* and the fairly infamous line, 'violence was, indeed, all I knew of the

Balkans: all I knew of the South Slavs' (West 1944, 23). Whilst the line is uttered as part of a wider reflection on violence in continental Europe, so much of West's portrayal of the Balkans draws upon romantic imagery of a noble savage that even her pushes towards nuance are often lost within the totality. So deep set is the connection that whilst the Romantics may have fallen to history, as Mischa Glenny, writing during the conflict shows, their imagery had not. Glenny instead speaks of regions where guns were 'a central part of the people's character' (1992, 7). Violence, and a deep commitment to violence within the region is indeed something Glenny (and many other journalists and authors) labour so that it is unsurprising that such violence stereotypes are the ones tourists arrive in BiH with.

It is therefore not the case that guides 'blame' tourists for coming with these stereotypes, in fact they see it as a challenge to 'break them' (Sanela) but it does they say beg the question, 'why is it tourists only know about the war?' (Sanela). Or that as another argued, why is it that they don't feel they've 'done' Bosnia and Herzegovina if they haven't been on a war tour (Jasna). Violence is the defining motif of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the point that it has become synonymous with a visit to the country itself. To miss out on war it is implied, would be to miss out on the attractions Bosnia and Herzegovina has to offer, so that conflict is firmly cemented in the touristic consciousness.

What guides did remark upon however was that although the framing of the Balkans as violent was somewhat omnipresent in tourist expectations, it was not now perhaps *as* omnipresent as it was previously (Nejla, Amila). Back in the past Nejla told me, some of their visitors were still 'frightened' 'they'd hold hands on the street and look round with distrust' because they said 'there wasn't so much information out there even though the war had been over for a decade'. With the rise of travel blogging and vlogging highlighting Bosnia and Herzegovina as a *hidden gem* in the region (Duranspahic 2015), the passage of time, and great efforts taken by the guides themselves

to reframe tourism away from its focus on conflict, the narrative is perhaps becoming less prevalent but is still, almost all guides stressed to me, very much present.

The Balkans and BiH as (still) unsafe

This continuing presence of violent framings of Bosnia and Herzegovina is intimately connected to the idea of the space as (still) unsafe, another recurring theme guides cited in tourist expectations of BiH. As one guide told me, they have had a guest tell them they 'didn't tell their family until after they'd come because the family would be worrying and constantly calling and checking they're okay' (Dino). It is 'frustrating' Dino says that this narrative still exists but as they made pains to confirm to me it 'definitely' does. The tourists see 'peaceful, beautiful Sarajevo' but they still ask, 'Where is the trouble?' (Jasna). As Jasna says 'it's like they believe the war is still happening' in spite of the evidence of their own eyes. Much as violence is something of a fixed reference when tourists think of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this also goes hand in hand with a sense that the country as a whole is still, in some ways, unsafe. So 'often people come expecting a war zone and they're always surprised to find out [there] isn't one' (Amila).

It is a lack of safety that many tourists, guides say, take quite personally, assuming they themselves are in danger in some way. As previously discussed, some tourists would 'hold hands in the street' and 'look around with distrust' because they assumed that this supposed danger would prove a threat to them (Nejla). Whereas in other cases they might ask 'when does the curfew start' (the irony being that during my visit to BiH, due to covid restrictions, there was technically a (unenforced) curfew in Sarajevo) (Amila, Dino). A narrative still very much exists in the minds of tourists that Bosnia and Herzegovina is dangerous and that likewise, this danger may directly impact them. As one guide somewhat cynically noted to me sometimes 'visiting a shitty place' (Amila) (and by this they imply this to be what some tourists think of BiH) makes them feel better

about themselves. It's not, they say, that they 'brag' about it, but it does give them a sense of a new perspective and so these projections of insecurity also, in this guide's mind, make them feel better about their own security at home.

It is a danger only enforced by messaging about the supposed fragility of the political system. Of course, some (if not perhaps most) tourists have, according to the guides, very little idea about BiH's unique political make up, 'it's complicated' (Nejla, Alma, Haris) so it requires a large amount of explanation and *translation* to make it comprehensible. Even when this is done, not one of the guides I spoke with expressed a satisfaction with the Dayton imposed system in the present day. Yes, it was good 'because it stopped the war, but now maybe we need to move on and find something different' (Mate). Combined with fear mongering that 'the Dayton agreement is so fragile that the war will start again should the international troops ever leave' (Glenny 2000, 652), this distrust of the political system and the tenuousness of its hold does not always seem to inspire confidence in visitors that Bosnia and Herzegovina truly is a safe place for them to visit.[16] That its governance and security systems are, seemingly, a Western imposition that BiH is presented as incapable of moving beyond only contributes to a feeling of insecurity as the barbaric balkanising discourse plays out even without any obvious or apparent violence.

This perceived danger thus shapes not simply their actions, but their visitor experience and engagement with the space. One guide even credits the growth of their company to this perceived fear, saying that they worked as a kind of facilitator to get people from Sarajevo to places like Trebević mountain and Srebrenica. People, they said, were 'scared' as they couldn't read the Cyrillic and so would just 'turn around' as they 'didn't understand that part of the country' (Faris). It was a fear that not only Faris observed. Other guides, particularly those in Srebrenica, also cited that

[16] Even if it has been the best part of a quarter of a century since Glenny first wrote this piece.

there was a sense of fear and trepidation to visit there in particular. In part they say, because visitors don't 'trust the infrastructure' (Tarik) but also as this guide and another noted because they claim 'Sarajevo guides spread rumours that it's not safe in Srebrenica' and that it's 'dangerous to go there' (Edin). Both claimed that this was so tourists would return to Sarajevo to spend their money there but nonetheless, the framing remains: that Srebrenica in particular is unsafe and that tourists require the protection of the guide (often a native Bosnian) even at the Memorial in Potočari. That this 'lie' is said by another Bosnian only makes it worse, Edin argues, because they are far more likely to be believed. Whilst there is a more cynical point contained within the idea that the fearmongering tactic as a way of diverting money back to Sarajevo, ultimately the narrative of danger is confirmed in the eyes of tourists.

Bosnia and Herzegovina as Ethnically Divided

This perceived lack of safety, guides claim, is often assumed by tourists as a result of a further 'stereotype' that Bosnia and Herzegovina *is* ethnically divided (Amila). It is something of an obsession for some tourists, particularly guides say, in Mostar where people come 'to see what a divided city really looks like' (Aida). Tourists still assume the country to be ethnically divided even when they are aware there is no longer conflict so that they want to 'know' what this 'divided life' looks like now (Aida). They go to the river, falsely assuming that this was the dividing line of the city and also the frontline of the conflict, assuming it has always been this way. Rather than, as the guide points out, that it was only after the beginning of the 'second war' (from 1993-4 when the HVO besieged Mostar) that Mostar started to be 'ethnically cleansed' with people 'swapping over' (Aida). It is a position Baker likewise supports, arguing that 'explaining the violence as an inevitable result of 'ethnic incompatibility' was insufficient [215: 88-93; 257: 159]' as such a practice serves only to 'obscure intra-ethnic rivalries' and 'ambiguities' and to 'mask another important dimension: socio-economic competition and struggle' (Baker 2015, 66). As Bougarel, Helms and

Duijzings also argue, a 'flaw that appears in many analyses is the reduction of Bosnian realities to their ethnic dimensions' (Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings 2007a, 13) and in the case of Mostar this ethnicised lens does not simply lead to a misunderstanding of its citizens but even the very geography of the city itself.

It is not just in Mostar however that people want to know what 'divided' life looks like. After all, according to Kaplan, division and hatred was almost all pervading in Bosnia where 'the villages all around were full of savage hatreds, leavened by poverty and alcoholism' (Kaplan 1994, 22). A guide in Srebrenica told me that when people come they almost seem 'too interested' in how people live, like 'they're spies' who want to know 'everything' about 'life, children, politics and how people treat each other' (Tarik). In short and as in Mostar, they also want to see the supposed division for themselves and find out how this manifests. Often guides say tourists will ask about this in a roundabout way, asking about their ethnicity to perhaps clarify for themselves where the guides sit in their understandings of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They will then ask something like whether 'the Serbs were the bad guys' to try, this guide claims, to draw you in to making a point about ethnic division (Haris). Haris hates these questions because they feel, 'it's a catch 22' and they can never have the right answer. It is they claim, like tourists want you to blame someone. As with the Mostar guide above, tourists come looking for the division.

As a result, a large number of the guides immediately stress to their participants that they or their family members are from 'mixed marriages' (Dino, Damir, Faris, Jasna), or that they are 'Yugoslavs' (Ibro, Damir), the 'other' category in the BiHian census (Dino) to try and disrupt this understanding. Dino makes a point that oftentimes tourists seem 'confused' that you might just be 'BiHian' or 'Sarajevan' or, as for Adem, 'Herzegovinian', rather than identifying with a particular ethnicity. Some also make further points about how BiHians don't just 'tolerate' each other but that they 'really live together' as often they say, people don't understand how 'Bosnia is both

secular and religious' (Amila). A 'history' of religious co-existence takes many tourists by surprise they say, just as the guides above note a similar surprise that one might choose a geographic identity marker, rather than an ethnic or a religious one.

Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Muslim Country

This assumption of ethnic and religious division is often explicitly connected by guides to an assumption that because many BiHians are Muslim, that they are radical or extreme believers. With one guide claiming that roughly 70% of the country is officially registered as being Muslim,[17] guides say that many tourists come with a 'stereotype' that because it is a Muslim country it will be 'kind of restrictive' (Dino). Such statements only seem to reinforce Todorova's point when speaking about the Balkans more widely that 'it has been chiefly the Ottoman elements or the ones perceived as such that have mostly invoked the current [negative] stereotypes' (2009, 12). More than once, I was told by guides that because of the number of Muslims many guests assumed that Bosnia and Herzegovina would be like 'Saudi' (Dino) or 'Saudi Arabia' (Amila) and that as a result 'you need to dress modestly and be respectful' (Faris).

In an extreme case, one guide even says they have had people assume 'there'll be sharia law' here (rather than the Roman law that BiH practices) and that guests were 'surprised we're not cutting people's heads off and stoning people to death' (Amila). Whilst the comment was made somewhat sarcastically there was nevertheless a truth behind it that this is what many visitors assume when they are told that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a Muslim country. As one guide notes, at the height of ISIS's popularity they were semi-regularly asked if they were an 'ISIS supporter' based solely upon their name (Ibro).[18] Connecting back to earlier framings we thus see, much as Baker discusses

[17] Official figures put the Muslim population at roughly 50% so Dino's number is more likely to represent the makeup of the Federation part of BiH only. His factual vagueness however does not detract from the wider point he wishes to make about stereotypes held by guests as Islam is still statistically the majority religion in the country.
[18] Ibro in BiH is a nickname/shortening of Ibrahim

(2018, 136), how intertwined BiH's Islamic makeup is intertwined with perceptions of the space as violent and unsafe, as perhaps exemplified best by the story from the previous framing about the Italian woman encouraging her child to hide her cross (Nejla).

Whilst some account for this extremity of viewpoint as a kind of 'CNN vs Fox News divide' (Ali and Sanela) they nonetheless say that both sides are in some ways surprised by the 'lack of muslim-ness' within the country as people as 'where are the Muslims?' (Amila). There is a visual expectation that many women will be wearing hijabs or burkhas and whilst there are some, it is certainly not to the same levels as, for example, Saudi Arabia. 'Sarajevo and Bosnia aren't what people imagine' (Faris) when they think of a Muslim majority country. Instead there is a 'lightness' (Dino) to the Islam that sometimes surprises people and is likewise welcomed by others (one guide speaks of a Turkish family who visited multiple times) because it feels 'welcoming' and 'like home' (Nejla).In some cases, guides will simply attribute the stereotype to a more general assumption about Islam in 'the West' (Nejla) and the Islamophobia they see both now and also in the 90s (Edin). Much as there is an assumption of violence and lack of safety, so too is there an assumption that this is down to ethnicity and a particular religious ethnicity.

Similarly, an American with whom I took a tour, speaking about a classmate, said they were told 'it was the Muslims trying to destroy Serbia' that sparked the entire conflict. Whilst this tourist clarified they knew it was 'propaganda, genocide 101' it nonetheless bears repeating to understand the potential sources of information some visitors may have before arriving. It may not just be people within one's sphere that hold this influence, one guide attributes the (false) idea that BiHian Islam is repressive as coming from 'blogs from people who haven't even been here' (Dino). They immediately contest the point because as you can see (and here they gestured to the street at large) 'in Sarajevo you can wear what you want' 'short skirts and high heels, whatever you like' (Dino) so to them it is obvious that the supposed blog writer has never been because the evidence of their

own eyes would suggest that dressing modestly is not mandatory within the country. Even then, some guides acknowledge that some guests may not realise that they are speaking or seeing someone Muslim because to 'a typical British girl' 'I could be mistaken for anyone' (Amila) so that sometimes guides make a clear point about their heritage if solely to show the diversity of Islam and its practice that may not be immediately apparent to tourists.

Whilst negative assumptions about the practice of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina are relatively easily dismissed the fact remains that this is a fairly prolific framing of the country that comes with significant assumptions and stereotypes about what it will be. Stereotypes that are primarily connected with repressiveness, violence and in some cases an assumption of non-Europeanness based solely upon religious belief.

Conclusion

Whilst only the briefest of overviews of the stickiest of the stereotypes tourists may hold before visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina, this chapter was intended to make clear the most popular narratives guides seek to contest and likewise how and where these arise. Whilst I chose to focus on the words of the guides because they are the main drivers of knowledge within this thesis and likewise within the tourist experience, in placing them into conversation with other experts on the region, I have demonstrated the parallels between their analysis and that of other scholars, cementing their idea as knowledge makers. Having now established these framings we may now progress to exploring how it is the guides contest them, entering into the analytical section of my thesis.

Knowledge that Destroys, Subverts and Disrupts

Introduction

Knowledge is often thought of as creative, generative, a way to discover and know more. However, as Freire (2000, 156) and hooks (1989, 9, 32) both show us, knowledge is not necessarily always a creative act. It can be used to destroy a status quo of understanding, to subvert and disrupt it. It can cause discomfort. Knowledge making can be used to destroy other knowledges, to break down a perceived misunderstanding or miscommunication. To attack a worldview that does not 'fit' with our own. It can be, hooks argues a 'transformation' that requires a 'remaking and reconstituting' (hooks 1989, 32) to better reflect the world around itself. This is the knowledge about BiH and about the conflict that I wish to begin with.

It is not that the tours always begin with destruction, subversion and disruption. The vast majority in fact, begin by 'creating' knowledge about BiH and the conflict, assuming that before this tour, most visitors will have only a limited knowledge of BiH or the 1992-5 conflict. Of course, this is not true for every guest, but it is better for the guide to assume no knowledge and work to establish some basic facts and understandings to get everyone, as it were, up to speed. Only then may they go more into the richness, into what interests and intrigues visitors rather than sticking solely to the facts and figures. Perhaps these facts are what some people want to hear but as Jasna says, most people don't come to them to learn 'the facts' they could read in a book or some UN report. This fact building, whilst creating knowledge about BiH and the conflict, serves more as a foundation from which to begin to create a richer and more interesting knowledge, to build from, disrupt and generate, to show, as the same guide says, 'the soul' of the place (Jasna).

Why then, if the tours begin by creating knowledge, would this thesis begin not with creation, but instead, destruction? The answer is based not on any logic or standard but quite simply because I

do not wish to end on destruction. It is not my wish to carry on a tired stereotype of the Balkans as a place of destruction and ruin (even if in the case of this chapter, the destruction I will speak about is often the disruption of these very stereotypes). Particularly as in the previous chapter I sought to construct (and very often simultaneously destruct) these stereotypes, it also feels fitting to continue this work. Finally, it would go against the wishes of so many of my interlocutors who say that through their tours they want to show more of what Bosnia and Herzegovina has to offer as, 'it's important that people remember and share that war really is over, that it is safe. There's so much to love about Bosnia,' (Dino) so that I may end, as they do, on a knowledge that creates new narratives about BiH. Therefore, I think it easiest to begin with destruction, subversion and disruption and the discomfort this creates. The destruction of pre-existing ideas and mores about the conflict, about Bosnia and Herzegovina, about the Balkans and even, a little bit, about the world and how we order it.

For this is what I mean when I say knowledge that destroys, subverts and disrupts. I do not mean that it does so physically, but that knowledge making can be used often to 'unmake' or contest certain narratives, to subvert and undermine them, sometimes even, to obliterate them. Sometimes the guides do work to destroy an existing narrative or knowledge but at other times they work to subvert these self-same established knowledges or even disrupt without fully destroying them. Of course, each vignette may do more than one thing at once, but these are the ways in which I approach this particular form of contestational knowledge making. Knowledge making is not always about adding and making, it can be about making anew from the remnants of an old, breaking things down to show their flaws. In doing so, the knowledge making is not always an easy or comfortable process, particularly when the given subject is that of conflict and war, and this is what this chapter will demonstrate. The discomfort that knowledge making around conflict may generate, within the tours, within the audience and even, within the guides themselves. This discomfort is a form of contestation, further broken down into destruction, subversion and

disruption to show the myriad of forms a contestational knowledge making may take. It is not one thing but a series of interlocking processes and means. We see how making knowledge about the conflict is not as simple as saying what happened to whom and by whom but is something far richer and more complex.

A Night on the Town

Let me tell you a story about my cousin, he was a young man at the time of the Sarajevo siege, about to celebrate his 21st birthday. We all kept trying to party during the siege, we kept partying in spite of it all. At the time it was difficult to get alcohol, because it was difficult to get water, or send messages, or have power as these were the things the Serbs cut off first – all to try to shut us off from the outside world. But you know, we always looked our best. The journalists, they'd always ask how our women managed to look so beautiful and so clean without running water but the girls they did it. During the siege the women in Sarajevo, they always looked good.

But no water and no food also meant no beer. You could get some disgusting beer made from rice at the brewery, one of the few fresh water sources left in the city because as you see (gestures behind to the Miljacka) you wouldn't really want to drink this.[19] *Or… you could get things 'from the Smurfs' – that was our nickname for the UN Blue Helmets - you'd know the name from No-Mans Land.*[20]

Well, the Smurfs had access to a lot of things we didn't have, alcohol, chocolate, cigarettes (the good kind) and they were willing to trade. So, my cousin, it's his 21st Birthday, he takes a painting and goes to swap it for 3 bottles of cognac. Now this painting, or others like it have sold for between 20 to 60 thousand euro! But what did he get for

[19] The Miljacka flows through the centre of Sarajevo but is hardly what one could consider a mighty torrent, in summer there is perhaps two foot of water flowing through it after rain and it is not especially clear. There was additionally a secondary assumption held that because the upstream area was held by the Serbs, that the river had been poisoned however even without this potential, the Miljacka is not a place one would gravitate to as a drinking source.

[20] A popular film about the conflict directed by Danis Tanović about 3 soldiers trapped in a bunker. It is often read as being representative both of the futility of the conflict and likewise the apathy of the international community in relation to it. The guide assumed my knowledge of it as a researcher on BiH but he notes that he also introduces it to his audiences as a good film to watch if they want to know more.

it? 3 bottles of cognac. No one knows where it is now… [the guide's attitude here is pretty disparaging and there is obviously resentment towards the attitude of the peacekeepers].

Well my cousin and his friends, they drank that cognac and they had a good time, a great time in fact. They drank and partied like any guy would on his 21st birthday but the thing was, we were in a siege and so there was a curfew. My cousin he didn't care. But he got arrested and taken to the police station to sleep it off in the cells. He might have been a Serb spy, sneaking around after dark. You were only allowed out after curfew with a special permit which my cousin didn't have.

But his family, they had no idea where he was. This was a siege, people were dying and my cousin was nowhere to be found. His parents ran to his girlfriend's house (they couldn't call – there were no phones) and they waited until morning for news. After a reprimand they let him out the next day – he wasn't a spy – just a kid looking to have a good time.

I asked my cousin if he ever regretted it, all that money for 3 bottles of cognac. But my cousin said no, that they had a good time and that 'he got to forget about the war for one night.' – Ibro

What such a story demonstrates is the way in which guides may disrupt an all-consuming idea of what it means to live through war and to a certain degree, what it may mean to be a 'victim' of that war. They do so by subverting ideas of what it means to be a victim of conflict but also likewise, a peacekeeper, disrupting established narratives with additional, somewhat unexpected, texture. The framing '*victim* of conflict' is unfamiliar to few, there are books, articles and chapters written on the idea and it is a fairly standard way of referring to many who have experienced conflict, not simply civilian, but likewise, combatant (under certain circumstances).[21] It is not always fully

[21] See for example, Goran Bašić's 'Constructing "Ideal Victim" Stories of Bosnian War Survivors' (2015) Helm's 'Innocence and Victimhood' (2013), Krystalli's "Narrating Victimhood" (R. C. Krystalli 2021) or Jacoby's 'A Theory of Victimhood' (2015).

'definable.' However, in writing the words of Stojan Sokolović, Elisabeth Dauphinee captures something of what it means to be a *victim* in the eyes of an international audience. As they put it,

> you can identify victims – static, immobile entities – but you have not asked yourself about the violence the committer of violence has done to himself, and you have not bothered to theorize that … If you had heard our wailing – killer and killed alike – you would say something other than what you are saying at your seminars and conferences. I don't know what it would be, but I know that it would not be the same. (2007, 12-3)

As Sokolović notes and as Dauphinee later expands upon (60–67), victim becomes little more than a category of classification, unknowable and unknown beyond an ability to tabulate, define and move on, entirely abstracted from the lived realities of the person to whom it is attached. Victim becomes imposed by the outside, a way to classify and define peoples of a post-conflict space.

Instead, the vignette above gives flesh, depth and life to the people of BiH, subverting if not entirely destroying the *classic* victim with someone altogether more human. War of course is still a huge part of this story, which likely would not have been possible or necessary without conflict. But the core and focus of it is not conflict, rather it is about life as happening around, within and beyond conflict. Life, the guide shows, does not stop or pause in war time to make people into the glassy-eyed, shuffling figure of news reports and movies. The expected 'victim' of conflict that Zječević, speaking in Helms, maligns as erasure of reality (Helms 2013, 25). It is a phenomena Baudrillard, speaking of the events of 9/11, labels 'war porn,' arguing that in producing such images of suffering, mass media landscapes condition observers into expecting certain standards of horror and trauma so that this horror becomes 'a non-event of an obscene banality, the degradation, atrocious but banal, not only of the victims' (2006, 86). An image of conflict predominates that often erases individuality in favour of some kind of mass-produced symbolic suffering to generate emotion and compassion without deep understanding. Instead, people like this guide's cousin continue to go on living as they do anywhere in the world, defying and

disrupting expectations of erasure of the self in war time. They do not simply exist but instead live and experience life. The cousin of this story is reckless perhaps, but also deeply recognisable. He is a 21 year old man looking to have a good time on his birthday, war be damned. He defies any sense of being able to ascribe victim as a status by going out and living, fleshing out an identity so that there is not space for the victim to subsume him. In this way a new knowledge of the people of BiH may be formed as conflict is transformed from the abstract to the personal and the conceptual victim is subverted for someone more real and human.

This conscious act, of telling personal stories is something many guides highlight as key to 'help[ing] people believe' (Alma). Some guides fear that tourists 'don't really care' (Adem) about the suffering and trauma of war, particular in abstract and more factual terms, but, as this anecdote shows, telling personal stories can be a powerful way of overcoming this apathy by introducing the potential of connection. It introduces a different way of 'knowing' conflict, not through numbers or statistics and equally, not even through knowing 'conflict' at all. Instead, one gets to know, at second hand, an individual who has known conflict and their response (or lack thereof) to it. This sharing of personal stories is regarded among many of the guides as a best practice of sorts, reflecting a belief in the power and importance of the personal within telling histories of the conflict. And it is a belief they are not alone in holding, with Cameron highlighting the powerful and 'irreducibly particular' nature of storytelling as a device of knowledge making (2012, 574), not just in conflict. However as scholars such as Selimović argue, storytelling is also an important aspect of conflict knowledge making with the power to build connections and make said knowledge relatable (2019). Personal storytelling is knowledge making, about how it felt and was to live through conflict as opposed to the more clinical information sharing of facts and figures, subverting understandings of what it exactly 'knowledge' of conflict might look like as knowledge itself is transformed into something more creative and relational. As one guide says, they've 'always hated guides who just tell facts' and instead prefer to 'tell real stories' (Nejla), denoting an idea that

these are more powerful and more meaningful interactions. Storytelling is a key tool in the tour guide arsenal to promote understanding, rather than the pure relaying of fact, which, whilst helpful, may not tell as much of the 'story' as they might hope. In telling personal stories guides create a far more relational knowledge between themselves and their participants as they share together in the story, connecting with one another and the narrative's lived realities in way that fact sharing often does not allow for.

It is important to note here too, the extent to which the guide's audience - primarily backpackers in their late teens and early twenties - may empathise with this story. The actions described, of going out and getting recklessly drunk as a way to feel like you are living, whilst not a universal, are certainly very familiar to this particular audience. There is a similarity of experience that helps to solidify those present during the Sarajevo siege for the audience, making them relatable and 'known' through a sense of shared experience and feeling. It allows the audience to step away from the idea of abstract victims of war and instead picture someone not necessarily unlike themselves or their friends, a relationality is constructed. In doing so, the guides create the potential for a transformation from sympathy towards empathy with this young man. An empathy that is not based on his experience of conflict, but instead on his experience of life more broadly. In such a way he ceases to be abstract or unknowable, therein disrupting these expectations of those who experience conflict and instead opening a door towards a more recognisable individual experiencing (relatively) *normal* feelings and experiences during conflict. The guide makes knowledge that disrupts ideas of an abstract victim by instead creating a shared experience, one that dismantles and blurs the abstract nature of suffering in conflict and makes it far more solid, far more knowable if not ever truly or fully known.

The guide's story also goes some way to subvert the idea of the benevolent nature of the international community to create a knowledge that is more subversive, more oblique. While as

Hansen tracks, at the time of the conflict, the international community may have presented itself as powerless to help in the face of the all-consuming and totalising nature of the conflict (2006, 37), this narrative instead presents the idea of the international community - as characterised by UN Peacekeepers - as active participants in the vignette. Not as combatants or defenders but instead as extractors, happy to pick and choose when to engage and 'assist,' but at a marked cost to the people they are supposedly there to help. They reflect the false "generosity" Freire speaks of regarding oppressors in the international order (2000, 44). The vignette takes critique of the UN one step further from another guide who claims the UN were just 'here to count how many people died and how many bombs' (Faris) and instead, undermines their credibility as humanitarians. They participate actively in the roaring trade of the black-market war time economy that whilst sometimes, as Andreas argues, may actually be a source of support and assistance (2008, 46), in cases such as this, instead casts a dim view on the UN itself and is far more reflective of the extractive and exploitative relationship some peacekeepers had towards the siege-time population (2008, 48).

The vignette therefore challenges knowledge as to the very make up of international order, who is there to help and who, as a victim of conflict, may be in need of that help. It is a knowledge of discomfort, disrupting expectations to create something altogether darker. In much the same way as Sarajevo's ICAR monument obliquely mocks the *humanitarianism* of the international community during the conflict (Sheftel 2011), so too does this narrative. As discussed within Sheftel's work but also by multiple guides during their tours (Ibro, Dino), the food aid provided to Sarajevans was often out of date, not halal (in a majority Muslim nation), or just plain inedible. Yes, Sarajevans were 'grateful' for the assistance, but it was also difficult to be grateful when receiving rations that were over 10 years out of date. The international community may have claimed and shown themselves to be helping but the reality was something altogether different. Such explorations establish a more ambiguous attitude towards knowledge about the 1992-5 conflict and the roles

people played within it. In generating new and challenging knowledge, we also see an element of how knowledge making of conflict plays out more generally, disrupting and subverting established narratives with something more ambiguous, creating a climate in which participants might seek to further question what is 'correct' in understandings of conflict. If the peacekeeper is not always a knight in shining armour, what else might be under question?

In concluding this analysis, I think it important to note one final, extra-textual piece of information not contained within the vignette itself; that of the guide's attitude towards their audience. When I asked them about the sharing of such personal stories and why they do so, the guide was clear to point out who they do and likewise do not, share these with. For this Ibro, they would not share such a story with "assholes" who they think would fail to understand. They will only share it with someone who they think has a connection to them, is listening and has the potential to 'hear' what is being said. Such an idea therein responds to points made by Gržnić (2019), Spivak (1988) and Freire (2000) that if the 'other' (or as Freire frames this, the oppressed) is to speak and share their knowledge it must come as part of a dialogue in which they are heard. In other words, a kind of relationality must be established. I believe Freire's work is useful in laying out why this understanding may or may not happen and why a guide may or may not choose to share a particular narrative. Freire spends much time looking at the power of dialogue and dialoguing between oppressed and oppressors. Arguing that it can only be successful if the oppressor comes open and willing to be **hurt** (emphasis my own) or changed by the narrative presented, allowing discomfort to enter in. Whilst I do not wish to directly read the guides as oppressed or their audience as oppressors, I think Freire's positioning is useful in understanding something of the relationship between guides and their international audiences who come without *needing* to hear what is being said and instead, must choose to be open to it. Their 'status' as it were, remains unaffected if they choose not to listen. But should they choose to dialogue, they may learn and (potentially) build an understanding of the conditions and lived experiences of the guides. The guides are deeply aware

that their sharing of stories and creation of knowledge may not always be 'successful' or comfortable, but they are alert to the conditions that may give them more of an ability to do so. Their knowledge making does not happen in a vacuum but is reliant upon an audience who are willing to share in it.

While the vignette and its analysis illuminates in some way the process and formulation of 'knowledge' within the tours, this reflection on 'assholes' contributes greatly to understandings of knowledge making itself. The knowledge making is contingent and relies on all parties within the performance of the tour. This guide understands something of what I believe is captured (or not) by knowledge making regarding its uncertainty and its contingency. In such ephemeral spaces as the tours there is no returning, repeating or going back. Either knowledge may be made between parties in the moment with the sharing of narratives, or a far wider and more ambiguous space is created, that of knowledge left unmade, as in the case with 'assholes.' Guides rely deeply on their participants to make knowledge together, creating a climate through their narratives in which this might happen, but which still relies on the audience to interpret. They may present a story but how it is understood and what comes out of it as at the hands of the audience themselves. I have read it in this particular way, but I am one voice and one interpretation. That the guide believes there are 'assholes' who would not listen or care however, likewise suggests an attuning to those ready to learn and know. It suggests an understanding that certain moments can be created between people to make knowledge but that these happen in the moment and by chance rather than as a guaranteed part of tour participation (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019). Yes, knowledge making may happen, but it also may not.

You Should Watch Out

This vignette is something of a story of a story, told to me in the hills above Srebrenica as we stood in the drizzle about to head back down from the half-built Guber spa complex. This guide Edin

is not so much guide, for there are very few in Srebrenica. He is more 'fixer' from what I could gather, although he would never tie himself down to one particular occupation or activity. Edin is a man, connected to 'visitors' of Srebrenica, not necessarily just tourists but also NGOs, celebrities (Colin Farrell had numerous mentions), and whoever else may happen to be passing through, myself included.[22] Whilst normally I refrain from discussing the gender of the guide with whom I am speaking, in this scenario however it is pertinent to reveal this information as I believe gender had a significant impact on the kinds of interactions we had, the effects of which I will explore below.

At the point from which this vignette begins we had spent almost the whole day together, beginning as he picked me up from the Srebrenica memorial complex, where he appeared to know everyone, then sitting in a café talking, becoming more and more conspiratorial in our tone over the course of three ish hours before finally heading up here to explore *the spa complex*. For those who have not visited Guber I would like to clarify as to why I italicise spa complex. Certainly, there is the potential that, at some point, it could become a fully functioning spa but for now to frame it as such would be disingenuous. As of my last visit (Summer 2021) there were a series of half erected concrete shells where buildings (including the spa and hotel to service it) may eventually arise but there is little more than that and the various springs (stone or wooden troughs alongside the road) that lead up to the top where the spa may eventually be. There are no barriers to entry and many visitors simply drive or walk up to take advantage of the waters and their various

[22] Srebrenica is a town that whilst very familiar with the international community as a result of decades of heavy international intervention and interaction from all those connected with peace building (and it was a HEAVY presence), has an incredibly small tourism/visiting economy. The local tourism office seems to primarily focus on the annual boatrace at a lake not far from Srebrenica. Its materials are mostly in BCS or occasionally German, with a brochure on the Potočari factory (where Dutch peacekeepers were stationed and where iconic images of Ratko Mladić handing out sweets to the families of men he would later slaughter were filmed), as the only English language material. The office is a small outfit, not prepared, as far as I could see, to provide services to visitors beyond the region. As such, people like this 'guide' are not uncommon, they know a lot about international visitors and what to do with them but are not formally involved within the tourism sector. If I had limited myself to only speaking with sanctioned 'guides' I would have shut the door to a number of interesting people and all their insights and so, in the case of Srebrenica, I widened my pool of interlocutors to better suit the situation.

healing properties. However, beyond a privately owned restaurant at the bottom of the hill, there is no infrastructure to support or lengthen these visits. According to friends in the area, nothing has changed in the three years since I last visited.

In spite of the drizzle and fairly muted surroundings, we ended up on what I found to be a familiar theme for both myself and my interlocutors, how much we love Bosnia and Herzegovina. For me it is sincere but also, I had come to find, a very generative statement as guides loved to share their love for the country and how it motivates them to show people around and welcome them into this love. It is an understanding that they hope tourists also take away, but as the story this guide told me shows, is not always something that can be guaranteed.

One time I had been showing around this Italian guy and we'd been together for about a week. I drove him everywhere, all over Bosnia and we had a really good time. We'd be laughing and joking for hours as I drove him. You know just having a good time. We stayed together in the same places and I showed him everything, the good food, where to go. I really looked after him all week.

So I drive him up here and we stop and look around and while he's looking, I hide a car wing mirror in my pocket. And when he comes back, I stick it in my pocket like this [he pokes out the pocket of his jacket with a few fingers to mimic the barrel of a gun inside it] and pretend it's a gun. And you know this Italian, he starts crying straight away. He says I can have everything, his money his passport, just please don't kill him. He's crying so hard.

And I start to laugh, you know. I tell him it's just a joke and show him the mirror. "Look." [he gestures, arms out, palms up to demonstrate his hands (and his pockets) are empty]. Even after a week together, all the joking, I could have robbed him anytime but he thinks that I'm gonna rob him now. And I ask, did you really think I would after the week we spent together. And this Italian, he's still crying and we get back in the car and I drive him home.
- Edin

This story, I would like to immediately clarify, was told to me as a joke. It was meant to be funny. And at the time, it really was. We both laughed about it as it falls easily in to the classical 'black' BiHian humour that is 'legendary' within the region (Vučetić 2004, 7). It is the blackness of BiHian humour which is in fact key to understanding why such a story might be thought of as a joke. Of course there are many stories about how even in times of war, BiHians still found time to joke (Orlov 2021; Maček 2009, 51), and the eponymous Mujo and Haso who always find themselves at the centre of some form of disaster often with the suffering of one, other, or both as the thrust of the punchlines. The kind of joke above falls easily into such a tradition.[23] Although I will explore the power of the joke to make me (and surely other visitors) laugh, the joke does, I believe, do far more than just serve as a humorous aside. There are subversive and disruptive elements at play within it but also, as I will explore later, alongside these more disruptive and contestational elements, something of an attempt to police. A subtext that does not contest but instead, potentially, works to confirm and enforce stereotypes and prejudices. The joke complicates notions of the potentially emancipatory nature of knowledge making, muddying the waters not only of what is acceptable to joke about but likewise, who might be joked about and why.

Before exploring the more fraught implications of the joke however, I would like to return to the fact that it is in fact, funny and what this means for knowledge making, particularly given the seemingly unfunny nature of its subject matter. The joke is rich in pathos, making ridiculous its participants but also centred around violence so that if not understood within a wider culture of BiHian joke making, it may not always be understood as such. Beyond this, even when understood as a joke, when uttered in an 'international' presence, as Helms explores in the context of joking they observed in the BiHian police force, the joke may not be intended to make the 'international'

[23] For more on this as well as some classic examples, see Vucetic's article *Identity is a Joking Matter.* Whilst they may primarily focus on uses of humour in the Balkans to form ethnic ties and practice identity making, the examples are both enjoyable and also indicative of wider practices of humour usage in the region, not just among particular identity groups (Vučetić 2004).

guest laugh (2006). Instead joking may be used to entertain oneself or to appeal to a more internal community so that not everyone told a joke might be thought of as said joke's intended audience. Discomfort for one (such as for this Italian, or even myself) can produce mirth in the other. Thus, it cannot be assumed *a priori* that the joke was ever intended to generate knowledge, it might just have been for the guide to entertain himself. And even, as van Roekel explores, when an international presence does laugh at this kind of dark humour, it does not necessarily suggest that one agrees with this statement but rather, that one conforms to the social convention of laughing as part of the performance of personal interaction (2016).

I however, laughed. And I laughed not just to mark that I understood, but because I found it funny. I had sufficient understanding of the practices of BiHian humour and also felt that between myself and the guide, there was sufficient connection to find each other funny. Both of us positioned ourselves within the 'world' in which such humour might be thought of as humorous (Vučetić 2004, 9). Much like Maček's experiences in wartime Sarajevo, laughing places me in part of what they label the '*raja,*' the in group (2009, 51), who keeps up with jokes and may laugh about and with others, but who need to be 'tested' to see if they will laugh, if they will conform to the expectations that such black jokes are actually a laughing matter. The joke and its 'success' - I laughed - becomes a sign of familiarity and shared understanding, reflective of a shared knowledge of the situation as found between the two of us and a disruption of a sense of outsiderness that may inhibit knowledge making. The joke formed part of our relationality and was rooted in a shared understanding of BiH and likewise, of each other, therein also establishing a relationality to our knowledge.

Of course, dark humour is not unique to Bosnia and Herzegovina and for its ability to address subjects that might otherwise be off limits (van Roekel 2016), but as Vučetić (2004) argues, it does form an important part of national identity as BiHians 'joke about **everything**' (Haris). Being

comfortable with and participating in this joking allows for a greater sense of connection between interlocutors and reflects a certain level of understanding. Although Vučetić speak about this humour in terms of in-nation/region familiarity I do not think it unreasonable to extend the same arguments of connection, as implied through shared humour to other types of relationship or connection. I was happy to laugh at the Italian and their fear of kidnapping and read the scenario, first and foremost, as a joke. This in itself demonstrates a kind of knowledge of BiH formed between myself and the guide, rooted, in this moment in a shared sense of humour and ability to laugh at the uncomfortable and the macabre. We come to understand each other through humour, even if that humour is uncomfortable and thus it marks a certain sense of knowledge making between the two of us that I believe runs in both directions. In laughing I established a familiarity with BiHian humour and a solidarity with the guide and their perspective, but on the other hand the guide also gained a sense of who I was and my ability to laugh, better understanding me. I become, to a certain extent, complicit within the joke as I did not reprimand this negative behaviour (threatened kidnap), but rather, took pleasure in it. The discomfort of the humour provided a base from which to establish a greater sense of connection and understanding of what kind of knowledge each of us have of the other and our context.

Discomfort in this scenario, produced hilarity and the discomfort of the 'international community' (as this Italian may be thought of) was made ridiculous and enjoyable, both by a 'local' BiHian and also me as an outsider as we established ourselves as in some ways 'different' from this Italian. The implication was made that the Italian's actions were ridiculous and that *I would never* react in this way. In laughing at the joke I confirm myself as part of the 'in group' but likewise shun the actions of the 'out' as represented by the Italian (Vučetić 2004, 10). I was not simply entertained but also conditioned into a particular set of practices. With regards to knowledge making the joke does not simply function as disruptive through its construction of a somewhat taboo scenario, upsetting the standard mores of what is an acceptable subject to discuss. It likewise establishes a new way of

thinking and practicing in its audience, serving as something of a warning to those attuned to its implications. They are challenged to confront expectations of BiHians as violent or barbarian and instead, to understand a far more humorous and playful aspect of national character. Even if it is a darker humour than most are typically aware of, the guide, in such a story asks that BiHians are thought of far more as funny than as violent. What might otherwise be an uncomfortable lesson in what to do (and not do) in Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes, through the medium of a joke, an enjoyable moment between the two of us.

I also learnt about the importance of not assuming that Balkan men may be a threat to me but without feeling lectured on my behaviour and a 'lesson' of sorts may pass between us which may otherwise have been far more awkward to communicate. As Pabel and Pearce discuss (2015), this kind of education through humour is seen not only as important to communicating the uncomfortable in tourism settings but also, crucially, as a desirable experience. The humour is not simply enjoyable but also sought out by tourists as a way of demonstrating familiarity and also sensitivity. From the tourists' perspective, to laugh at the joke shows not only that you understand but likewise, you accept the message so that the humour plays a key role in the knowledge making process. Meanwhile for the guide, the use of such humour displays a deep knowledge of their own clientele and what makes for a sought-after tour. It is not just what is said but likewise, how it is said, with this kind of conspiratorial humour often viewed as the marker of a *good* tourist experience. Whilst evidence of a kind of relational knowledge making, it is a relationship that works in both directions with guides often consciously developing this as part of their expert practice.

In addition to the more pedagogic aspect of humour, guides recognise humour as important to the very experience of being on a tour, on holiday. As one states, tourists 'come to enjoy themselves, not to cry' (Faris). While Oren, Poria and Reichel may argue, when speaking of visits to Auschwitz Death Camps, that not every tourism interaction has to be 'fun' to be 'enjoyable'

(2022), these moments of humour allow for a broaching of subjects in a way that maintains something of the visiting and touristic elements of the tour keeping it within a 'holiday vibe' (Aida). Tourism is intended to be enjoyable, even if not always full of laughter. Although in this case laughter and the macabre combine in a way not featured in Oren, Poria and Reichel's study of Auschwitz, where perhaps joking is 'less' appropriate or welcome,[24] therein suggesting the importance of timing and sensitivity for the successful learning through joking to occur. In the case of the guide above, joking makes participants happy, they enjoy themselves. And in so doing, the guide marks himself as a well-versed practitioner. He is not here solely to educate but likewise entertain, with joking forming part of this.

Beyond this humour however, such an interaction also speaks to the potential 'lack of success' in breaking down stereotypes through humour or interaction. As this guide is keen to stress to me, he spent a whole week with this person (far more than the day we had spent for example) and even after all that time, they still assumed they were being robbed for real, rather than as part of a 'fun' joke. The joke, I believe, was told to reveal something of a prejudice held by the Italian, that there was still something to fear in this man. Of course, I have no way of knowing if this fear comes from a general fear of being robbed, some past experience, or if it is specifically tied to the guide's identity as a BiHian, but there was an implication from Edin that this was the case. I think it an important moment to tease out to show the lack of guarantee that making new knowledge about BiH will always succeed. This guide had been nothing but helpful and friendly and still, when faced with the idea that they may be a threat, this Italian instantly assumed as much. It is an uncomfortable moment to hear or think about, a disruption in a potential positive trajectory of friendship as prejudice and stereotype re-enters the picture.

[24] See also Reynolds (2016) and Owens (2019) for *appropriate* behaviour expectations at concentration camps.

Such a story speaks to ideas regarding negative stereotypes of BiHians both more historically and in the contemporary period. At first glance it appears as a reinforcement of a more insidious narrative of the 'barbaric' and 'violent' Balkan man. This Italian plays out a suspicion almost exactly the same as Rebecca West, travelling in the region almost 100 years before, likewise promoted, saying 'violence was indeed, all I knew of the Balkans,' (1944, 23). That in spite of all evidence of kindness and good treatment, to the contrary, one must always suspect and be aware of the Balkan nature to turn on a foreigner if given the opportunity (1944, 5, 23, 398). West's 'Grey Lamb, Black Falcon' is something of an iconic yet vilified account of travelling in the Balkans in 1937 that remains popular to this day. As a wealthy English woman with protection either from the Austro-Hungarian empire or the Ottoman Sultans and Pashas, West does not relate any genuinely dangerous experiences during the course of her travels but is happy to imply throughout her writing that this danger is only round the corner, despite never arising. There is something of an idea presented by West that any hospitality is more façade than reality so that a negative or dangerous interaction with locals is not as unlikely as one might presume. So too does this appear to be the case for the Italian above. Many of the guides are not insensitive to this perception with a number telling me either; about the prejudices they faced 'they held hands on the street, always looking around in fear' (Nejla); the way many guests might try to goad them into negativity 'people always ask me questions about the war, if the Serbs were the bad guys. And I hate that question, it's a dangerous question' (Haris); and the importance of their message that they 'do not hate' (Adem). Regrettably, in the Italian's reaction we may read a confirmation of a fear towards the violence of Balkan men simply waiting for the right time to strike, one that defies personal experience or interaction and instead harks back to a more ingrained stereotype.

When read across other tours I attended and remarks received from not one, not two, not three, but four other guides (all of whom were men) of their potential ability to commit violence against me, I think we can see something of a pattern emerging regarding expectations of violence from

Balkan men and how the guides work to both disrupt and confirm this expectation. In the following instance this was my second day meeting Haris, who also happens to have been my very first interlocutor of the research trip. We were walking around Sarajevo, blurring together 'official tour,' discussions on his craft and construction, and the more personal chit chat that flows naturally after having already spent time together. On a road running parallel with the Miljacka river we made a right into a small, slightly dank courtyard space containing a couple of large rubbish bins. Initially it was a somewhat confusing turn as I assumed we had not come to see the bins and was correct in this assumption. Instead, as my guide later explains, we had come in here to see the back of a Sarajevo synagogue, hidden (mostly) from the view of the street. Before he told me this however, he made a joke.

I'm not going to kidnap you – Haris

Once again, we see something of the 'blackness' of BiHian dark humour in such a joke and over time, after facing the same joke/threat from three other guides, I too came to read it more as joke than threat. However, I have to admit, this first time, it was a comment that took me back for a second. I did not feel threatened, but I did question as to why exactly the need to tell the 'joke' at all had been present. Perhaps, unlike the above vignette, which happened towards the end of my research trip, I had not yet been sufficiently cultured into BiHian humour practices or perhaps we had not established the same level of rapport as with the above guide, so the joke did not sit as easy with me. On that day however I left it as part of my fieldnotes and did not return back to it.

In fact, I only realised it was part of a repeated pattern much, much later after an off-hand comment in a meeting with my supervisory panel. I then looked back and realised it was, not a lone incident but instead just the first example of a repeat behaviour. I noted four different guides joking about kidnapping me or how it was 'dangerous to be alone with a Bosnian man' (Edin) in a secluded spot. This time not in some Sarajevan back alley, but instead at the half developed and

mostly deserted Guber thermal water complex above Srebrenica, coming not long after the story of the Italian. Of course, in one way my guide had already prepared me that this was a joke by telling the story of the Italian and how preposterous their reaction was, but at the same time, he continued to make the joke to me. The joke functions both to subvert ideas regarding the notion of a violent Balkan man as it is so patently obvious between the two of us that it is not true, but also as a warning to me. Perhaps I should think this way. Should I guard against falling into the same modes of thought the Italian did, directly calling out not just a perceived, but a personally observed prejudice or should I be on alert for potential danger, heeding the implicit warning within the joke. The practice is perhaps more complex than first appears.

Whilst I only ever received such comments as part of one-on-one tours and interactions, rather than as part of the 'traditional' tour narrative, I think something of their frequency reveals them as more important than the off-hand nature of the joke first suggests. At the outset there is an important gendered notion that must be explored here regarding why it was that four different men felt they should make such a comment to me. Is it a classic case of gendered power and the reassertion of this through veiled threat (Sev'er and Ungar 1997, 88)? Perhaps yes, but I am not entirely sure of this. It was not my feeling either in the moment or looking back. Much as Kurowska (fails) to unpack the meaning of a wink in their interactions with Polish border guards (2019), the situations created between us in these moments were ambiguous and ephemeral but still generative of certain feelings and implications I wish to explore. I thus take my cue from Cole and their interrogation of an observed street harassment when on fieldwork and their 'inability' to act as a feminist scholar in such a scenario (2017). Their 'gendered body' created a 'bystander' effect within them, preventing them acting perhaps in the way they had been 'trained' to respond (L. Cole 2017, 389–9). It was a (lack of) response I saw mirrored in my interactions. As whilst in the alley behind the synagogue I failed to react at all, unsure what to do or how to act, in the second instance at the Guber Spa I parried, threatening to attack with my umbrella. Such an

attempt was of course, scoffed at, but notes the lack of singularity of reaction to threat and its dependence on personal feeling and comfort. Much like van Wingerden (2022), I was always unsure of how myself or my body would react to the (research) situation and am unable to pin this down to any particular scenario or interaction. Surely there was something about the two scenarios that changed this, but I would be hesitant to truly ascribe a particular reading on to this.

From the first, I would like to refer back to narratives which both Hansen and Todorova plot of the 'violent Balkan' (Hansen 2006, 85) 'barbarian' (Todorova 2009, 3). At first glance these references to (sexual) violence against myself play in to such a stereotype, casting *me* as the victim of said barbarians (much as Rebecca West feared she could be some 100 years ago… (West 1944)), who, perhaps through the grace of god or their own moral compass, chose only to joke about such an act, rather than carry through with it. Although it was always clear such a statement was a joke and I never felt threatened the statement of power over another remains. Of course, personal connection is no guarantee of safety. The majority of violence committed against women is done by those known to them, rather than unknown strangers ('Perpetrators of Sexual Violence: Statistics | RAINN', n.d.), but the personal connection allowed for the joke to be uttered and the idea made ridiculous as we both knew *he* would not do something like that. Because of the context in which it was uttered the stereotype was not so much enforced but instead, undermined. However, much as Sev'er and Ungar discuss, this context was key to allowing for the interaction to come across as joke (1997, 90). It is not so much the utterance but how and where it was situated that allowed for the disruption of stereotype so that the knowledge made between us in that moment must be considered as contingent, rather than guaranteed.

I am, however, not so sure that these jokes worked solely and entirely to undermine the 'barbaric' stereotype. Humour is an important way to establish boundaries and behaviours, acting as a warning without looking explicitly like one (Dobai and Hopkins 2020), however I am not entirely

sure that it was me being warned against enforcing a stereotype. What I believe the pattern of warnings about my own personal safety suggests is that perhaps, these were not just jokes, but instead, implicit warnings. Certainly, I was 'safe' with *these men*, who were *good men*, guiding and advising me. But there is an implication behind the jokes that there are in fact, others out there, who are not good men (Tidy 2021); who I should be warned about and be wary of. Who could make me into the victim of violence, with the joke serving to draw my attention to this. Instead of subverting or undermining a stereotypical knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the joke can be used to reinforce it. Not only was I being policed against thinking in such a way but likewise I believe, being cautioned to think in exactly this way. I might not need to *watch out* for these good men, but rather, some other men out there. The jokes make a knowledge that is not necessarily a positive but, as I insisted when opening this chapter, not all knowledge need or can be positive, and this warning/policing is certainly evidence of this.

This discomfort is of course important to discuss. The knowledge shared in such situations is not always pleasant but instead far more barbed. The knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina made by the guides should not always be thought of as some kind of cleansing of their image or a catharsis, but instead something far more complex that does not always shy away from the violence of the country. It may address it head on and try to subvert it but might also act to confirm it, creating a new form of discomfort as the threat of violence does not dissipate but instead, remains. Jokes of course are something of a smart way to bring in these hints without making audiences too uncomfortable as after all, these tours are tours. They are meant to entertain. Of course, while not all tourists expect to have fun, particularly when visiting dark or memorial sites (Oren, Poria, and Reichel 2022), there is something of an expectation of being 'entertained' within the tourscape as an environment and humour can prove to be a key part of this. It lets one broach subjects without the particular social and economic confines of a tour, entertaining and creating knowledge without overly upsetting.

Only 11,000

Whilst the previous two vignettes are more a discussion of where I found discomfort and destruction occurred somewhat more 'organically' in the course of tours or interviews, this final vignette arises from a far more deliberate questioning of the guides about their craft and their audiences. It was never intended to lead to the negative but, perhaps more often than expected, our conversations went in that direction.

The question itself is fairly innocuous. All I wanted to know was 'what kind of questions do tourists ask?'

The responses I received were predictably varied, although most guides said they were asked about their own opinions on the conflict, on who the 'aggressors' were, and on the state of modern Bosnia and Herzegovina. While of course, these questions and the guides' responses to them are interesting, there was one particular response I received that really stood out to me, making me reflect and leaving me more uncomfortable and more uncertain than any other I received.

At this point during our tour we had been walking for the best part of two hours, strolling through the streets of Sarajevo until we stop under the shade of some trees on Susan Sonntag Square, looking over at the National Theatre. I ask my guide what questions they get asked by their guests and they say, like many others, that they are asked a lot of personal questions, about what life was like living in Yugoslavia, what happened during communism (and how they have to clarify that Yugoslavia was not actually communist at all), many things like that. But then they talk about the questions that really stuck with them. They say it's the really 'ignorant' questions that stick with you because 'your body goes into a defensive mode' and you feel it physically. That sadly, being a tour guide, you get these questions but even so, you have to handle them 'carefully and graciously.'

There is one question that actually 'really bothers' them, that they often get but that still bugs them. 'How come only 11,000 people died in the siege even though it lasted for over 1000 days?' As if somehow, they think there should have been more deaths, that it could have been worse and to this the guide questions 'How can you even ask that?'

I did not ask any follow up questions in that moment and our conversation moved on. The comment however, stayed with me and it was all I thought about walking home from the end of our tour along the infamous Sniper Alley. - Ibro

Despite the guide's regret that such questions are asked of them, it is not so unique a question. It is in fact, so common that another guide all but begins their tour with it.

Still in the introductory stages, as participants gather at the start they present 'the facts' of how many people died in the siege and over how long. They also mention the questions they get in response to this. How visitors ask them why that number was so low. They address such a question head on. Asking, much like the guide above, why someone would ask that. But in this case not so much to themselves as to their audience. They point out that this was 11,000 people dead and does not even include those injured, physically or mentally by the tactics of siege. They likewise go on and discuss how, in their view, the siege was more a tactic of mental oppression. Of course, the reality of its physical manifestations cannot be ignored but, they say, its purpose was in keeping people scared, to 'terrorise them,' rather than in truly destroying the city. Radovan Karadžić, responsible for directing the siege of Sarajevo, they point out, was a trained psychologist. - Dino

When read together I think this question has much to teach us not simply about how guides make knowledge during their tours but also what it is that they must make knowledge about. The questioning of 11,000 deaths and the guides' responses to them reflects a real instability in the nature of knowledge making within the tours, setting much off kilter. Certainly, the question itself, as the words of the guides attest to, is disruptive to them but the response to it allows the above

guide to delve deeper, disrupting and subverting expectations of 1992-5 conflict and how conflict is perceived more generally. They do not simply seek to disrupt this understanding however, but instead add in a new way of seeing things not so much leaving a void but rather placing new knowledge and ways of looking in its place.

To understand the depth and impact of the question before looking to further interrogate it, I think it useful to explore a little as to how one might get to the stage of asking it. The deaths of 11,000 people is a huge number but stretched across the length of the siege (1425 days or just under 4 years), this averages to roughly 8 deaths per day. Given the destructive capabilities of modern warfare (even 30 years ago) there is certainly scope to believe that *more* people could have died. That the siege might have been *far worse*. It is from this kind of logic, I believe, that such a question originates. This is not of course to justify such a thinking, but rather, to understand from what perspective such an utterance could originate.

In the words of Harold Zinn,

> as soon as facts are presented, as soon as facts are put out in the world (you put them out in the world or somebody else puts them out to you), they represent a judgement. The judgement is that these particular facts are important for somebody to know and there are other facts we are not going to tell you about, where are not important for you to know… But once you understand that certain facts are held out in full view and others are not, and that the selection is not innocent, that is a leap of social consciousness (2011, 18).

As such, guides do not simply address the 'fact' of the deaths of 11,000 when they challenge this statement, they likewise challenge the judgement behind it. In this case, that 11,000 are perhaps, in the grand scheme of things, not so many lives. The guides understand that knowledge and even facts are not something neutral but things meaning can be laden upon. Thus, when Dino speaks of Karadžić as a trained psychologist and speaks about the deaths as embedded within a wider structure of terror, they are not seeking solely to present the statistical facts but instead, a much

deeper reality behind them. They seek to create a depth of knowledge, an awakening, as Zinn might put it, of the 'consciousness' of how we consider and understand war (2011, 18). Much as we earlier discussed Baudrillard's banalisation of war through television visuals (2006), and the felt need by guides to combat this, the guide here, in their knowledge making, disrupts the banalisation of statistics by painting a picture of the far wider implications and likewise motivations behind these statistical *results*.

Thus, we see in such an interaction not only a contestation of knowledge about the BiHian conflict but likewise, a challenge to the nature of knowledge itself. Knowledge is not solely as this guide and many others make clear, simply the facts. It is likewise about the stories behind these facts. As one guide Alma notes, 'no one comes here for a history lesson. Facts aren't necessarily fun' so 'it's better to tell stories'. Alma claims that the best guides are not the ones who 'read the history and geography books' as whilst that might make you 'a good expert' it does not make you 'a good guide'. They present an idea that sometimes facts are a useful form of knowledge but that within the context of the tour, this is much less the case. Their words seem to echo that of Arlene Tickner regarding the importance of form and style for imparting different knowledges and understanding said knowledge within its own context (2003). Local knowledge of conflict, in the cases of the guides, is not imparted through facts and statistics, although certainly this plays a part, but instead through the telling of stories within their 'specific geographical, historical and cultural contexts' (Tickner 2003, 302). These stories are valuable in their own form as a different mode of knowledge making that, the guide above argues, may be more effective within the tourist context than 'the facts' alone. The guides make a knowledge within the tourscape that is tailored to that particular space. They do not necessarily dismiss other forms of knowledge making but rather argue that in this time, with these people, it is the telling of personal stories and adding richness, rather than facts, that makes for a more enjoyable and productive knowledge making experience between guide and participant.

In the case of this vignette, it is a knowledge making that subverts an idea that the only purpose of war is to kill. In asking participants to consider the psychological implications of a siege and as a result, how much more impactful it was to the population of Sarajevo than *just* the deaths of 11,000 people the guides may engage their participants in a far richer understanding of what it means to experience conflict. The guides therein curate a more affectual knowledge between themselves and their participants as they ask tourists to go beyond an understanding of conflict rooted in numbers but far more into how it felt and was lived. As the guide Ibro discusses, they [the citizens of Sarajevo] were 'grateful' and 'thank[ed] god' that when the maternity hospital was bombed, only one baby died. That this lack of death should be celebrated because in war time 'logic goes out the window' – and in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole, they also joked (Ibro). A maternity hospital is no kind of 'legitimate' target at all, much as the ordinary citizens of besieged Sarajevo were not 'legitimate' targets either[25] but due to the nature of war, ordinary understandings of life, death and what is and is not acceptable 'go out the window' (Jasna). The siege as a tactic did not so much destroy Sarajevo and its people physically (although there is no denying that it also did this in part at least). It also was part of a mental game, a psychological process, that one may not understand if considered from the purely statistical point of view. While the guide may begin with a destructive form of knowledge making, they transverse across to a richer, more qualified understanding of the conflict and how it was experienced.

In choosing to address such an assumption head on, as the second guide does, we can also observe the process of how some guides tackle these 'ignorant' (Ibro) questions and assumptions by destroying them. In shaming the unspoken and absent questioners the guide draws attention to

[25] As Helms discusses, this 'ordering' into legitimate and *il*legitimate targets works to accept the perversity of conflict framings that one can divide the world so clearly between the two (2015). As we see in current events in Gaza, legitimate and illegitimate targets have no foundation in fact or reality and function only to legitimise one perspective/reality over another's. I do not wish to claim that I believe in legitimate or illegitimate targets but rather, to present that this is how the guides explain it.

bad practice without having to shame a real person, creating a learning moment from this 'real' hypothetical. This use of exemplar is something of a classic pedagogical technique and it is telling that such a strategy is often used in consent and harassment trainings where experiences and knowledges are shared that many group members may find upsetting or uncomfortable. As Bellini, Olivier and Comber argue, asking groups to comment not on their own experiences, which may leave one feeling vulnerable either to attack or oppression, but rather on hypotheticals, often leads to more open discussion. In providing context specific scenarios, one allows a certain safety to critique and discuss at a far less personal cost, allowing for more 'nuanced' understandings to arise (Bellini, Olivier, and Comber 2018, 1). Much like the guides in the earlier vignette used humour to address the uncomfortable and bring participants into an understanding that *they* would never think this way, here, just as with the joke, a bad actor is created whom the audience may position themselves against. In this way, the guide builds a knowledge between themselves and participants about what is and what is not acceptable within the space, as well as a way to transform their thinking without necessarily making the tourist themselves uncomfortable.

Of course, whilst this may not prevent the audience from thinking this way, it does seem to go some way towards preventing them saying such thoughts out loud. It hopefully spares this guide some of the adverse physical reaction Ibro felt in relation to such questions where their body 'goes into defensive mode'. It is a suffering I would like to take the space to acknowledge, rather than ignore as it is an important aspect regarding the knowledge making that takes place within the tours. Whilst some guides, as I shall return to in later chapters, might see this work as a form of 'therapy' (Dino, Nihad), retelling such traumatic stories and having 'ignorant' (Ibro) questions asked of you is not without its burden on the guides themselves. Although Ibro discusses how at times, doing the war tours and speaking about their past helps them to 'sleep better at night', simply speaking about trauma does not necessarily guarantee a healing process. In much the same way as Helms describes the experiences of war time sexual assault survivors who give testimony,

for some it may prove cathartic whereas for others it may have a retraumatising effect as one relives events over and over (2013, 193–96). For others still, much as the guides attest one just becomes 'numb' and 'mechanical' unsure 'if I even told that story today' (Amila) after saying it so many times over. The act of knowledge making is not neutral or without impact on either participant or guide and whilst previously in this chapter I have spoken about destruction as a kind of emancipatory knowledge making practice I think it important to acknowledge also the destructive nature of knowledge making in the tours turned on to the guides themselves.

Likewise, the importance of speaking 'carefully and graciously' (Ibro) in response to such questions suggests something of the mediated and constructed nature of the touristic interaction and the knowledge narratives that tour guides create. Whilst they may wish to contest certain narratives, there is an artform to this as, to come on too strong, it is implied, would not necessarily lead to a positive interaction. As another guide says, they have learnt to speak their mind but, to 'wrap it up in paper and bows' (Amila) to soften the blow. It is not, guides make clear, that they do not express their opinion, but that they are simply careful in their delivery. It is a balancing act, one guide suggests, noting 'you have to be professional… but you have to tell a true story' (Faris), so that they craft their narratives and responses deliberately to adhere to both tenets. As another guide notes, an important part of their craft is learning how to 'say no nicely' (Haris) in response to certain questions or requests. Taken together what we see is how structured and deliberate the narratives of many of the guides are. They do not share personal stories on a whim, nor do they answer questions or respond to certain narratives solely through their heart. Tourism after all, is not like Freire's classroom where some may enter in with an expectation to be 'hurt' by the knowledge they receive, it is 'about enjoying yourself' (Ibro) so that even destructive knowledge making requires some form of mediation. As such the tours and tour guide narratives should be thought of as a carefully learnt craft and practice so that the knowledge making, particularly when it may appear somewhat conflictual or destructive, must likewise be understood as deliberate. The

tour guides are knowledge making professionals, deeply conscious of their actions and interactions and how it is their tours will be perceived.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid much of the foundations for how it is I understand the processes of knowledge making within BiHian war tours. As has been shown, the guides use a number of strategies to make knowledge within the tours and utilise these strategies to different purposes. As all the vignettes showed, given the often times uncomfortable or upsetting content of the war tours and the need to balance this against a certain level of 'enjoyment' given that the tours are a form of leisure, the guides adopt certain tactics to make this uncomfortable knowledge more 'appealing' to their audience. In this way, through things like personal stories, joking or hypothetical exemplars, they are able to address difficult topics and knowledges without creating too much discomfort in their audience. Thus, even when speaking of destructive or subversive knowledge, one cannot think of the tours necessarily as a direct confrontation between guides and tourists as they seek to correct certain misperceptions and misunderstandings, but rather as a carefully crafted set of interactions where guides often ameliorate or 'wrap' their message to make it more palatable to their clientele.

It is this relationship, that the tourists are likewise customers that I think does much to shape even destructive knowledge making. As seen in *A Night on the Town,* the guide tailors the story they tell to suit their audience (mostly backpackers). They introduce a subversive knowledge about what it meant to live through conflict and likewise under the *protection* of the international community in a way relatable to them. Likewise, in *You Should Watch Out* the guide's use of humour, whilst a stalwart of BiHian culture, also works to establish a friendliness and relationship between them and their participants to establish something of an 'enjoyable' experience in spite of (or perhaps as a result of) the subject matter. And finally in *Only 11,000* we see how guides might make an example

not out of those before them, thus shaming and making their audience members uncomfortable, but by speaking of a hypothetical other so that the strategy they adopt polices audience members without actively singling out behaviours or mentalities within the group.

Whilst this process of destructive and subversive knowledge making is anything but a neutral process, the guides adopt a number of strategies to make this more palatable which in turn helps us to better understand the nature of knowledge making within the tours. As we see, particularly in *Only 11,000* there is a unique nature to knowledge making within the tourscape that differentiates it from other structures or forms such as 'history books' (Alma) or lectures. It is one rooted in a much more personalised narrative that often relies far more on relationality and affect than these other *more traditional* forms of knowledge that have come to be regarded as expertise. As the guides show however, with the deliberateness of their craft, they are experts in their own forms of knowledge making within the tourscape and how it is that they might contest perceived misunderstandings of the 1992-5 conflict. Whilst in this chapter I have focussed upon knowledge as a form of destruction, subversion and discomfort these vignettes also go some way to show how knowledge can likewise be about enriching and deepening knowledge and so it is from this point, considering how knowledge might be used to broaden understandings of more surface level information, that the next chapter begins.

Knowledge that Builds and Enriches

Introduction

Having established what it might mean for knowledge to act as a destructive force in the previous chapter, this chapter turns towards a more expansive knowledge, building beyond a more basic understanding of the conflict and its events to add greater richness and comprehension to what knowledge of the 1992-5 conflict might mean. Taking a relative baseline from which the guides establish their tour narratives regarding how long the war lasted, (roughly) who was involved in fighting who, and what the outcomes of this were, many of the tours seek to go beyond 'just facts' (Nejla). They offer participants, should they be attuned to hearing it, an idea of the conflict that steps outside of the statistical and far more into the lived experience: 'a sense of the place and what it's like' (Nejla).

In this way knowledge making, through the telling of more detailed and tangible personal stories expands the horizons of participants, deepening and enriching their perspectives so that we might come to think of the knowledge as expansive. In this chapter, I therefore, explore how the guides add richness and depth to understandings of conflict, often by breathing (their own) life into the stories they tell. As Abou Jaoude and Rugo discuss, when it comes to speaking about conflict, the telling of (personal) stories may reveal to us things that would not otherwise be possible and their inclusion has the potential to 'challenge the idea of war as a spectacular/exceptional event and move our attention to everyday experiences and therefore everyday impacts of violence' (2021, 12). Personal stories add a richness and expansion of tour narratives, particularly when shared in spaces where the memories occurred. An expansiveness that helps provide the potential for a deeper form of understanding that may not have otherwise been accessible to participants. In particular, I focus upon the affectual nature of these stories, looking at how intimately their

grounded-ness connects to their affective resonance, understanding physicality as part and parcel of the knowledge making experience.

Perhaps conversely however, the chapter will also explore when personal stories might be thought of as hindering understanding or acceptance of narrative so that guides instead turn to external sources like the documents of the ICTY, newspapers or photographs to enrich their narratives. There is an irony present of course that much of the work of institutions such as the ICTY are reliant on witness testimony, such as those the guides provide, but are seen, as I will explore, as more robust forms of knowledge in the eyes of certain participants. The ICTY and these more structured sources guides say, are better able to *convince* certain audience members. As one guide says, they 'can't always convince people but [they] can show them the facts' (Edin) so that these documents and judgements provide an expansion and evidencing that the guide's own testimony may not. Not all who use these judgements do so in this negative sense of course, with others incorporating the external into their tours to add richness or as acknowledgement of the limits of personal experience and the importance of presenting wider, more expansive narratives so that this source work may be thought of as enriching their tours and the knowledge they provide, in conjunction with, rather than as validation of, the knowledge they make.

This chapter thus explores the strategies and techniques guides adopt to add richness to their narratives, looking at how detail can come through personal stories, situated knowledges, visual images or external sources and how these are inserted into the larger architecture of tour narratives. As guides themselves argue it is not so much a case of one or the other, of 'just facts' or 'putting your whole self out there' (Dženeta), but a far wider interweaving of multiple strategies and approaches so that those discussed here with regarding to enriching knowledge within tour participants should not be thought of as exhaustive but rather, exemplary. Richness, by its very nature, is rich in form and content and expansion can take many directions. Looking at how guides

choose to do this therefore gives us a great understanding of what knowledge making has the potential to look like. Rather than a one size fits all strategy, the variety of approaches signal the great potential for knowledge making about conflict and how the tours may fit into a far wider and broader understanding of what knowledge making may be. As Bliesemann de Guevara and Krystalli show, there is much to be gained from understanding conflict knowledge beyond the traditional bounding of the academic or the written (2022) and the tours and their approaches fit into this rich tapestry of knowledge making.

The Jewish Graveyard

The following story is that of a (now retired) guide and ex-soldier during the siege of Sarajevo. It was one of the few genuine 'tours' I went on, accompanied by strangers, making my role as participant/researcher less obvious. There were moments certainly, where my transient identity became apparent (certain knowing looks between the guide and I, moments of greater understanding and more interrogative questions perhaps, but undoubtedly these actions were not exceptional to myself as a researcher and may just as easily have been performed by a well-informed participant). By agreement, I kept all of my more technical questions on craft until after the end of the official tour, making note (mental or physical) of interesting moments I would have otherwise asked about at the time, but instead left until after. I watched and listened to the questions of other participants but did not remain entirely silent as that too would have been unnerving in such a small group. I consider the narrative provided here to be one of the least consciously 'tailored' to my presence however I am sure that this is not entirely true as both guide and participants knew my identity as researcher from the very outset.

At the point which we enter the Jewish Cemetery our tour has been going on for well over two hours, we had covered the basics of what happened, who did what and to a certain extent, why and had already driven through Sniper Alley, visited the Tunnel Museum, walked the length of the bobsled track and had now made our way to the old

Jewish Cemetery. As our guide had previously informed us, the cemetery is the largest of its kind in Southeast Europe.[26]

It was here that he served part of his time defending Sarajevo against 'the Serbs' and their 'crazy idea of a Greater Serbia,' for it is to this that he attributes motivations for the war and the siege. Although clarifying that he does not think all Serbians bad, he nonetheless apportions primary culpability to Serbia and Serbians. His distinguishing between Serbs and Serbians is not always clear, particularly when talking about who besieged Sarajevo so that one leaves the tour unclear as to whether there is a distinction or difference or not.

The cemetery, he tells us, was part of the Sarajevan front line and also part of where he spent his time as a defender of Sarajevo. As we stand near the entrance he stops us, telling us about how he served here and what it felt like. He points at a house behind, tracing a line across the space with his finger to show how he would run first from the house, ducking behind tombstones to avoid rifle fire, to jump down beneath a low wall and finally into the bunker, one of three on the site. The journey, all of 50 metres perhaps, was incredibly dangerous. As his finger tracks you see distinctively bullet shaped holes, marks, and chips in some of the headstones alongside the surprising 'freshness' of others, replaced, he says, because they were too badly destroyed.

How such thick lumps of granite were destroyed becomes clearer when he speaks about one lucky journey. It was not just bullets that those on the other side would fire. Every now and again, seemingly randomly, someone would decide to throw a grenade. On one of their journeys a grenade was thrown, missing him, he says, 'by seconds,' destroying the temple steps[27] *that you see behind him.*

[26] Although at the Jewish cemetery, very little time is devoted to Sarajevo's Jewish history in this portion of the tour. We had been given a brief summary earlier in the tour but the significance of the site within his tour is not it's Jewish heritage, but rather what it meant to him and his experience of conflict and so, like the tour itself, this is what I focus on here.

[27] The steps, now fully restored having been part of a restoration effort paid for, he says, by an American woman he brought here to help find her grandfather's grave. They searched the cemetery together looking for and eventually finding it, at which point the woman cried and sat. After this, the guide says, she paid for the restoration of the temple and its roof which had been very badly damaged. An act, he says, that was 'very nice' of her.

Whilst this is one of the most detailed stories he tells within the graveyard, it is not the only one. Perhaps the most haunting, from my perspective, is of the actions of the 'Serbians' within the graveyard. He talks about the Serbians using 'our people' (it is implied, as human shields) when attacking and slightly more quietly he says, they [him and his fellow defenders] 'had to do something,' to prevent the attack because he says, after pausing briefly, if they were to let their defensive line fall, the Serbians would be in amongst 'the children' and the people who 'lived and played' right next to the cemetery. The guide knew, if they pushed them back, it was straight into the neighbourhoods where people lived so 'we never went backwards' – the front lines were people's houses 'where the kids were playing' so one could never go back. Here, just as at an earlier point in the tour, when he says he will not speak about what he personally has done, he nevertheless says that if someone is trying to kill you, you have to 'do something.' It remains unspoken, but the implication remains, that in defence of himself and of Sarajevo, he has likely killed.

He then guides us out of the graveyard to look at the surrounding hills, drawing a map of the front lines across them with his finger. Describing the building they 'shared' with the Serbs [the military forces against whom he fought, rather than the Serb civilian population of Sarajevo]. Where they ran between the house and the bunker, directly in the line of fire after the Serbs demolished a building to make it that way. Saying that it was here where several friends died. But moving on as if such a statement was like any other fact, before leaving us to stand and think.

There was always this space to stand and think during the tour. We were not hurried to the next point but instead often left to let things sit for a few minutes in silence. – Faris

It is in this silence where I would like to begin. For as Fujii argues, silence is not nothing and pauses can create key learning moments (2010), particularly as Dragojlovic points out, in speaking (or not) about experiences of violence (2023, 884–85). In certain cases, silence allows one time to digest and consider, to take something in rather than constantly adding more and more information to the point of overload. As another guide Dino notes, echoing the words of Edensor

(2010, 69), there is something of a 'rhythm' to tour guiding and what they label 'pauses' are a key part of how they structure their tours. They are not accidental lulls but instead part of the tour's programme, with space being given at particular sites, in their case, at a Sarajevo rose, where the craters of shells who killed multiple people are painted red to commemorate this. The silence, they say, is important, surprisingly it 'really wakes people up' as they stop and 'really think about it' (Dino). As Martini and Sharma argue:

> When the magnitude of the experience exceeds narration, silence feels for many the only appropriate response, in a dialectic process of memory-making and witnessing, in which the power of silence acts as a chamber of resonance for the sublime. The complex intimate reactions of visitors to the narratives of horror experienced by the survivors, the gloomy affective atmospheres, and the physical traces in the landscape can only be received in silence, expressed by silence and by a cathartic release experienced from confronting such pain from the safe place as an audience (Huey, 2011)' (2022, 8).

Rather than just hearing the information, tourists are given time to stop and process it and so silence becomes part of the deliberate pacing of the tour, a strategy for learning in and of itself. It points to the importance not simply of content when thinking about knowledge making but likewise delivery, suggesting it is not just what is being said but how it is said that guides understand to impact knowledge making. The guides create these affectual spaces of silence within their narratives not accidentally, but deliberately as part of the knowledge making process. Silence, is therefore part of the construction of knowledge within the tours, allowing information to sink in and be considered, rather than heard and forgotten.

The silence of this guide does not I believe, function solely to allow their audience to catch up and consider. As Fujii also discusses, the unsaid and oblique nature of silences may be just as important to learn something from one's interlocutors, from what is not said, or left, unsaid (2010). In this guide's pauses I read something of an admission. After saying that he 'had to do something' Faris stopped himself for a second, something he also did at the tunnel tour after a similar utterance on

the need to 'do something… if someone tries to kill you'. Whilst at another point he tells his audience he will not talk about 'whether I killed people,' these kinds of pauses, to me at least, imply an admission without an admission. They are something of what Maček labels the 'inassimiable experience' of wartime (2009, 10), the experiences one cannot square with one's self so that they remain outside of utterance or even personal understanding. It was, as the Faris himself says, 'war after all' but the realities of this are left unarticulated. Much as Edkins, speaking of the horrors of Dachau, argues that 'there is no way in which the 'truth' of what happened can be expressed in a historical account. It demands attention to the unspoken and unspeakable' (2001, 405), I believe this likewise to be true in the case of the guides' narratives. I have chosen to infer between both the silences and the utterances that this guide has likely killed but, as I did not ask, feeling it inappropriate and also uncomfortable, I will never know for sure.

In this inference however, we learn something as to the nature of knowledge making within the tours. Information does not necessarily need to be shared with a participant for them to learn something. Instead, one may build up the potential within an audience to read between the lines. Often, I heard guides speak of perceived differences in their audiences between those who 'really care' and those who 'hardly listen' (Nejla). For whom they would alter their tours as there is 'no point in telling people anything about something they don't care about' (Amila). The attitudes of their participants, many guides argued, changed what stories they told, what they revealed and showed. Few welcomed prying questions and said they would only share their 'personal' (memories of war) if they 'got the right vibe' (Haris), choosing to deflect or move on and create silence if they felt questions to be inappropriate. As Fujii argues, sometimes silence or ambiguity 'is not [an] invitation to probe more deeply, but rather subtle admonishments to the researcher to respect certain topics as 'off limits'' (2010, 239) and I suspect the same to be true of the guides themselves. Their silence is something to be respected but this does not mean it is always without meaning. I inferred the potential violence within the guides' silence but likewise chose not to pry. I, much like

Fujii also discusses, felt it would have been uncomfortable and disrespectful to do so (2010, 238). I chose to take my inference but leave it at that, pointing to an uncomfortable tension in the potential knowledge making within the tours as to how contingent a process it might be. Perhaps I have entirely misinterpreted this moment, perhaps I am correct, but in *respecting* the silence and refusing to ask, I shall never know. The tours are not so much a guaranteed space of knowledge making but instead, a possible one as the reading (and respecting) of such silences and inferences rest upon how attuned a participant might be to such a silence and how they might interpret it, it could enrich their understanding but likewise, there is no guarantee of this.

Aside from silence and the unsaid, there is also an important component to the knowledge created in this tour that derives from what is said, particularly with regard to who may be a victim of conflict under certain circumstances. The guide's story offers something of a point of clarification or refinement to the notion of who may be thought of as a victim of conflict, in a different way to that of the young party maker in the previous chapter. As a soldier this guide has something of an agency to his actions, which whilst Krystalli argues, does not necessarily preclude their ability to claim a status of victim (K2021), does generally make one less likely to do so. He is a soldier and protector, fulfilling a traditional masculine role which situates him outside traditional ideas of victimhood both from an international but likewise local perspective. As Helms explores, in the context of BiH and the conflict, ideas of who might be *worthy* of the status of victim have crystalised into quite a specific idea, mainly women and in particular those who experienced sexual violence or who lost male relatives and who 'continue to suffer' as a result of this (2013, 5–6). Victimhood, as Schäuble argues and Helms enforces, is rarely reserved for male soldiers (Schäuble 2014, 202–5) and there is often very little questioning if whether simply being a participant in war makes one a victim, regardless of how *active* or *passive* that participation might have been. Whilst of course, as Lai rightly notes, one should not assume *a priori* that all those who experience conflict are vulnerable/victims (2022, 177), this guides' narrative both rejects his own vulnerability and works

to establish what he feels to be a more *appropriate* victim. In this way his narrative does not perhaps broaden or enrich understandings of the 1992-5 conflict, but rather, enforces them.

From their narrative of protection of 'the people in those houses', Faris constructs a more familiar and seemingly 'worthy' victim of conflict, the innocent and the helpless. Although not actively voiced there is an implication behind who exactly these people in the houses he was defending might be, one he later expands upon to clarify by discussing when he went out to fight but made sure his 'wife and kids' always 'slept in the basement'. He therein suggests to his audience a deeply gendered experience of conflict and how it might be thought about, enforcing traditional ideas about both men and women's roles during conflict as he goes out to fight to protect his wife and children who are left behind. They are separated from the violence of conflict and placed into a position of passivity, requiring of protection, rather than taking an active role in this own defence. This allows the guide to reap a moral standing of protector that is heavily reliant on certain gendered assumptions and enforcements. In this way knowledge making functions to define and clarify ideas regarding (gendered) victims of conflict and victimhood so that the knowledge is not so much made, but instead, refined, if only perhaps, to enforce a stereotype.

This guide's upholding of expectations on how gender is performed (even in wartime) was not limited to creating an idea of women simply as objects of protection. As he highlighted at a different point during our tour, women were still out in public during the siege and when they were they 'always looked good'. Faris spoke with pride about how 'Western journalists were often surprised when the saw the beautiful girls of Sarajevo', recalling how these journalists often asked him 'how do they do it? There's no water. How can they look so good?' as they walked by in short skirts, looking clean and made up. It is a point only reinforced in various memoirs from journalists

covering the conflict.[28] It was, he claims, a point of pride for the women (and for the Sarajevan men) that no one let themselves look 'dirty or slovenly' and the women managed to make it work, to 'shower in 2 litres of water'. Whilst Maček references such a *phenomenon* as an 'imitation of life' that highlighted the emptying of such routines' 'previous meaning' (2009, 62) for this guide he argues it was a case that you had to 'keep living during war' because 'life doesn't stop' and evidently, part of this was also in looking and feeling good (Faris). Faris echoes Maček and their arguments that 'continuing peacetime routines…enable[ed] people to retain their sense of dignity and strengthening their will to fight for survival' (2009, 62). In such utterances the tours expand not simply on the realities of life and living during war time but likewise as to expectations placed upon women within Bosnian society that even during war time, beauty was still prized and lauded.

I speak of this as a wider phenomenon in Bosnian society as this guide was not the only person to draw attention to this pride of appearance. Another guide Dino discussed with me how his mother would get dressed up for work every day, applying lipstick and wearing heels to cross through siege-time Sarajevo. When asked as to why, she allegedly responded that if she were to die, she wanted to 'die looking good'. Indeed this mentality of looking good in spite of danger is a phenomenon Maček likewise captures in their ethnography of the siege, speaking of a young woman who, despite shells falling around her, refused to jump in to a ditch to prevent her nylon stockings from being torn (2009, 7). Maček, much like the guide above, credits this pride in looking good as an attempt to maintain a sense of 'normality' during the war, part and parcel of the idea that 'life doesn't stop' (Faris) during conflict, and so why would standard hygiene practices. Discussing the day to day of conflict, including how one dressed and presented oneself thus helps to expand the audiences' understanding of what it means to live through conflict and how it is not

[28] See for example Jeremy Bowen's *War Stories*, Kate Adie's *Corsets to Camouflage* or Martin Bells' *In Harms Way*.

a cessation of all normality but instead assists in understanding that daily life often runs in parallel with conflict.

When speaking however, of this praising of beauty as an expansion of understanding of the realities of life during war time and likewise of gender expectations in Bosnia and Herzegovina it would be remiss to ignore which guides highlighted this importance of looking beautiful. I only ever heard male guides talk about women's appearances or attire during the siege (Ibro, Faris, Ali, Dino), remarking on how 'beautiful' (Ibro) women looked and how they did it 'without a bath' or 'without light' (Ali) but always with the same pride as the guide above. While one woman spoke of the difficulty in 'keeping clean' and maintaining standards of decency within a prison camp (Nejla), beyond that I did not hear a single mention from any other woman of the value placed in looking good during the conflict. The implications of this disparity are stark, both for what one may learn about conflict but also about BiHian society, depending on the tours one takes. It suggests both that there is no monolithic picture or imagining of BiH or the conflict and that there is likely a highly gendered element to how one understands one's conflict experience as such different perspectives arise, even with regards to the way one looked, let alone felt, worked or acted, during wartime. For female guides this seems to be something of a non-subject, not even discussed, let alone praised. Whereas for male guides the beauty of the women of BiH is something they themselves take pride in, seemingly on behalf of the women, despite having nothing to do with their beauty regimens.

Whilst perhaps it might be that this maintenance of a certain standard of appearance was just part and parcel of daily living and therefore not even worth commenting upon for women, that men see and saw it as so important has meaningful implications for what knowledge tourists might gain within the tourscape. To tour with a male guide may lead one to believe that female beauty is a prized part of BiHian culture, so important that even war could not get in the way of it and that is

something to be celebrated. Whereas to tour with a woman might mean one learns nothing of beauty expectations at all. There can be no guarantee as to what knowledge a participant might gain during the tours and likewise, no limit to how knowledge might be expanded upon, with whatever knowledge making being deeply contingent upon the guide in question. To tour with men, one might learn more about daily life during war time and how this intersected with gendered expectations, but we must understand that this comes through as a result of the very perspectives of the guides themselves. Therefore, what men may see as worthy of praise and special demonstration, women may not even think to highlight. The tours and the knowledge they produce are conditional and dependent upon each and every guide and the unique perspective they bring with them to the tourscape.

To return however to the graveyard and the physical experience of the tour, not all the potential to know within this tour is tied up in the (un)spoken. There is an important physical aspect to how knowledge is made within this tourscape. For one, there is the presence in the real site, where it really happened, lending an air of authenticity that tourist scholars discuss as considered to be important to learning and for tourists to feel they have learnt (Taylor 2001; Edkins 2001; Upton 2001). Hearing knowledge in this space, where it really happened as Noy argues, makes for a more meaningful interaction that tourists are more likely to take back with them (2004), so that the physicality of the site offers up more potential for successful knowledge making between guide and tourist. The space is loaded with what Blom labels 'symbolic value' (Blom 2000, 32) so that tourists derive more worth and place more emphasis on narratives they are told in situ, believing them to hold greater value and authenticity.

As Paulauskaite et al. argue, there is something of a 'local' trend emerging in tourism (2017), where living or operating like a local has become something of a key attraction to visiting. As Tsai argues, supposedly 'local' experiences are sought out and praised as the very best way of experiencing a

city and forming an attachment to it (2016). Place is not simply desired, but necessary within the touristic environment if knowledge making is to occur or at very least, as Tsai argues, to make it 'memorable' (2016). That there is a 'market' for such 'local' experiences suggests however, a certain artificiality to them as they must be produced and coordinator to bring about tourist satisfaction. As Freire-Medeiros, looking at favela tours in Rochina also explores this 'real' experience is mediated and tightly controlled to give tourists perhaps a slight flavour of the favela without getting too close (2009). The tourist comes away happy to have had a supposedly 'real' experience but without necessarily exploring the lived realities of the space. It is not full facsimile, but neither is it a fully lived experience, rather a kind of in between that the tourscape captures. Thus, in understanding the tourscape as a space of knowledge making we must also understand that the guides craft is not just about the creation of a certain experience but likewise a savvy business practice.

The potential performance or artificiality of tourscape is however not shown as a hinderance to the tourist experience. As Edkins explores in their discussion of Dachau, the staging of the space to look as it did during the period of National Socialism, whilst also managing its function as a memorial with modern interventions does not prevent visitors from engaging with the space and finding meaning within it (2001). That one is there at the site where it *really happened* gives authenticity and credence to narratives shared within the space that even if they are produced in mediated or reconstructed spaces; the *reality* of the space creates a powerful affectual resonance that contributes to their knowledge making potential. Being where it *really happened* becomes something of a symbol of honour when speaking about one's experience as a tourist and when being part of the touristic experience, regardless of how actually 'authentic' the space may be (Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 2003). This is not to say of course that spaces such as concentration camps are inauthentic but merely, that they have been in some ways mediated and transformed to

suit their new purposes as visitor 'attractions' rather than as spaces of torture and death so that they can be thought of as constructed spaces

As Rolfes and Schwenkel both argue place leads to a belief in the 'authenticity' of a narrative which helps to validate the narrative of guides and secure their tours as spaces of knowledge making (Rolfes 2010, 422; Schwenkel 2006). As long as guides enforce and tourists believe in, the authenticity of a location, it is imbued with greater significance (Noy 2004, 85). This belief in authenticity can be a key factor in knowledge making as it is not enough to simply share one's narrative to assume knowledge making is happening, instead one must hope that, in some way at least, it is believed and place can be a key factor in ensuring this believability. The use of space becomes a form of 'evidence' as claims like being shot at in a graveyard are validated by the sight of bullet marks in the tombstones. It is no longer just this guide's word that the audience must trust but instead, through use of the physical they are given far greater reason to believe. Not only are participants hearing the story of person's life during the conflict, they, like those who participate in tunnel tours in Cambodia, are 'living' it, as temporal barriers between past and present, experienced and narrated, fade (Alneng 2002, 474).

As to what this means with regards to being within the graveyard to hear the guide's narrative, I believe the impact is more than just *being there*. Whilst in being there one observes the mechanics of the space, understanding just how close the houses described were to the frontlines, there is also the ability to feel it, to embody this distance. In this way sites such as the graveyard become not simply informative but likewise, affectual spaces as body and narrative intertwine in the tourists' occupation of the space. Participants move across the graveyard and inhabit the space and actions (in slower and less deathly circumstances) of the guide during war time. They walk from headstone to headstone, hopping down over the low wall where his company took shelter, making their way across to the building where he was posted. As I walked, I felt the potential for

me to trip on the uneven ground and how the impact went up through my knees as I jumped down, 'constructing' a sense of place and the narrative as my body responded 'to the landscape' (Vergunst in Springgay and Truman 2017, 31). In 'walking with' as Ingold and Lee put it (Ingold and Lee 2006, 67), I became aware within my own body as to how potentially dangerous this trip could be, what might go wrong and both how close and how far the distances between each stone, between the house and the bunker might have been. It is something I could not have experienced simply from hearing the narrative and the physicality of it has, as per Ahmed, *stuck* with me in ways the narrative alone could not (2004). In being there and walking with, I and other tourists enrich their understanding not just through learning but likewise doing, so that their knowledge does not rest solely on an informational but also an affectual level.

Experiences such as those above are deeply powerful and portrayed by the guides as an acceptable way of creating this feeling in the body and minds of participants but without taking it too far and 'playing' war (Dino). In particular, guides often contrasted themselves against the (currently) closed War Hostel. The War Hostel claims to give its clients a real taste of what life in the siege was like, playing near constant sounds of shelling in the background, having visitors sleep on camp beds or mattresses on the floor and with opportunities to spend a night not in a real room, but down in the cellar, as siege time Sarajevans often did ('War Hostel Sarajevo', n.d.). This hyper-reality is something guides told me they were 'not really sure about' (Dino) and generated a lot of discussion within the guiding community when it was first founded. While on review platforms some praise the War Hostel, saying 'If you are curious about the Bosnian war, this is the best place to learn about history while having an immersive experience of what life used to look like during the war' (mingchyyy1671 2023) or that 'If you are interested in the history of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina and want to experience even more than what you'll see in the museums in the city, then stay here,' (kamillehojskov 2023) this stands in stark contrast to the guides who do label it more as 'playing' war (Dino).

I do not wish to imply however that all tourists approach this experience without a sense of criticality as in reality my own visit there, prior even to undertaking my MA, can in many ways be seen as the genesis of this project. I stayed in the War Hostel with a small group of friends, also participating in the 'front line' tour offered by the hostel owner. We in our group had something of a mixed response to the tour, with some expressing that they suspected our host of making certain narratives up for show, while others pushed back to question why one would feel the need to lie given the harsh realities of the siege and the other corroborating sources (museums, guided tours, the landscape) we ourselves had already seen. Others still, like those quoted above, considered it the 'most real' experience they had had whilst backpacking. I was deeply unsure about what I learnt and experienced there and as a result have produced a whole MA and now PhD thesis to perhaps better understand this.

The War Hostel thus reflects a tension between what guests may assume to be real and what the guides themselves may think of as more realistic in portraying and understanding the conditions of siege time. The discomfort felt towards the War Hostel and how it creates an embodied understanding of conflict points to the difficulties of (re)creating empathetic experiences of conflict which make knowledge about it for participants, whilst keeping a sense of authenticity and respectability in the eyes of those who experienced conflict. As Tucker, citing Dean, 'warns that empathy is ethically hazardous in that imagining oneself 'in the shoes of the other' entails the obliterating of the 'boundaries between self and other . . . in which the imagination absorbs and annihilates what it contemplates' (2005, pp. 9–10)' (Tucker 2016, 37). Other guides' wariness of the War Hostel seems to reflect fears that in staying at the War Hostel, tourists may believe too much that they understand the conflict when in actual fact, the War Hostel is more simulacra than lived experience. It is perhaps a false depth of understanding that whilst certainly impactful, may not be the story all guides wish to tell. Of course, in this tension we likewise see a wider tension in

how to historicise the conflict itself. The owner of the War Hostel believes themselves to be doing something deeply important and showing a side to conflict that others do not offer, whereas for other guides, they perhaps go a step too far, embodying or inhabiting too much.

This uncertainty as to how to appropriately memorialise and educate was something I found particularly prevalent when speaking of visiting experiences to Srebrenica. There was so little cohesion of position and such starkly different viewpoints, pointing once again to the difficulties in creating knowledge about the 1992-5 conflict and how it should be done. While some guides reflect that the visiting of Srebrenica is something they cannot do in a professional capacity, as it takes too much toll and means too much personally, they nonetheless argue it is a good place for people to go to as it 'really puts things into perspective' to see 'the enormity of suffering' (Adem). Others however speak about their discomfort in making Srebrenica into some kind of attractions saying they 'hate the word Srebrenica tour' (Ibro) but at the same time, much as the guide above, acknowledging the importance of the site as a memorial and reflective space, but not a space for 'tourism.' As they say 'someone smart needs to come up with another word as tour isn't right' (Ibro), working towards some kind of semantic distinction between types of visiting. One might 'do' tourism visiting a castle or kayaking down a river but even if contained within the same trip, they do not feel it appropriate to put the visiting of Srebrenica in quite the same category. It is important to visit and learn from but should not be thought of as a tourist attraction/experience in the way suggesting different modes of learning and engaging with spaces as part of the touristic experiences.

Others however speak of Srebrenica in less ambiguous terms, attesting to its importance of being visited, much like Auschwitz (Mak), but also that the focus cannot rest/stop at the Memorial centre. One local estimates that '95% of guests visit the Memorial Center' which is located in Potočari and perhaps '5%' make it the 8km further up the road to Srebrenica itself (Tarik). They

speak with annoyance about 'Sarajevo guides' who, when asked by participants at the Memorial will say there is 'nothing there' in Srebrenica to faster shuffle them back onto tour buses to spend their money in Sarajevo (Mak). It is a sentiment shared by many other Srebrenica locals with whom I spoke to, who lament the lack of interest in Srebrenica itself. The tourists see only the Memorial and do not get to view the 'potential' of Srebrenica, 'the spa, the canyon, the lake, the healthy food' (Tarik). No one gets to see the 'deeper picture' (Mak) as fixating on the events of the genocide alone prevent one from viewing the whole history of Srebrenica and understanding it and its history. Even within the group who urge people to visit Srebrenica as an important part of their experience visiting BiH, there is no cohesion about how this might be best done. In this confusion we thus see the difficulties in regarding the BiHian tourscape as a space of knowledge making, as so much of it is contingent on particular guides and their attitudes, not to mention the attitudes of the tourists themselves so that we must not assume knowledge making through tourism may happen or is even welcome in particular spaces.

Space, place and body thus become key factors in the tourscape itself, helping to create and deepen a particular knowledge of the conflict and of the city itself but ones that are often without certainty or guarantee. One can for example read about the destruction and rebuilding of the main temple at the Jewish graveyard, but such a piece of information and those who interacted with it as a front line remain abstract and decontextualised as one has no real sense of the physicality. When told this in the place, by a man who fought there, both the newness of the temple but likewise, the occupation of the space becomes evident. The closeness of war, whilst still difficult to comprehend, is both more visually and physically apparent, garnering a deeper sense of tangibility *in situ*. By using space and the body's occupation of it, guides enrich audience understandings by providing not only evidence but likewise (bodily) experiences to support their narratives. One does not just hear but also sees and even feels the narrative, gaining a far deeper and more situated knowledge about the events of the 1992-5 conflict.

The ICTY

It is not however, solely the physicality of the body and the nature of space and place that guides utilise in the sharing of their narratives. While in the above section we saw how personal stories formed a key aspect of knowledge making, it is likewise important to appreciate the difficulties of relying on this. Telling personal stories can become a burden as, 'you can become numb. It can be mechanical as it's not easy to speak about your personal experiences every day' (Amila). So that we must appreciate both the power and the concurrent drain, of sharing personal stories. Not only this, whilst almost all guides agreed that you 'need… a personal touch' if you tour is to 'work' (Amila) there is also often an acceptance that in some cases, the personal may not be enough. There are other forms of knowledge available to the guides, be this photographs, newspaper clippings, books or, in the case of the guide to follow Adem, and others like them, the rulings of the ICTY itself.

We have now been together for over 3 hours, driving all over 'modern' Mostar, avoiding the historic centre, as my guide knows, I have already heard 'all about it' from their colleague. Instead, they will show me things that sometimes fall a little beyond the standard walking tour or what 'day trippers' normally see. It has been something of a merging of their classic Yugoslav and war tours so that we begin at the derelict shopping centre, crossing over to the high school the football ground, the Yugoslav memorial and now we have driven up into the hills to the newly developed Fortica Adventure Sports Centre.

We get out of the car and walk a little way so we can see not just Mostar down below us but the ranges of hills that surround us on all sides and here my guide, despite having already spoken about this for 3 hours, launches in to the

most detailed explanation of the events that happened around Mostar during the 1992-5 conflict, that I had ever heard.[29]

They use the vantage point to show exactly where the front lines were, where supplies or soldiers came from, how refugees attempted to leave. They speak about who did what to whom and when and the horror of the experience in Mostar until, allegedly 'Sarajevo sent a pay out of 5 million marks' to the 'JNA' to 'park up and withdraw' only 'firing occasionally' so that now Mostar had only the Croatian forces to worry about.

It was then however that they 'entered into hell' being 'ethnically cleansed' from their village and brought to Mostar with their brother and mother where they 'spent most of our time in basements.' They were 'starving' and out of 'food, water and electricity' waiting for aid convoys that were 'blocked for days wherever they were' 'until the shooting stopped.' Their father, the guide says, was 'taken to a concentration camp.' It was 'like Srebrenica' 'a genocide' that happened 'in front of the eyes of the UN.'

Despite their voice wavering at such a statement they regain their composure to discuss the perpetrators, being clear that there were 'war criminals on all sides' but that that did not 'justify' the actions of 'anyone.' That even though there were 'concentration camps and genocides' even after this the 'don't hate, [they] don't want to be about hate' as 'killing someone is the worst thing you can do.'

It is here that they end, pulling out a folder full of 'ICTY rulings' and 'judgements' and 'official reports' that they say are 'useful when people don't agree.' As whilst they 'can't always change their minds' they can 'show them the facts.' – Adem

[29] Suffice to say, the account would be too long and too detailed to reproduce here, taking up the best part of three pages in my field notes and so for the purpose of my own narrative I have edited it out. It remains however the very best, most detailed and yet also most comprehensible account of why war broke out in Yugoslavia and how this manifested in Mostar itself that I have ever heard.

In an exchange like this we see the importance of guides having multiple strategies and approaches towards knowledge making within their tours. The incident suggests that knowledge making not be thought of as a one size fits all approach but multiple and varied, crafted to suit the needs or expectations of whoever is part of the knowledge making experience within the tours. As Adem shows, sometimes personal experience is not proof enough and so they must fall back onto 'the facts' of the ICTY to supplement and strengthen their narrative. It is not always necessary they show, but in certain cases, the ICTY judgements are a useful document to provide. In this way, as pedagogues have long noted, we see that much as every person is different, so too are their learning strategies (Chen, Jones, and Moreland 2014; Sims and Sims 1995). What works for one might not for another and so guides must be ready to change and adapt themselves and their narratives to suit their audiences if they are to hope to create a moment of knowledge making within the tourscape. Knowledge making within the tourscapes should not therefore, be thought of as a monolith or a formula but a complex and adaptive processes so that one should not assume either a universal approach or outcome to the tours as they shift and change to suit the requirements of each participant. As such we see with great clarity how the guides are not just accidental but rather, expert knowledge makers bringing different strategies and approaches with them rather than simply relying on a particular narrative or approach to make knowledge within the tourscape.

Whereas in the previous vignette, a tourist does not just hear about a general history of the war, but instead someone's personal, lived experience of it, in this case, this lived experience is not necessarily good enough as a *convincing* knowledge object. While guides are aware of how powerful a tool the utilisation of the personal is, even going so far as to state that 'in order for people to truly understand, you have to incorporate the personal' (Alma). Implying in many ways, that there is a gap in *factual* knowledge of conflict that the personal is key to filling to make the story 'complex' and 'teach people' about BiH and conflict. Their personal stories function much as the sharing of Holocaust testimonies, with guides saying that they help to make events more 'concrete' to allow

people to 'connect' and to give events 'current' relevance (Richardson 2021, 322).[30] However, as another guide discusses, sometimes in sharing the personal they are perceived as too 'biased' (Mak) for their narrative to hold real weight, lacking a sense of objectivity that some tourists feel to be important. Thus, utilising other outside sources either to validate one's testimony in the case of the guide above, or to provide a different format and kind of knowledge making can be important to appealing to and connecting with different types of tourists and their understanding of knowledge and learning.

Whilst Mak argues that when speaking about the war it is important to be 'objective' they also state that when being 'objective' it can be 'hard to bring the personal back in' as they prefer to do so. They touch on the tension found both within expectations for what tours might contain and also more largely about how it is that we are expected to speak about war. There is an implication for this guide, and the guide in the anecdote above that they are apparently, like the Yugoslav Women+ Collective, *too close* to the subject to be able to speak about it (Stavrevska et al. 2023). Indeed, the Collective directly highlight critiques that they are not "objective enough" and so their knowledge has previously been discounted as a result of this (mis)perception (Stavrevska et al. 2023, 3). The guides find themselves and their knowledge making in a similar trap to scholars from the region reflecting a far wider context of domination and dismissal of 'local' knowledges about conflict in which their tours are thus situated.

That in moments such as this, when one's objectivity is under question, a guide might pull out the rulings of the ICTY does however add an interesting layer to this understanding of personal testimony as a legitimate/illegitimate form of knowledge made about the conflict. Adem created a sense in me that the rulings of the ICTY are supposedly, without question, an idea that is in itself

[30] Additionally see (Beech 2000), (Edkins 2001) or (Kushner 2006) or the work of the Potočari Memorial Centre.

somewhat confusing given the fairly well documented distrust in the ICTY from all parties within the region (Klarin 2009; Hodzic 2013; Magid 2017). That guides position the ICTY as 'facts' (Amila, Adem) which cannot be questioned therein suggests a different presentation and reception towards the ICTY by the international community as it becomes a useful legitimator of guide narratives. It suggests there is less criticality from the international audience (as represented by tourists) towards the ICTY and as a result, a respect towards it as a legitimate form of knowledge regarding the conflict. Its utilisation thus aids, potentially, in legitimating the guide's narratives as they might use the verification of truths within the ICTY to likewise verify the truth of their own narratives. The intervention creates a sense that within the tours not all knowledge might be considered as equally valid or legitimate and that in some cases, personal testimony is not enough to create believable knowledge about the 1992-5 conflict within the minds of participants.

That the ICTY might be presented even by guides as a more *legitimate* form of knowledge than their own personal experience also points to something of an irony regarding the very nature of testimony. The majority of proceedings within the ICTY, particularly with regards to evidence, was made up of personal testimony and the sharing of peoples' experiences of conflict. Whilst these courtroom narratives were perhaps more detailed and graphic than those to be found within the tours, there is a core form to them that is nominally the same. It begs the question as to what it is about the ICTY that changes the supposed believability of the narrative and makes it able to be presented as an unquestionable form of knowledge about conflict within the course of the tours when the guide's own testimony is perhaps less so.

This legitimacy of the ICTY over and above the narratives of the guides indicates a relative hierarchy in knowledge making and a subsummation of local knowledge under the banner of international legitimacy. The guide's utilisation of the ICTY as an act of validation is emblematic of a wider process of invalidation of local knowledge particularly with regards to conflict wherein

it often must be 'validated' by the international community to be seen as legitimate knowledge. As Kušić touches on in their article regarding the Balkan subjects in intervention literature, people from the Balkans are often made subject to knowledge, rather than positioned as able to make knowledge about conflict (Katarina Kušić 2021). As Dembour & Halsam explore, that the ICTY is so often presented as a 'legitimator' of witness testimonies, even if, as they highlight, the specific testimony is not always linked to the case at hand, suggests that it is more the form and aspect of the body, rather than the local knowledge (in the form of testimony) that matters to international audiences (Dembour 2004). The ICTY acts as some kind of blanket stamp of approval when it comes to knowledge production that allows all that which falls under it a kind of legitimacy. Thus, in invoking the ICTY in connection with their own narrative testimonies, the guides lean into this international legitimisation. Invocations of the ICTY in this way function, I would argue, as a kind of necessary evil. Whilst it may be unfair of tourists to dismiss personal narratives as not being 'objective' and the guides have every right to have their stories respected, in invoking the ICTY they might better achieve an overarching aim of having their stories believed and allowing the tours to function as knowledge making spaces. Of course, as the guide above shows, they would rather it was not so but ultimately what is important to them is that they are 'believed' rather than in what manner. As a result however, we see that in certain cases personal experience such as that of the guides is subsumed/falls lower within the international knowledge production hierarchy that guides find themselves negotiating within the course of their tours, speaking to their limits as knowledge making spaces.

However, whereas the guide in the vignette makes reference to the ICTY to assist in validating their own knowledge I find it interesting that another guide instead speaks about using the ICTY to guard themselves against 'nationalist' rhetoric (Mak). While the guide in the vignette references their own knowledge as equally valid to that as found within the ICTY, for Mak there is a suggestion that perhaps more localised/national knowledge may in fact be biased or somehow less

appropriate as they see it conflating with certain 'nationalist' discourses. Indeed, Mak believes other guides within the area (Srebrenica) to be more 'nationalist' in their narratives. At first glance it may appear they have internalised ideas about how BiHians may not be able to speak *objectively* about conflict and see their own experiences as less appropriate knowledge than that to be found at the ICTY however I do not believe this to be the case. They identify as a leftist and we spoke at length about their frustration of how politics and political parties function in BiH, particularly in the Srebrenican context. They discussed how politicians often instrumentalised genocide discourses to retain their vote share (as other guides pointed out, even politicians in Sarajevo adopt a similar tactic) so that politics and political discourse is not focused so much on political actions but historic markers. It is not so much that they see the ICTY as somehow a more valid or worthy knowledge of the conflict but more that they are suspicious of how it is that conflict memories are utilised within the national context. The guide therefore uses the ICTY to guide against reproducing these nationalist narratives within their tours. In this way we see how even when speaking about conflict the guides may use their tour narratives to create knowledge about contemporary BiH, therein expanding the nature of knowledge making within the (conflict) tourscape.

This is not to suggest however that all guides utilising external sources like ICTY judgements do so out of a sense of self-defence for their own personal histories or political identities. As one guide states, 'as a professional I start with the facts at the beginning confirmed by the international community at the ICTY' (Amila). Amila utilises the ICTY judgements and documents to enrich their tours, giving them depth, solidity and concreteness. The ICTY in Amila's eyes is a useful form of knowledge made about the conflict, which they utilise to assist in creating knowledge within their participants. ICTY judgements thus become not a silver bullet against scepticism but instead, part of a robust set of sources built in to making the tour informative and accurate, without having to rely solely upon one's personal experience. Instead of being something of a last resort, the information about the conflict provided by the ICTY becomes a useful reference to draw on

to craft a narrative that tells of a far wider experience of conflict than that which the guide alone could possibly produce.

Likewise, utilisation of the ICTY might not be so much a form of narrative self-defence but instead a more personal guarding of one's own memories and heritage. As Amila states, when sharing personal stories or even simply conducting war tours day after day, 'you can become numb. It can be mechanical as it's not easy to speak about your personal experiences every day'. They appreciate the power but likewise the concurrent drain of sharing personal stories, concluding that the tours 'need… a personal touch' if they are going to 'work'. Whilst it may be a powerful form of knowledge making, it is also important to appreciate the burden this personal exposure and commercialisation of one's own memories as it is incorporated into the performance of tourism. Using the 'facts' of the ICTY as Amila, Adem and Mak do allows for the sharing of knowledge without necessarily taking on so great a personal burden, so that a guide may be a step removed from the narrative of the tourscape. The ICTY and the judgements pronounced within it provide a rich source of information to share within the tours. Whilst Adem still and will always, they say, continue to bring these personal stories as otherwise tourists would not 'understand,' they are also aware of the burden this imposes on them as individuals. Thus, when thinking about the process of knowledge making during the course of the tours, we should not let ourselves believe it is always easy or that there is only one way of sharing knowledge within them. Utilising external sources can have many impacts on the nature of knowledge making within the tours. In the case of ICTY judgements they may be complementary or act as validation to personal testimony. But they may equally serve to deflect from the need for said testimony, giving a sense of depth and legitimacy to tour narratives without the guides having to rely on their own stories and thus shouldering this emotional burden of sharing such deeply personal narratives.

I do not however wish to solely focus upon the narrative power of utilisation of the ICTY as I believe the physicality of the document plays an important role in the knowledge making present within the tours. Not so much for what the document says but rather, what it represents. These extra-textual elements add something that narrative alone may not be able to, so that the very physicality of the copies of the ICTY documents must be considered as part of the knowledge making process. For one thing, to carry around physical copies of legal judgements seems quite unusual within the tourist setting. These judgements are not light reading, and neither are they easy to parse or digest during a walking tour. They seem an odd companion within the tourscape. If a tourist were to truly sit with the documents the guide carried with them there is in reality very little they could learn from it, considering that by in large it is a few (poorly) photocopied pages that document neither the full story of a particular trial, nor detailed information about certain events within the conflict.

That multiple guides (Adem, Haris) choose however to carry around these pages and the physical burden of the weight suggests that these pages do have a purpose, despite the fact that at first study, they may seem fairly uninformative. By in large the documents I saw were not whole records of proceedings but instead curated pages stating for example, a judgement that certain actions within the conflict did happen e.g. genocide in Srebrenica or the sentencing counts of prominent war criminals such as Ratko Mladić and Slobodan Milošević. Much as with above discussions on the relative (un)importance of witness testimony within the ICTY (Dembour 2004), what seems to matter in having these judgements to hand within the tours is not so much what they actually say (no person, let alone a tour guide walking miles each and every day, could carry around the full archive of the ICTY), but rather, what they represent. They are more symbolic objects than strict and unassailable texts that nonetheless play an important part in the knowledge making processes present within the tours. As symbolic objects they represent something more than the guide's own narratives, they evidence and prove their statements, enriching the narrative and adding a depth

which personal testimony or even general narration of the conflict could not, a tangible object that adds more richness than words alone might provide.

The photocopied judgements likewise find themselves within a wider folder of pieces of 'evidence' so that as the guide flicks through their binder a tourist might also see maps and photographs as these objects provide a kind of information that narrative alone may be incapable of producing.[31] Multiple guides for example, carry round with them photos of the BiHian parliament. Whilst today it is fully restored and functioning, during the siege the building was shelled multiple times by besieging forces, at one point catching fire so that the upper stories of the tower were completely burnt out. It is this photograph, of the tower in flames, that many guides carry with them as whilst it is all very well to explain the events, their words alone cannot truly capture the destruction. The guides use photographs to enrich and deepen the understandings of their participants as they are well aware that narrative is not the be all and end all of knowledge making. On supplementing their tours with additional sources and forms of knowledge, they create a deeper understanding of the conflict within their participants. Photographs form simple but effective moments of knowledge making within the tours that once again point to the depth of strategies involved in knowledge making.

This is not to say that the guides deem all photographs to be equally as useful or appropriate for making knowledge about conflict. At the end of one tour, I was sat on the steps of the history museum, chatting with a guide about their use of photographs and they told me about their own *philosophy* with regards to images. Whilst they scoffed at guides who use photos saying 'the narrative

[31] It is interesting to me but mostly speculative that almost no guide carried any physical objects with them that were not paper based. Perhaps this was also a question of weight, space and practicality or that there are more fitting spaces for objects e.g. museums, but it is curious that given the perceived utility of photographs and documents that this is not extended into other objects. I reflect on this solely within a footnote as any such analysis of the (lack) of objects would be purely speculative and therefore inappropriate. It is however something of interest to me and so I make note of it so that others might also reflect upon this (surprising) absence.

should be enough' (Ibro), they nonetheless have much to say about what photos they would deem appropriate and what not. In this way they echo a rich debate within Holocaust studies regarding what images should and should not be shown. There is no clear consensus within the discipline with some, such as Lenga, arguing that atrocity images have almost 'no place within the classroom' as they function only to shock, dehumanise the victims and make atrocity banal (2020, 197). If such images are to be included, they say, robust scaffolding and support must be provided to give these images utility within a learning environment. Viewing them is often not enough. Or as they likewise argue, too much for them to be taken in and appreciated (Lenga 2020). Hirsch likewise struggles with such a dilemma. They argue that the 'repetition' of such images of suffering have led to a kind of numbness that results in forgetting, a *'postmemory'* of the Holocaust that serves only to recount the suffering and not to make concrete the actions that led to it (2001). They still believe in the power of the images but like Lenga, feel their display and utilisation is something to be considered and grappled with. In line with advice from many Holocaust memorial trusts, there is an appreciation of the power of images but likewise a cautioning against sensationalising them or presenting without sufficient context or depth.

Within the scholarship there is little consensus regarding the use of images of horror, but I found within the guides as a pool, as those who had witnessed conflict first hand, there was something of a commonality in their avoidance of particularly graphic imagery within their tours. As me and Ibro were sat alongside Sniper Alley they mentioned (and then brought up on their phone), an image of a young boy lying dead on the road, gesturing over to the point where he died. As we both agreed, it was much too 'graphic' to be used on a tour, both because of the violence of the death and they made this point strongly, about the dignity owed to that child. They then switched to another iconic image of a woman hiding behind a UN armoured vehicle to cross that same spot citing this as perhaps, a better example to use. The words of this guide point to a clear lesson about the nature of knowledge making within BiHian war tours but also as to how it is that this

knowledge making is controlled by the tour guides themselves. Whilst both images depict the horror of life under siege, only one was deemed as *appropriate* within the setting of the tourscape. The guide attempts to offer the young boy dignity in death by arguing that this image should not be part of the 'entertainment' that is a war tour, therein allowing his death, in some part, to become a voyeuristic experience. Ibro refuses the banalisation of suffering that both Lenga and Hirsch fear and sets a course that whilst still accepting of the use of visual imagery, also polices what images others might use. Only some images, and thus some knowledges, are felt to be appropriate for the tourscape therein suggesting perhaps a limitation as to what it is tourists may learn within the course of their experience.

It was a philosophy I also saw echoed by guides concerning what museums they did and did not recommend to tourists. The War Child Museum (which collects objects sent in by those who experienced conflict as children, positioning them alongside a small text written by the donor) was highly recommended (Faris, Dino) and having visited myself I understand why. The museum is a deeply affecting space that shares stories of hardship and joy in wartime, where the vast majority of visitors (myself and entire family included) rarely leave without shedding at least some tears. At no point however, are grizzly or grotesque images of death or suffering, the supposed visual 'reality' of war displayed, instead it is just the objects and the stories behind them. Often this was contrasted against another Sarajevo museum, the Museum of Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide. The museum is far more graphic and whilst I have also cried in there, I have also walked out multiple times (despite its relatively small size) as I felt unable to process the entirety of the exhibition. There are pictures of dead bodies and graphic descriptions of torture alongside the supposed torture instruments that whilst certainly powerful, I and others I have visited with, found too much to experience as part of a *leisure* activity. The museum, one guide told me, was too graphic and they felt, was 'profiting from suffering' (Dino).

This contrast between appropriate and inappropriate memorialisation raises interesting questions on the nature both of knowledge making about the 1992-5 conflict but also more specifically within the course of the visitor experience. As war correspondent Jeremy Bowen argues, 'I think it sounds patronising when news presenters or reporters say that there are pictures 'too distressing to broadcast'. Far better, when the story warrants it, to warn people that something horrible is coming, and to show a nasty burst of the truth' (2006, 85). What they suggest is that no image of conflict is ever inappropriate if it represents 'the truth' and that there is something of value to be gained by audiences even in the most horrific of circumstances. But such a position seems at odds with that of the guides with whom I met and spoke with, who largely all seemed to resist an emphasis on the visual horrors of the conflict. These images of extreme suffering they mostly argued, were not appropriate for tourists either because as one argued no one visits 'to cry' (Faris) or as Ibro said, because that those who have died are 'owed' dignity. Perhaps the difference in position is down to the relative contexts and professions, Bowen as a journalist takes great stock in the visual and the importance of witnessing,[32] whereas the guides are providers of leisure experiences (even if these are conflict based) and therein imply that certain knowledges or experiences of conflict do not belong within them. In the attitudes to visuals and likewise museums we thus see something of the limits of conflict knowledge making within the tourscape as a normative stance against the relative voyeurism of graphic visuals is taken.

At this point however I think it important to focus on the implications that it is BiHians making these arguments against engagement with images of extreme suffering and death, promoting instead the idea, as Ibro does, that 'narrative' should suffice. Across the tours I saw clear pushback against the international community thinking about BiH as 'pathetic,' against fears that there was

[32] Bowen in fact professes to the belief that if only the 'right' image could be found then perhaps they could bring about some change and begin an end to the horror of war. They likewise acknowledge the naivety of such a position but nonetheless hold out hope for it. As they themselves saw with regards to Bosnia and Herzegovina and as we see today in Gaza, it would appear that *powerful* visuals of horror are seemingly powerless to stop the continuation of the events they depict.

still violence within the nation or against ideas that BiHians personal experiences alone were not enough. The guides positioned their tours as spaces to contest international narratives and to thus create narratives they deemed as more appropriate or better fitting of their own experiences. They do it, by in large without drawing on the graphic and yet I still walked away from every single tour affected, in some way at least, by the narratives contained. Unlike Bowen, I do not believe I *had* to see the horror to believe in the guide's testimonies. I say this because through their narratives and use of space and object they found other ways for me to believe. Relying on affect and empathy, far more than shock and horror, as knowledge making strategies. This is why they recommended certain museums and not others, spoke about the utility of some images without prizing all images equally, why they even carried around ICTY documentation in spite of its weight and mostly symbolic worth. It is because they are using their tours to make what they deem to be more fitting narratives about conflict, implicitly (and often explicitly) challenging the international community as they do so.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored how the guides use their tours as places to build up and enrich understandings of conflict. Where after having established a baseline of knowledge about the events of 1992-5 they build depth and richness into their narratives, understanding facts and statistics can only do so much. The chapter explored the power in telling personal stories and the ability of this to build affective connections between participants, guides and narratives of conflict, much like in *A Night on the Town* from the previous chapter. Whereas that vignette explored some of the more irreverent aspects of living under conflict, in *The Jewish Graveyard* we explored more of the lived experience of being a combatant during war time and what it meant to think and act as a soldier.

Exploring such themes, because of the difficulties many ex-combatants face when speaking about this period lives, relied more on inferences and what was left unsaid, than in explicit articulations from the guide. In this way the knowledge making about conflict present within the tour relied far more on a certain level of attunement between participant and guide, than on a direct act of knowledge transfer through narrative. Silence, as explored, may hold an affectual power to shape tourist understandings regarding the lived experience of conflict but it is one that is highly contingent upon attunement, rather than a guarantee of the tourscape as a space of knowledge making.

We also explored the importance of place as both enricher and legitimator of narrative. The physical act of moving through former spaces of conflict, such as the graveyard, allows for a more embodied knowledge about conflict experiences as they are not just heard but felt, often creating moments of affective 'stickyness' (Ahmed 2004, 91), where one does not just hear but likewise experiences a narrative *in situ*. As discussed however, many guides feel there is a fine line between creating a sense of embodied understanding in their tours whilst avoiding ideas of *playing* at war as exemplified for some, by the War Hostel which many viewed as an inappropriate way of accessing conflict. This discussion of *appropriate* memorialisations and knowledge as shared within the tour also came up in *The ICTY* where guides explored what they felt to be appropriate and inappropriate images to share with tourists about the conflict. It is not, in their opinion, that all images should be used to create knowledge just because they are images of conflict. There are important discussions to be had about respectfulness and avoiding the commercialisation of death even within spaces such as the war tours.

The knowledge made between guides and participants, as explored in both vignettes is therefore often highly curated, with guides using their expertise to select certain events, objects, or spaces, whilst leaving others untouched. This does not mean however that their knowledge making is

somehow less meaningful because a 'full' story is not told. Such an account would be impossible. Instead, it must be understood that the selection of certain narratives within war tours mirror practices in other more established knowledge making spaces e.g. history books, classrooms… and speak not to a *failure* of the tours but rather to their strength in creating and curating specific moments of knowledge making that the guides have crafted as such.

This idea of the guides as expert curators of their narratives is important in understanding the war tours as spaces of knowledge making. As seen in *The ICTY* and *The Jewish Graveyard* guides often have multiple strategies through which they explore conflict narratives. In using documents and other sources the guides build a background to enrich their own personal narratives. Alternatively, however, the use of external sources can assist in building a robust narrative without having to rely on personal experience, therein sheltering them from the burden of speaking about their own war stories day after day. Documents can shelter not just one's personal history but likewise one's professional credibility, particularly given attacks on guide's *objectivity* as knowledge makers. As explored in *The ICTY,* guides operate within a hierarchy of knowledge making where often those closest to the experience of study (particularly if they are not from Western Europe) are perceived as less legitimate knowledge makers. By showing how their narratives are corroborated by other, supposedly more valid forms of knowledge they strengthen their own claims to knowledge making about conflict.

These two vignettes therefore demonstrate how the guides negotiate not just the physical nature of the tourscape to build and enrich their own narratives but likewise the assumptions some guests carry with them and how these assumptions might be fought against. They rely on place and object alongside their narratives to build a knowledge making space with greater depth and richness to help further tour participants' understanding of conflict by building more nuance in.

Knowledge that Interprets and Connects

Introduction

Whilst in previous empirical chapters I interrogated the ways in which knowledge may act as a subversive or destructive force towards international understandings of the 1992-5 conflict and likewise, when tour narratives are used to enrich and broaden these understandings of conflict, I turn now to where guides use their tours to go beyond said understandings. Whilst the knowledge made over the course of these tours is still intimately connected to conflict and forms part of the guides' war tour narratives, I find it to go beyond the narratives of enrichment or broadening of understanding discussed in the previous chapters. In this section I explore how the guides connect past with present to better understand the aftermaths of conflict, rather than simply the events and experiences of the 1992-5 conflict itself. As a result, this chapter explores the roles of guides as interpreters, rendering visible the invisible and drawing connections across their tours, rather than simply situating their knowledge within the events of the conflict itself.

The knowledge making discussed within this chapter therefore seeks to explore how conflict, as Harroff-Tavel rightly asserts, does not end when the guns fall silent (Harroff-Tavel 2003). It is often, they say, more fitting to speak of a 'transition' from conflict than to think of places that have experienced conflict as *post*-conflict spaces, therein implying a cessation or departure from conflict and its impacts (Harroff-Tavel 2003, 466). As a result, this chapter explores where guides speak of this transition and how it manifests, carrying and connecting the impact of conflict into the present. Particularly given the current time frame in which this knowledge making takes place, nearly 30 years after the cessation of the conflict, tourists are often deeply reliant on their guides to interpret particular sites or stories as their histories may not always be so visible. Thus, the knowledge discussed here is a knowledge making focussed on connecting past and present, going

beyond simply enriching understandings of the conflict but instead creating knowledge in tourists about the impacts of historical events upon present day.

How these connections manifest within the narratives of the guides is naturally, quite varied. For some of the younger guides, born after the conflict ended, the connection is far more historic in nature, as is the conflict itself. As such, when they speak of connections between the conflict and contemporary BiH, this is rooted in more sociological or political understandings, a collective, rather than personal memory of conflict. In particular a theme of corruption as created through the war time politicisation of ethnicity in BiH ran across the tours. Whereas, for older guides who experienced conflict first hand, their narratives reflect a more personal and embodied connection to conflict, often speaking about its impact upon them and shaping their narratives around this. This final chapter thus explores the connections between the conflict and modern day BiH looking at how the guides build these understandings through interpretation of their surroundings. As Ababneh argues, 'the reputation of a site [in the eyes of the tourist] is largely attached to the tourist experience and partly molded by the interpretation process' (2018, 257). Thus in understanding tour guide as knowledge makers we must understand their processes of interpretation. The chapter thus explores how guides connect past and present to build a far wider understanding of BiH, not so much reliant on what is observed but the way the guides structure their interpretations around certain sites or stories within their tours. There is after all and as the tours show, so much more to Bosnia than just conflict.

It's a Kind of Therapy

We are walking along the streets of Sarajevo, having just been to the Central Market, walking through it together and unusually, I notice as we pass through, we do so in near silence. Bar stopping briefly to point out the spots where the two shells, which killed 68 and 43 people respectively, landed, we do not exchange a word. This guide does not say anything until we step out of the stalls and back on to the street. They later clarify that once when walking an

English couple through, someone began to harass them, shouting about international guilt, and so they had to stop them and explain that this was not the couple's debt. They try to respect that the market is many peoples' 'office' and avoid bringing big groups in to clog up the space.

This discussion of discomfort within their tours leads us on to a topic of further discomfort, that for a time, the guide didn't and still doesn't always enjoy the war tours.

As we walked towards the eternal flame we talked about how the war tours are sometimes 'very hard, and stressful for me.' But that once, 'about five years ago, I was talking with a psychologist friend who asked about my work. I complained a little, telling them about how hard the war tours were on me and she asked if I ever told anything personal in them. I said 'no.' Then she asked me how I slept. And I said I had nightmares, night sweats, all these things. And she recommended to me that I start talking about my own experience more. Only when I felt comfortable mind you. But from then on, when I trusted a group, I told them.

A few years later I met this same psychologist friend and she asked 'how was work and whether I was still having nightmares or sweating' and I told her 'I couldn't remember the last time that happened.' She said 'yes, I saw you needed to vent a bit."

The guide then goes on to tell me that for them 'the tours have been a kind of therapy.' They assure me that they're 'not making this up' and that if we wanted to 'we can go to her ordination [clinic] right now' and she'll prove it. - Ibro

Although I have already briefly touched upon guides seeing their tours as a form of 'therapy' within the first chapter I feel it important to devote more time and space to this discussion as it was such a common theme. It ran across many of the tours and many of the guides, although certainly not all, spoke of the therapeutic benefits tour guiding held for them. Even more so, of all the guide

with whom I spoke who claimed to have been combatants during the conflict, every single one of them mentioned how, in some form or other, and under certain conditions, the tours had a therapeutic element (Adem, Damir, Ibro, Faris, Nihad). Likewise, even for those who had not fought but instead, been witness to the conflict, this therapeutic impact was both mirrored and highlighted (Dino, Edin, Jasna, Amila). Whilst not perhaps so immediately apparent the tours' therapeutic nature is an important part of their knowledge building potential. It has significance both for the guides and their own self-understandings and likewise for participants to reflect on the nature of the conflict and crucially here, how experiences of conflict do not simply disappear. Instead, those who experience conflict remain connected to those experiences and the way that the guides address this, often through personal experience, can create powerful moments from which to build knowledge of this connection within their audience.

This therapeutic nature is something many guides openly speak about as part of the tour itself, telling their participants how the tours are 'my therapy' (Nihad, Hazim, Dino), thus reframing the tours away from purely touristic experience and from the notion that their advantage for the guides is predominantly financial. In this way the tours step beyond the idea of using local experience as a purely exploitative or commercial tactic and instead make clear to their participants the advantages to the guides that go beyond the transactional (Tonnaer, Tamisari, and Venbrux 2010). The tourscape is transformed into a more complex space of individual and collective knowledge as participants learn and guides may transform themselves, connecting past and present experiences to show how speaking about conflict within the context of tourism can have not just commercial but also therapeutic benefits. Much as Aussems highlights the healing power of tourism in post-conflict BiH across local communities (Aussems 2016), so too does the experience of the guides themselves speak to such a potential. In speaking about their experiences of conflict guides may practice a talking therapy of sorts between themselves and their guests that goes beyond the commercial space of the tour.

Of course, as the guide above alludes to, this therapeutic effect is not a guarantee of the tour environment. For Ibro, it involves trust. They will not share certain things with 'assholes,' and so it should not be assumed a priori that all tourists come and learn about conflict and that the guides are able to practice a form of therapy among them. Instead, what is required, another guide says, is someone who is 'really listening' (Nihad). Whilst they say, everyone in BiH 'has a war story,' leading to what Maček labels an 'existential loneliness' as 'each person comes to terms with [memories of conflict] – or fails to come to term with them in their own way' (2009, 10). Tourists instead really spend time listening to the guide's experience. They become, according to Hunt, an 'appropriate listener' who are open to understanding the guide's experiences on their own terms (2010, 3), rather than comparing or arguing others had it worse, as the guide says fellow BiHians sometimes do. The tours function for these guides in much the same way as Čaušević and Lynch observed in another study of BiHian war tour guides, as something of an 'escape [from] everyday politicking and division' when speaking of conflict which, the pair argue, leads to 'empathy, catharsis and emotional enhancement' (2011, 792). It is an empathetic understanding, Tucker argues, that is rooted in the openness of guests to their experiences, but that is not fully guaranteed within dark tourist sites. This empathy is rather limited and risky and thus dependent upon the interactions between guide and guest (Tucker 2016). Whilst perhaps a little more colloquial, that Ibro does not share their story with 'assholes', but instead recognises when these therapeutic moments may occur speaks to the tours as spaces of connection within the knowledge making process. Guide and guest may connect to create a shared understanding of the lasting impacts of conflict but it is one dependent on their interactions rather than a guaranteed outcome of any tour.

It is not just having listening ears however, that functions to make the tours therapeutic for this guide. It is also important as to what is shared, in this case the telling or personal stories. These personal stories as previously discussed, are important to how guides construct their narratives

and also, many say, as to whether they enjoy the experience of tour guiding. Personal stories change the climate from a repetition of impersonal and cold statistics and facts into something more fleshy and human, making conflict more relatable to participants, but also crucially to the guides as well. As some guides discuss, doing their tours day after day can become 'quite mechanical' (Sanela), particularly when speaking about fairly detached history so that they sometimes struggle to remember if 'they told [the tour group] that or not' (Sanela). Much as Walcott-Wilson highlights in their study of former plantation tour guides, repeating traumatic statistics and stories, even if not one's own, can take a huge emotional burden (2020, 54), that as Katrikh discusses in the case of the Holocaust themed 'Museum of Tolerance', often requires distinct strategies to protect guides from the traumatising aspects of this repetition (2018).[33] For Sanela, telling the facts can become 'mechanical' as they say, it does not allow them to 'create an image of the Bosnia [they were] raised in' so that they use personal stories to connect with their guests and their own tours. Even if the stories are about conflict they have 'something good in them' they say, so that they too can feel good about the tours they produce. The personal becomes a key part in building connections between the guide and the tour and likewise guide and tourists, stepping away from the cold impersonality of facts and into something warmer and more human.

That the tours function as therapeutic sites is not something guides only told me, it is something they say they also tell tourists, making clear what the tourscape represents for them as guides. Such explicit telling allows for tourists to engage with ideas about the ongoing impact of conflict and consider how this may shape societies and individuals, therein deepening their understanding of experiences of the 1992-5 conflict. As Caddick discusses, with the signs of PTSD being mostly

[33] Whilst participants in neither Walcott-Wilson or Katrikh's studies had direct experiences with the events they relate I still think their work to be of relevance to the experiences of the guides. As both studies note, guides at these sites often have some kind of personal correction to the subject matter and draw on notions of post-memory when guiding through the sites even if they have no personal experience. The potentially traumatising impacts of sharing these stories is well documented in Holocaust studies regarding notions of intergenerational trauma, which as Hirsch shows is often considered akin (if not directly the same) as those who experienced the events first hand (Hirsch 2008).

invisible, it is often only by speaking out about these impacts that they become knowable to others (2023). Thus, by exploring how the tours may have therapeutic outcomes, the guides make explicit to their audiences that they still carry the memories and likewise potentially, the traumas of conflict with them, connecting past and present selves. The witnessing of the guide's narratives but likewise the enforcement of the continuity of conflict does not simply serve to educate on how conflict has a lifelong impact but works as part of a preventative strategy to never again allow such events to occur (Vollhardt et al. 2024). The guides mirror the words and actions of Zehra from the SULKS sewing group in Sarajevo that 'it's important for her and the others to talk "so that history does not forget"' (Helms 2013, 195). As one guide states in ending their tour, having spoken about the horror of conflict and the solace they take in tour guiding, 'Don't vote for people who will start wars' as this is 'the best thing we can do to help each other out' (Faris). Speaking of therapy makes it so that it is not so much conflict, but its impacts that becomes present within the tours, meaning tourists may understand the lasting impacts of the past to present day, educating them better on how conflict manifests and continues to manifest, creating a space of empathy and care.

As Tucker discusses however, this invocation and creation of empathetic spaces may have it limits within the context of dark tourism. As they highlight, there is the potential that moments of empathy become 'reified' to the point of becoming 'ethically hazardous' (2016, 37). Creating spaces of empathy, as they show through the work of Pedwell, may actually creative negative outcomes to understanding and knowledge as tourists both overly insert themselves into the narratives of others (Pedwell (2012b, p. 165) in Tucker 2016, 37), and likewise according to Miles, come to expect this creation of empathy so that it becomes at times, performative (Miles (2002) in Tucker 2016, 36). As one guide told me when speaking about why guides select certain stories and frame their narratives as healing or therapeutic, going into great deal about the traumatic they suspect an ulterior motive. They say they 'know why they do it, to get better tips' (Ibro). Of course in the competitive environment of BiH's tourism industry, itself positioned within a country that suffers

from an overall unemployment rate of 13%, rising to 33% among the youth ('World Bank Open Data', n.d.), having a unique selling point and a powerful story to tell is an important money earner. The tear-jerking nature of some stories is useful in generating empathy through guilt among audiences, that the guide argues leads to these 'better tips.' It is not a practice this guide says they engage in, as they do not want to tell a 'pathetic' story (Ibro), but it was one they suspected fellow guides of practising. As such the invocation of empathy and the affective aspects of the tours may be viewed as having negative outcomes for knowledge making in these spaces as it becomes a more commercial and performative action, focussed less on the contestation of international narratives of conflict and more, if anything, upon their confirmation.

In Ibro's statement regarding the importance *other* guides place on garnering 'better tips' from their audience we may also understand something of the fraughtness of framing war tours as knowledge making spaces. It is not necessarily that Ibro accuses other guides of *making up* these more heart-wrenching stories but rather, that in opting to tell these stories they create an unrepresentative view of what it meant to experience the conflict. As Ibro says, they are wary of telling a 'pathetic' story, either of themselves or Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole. They and many other guides take great pride in the resiliency of 'little' Bosnia and Herzegovina when faced (at the time) with one of the world's most powerful militaries (Alma). To paint BiHians as defenceless and deserving of *only* pity would do a disservice to the country and it's citizen's strength during wartime. Thus, to only show weakness and not strength would not, these guides feel, tell the full story. That this approach must be adopted however, as a result of economic pressures, points to the potentially negative impacts of tourism as a space in which to share narratives at conflict. It is not just a desire to tell the story of conflict that is at the heart of such endeavours, their financial aspects cannot be forgotten. A tour guide can only survive so long if their tours are not profitable and the telling of emotive stories may have the potential to turn the financial tides. Whilst many guides speak of the desire to balance money-making and history-sharing aspects, there are times certainly where one

may take precedence over the other and sometimes this is the need, as all of us have, to make money.

The dislike of the war tours as spaces of knowledge making that the above guide discusses is not a unique experience. Whilst this guide highlighted the tours' potential to be therapeutic and whilst many others echoed this, the therapeutic nature should not be thought of as a universal. There are many guides who state they do not like to do war tours as they are not 'enjoyable' and 'the stress isn't worth it' (Haris) and that they are 'tired and frustrated' of talking about war (Jasna). There are even those who refuse to do them now, being more established in the industry (Aida) and in fact, certain companies which have chosen to focus their offerings more on the positive and all but exclude the events of 90s from their narratives. For these individuals the constant references to and inhabiting spaces and narratives of conflict is, if anything, antithetical to therapeutic practices, causing them increased stress and unhappiness so we should never take as a given that war tourism may be a transformational practice. Much like Helms discusses in the case of a women's survivor organisation in Sarajevo, the constant practice of repeating and rehashing one's trauma may not always have therapeutic impacts (2013, 193–96), becoming like the guides say 'mechanical' (Amila). As Helms, highlighting that members of SULKS seemed to 'know what the journalist wants' there becomes a kind of set formula to giving testimony that may not really act as a form of therapy as it does not really allow for processing but rather, just constant (re)performance of the narrative (2013, 195). There is, as Ibro shows, the potential for the tours to act as a form of therapy but also the potential for (re)traumatisation so that they should not be thought of as entirely positive spaces of knowledge making.

Moving beyond this sense of narrative connection (or lack thereof), the vignette above also has much to teach us about the nature of space and place and the role this takes in the tours as a catalyst for knowledge making. Unlike with the experience conveyed in *The Jewish Graveyard*, here

we see how the guide actively avoids sharing a particular narrative in the space it happened. Tourist and guide face head on the tensions between historical memorialisation and the day-to-day operation of the city and the market space. Despite its history as the site of the largest massacre within the siege of Sarajevo, and whilst having a Sarajevo rose and a memorial wall with the names of the dead within the space, it is primarily a functioning market, selling fruits, vegetables and flowers to whomever passes by. It is a function that this, and other guides tell me, they seek to preserve, not taking their tour groups in there, or allowing participants to walk around individually, rather than guided with a narrative. Much as Light documents in the case of tours focussing on Romania's communist legacy, there is a discomfort or even a dislike by some locals regarding this focussing on what they view as darker or unhappier times that are 'dissonant towards the country's post-communist aspirations' (2000, 145). With a push towards peace and regeneration, combined with the almost 30 years since the end of the conflict, framing the market as a site of conflict and death likewise reflects a kind of dissonance between past and present. The guides do not 'want to bother' (Haris) the vendors and people going about their shopping, a tactic that is in part respectful and also practical, as other guides also note they have been shouted at by vendors in the past for bringing a 'big' group into the market and preventing paying customers from accessing their stalls (Alma).

Experiences like these teach visitors about how life continues and how the conflict space can be rendered not fully invisible but perhaps less visible with the passage of time as 'normal' life resumes again,[34] therein making such spaces reliant upon interpretation by a guide to render this history visible. Sarajevo and BiH more broadly is not a museum but a real place where narratives of conflict interact with the daily lived experience of the city. Sometimes to the extent that for some

[34] I use normal here in quotation marks to reference Maček's work on how citizens of Sarajevo would often carry on as 'normal' within the siege and make attempts at *normality* within wartime whilst also understanding the period as anything but normal. Everyday life both happened and did not happen concurrently within the siege (Maček 2009, 5).

the market's memorial identity is something of a hindrance or annoyance, with those visiting the space in this capacity perceived as getting in the way of normal business. In these scenarios the tourscape clashes against the cityscape as the two combine and, it seems, compete over the space, with one party concerned with it for commercial and the other, for historical, reasons. While in cases such as this, the tourscape may be attuned to discovering the 'ghosts, we are willing to see, hear and feel' (Ravio 1999 in Schäuble 2014, 3), and incorporate them into the narrative of the space, for others, these ghosts, or perhaps, those who seek them out, are less well received within the space. This marks both the tension of memorialisation itself but likewise the tension between cityscape and tourscape as the two intersect for markedly different reasons. The guides' lack of presence in that physicality draws attention to these ghosts for the tourist as conversely; by not occupying space they are able to help tourists better understand the connection between past and present. Sometimes and in contrast to the majority of tourist literature valorising the importance of presence (see (Noy 2004; Peyrefitte 2012)), it appears that **not** being there can also be a powerful catalyst of knowledge making.

26 Years Later

Today is my first full day in Mostar, meeting up with a guide friend of a guide/friend who, knowing that I already 'know the basics,' decides to take me on a more alternative tour of Mostar. For this reason they pick me up in their car as they plan for us to drive up into the hills above the city. Before this however, we head to more familiar ground, driving past the still derelict Hotel Neretva and the very much alive Hotel Bristol and then further to the 'ghost' apartment building.

The story of the two hotels, positioned on opposite sides of the river, they say, is emblematic of how Mostar has (not) been rebuilt and what the priorities of the local government are. They speak of both hotels as vibrant cultural and social spaces prior to the conflict, stressing their openness to <u>all</u> citizens of Mostar, regardless of ethnicity or religion and how the two were true sites of friendship and interconnection. Now however, after the war, there is so much

'politics' which means things simply don't get done. Local people, they say, receive no help from the government and so they have to work hard for themselves, pointing to the ice cream/waffle shop that has opened up across the street from Hotel Bristol. The owners, they say, asked for entrepreneur assistance from local government but received nothing.

The politicians, this guide says, being a little freer than they would be on an 'ordinary' tour, are 'no good.' Whilst they are happy to share this opinion with me, they say they do not normally, but that they still tell visitors about the difficulties of politics here in Mostar. They say that at the start, the Dayton Accords were a good thing as 'we needed peace' but now 'we need something different.' They speak about how the 'nationalist politicians all work together' to benefit each other. How sadly after not having elections for 12 years, everyone now votes for nationalists as that's the only choice. 'Here in Mostar we don't vote for someone's politics' but rather, for their ethnicity.

As proof of this enrichment he points to the apartment block we are now parking in front of. Half of the building is still charred and derelict but in places walls have been rebuilt, plastered, and painted and it is clear people live inside. 'After 26 years of waiting, people couldn't wait any longer' and so they moved back in, fixing the building for themselves as 'the government' wouldn't help. The 'billions of dollars of aid' that came into the country to help rebuild and reconstruct didn't go to the people but instead 'into the pockets of the politicians.' For this guide 'there are no good politicians' as there are still houses like the one we see here whereas they have built 'lovely houses for themselves on the coast, in the mountains or in the city centre' and that part of the problem is that here politicians 'don't have to declare where they get their money from' and whenever a law comes to parliament about it they 'mostly bury their heads in the sand.'

They then tell me again that while they might not share quite so strong an opinion with 'normal' groups they still think it's important to talk about politics in Mostar as otherwise tourists 'won't understand.' – Adem

Corruption was something of an evergreen and yet (for me at least) unexpected theme within the tours, coming up time and again. It was not that I did not know about corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina but rather, that I was not expecting the topic of corruption to come up when speaking about tourism. Whilst reflective of a certain naiveté on my part I think it reflects something of the unusual nature of the knowledge making space created within the tours and the necessity of it with regards to BiH. Because tourists are so often grasping for a sense of the 'real' and everyday experience of the country (Carter 2019), topics like corruption, which are so present in BiHian's everyday lives, inevitably come up.

The vignette thus points to a certain tension in the process of making knowledge about Bosnia and Herzegovina, when lived experience comes up against advertised descriptions. It is rare (or perhaps unheard of) for a nation's tourism advertising campaign to focus on the more negative aspects of said country. Whilst Bosnia and Herzegovina's current advertising campaign does hang on how 'unexpected' BiH might be to tourists,[35] it is entirely rooted in selling the positive and attractive elements of the nation ('Travel to Bosnia', n.d.). The standard message promoted when speaking about Bosnia and Herzegovina is that it is something of a 'hidden gem' waiting to be 'discovered' by those who come visit. It plays into a number of ideals regarding, much like the 19th Century travelogues of earlier visitors, an idea that Bosnia is somehow a purer and more simple way of life that we all seek to return to (Hadziselimovic 2002); that in its simplicity is its beauty. Of course, such ideas play into the romantic notion of an undiscovered and primitive land that may perhaps enforce the stereotype of Bosnia and Herzegovina as backward in some way, but they attempt to balance this by also showing 'modern' elements like clubbing and zip lining. The campaigns all note that the mod-cons of life are there but likewise that in BiH, one can find a purity that, they imply, has been lost in much of the rest of Europe.

[35] The current campaign is #landofbuts which does sometimes uncomfortably play to the innuendo of butt vs but, but which mostly focuses on the idea that you might not get a luxury option in BiH BUT you do get a sense of authentic hospitality when you visit (Robert Dacešin 2023).

Indeed, these formal campaigns are echoed in a large number of informal travelogues and blogs all citing the 'hidden' nature of BiH and how it is just waiting to be 'found' by tourists (Duranspahic 2015; Snow & Curt 2024; Ale Salvino 2022; Flying the Nest 2018; Dasovich 2018; PlacePeek 2021). There is an implication, again not unlike the 19th century travellers (West 1944; Asboth 1890; Balch 1908), that it should be visited now, before this 'authenticity' is gone, swept up with the hordes of visitors who, these bloggers imply, are surely coming soon but that you, watcher, would somehow not be part of. Overall, the idea is presented that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a space of beauty and natural wonder, a melting pot of cultures or a land perhaps lost to time, but where all such ideas are part of what makes it attractive to visit. Whilst there are also a number of videos asking whether it is 'safe' to visit Bosnia or not (Morris 2017; *Sarajevo - IS IT SAFE?* 2017), these are lessening with each year, and it is difficult to find any that have been published and widely watched in the last four years. Therefore whilst still present, they are not the first things one sees when looking up Bosnia or BiH on YouTube or Instagram. Even then, with these videos which focus on war and (un)safety is a remnant of the past, this is framed as something that is being moved on from, where efforts to rebuild are simply an issue of time, rather than hinting at more structural barriers within such a process. Corruption is rarely (if ever) highlighted as something one might see or experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the lasting negative impacts of the conflict remaining somewhat abstract and almost certainly without a perpetrator to be held responsible for the delay. Whilst it may be easier when reading academically or in the news to discover the depth of corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in travel literature, this is almost entirely absent either in official or unofficial tourist narratives.

The sight of the still abandoned hotel, or the only partially reconstructed apartment block is therefore a very visual disruption to such narratives and unlike in the majority of vlogs I watched, guides do not leave the reasons for this lack of reconstruction as ambiguous or simply a *matter of*

time until reconstruction is completed. More often than not, guides make an explicit connection between the lack of renovation/habitation and corruption. A corruption they largely attribute to the impacts of the post-Dayton governmental structures. In speaking about contemporary BiH they draw an explicit connection not just with the past but with the conflict, creating a far more robust narrative regarding the impacts of conflict today. It is not just, as the vlogs argue, that time needs to be taken for wounds to heal and buildings to be rebuilt but rather, that conflict has created a unique political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its three presidents and that that in turn has created issues within the country.

In this we likewise see a tension between the knowledge of the guides and the knowledge produced about BiH by the international community. Whereas the majority of vlogs (particularly travel vlogs) leave politics out of the equation, as Adem argues, when speaking about contemporary BiH, one 'must' speak about its politics. Of course, such largescale issues like corruption can be difficult to broach as a subject, particular given its somewhat nebulous nature and how often corruption manifests as a lack or absence. As so many told me, politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 'complicated' (Nejla, Alma, Haris, Aida) so that it is unsurprising and perhaps even welcome that relatively less informed vloggers and influencers stay away from the topic so as not to spread false information. Where the guides differ from vloggers who seem to shy away from this complication is instead, as with the guide above, in their desire to tackle this head on. It is absolutely 'necessary' to speak about politics and the complications of the post-Dayton system and the influence war has had upon BiH as otherwise you cannot 'explain the country' (Alma). Speaking about conflict becomes inevitable because how else can one 'explain why we have three presidents without talking about the war' (Alma's Grandmother). It is guides say, vital to their success as guides, as whilst explaining might make some people's 'heads hurt so they need an aspirin afterwards' (Dino) this is an important aspect of their job. Thus, an important aspect of knowledge making within the

tours is not so much about avoiding but rather addressing complexity as this is seen as a key function of the role.

It is not simply that this speaking about politics (and by extension corruption) is *necessary* for tour guides, it is also something sought out by a large number of tourists who come asking to know more about the political situation. Questions about politics are, Amila tells me, one of the things tourists 'care most about'. They want to know 'how Bosnia works' 'now and in the past'. With much of the materials tourists access before their trip largely ignoring or avoiding the topic of politics, guides have an important role to fill as gap fillers and thus, knowledge makers. It is however one they treat with great caution. As both Amila and Haris told me, they have learnt to be careful about they speak about politics with their guests to avoid accusations of 'bias' or prejudice. Sometimes tourists, Haris claims, '*think*' they know about the situation and try to use it to 'trip you up'. Amila whilst candid about speaking about politics says they have learnt to speak about it 'in a certain way'. Their knowledge making with regard to politics and the political situation is somewhat guarded, marking the difference between their roles as guides and their own individuality. Perhaps in a more personal setting they would be more open, as many of them, like Adem above, were with me. However, in the context of the tourscape there is a professionalism to be maintained that may sometimes also mean a distancing of personal opinion from the subject at hand. It is not that guides necessarily hide their feelings, but as per Amila's words, that they must share these in a 'certain way'. The tourscape as a space shapes the nature of knowledge making within it.

With regards to how it is that guides speak about such a nebulous concept as corruption, it can be hard to know how to begin. It is nearly impossible for example to show that the syphoning of money has led to a primary school *without* certain books or a hospital *without* a piece of machinery, particularly to a tourist. What tourists can see however are half-finished apartment blocks, hotels

or the unemptied bins in Mostar in a zone designated by UNESCO as an area of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.). One guide spoke with me about their 'shame' that this could be allowed to happen, leading to a build-up of bugs and bees that bothered visitors as they walked around. It is sometimes so bad in summer, the guide told me, that they 'didn't want to show guests around' (Nejla). Such a nuisance (both from the smell and the insects) cannot be ignored as they toured guests around so that the felt compelled to speak about corruption if only to explain why it is that their guests had to move away from the best photo taking spot for fear of being stung. The (unempty) bins are a very quotidian example of how corruption manifests that tourists have access to seeing. The houses and the bins give guides something concrete from which they can hang an abstract idea such as corruption. Even this however is reliant on a level of trust between guide and participant. As already discussed, BiH is a relatively poor country within Europe so that tourists must believe the lack of good public services (with regards to rubbish collection) comes as a result not of a lack of funding, but rather improper application of funds. Whilst a concrete example of a 'lack' of something, the guide's interpretation is, without the ability to verify in the moment, only an interpretation so that we must not assume all tourists are equally as trusting of such an interpretation. The guides make issues like corruption more concrete through the interpretation of the bins but it is, crucially, an interpretation of this symbolic object.

It is a strategy I saw guides adopting time and time again however, shifting from the abstract into the concrete through the use of certain objects or places as their knowledge making is very much rooted in the more quotidian and observable. As already discussed regarding the lack of focus on the facts and statistics of conflict and instead upon everyday experiences of it, the focus on bins and buildings represents a shift from the abstraction of how corruption might impact on people's everyday lives into something far more tangible. Their knowledge making is often rooted in this tangibility so that the abstract has very little space within their narratives. Even when speaking

about the corruption involved in BiHian hiring practices as motivated by the ethnicisation of politics via Dayton, I saw guides focus far more on themselves and their experiences of this structure, rather than leaving it as an abstract concept (Damir). They often spoke about how one needed to have a kinship/ethnic connection to get jobs but then shifted to explaining how by in working in tourism, they stepped outside these structures. One guide tells the story of how they could have walked into their father's job at the local bank simply because of their familiar connection as 'that's how it works in Bosnia' but instead, the tourists see that guide stood before them. This is because, they claim, they have made a choice to step outside of these ethnically motivated structures and tourism offers one of the rare spaces (they claim) to do this (Damir). Thus, much as by using the houses and the bins to speak about financial corruption, the guides use themselves to speak about corruption in employment, constantly shifting away from the abstract and into the concrete to make a knowledge that is far more tangible for their tourist audience, using themselves as an object of interpretation.

There is also an important point about pacing and the construction of tour narratives to be made with regards to when ideas about corruption are introduced. Whilst in the vignette above we began to speak about corruption almost immediately (bar a slight tangent about Jan Sobieski), this is not, Adem told me, what they normally do. Often discussions about corruption come towards the end of guide's tours (the half-inhabited building is normally the final stop for this guide, rather than their first) because they tell me, there is so much background that needs to be established to make this corruption intelligible. One needs to talk about the 3 presidents structure, and thus one needs to talk about Dayton, which also means one needs to speak about the particular conflict politics of that space to understand how such a system even began and before that, how it was that the conflict began. The guides very deliberately craft their narratives to make certain themes intelligible to their audience and structure plays an important part in this. Some stories cannot be told without

others coming before them. The guide's knowledge making is not accidental but instead deliberate and highly structured with the decision to speak about corruption being a single example of this.

The sight of the empty houses and the unemptied bins does however, have an inverse impact on the knowledge making of the guides. As already explored and as will be examined in further detail in the next vignette, much of the guides' narratives focuses on contesting ideas regarding BiH as backward (or perhaps even savage). These very visible signs of corruption and neglect stand in direct contradiction to narratives about BiH's growth and modernity and do perhaps contribute to the climate in which guides find themselves asked whether Bosnia and Herzegovina has 'full time electricity' (Nejla). Overflowing bins have the potential to create mistrust in the guide's narratives because surely here, at a UNESCO world heritage site, one would expect nothing less than perfect cleanliness and care. Such a tension speaks to two important aspects regarding the knowledge making of the guide. For one, that their knowledge making can only go so far and that oftentimes, cannot exceed the realities of the situation. There is no 'perfect' Bosnia and Herzegovina (like in the tourist brochures) and so one cannot make that image *in situ*. And secondly, that not every attempt at knowledge making from the guides will be accepted by visitors if they chose to interpret the 'evidence' around them in a particular way. Narrative is only a single piece in the puzzle of the guide's knowledge making and sometimes the environment may actually serve to work against, rather than with their knowledge making processes.

One final element that I think important to explore regarding what kind of knowledge is made about corruption is the location in which this knowledge making takes place. I noted real differentiation in what aspects of corruption were discussed depending on where I went in the country. Where in Sarajevo guides primarily spoke to me about the ethnic capture of jobs, in Mostar and Srebrenica discussions were far more wide ranging. In part I suspect that being in the (relatively) more affluent capital city some of the more physical signs of corruption are not visible

as there is sufficient money present to smooth over certain elements.[36] This impetus towards reconstruction appears less present in Mostar and whilst only a small fragment of the city, the proportion of still unrenovated buildings in and around the centre of Mostar is far higher than in Sarajevo, making the more physical expression of corruption far more frequent than in Sarajevo. In Srebrenica, where almost everything (bar the bakery) has been rebuilt due to a veritable flood of international aid money, discussions about corruption instead centred on the inefficacy of services and ways of living. Guides spoke with me about how money could only do so much and actually, what Srebrenica needed was a more robust administration and governance, something that money perhaps, cannot fix (Tarik, Edin, Mirsad). Thus, we see that, depending on where one was to go in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one might learn very different things about corruption and how it manifests. There is no universal expression or narrative that guides stick to, instead it changes and alters depending upon their context and environment. We cannot speak of one singular narrative about corruption (or really anything regarding the conflict) as there is no one single expression of it. In this we see the contingency but likewise diversity of knowledge making on show across various war tours. There is no one story to tell but instead multiple stories and thus, the capacity for the creation of multiple knowledges of conflict and its impacts, even if centred upon the same theme.

Look We're Modern

Whilst I have already alluded to the quote which constitutes the title of this vignette, I think it important to explore it a little more in context, understanding where and why it was uttered as part of the tour. Said by one the youngest guides with whom I met, born after the war had ended, I think it a more than fitting place to conclude my analysis.

[36] The city itself for example is almost entirely re-constructed both as a result of the demands of space and housing in a capital city and also the influx of international capital to rebuild post-95.

Having walked up hill from the Vijećnica (town hall), my guide and I had been chatting about the 1984 Winter Olympics, held in Sarajevo and which resulted in (among other things) the construction of the cable car we were now headed towards. They spoke of the 'surprising success' of the event, not just as a sporting competition but likewise politically, 'appeasing Cold War powers' and showing 'the Olympics could be friendly again' after the Moscow summer games. They spoke of Sarajevo as a place full of community, where its citizens cleared the streets the day before the games opened after a two-metre dump of snowfall and how its multi-religious sense of 'tolerance' was presented as a key part of its selection bid. Yes, the games 'was not the most perfect' in terms of the infrastructure but that it was so friendly and really 'put Sarajevo on the map,' 'open[ing] us up to the world.' While there was tourism before, it had been to nowhere near the same extent.

As the automatic doors opened into the station and they finished up their sentence they made a small but playful comment saying, 'look we're modern,' as we both stepped inside. Said in jest the comment nonetheless stuck out to me, even at the time, as I considered why they might have felt the urge to say it. I could not however follow up, as they were already in discussion with the cashier, showing and then having to tersely explaining the validity of their tour guide credentials. Whilst I, as a tourist, had to pay for the cable car, as a licensed guide, they did not. The problem however, they explained to me, was that working as an independent they lacked the status recognition agency guides had. The agencies, they said, 'have a kind of mafia' surrounding them as they like to 'take over,' making it a lot harder for freelancers who get pushed out. As a result, this guide mostly works with agencies overseas to get clients as it's difficult to have the same presence as the bigger agencies.

On the cable car itself our talk returned to the Olympics but also in part the reasons why the cars look so fresh and so modern. The cable car was one of the first things to be destroyed and the murder of the cable car attendant by the 'radical Serbian army' is marked by many as the start of the siege of Sarajevo. In destroying the cable car, the guide says, the 'radical Serb army' 'cut off the people of Sarajevo from a part of themselves,' almost as though they 'couldn't go home anymore.' So much so that when it was announced the cable car was to be rebuilt, they claim to have seen

'people crying in the streets' outside the Vijećnica. The 'middle class people who lived through the war,' that was who the cable cat mattered most to, they said.

Travelling up they spoke more about why it took so long for the cable car to be rebuilt (its official re-opening was in 2018), noting it was because the mountain was 'the front line' both in the war and, to a certain extent, even now as driving up you pass constantly between Republika Srpska and the Federation. It was a 'danger point' they said, both because of the mines and also the 'geography' and 'mental borders' on it. As they said this, we went over the remains of an old bunker and they sighed while identifying it as such. A reminder of old 'war' Sarajevo even within the modern and forward-looking cable car. – Alma

Beginning with the somewhat flippant titular remark about being 'modern,' such a vignette has much to teach us about the nature of knowledge making within the tours. Whilst at first glance it may appear somewhat subversive, upsetting understandings of how BiH (and even Yugoslavia) is now perceived and thus linking it better to the knowledge found within the first empirical chapter, I believe the comment has much more to show about the connected nature of knowledge making within the tours and the importance of interpretation to their craft. Within this vignette we observe how the guide interweaves stories of BiH's past with its present, connecting Yugoslav, conflict and contemporary events together, with the cable car featuring as something of a symbolic marker of the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina's more recent history.

The cable car itself is used as an object of knowledge making, a symbolic node around which the guide wraps the modern history of BiH. Its significance in the tours comes not so much from its purpose, as a means to move people up the mountain but rather, for the narratives that are attached to it. On the one hand, there is the idea of a historically 'modern' Yugoslavia wherein the guides may educate visitors about the history and development of the state. Yugoslavia after all was 'modern for decades' (Dino) and the cable car is used to demonstrate the development of BiH and

its interconnectedness with the globe as the host of the 1984 Winter Olympics. The cable car also has the dubious fame of being the point at which the siege of Sarajevo began, with the operator, Ramo Biber, often considered as the first victim of the siege (Dzaferovic 2018). And finally, its reconstruction is used to stand in for what BiH is once more becoming, a modern and developed part of the world. The cable car thus becomes a point at which to interweave narratives together, building a more connected picture of Bosnia and Herzegovina's history around it. On the one hand it could simply be read as a means of transportation but when guides expose its history to tourists, they allow for the building of a much larger story about Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yes, one may piece these narratives together after research and careful observation (there is a small plaque to Biber at the top station for example) but to blend the story together is dependent upon guides using the cable care as an object of knowledge making around which to build a narrative. They are responsible for crafting this moment of knowledge making that would not be so accessible without them present, interpreting tourists' surrounding for them. The guide's role as interpreters of the cityscape becomes more apparent in these moments, teasing out a knowledge and a wider history even here.

It's modernity and newness are positioned by some guides in contrast to the Vijećnica national 'library' and town hall which stands across the river from the cable car. Where guides such as the one above orient the cable car to demonstrate something of a return to 'normality' in BiH, the Vijećnica is often used to demonstrate the relative impossibility of this. It becomes a symbolic marker of the way in which conflict can cause irreparable change. As Maček notes, during the siege, many Sarajevans sought to *imitate* 'normal life,' 'the prewar way of life and social norms that had been lost amid the violent circumstances of the siege' (2009, 9). The return of the cable car thus symbolises, as Alma notes, the return of *normality* for many (middle class) Sarajevans as everything is returned to how it was before. In the case of the Vijećnica however because it was burnt down along with almost all of BiH's historic and archived texts, there can be no return to

normality (Riedlmayer 1994). The texts are lost forever and so it has become, as one guide labels it 'the only national library in the world with no books' (Dino). Its symbolism derives from the impossibility of returning to normality, acting as stark reminder of how conflict cannot be forgotten, even though the physical building has been repaired, its contents still remain absent, the relative lack or emptiness standing as a symbol of the ongoing impacts on conflict on modern day BiH.

To return to the ideas of Maček, as they write, 'while material destruction and mass killings can be caught on film or summarized in statistics, the destruction of cultural meanings is hard to express, as the very creation of meaning becomes difficult' (2009, 35). In using the Vijećnica as a symbolic object, much like the cable car, guides are able to convey something of the impossibility of conveying cultural destruction, an impossible loss where quantification (it is estimated over 2 million texts were burnt (Kurtic 2022)) does little to truly account for the meaning behind this. To speak of a library 'with no books' (Dino) transforms the Vijećnica into a symbolic object as it is impossible for it to perform its function. As such the guides may draw attention to the ongoing impacts of conflict within the country, making overt even the potentially imperceptible nature of loss, as whilst we may not view what is not there, tourists are still left to envisage and imagine this.

They may also in such a moment, expand ideas of conflict related loss itself and how sometimes a collective mourning may overtake and subsume the individual. Often what is remembered about the burning of Vijećnica is the loss of the books. What is far more rarely spoken about is the death of librarian Aida Buturović, shot by a sniper as they attempted to rescue books from the burning building (Riedlmayer 1995). In fact, whilst many of the guides with whom I toured spoke to me about the burning of the Vijećnica, not one of them mentioned Buturović. As Kidron discusses when speaking about the use of objects in Holocaust museums, these objects can have the effect of obscuring the person behind them (Kidron 2012). Focus rests on the object itself, not its owner.

The story being told is that of the object alone. What was almost certainly a personal tragedy for Buturović's family is largely obscured by the seemingly *more important* loss of Bosnia and Herzegovina's national archive. Whilst no guide framed it to me as such, I think the *forgetting* of Buturović points to a hierarchy of memorialisation within the conflict where individuals are often lost to the totality of events. It is not, I would like to stress, that I think the guides do not care about Buturović's death but that rather, in the grand scheme of things, and in the story they wish to tell to tourists, that her death is, regrettably, not so important. Returning to Ahmed's idea about what 'sticks' (2004), the almost complete loss of a nation's cultural and printed history appears far grander than one of 'only 11,000' to return to the ideas of an earlier vignette. Thus, much as guides might seek to inject more humanity into their tours, there is perhaps, only so much they can do, only so far that their knowledge making might go.

As a final note, this vignette also has much to teach us about the conditions under which the guides create knowledge within the tourscape. This guide is licensed, having taken the state exams and regularly kept up this license, paying the monthly €200 fee (the equivalent to a month's rent) to do so. They operate with a relative level of security which is not afforded to all their colleagues, many of whom work on the 'black' market, liable to fines if they are caught guiding without a license. However, even as a licensed freelancer, with the interaction between the guide and the ticket seller, we see the difficulties in occupying the space of the tourscape and thus, knowledge making space. Their independence is not encouraged by the social and business structures in which there are situated, which in BiH more often lean towards tour companies or large organised groups, than the smaller and more intimate nature of the tours this guide usually conducts. As another guide says, when touring large groups, 'in a group of fifty, maybe five will listen but in a group of five, everyone is listening' (Nejla) so that in these larger groups, the capacity to make knowledge between guide and tourist is often severely reduced. The big groups, they say, are often more concerned with 'taking pictures' (Nejla) so that they are not focussing so much on the narrative

being shared with them. But these of course, are the groups that make more money and are seen as more attractive to business. This certainly does not mean that there is no guarantee of knowledge making within such tours, but it does guides say, constrain the possibilities.

This difficulty in considering knowledge making as an integral role of the tour guide is likewise mirrored, guides say, by the structures of tour guide certification coming from the state. Whilst almost every guide I met with said they had completed the state exam, many of them claimed it 'didn't teach much,' being 'organised at an amateur level' (Amila) or that it 'teaches you things for children you know, like naming the longest river' (Dino). Not a single guide accredited their skill or learning to the exams, saying it was 'pretty useless, covering only 10% of what we learnt in practice' (Sanela & Ali) and in particular saying 'nothing' (Amila) about the war, despite this being such a huge chunk of tour guides provide in terms of the tours they do. Much as Light discusses with regards to Romanian tourism (2000) or Rivera in Croatia (2008), the state structure does not really encourage guides to understand or consider the 1992-5 conflict as a subject for tourism, despite its popularity. Therefore, when considering what narratives to share about the conflict, guides are largely left to their own devices. There are no guidelines to follow and likewise an implicit assumption that war tourism is not the sort of tourism they should be providing, thus, potentially, putting their work in tension with the state. As discussed in the previous chapter regarding the relative knowledge hierarchies in which the guide's knowledge is (likely) positioned by tourists, the (non)interventions of the state also must be considered as part the climate of knowledge making in BiHian war tours. It is not that the state is explicitly against war tourism (no guide ever spoke to me of repression), but that in choosing not to highlight or instruct guides as to what to say about the war, there is something of a vacuum created that guides must fill for themselves. On one level this serves to demonstrate the guide's expertise as knowledge makers as they are entirely self-organised and directed but it also opens the door to critiques regarding the

'validity' of their knowledge if they receive no institutional backing. It is not necessarily a viewpoint I share but an important line to consider regarding how their knowledge may be received.

Of course, whilst the lack of guidelines may allow for a great amount of personal creative control, which many of the guides highlight as important to them as their own 'boss' with 'no one telling me how to breathe' (Edin) it is not always seen positively. The relative lack of appropriate regulation or certification is viewed by many guides as a problem. As one guide says, they don't like it when they hear other colleagues 'making things up as it's not fair to the customer and actually, we can't know everything' (Ibro), acknowledging that the relative lack of training is creating problems for the reputations of BiHian tour guides and the relative trustworthiness of their narratives. This individual lack of integrity is viewed by many guides as a failing in the system as a whole and so many are working towards the creation of a Bosnian tour guide association to better regulate and educate tour guides on how to tour guide and examples of best practice (Amila, Sanela, Ali, Alma, aida). As so many told me, they learnt their craft from other guides and so it seems far more appropriate to these guides to set up an independent body as they understand themselves as best placed to know and to regulate their own industry. In this way we also see how the guides position themselves as experts not simply within their tours, but likewise are moving to do so as part of a wider national structure. They are knowledge makers and know themselves as such. I hope this thesis has gone some way at least, to demonstrate this. The guides already know, but now we too have seen, in some small way, how it is they do this.

Conclusion

In beginning this thesis, I asked the question as to how Bosnian and Herzegovinian tour guides used their tours as spaces of contestation. I set out to explore how exactly the guides use their tours to make knowledge about the 1992-5 conflict and more precisely, what strategies they use in order to do this. In telling the stories of the guides and my stories of experiencing and interpreting them, I have opened space for them to be seen and read as knowledge not just in their own right, but as a form of knowledge making valuable to International Relations as a discipline. In presenting these experiences as longer form ethnographic vignettes the reader is able (at least at second hand) to enter into the experience and participate within the process of knowledge making between guide and participant. They are given great access to the picture and see the impact of the tours as spaces of knowledge making. Such a conclusion came initially from a deep personal motivation, as it is a process I myself underwent, first going to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a tourist and finding myself "enchanted" by the guides and the place. In reality there is a fairly simple logic at the heart of this thesis: I learnt on these tours, not just about BiH and its history, but also about conflict and what it means to have experienced conflict, and thus, why couldn't anyone else. The goal of the project was therefore to push for scholars of IR to consider the benefits tourism, and particularly tourism in post-conflict spaces as a practice of relational and affectual knowledge making. I argued that tourism is representative of a new space in IR, where *locals* and *internationals* combine in a relatively organic process and in coming together, make knowledge of conflict. This knowledge making requires no set up or manipulation by the researcher, but instead takes place without and perhaps also for some guides, in spite of them. The guides know they are making knowledge, it is more a question of scholars of International Relations catching up to this fact.

I thus began from the premise that the guides *are* in fact knowledge makers. In my theory chapter I grounded their practices as part of a wider school of thought, leaning on post- and de-colonial studies regarding who might be considered as a knowledge maker (or not) and why. I argued that the work the tour guides do to shape international perceptions of BiH and of the conflict places them as excellent candidates in considering Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara and Readhead's concerns about how to meaningfully include local voices in scholarship on peace and post-conflict (2019, 217). As I explored, it is not just as a result of their identities as those who have experienced conflict that they may be considered as experts on how to communicate experiences of conflict. Rather it is precisely because of their positions as tour guides, who make knowledge about conflict that lends added credence to the idea that they might be thought of as conflict knowledge experts. I likewise argued that the format of their knowledge making, conducted through tour experiences also offered interesting avenues of study as it is situated outside of traditional scholarship (and its more traditional blinkers). That through its situated and interactional nature, tourism offers a space to explore a more relational and affectual knowledge than that more commonly found within academia. In looking at knowledge making within the tourscape I asked not if, but rather how guides did so. I therefore also took as a given that there was a deliberateness to their creation of knowledge within the tourscape so that is should be considered as a form of expert craftsmanship, rather than an accidental outcome.

As such it was important to ground the guides' practice within a wider literature that connected both my own practices of knowledge making and theirs, that of ethnography and in particular, walking ethnography. With the physicality of tourism being so integral to its understanding as a space of knowledge making; that by being there and seeing and sensing for oneself, one gains a particular kind of knowledge of a space, this had to be accounted for in the project as it is a core part of both my own and the guide's practice. To focus solely on ethnography in the more general sense would leave me vulnerable to the exclusion of texture and the physicality of feeling (and

learning) that forms a core part of the knowledge made within the tourscape. It was my body that moved through the space, sometimes with the guide, sometimes alongside and sometimes situated apart from them. My feet that I felt the ground through, my body that shuddered at certain moments, my lungs that tired up some of Sarajevo's more punishing hills. In physically inhabiting the space with the guides I gained a sense not just of the meaning of the stories they told but likewise, how it is to inhabit that space, gaining knowledge from my very presence. Accounting for this physicality was therefore core to the understanding of the tours as knowledge making spaces.

My physicality also led me to understand the affectual nature of the spaces the guides create and occupy within the course of their tours. I make the distinction here between create and occupy because I believe it was not always the case that guides deliberately crafted an affectual encounter for their participants. Yes, in certain scenarios, like in *The Jewish Graveyard* when Faris asked us to move through the space as they did when a solider, there was certainly a push to create a certain atmosphere. At other times however, I believe the guides *simply* move tourists into affecting spaces, not so much orchestrating, but rather, facilitating, an affective encounter like when viewing the only half reconstructed apartment block in Mostar. Whilst both experiences may be comprehended through reading or looking at photos of the spaces, in being present one undergoes a different process of knowledge making that tourism is a great facilitator of. The physicality of the tourscape and the affectual encounters it creates are a core part of its knowledge making.

I therefore conceived of the tourscape as a mediated landscape that guides tailored their tour narratives around but likewise used their tour narratives to illuminate. Whilst on the one hand this may lead to an understanding of the tourscape as an artificially controlled space wherein guides are selective about what sites they guide visitors to and what narratives they tell, I argued this did not impact on the knowledge making potential of the tourscape. As I contended, tour guides are

not alone in selecting certain narratives above others; journalists, academics and authors do so all the time. It is impossible to tell every story and thus the art of selection should instead be considered as a part of their craft. Guides look for and curate what 'sticks' to make impactful narratives for tour participants. Whilst they may leave out some of the more grisly or upsetting stories this should not be considered as an act of censorship, but rather, as an act of respect and attentiveness. Their work as guides is to find the most impactful stories and share them, therein creating knowledge of conflict without overwhelming or alienating.

With these caveats regarding the kinds of knowledge made (or not made) within the war tours I think it now time to turn to the actual nature of the knowledge making found within the guides' tours. In looking as to how this knowledge making occurred, I divided my analysis into three empirical chapters to explore the different 'kinds' of knowledge I observed across the tours and likewise the strategies used to approach and articulate these 'kinds' of knowledges. Whilst my distinctions between different 'kinds' of knowledge is perhaps somewhat artificial or arbitrary, in segmenting them I was able to bring clarity to my discussions and likewise understand how knowledge making functioned as a whole within the tours. It was not, as I showed, that there was one particular knowledge or narrative of the 1992-5 conflict that guides conveyed to their guests. Instead, the tours are far more complex and it was necessary to explore, rather than flatten this curiosity, admitting to ambiguity and liminality, rather than shying away from it. The richness of the description contained within my empirical chapters was at the heart of understanding the tours as spaces of knowledge making as through their richness came the ambiguity and liminality that make up the knowledge of the tourscape. It is not so much that anything is truly definitive as an object of knowledge making, but rather that in interpreting this ambiguity, the possibility arises.

Knowledge Making Strategies

In *Knowledge that Destroys, Subverts and Disrupts* I examined how the guides used their tours to directly contest and often discredit negative stereotypes they perceived among their guests. Given the potentially confrontational nature of such an undertaking I channelled particular focus towards ways that the guides often smoothed out such contestation, making it *palatable* to tourists so that they did not feel attacked but rather educated. I argued that this palatability was an important aspect of their knowledge making processes, allowing tourists to feel more comfortable within the tourscape and more open to having their views and assumptions challenged. The guides consciously create an environment in which contestation (might) be possible through using humour or trickery as deliberate strategies in their knowledge making processes.

In the first vignette *A Night on the Town*, I presented the story of a young man breaking curfew during siege to celebrate his 21st birthday. The vignette demonstrated the realities of life under siege and how *normal* life continued during war time whilst also upsetting certain perceptions about goodness and badness during conflict, particularly the supposed goodness of the international community. By telling a relatable story (that of over-doing celebrations on your 21st birthday) the guide created a point from which tourists might connect with conflict experiences by lessening the divide of experience between themselves and the subject of the story. Having established this more relational aspect the guide then opened the space to share knowledge of conflict and likewise, to contest ideas relating to the conflict, using the more relatable story to hang this from. The second vignette *You Should Watch Out,* looked at the multiple times guides joked with me about my personal safety in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Whilst presented as humour, the vignette displays the edge this joking often takes in BiH, looking at its gendered manifestations and how learning experiences may differ depending upon both guide and tourist genders and relationships. Whilst humour might be an important tool in creating camaraderie and a sense of shared knowledge, it can, as the vignette explores, also be exclusionary and malignant so that the guides should not be positioned as perfect knowledge making subjects. The final vignette *Only 11,000,* showed a guide discussing

how much it upsets them to have tourists be surprised about the number of deaths in the siege of Sarajevo. In the vignette we saw how knowledge making in the tours may take a more confrontational edge to police certain ideas and to foster what guides believe to be more *appropriate* understandings of the lived experience of conflict among their participants.

The second chapter *Knowledge that Builds and Enriches* looked not to unmaking, but rather to strengthening narratives of conflict by adding greater detail and understanding to pre-existing knowledge. As such, it looked at how guides use their tours to flesh out understandings of conflict. I interrogated the use of physical space to make real and concrete certain narratives, and how the exertion of the tourist body can make a knowledge that is not simply ephemeral but likewise, physical. Finally, it also considered the use of artefact and prop within the tours to understand a further aspect of physicality (in this case materiality) within the tours and how this contributed to knowledge making by adding visual or physical elements that narrative alone may be unable to express.

The Jewish Graveyard told the story of a guide's posting there and what it felt like to be a defender of Sarajevo. The analysis considered not just the implications of the vignette's content for knowledge making, particularly with regards to who is perceived to hold agency within conflict. It also explored the importance of pacing and silences as part of knowledge making within the tourscape and how the absence of narrative may be as instructive as the narrative itself. It took account of the utilisation of space and tourists' physical occupation of this to understand the embodied nature of knowledge making within the war tours, showing how this altered and deepened tourists' understanding as knowledge is no longer simply a heard, but likewise a felt experience. In the second anecdote *The ICTY* I explored how guides take advantage of external sources to strengthen or even evidence their own narrative claims. The analysis discussed the difficulties guides sometimes have in being believed by tourists and the strategies they use to

counteract this. It therefore considered what physical objects such as photographs or photocopies of ICTY judgements bring to tours, and their status more as symbolic objects rather than as sources to interrogate. As explored, it was not always necessary that the artefacts presented a complete (or even legible) picture of what they were intended to stand in for but rather their presence, and the potential for their application might contribute to tourist understanding within the tours. As the vignette demonstrated, there is no one hard and fast rule for how to make knowledge within the course of the war tours and likewise, no guaranteed strategy that would work for every guest. Instead, guides must come prepared with a variety of strategies to present (and sometimes defend) the knowledge they make on the tours so both guides and the knowledge they make should not be considered as homogenous or uniform.

The final chapter *Knowledge that Interprets and Connects* then looked to how knowledge of conflict is overlaid into the present day to both historicise and contemporise its impacts. Whilst not seeking to ignore or erase the history of conflict, the guides use physical space differently to how they do when enriching knowledge of conflict, moving this knowledge into a historic sphere. They ask tourists to read the tourscape not so much as historic setting but rather, as a contemporary and ordinary "lived in" space where yes, certain impacts of conflict may still resonate but which should no longer be thought of as solely framed through the lens of conflict. They therein shape understandings of what it means for a place to have experienced conflict but likewise, illuminate how these experiences are lived *with* so that time does not stop when conflict starts (or ends).

In *It's a Kind of Therapy* I interrogated how the guides think about their own tours and their potential benefits as therapeutic tools to gain a sense of their importance not just as knowledge making space for the international community but also for those who run them. The analysis picked up this theme to discuss in more detail the therapeutic potential, but also conversely the potentially damaging nature of running war tours that repeatedly expose guides to traumatic memories of

conflict, positioning the tours as imperfect spaces of knowledge making for those who conduct them. In *26 Years Later* we saw Adem discussing the uneven efforts of reconstruction in Mostar and making explicit links between this and a corruption they root in the conflict but extend to the modern day. The analysis considers how narratives such as this can concurrently historicise conflict but draw lines to contemporary BiH that may not be apparent unless illuminated by guides who have a greater understanding of current political dynamics. It therefore also delved into how such a contentious (with corruption often being connected with ethnicity within BiH) but likewise complicated subject is addressed and simplified (or not). And likewise, as to what point in time it is even *possible* to discuss this given the depth of knowledge required to make sense of it.

In the final vignette of the thesis *Look We're Modern* I discussed a relatively off-hand joke made to me by a guide as we travelled on the newly refurbished Sarajevo cable car. The vignette subverted contemporary notions of BiH as somehow backward or underdeveloped both now and also historically therein creating new knowledge about BiH whilst also making clear how reliant such an understanding likely is upon guides to illuminate it. Unless one begins with a deep knowledge of BiH it is unlikely that the cable car could stand for so much and so we see the power of the guides to craft knowledge, building unexpectedly grand stories out of a single object. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I also explored the climate in which the guide's knowledge making takes place and how they position themselves as knowledge makers within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The state and its licensing, guides argue, has very little impact on the knowledge these guides have and their ability to share with tourists about BiH as a whole, let alone the conflict. I therefore ended by looking as to how the guides are self-organising to institutionalise themselves and their practice as knowledge making through the formation of a professional organisation. Such an institution, they argue, will bring legitimacy and respectability to their craft and will not simply symbolise but rather demonstrate and formalise their positions as knowledge making authorities.

Lessons Learned

In writing this thesis I am certain that the war tours' value to International Relations as a discipline has become apparent, but I likewise think there is not harm in being explicit in what I think IR might gain in studying the war tours as sites of knowledge making. Of course, their worth is far greater than simply what the discipline might extract from them (this fact too I hope is self-apparent, but nonetheless bares stating), but there is likewise much that IR might gain. Whilst I am not the first to make this point (Debbie Lisle for one has a whole book on it (2016)), I think tourism is a wonderful space for seeing how knowledge making and narratives may crystalise between so called *local* and *international* populations. As Alma so rightly said, the average tourist will never 'meet the Bosnian Ambassador, but they will meet me' and so tourism opens up a space to understand how a much more quotidian and relational form of International Relations might be practised between people. People who, as I also argue, form a part in shaping international narratives and understandings of a country and its history, but who might not be considered as the typical/traditional subject of IR and its discussions. More than anything, I argued that the organic nature of interactions between guides and guests in tourism is a core part of its value as a space in which to study the formation of (post-) conflict narratives. In saying organic I here mean that no research or no project has brought these groups together to specifically work to 'make' knowledge. It is not necessarily an organised site of cultural exchange (although it could be) but rather something happening independently of any research agenda or organisational push. People go on holiday and (depending on their willingness/interactions) often gain a knowledge of the place they visit and a certain perspective of its histories. A perspective that is fairly unique to tourism.

It is not, as I argued, that I consider other forms of knowledge about conflict as inferior, but rather that in looking to tourism as a space of knowledge making about conflict, a new avenue is opened up. One that is far more rooted in the experiential, the relational, and the affectual. So that in looking to tourism as a space of knowledge making, IR might broaden it's understanding not

simply of what knowledge of conflict might contain but also, how this might be attained. As I have shown, the act of using the war tours to make knowledge about conflict in BiH is anything but accidental. The guides employ a wide variety of strategies to give their knowledge depth and richness, particularly regarding use of space and place, but also to make it both comprehensible and palatable. Knowledge of conflict is often uncomfortable because the very subject is uncomfortable, how the guides balance between educating and entertaining (this is a touristic interaction after all), reflects a great level of skill and craft. They do not simply throw facts, information, or even stories at their participants in the hope that something will stick. Instead, they carefully craft these narratives, considering their pacing, their environment and the established knowledge the tourists come with, with the aim of creating a richer knowledge making environment. Given such purpose and such skill, International Relations might look to the guides as expert knowledge makers on conflict, much as it does other scholars in the field.

In the understandings of some of the guides, and as this thesis as a whole has explored, sometimes the content of the war tours acts as a direct challenge to some international understandings of the conflict. Whilst I have also detailed and referenced times when the narratives of IR scholars seem largely in step with that of the guides, the guides themselves have identified and seek to work against a number of negative stereotypes (scholarly and not). The study of the tours thus offers up an interesting challenge to International Relations, making them all the more worthy of study. With the guides' narratives sometimes lying out of step with some international understandings of the 1992-5 conflict their value becomes twofold. Firstly, because they offer up a new perspective on the conflict but secondly, because they offer a space to study how this contestation of narrative might occur. They are an open space to learn from and it is a learning that is rooted in its experiencing, thus tourism provides a wonderful space for knowledge making and, with regards to Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, knowledge making about conflict.

As I have mentioned time and time again however, the war tours should not be assumed as a guaranteed space of knowledge making. Perhaps as a result of what makes them such interesting and unique spaces of knowledge making, that they are so experiential, relational and affectual, they are likewise, unreliable. No two people within them will have had the same experience and often the knowledge making is highly contingent, relying on how guide and guest interact and understand each other. If there is a willingness, then knowledge making might happen. However, without this willingness, there are absolutely no guarantees. I therefore end this thesis simply by saying "Go visit Bosnia and Herzegovina so you can learn for yourself."

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