

In accord with the decisions of the Foundation “Bosnian-Herzegovinian Book” and the Journal Human Rights Review to establish recognition for a “Book of the Year,” the Board, consisting of Thomas Cushman, Robert Donia, Francis R. Jones, Ivan Lovrenović, Rusmir Mahmutćehajić and Žarko Papić announces the following

DECISION
on selection of the book for 1999
(No. 2-2000/O)

The Board announces the book of David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) as its English language selection for the “Book of the Year.”

In this work, Campbell applies deconstructionist thought to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He does so while offering philosophical propositions that elaborate existing deconstructionist theories of democracy, ethnicity, international relations, and historical narration. He provides a broad-ranging and convincing critique of what he classifies as “single-author” monographs on the causes of the war (Woodward, Cohen, O’Balance, Zametica, Mojzes, Denitch, Ramet, Bennett, Silber and Little) and deconstructs their key presuppositions. He offers a marvelous summary of the various international peace proposals and critiques the various assumptions on which they rested. He identifies the international community’s propensity to associate national identities with territoriality as a major influence upon the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he rejects the views of those who explicitly advocated partition and population transfers as solutions to the crisis. In a far-reaching treatment of international aspects of the conflict, he analyzes the 1993 decision of the International Court of Justice in the suit brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He shows that the Clinton Administration’s inaction was linked to its incapacity to promote multiculturalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina while the American right was attacking “multiculturalism” in the American academy. In a concluding chapter, he argues that deconstructive thought can expand our sense of options and provide the political space for multiple approaches to understanding Bosnia and Herzegovina and for Bosnians to create a different future.

This singularly important work opens new avenues of inquiry and proposes different modes of understanding, both in comprehending Bosnia and Herzegovina and in viewing the international environment in which the war took place. The author’s advocacy of deconstructionist thought is energetic, persuasive, and in the end very specific to the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He shows an extraordinary command of the specifics of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, collected from a host of sources, both printed and electronic. Unlike many western views of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this one does not end in total despair and in fact offers a forward-looking perspective in the light of potential deconstructionist thought.

One may question the accessibility of this work, for its philosophical discussion presupposes a reader's familiarity with "postmodernist" theories and approaches. Having to work through the dense underbrush of deconstructionist thought is a cost that the reader must pay for this broadly conceived critique of "Bosnia" as a global crisis. But this is original, bold, and important scholarship, and anyone concerned with Bosnia and Herzegovina and its future would do well to understand the analysis.

Acting through its founders and collaborators, the Board will support the translation and publication of this book in the Bosnian language as an endeavor to advance human rights, the rule of law, and democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Board:

Thomas Cushman

Robert Donia

Francis R. Jones

Ivan Lovrenović

Rusmir Mahmutćehajić

Žarko Papić