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Imagining Peace: The Role of Historical Narratives in the Bosnian Peace Process

Rose Ramos

Though memoirs about the events surrounding the wars of secession that led to the breakup of the former Republic of Yugoslavia have proliferated within the last five or six years, two such personal narratives stand out because of their documentation of the long and difficult peace process in Bosnia-Herzegovina: David Owen's *Balkan Odyssey* and Richard Holbrooke's *To End a War*. The memoirs of both David Owen, the European Union's representative to and Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) and the co-author of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, and Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs and architect of the Dayton Peace Accords, reveal very different approaches to finding a peaceful solution to the war. I would like to suggest that the narratives that these key negotiators in the peace process read and ascribed to influenced the ways in which they imagined peace, how they carried out negotiations, and the eventual shape of their proposed plans for peace. It is through these narratives that we see Trickster at work in this peace process. This paper examines Owen's *Balkan Odyssey* and Holbrooke's *To End a War* to determine the Trickster's role in the extent to which particular historical narratives may have influenced their ability to imagine a plan for peace in Bosnia .

Not unexpectedly, their memoirs name some of the same histories. Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, published in 1941, appears in both books, as does Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*, published in 1993. Both of these histories, dressed up as travel narratives, hold to the view that the Balkans are an essentially violent and incomprehensible place where ethnic divisions are deep, memories are long, and differences are unbridgeable. Noel Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History*, published in 1994, appears only in Holbrooke's book, and it takes a less pessimistic view. For Malcolm, ethnic conflict is a part of Bosnian history, but there is nothing inevitable, impenetrable, or innate about it.

To begin with one of the books that Owen and Holbrooke have in common, Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* has by turns been praised as an epic masterpiece of travel writing, war propaganda, history, and psychoanalysis and derided as a moralistic, racist, pro-Serb treatment of Yugoslav history. Sweeping in its scope, the 1100-page book that represents the pinnacle of West's writing career

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has achieved legendary status as one of the definitive sources on Yugoslavia, and its influence on contemporary perceptions of the region, however indirect, is far-reaching. As journalist (and fellow travel writer) Brian Hall notes in a 1996 article about West for *The New Yorker*, "For English and American journalists who write about the region, the book dominates all other secondary sources" (76). According to Hall, the book was originally published to critical acclaim and sold respectably well, but after World War II, it became a work that "everyone had heard of...but few had read" (74).

During the wars that led to the eventual breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* began selling in large numbers again as journalists, diplomats, academics, and laypeople alike tried to understand the rapid dissolution of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. According to Hall, 21,000 thousand copies were sold in the U.S. alone between 1993 and 1996 (76). *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon's* appeal is understandable. West's compelling prose is expressive, passionate, and dramatic in its descriptions of the historical, physical, and psychological landscape of the Balkans. As yet another influential journalist and travel writer Robert Kaplan ecstatically writes in *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*:

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon is, like Yugoslavia, a sprawling world unto itself: a two-volume, half-a-million word encyclopedic inventory of a country; a dynastic saga of the Habsburgs and the Karageorgevitches; a scholarly thesis on Byzantine archaeology, pagan folklore, and Christian and Islamic philosophy. The book also offers a breathtaking psychoanalysis of the German mind and of the nineteenth-century origins of fascism and terrorism. It was a warning, of near-perfect clairvoyance, of the danger that totalitarianism posed to Europe in the 1940s and beyond (4).

The appeal of West's book comes from this kind of comprehensive approach. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is "the work in which Rebecca West formulated her views on religion, ethics, art, myth, and gender" (Glendinning 164) set against the violent backdrop of Yugoslavia. It is also a work which does the work of Trickster in the formulation of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan.

West begins *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* with a justification of its subject, a narrative of how her need to write about Yugoslavia came about. She reveals that she was in the hospital recovering from surgery when she hears news of the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia in the streets of Marseilles. Upon hearing this news, it seems to her "inevitable that war must follow" (2), and it would have, she believes, if the Yugoslavian government had not maintained strict control over its population and refrained from any reaction that would have provoked its enemies. Explaining to an uncomprehending nurse that "assassinations lead to other things," she grows exasperated and apprehensive: "I sighed, for when I came to look back on it my life had been punctuated by the slaughter of royalties, by the shouting of newsboys who have run down the streets to tell me that someone has used a lethal weapon to turn over a new leaf in the book of history" (3).

Couching Balkan history between these political assassinations, West

describes the Slavs as "a people, quarrelsome, courageous, artistic, intellectual, and profoundly perplexing to other peoples, who came from Asia into the Balkan Peninsula early in the Christian era and were Christianized by Byzantine influence" (4). After this time, "they founded violent and magnificent kingdoms of infinite promise in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia, but these were overthrown when the Turks invaded Europe in the fourteenth century..." (4). The Slavs on the western borders of the Balkan Peninsula, West continues, were oppressed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire "largely because the German-Austrians felt a violent, instinctive loathing of all Slavs and particularly the Czechs, whose great intelligence and ability made them dangerous competitors in the labour market" (5). She goes on to explain how Austria-Hungary had oppressed the people of Serbia and Bulgaria, who had overthrown the Turks in the nineteenth century, and "tried with especial venom to destroy their languages, and created for themselves an increasing amount of internal disorder which all sane men saw to carry a threat of disruption" (5). Violence as a response to political, social, and economic oppression in the region is not only a natural response by the Slavs; it is also, for West the rational response. It is "impossible to think of the Balkans as gentle and lamb-like" (21), she concludes after her brief Yugoslav history lesson. In West's view, violence as a means of resolving conflict, particularly those of a political nature, is simply the Balkan way.

As troubling as her stereotypical vision of the Balkans as an inherently violent place, her equally disconcerting pro-Serb bias is evident throughout her narrative. She sees in modern Belgrade "a conscious attempt to restore the glories of the medieval Serbian Empire... The memory of the Nemanjas and their wealth and culture was kept alive among the peasants, partly by the Orthodox Church, which very properly never ceased to remind them that they had once formed a free and Christian state" (519). The Serb national ballads also kept alive the memory of the Serbian Empire. These collectively composed poems contained:

the full force of the artistic genius of the nation, denied all other outlet. and the late eighteenth century, which marked the decline of the folk song in the West, here brought it new strength, for the nationalist and liberal ideas popularized by the French Revolution found their perfect expression ready-made in the laments of this enslaved people. The Serbs who took part in the first rising against the Turks in 1804 were, therefore, nothing like primitives who were simply revolting against an immediate injustice. That revolt they were making; but also they were the heirs of a highly developed civilization, which they intended from the first to create anew (519).

That West is sympathetic to this re-creation of the Serbian Empire is also seen in her extended retelling of the plot to assassinate Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip that is the central story in the book's section on Bosnia. Gavrilo Princip is a tragic figure, a martyr for the cause of Serbian nationalism. Of the assassination itself, West acknowledges that it was an act that led to the killing of millions and the mindless destruction of the Great War. "But to those who look at it on the soil where it was committed," she says, "and to the lands east of that, it seems a holy act of liberation; and among such people are those whom the West would have to admit are wise and civilized" (381). Moral judgment of that act of violence is not possible for West. The more one tries to understand it,

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the more incomprehensible it becomes. She explains: "The soul should choose life. But when the Bosnians chose life, and murdered Franz Ferdinand, they chose death for the French and Germans and English, and if the French and Germans and English had been able to choose life they would have chosen death for the Bosnians. The sum will not add up" (382). Recognizing that the sum does not add up reveals a recognition of Trickster-like activity within the Balkan world as viewed by West, even though she does not name it as such.

The belief that the Balkans are inherently violent, impossibly complex, and morally convoluted is passed on to the many journalists who were trying to understand and explain the complexity of the wars that had broken out in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. One such journalist is Robert Kaplan, who had used *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* as his guide through Yugoslavia. In fact, in *Balkan Ghosts* he claims, "I would rather have lost my passport and money than my heavily thumbbed and annotated copy of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*" (8). He even sees his journey through the Balkans as analogous to West's, for just as she had visited Yugoslavia to understand the nature of the "looming cataclysm" (8) that was to become World War II, so he, too, had come to the region to understand the nature of another looming cataclysm in that region as the Cold War was coming to an end. "Politics in Yugoslavia," he pessimistically declares, "perfectly mirrors the process of history and is thus more predictable than most people think" (8). Perhaps at least some of this predictability is a manifestation of the "transformation of the meaningless into the meaningful associated with Trickster" (Jung 256).

In *Balkan Ghosts*, Kaplan, like West, positions the ethnic conflicts that were the ostensible cause of the Yugoslav wars of secession in the context of the division between the ancient Holy Roman and Byzantine empires and the division between the influence of Christian Europe and Muslim Ottoman Turkey on the people of the Balkans. For instance, he discusses the ethnic tension fostered by the exploitative practices of the Austro-Hungarians on their Slav subjects. Revolutionary movements against the Habsburgs were put down with mass executions, and divisive plans such as giving the Serb minorities in Croatia special privileges in order to increase ill feelings between the Croats and Serbs. The Habsburgs, after all, reacted to Bosnian Serb separatist, Gavrilo Princip's assassination of Franz Ferdinand by arresting and executing hundreds of Orthodox Serb peasants who had nothing to do with the assassination. They then declared war on Serbia, which started World War I. The Habsburg empire, Kaplan concludes, came to an end in the same way as the Ottoman empire: "amid a welter of cruelties directed against a host of small nations, struggling to break free" (27). This underscores his thesis that Yugoslav politics mirrors its history, and is therefore predictable.

At the end of *Balkan Ghosts*, Kaplan compares the decline of the Soviet Empire with the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Enver Pasha and the Young Turks became Mikhail Gorbachev and his supporters in the Soviet reenactment of the fall of the Ottoman Empire. They "dictated reform from the top down, hoping to preserve the empire, in looser form, through dramatic liberalization," but, Kaplan emphasizes, "the plan was overpowered by centrifugal forces that drove subject populations to demand full independence; and by fears of people in the streets, who wanted to retreat backward into the past rather than to advance forward into the future" (286).

The Young Turk Revolution, though, made the Young Turks themselves irrelevant like the Soviet reformers, so Atatürk came forward with his vision of a new, compact Turkish nation that was free of the responsibility for its empire's outlying lands (286). A similar contraction, driven by such centrifugal forces would now be required to save the Balkans: "Conflicting ethnic histories, inflamed by the living death of Communism, had made the Balkan sky so foul that now, sadly, a storm was required to clear it" (287).

Rozen correctly describes Kaplan's dark view of the Balkans as "a place riven by such innate, historical and profound ethnic and religious hatreds, that a brutal war and ethnic cleansing seem almost inevitable" (online). This pessimism about the region that *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* inspired extends beyond the realm of journalists and travel writers. Filtered through the work of contemporary writers, it shaped the policy of the Clinton administration toward the Balkans in general and toward the war in Bosnia in particular. President and Mrs. Clinton, as well as Colin Powell (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time) are widely reported to have been strongly influenced by Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*, which had been published in 1993, a year after the fighting had broken out in Bosnia (Rozen, online; Drew 157; Holbrooke, 22; Owen, 162). Elizabeth Drew's account of the Clinton presidency explains that after reading Kaplan's book, whose overriding theme was that tribal differences and ancient ethnic hatreds had been played out for centuries in the Balkans, and the barbarity with which those differences were fought out, guaranteed that the violent conflict would continue for centuries into the future. President Clinton decided not pursue the policy of lifting the arms embargo against the former Yugoslav republics but instead to use air strikes, against the Serb positions on the ground to lessen their military advantage, to try to hasten a settlement. As members of Clinton's foreign policy team were trying to promote the policy of "lift and strike" to the European Union, the President changed his mind about intervening in the war. Les Aspin, then Secretary of Defense, heard the President discussing *Balkan Ghosts* and its claim that "these people had been killing each other for centuries" and reported back to his colleagues that the President was "going south on this policy. His heart isn't in it... We have a serious problem here. We're out there pushing a policy that the President's not comfortable with. He's not on board" (Drew 157). Thus, we see West's text performing the work of Trickster in two ways: as a destabilizing force within the Clinton administration and concurrently as a stabilizing force in the President's decision to employ air strikes against the Serbs.

Many critics of the Clinton administration's increasing confused policy on Bosnia blamed Kaplan for emphasizing "ancient hatreds" while ignoring the significant rates of intermarriage and the sophisticated, non-religious, and multiethnic qualities that typified Bosnia and much of the rest of Yugoslavia after World War II. Nevertheless when he was writing and reporting the stories that were to become *Balkan Ghosts*, Kaplan's aim was to illustrate the power that the "ghosts" of subdued animosities related to historical injustices in the region seemed to have on certain segments of the population during the final days of Communism (Rozen, online). He did not intend to be comprehensive. But by the time the book was published, "It mattered that members of a cosmopolitan civilization that lived and breathed and supported multiethnicity—a population largely ignored in the book—were being forced out of their homes and murdered by those fighting for fascist, ethnically 'pure' states

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carved out through genocide" (Rozen, online). The region's troubled and violent history was important, but was not helpful in finding a solution to the current crisis. As Anthony Lake, Clinton's National Security Advisor, stated, "In a policy sense, you want to be aware of that, but you look at a mother who's lost a child, and it's cold comfort to her that this has been going on for centuries" (qtd. in Drew 143-144).

Kaplan, however, now justifiably claims that he never meant for his book to be used as a guide for U.S. foreign policy: "When I was reporting *Balkan Ghosts* in the 1980s, the Balkans were like Ethiopia, an obscure country. The idea that any policymaker would read it, I didn't even consider. I saw it purely as an entertaining journalistic travel book about my experiences in the 1980s" (qtd. in Rozen, online). In spite of these claims, Kaplan's conclusion that in the Balkans, "men have been isolated by poverty and ethnic rivalry, dooming them to hate" (qtd. in Rozen, online), is both undeniable and undeniably reliant on West's interpretation of Balkan history in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, and it clearly affected America's policy toward Bosnia during the war. So, West's text tricks the U.S.'s policy through the medium of Kaplan's travel book, whether Kaplan intended such a tricking or not.

The notion that the people of Yugoslavia are condemned to hate each other that was put forth by West and advanced by Kaplan not only influenced the policy toward the war in Bosnia, but it also played a role in shaping the peace process. Two key negotiators in the peace process that eventually led to the end of the war in Bosnia also had at least a passing familiarity with West's book. Both Owen and Holbrooke refer to West's book in the opening chapters of their memoirs of their respective roles in the peace process. Owen, at the beginning of the war, "had dipped into, rather than re-read, Rebecca West's account of her travels through Yugoslavia in the late 1930s. On every page I had found a labyrinth of history, weaving a complexity of human relations that seemed to bedevil the whole region" (Owen 6). That Owen is sympathetic to West's view of Balkan history is evident from remarks in his introduction to *Balkan Odyssey*:

History points to a tradition in the Balkans of a readiness to solve disputes by the taking up of arms and acceptance of the forceful or even negotiated movement of people as the consequence of war. It points to a culture of violence within a crossroad civilization where three religions, Orthodox Christianity, Islam, and Roman Catholicism, have divided communities and on occasions become the marks of identification in a dark and virulent nationalism (3).

The genocidal acts and forced migration of entire groups of people that were taking place in Bosnia were simply another episode of violent nationalism in a place where such things were a natural, regular feature of history.

Another example of this attitude occurs when Owen describes the Croatian government's attack on the Krajina and the Bosnian Serbs' attacks on Zepa and Srebrenica between May and August 1995, as a "Balkan solution" (353). This suggests that once again, this is the way these people do things here: "A Balkan solution had been imposed on the battlefield, tearing up the Contact Group map,

destroying the Zagreb 4 plan and raising fundamental questions about the relevance of any of the various involvements from outside the region since 1991" (353). Not only is violence against one ethnic group by another the Balkan way, its mere existence casts doubt on the relevance of Western involvement in the peace process. While Owen does not seem to hold to West's pro-Serb rhetoric (he finds members of all three combatant parties despicable and deceitful), he clearly embraces her belief that the Balkans is a region doomed to conflict and ethnic hatred and that intervention from external powers would likely amount to little, unless that external intervention accommodates ethnic divisions.

This belief is underscored by his criticism of the European Union's early decision not to allow changes of the internal borders of the constituent republics of Yugoslavia if those changes could be agreed upon: "Incomprehensibly, the proposal to redraw the republics' boundaries had been rejected by all eleven other EC countries" (33). The insistence of maintaining the internal boundaries would be incomprehensible if one listened to the few who wanted to divide the country along ethnic lines, but not so incomprehensible to those who had been living along side their friends and neighbors in peace for at least two generations.

The plan to allow changes to the internal borders of Yugoslavia had been rejected for good reasons. The boundaries of the republics could not be redrawn to any group's satisfaction because there were so many different pockets where an ethnic group would have made up the minority of the national population. Moreover, these pockets were not geographically connected. Such divisions, many argued, would have also legitimized the practice of ethnic cleansing, and the patrolling and monitoring of so many borders would have been impossible. Owen, however, believes that violence and nationalism are the strongest traditions in the Balkans and rejects these reasons. He cites the "velvet divorce" of the Czech-Slovak separation in 1993, stating that "there is an alternative to staying locked in a loveless, even antagonistic marriage. All over the world there are peoples who believe that their nationality would be better expressed by living in an independent state separate from that in which they are living" (33-34).

This metaphor of a multi-ethnic Bosnia as a loveless marriage points to Owen's assumptions about the region that are inspired by, or tricked by, West's vision of Yugoslavia. Its turbulent history would lead inexorably to a turbulent future, so there is little point in trying to hold the country together in a meaningful way. Unsurprisingly, though complying with the EU's guideline that the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina should remain as they were before the war, Owen helped to engineer a peace plan that would divide the territory along ethnic lines into ten highly autonomous cantons with a weak central government (Silber & Little 276). The Vance-Owen Peace Plan was a "three-part package comprising ten constitutional principles, a detailed cessation of hostilities agreement and a map" (Owen 87). Willingness to fragment the state in such a fashion and to impose new internal borders on the Bosnian population, members of which had intermarried and had lived side by side with no regard to ethnic or religious background for two generations, parallels West's insistence on the ethnic divisions in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. This reveals Trickster's masking function; the volatile hatreds are highlighted while the loving marriages are masked.

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Owen disingenuously states that he and Vance were "careful not to label any provinces Serb, Croat or Muslim" (90), but on the very next page he talks about how "provinces with a clear Serb majority would represent 43 percent of the total land area of Bosnia-Herzegovina" (91). When Bosnian president Izetbegovic rejects the map as unprincipled and unacceptable because it legitimized ethnic cleansing and essentially prevented the return of refugees, Owen's response is that in an ideal situation, "a case could be made for many of his wishes; but in the mess that was then Bosnia-Herzegovina his objections, if maintained, represented a totally non-negotiable position. What was more serious was that he probably knew that if he persisted, he would destroy the VOPP..." (92). Once again, in Owen's view, the ancient ethnic hatreds in which the region is hopelessly and inherently mired, overrides a genuine desire for a multi-ethnic state.

Owen, though, reveals that he is not even convinced of the existence of a multi-ethnic culture in Bosnia because that identity was developed and established under Communism. "This identity... was sadly never underpinned by democracy.... There is disagreement as to how well integrated and multi-ethnic its peoples' lives had actually become and the evidence is patchy" (38). It was the Sarajevan intellectuals who "wanted the world to know the tolerant side of Bosnia-Herzegovina; they were proud that it was the crossroads of civilizations, where Muslims, Orthodox and Catholic religions mingled, home to Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Jews and Gypsies" (38). He claims that it was Bosnia-Herzegovina "which inspired... Cyrus Vance and me to try to keep the citizens of this newly recognized country together in one state" (38). Yet two pages later, he says that by 1992, it was "clear... that the challenge facing us in the CFY was to devise forms of decentralization and autonomy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Croatia and in Kosovo that would contain the legitimate nationalism of Croatian and Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians, and ensure respect for Albanians living in Macedonia" (40-41). At the very least, Owen seems to think of a multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina as a dream conjured up by intellectuals. Curiously, he does not seem to acknowledge the possibility that the violent and ethnically divided Bosnia-Herzegovina is also a **((Trickster))** fiction conjured up by West, Kaplan, and nationalist/separatist propaganda.

In contrast, Holbrooke, in *To End a War*, while acknowledging the difficult and tortured history of ethnic and religious conflict in the Balkans, is less prepared to accept West's (and Kaplan's and the nationalist/separatist's) vision of the region. "It was, of course, undeniable that the ethnic groups within Yugoslavia nursed deep-seated grievances against one another. But in and of itself, ethnic friction, no matter how serious, did not make the tragedy inevitable--or the three ethnic groups equally guilty" (23). West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* and Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* are, for Holbrooke, merely examples of "bad history," that advanced the theory that "'ancient hatreds,' a vague but useful term for history too complicated (or trivial) for outsiders to master, made it impossible (or pointless) for anyone outside the region to try to prevent the conflict" (22). Western officials and politicians who espoused this theory seemed to Holbrooke to use it as an excuse for their own hesitation to seek solutions to the problems in the region. Holbrooke seems to recognize the Trickster at play in the West text and in doing so, refuses to play along.

As an antidote to the bad history of West and Kaplan, Holbrooke offers Noel Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History* to his readers and even implies in a footnote that had this book appeared earlier, it might have convinced Western leaders to intervene in Bosnia sooner and more decisively (23). Unlike Kaplan's book, which was "only" a travel narrative, Malcolm's history of Bosnia deliberately sets out to persuade its readers that Bosnia had a distinct history that indeed embraced multi-ethnic ideals and that the war that had broken out in 1992 was the result not of deeply rooted ethnic hatreds, but of deliberately provocative actions of criminal politicians.

In the introduction to *Bosnia: A Short History*, Malcolm explicitly states this view:

The history of Bosnia itself does not explain the origins of this war. "The biggest obstacle to all understanding of the conflict is the assumption that what has happened in that country is the product--natural, spontaneous and at the same time necessary--of forces lying within Bosnia's own internal history. That is the myth which was carefully propagated by those who caused the conflict, who wanted the world to believe that what they and their gunmen were doing was not done by them, but by impersonal and inevitable historical forces beyond anyone's control (ix).

He does not deny that hatreds and hostility existed in Bosnia, but he maintains that they were more often attributable to economics than religious or ethnic differences. This hostility fluctuated with changing economic conditions and was subject to external political pressures (xi).

According to Malcolm, the supposedly ancient ethnic hatreds were the products of history rather than innate features of the Bosnian people. Economic causes of hatred were diminished by reforms in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and religious causes of hatred were moderated in the second half of the twentieth century by general processes of secularization. "For most of the period after 1878, the different religious or ethnic communities in Bosnia lived peacefully together: the two major episodes of violence--in and just after the first world war, and during the four years of the second world war--were exceptions, induced and aggravated by causes outside Bosnia's borders. And since the second of those terrible episodes, two whole generations have grown up, the majority of the Bosnian population, who have no personal memories of the fighting in that war, and no particular desire to revive it" (xi).

That Holbrooke embraced this version of Bosnian history is illustrated by the eventual shape taken by the Dayton Peace Accords, which officially ended the war in Bosnia and of which he is the chief engineer. Like the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, the Dayton Accords did not change the pre-war borders of Bosnia. Rather than dividing the territory into ten ethnically defined cantons, Dayton divided the country into two regions (the Muslim-Croat Federation with fifty-one percent of the territory and the Republika Srpska with forty-nine percent) that were to be joined under a central government with a single constitution that would ensure democratic elections of national and local representatives, the right of return for refugees, and respect for

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human rights (US Dept. of State, online). Also significant about the agreement is that the long-besieged capital city of Sarajevo, which became *the* symbol of multiculturalism and tolerance in Bosnia throughout the war, remained united in the Muslim-Croat Federation, despite the initial desire of the Serbs to divide the city between the two entities. In previous peace plans, including Vance-Owen, the most the parties were able to agree upon was placing Sarajevo under international administration, but the Bosnian government and Holbrooke's team insisted that it remain united. After the negotiations, Haris Silajdžić, the Bosnian prime minister, recalled Holbrooke's saying that "we shall not create another Berlin Wall at the end of the twentieth century" (qtd. in Silber & Little 371).

Despite these successes, Holbrooke is aware of the problems with the agreement, the most serious of which is that it left two opposing armies in one country out of necessity because NATO would not agree to disarm the different sides. The partition of the country is also problematic, but less so than strict division along ethnic lines, which would have induced mass migration of refugees as minority groups would be forced out of their homes. Migration would have caused violence to flare up again over land and houses (363). Even so, Holbrooke is not against a voluntary division of Bosnia, as long as it were the wish of a majority of each of the three ethnic groups in the country. Like Owen, he cites the peaceful breakup of Czechoslovakia, but a separation would have to be the result of '*elections free of intimidation*' (emphasis in the original), which simply was not possible after the war (364).

This desire of Holbrooke's to keep Bosnia united unless and until the majority of the population can decide freely for themselves whether to partition their country is in stark contrast to Owen's desire to impose ethnic divisions as a condition of a peace plan. These differences not only, once again, underscore the diverging views of nature of Balkan history, but also how *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* had performed as Trickster in the forging of the Vance Owen Peace Plan.

Despite initially being subjected to the same descriptions and analyses of the Balkans, these two men had very different attitudes and approaches to negotiating a peace agreement. How did simple history lessons lead each of these negotiators to different conclusions about what peace in Bosnia would look like, about what peace in Bosnia would even mean, and how the peace process itself should unwind?

The assumption behind these questions is that, simply put, stories matter. They matter because they allow a group of people to imagine their collective identity. The history that contains stories of conquest, colonization, resistance, oppression at the hands of the fascist Croat Ustashe, matters to Serbs who believed they had a right to "ethnically cleanse" lands occupied by Muslims and Croats in order to create a Greater Serbia. Stories matter to Croats who believed that Bosnian Muslims were really Croat Catholics whose ancestors had been forced to convert at the hands of Ottoman Turks. Stories matter even, and perhaps especially, to those who refused to identify with a particular ethnic or religious group and who refused to give up on the possibility of a multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is because stories matter,

that we must come to terms with the archetypal character of the Trickster. Trickster is a regular in a narrative's cast of characters. So, we should not be surprised that Trickster is at work in the construction of the Bosnian narrative. In the construction of this narrative, West's text is taken into account by Owen and by Holbrooke; however, whereas Holbrooke does not allow the negative representations in the text to sway him, thus denying Trickster's power in the Dayton Accords, Owen does allow such representation to sway him, promoting Trickster's power in the Vance Owen Peace Plan.

Just as stories matter to those who both fought in and resisted war, stories were important to the imagination of the restoration of peace in the region. Holbrooke is no less swayed by his history of choice, that represented in Malcolm's history of Bosnia, than is Owen by the history represented in West's epic travel narrative. If Rebecca West's interpretation of history of Yugoslavia relies too heavily on myth, Noel Malcolm's is perhaps too quick to dismiss the powerful hold that past conflicts, wrongs, and humiliations have on the present--no matter how many generations removed. As ethnic conflicts have proliferated over the last decade with the end of the Cold War, leaders and negotiators aiming to resolve those conflicts would do well to keep in mind that the ability to imagine a just peace requires a comprehensive and balanced view of the histories of the parties in conflict. However, peace planners beware of Trickster for his work is to ensure that such an imagining is, at least slightly, off-balance.

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