



Introduction: Violence Taking Place

It was the fall of 1999. Almost three months before, Slobodan Milošević had agreed to withdraw Serb forces from Kosovo if NATO stopped its bombing campaign against Serbia. I waited for hours to cross the Macedonian border into Kosovo. Around eight hundred thousand Kosovar Albanians—almost half of Kosovo’s population—had fled or been expelled from their homes during the previous two years of conflict between Serbia and the Kosovo Liberation Army. Most had quickly returned after the war, but I was waiting among others—returning emigrants, visiting relatives, incoming aid workers—thronging to cross Kosovo’s recently opened borders. I was coming to Kosovo to survey the state of architectural heritage after the just concluded conflict. A colleague and I were working on behalf of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which at the time was researching indictments for war crimes in Kosovo. According to media reports and interviews with refugees, Serb military and paramilitary had inflicted catastrophic damage on architecture during their counterinsurgency campaign against the Kosovo Liberation Army. If this architecture was included within what the tribunal termed “Kosovo’s cultural and religious heritage,” its deliberate destruction comprised a war crime for the tribunal, a form of the crime of persecution. I was an architect with some work experience on Ottoman-era architecture in Bosnia, both before and after the Bosnian War, and a doctoral student in architectural history. Putting my dissertation on hold, I was going to find out what had been destroyed, how it had been destroyed, and who was responsible

for this destruction: questions that at the time seemed wholly sufficient to frame an account of the role of architecture in the Kosovo conflict.

Throughout Kosovo, architecture registered ample and vivid evidence of violence: facades stippled by the spray of bullets, black aureoles of smoke around gaping holes where doors or windows once were, and piles of rubble that were no longer identifiable as architecture at all. In some towns, entire blocks were in ruins. In other towns, destruction yielded even less: at the center of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, for example, there was an expanse of bare earth, vacant except for some scattered stones, bricks, and the octagonal foundation of, we eventually discovered, the minaret of a bulldozed mosque. Some small villages were completely uninhabited, with some or all of their houses burned, stray dogs wandering the streets, and fruit trees in abandoned gardens rustling in the wind. In one destroyed village, we encountered an elderly Albanian couple living in a shed behind their burned house. The husband put two pieces of wood on the grass for us to sit on while his wife prepared tiny glasses of tea for us. The man told us about the burning of the village, but it was impossible for me to comprehend what had happened, what had been experienced, what had been lost. We gave the couple two hundred deutsch marks when we left. Our gesture was at once typical and symptomatic. It was but one of many attempts, each that seemed inadequate in its own way, to respond to what we experienced as massive social suffering. It was also a response based on my felt interpellation as a “relief worker” who could provide such things as financial aid or redress, access to the postwar NGO industry, justice, or sometimes just empathetic listening.

The survey for the tribunal, of course, was our primary instrument of relief, but as the survey continued, my understanding of it became increasingly complicated. I wanted to assist in the prosecution of perpetrators of violence, but who or what did these perpetrators represent—a state, a political elite, an ideology, “history” itself? I wanted to assist the victims of violence, but how to locate individual situations of suffering with respect to cover terms like “ethnic violence” or “ethnic cleansing”? How to differentiate the violence of war, which I was documenting, from the violence of postwar “peace,” which was unfolding in many dimensions, including the architectural, in the very midst of this documentation? What relation did violence against architecture bear to violence against the people who built, inhabited, or identified with that architecture? Is architec-

ture always innocent? Is destruction always violent? Is passing judgment on violence—part of my work for the tribunal—an effective form of resistance to violence? Framing these and related questions, I came to regard my work for the tribunal as only preliminary, and to project my response to violence in Kosovo onto many other forms, architectural, institutional, and narrative. The latter form includes this book, in which I explore the intersection of architecture with violence, identity, agency, and history in modern and contemporary Kosovo.

Constructing Destruction

Bullet-sprayed facades, ruined city blocks, burned houses, uninhabited villages: I have only begun to set the stage for this story and have already recruited destroyed architecture to represent abstract conditions in vivid, material form—a typical and symptomatic gesture toward destruction, and precisely the one around which this book will revolve. Indeed, the destruction I surveyed in 1999 would be referred to in just this way when the report I eventually coauthored was entered as evidence in the trial of Slobodan Milošević in 2002.¹ In the Milošević trial, destruction was at once a war crime and a representation of the various forces and causes behind that crime. Destruction was therefore traced back to a single author, Milošević himself; destruction was confined to the formal, if illegal operations of a state; destruction was regarded as politically rational, an instrument knowingly applied as a means to achieve a specified end; and destruction was thought to embody a political power that preexisted and stood separate from its applications, a power that was understood to distribute itself continuously across space, from a central point of authority to peripheral sites of violence. Destruction, that is, served to make manifest a host of otherwise inchoate presences, from the authority of Milošević, through the political agency of his regime, to the power of the state.

Milošević, it was clear, bore political responsibility for war crimes, in Kosovo as in Bosnia and Croatia. Yet, the narrative of destruction that emerged in his trial, just like narratives of destruction in many other discursive contexts, was based on a decisive yet unmentioned exclusion of destruction from the problematic of architecture. Consider the fundamentally different ways in which architecture (whether imagined or realized) and destruction are usually understood. Architectural discourse has produced

sophisticated interpretive techniques to register the material and semantic autonomies of architectural constructions, to accommodate the capacity of architecture not only to reproduce already existing contextual realities in another form, but also to produce new realities, to act upon and even transform its putative contexts: in short, to problematize reflexive assumptions about architecture's relationship to the presences of which it might be taken as mere product, effect, expression, or mediation.²

When architecture is destroyed, however, it is typically regarded as just such a product, effect, expression, or mediation. Destruction usually displaces architecture from architectural discourse, if not the domain of "culture" more generally, and positions it in the domain of "violence," and so, in typical formulations, in radically different disciplinary sites and epistemological frameworks. The underlying assumption, characteristic in humanist discourse, is that "culture" and "violence" stand in unmediated opposition to one another, that violence is always absent from or aberrant in fully "cultural" formations. This assumption sponsors not only opposing valuations of culture and violence but also opposing epistemologies: while cultural phenomena are posited as complex and necessary to interpret, violence is apprehended as obvious and apparent. As such, violence is typically reduced to either a rational or irrational act, either an instrument to achieve a specified end or an exit from instrumental logic altogether. As a rational instrument, an act of violence is presumed to be already interpreted; as an irrational irruption, an act of violence is presumed to be uninterpretable. What often passes for the "interpretation" of violence is thus contextualization, the rendering of an act of violence as a mediation of pre-existing and self-constituting contextual formations of antagonism, authorization, or legitimization. As Gyanendra Pandey describes this dynamic, "historical discourse has been able to capture the moment of physical or psychological violation only with great difficulty. The history of extreme violence is, therefore, almost always about context—about everything that happens around violence."³

Like other cultural forms, violence is a kind of inscription, an investment of material with identity and meaning that is irreducible to the intention of an author, the determination of a context, or the explanation of an interpreter.⁴ In the case of architecture, however, only design is usually recognized as inscription; destruction tends to transform architecture from *inscription* to *transcription*, from the production of identity and meaning

to their mere circulation—a transformation in architecture’s fundamental mode of existence. In the predominant forms of disciplinary labor, then, architecture invites critical interpretation, just as other cultural forms do—until it is destroyed. Destruction, by contrast, prompts contextualization as a mere surface expression of supposedly “deeper” social, political or, economic conditions—themselves the typical sites of scholarly labor and academic knowledge production on violence, and, not at all incidentally, of state management and control of violence.⁵

Such was the case with the report I coauthored for the tribunal. What was destroyed? When was it destroyed? And who destroyed it? Those were the questions that organized our report and that neatly fit our description of wartime violence against architecture into the tribunal’s prosecutorial narrative. This was a narrative that paid far less attention to acts of violence against architecture than to their context of authorization, the chain of command connecting Milošević—the supposed point of origin of those acts—to forces on the ground in Kosovo. And such is also the case in most historical discourse about the post-Yugoslav wars. The title of one of the most thorough surveys of this discourse—“Who’s to Blame, and for What? Rival Accounts of the War,” by Sabrina Ramet—succinctly expresses the prevailing focus on naming and judging the authorizing agencies of violence over and against describing the violence that these agencies supposedly authorized.⁶ Whether these agencies comprise states, actual or imaginary communities, ideological formations, or historical dynamics, it is as if, in most accounts of the post-Yugoslav wars, the wars’ violence was immediately apparent, and as if the interpretive problem was therefore to assess responsibility—political, historical, or ethical—for this violence. With respect to architecture, just like other targets of violence, this protocol of historical representation moves interpretive attention away from the architectural articulation of violence to violence’s supposed agents, causes, or originary conditions. The destroyed facades, houses, and villages that I mentioned in passing at the beginning of this introduction tend to *only* get mentioned in passing.

Moreover, even when histories of political violence do attend to architecture, the epiphenomenal status of architecture tends to be maintained, if not further reified. In almost all historical accounts of destruction in the former Yugoslavia, the seemingly automatic assumption is that architecture is targeted as a representation of the actual, intended, or final destination of violence. This representation is often posited as a “sign,” so that violence

against architecture targets “signs of the culture of the ‘enemy’”; it is also often posited as a “symbol,” so that violence against architecture targets “symbols of other nations.”⁷ This representational status is often reiterated in the guise of correcting it, of presenting a “historically accurate” representation as a replacement for the merely ideological ones staged by history’s protagonists: “It is not only that the shrines represent the religious ‘other’ but, more importantly, that they embody five centuries of religious pluralism and accommodation.”⁸ And histories of conflict also project this representational status back into history itself, so that it becomes the original intention of architecture’s authors or patrons: “(s)acred landmarks, as border guards and visible material cultural markers, were built for millennia by various empires, native regimes, and foreign invaders.”⁹ What remains unquestioned, in other words, is that architecture represents something else, a presence—culture, nation, community, history—that exists prior to and exterior from its architectural signification or symbolization.

At the same time, however, even as historiography *differentiates* architecture, as representation, from the seemingly autonomous presences that stand as origins, grounds, or causes of history, it also poses violence against architecture as an *identification* of those presences with their architectural representation. This representation exposes otherwise unavailable presences to violence; it allows cultures, nations, communities, or history to be attacked through their architectural “signs” or “symbols.” In one typical formulation, “the link between erasing any physical reminder of a people and its collective memory and the killing of the people themselves is ineluctable.”¹⁰ As a “reminder,” architecture is differentiated from a complete and stable presence, here termed “a people,” but, as a target of violence, architecture is identified with that presence, so that a people can be attacked via its architectural reminders. A people is presumed to be merely represented by architecture, although the destruction of this architecture is presumed to destroy the people who are represented.

This paradoxical status of architecture in political violence, both differentiated from and identified with what it represents, renders architecture to be what Jacques Derrida has termed “supplemental.” On one level, the supplement is a superfluous addition to an already complete presence. It “adds itself, it is a surplus, a plentitude enriching another plentitude”: the conceptualization of architecture as a sign or symbol of a culture, community, nation, or history assumes each of the latter as such a plentitude.¹¹

But, Derrida points out, the supplement is also a compensation for that seeming plenitude's incompleteness. The supplement "adds only to replace. . . . If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. . . . It is not simply added to the positivity of a presence. . . . its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness."¹² This emptiness is what summons architectural signification or symbolization in the first place. It is, for Derrida, originary. No presence exists prior to or separate from its representation. The illusion of representation, writes Derrida, is that it "creates nothing," that it re-presents "a present that would exist elsewhere and prior to it . . . a present whose plenitude would be older than it, absent from it, and rightfully capable of doing without it."¹³ This plenitude is the object of an architectural representation that does not simply *add* to this object but *completes* it. Architecture thus comprises one form of the "supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing that they defer: the impression of the thing itself, of immediate presence, or originary perception."¹⁴

In this book, then, rather than searching for the historical causes, origins, or contexts behind or prior to violence against architecture—the typical destinations of interpretive labor—I focus on where *violence takes place*: the particular sites, both spatial and discursive, where violence is inflicted and where the subjects and objects of violence are articulated. I do not include destruction, therefore, in already established narratives of political identity and agency as simply another field on which those phenomena are mediated, expressed, or effectuated. I seek to register the emergence of power, agency, and identity from violence, rather than to rely upon power, agency, and identity as self-constituting and free-standing historical constructs. I posit destruction, that is, as a form of construction, irreducible to its supposed contexts and productive of the very identities and agencies that supposedly bear on it as causes: a supplement to the presences usually cited as causal in accounts of political violence in the former Yugoslavia.

Violence, Theoretically

The understanding of violence as both materially and culturally destructive has, for the most part, displaced violence against architecture from architectural history. Yet conceptualizations of the cultural productivity of violence have been adumbrated in artistic and architectural

discourse. Foremost here are the aesthetics of the early twentieth-century avant-gardes, for whom violence was a resource for cultural production, and culture, in turn, a resource to apprehend violence.¹⁵ Italian Futurism was here in the lead: F. T. Marinetti's call to "the good incendiaries with charred fingers" to burn down museums and libraries; Luigi Russolo's evocation of modern warfare's "infinitely sensual, significant, and expressive" noises; and Giovanni Papini's prediction of a new art produced by those "refreshed by destruction" each posed violence as a constituent element of modern culture.

In their attempts to engage violence, the avant-gardes glorified, celebrated, and aestheticized war, destruction, and injury—but these were not simply ideological misrecognitions. These glorifications, celebrations, and aestheticizations were acknowledgments of existing conditions as well as performances of transgressive cultural ideologies. The avant-gardes did not merely proclaim the beauty of war; they revealed the beauty that bore upon those who imagined war, designed war, narrated war, beheld war, and in some cases carried war out. The avant-gardes, that is, acknowledged symbolic and expressive dimensions of violence that were—and still are—denied by moralizing and rationalizing discourses. The theoretical frame was Nietzschean: the aesthetic was a negotiation with and by power, and violence was not a regrettable interruption of social life but rather an indispensable form of social transformation.

Concepts of ecstatic, revolutionary, or messianic violence in the almost contemporaneous writings of Antonin Artaud, Georges Bataille, and Walter Benjamin similarly recovered aspects of violence neglected by or suppressed in predominant articulations, authorizations, and legitimizations of violence. And, in muted form, similar concepts of violence were brokered elsewhere in modernist aesthetics. The Formalist concept of art as "defamiliarization," for example, suggests that destruction, as well as construction, possesses cultural agency and semantic capacity. Here, destruction is not a simple removal or erasure of its target from social space, but a transformation of that target's social status and meaning and, with it, of the social itself. Material destruction is cultural production: this seeming paradox was crucial to the critical force of avant-garde and modernist aesthetics, but it also attests to the symbolic and practical efficacy of violence more generally.

The cultural productivity of violence has framed recent revisionist

art histories of vandalism and iconoclasm.¹⁶ This productivity has also suggested a new disciplinary labor for histories concerned with architecture.¹⁷ The themes around which such histories have been organized—the constitutive relation of imagined or built objects to their social, political, and historical surroundings, the representational vocations to which architecture is assigned, the signifying potential of architectural form—are as relevant in the case of destruction as in that of construction. Political conflicts conducted, narrated, or imagined by destruction, that is, have a particularly *architectural history* that solicits representation as such.

The theoretical catalog that I draw upon to represent this history to some extent emerged in dialogue with the avatars of avant-garde and modernist aesthetics and, thus, the violence that preoccupied them.¹⁸ Indeed, that Derrida's writing, in particular, was partly constituted in relation to and conversation with Nietzsche, Artaud, Bataille, Benjamin, and others invested in the apprehension of violence testifies to the particular significance of violence in that writing, as well as in poststructuralism more generally. The poststructuralist critique of structuralism was oriented, in part, to the latter's violence, its liquidation of negativity and difference, its legislation of change as chance, if not disaster. "The structuralist consciousness is a catastrophic consciousness," writes Derrida, "simultaneously destroyed and destructive, *destructuring*."¹⁹ But this observation is exterior to structuralism, outside of or beyond it; the cognition of this catastrophic consciousness, of the violence that structuralism not only displaced or repressed but also inflicted, is, perhaps definitively, poststructuralist.

So, too, consciousness of the violence of cognition may be poststructuralist. Derrida evoked this violence through a figuration of the structures of structuralism as ruins: "The relief and design of structures appears more clearly when content, which is the living energy of meaning, is neutralized. Somewhat like the architecture of an uninhabited or deserted city, reduced to its skeleton by some catastrophe of nature or art. A city no longer inhabited, not simply left behind, but haunted by meaning and culture."²⁰

This is a critique of structuralism as a species of destruction, yet it is also an apprehension of the semantic and cultural productivity of destruction. The "meaning" and "culture" that haunt a destroyed city are, in this sense, not so much residues of destruction as enmeshed with, summoned through, and supplemented by that destruction.

Humanist thought, by contrast, posits “meaning” and “culture” as exterior to violence, exposed to violence only as its target or dichotomous opposite. Violence is excluded from humanist thought through teleological schemes of nonviolence, which pass by such names as culture, politics, and history. The elimination of violence typically marks the end of culture, politics, and history, both in terms of their final determination and their temporal destination. It also shapes the status of violence as an object of thought, an object always subordinate to and disruptive of a primary, seemingly autonomous concept. Yet the normative disqualification of violence stands in opposition to violence’s constitutive qualifications of culture, politics, and history, qualifications that are encoded in the very attempt to marginalize violence as merely “empirical” and therefore detached from the ideal orientations and ends of human(e) praxis.²¹ Post-structuralism’s interpellation by violence thus opens onto an interpellation of violence by poststructuralism, an apprehension of violence within reconstituted concepts of culture, politics, and history.²²

From Archives to Traces

The materials that I rely on in this book are a diverse set of archival records, media accounts, human rights reports, oral histories, and my own documentation of wartime and postwar spatial situations. Each of these materials reveals specific aspects of violence against architecture in Kosovo. These materials are heterogeneous and fragmentary. I collected them in an attempt to register the available discursive representations of violent destruction—that is, destruction defined as violent by some interpretive community—in modern and contemporary Kosovo.

One risk of such a collection strategy is that the indeterminate definition of the sources under study would prompt reflexive confirmation of my own theoretical preconceptions—that I would find only what I was looking for. The necessity of this strategy, however, was founded in the status of the formal archive as a wholly inadequate repository of information on violence against architecture in Kosovo. This inadequacy has two dimensions. First, violence against architecture in Kosovo has at times included violence against archives. Along with other cultural institutions, archives were sometimes specifically targeted for destruction; this destruction, then, was a phenomenon that destroyed its own archival prehistory.

Jalal Toufic describes two sorts of catastrophes, one sort that is recorded in archives and another sort, termed by Toufic the “surpassing catastrophe,” that involves even the destruction of archives.²³ The 1998–99 counterinsurgency campaign conducted by Serb forces in Kosovo comprised such a catastrophe, as its targets included the buildings and collections of various state archives, libraries, and museums; and Islamic libraries, theological schools, and Sufi lodges.²⁴ Some archives and collections were also removed from Kosovo into Serbia proper; in 1999, for example, the archives of the Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Kosovo were taken from the institute’s building in Prishtina/Priština by staff from the Yugoslav Ministry of Interior; as of the writing of this book, these materials remain in the ministry’s possession.

Second, there is also a violence *within* the archive, a violence that is more pronounced when the subject at hand is violence. The archive is a construction of the state, dedicated to subjects and objects of concern to the state. The archive’s view is the view from the center, from the authority of the state or other sovereign institution; from this vantage point, nonstate violence is almost always disruptive, aberrant, and necessary to control, while state violence is a counterviolence, invoked at the last instance to restore order. Subaltern studies have opened up new possibilities to read through state-sanctioned accounts of violence to construct or reveal the hidden agencies of the dominated.²⁵ At the same time, historical and cultural studies have opened up the study of other forms of cultural memory and alternative sites of historical materialization—sites that, unlike the archive of documents, are not founded and managed by the state and are thus untethered to imperatives of state self-definition and legitimation.²⁶

In this book, I both consider and complement material on violence against architecture collected by the Serbian state, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the Islamic Community of Kosovo. In so doing, I register violent spatial production in Kosovo in architectural and urban artifacts, visual and textual representations, and social practices, each recovered from the heterogeneous set of materials described above. Here, then, the historical form of violence against architecture is comprised of what Derrida has called a “text”: “a relational network of instituted traces” in which written language is conjoined with and perforce complicated by inscriptions of other types.²⁷

Architecture of the Book

In this book, I insert the 1998–99 conflict between Serbia and the Kosovo Liberation Army into a genealogy of anticipated, threatened, inflicted, and remembered violence against architecture in Kosovo. This genealogy stretches from the late 1940s and the advent of socialist modernization in Yugoslavia to the first decade of the twenty-first century and the development of Kosovo’s postwar “reconstruction.” Tracking violence against architecture in each of these periods, “war” becomes but one moment of political violence that assumes different names, targets, and visibilities in various historical contexts.

The book is divided into three parts. Chronologically, the parts correspond to the conventional periodization of Yugoslavia’s modern and contemporary history: socialist modernization, late- and post-socialist conflict, and postconflict reconstruction. In empirical historiography, these periods are usually the sources of failures or contradictions, either contingent or structural, that drive history; the failures of modernization determine ethnic conflict and violence, the contradictions of ethnic conflict and violence determine postconflict reconstruction, and so on. Where empirical histories point to change, I point, instead, to a condition of repetition. This condition is architectural: it is the recurring positioning of architecture as a nexus between a posited alterity and present actuality. In the moments I study here, these alterities were posited as abject, endangered or dangerous, or unjust; their elimination thus entailed the elimination of their architectural supplements. I stage history, then, as the repeated summoning of architecture to simultaneously represent and annihilate rejected presences—a history of the negation and assimilation of alterity.

In his poem “Spomenik” (Monument), Vladislav Petković Dis dreamed of a monument:

It has a long life,
 Today it descends into new legends,
 To prepare our descendents for the next monument.³⁵

Dis was writing in 1913, just after Serbia wrested possession of Kosovo from the Ottoman empire and installed an obelisk on the site of the famous medieval battle in which Serbia was thought to have lost Kosovo. His dream has sometimes been interpreted as a fantasy of Serbia’s perpetual return to

Kosovo; I pose it as a historical premonition—its sign of a history that suppresses historicity—an anticipation of a history of repeated attempts to make alterity manifest in architecture.

Part I of this book explores the destruction of rejected architectural heritage in Kosovo's socialist modernization, focusing on Kosovo's capital city, Prishtina. Socialist modernization staged itself by contrast to a premodernity, prior to and inherited by it. This premodernity was made manifest in both treasured and debased versions, the latter, in Kosovo, fabricated primarily by Ottoman-era architecture. Modernization was carried out through the destruction of abject heritage, a destruction that was narrated by the socialist state as the destruction of premodernity itself. Yet heritage was not simply a contingent mediation of premodernity, one of its many forms of appearance, but an essential completion of premodernity, the form in which it was made manifest to the beneficiaries of modernization. Premodernity was thereby produced in the very process of destroying its architectural supplement; this was a historicization of destruction rather than a destruction of prehistory, a simultaneous summoning and expulsion of premodernity that took place, through the medium of architecture, in the name of political progress.

Part II investigates the destruction of endangered or dangerous architectural patrimony as a manifestation of ethnic alterity in late- and post-socialist conflict in Kosovo. In these conflicts, self-appointed representatives of Serbian ethnic communities consolidated the identity of these communities in response to violence against architecture claimed as patrimony or assigned as patrimony of ethnic others. One aspect of this consolidation involved the narration of late-socialist vandalism against Serbian Orthodox graves and cemeteries as "ethnic violence" carried out by Kosovar Albanians against Serbs; another involved the postsocialist destruction of Islamic buildings posed as Albanian patrimony by Serb military and paramilitary forces. In both cases, patrimony was apprehended as the primordial inheritance of an ethnic community. The apprehension of architecture as patrimony, however, took place within political conflict; the fabrication of architecture as patrimony thereby comprised an ethnicization of conflict rather than a form of ethnic conflict, an ethnicization conducted through the medium of architecture. The architectural mediation of ethnic identity was not, then, a symbolic representation of that identity as much as an architectural supplement of it—a supplement that installed ethnicity in political conflict.

Part III examines the destruction of architectural surrogates of un-avenged violence in postwar Kosovo. After the 1998–99 war, calls for retribution for prior violence inflicted by Serb forces against Kosovar Albanians circulated through Kosovar Albanian public culture. The postconflict destruction of Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries was narrated as a form of this retribution, with architecture becoming a surrogate for the agencies deemed responsible for the violence to be avenged—initially the Milošević regime and its military forces. The fabrication of architecture as a surrogate for unavenged violence, however, not only mediated an already constituted concept of violence but also ramified on that concept; the destruction of churches and monasteries represented not only revenge for the violence of the 1998–99 war but also a continuous sequence of actual or imagined violent acts stretching back to the medieval construction of churches on crypto-Albanian religious sites. The destruction of architectural surrogates of violence thereby elicited a potentially endless justification for destruction rather than a politics of justice.

In these scenarios, violence takes place in three major senses. First, violence is instantiated in specific sites and situations, instantiations that in turn produce simulations and effects of power, authority, and legitimization. Violence becomes, then, a supplement to what are conventionally regarded as its sources, origins, or causes; it comprises “a subaltern instance which *takes-(the)-place*.”²⁹ Analysis of this supplement, which here comprises destruction, defamiliarizes narratives that posit violence as originating in and distributed from a central locus, be that locus defined geographically, institutionally, historically, or ideologically. Second, violence transforms place, thereby becoming what Henri Lefebvre calls a form of “spatial production.”³⁰ Analysis of the violent transformation of place reveals a general aspect of modernity that is repressed in historiography that presumes violence as aberrant, exceptional, or transitional. Third, violence targets architecture, one of the key figures of place in modernized contexts. Here, architectural damage and destruction are posed not as threats to or fractures of social order, but as attempts to impose novel forms of order through the production of place.

This analytical perspective situates *Violence Taking Place* within a set of recent studies of political conflict in the former Yugoslavia. These studies refuse a priori distinctions between “politics” and “culture” and attend closely to the symbolic, expressive, or performative dimensions of “politi-

cal” actions and events.³¹ More particularly, this perspective prompts an examination of the sites and situations of violence against architecture via the interpretive protocols of architecture. The placement of architectural construction within the domain of these protocols and architectural destruction outside this domain has nothing to do with construction and destruction themselves and everything to do with the history of their study—and thus, with history more generally. A blurring of the discursive and disciplinary separations between construction and destruction, then, may comprise an opening toward or initiation of other histories.³²

Mimesis as/of Violence

I conducted the research from which this book emerged in Kosovo from 1999 to 2004. This period, however, was not only the temporal frame for my research but also a historical moment I intervened in and, in microscopic ways, affected. My participation in postwar Kosovo is not explicitly foregrounded in what follows—but, at the same time, I also do not claim to write in a position removed from who and what I write about. My participation in Kosovo’s history began in 1999, with my survey of wartime destruction for the International Criminal Tribunal. Encountering not only the catastrophic destruction of architecture but also the destruction of the institutions responsible for maintaining and reconstructing that architecture, I became involved in a number of ventures to “build capacity” in those institutions, as the process is known in reconstruction discourse. In 2000, I cofounded and codirected a nongovernmental organization, the Kosovo Cultural Heritage Project, which raised funds and organized the reconstruction of architectural heritage damaged during the war. In 2001, I joined the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, first as a cultural heritage officer and then as the international cohead of the Department of Culture. From 2002 to 2005 I worked on a national inventory of architectural heritage in Kosovo with the Ministry of Culture in Kosovo’s Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. And in 2006 I advised representatives of Kosovo’s provisional government on cultural heritage issues in United Nations–sponsored negotiations with Serbia over Kosovo’s future status.

Through this work, I became involved in a number of political projects, most notably one aiming to render Kosovo independent from Serbia;

I not only observed the drive toward independence but I also participated, in ways both witting and unwitting, to further it. This sort of participation in a historical situation is often distinguished, either negatively (as the site of bias) or positively (as the site of close observation), from a distanced and dispassionate inspection of that situation. Timothy Garton Ash, for example, contrasts the interpretive positions of “the witness” and “the historian.” While the historian can “gather all the witnesses’ accounts and is generally unswayed by . . . first-hand experience,” the witness can “see things that the historian will not find in any document,” “a glance, a shrug, a chance remark” that may be more historically salient than, Garton Ash writes, “a hundred speeches.”³³

In Garton Ash’s account, the distinction between “historian” and “witness” is organized around a number of unmediated oppositions: historical reading is a passive and objective practice, while historical witnessing is active and subjective; reading is focused on documents, while witnessing accommodates a wide spectrum of visual and textual evidence; and reading neither produces nor is produced by experience, while witnessing is itself an intensely experiential act. These oppositions suggest that, on one side or the other, protocols for the mimetic representation of history can be found—either the mimesis of the witness, up close and personal, or the mimesis of the historian, distant and objective.

Yet mimesis itself is a constituent feature of violence. Mimesis is another name for the process by which violence comes to represent imagined or imaginary communities, ideological positions, or political agencies—another name, that is, for the suppression of supplementarity. Mimesis has thereby underwritten the destruction of architecture in Kosovo, destruction that has been posed—by its authors, victims, and historians alike—as an instrument to destroy ethnic communities, cities, culture, cultural memory, multiculturalism, and an array of other targets. Each of these readings of destruction presupposes an architectural mimesis; destruction makes sense to the extent that such mimesis applies, to the extent that the authors, targets, and victims of destruction can be positioned as representative.

The history this book stages, by contrast, is that of failed mimesis, of repeated attempts to enact mimesis through destruction and to conceive destruction through mimesis. This is the history of a project to render architecture, through violence, a political resource and cultural medium—

an object of history. As such, this history suggests a reformulation of the relations usually subtended between history and architecture in empirical historiography that deals with architecture. In this historiography, architecture is typically posed as an effect, product, or representation of political power, agency, ideology, or identity—the typical sources of historical causality. These sources are presumed to occupy a different, more “present” ontological register than that of the “representations,” architectural and otherwise, that supposedly manifest them.

But this positioning of architecture is, in effect, tautological; it begins from the position that architecture is epiphenomenal and mimetic, and then assimilates architecture into the narrative of whatever phenomenon is staged as causal. Architectural mimesis is not so much derived as assumed; architecture, if not culture more generally, is posited as a simple representation, so that the task of historical interpretation becomes the identification of that representation’s authors, contents, and effects. In so doing, this historiography collaborates in the logic of the violence it seeks to analyze, a violence that authorizes and legitimizes itself by invoking the same presences as those invoked by its historiography. This historiography possesses, in other words, its own violence; it is part of an apparatus that renders violence a mere effect or product of something else—something that we may esteem or desire, something that we believe we may not be able to live without.

In this book, by contrast, I am concerned not only with who or what architecture represents, but also how it is that architecture becomes representational. Violence emerges as a simultaneous demand for and form of mimesis, a forcing of representation onto architectural material that is recalcitrant in its sheer particularity. The “burden of history,” “surplus of history,” or “abuse of history” that so many histories of Yugoslavia cite as causal of destruction here become, at least partly, architectural effects, derived from a historicization of violence achieved through the destruction of objects posited as “historical.” To articulate an architectural history of destruction, then, is also to pose the object of architectural history not only as the history of architecture but also as the architecture of history: the ways in which architecture is enlisted as a supplement to history’s assumed protagonists, structures, and dynamics.

It is not at all accidental that the subject of violence impels reflection on the architecture of history.³⁴ Architecture is insistently called upon to

stand in for reality and assume historical significance precisely when that reality is apprehended as destabilized by violence. Violence intensifies architecture's historical significance and cultural meaning in the very process of destroying it. The historicization of architecture wrought by violence thereby calls specific attention to architecture as a representation of history. Accordingly, *Violence Taking Place* tells the story of architecture's participation in a series of particularly vivid and consequential mimetic acts. It is a story about architecture itself becoming a story: about power, about agency, about identity, about history. This story—what I am positing as history—relates the violence that must be inflicted on architecture to render it significant and signifying, to insert architecture into history.

The poststructuralist critique of representation also applies to the representation of this history—and, even more profoundly, to history itself *as* representation, as an order of causality, linearity, continuity, teleology, eschatology, determination or any of the a priori by means of which the past is sensed, thought, and narrated. This critique thus problematizes history not only as a transcription of the past but also as an object of knowledge and an epistemological domain. For me, these problematizations do not yield a simple invalidation or rejection of history, rather, they imply a reinscription of history as a discursive site, textual field of dispersion, or even form of strategic counterviolence.³⁵

They also imply a subject position that Dominick LaCapra has termed a “secondary witness.” The relationship of this witness to her object of study parallels—though does not duplicate—that of the witness to the event. “Experience,” LaCapra argues, “involves affect both in the observed and in the observer.” For the observer, he continues, “the problem of experience should lead to the question of the role of empathy in historical understanding.”³⁶ Empathy, then, becomes a kind of surrogate or virtual experience, centered not on identifying with or substituting for the experiences of others but rather on attending carefully to “the possibly split-off, affective dimension” of those experiences.³⁷

In a sense, my passage from coauthor of a compilation of evidence for the International Criminal Tribunal to author of this book involved a passage—still, to be sure, in process—from a (seemingly) detached commentator to a secondary witness, to a position in which I could be troubled by, and could attempt to trouble, distinctions between the violence of war and the violence of “peace”; between the text of violence and the

contexts that supposedly bear on that text, between the perpetrators of violence and the collectives they claim to represent; and between the intentions that precede violence and the effects that seem to follow from it. I understand secondary witnessing as involving an employment of mimesis against itself. While deploying the mimesis of both witnesses (myself and others) and historians, my abiding concern is to turn the mimetic representation of violence against mimetic violence—to historicize violence as inscription, representation, and cultural production. Of course, “violence taking place” also describes this book’s effect on its object of study in the course of subsuming that object to a determinate order of thought. My hope, frankly, is that this is a counterviolence, a friction against the collapse of objects and representations that violence itself attempts and that histories of violence often ratify.