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Research article

The enduring agency of Fikret the smiling bodybuilder in Suada's journey

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Abstract

This article examines the agency of a deceased husband as it continues to affect his former wife's life. Over thirty years have passed since he became one of the countless victims of violence during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s. Today, his wife keeps a memorial room in their hometown, preserving his memory as the first and most celebrated Bosnian bodybuilder, and ensuring that his legacy endures. These continuing bonds serve as both a mourning process and a celebration of his life. Two forms of agency of the dead are presented in the article: material and spiritual. The material agency is expressed through physical markers of remembrance such as the tombstone, the memorial room, and the commemorative plaque. The spiritual agency manifests in the dreams his wife experiences, which provide her with a sense of connection and guidance. This analysis examines the agency of the dead through the individual act of maintaining bonds with the deceased, while situating the narrative within the broader context of Verdery's concept of the politicization of dead bodies. This approach highlights how personal mourning intertwines with collective memory and cultural significance.

KEYWORDS: agency of the dead, Prijedor, continuing bonds, memorialization, politicization

Introduction

"He was the love of my life," Suada said, her voice heavy with emotion, when I asked how much she misses her late husband, Fikret. Fikret was only 39 years old when he was killed in the summer of 1992. He was one of the many victims of the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Bosnian Serb forces against Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats

during the Bosnian War (1992–1995). Suada's experience mirrors that of countless women who lost husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons during this period of immense violence and upheaval.

This article explores the agency of the dead in the lives of the living through Suada's poignant story. While her narrative is deeply personal, it also reflects the broader collective trauma experienced by survivors of the atrocities committed in the Krajina region during the spring and summer of 1992, when the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina began. Focusing on the relationship between a married couple, Suada and Fikret, the article investigates how the "agentive aspects of the dead" (Crossland, 2017, p. 181), or the ways how the deceased, despite no longer being alive, continue to exert influence or "agency" not only in the lives of the living, but also within social, cultural, religious, and political contexts. Agency here does not imply that the dead act consciously, but rather that their memory, representation, or physical remains can influence actions, emotions, and events in the world of the living. Agency in this context is the power of the dead to impact the living indirectly, through memories, rituals, cultural meanings or material symbols that continue to shape the lives of the living, offering insights into both individual mourning and collective memory. Building on theoretical frameworks such as "continuing bonds" (Klass & Steffen, 2018) and the concept of the agency of the dead, the discussion is structured around three distinct stages of Fikret's presence in Suada's life: their shared life together before the war, the transformative loss during the violence of 1992, and the enduring ways in which Fikret's memory continues to influence Suada's present. Through material and spiritual connections—memorials, tombstones, plaques, and dreams—Suada's story reveals how the living sustain relationships with the dead in ways that mourn, commemorate, and politicize their absence. It also helps us understand how societies construct memory, identity, and meaning around death.

Theoretical context

Tony Walter (2018) identified six frameworks in which the relationship between the living and the dead is interpreted: the dangerous dead, ancestors, monotheistic religions, Buddhism, secular memory, and romantic love. In those relationships, the deceased continues to influence the lives, beliefs, and actions of living in many different ways. The agency attributed to the dead—meaning their perceived ability to affect the world even in the absence of a physical presence—is visible from a wide range of cultural, religious, and social practices. Scholars have analyzed this phenomenon through various lenses, for example the sacralization of art (McCormick, 2015), human remains (Crossland,

2017; Stutz Nilsson, 2018), ancestors (Harper, 2010), bones (Williams, 2004), social memory (Schindel & Colombo, 2014), and cultural geography (Ljubojević, 2022), all of which allow the dead to "exist" beyond the physical. This perspective sees the dead not as passive remnants of the past but as active agents influencing political and social matters (Verdery, 1999), such as debates over historical figures, the ethics of ancestral land and deathscapes (Semple & Brookes, 2020), or the legacies of individuals (Klass & Steffen, 2018). Sustaining the relationship between the living and the dead often evokes ethical questions about memory, privacy, and representation. Through these lenses, the agency of the dead challenges the boundaries between life and death, highlighting how societies negotiate their pasts and build futures in ways that continuously engage with the presence of those who have passed, shaping their personal and collective identities.

Numerous scholars have addressed the agency of the dead from various points of view. Alfred Gell's theory of agency, particularly as presented in his work *Art and Agency* (1998), introduces a unique approach to understanding how art and objects exert influence over people, effectively having agency. Gell's anthropological theory extends beyond the human-centered concept of agency to include non-human entities, challenging the idea that only living beings can act with intention or affect others. According to Gell, agency is not about the literal ability to make decisions but rather about how objects can act as intermediaries in social interactions. In his view, objects (especially artworks or ritual items), possess a form of "secondary agency" because they affect people emotionally, behaviorally or cognitively, evoking responses, beliefs or actions as if they had a will of their own (1998, p. 7). Gell uses terms like "distributed personhood" to describe how agency is dispersed across objects, individuals, and contexts. This means that people project qualities of the human mind onto objects, endowing them with power and presence within social relationships. Or to put it differently, primary agents, who are intentional beings, distribute their agency in the causal milieu, and this renders the agency of the secondary agents effective (1998, p. 20). Gell's theory is significant because it opens up the study of agency to include the material world, exploring how humans interact with symbols, artifacts, and representations in ways that shape society and individual identity. He described the artifacts as:

> Social agents not because I wish to promulgate a form of material-culture mysticism, but only in view of the fact that objectification in artefact-form is how social agency manifests and realizes itself, via the proliferation of fragments of "primary" intentional agents in their "secondary" artefactual forms. (Gell, 1998, p. 21)

Gell's theoretical approach is important because he argues not that dead bodies can be social agents and have agency, but that any objects can. As we will see further in the article, objects have the power to affect human behavior, suggesting that they possess a form of agency even if they are not conscious beings.

The next scholar who addressed the agency of objects is Fontein (2010, p. 424), who explores the usefulness of the materiality of bones and bodies and how they do things. In his discussion of the politics of the dead in Zimbabwe, he claims that the spirits and bones/corpses of the liberation war dead haunt Zimbabwe's postcolonial milieu. This is contrary to my fieldwork results in B-H, where the corpse or dead body appears simultaneously as both an object and a person (Crossland, 2017, p. 181), telling a story of identity, trauma, and postmortem mutilation in the forensic anthropological context (see Owen, 2000, p. 8; Crossland, 2017, p. 182). Unlike in Zimbabwe, in B-H, bones have been shown to be valuable sources of DNA evidence. What Verdery observed was that in addition to this, dead bodies have also been mobilized for political purposes, and this was more than visible not just in the case of Fikret, but of all the victims of the Bosnian war. In her book *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*, Katherine Verdery argues that the dead bodies of the war victims are indisputable "material" evidence of the committed crimes, and they have an immense power to affect and shatter people's lives. Furthermore, the materiality of the bodies "became a powerful political symbol and site of political profit" (Verdery, 1999, pp. 27–33). This symbolic and political power of human remains was used in political and cultural struggles during the times of social and political transformation, but, as we will see below, dead bodies are still being used as political symbols of the ethno-nationalistic politics of both Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs almost daily, and even more frequently in times of elections and commemorations. The use of dead bodies as a tool by political actors to legitimize their authority, reframe historical narratives, address collective trauma, and rework the memory of past events is a great example of the cultural and political changes visible in the town of Kozarac[1] and the municipality of Prijedor. In her book, Verdery thus demonstrates how dead bodies, though physically lifeless, are central to processes of nation-building, political transformation, and cultural redefinition. She shows that bodies serve as potent symbols which can be deployed to reframe history, foster collective memory, and legitimize new political orders in times of upheaval. By focusing on the "political lives" of corpses, Verdery

[1] Kozarac is a small town in the municipality of Prijedor. During Yugoslav times, most of its inhabitants were Bosnian Muslims, i.e. Bosniaks. The ethnic cleansing of the town began on May 24, 1992, when 92 percent of its population was expelled. The town has now been renovated and repopulated. The pre-war number of inhabitants was about 4,000, and is now increasing past that number, but many people who hold residence permits in Kozarac live abroad, making the city alive and busy during the summer months.

provides a unique lens that helps us understand how societies navigate profound historical change and confront the legacies of their past.

Various surveys have reported that around 50–60 percent of bereaved individuals report interactions with the dead after they die. These interactions vary, from sensing the presence of the dead to dreaming about them, seeing apparitions in the waking state, witnessing poltergeist-type phenomena, and others (Cooper, 2018, p. 201). In 1996, Klass and Steffen proposed a theory addressing those interactions which they called "continuing bonds", suggesting that instead of "letting go", the bereaved person continues to integrate, identify with, and create bonds with both the deceased person and/or objects belonging to this person. This modified relationship with a person who has died thus does not break the bonds but changes them in many ways. Over the years this theory has shown different experiences and expressions of grief in different cultures (Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 11). They pointed out that it is not just about experiences and expressions of grief, but also about making meanings and sense before and around the death itself, making sense of our relationship to the deceased, and making sense of our ongoing lives after the death (Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 8). Fong & Chow (2018) write how continuing bonds are manifested in the form of values, attitudes, and memories associated with the deceased, but more importantly, they provide three different experiences in the form of values, actions, and sensations (Fong & Chow, 2018, p. 279). In this article, I will focus on the first two—values and actions. In the first category, the authors included dreaming and dreams (Fong & Chow, 2018, pp. 279–80), while the second category contains multiple actions, behaviors, and rituals, all performed with the desire to memorialize the deceased person. These actions include, for example, setting up special places memorializing certain dates, organizing or attending events on certain days and/or at special places, and creating memorial products (Fong & Chow, 2018, p. 279). Usually, these actions are integrated into everyday activities and become part of new traditions and customs. Tony Walter uses the term memories rather than bonds, but the overall idea is very similar. To cherish a memory, to uphold the values, to enjoy the emotional legacy of the deceased does not mean one needs to let go and forget. Quite the contrary—letting go means a transformation where the relationship does not need to end, and memories (i.e. bonds) may continue (Walter, 2018, p. 48).

Methodology

Talking about the private and intimate feelings and relations people have with their deceased is not an easy task. But, given the ethnographic focus of this study, semi-struc-

tured interviews were appropriate for capturing detailed, contextualized insights from participants. This method allowed me to explore the participants' lived experiences and perspectives while allowing flexibility to follow up on interesting themes that emerged during our conversations. My interlocutors cover a wide range with respect to national and religious affiliations, age, sex, and education level. This diversity enabled the study to capture multiple perspectives on the agency of the dead in the lives of individuals. I conducted semi-structured interviews in settings chosen for the participants' comfort, taking the intimacy of the topic into consideration. Most of the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim. I took additional field notes to capture non-verbal cues and observations. To ensure confidentiality, all data were anonymized and securely stored. I noticed an interesting difference between my Bosniak and Bosnian Serb interlocutors, where the majority of Bosniaks stated without reservation that I can use their real names and surnames in my research and analysis, while the Bosnian Serbs preferred anonymity. Additionally, I noticed that my position as an outside researcher influenced how participants shared their experiences, where I once again noticed a difference between the two ethnic groups. Asking all my interlocutors similar questions on several different topics enabled me to use the bottom-up inductive approach to find common patterns and ideas in relation to the dead. But it was not only my positionality that affected my ability to find the interlocutors; it was also how they positioned themselves. It started with the basic distinction in response to my question "What happened during the war?", which elicited two very different narratives. Anna Sheftel described this plurality of truths using a very basic and practical example, saying that Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks live separately in almost every way—banks, phones, schools, even beer. This deep divide also means they have three different versions of history, with no shared truth about the war (Sheftel, 2011, p. 150).

Looking at the positionality of the victim and the perpetrator, we see that both groups positioned themselves as victims, but in the public/political discourse, the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) were recognized as victims, and Bosnian Serbs as perpetrators. Of course this leads to several moral dilemmas, as attributing the criminal acts of a small group to an entire nation is never a good solution, but it occurred several times during my research, where my interlocutors strictly distinguished between "us" and "them", where "them" indicated a sense of collectiveness that overshadowed any individuality. It became noticeable that the Bosnian Serbs changed the tone of their voice and their facial expressions when asked about the mass graves in the vicinity of their homes, or immediately changed the subject and started talking about the Serbian victims at the Jaseno-

vac concentration camp during the Second World War.[2] Additionally, understating the number of Bosniak victims in Prijedor was something I often noticed during interviews with Bosnian Serbs. On the other hand, Bosniaks talked to me openly about their war experience. While the women, who had experienced expulsion from their home villages, talked about it in a very generalized way, referring to Bosnian Serb Army soldiers as Chetniks (*četniki*),[3] the men who had experienced the brutality of one of the concentration camps often addressed those who had tortured them by name. The banality of evil and the absurdity of the ethnic cleansing in Prijedor is visible here, as my interlocutors reported being beaten and interrogated by Bosnian Serbs who were their former colleagues, co-workers, or acquaintances. This was not evil coming from the outside, but from within the community.

Fikret alive

How did history evolve looking through the lens of Fikret Hodžić's life? Fikret was born in a small village near Prijedor called Trnopolje, on June 26, 1953. The years following the Second World War in Yugoslavia were focused on rebuilding and establishing a new Yugoslav society, grounded in Tito's socialist ideology of "brotherhood and unity." This approach entailed turning a blind eye to the unresolved wounds of the war, during which neighbors had fought against neighbors and brothers against brothers. Many personal and collective traumas were suppressed, swept under the rug, and ultimately became taboo topics (Sudetic, 1998). People spoke in hushed voices about who was a Chetnik (*četnik*), who was an Ustasha (*ustaša*),[4] and who was a Partisan, and in many cases all three sides were represented in a single family. This demonizing characterization of the national "others" transformed Serbs into Chetniks, Croats into Ustasha, and Muslims into Fundamentalists (Brubaker, 1996, p. 20), an attitude that reached its apotheosis during the war in 1993. As the Partisans were the official winners of the Second

2 Jasenovac, a town in Croatia, was the site of one of the largest concentration camps in Europe during Second World War, operated by the fascist *Ustaše* regime from 1941 to 1945. It was part of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a Nazi-aligned puppet state. Jasenovac was notorious for its brutal treatment of inmates, which included Serbs, Jews, Roma, and political dissidents (particularly communists). The estimated number of victims varies widely and is still debated. For Bosnian Serbs, Jasenovac is a synonym for a genocide that the world does not recognize, carried out against their nation.

3 The Chetniks were a Serbian nationalist guerrilla force established during World War II to promote Serbian aims. While nominally against the Axis invaders and Croatian collaborators who were fighting the Yugoslav communist guerrillas, i.e. the Partisans, they collaborated with Nazi Germany throughout most of the war. In the 1990s, this term was a pejorative applied to both VRS army and Serbian soldiers.

4 The *Ustaše* was a Croatian ultranationalist/fascist organization active during World War II (Thompson, 1999, pp. 363–7).

World War, their victory and glory were praised in songs, films, plays, books, and public speeches, while any cultural production by Ustashas and Chetniks was banned. Many public institutions were named after newly created Yugoslav national heroes, among them the elementary school in Kozarac, the school Fikret attended as a child. The Rade Kondić elementary school was the largest elementary school in Bosnia (Neuffer, 2002, p. 20).

Suada Hodžić, four years younger than Fikret, was born in Kozarac on May 25, 1957. Among Yugoslavs this day was dedicated as the official day in honor of president-for-life Josip Broz Tito,[5] and was celebrated throughout Yugoslavia as "Youth Day" (Velikonja, 2009, p. 15). She grew up in a large family with eight siblings and went to the same elementary school as Fikret, where they met when she was finishing elementary school.

> I was in the eighth grade when I met Fikret, four years before we got married, and we stayed together till the moment he was killed. He left in the most beautiful period of his life. When we saw each other, it was love at first sight, for both of us. We were inseparable.

At that time, it was quite usual that people married young, and Suada, who grew up in Kozarac, married Fikret in 1975, at the age of eighteen. She described their life together as a fairy-tale. He worked out every day, and Suada took care of him and the family, a role she now remembers with nostalgia. He began weightlifting using very simple, homemade equipment, and a year after their marriage, in 1976, Suada had the idea of opening the first body-building club in Trnopolje (and beyond). In the same year, Fikret became the Yugoslav champion in bodybuilding and stayed number one for the next 15 consecutive years, from 1976 to 1991. Suada recalls:

> Fikret found a picture of a bodybuilder in the newspaper Tempo and decided to start as well. He made concrete weights for himself. I have one of them here in the memorial room. He made small weights for one hand using cans. He made big concrete weights out of large buckets. Later, he made another weight using large wagon wheels. Since his father was a blacksmith, he worked with him, so he knew how to do such things. He also made benches for himself. He didn't even have proper equipment but just used a wooden plank. He put a pull-up bar between two plum trees.

[5] Josip Broz Tito was born on May 7, 1892, but celebrated his birthday on May 25. He was the president of Yugoslavia for nearly forty years, from 1944 to 1980, guiding Yugoslavia based on the notions of "brotherhood and unity," self-management, and nonalignment in foreign policy (Ramet, 2008, p. 32). Building up his cult of personality, Tito became the main symbolic center of political mythology and narrative imaginary in socialist Yugoslavia (Velikonja, 2009, p. 16).

When Suada saw his successes and his determined approach to training, she urged Fikret to become more professional, not just in his personal workouts, but by providing a space, a gym where other people could also train. Seeking ideas and information from bodybuilding magazines, Fikret and his father made their own gym equipment. In October 1975, the bodybuilding gym opened its doors and the interest in training was big. Fikret progressed constantly, and his workouts became increasingly demanding, which resulted in a victory at the Mediterranean Games. He became the runner-up in Europe and third in the world, said Suada proudly. In 1980, Suada and Fikret started to build a new home.

> At that time there was no problem getting a loan from the bank. I got several and we were able to build the house. Fikret's father also helped us. It was a fairytale life I lived for 17 years with my Fikret. We had two children; he was always very gentle with them.

The secret to Fikret's success was a very strict diet and daily workouts at the gym. Suada worked and took care of the family, the family business and the gym. Many young boys of Serbian nationality from Trnopolje came to the gym to train, and as it later turned out, some of them joined the Army of Republika Srpska (*Vojska Republike Srpske, VRS*) and were responsible for the killing of not only Fikret but also many other Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats. Suada often emphasized that the doors to the gym were open to everyone, regardless of their national and religious affiliation. She recalls the nights she and her children spent at the Trnopolje camp,[6] where many of the guards were young Serbian men:

> If those young guards in the camp had been strangers, one wouldn't feel sorry, but these were young men who trained with my husband in my home, my doors were always open for them, they shared countless meals and drinks with him [Fikret] and me. They were from Trnopolje, Serbs.

According to David Henig, who conducted ethnographic research in rural Bosnia, the concept of the house—and by extension, the home—is central to understanding how relatedness is structured and how a sense of belonging is imagined (Henig, 2012, p. 10). It

[6] In addition to the camp in Trnopolje, the Bosnian Serb authorities set up two more notorious and horrific camps, one in the former iron mine complex in Omarska, and another one in the former Keraterm tile factory. In all three camps, active from the spring to the fall of 1992, more than 31,000 people were imprisoned, and about 1,000 were brutally killed (Vučkovac, 2021, p. 234). Bosniak and Croat men were tortured, beaten, denied access to food, water, and medication; women were raped and killed. For the Bosnian Serbs the camps were considered interrogation centers, while for the prisoners these camps were seen as concentration camps. Many camp survivors have written memoires telling their stories of survival (e.g. Pervanić 1999; Šarić 2012; Mujkanović 2019; Velić 2020; Hukanović 2023).

is closely related to the idea of "open doors", that Suada talked about, which in a broader way was a metaphor for "commensality, relatedness, belonging and living together, exchanging help and hospitality" (Henig, 2012, p. 10). Living in a *komšiluk* (Sorabji, 1989; Bringa, 1995; Henig, 2012), meaning a neighborhood with specific collective ideas about community life, respect, support, and co-existence regardless of ethnic or religious differences, changed dramatically during the war. For Suada, her home and her *komšiluk* were destroyed, along with the idea of "living together" (Henig, 2012, p. 10).

The War in Prijedor in 1992

Although Suada was able to build her house by taking out several bank loans, the Yugoslav dinar was undergoing hyperinflation and economic instability because of the general political and economic crisis which began soon after the death of Yugoslavia's president for life, Josip Broz Tito, in 1980. The rising tides of nationalism that followed reached their peak in the summer of 1991, when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence and war broke out in both countries (Aleksov, 2012, p. 110). Day by day, national and religious identity became increasingly important (Volcic, 2011, p. 7). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the violence escalated in the spring of 1992, when Bosnian Serb forces took control of the city of Prijedor and the surrounding villages, including Kozarac and Trnopolje, where Suada and Fikret lived. They faced practically no resistance, making this the beginning of the ethnic cleansing campaign against the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Bosnian Croats living in the municipality. According to the NGO Izvor, it is estimated that 53,000 civilians were expelled (94% of the non-Serb population), and 31,000 were detained in the three main concentration camps: the Omarska mining complex, the Keraterm tile factory, and a social center in Trnpolje (Vučkovac, 2021, p. 234). 3,176 were murdered, among them 102 children and 256 women (see Izvor 2012 and Paul, 2021, p. 2). Many of my Bosniak interlocutors recounted how they were fired from their jobs, and how the roads were closed and blocked so that they could not travel anywhere. These "critical events" (Das, 1995 in Henig, 2017, p. 44) created a frame of reference for the histories of individual lives: for example, one interlocutor told me:

> I was fired from my job in Prijedor. So were my neighbors. At first, I did not think this might be because I am a Muslim. When the Bosnian Serb army attacked my village, I was hiding in a forest nearby. I saw my old neighbor being shot on his doorstep. After we were captured, my group was brought to the Omarska prison camp, where I was tortured every day.

In May 1992, after taking over the municipality of Prijedor, the Bosnian Serb authorities from the Serbian Democratic party (*Srpska demokratska stranka, SDS*)[7] and the Prijedor Crisis Council ordered the non-Serbian population to mark their houses with white sheets, while individuals were required to wear white armbands when in public as a sign of surrender (Vučkovac, 2021, p. 246; Kovačević, 2000, p. 117). In this way, they would express their loyalty to the new political party and the new political regime and state publicly their national and religious identity. On May 30, 1992, a small group of poorly armed non-Serbs unsuccessfully attempted to regain control of the town of Prijedor (Mihajlović Trbovc, 2014, p. 28). Suada recalls that the attack on the "biggest smallest city in the world," as the locals like to call Kozarac, started on May 24, 1992 (Belloni, 2005, p. 435; Medić, 2019, p. 44). The attack lasted only two days, "when the 25,000 residents of the area were cleansed." (Kovačević, 2000, p. 118) In practice this meant that the women and children were separated from the men, who were brought to the Omarska and Keraterm detention camps, "while the women, children, and elderly men were transported to Trnpolje, for immediate deportation or prolonged captivity." (Kovačević, 2000, p. 119) Shells were falling everywhere. She saw her family house get destroyed. Her mother was wounded in the explosion and died soon after that. She explained:

> The bombardment lasted for 48 hours without a break. Rockets were literally flying over my house. I went upstairs to the roof from where I observed how houses in Kozarac were destroyed one by one. I knew each house, each family there, as this was the place where I was born, and grew up.

Fikret, Suada and their two children, a girl of 14 and a boy of 11, were forcibly displaced from their home on July 9, 1992. Suada and her children were taken to the Trnopolje camp, not far from their home, while Fikret was killed just outside their house at the age of 39, at the peak of his career. Even now, 33 years later, it feels to Suada as if this event happened yesterday. It was not only that the soldiers killed her husband, but they also destroyed and burned down her home and her custom-made furniture so that even if she survived, she would not have anywhere to return to.

> We went to the camp on Thursday afternoon. Behind my back, Fikret was killed. I didn't see when he fell, but I heard the burst of gunfire because they forced him to walk ahead behind the house. I did not want my children to see anything. On Saturday morning, I managed to get out of the camp and went home. When I arrived, there was nothing, and what I did find was all smashed up.

[7] The leader of the SDS, Radovan Karadžić, claimed to have the right to seize what they perceived as "Serbian territories", meaning anywhere Bosnian Serbs lived in B-H, and to incorporate those territories into a country that would gather all Serbs in one state called "Greater Serbia." (Mihajlović Trbovc, 2014, p. 27)

Suada said she knew the soldier who killed Fikret. He used to come to the gym. Although the Dayton Peace Agreement required all warring parties to prosecute perpetrators and hold them accountable for their actions during the war (Jugo, 2017, p. 26), Fikret's killer was never brought to justice. Even today, so many years after the war, the municipal authorities deny any responsibility for the torture and death of thousands of people, while the official municipal memorials remain reserved exclusively for victims of Serbian ethnic background (Vučkovac, 2021, p. 231). For many victims, not finding justice is very painful, especially for those whose relatives' remains are still missing, and here lies one of the main problems in Prijedor's divided society today: In order to hide the evidence of their crimes, the VRS buried the bodies and the human remains of their victims in more than 100 mass graves, scattered all over the municipality and beyond. This practice of the "invisibilisation of human remains" (Anstett, 2018, p. 181), where the bodies were hidden from the eyes of the perpetrators, future victims, and/or survivors, lasted for a significant period of time. It resulted in the existence of primary, secondary, and even tertiary mass graves, where the human remains were taken from the primary mass graves, disarticulated and scattered into secondary mass graves (Jugo, 2017, p. 29). From this perspective, Suada said, she was happy to find Fikret's body in one piece buried in a cemetery not far from their home.

After the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in December 1995, officially ending the war in B-H, it took a couple of years and the work of many international humanitarian organizations for people to be able to start returning to their destroyed homes. One interlocutor said:

> When I came back to my village with my family, there was nothing there; everything was destroyed. Before the soldiers burned our house, they took everything of value; I do not have my wedding ring, I don't have my documents, or family photos. Everything is gone. Because of politics and stupid nationalistic ideas.

Another one recalled:

> When we first buried our dead in the local cemetery, the Bosnian Serbs threw rocks at us, we even heard gunshots. Like they were trying to frighten us not to return. It was not pleasant, I tell you.

As Belloni notes in his article (2005), the Dayton Peace Agreement affirmed the right of displaced persons to return home with dignity and safety, but numerous obstacles hindered this process. While local displaced persons played a key role in organizing returns, many feared going back due to past atrocities and ongoing security concerns.

However, by 1998, Prijedor had become a focal point for Bosniak returnees, aided by legal measures like the 2000 Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP). By 2004, thousands of property claims had been resolved. Despite these efforts, challenges such as police violence and unemployment led some returnees to sell their homes and leave again. In 2022, the U.S. recognized the progress made in Prijedor by lifting the sanctions imposed under the Lautenberg Amendment.

Life after Fikret's death

After two horrible and scary nights at the Trnopolje camp, Suada and her two children were sent first to Austria as refugees, and then to Germany, where they stayed until 1997. The year before that, in 1996, Germany, which had hosted nearly half a million Bosnian refugees, lifted the temporary protection measure and began returning people to Bosnia (Belloni, 2005, p. 439). Suada and her son were among the 150,000 refugees who returned to Bosnia after the war ended (Belloni, 2005, p. 439). She settled in Sanski Most, a Bosniak-majority city in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina[8] that was the closest to Kozarac. When she returned, she immediately started looking for Fikret's body. She was told that he had been buried in the local cemetery next to his father, but that was not true. Instead of him, they found some other people who had also been missing. In 2009, Fikret's body was found and reburied in the Martyrs' Cemetery in Kamičani (*Šehidsko mezarje Kamičani*). Martyrs' cemeteries across B-H commemorate wartime violence and serve as burial sites for its victims. According to Anstett (2023, p. 673) notes, postwar commemorations are not only collective but also repeated, a pattern reflected in these cemeteries. This process reinforces Bosniak national identity and fosters new collective memories and traditions. As Verdery noted, the reburials of victims and commemorative practices related to those reburials also provide opportunities for various groups to reinterpret history, assert their values, and compete for legitimacy (Verdery, 1999). However, it can often also be the case that dead bodies become vehicles for contesting and negotiating meanings relating to history, authority, and belonging (ibid.).

Suada emphasized that "we all" must show respect for the dead by attending various commemorative events, either at the annual collective burial (*kolektivna dženaza*) or on other anniversaries. All are great means of creating collective memory and national

[8] Since the Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia-Herzegovina has officially been divided into two nationally homogenized entities: *Republika Srpska* (the Bosnian Serb entity) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is effectively split between Croatian and Bosniak-dominated territories where three constitutive nations, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, live.

identity. By attending these social events, Suada and other interlocutors position themselves within a deeply politically, ethnically, and religiously divided society. If many of them had identified as Bosnians before the war, after the war they became Bosniaks, bringing politics and re-Islamization into their former Bosnian national identity. Suada is not the only person who, after being asked about her national identity, proudly said "I am a Muslim, I am a Bosniak," making no distinction between her national and religious identity. It turned out that neither Fikret nor many of the other men buried in the Martyr's Cemetery in Kamičani were active believers and practitioners, but they were nevertheless buried according to Muslim traditions and customs, which supports Verdery's notion of the politicization of dead bodies. In this case, where religious and ethnic identity are often seen as one, bodies are no longer seen as individuals with names and surnames, but as a collective group of one ethnicity. This leads to a differentiation between "us" and "them," and the fueling of discontent and disrespect for the "other side", i.e. the Bosnian Serb side. Creating the imagined community of Bosniaks, standing alone in an enclave in the midst of the territory of Republika Srpska, gives my interlocutors the determination to fight for a united Bosnia-Herzegovina, which would also mean that the dead did not die in vain (Klass, 2015, p. 111). Suada says that it is a moral obligation of the whole nation to remember all victims, not only those they knew personally, because forgetting their sacrifice for freedom would be wrong. Keeping their names alive is a continuing bond that is significant on a personal and collective level. She states:

> The only thing we can do is recite the annual memorial prayers, *jasin*. Everyone for their own, and collectively what is done annually, that's it. We can't do anything else. We can only make sure they're not forgotten, to remember them on every occasion we can. That's the only thing we can do for the dead, and we owe it to them. My belief is that we owe it to them because they gave their lives so that we could have freedom today. At least, that's how I think; I don't know how others think. But that's my way of thinking.

Praying for the souls of the dead is not only a moment of remembrance, but also an act of vital exchange. According to Henig, praying "is an act that earns good deeds. The person receives in return good fortune and blessings for the living" (Henig, 2017, p. 42). This divine blessing (*berićet*) that the living receives by praying for the dead is, according to anthropologists, related to a multiplicity of exchanges, relations, and agencies. But not only that, "praying for a good afterlife for the souls (*duše*), of the martyrs (*šehidi*) also continues to be apprehended by Bosnian Muslims as part of the individual ethnic conduct of being a good Muslim." (Henig, 2017, p. 43; Klass, 2015, p. 104), and Suada often

emphasized the importance of being a good Muslim, which she also related and intertwined with the importance of being a good person, in taking care of your deceased family.

Tombstones

According to local Islamic tradition, when a person dies, the grave is first marked by a temporary wooden marker, which is replaced after one year with a permanent marker, a tombstone called a *nišan*. It is believed that the soul can wander around for a year (Softić, 2016, p. 174), but in the case of the Martyr's Cemetery in Kamičani, all graves were immediately marked with *nišan*. In fact, both Klass and Softić sees the *nišan* as a continuing bond between the dead and the living (Klass, 2015, p. 103; Softić, 2016, p. 24), where all members of the community are obliged to take care of the tombstones throughout the year. Fikret Hodžić is buried in the Martyr's Cemetery in Kamičani, where his tombstone is the same as the others. There is no individualism at the graveyard; all the graves are the same. Suada visits his grave quite often:

> Obligatory on his birthday, on *Bajram*[9] one (*Ramazanski bajram*) and Bajram two (*Kurban Bajram*), on the anniversary of his death. Those days are a must, and always when I visit my sister, because she lives close by.

There, Suada prays, but does not speak to him, as this is not part of Islamic tradition, where talking to the dead is generally not approved of. Her prayers, however, reflect what Klass (2015) describes as continuing bonds, in which the relationship with the deceased is maintained not necessarily through direct speech but through socially meaningful acts that reaffirm connection, care, and presence. At first, she wanted to make his *nišan* something special, because Fikret was special. She imagined adding two small marble or concrete one-arm dumbbells placed one over the other with an Arabic prayer inscribed on top, but she was refused permission. Fikret's *nišan* differs from all the others only by an additional inscription that reads: "multiple bodybuilding champion."

Suada always attends the annual funeral ceremony (*šehidska dženaza*) on July 21 at the Martyr's Cemetery in Kamičani, which includes burying the remains of individuals who were victims of the war. Every year, since the first commemoration was organized in 2003 (Mihajlović Trbovc, 2014, p. 29), the bodily remains of those who have been discov-

[9] In English, *Bajram* is typically translated as *Eid*, referring to the two major Islamic holidays: Eid al-Fitr (*Ramazanski Bajram*), celebrated at the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, and Eid al-Adha (*Kurban Bajram*), celebrated during the Hajj pilgrimage, marking the sacrifice of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). On *Kurban Bajram* (Eid al-Adha) a lamb is slaughtered and exsanguinated (Henig, 2012, p. 12).

ered and identified in the past year are laid to rest in the cemetery. The term *šehid* is derived from the Arabic shahid, referring to a martyr, i.e. someone who died defending their faith, land, or community (Bougarel, 2007). The word *dženaza* is derived from the Arabic *janazah*, which means a funeral prayer or burial service. This commemoration attracts many people; many of my interlocutors even said that they plan their annual holidays around this date. In agreement with Crossland, who noted that "the dead are often used to evoke larger entities" (Crossland, 2017, p. 186), here I see the importance and dedication of being present at the event and paying respect to the victims. Creating an "imagined community" among the attendees of one (Bosniak) ethnoreligious group is not just a patriotic performance; partaking in a monumentalized commemorative service to remember the past and the present is also a good way of re-creating national and religious identity, and as Henig noted, prayers for the martyrs "have also become an indispensable part of highly nationalized political life in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina" (Henig, 2017, p. 43). Attending the funeral ceremony last July (2024), I noticed the politicization in the Slovenian guest *imam's*[10] speech, where he addressed the topic of abortion, criticizing the European values to which the Bosnian diaspora is exposed. When talking to my interlocutors about how they perceived the speech, the majority were highly critical of it. One interlocutor said:

> He is criticizing European values and so on with all of us living abroad. But he likes the money we bring back home to Bosnia. I don't agree with his ideas, and I practice Islam every day.

Memorial room in Kozarac and the memorial plaque

Kozarac is a very intriguing place. It is too small to be a town, but too big to be a village. In 1960 it was an independent municipality but was attached to the municipality of Prijedor because of the Kozara mountains[11] and the tourism income they generate. Inhabited mostly by Bosnian Muslims, Kozarac stood directly in the middle of the Prijedor–Banja Luka corridor, a corridor that Serbian president Slobodan Milošević envisioned as a pathway that could be used to connect the Croatian territories around Knin with Serbia, thereby uniting all Serbs in one country. After the ethnic cleansing of Kozarac and

[10] Muslim priest.

[11] The Kozara region remains deeply scarred by Second World War trauma. During the Kozara Offensive (June–July 1942), Axis forces targeted Partisan resistance, leading to mass deportations, widespread destruction, and the forced exodus of much of the Serbian population, with many perishing in the Jasenovac concentration camp. On the other hand, it became a part of the national mythology in post-war Yugoslavia, which honored the bravery and martyrdom of the Partisans.

the villages around it, nothing remained whole. In the desire to delete all aspects of Muslim existence and traditions, Suada also remembered, most of the mosques were desecrated and destroyed. But as early as 2000, when the first returnees returned to their destroyed homes, the first mosque was rebuilt (Belloni, 2005, p. 441). Slowly, more and more people returned, some only for a short time, to sell their properties and continue their lives abroad, while others came for good. But as Neuffer observed, "like Bosnia itself, Kozarac had been repaired only on the surface; in the hearts and minds of its citizens, the scars of the war had not yet healed." (Neuffer, 2002, p. 364) Suada also returned to her home in Trnopolje in 2004 and rebuilt her house with the help of one of the many NGOs that helped rebuild Bosnia's destroyed infrastructure and society. She intentionally left the foundation of the old house intact and is now able to show where her husband once trained in the gym. She said:

> My house was built on the same spot where the old house with two entrances used to be. Now, I've cleaned up half of it, and the house has been built, but the other half is just standing there as it is, and it really feels like a monument to what was and what happened.

Two historians have labeled the post-Holocaust era as "the era of the witness" (Wieviorka, 2006; Kromják, 2017, p. 15) and "the age of testimony" (Felman & Laub, 1992; Kromják, 2017, p. 15) because it guided the moral sensibility towards victims of wars. Bearing witness and testifying serve as key sources of knowledge, allowing survivors to reshape identities and create new subject positions (Kromják, 2017, p. 15). In this context, I noticed Suada sought various ways to honor the memory of her late husband while also raising awareness of the horrific events and the unrecognized genocide that occurred in the municipality of Prijedor. By opening a memorial room in July 2021, she fulfilled her long-held wish to preserve her husband's legacy and remind the public of these tragic events:

> To not forget Fikret, his work, his legacy. He made Kozarac famous all over the world with his success. I want to leave something behind when I am gone. I had a wish to make a memorial room for Fikret for about 20 years, and to store his workout equipment. I did not want it to collapse due to corrosion.

In the memorial room, Suada also placed some of Fikret's personal belongings: his clothes, ID card, and membership cards. She told me:

> Here are his clothes and here his sneakers; I took them off his feet when I found him killed. The sneakers are still bloody. Here is his ID card and membership

> card, also soaked in blood. There is also his Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) military booklet I found in his pocket. It is also completely bloody; it was still wet when I found him. I found that in his pocket and collected it.

Despite knowing her husband had been killed, Suada carried his suitcase—with his belongings—on a journey from Trnopolje, where her daughter had mistakenly taken it in a rush, to Austria, Germany, back to Bosnia, to Sanski Most, and finally home to Trnopolje. She is very emotional about this suitcase and its contents. She takes his clothes out once a year, washes them, irons them and puts them back in the suitcase. As Crossland emphasized, "clothing acts as a powerful potential marker of identity because of its indexical relation with the person who wore it." (Crossland, 2017, p. 185) One can also argue that objects (in this case Fikret's clothes) have agency and serve as continuing bonds between him and his wife, as she can continue their relationship in that way. When Suada sees his clothes, she immediately associates them with Fikret and their time together.

To collect some money for the rent and electricity, Suada sells various items with Fikret's picture on it. She sells T-shirts and coffee mugs, "traveling memorials" which carry their message of remembrance through both landscape and society (Maddrell, 2013, p. 502). In addition to the memorial room, which is in the center of Kozarac, just couple of meters away from the big marble monument dedicated to all the victims of the 1992–1995 war, Suada and some friends erected a memorial plaque in front of her house in Trnopolje. This plaque is an affordable vernacular memorial, where a commemoration for her husband is held every year on a Sunday close to July 9. People come from far away to attend the ceremony. First, they lay flowers at the memorial plaque, then they go to the cemetery and pray a *fatiha* (*Al-Fatiha*) at Fikret's *nišan*. The next stop is the memorial room in the center of Kozarac, before returning to Suada's newly rebuilt home, where she serves food and drinks.

> Other people make *mevlud*[12] for their deceased, I made it once, twelve people came. I didn't like that, so I decided to hold an annual commemoration. Now it is already ten years I have been doing that. I do it at home, not in the mosque.

One of Fikret's friends conceived the idea for this memorial plaque, rendering it particularly significant for Suada. It shows how Fikret remains in his thoughts and serves as a tribute to his memory. As Maddrell (2013, p. 509) describes, such a "spatial fix" provides a tangible place where the dead can be remembered, their lives honored, and ongoing care expressed. There are not many monuments dedicated to Bosniak victims in the mu-

[12] Annual death anniversary, where the living family, relatives, friends gather and pray for the dead.

nicipality of Prijedor. When driving through Prijedor and its villages, I noticed that the monumentalization of the past in the present shows only one war narrative and reflects the suffering of just one nation—the Bosnian Serbs. This attempt "to appropriate narratives of suffering and loss into the grand national narratives and cosmologies" (Henig, 2017, p. 45) was/is similarly present in both nations, Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks, where clashes often arise over attempts to minimize the above mentioned. To commemorate the memory of the bodybuilder Fikret Hodžić, the small narrow street leading to Suada's house is now called *sokak* Fikreta Hodžića—Fikret Hodžić Alley.

Dreams

In addition to the moral obligations my interlocutors have towards the dead, they also often spoke about seeing them in their dreams. They dreamt about them on different occasions, remembering that the dreams were mainly pleasant, something that has often been found in bereavement studies, where unfortunately no one ascribes much significance to dreams and their meaning. In psychological research, however, such dreams are often interpreted as part of the "continuing bonds" framework, where the dead remain present in subtle ways within the lives of the bereaved. Rather than signaling pathology, they allow mourners to sustain relationships in ways that comfort and empower them. Knowing their loved ones are doing fine, "on the other side" as one interlocutor said, comforts her, but she stressed that this has nothing to do with the Islamic interpretation of dreams. Suada, on the other hand, remembers that she often dreamt of Fikret in the first years after his death. Her interpretation was that this happened because she missed him so much. Blaming the time that has passed, she recalls the dreams that she had before the yearly anniversary.

> I usually don't remember exactly what the dream was about. But I know it is always beautiful. I talked to Fikret, but I didn't see him. I hear his voice and see his silhouette, but not his face.

Islam and dreams are inevitably interrelated, and Islam is often seen as the largest night dream culture in the world today. Dreams have been firmly anchored in the imagination of many Muslim societies (Edgar and Henig, 2010, p. 2), and as a local Muslim priest (*imam*, also *hodža*) in Kozarac explained to me, "dreaming is one of Allah's signs and an opening to the unseen". In Islamic tradition believers distinguish between three types of dreams, inspired by either the God, the Devil, or the individual. Dreams that are inspired by the individual reflect the wishes and worries of that individual. In Islam, dreams are regarded as the sole means by which communication between the living and

the dead is both possible and permitted. This belief system contrasts strongly with Western clinical approaches that often minimize the significance of dreams in bereavement, underlining how cultural contexts shape both interpretation and meaning.

In Suada's dreams, her husband never demanded anything from her, so his intentional agency was not present. Nevertheless, he influences her behavior in a positive way. Seeing him in her dreams makes Suada happy. Here we can see how the dead retain a subtle form of agency: their presence reassures, comforts, and motivates, without direct demands. This quiet influence contrasts with the more forceful agency she experienced during her near-death episode. But interestingly, his agency was very direct and powerful on only one occasion, when Suada was clinically dead. She told me:

> I only saw his face once, when I was clinically dead because I had had three heart attacks. Then I saw him very clearly. He was dressed in white, looking so handsome with his darker skin. He said, "You must return to our children", and I did; I woke up from the coma.

The concept of communicating with the deceased during a near-death or clinical death experience is a phenomenon whereby people report encounters and communication with deceased loved ones. Interestingly, Suada saw Fikret's face just this one time, and he demanded that she return to their children because they needed her. This moment can be read as a liminal crossing, where the boundary between life and death was briefly suspended. Unlike the hazy silhouettes of ordinary dreams, this encounter was clear, urgent, and authoritative, suggesting that such threshold moments carry heightened symbolic and emotional weight. Finding a new sense of peace and purpose, Suada woke up from a coma and is now taking care of his legacy.

Seeing and communicating in a dream is also a way of grieving, and by combining the materialization of the past through the collection of Fikret's personal belongings Suada has in the memorial room, she was able to "build" the past to mourn it more effectively. The interplay between dreams and objects is striking. The immaterial visions she has in her dreams and the tangible belongings in the memorial room form two parallel modes of presence, one fleeting and one enduring, both of which sustain Suada's ongoing relationship with her husband. I noticed that the one-sided nature of the relationship and engagement with her deceased husband is intimate and emotively intense, but it also gives her strength, energy, and motivation in life.

When talking about Fikret, Suada's eyes still sparkle. She recalled:

> Life with Fikret was the most beautiful fairy tale that could be told. He was a man who didn't know how to be angry, didn't know how to raise his voice, and he was always smiling. They called him "the smiling bodybuilder." With him, I lived a life I could only wish for every young woman.

They never discussed the opening of the memorial room or anything like that, because they were occupied with other topics. Thoughts of death were never near the surface for the young married couple in their late thirties.

> Who would think about such things during the best years of [one's] life? We were already making plans for what we would do next. Unfortunately, none of that came to be. We had everything we needed.

There are many women, not just in the municipality of Prijedor, but all over B-H, who are dealing with the loss of a spouse, children, or family members. Not all are lucky like Suada, who found Fikret's body and was able to bury it. Or to have some of his personal belongings, whose materiality provides a lived experience and a unique link to the deceased's personhood. For others, the absence of a body or personal belongings prevents this kind of intimate grief work, leaving them only with dreams as a space where contact feels possible. In this sense, dreams become not just personal but also deeply social, reflecting broader patterns of loss and absence in postwar B-H.

Conclusion

The agency of the dead, as discussed in this article, reveals the multifaceted roles that the deceased play in both personal and collective spheres. Tombstones, memorial rooms, and other material markers serve as mediators of memory, embedding the dead within the social and political fabric. These artifacts, laden with symbolism, allow the dead to exert influence over the living, shaping identities, memories, and even political agendas. In this context, the continuing bonds model further enriches our understanding by highlighting how relationships with the deceased persist beyond physical death. The ongoing connection manifests through memories, rituals, and interactions with material objects, enabling mourners to integrate loss into their lives rather than sever ties. This demonstrates that mourning is not simply a matter of closure but an ongoing practice that sustains both individual resilience and cultural continuity.

However, this relationality often stands in stark contrast to the private and intimate dreams of those who grieve, where the dead remain as ephemeral presences shaping inner lives in deeply personal ways, defying public articulation. Dreams, therefore, high-

light the private dimension of agency, showing how memory and loss unfold differently in the intimate interior world of the bereaved compared to the highly politicized spaces of public commemoration.

This duality underscores the tension between the tangible and the intangible, the public and the private, and the collective versus individual engagement with the dead. It illustrates the complex interplay of memory, materiality, and continuing bonds in shaping how societies and individuals navigate the enduring presence of the deceased. As seen in the case of Fikret and Suada, their personal trauma and the critical events of the war have been embedded in national discourses on Bosniak collective identity and memory (Henig, 2017, p. 46), which are revived every year. In this way, war itself has become a monumental mode of temporalization of the past in the present (Henig, 2017, p. 46). Building on this, Fikret's posthumous agency can be understood as emerging not from any single source but from the relational matrix that binds together the living, the dead, and material objects. Rather than being simply distributed across these elements, agency is enabled and expressed through their interconnections. This relational perspective clarifies how Suada's dreams, her care for Fikret's belongings, and the broader commemorative practices of her community together sustain his continuing presence and influence.

Although Lisa McCormick (2015) wrote about the agency of dead composers, this long-standing theme of the sacralization of the cult of the dead composers in classical music can also be applied in Fikret's case. He too, like the greatest composers of all time, is venerated, and commemorative rites, such as anniversary celebrations and the existence of a memorial room with his private belongings (relic-like objects), provide a phenomenological connection between the living and the dead, both on the individual and collective levels. In this sense, Fikret's legacy demonstrates how the veneration of the dead operates not only through famous figures of high culture but also through everyday lives scarred by violence, reminding us that memory work is simultaneously personal, communal, and political.

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Povzetek

Članek obravnava odnos med ženo in njenim pokojnim možem, ki je bil ena izmed neštetih žrtev nasilja med vojno v Bosni in Hercegovini v devetdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja. Od takrat je minilo več kot trideset let. V njunem rojstnem kraju žena Suada vodi spominsko sobo, kjer neguje spomin ne samo na svojega moža, temveč tudi na prvega in najbolj cenjenega bosanskega bodibilderja, ter skrbi, da njegova zapuščina ne bo pozabljena. Te trajne vezi služijo hkrati kot proces žalovanja in praznovanje njegovega življenja. V članku sta predstavljeni dve obliki delovanja mrtvih: materialna in duhovna. Materialna se izraža s fizičnimi oblikami spomina, kot so nagrobnik, spominska soba in spominska plošča. Duhovna pa se kaže v sanjah, ki jih ima njegova žena, in ki ji dajejo občutek povezanosti ter vodstva. Analiza preučuje delovanje mrtvih z individualnim dejanjem ohranjanja vezi s pokojnim, hkrati pa njuno zgodbo umešča v širši kontekst pojma politizacije mrtvih teles (Verdery 1999). Takšen pristop poudarja, da se osebno žalovanje prepleta s kolektivnim spominom in kulturnim pomenom.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: vloga mrtvih, Prijedor, trajne vezi, ohranjanje spomina, politizacija

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