

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SANTA CRUZ

BALKAN SONG

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF FINE ARTS

in

DIGITAL ARTS AND NEW MEDIA

by

Nada Miljković

June 2009

The Thesis of Nada Miljković
is approved:

Professor Elizabeth Stephens, Chair

Professor B. Ruby Rich

Professor Soraya Murray

Lisa C. Sloan
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Copyright © by
Nada Miljković
2009

ABSTRACT

My thesis investigates the concept of Sevdah while experimenting with new digital media forms. Followed by years of isolation and suffering created by war, the need for reconciliation is essential for the people of the former Yugoslavia. Multi-media can be powerfully effective for post-conflict reconstruction across ethnic divides.

The *Balkan Song* project, through the employment of song, video, and social networking, intends to create connections and collaboration between the peoples of Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia and its Diaspora. The concept and musical tradition of Sevdah will be the thread.

An expansion on theories of contemporary art, systems and the politics of difference will inform this process. By applying ideas from Andrei Simić, Dylan Evans, Fritjof Capra and Tamara Karaca-Beljak, a new historiography will be written. Also, I examine the artistic practices of two artists – Christian Boltanski and Marina Abramović in reflection upon my own experience as an artist, in adapting to particular modes of art practice from performance to video archive and social networking

Balkan Song aims to create a sense of how conceptual art and technology can support the belief that art is inextricably bound to the promise of a better world.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Matthew Ammann. Without his untiring support and encouragement, I would not have attempted the crazy idea of going back to school after twenty years nor been able to finish. Also, I am eternally grateful to his excellent caretaking of our children and myself.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This written document would not have been completed had it not been for the generous and patient support from Soraya Murray by way of her mentoring and hours of editing. Also, I am very grateful to Elizabeth Stephens and B Ruby Rich for their contribution and help in conceiving and formulating this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| TITLE PAGE | i |
| COPYRIGHT | ii |
| ABSTRACT | iii |
| DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | v |
| 1 - INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2 - SEVDAH – the Journey | 4 |
| 3 - SEVDAH – the History | 7 |
| 4 - SEVDAH and Gender | 12 |
| 5 - CURRANT/CURRENCY | 17 |
| 6 - SEVDAH – Field Study | 19 |
| 7 - <i>BALKAN SONG</i> – the Form | 22 |
| 8 - THEORY | 24 |
| 9 - CONCLUSION | 31 |
| APPENDIX I - Lyrics and Translations of Sevdalinke | 37 |
| APPENDIX II - Song Stories | 40 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 44 |

“Moj dilbere, kud se šćeš”¹
“My darling, where are you going?”

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores Sevdah, an emotion, musical tradition, and phenomenon found throughout the Balkan Peninsula that conveys the pain of separation from love. The word’s root can be traced to many regions of the world from the Far East to South America, crossing political, cultural, and religious borders. Sevdah has many narratives and is ideal for purposes of exploring identity issues that transcend site specificity. *Balkan Song* was created to investigate the relationship between feeling, performance, and behavior as the content and means for experimenting with the effectiveness of different types of new and old digital media in the context of contemporary art.

Balkan Song uses music, performance, video, and web-art for collaboration and social networking to connect peoples across varying cultures and religions in the world and particularly those of Serbia, Bosnia Hercegovina, Croatia, its Diaspora and the United States. Through an examination of the various aspects of the piece, this investigation provides a historical, personal, formal, and theoretical context for understanding Sevdah and its twenty-first century iteration in *Balkan Song*. Also, due to the common human feeling of heart-sickness, *Balkan Song* employs multiple forms of media to create a powerful and effective agent for post-conflict reconstruction across ethnic and cultural divides. Sevdah is the common thread.

Balkan Song questions whether a musical form can spark a dialog that allows the possibility for some reconciliation among peoples that have recently been at conflict, yet share many aspects of culture and history. The general understanding of Sevdah with associated behavior and emotion has the potential to heal ruptures between peoples from within the former Yugoslavian boundaries. Under the meta-narrative of Sevdah, many different manifestations of musical forms are found from Slovenia to the Black

¹ Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. “Moj Dilbere.” *Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997.

Sea. Sevdah is also nuanced enough to be site specific by being regionally distinctive that people from this part of the world know immediately within a few notes the location where the music originates. Along with the musical form of Sevdah, there are broad and distinctive behaviors associated by those listening and performing in relation to the feeling. The music is usually performed in cafes while the patrons drink copious amounts of alcohol and egg each other into feeling the pain. This musical tradition has also resurrected as “pop” with the biggest Balkan singers sing turbo-folk to sold-out stadium size concerts.

These people have suffered through nearly twenty years of civil war and ethnic conflict. Years of strife have caused a breakdown in the cultural ties that had bound neighbors, villages, and towns together. Since then, many yearn and strive to recapture the multi-ethnic and multi-national culture that had once thrived. At the same time, this cultural vanguard recognizes the poisons of ethnic insularism that caused so much suffering in the region. Yet there are many, particularly in the current coming of age generation, who are interested in pulling back the veil, to recognize and discover themselves and the “other.” They will find many cultural aspects mirrored, particularly, Sevdah and its role in a patriarchal society.

The word "Sevdah" most directly originates from ancient Arabic and is translated to mean the feeling of love sickness or melancholy. The word, emotion and music also have roots further back in history and geography to Hindustani, South Asia. Sevdalinke is the musical tradition associated with the word, Sevdah. Today, it is a complex Balkan cultural phenomenon which connects political activism, pop music and the practice of “cutting” or self-mutilation. Also, in a not so distant past, it was the women living in an extreme fundamental patriarchal culture who sang these songs. These women were forced into marriages, dehumanized and treated as commodity or slaves.² As indicated in the field of modern slavery by expert Beth Herzfeld, “Denying children the right to consent to marriage is a violation of their rights and a crime according to several international declarations.”³ According to UNICEF estimates, there

² Herzfeld, Beth. “Slavery and gender: women’s double exploitation.” Gender Trafficking and Slavery. Ed. Masika, Rachel. Santa Cruz: University of California, Santa Cruz Press. 2002. 50. She is the Press Officer for Anti-Slavery International at antislavery.org.

³ Mikhail, Susanne Louis B. “Child marriage and child prostitution: two forms of sexual exploitation” Gender Trafficking and Slavery. Ed. Masika, Rachel. Santa Cruz: University of California, Santa Cruz Press. 2002. 46

are still over sixty million under-aged women around the world forced into marriage today.⁴

Balkan Song creates a logic by which empowerment is made possible for the disempowered. *Balkan Song* uses Sevdah to inform the public and find ways to stop this abuse. Additional research for this project will consist of investigating works by Dylan Evans, Andrei Simić, Tamara Karaca-Bjelak, and Marina Abramović on topics of emotion, gendered subjectivity, and intercultural collaboration, along with observations and experiences of feeling and performing Sevdah.

To be most effective, the many forms of *Balkan Song* melds the temporal constraints concerning each one of these forms with the ephemeral quality of live performance. It combines the impermanence of exhibitions and the potential of long lasting web-based dialogic interactions, in a space not limited by physical boundaries. The last component, a social networking site, is key for the development of connectedness and the goals of post-conflict resolution, liberation and peace building.

⁴ Childinfo. Monitoring the situation of Children and Women. April 24, 2009. <<http://www.childinfo.org/marriage.html>>. This number is from the latest UNICEF census results of 2006.

“Haj što i mene ne povedeš?”⁵
“Why don’t you take me with you?”

SEVDAH – The Journey

Sevdah is found all over the world except most of Western Europe and North and Central America. Once explained and translated, every person I’ve ever spoken to has understood and related to the feeling. It is an emotion widely felt by those who have loved. The love does not have to be lost to fear the loss. Sevdah can be experienced in the happiest moments filled by love. It is a reminder of mortality. Happiness in love can give way to Sevdah by a quick change of perspective.

At the beginning of his book, *Emotion, the Science of Sentiment*, Dylan Evans speaks of an experience of learning a Japanese word that described a feeling of comfort in belongingness, a word that has no English translation. Immediately upon learning the word “amae”⁶, he related to its sentiment. The word, meaning more literally “comfort in another person’s complete acceptance,” is signified in another language and not in English. Soon after, he wonders why the feeling is not a word in his native language. Is it because American culture does not value this? The rest of his book explores sentiment as a means to argue the “Enlightenment” view of emotion as antithetical to rationality and reasoning. Yet, at the zenith of the “Enlightenment” there were those who recognized intuition as helpful, particularly in cases of morality. This view was advocated and investigated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who felt that the excessive reliance on reason made no room for intuition or sentiment. Dylan Evans agrees with Rousseau and argues that sentiment and/or emotion does not contradict the rational. He argues that the heart, the purported origin of feelings, has commonalities that can be understood in cultures all around the world. He concludes that the emotionally intelligent use a blend of heart and mind.

Similarly, upon reading the word Sevdah with its accompanying descriptive

⁵ Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. “Moj Dilbere.” *Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997.

⁶ Evans, Dylan. *Emotion, the Science of Sentiment*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001.

translation, I knew what it meant immediately, intuitively and viscerally. It sparked full sensual memories that included hearing and feeling. Suddenly, all those of years of being struck with tears during some silly Yugoslavian pop song made sense. Those songs were simply using Sevdah to evoke a feeling of loss. Now, this manipulation I had felt my whole life had a name and a word. I also wondered why there was no direct translation in English.

I came across the word in a book by Goran Gocić about a famous Yugoslavian director, Emir Kusturica.⁷ It was an intriguing section entitled, “Music, Drink, Ecstasy and Sevdah”. In every one of Kusturica's movies, there is a scene where a man is carried away by music and must feel physical pain so as to not lose his mind. The musicians are usually played by Romi.⁸ Sometimes, these heroes break a bottle on their heads or get physically struck by a matriarch. The physical pain is necessary so as not to get too emotionally transported. This mental/heart pain of loss is so severe that it has the potential to carry them into existential oblivion. The physical pain embodies them and grounds them to reality.

I understand Kusturica's and Gocić's Sevdah as a more masculine point of view. In conventionally feminine terms, the feeling is subtle, internal and centered in one's chest that often leads to spontaneous tears. The feeling is evoked intentionally, tested by thousands of years, by melismatic embellishments⁹ of music in the key of E flat. It is a form of music performed to stimulate vibrations that strike chords of pain from loss. When I asked my parents about this word, they said, “of course we know of Sevdah.”¹⁰ It is a common part of the Balkan vocabulary. “You should call your godfather, Obred.

⁷ Gocić, Goran. Gocić, Goran. The Cinema of Emir Kusturica, Notes from the Underground. London & New York: Wallflower Press. 2001. 84.

⁸ “Black Cat, White Cat” and “In the Time of Gypsies” Emir Kusturica is known to have been one of the first to film with an all Romi cast (mostly amateur) into several of his movies. The Gypsies and their aesthetic is Emir's muse. I mention this because the Sevdah in this paper is situated as Sarajevo as the Memphis of Sevdah to the Blues. The Romi have Sevdah in their music. Their Sevdah has different modalities and rhythms and different origin tracing. Sevdah in Bosnia came via the Ottoman and Sufism. There is not much date. We do not know that the first written record of Gypsies in Europe was as a Pasha's tally as slaves and the trainers of bears. Even so, gypsy music is strongly impressed more directly with Eastern Indian. For more information, see Jan Yoos' book The Gypsies published in 1967 by Illinois Waveland Press.

⁹ Pretrović, Ankica. “Islamic Echoes in Bosnia and Hercegovian: Tradition and Modernity”. Conference on Music in the world of Islam. Assilah, 8-13 August, 2007. 3.

At the age of seven, I was taught to sing the Epistles, Letter from Paul from Greece, during liturgy in my Serbian Orthodox Church.

¹⁰ Miljković, Dragana and Milan. Private telephone conversation. 1 April, 2008.

He'll tell you all about it. He's a Sevdah." "What does that mean? How is he a Sevdah?" I asked. "He knows it when he sees it," they replied. Later upon interviewing him, I found my Kum Obred was indeed an expert researcher, sensor, and performer. "Well so am I," I exclaimed. "We know,"¹¹ my parents replied. Nobody ever told me. With that conversation, a whole new world opened up to me.

After I began researching the word, uncanny synchronicities quickly popped up everywhere. When I asked another friend and mentor, Andrei Simić, if he had heard of Sevdah, he said "of course, I wrote an article about it in the mid-70s." When I spoke to my professor of ethnomusicology about Sevdah, he told me, "of course, I understand. That is what my name means."¹² His name is Dard. The word for pain in Hindi is "darda."¹³ There is a long tradition of music and emotion surrounding "darda." Filmmaker Carlos Saura is famous for making many beautiful dance movies including *Tango*, recently completed a film about the musical tradition of Fado.¹⁴ This type of music also is performed to evoke the feeling of loss. It was brought to Spain and Portugal by the Islamic expansion of the Umayyad Empire in the 800s until ending with the Nasrid Empire in 1492. The concept moved on with the Portuguese colonization and specifically to Brazil.

Most recently, I met with a literature professor that who showed me a book she had written within which has a chapter entitled Saudade.¹⁵ Saudade is the Portuguese word equivalent to Sevdah. Professor Yamashita inquired if I knew that Brazilian Samba is tied to Saudade. She added that Brazilian immigrants had come to Japan and introduced Saudade along with Samba into Japanese culture. That was the subject of the chapter in her book. I had circled the globe following the thread. Movements of migrations now connected Samba and Sevdah. The word kept growing in scope geographically and culturally spanning a couple millennia. I had uncovered a lot of the history of this complex word. It was the tip of an iceberg.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Neuman, Dard. Personal Conversation, Music Building, UCSC. 29 Sep. 2008.

¹³ English Hindi Dictionary. 18 April 2009. <<http://www.shabd-kosh.com/en2hi/search.php?e=pain&f=1&p>>.

¹⁴ fados, Carlos Saura. 18 April 2009. <http://www.fados-saura.com/index_pt.html>.

¹⁵ Yamashita, Karen Tei. Circle K Cycles. Minneapolis, MN. Coffee House Press. 2003.

“Povedi me u ćaršiju”¹⁶
“Take me to the old part of town”

SEVDAH HISTORY

Sevdah’s emergence in the Balkans begins with the occupation of the Ottoman Empire and the loss at the Battle of Kosovo in 1392 and a slow Muslim conversion of the indigenous Bosnians at the end of the fourteenth century. From that time, the music incubated in Sarajevo and radiated out in all directions, ending at the Dinaric Alps to the west, the Adriatic to the southwest and the Balkan mountain range to the northeast and the Black Sea. Today, the music and the emotion span the entire Balkan peninsula and are found in almost a dozen countries: Bosnia Hercegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey, Rumania, Montenegro, Slovenia, Kosovo, and the migratory Romani peoples.

Sevdah is traced back to the call for prayers (five times a day) and the religious schools brought by the Muslim Ottoman Empire.¹⁷ Music in the Islamic cultures was primarily taught through religious primary classes (mejtef) and dervish houses of worship (tekija).¹⁸ Once the music took root and evolved as a Bosnian tradition, the many cultures of Sarajevo made their distinct sound from the Orthodox Christians, Catholics and Bosniaks, local peoples many of the mercantile trade that converted to Islam.¹⁹ Sevdah is also connected to people of the Sephardic Jewish and Muslim

¹⁶ Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. “Moj Dilbere.” *Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes. 1997.

¹⁷ Petrović, Ankica. “Islamic Echoes in Bosnia and Hercegovina Tradition and Modernity” Los Angeles, Conference on Music in the world of Islam. Assilah. 8-13 Aug. 2007.

¹⁸ Karaca-Beljak, Tamara, On Sevdalinka Urban Songs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CD notes for “Antologija BH Sevdalinke”. 2008. This author is a professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Sarajevo and considered the foremost expert on Sevdah in Bosnia, if not the world. I learned of her at the University of Music Arts, Belgrade in 6 Oct. 2008. This was the only translated material I found in the US.

¹⁹ Bosniaks are indigenous Bosnians that converted to Islam.

migration. Along with the Jews, upon expulsion from Spain, many Moors came to Sarajevo as well.

Etymologically, Sevdah is an Ancient Arabic word meaning in its constitutive parts, “sev” black, and “dah” gall, or black gall. It refers to the ancient belief that bodies are made up of humors, liquids secreted dependent upon the host’s physical and emotional state or health. The black bile was made by the gallbladder when one experienced the pain of loss. This pain can come from a wide variety of separations, from the physical body being separated from God, or the immigrant separated from the motherland, or the lover separated from the loved one. Music and dance traditions have been used to provoke this feeling in religions for at least two thousand years. Most recently, the word is associated with the trance of the whirling dervish in the Sufi tradition as well as the dance and accompanied music and chanting.

Sevdalinke (songs of Sevdah) are meant to be performed live so as to evoke or provoke the intense feeling in the audience’s heart of love’s eventual loss through death or some other dividing force, such as betrayal or forced marriage. This evocation of feeling is meant as a way for catharsis. I liken the meaning of the phrase “carpe diem” (seize the day for tomorrow may never come) to Sevdah as “carpe amor diem”, (seize the love today). Sevdah has been described as “the feeling when you are incapable of enduring the pain caused by love and the pain transforms into the ecstasy of the intoxication of love that compares to the slow process of dying.”²⁰ The music is often referred to as the “Balkan Blues.”

When I began to research this concept, one of the first and most popular names that I found to be cited concerning Sevdah was Muhsin Rivić, a literary historian from Sarajevo. He writes the following:

It was possible for sevdalinka, one of the most representative genres of our verbal literature and our folk art in general, to be born in times when the Eastern lifestyle was more comprehensively recognized in the part of the population of Bosnia that accepted Islam, when specific urban environments were formed with all necessary institutions, when the urban quarter – mahala – was fully developed

²⁰ Karaca-Beljak, Tamara, On Sevdalinka Urban Songs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CD notes for “Antologija BH Sevdalinke”. 2008

with special spaces, depending on the economic power of the head of the household: court-yards with kapidžik with a fence around it, gardens with čardak , ašyk-pendžer ... It was at the times when life was lived in an ambience that was characterized by well-known events described by sevdalinka. This may have taken place some fifty years after Bosnia came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, that is, at the beginning of the XVI century. Since the lifestyle did not change from that time until the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, this period is believed to be the golden age of the thriving of sevdalinka.

During its life throughout centuries, sevdalinka was created in different social classes of the urban population, and it was composed and sung at girls' and young men's meetings, wheel dances, at come-togethers, weddings and other family gatherings, in court-yards, gardens, in towers, at belvederes, house rooms, at fairs, during travels... at hunting, at city fortresses, in prisons, military marches, under the stars during nights spent in foreign countries...²¹

With its associated emotion and musical manifestation, Sevdah flourished in large part because of the Ottoman Empire's governing tool, the millet system. This was a common Islamic approach to colonization used from the beginning of its expansion. The millet system of governing was what the Ottoman Empire used for political purposes that allowed control of the locals, the South Slavs, while allowing them to retain their cultural identities and slowly adopting to Turkish culture from food, architecture, religion, lifestyle and music. Norman Itzkowitz, a professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University explains the millet system as follows:

The three leading non-Muslim religious communities—the Jews, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Armenian Church—were established as recognized dhimmi communities known as millets. Each millet was headed by its own religious dignitary: a chief rabbi in the case of the Jews, and patriarchs in the case of the Greek Orthodox and Armenian communities. In the millet system, each community was responsible for the allocation and collection of its taxes, its educational arrangements, and internal legal matters pertaining especially to personal status issues such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. In the pre-modern Middle East, identity was largely based on religion. This system functioned well until the European concepts of nationalism and

²¹ Rivić, Muhsin, Sevdahlinke. 18 April 2009. <<http://sevdalinke.com/english.php>>.

ethnicity filtered into the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century.²²

From the mid-1400s to the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the specific region of Bosnia Hercegovina was the most western outpost of the empire. Due to both its proximity to the Adriatic (with its Mediterranean-type climate) and the millet system, this allowed for many people of different religions (not just the south Slavs) to live together peacefully particularly in the urban places such as Sarajevo the capital of Bosnia Hercegovina. Sarajevo was then and continued for centuries to be one of the most culturally and ethnically integrated cities in Europe. People retained cultural distinctions through religious ties while maintaining common culture that is until the break-up of Yugoslavia and the subsequent Bosnian war between the Serb, Croat, and Bosniak political groups.

As mentioned above, Sevdalinke are complicated both in performance and historical background, as well syntactically. The lyrics of Sevdalinks are written from both the male and female point of view and sung by either, without changing the lyrics or gender.²³ For example, the song “Moj Dilbere”, a very popular Sevdalinke known throughout the Balkans, including Turkey, is definitely from the female point of view and yet is sung by men.

From the beginning, the music was distinguishable between women and men not by the lyrics but by the delivery. Women sang the songs as more internal expression, subdued, subtle and refined. On the other hand, the men sang the songs loudly, lewdly and with abandon. This performance can be seen as a metaphor of the two different power positions. It is emblematic of the all-powerful male, cavalier in his actions, and the subservient docile female. A woman sang these songs because her heart forced the song out of her throat so as to not drown. A man sang it with zealous abandon.²⁴

Sevdah was sung and performed by the elite for the elite. It began with cloistered urban women living in an extreme patriarchal culture singing these songs. They sang

²²Encarta. 25 April 2009. <http://encarta.msn.com/text_761553949_3/ottoman_empire.html>.

²³ Slavic languages, as with most European languages are very gendered particularly for nouns. Certain cultural concepts express feminine or masculine agendas. Also, the verbs in Serbian are inflected according to gender.

²⁴ Karaca-Beljak, Tamara, On Sevdalinka Urban Songs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CD notes for “Antologija BH Sevdalinke” 2008.

quietly for themselves or the other women of the family inside walled compounds that were their homes. The exception was when they were brought out to sing and enrapture a wealthy man who the father or patriarch wanted his daughter to marry. Many times these women were often forced into marriages and had no opportunities for escape. These women lacked choices due to combinations of factors from “economic resources, illiteracy, cultural expectations, family obligations, war...”²⁵ Once married, it was possible that the bride was shipped off to another compound and bound the husband’s family to be treated as they wished. Some of the saddest of Sevdah songs are those sung at the wedding preparations by the mother of the bride. She essentially is losing her daughter, sometimes forever.

Today, men and women sing Sevdalinke, the songs of Sevdah. When the men sing, the style is louder with dramatic affectations as means to encourage dramatic behavior. Also there is a cultural norm that allows for men affected by listening to the music to behave violently and masochistically through cutting. This cultural phenomenon is found throughout the Balkans. As mentioned above, they are prominently found in Emir Kusturica’s filmic language. Andrei Simić writes of it as “ritual containment of machismo in the Balkans.”²⁶ He goes on to describe many examples of men fueled by alcohol, frenzied by music, hurting themselves in some socially-sanctioned behavior. The bigger the man (or his ego) the greater the frenzy and depth of feeling portrayed. He shows the depth of his pain by dramatically dancing and drinking copious amounts of brandy. This scripting allows for ritual containment of orgiastic impulses as a vent for male sexual aggression. Simić finds similarities with pre-Lenten Carnival.²⁷ The backbone of Carnival and what motivates the movement of Samba is the feeling of “carpe amor diem.” This is the one week a year for everyone to party and let loose from daily post-modern life. Carnival began and continues as means of subaltern control through government subsidies. Feel the love and dance today for tomorrow, particularly for the poorest of the poor, may never come. Samba, the dance, allows for ecstasy in poverty.

²⁵ Parrot, Andrea and Nina Cummings. Sexual Enslavement of Girls and Women Worldwide. Connecticut & London: Praiger. 2008. 4

²⁶ Simić, Andrei “Sevdah: the Ritual Containment of Machismo in the Balkans” in U.C.L.A. Journal of the Association of Graduate Dance Ethnologists. Volume 3, Spring. 1979.

²⁷ Ibid.

“Uzmi za me oku zlata”
“Take for me two pounds of gold”²⁸

SEVDAH and Gender

When Sevdah began, only the elite rich could afford to send their children to religious schools and this was especially rare for a girl child. As they grew and developed, these women, vocally trained and educated were controlled, cloistered, sold off, and generally treated as sub-human just like the ancient times of Greece. The women used whatever means they had for some agency. The following excerpt speaks specifically of Muslim girls and Islam ethics:

The strict separation of women, imposed by Islam ethics, reflected in the Muslim urban environment, and the culture of living that was partially transferred to the entire urban population: wealthy households had separated female and male rooms or even constructed separate buildings, selamluk and haremluk as well as female and male courtyards, with high walls or a wooden fence around it, in order to protect female faces from the glimpses from outside, but also to hide the maidens from their own cousins, grown men. A more moderate separation of girls that was practiced among the majority of the urban population, led to a special form of love encounters, *ašikovanje*, a gradual love acquainting with precisely established rules of love declaration, according to which, place, time and circumstances of the lovers' meetings were rather precisely determined: it took place mostly on Friday afternoons, but also on other days and in different times of the day, at the gate or *ašik pendžer*, *mušepci* ... On days determined for flirting, boys used to walk in the streets in groups, and girls used to stand in *ašik pendžer* or to peer out through a half-open courtyard door. One of the typical ways of understanding each other in this love dialogue was *sevdalinka*, which represented a unique form of communication between the female voice singing behind

²⁸ Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. “Moj Dilbere.” *Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997.

mušebak, the courtyard wall, and the male voice singing on the other side of it.²⁹

Keep in the mind, the Balkan approach to women's rights were was harsher. The patriarchal society took the worst of both cultures to keep the women down. Muslim women had more rights than her Christian neighbors. In the 7th C.E., through reciting directions from God, the Prophet Mohammed gave women rights to divorce and property ownership. In large part due to the dogmas of the Christian Faith, these rights did not come to women of the West until the 20th century, thirteen hundred years later. Women had virtually no legal rights to own property on their own, or divorce. Also culture and tradition pressured women to be subservient, for to serve was of the highest attainment for a woman. The culture put women that were self-sacrificing and altruistic on a pedestal as worthy of the highest regard.³⁰ The situation for women did not change until post World War II communism, my mother's generation.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the song "Moj Dilbere", meaning, "My Darling", is very popular and sung by the biggest pop stars, both male and female. The simple lyrics are the following: "My darling, where are you going? Take me with you. Take me to the old part of town, to the bazaar. Sell me for two pounds of gold. With this, gild the front gate of your palace."

The song, as with most songs, can have multiple readings and translation. Most simply put, the woman is asking her lover to sell her so that she will be forever in his mind. The ultimate sacrifice for love is oneself, complete submission.³¹ Another interpretation is that her love is so great that she would rather live on as a symbol, never to tarnish, rather than grow old in his presence. Her youth will fade and she will be unworthy of her lover. Her worth of love will evoke will dazzle him, forever reminding and blinding, every time he goes home.

²⁹ Maglajlić, Munib. Sevdahlinke. 18 April 2009 <<http://sevdalinke.com/english.php>>.

³⁰ The book, Yugoslav Short Stories published in 1966 by Oxford Press has many stories from around the turn of the 19th century to the 20th is a great literary testament to the ideal Balkan woman. All the stories were written by men and most of the female characters sacrifice themselves to near dramatic martyrdom.

³¹ This reminds me of the first pillar of the Islamic faith concerning submission to the one God. What if you believe that God is love? Therefore can the ultimate submission be to love?

The songs of Sevdah, modeled after the Koran, can be read on multiple levels and in various contexts creating many translations. Sevdah is open to different narratives and yet bound to the pain and a long tradition of patriarchy. The songs in the appendix were chosen to be included in *Balkan Song* because of their cross-region origins while maintaining the expression of greater cultural chauvinism. “Moj Dilbere” sings of selling oneself so to always be a reminder to her lover. It can also be read that this song inverts the master\slave narrative by the woman freely submitting herself since inevitably she will have no agency. By giving herself for gold so that her lover will be in constant remembrance of her self-sacrifice, she acts by her own volition. “Kad Ja Podjo Na Benbasu”, a Sephardic Jewish song, describes the fleeting pleasure of a greeting from a terrace, and the pain of loss of one last connection before the woman is taken away. The last song is “Mito Bekrijo”, a specifically Serbian song originating from near my ancestral village. The woman suffers waiting for man and pleads to him that she will take care of his old mother if she would just take her. Even with the offer of nursing the only woman he could possibly love other than himself, his mother, is not enough to take him away from being with his buddies drinking and ironically probably singing Sevdah.

This song begs the question, why would someone sell her self instead of just being? The answer may lie in realm of the subaltern, someone that does not have agency. The patriarchal hegemonic rule has objectified the woman as far as it can go and still maintain social acceptability. She is going to be sold off whether she likes it or not to whomever, whenever. By making the deal herself, she makes a choice where it seems there is no choice. This is an act of choosing to submit in almost a Derridian post-modern move. The colonizer’s mission to civilize has still left her in a state of domination. She has yet to have the rights of a citizen. Forced marriage “takes place against one’s will, or with the coerced consent of both parties” and is a “means of curtailing women’s autonomy and controlling.”³² Lastly, “if the woman has no agency, cannot leave, cannot refuse...it is a form of slavery.”³³

³² Parrot, Andrea and Nina Cummings. Sexual Enslavement of Girls and Women Worldwide. Connecticut & London: Praiger. 2008. 57.

³³ Ibid.

With that kind of history, why are the youth in the Balkans interested in these older forms of music? The meaning of the words in the lyrics is obvious. Maybe this interest is connected to their search for identity. Both individually and culturally, identity is on constantly shifting ground. It is interplay between identity and culture in shades of constant variation. A person will change identities over the course of a day as well as a lifetime. Some aspects of one's identity can be suppressed and other times these same aspects are held as a priority. It depends upon the context of interaction and the environment, systems working in collaboration with other systems. Identity is complex enough without throwing war into the mix. A war takes the individual's psychological ground away through trauma to the body that destabilizing one's fixed sense of self.

In the case of the former Yugoslavia, likewise across the world, cultures are expressed in many different ways from music, food, the diacritics,³⁴ how they socialize, greeting behaviors, and family structure, to religion and of course art. There are barely perceptual differences and very substantive differences. Both can be used to create an ethnic demarcation. In the Balkans, there are studies of disparate villages that are more alike culturally than other nearby villages. Yet, due to the fact that they were of different religions, either Roman Catholic or Orthodox or Muslim, the villages could not allow the idea of co-ethnicity. The weight of the religious prejudice privileges the distinction and objectification of the "other." This simple explanation was seen in the media all over the world during the war. It was used as the concrete explanation for the war.

Another line of demarcation can be found in music. Sevdah is immediately tagged from Sarajevo or Mostar. Yet Sevdalinke songs can be found radiating out from Sarajevo in all directions. The music is site specific and all the Balkan people own the feeling. There are hundreds of other types of music on this peninsula. People from this part of the world can tell within a few notes exactly the site-specificity of the song and place origin, like the old-TV game show "Name That Tune." They know by the rhythm, the pitch, the coupling of notes, not only which state the music comes from but also what region and maybe even particular city or town of origin. There is the outer-sphere

³⁴ Andrei Simić explained to me that in anthropology this meant those grace notes that constantly reaffirm their identity.

of distinction that is used by the nation-states as ways to divide very similar ethnicities by the subtle derivations of regional music styles. That is where the meaning of Sevdah is so useful. Sevdalinke songs may be used as divisive, differentiating people. And yet, the feeling unites. Most people, all over the world can relate to the pain of loss whether it is a lover, country, or way of life.³⁵

Sevdah can and is being used as a tool for post-conflict reconstruction. This is happening today in Bosnia. A specific example would be young activists from Mostar. The key is to bring awareness that simply returning to some past ideal is not necessarily better. From the woman's perspective, it was worse. It was slavery due to overwhelming cultural misogyny. When revisiting the past, it is key to be aware what community, and as Benedict Anderson argues, ask whose community is being imagined. Also, one must understand how to ask the questions so as to see the range of possible answers. Understanding the physical and psychological damage brought on by the recent wars, people are culturally sensitive especially in the Balkans. In a conversation with Andrei Simić, he suggested the following for insight to formalizing the questions. If people in a group regard a specific cultural trait as ritual property, how would they resent this borrowing of these traits? Does sharing the same cultural trait by traditional enemies lessen or exacerbate the tension? Do people have negative feelings about cultural traits belonging to their enemies or competitors? And finally, can all three of the conditions that answer the above questions, coexist and be segregated contextually? This last question answers itself if it is understood that an individual can experience all these emotions at different times and situations.³⁶

³⁵ Aljadid. "The various historical processes which include imperialism, that would include crossing boundaries, migration, genocide, all of these collective experiences of involuntary or forced uprooting and dislocation, contribute to this (process), not some utopian idyllic state." Edward Said speaking in an interview with Stephen Sheehi, 8 Dec. 2008.
<<http://www.aljadid.com/InanExclusiveInterviewwithAlJadidEdwardSaidSpeaksonDemocracyIdentityWesternIntellectua.html>>.

³⁶ Letter from Andrei Simić dated November 2008.

“Haj pa me prodaj bazarđžanu”³⁷

“Sell me at the bazaar”

CURRENT/CURRENCY

For the past twenty years, the global news media has been particularly harsh on the Serbs, my own ancestral tribe. The Serbs have been vilified and demonized since the beginning of the breakup of Yugoslavia. I was immensely motivated to act when the war began in the country of my origins, culminating with the 1999 bombing of Serbia that adversely affected my family members. As an immigrant living most of my life in the US, these events led to severe psychological trauma. My hybridity was bombing its origins. My American self was bombing my Serbian self. All my friends here and family there wanted to know what was going on. I could neither explain nor understand. I didn't believe any of the media, here or there. I had not believed the US New Media from the 80s when I went to college. My earliest newscast memories are of “Watergate.” My initiation into politics and news agencies were to use propaganda lies. Commercials were used to sell their products. I tried reading the crumbling Yugoslavian media that was slowly turning into Serbian media. The Serbian propaganda was generated by Milosevic's regime. I did not know what to believe. I tried reading all the news to figure some center of possible truth. It was so hard for me to understand the US push of the war could be simplified to some ancient hatred. This line went against all of my lifelong experiences in the former Yugoslavia.

Beginning in the late 60s and continuing today, of travel across the former Yugoslavia, I never felt threatened or fearful. That was one of the greatest joys of going there and feeling freedom as a young woman. I grew up next to the Southside of Chicago in the 80s. My city (Gary, Indiana) had the highest murder rate in the world the year I graduated from high school. I didn't go out at night alone unless I drove. In

³⁷ Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. “Moj Dilbere.” Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997.

Yugoslavia, not only did I feel safe, I also never felt diminished or judged for being Serbian. In fact it was the opposite.

In the US, the Balkan Diaspora is very genetically and ancestral oriented, tribal in the old sense of the word. In this country and my subculture, I was a Serb. The immigrants that came to Chicago had their regions and maintained ancestral cultural ties. A lot of times, it was the religious centers that held the various Diaspora. My parents did not go regularly to church in Yugoslavia, but were regular members here in the US. Our Diaspora behaved like the other immigrants. Yearly, we had Serb-fest at my church, St. Elijah's Serbian Orthodox. The churches next door had Greekfest, Italian-fest, Polish-fest with the corresponding, Orthodox or Catholic Christian flavor. There was even a Popcorn-fest for the farming community. We, the collective we of all the ethnicities, went to them all. We maintained our distinctions through our immigrant origins.

When traveling in Yugoslavia, I was inevitably asked my place of origin since I spoke with an American accent. I do not roll my R's hard enough. If I answered I was Serbian, no matter where I happened to be in the country, they always said no, you are a Yugoslavian. When I finally got over the American pressure to be Serbian and embraced being Yugoslavian, the war began.

For whatever reasons Yugoslavia splintered off in the horrible way that it did, the "balkanization" began on June 25, 1991, when Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. This sparked a war between those that wanted one country and those that did not. This was the beginning of a slow and gruesome death of the multi-ethnic nation-state experiment stitched together by the Great Powers in 1919. The worst fighting and civilian death tolls were in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995, a war waged between Croatian and Serbian (Yugoslavian Army) forces. Serbia, (still calling itself Yugoslavia), continued fighting in Kosovo until 1999 when NATO bombed all across Serbia and Kosovo for 79 days. This intervention finally brought a stop to the Serbian army and the end of Yugoslavia.³⁸

³⁸ In 2005, Serbia voted to be a country called Serbia-Montenegro. In 2007, Montenegro voted to secede, leaving Serbia.

“Na djurdjevak miriše meni nikad više.”³⁹

The scent of the lilies of the field is forever gone for me.

SEVDAH - Field Study

In October of 2008, I went to Belgrade and Zagreb for field studies research. This recent study provided many results. My idea was to bring connection to these separated peoples who, in my mind’s eye, seem more ethnically similar than dissimilar. Everyone understood Sevdah immediately. It is a natural part of their culture. We spoke of Sevdah as a part of the Balkan identity and a part of many common cultural elements. I conducted many interviews over the course of ten days with a cross-section of the population. The ages of my interviewees spanned from thirteen years old to over eighty. Every single person I spoke with in Croatia, from taxi drivers to university professors, expressed dissatisfaction with the breakup. They wished it had never happened. One young activist in Zagreb lamented the loss of twenty years of progress in gay rights. Contrary to all the media that portrayed the war as ancient ethnic hatred, particularly in Bosnia, the conflict was politically motivated and brought in from outside the country.⁴⁰ “How can you have thirty percent intermarriage and ancient ethnic hatred?” Svetlana Broz asked rhetorically, speaking of Bosnia.

Also, the singing of Sevdalinke has experienced a rebirth of popularity both for the purists that want an “authentic” pre-war cultural bond, as well as for profit driven kitschy pop-music. There is a massive broad appeal of the songs sung by “Turbo-Folk Yugo-Barbie”⁴¹ Pop Starlets, heavy with make-up and silicon. This is occurring with all

³⁹ Bregović, Goran. Ederlezi. Universal Int’l. 1998

⁴⁰ Broz, Svetlana is the author of the book, Good People in an Evil Time: Portraits of Complicity and Resistance in the Bosnian War and granddaughter of Josip Tito, former president/dictator of Yugoslavia until his death in May 4, 1980. She feels very strongly that the Bosnian war was created by greedy politicians with the help of outside forces, such as Russian mercenaries and later Islamic fundamentalists. The war did not happen from within because of some long simmering hatreds. It came from out.

⁴¹ Ugrešić, Dubravka. “Balkan Blues.” Balkan Blues. Ed. Joanna Labon. Evanston Illinois: Northwestern University Press. 1994.

the traditional types of folk music not just Sevdalinke. These scantily clad, surgically enhanced bosomed, high-heeled women sing traditional music that is mixed to a faster beat similar to that of dance club music, using feminine sexuality to make money. Move over Madonna and Britney Spears. Make way for the Balkan Babes.

During the break-up of Yugoslavia, this phenomenon involving “turbo-folk” music became popular with incredible ferocity. Dubravka Ugrešić explains in her short essay “Balkan Blues”⁴² that this new style music began immediately upon Tito’s death as if sensing the forthcoming disintegration. This music is in a genre of “newly-composed folk music.” “Turbo-folk” can be described as post-modernity socialist pop. This type of music is common throughout the Eastern, former Soviet States. Milan Kundera writes of it in his, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, as precious to the dictators.⁴³ It is music without memory and sometimes even elicits instantaneous amnesia. For this ability, the music is very superficially attractive, familiar, and able to cross-borders. How else can one explain the popularity of “Ceca”, Svetlana Ražnatović, one of the most popular successful Turbo-folk “Yugo-Barbie dolls” across Yugoslavia in the very moment it was tearing apart. Her star rose during the war in Croatia and Bosnia in spite of being married to an infamous paramilitary criminal, “Arkan”, Željko Ražnatović. A Bosnian Serb, he was tied to ethnic cleansing in the same places people were buying her albums.

Why are the youth of the former Yugoslavia consuming music trans-nation-state? I propose that pendulum is swinging from sexy sanitized “pop” to emotionally heavy, possibly more “authentic”, historically rooted music. Ironically, their parents of the 80s rejected this music when they were young for modern British and US Rock & Roll. During the golden age of Yugoslavia folk music was out of fashion in urban culture.⁴⁴ Western music or even more specifically British imports were chosen for consumption back then, so long ago in the 1970s and 80s.

One friend, in Croatia, born in the 60s, explained to me how on a recent school trip with his 13 year old, all the kids were listening to their iPods or MP3 players. That

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kundera, Milan. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. Harper Collins, New York. 1978. P.

⁴⁴ In spite of Tito being a Dictator and leading up to his death in 1980, Yugoslavia experienced a tremendous socio-economic boom. Ironically, many people of the former country look back at his reign as the best of times.

wasn't the shocker; youth around the world have ear-buds growing from their heads. The thing that shocked him was the content. They were listening to traditional Yugoslavian folk music. Maybe the generation that has never lived in "Yugoslavia" (because they were born after the fact) are looking for insight to an older pre-modernity identity? Could it be that these kids are using Yugoslavian folk music for memory?

All across the Balkans, this movement forms a search for cultural authenticity. They have been assimilated and are post-MTV global. They look alike and consume as everyone else around the world has for years. Now, they are searching for something older that can give uniqueness in this global market/culture. In August 2008, the World Radio program from Public Radio International (spell out PRI) had a piece about Sevdah. The reporter interviewed a young activist in Mostar, who explained the need for old folk traditions music. This music reminds its listeners and performers to the values associated with the culture. The activist, Kristina Ćorić, told the reporter, "We are actually trying to preserve what was good about before and not to say, OK, to the whole past we just want to erase it and to live the lives today but we are trying to take the best from the traditions before and to show them with the new approach."⁴⁵

In a typical post-modern post-colonial fashion, the past is commodified and fetishised.⁴⁶ These kids are looking back for some grounding. Yet, the time they are looking back to is a time of a feudal social structure, one colonized by either the Austro-Hungarian or the Ottoman Empire and their own monarchy.

⁴⁵ [The World on PRI](http://www.theworld.org/?q=node/19876) (August 2008 Program on modern Sevdah), 29 Oct. 2008. <<http://www.theworld.org/?q=node/19876>> .

Kristina Ćorić helped build the Abrašević youth cultural center in Mostar. The city's old cultural center was destroyed when bombed during the war over 15 years ago. She continues working to help save culture with the help of the sale and proceeds of new Sevdah singer, Damir Imamović. He recorded a live album at the new cultural center in 2008.

⁴⁶ Marx, Karl. Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859 Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977.

“Pa pozlati dvoru vrata”⁴⁷
“And gild the front gate of your palace”

BALKAN SONG – The Form

With the research of context of Sevdah and contemporary new media art theory, the form of the experiment began to appear as *Balkan Song*. Through the exploration, *Balkan Song* is intended to provoke psychological meditations on gender inequality issues, colonialism and the politics of representation. The installation is also formalized as an experiment on affective impact of various new media employments of experimental video, interactivity, on-line social computing and live performance.

The first manifestation of *Balkan Song*, took place as a performance for capturing video content. The space is a large (approximately 30 feet by 40 feet) well-lit atrium of the Museum. The performer wore a white traditional Balkan woman’s outfit with vest, apron, waist belt, and upturned toe leather shoes called “opanka”. Two musicians accompanied the singer for five songs, a violinist and an accordionist.

The second performance lasted for two hours over the course of a Friday afternoon in the same location as the first exclusively singing performance. During this endurance piece, I maintained or endured the intense emotional level of Sevdah. Through ritual and dialog, one present and the other from the past, the audience was informed of the many aspects of Sevdah, both the emotion and the music. Zora, the character of the Balkan woman gave insight into a pre-modern Balkan life. The Modern woman educated the audience about the human migration that dispersed the concept of Sevdah along with Islamic governing techniques that allowed for multi-culturalism.

I changed from wearing a light blue colored dress into the same outfit from the first performance. In the far corner of the atrium across from the main entrance, there was a small stage upon which the piece was performed and dialog was spoken. I sang

⁴⁷ Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. “Moj Dilbere.” *Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997.

at fifteen-minute intervals, *a cappella*. Sometimes, the singing took place on stage and at other times on the open stairwell overlooking the audience. I ground the coffee using a standard Arabic coffee mill and offered audience members the chance to help. I served pouches reminiscent of Fluxus bags that contained a booklet with guides for the program and the lyrics with songs in both Serbo-Croatian and English. Other contents of the bag included tiny pouches of lavender, and a card directing the audience for the performance. Information enclosed suggested actions to stop forced marriages in the United States and around the world. Beside the stage, the artist had created an altar of Balkan tchotchkas with which the artist introduced and spoke about. The piece ended with a duet with my mother and I singing “Bolujem Ja.”

This performance expresses the pain and humiliation of being without agency. It also inspires this feeling of *Sevdah* that is within all of us yet unnamed in the west. By being informed through experience, the participants have a new way to look at life and make connections with others. One friend and participant described the piece as passionate performance combining, direct teaching, ritual, theater, music, storytelling and more.”⁴⁸

The second form of *Balkan Song* is a multi-channel video installation along a 20 foot long 13 foot high wall. The wall is painted a dramatic dark midnight blue with large vinyl lettering of gold and red symbols. Looped videos play in four (4) wall-hung monitors. Each monitor exhibits different perspectives of *Sevdah*. One shows a slow train moving from Belgrade to Zagreb, captured in the recent field study to Serbia and Croatia while the song “Kad Mlada Daje” or “When the Bride is given Away”. The second monitor shows a young girl, the artist’s daughter, telling the story of another girl her age that was forced to marry. The third monitor plays the movie of an older woman, the artist’s mother, telling the story of her own forced marriage. The last monitor shows the artist performing “Bolujem Ja”, “I’m in Pain” with an accompanying accordionist and violinist in the museum space. The mother is also obviously in the museum space. This element gives the pieces a distinct immediacy, mirroring affect of the piece within the museum within the piece.

⁴⁸ Internet (email messages) exchange between Caitlin Johnston on 2, June 2009.

The third and last form of the project is an on-line community network. This aspect has the potential of being self-sustaining as long as there is interactivity. An on-line community is the space for discussion to occur. Also, Sevdah is a complicated and multifaceted Balkan phenomenon. It deserves a lot of space to explore and dialog about the large range of behaviors associated with Sevdah. Similar examples of male and female performances found in the video installation are available for viewing, commenting and dialoging. This also serves to archive the material beyond the duration of the exhibition.

The *Balkan Song* website creates the space and platform for interchange and collaboration by tapping into a vast network already in existence and further linking Sevdah lovers across the world with the use of trans-media like never seen before. This is space in which activism can occur on a global level. This website also showcases women and young girls forced into marriages and able to escape. It will discuss laws such as the recent passing of the British Forced Marriage Act, and gives British courts the power to compel someone to reveal the whereabouts of a person believed to be at risk of being coerced into marriage. In the first nine months of the law there have been 1300 cases.

The components of the website will be the following: video streaming of *Balkan Song*, ability for contact and dialogue, audio, and connection to the *Balkan Song* "ning"⁴⁹ social network. Sound will begin when the website is opened, "Kad Mlada Daje". This song was composed and played by Professor of Music at the University of Niš, Maksa Maksutović Maksut and is also played in the video installation. He found the song within 19th century manuscripts, translated them and orchestrated the song. The song is intended to transmit the feeling that the mother of the bride would have for her daughter on her daughter's wedding day. This is a day of happiness and new beginnings as well as sadness and trepidation for fear that the family will not be together anytime soon. I believe that Maksa's trumpet carries the feeling within the tune.

⁴⁹ Ning is a social networking site on the internet.

“Ej Kome sada moja Draga?”
“Where are you now my Dear?”⁵⁰

THEORY

The term of new media is conceived through an understanding of a conceptual underpinning that operates outside the restrictive rules of an institution by manifesting itself in a form of a new framework – demanding active and rigorous participation from the audience to sustain its existence.⁵¹

With the different art forms, *Balkan Song* is experimenting and investigating issues that are different and encompassed under the concept of contemporary “Art” and involved assumptions. When I speak of art, I am referring to a specific post-colonial, post-feminist, contemporary frame. I believe that artwork must be thought provoking and collaborative.

In addition to drawing attention to continued forced marriages, *Balkan Song* addresses the problem of reconciling cultures of similar languages and ethnic heritage divided by war. The break-up of Yugoslavia left many similar cultural ethnic groups completely isolated from one another. This isolation cut off possibilities for reflection and recognition of the different groups’ common heritage. The war caused both physical and psychic trauma to the people within the Balkans as well the Diaspora. *Balkan Song* aims to create bridges while providing a platform for cross-cultural dialogue between Serbian and Croatian peoples as well an opportunity for people of the US to discover a new type of music, emotion and possible new way to look at life. It has been nearly twenty years since the break-up and an entire generation has been completely cut-off from their neighbors. The youth are interested in the “other”.

⁵⁰ Bregović, Goran. *Ederlezi*, Universal In'l. 1998

⁵¹ Sitharan, Roopesh. *Journal of Contemporary Art, Ctrl+P*, Issue 13. November 2008. 25 April 2009.
<<http://www.ctrlp-artjournal.org/>>

Artists have used whatever tools were at their disposal to transfer ideas and stimulate feelings. Aristotle argued over twenty four hundred years ago that for art to be great, it must stimulate empathy.⁵² He was specifically writing about theater. Aristotle defines empathy as a feeling of understanding with a fellow being and by making the same choices. Since Ancient Greece, the idea of great art requiring empathy evolved to include all visual, musical and, written forms of art. In exploring the new digital forms, I find this definition to be true. Also, Aristotle is forcing the entire human body to be involved in great art. The art must be felt viscerally. Empathy is stimulated. It is a feeling on and of the body. Also, empathy requires the “other” or alterity. Empathy derives from the face-to-face encounter. Some might believe that once the eyes make contact, responsibility is born. For some, it is feeling.

What is a feeling? In Evans’ book, *Emotion*, he writes about the cultural theory of emotion. He argues that basic emotions (joy, distress, anger, fear, surprise, and disgust) are found in all cultures around the world, absent in none. Feelings are hardwired into our bodies. He describes the basic emotions processed in the subcortical structures. There are higher cognitive emotions (love, guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride envy, and jealousy) found in all cultures and with more cultural variation than the basic emotions. These “higher” emotions are processed in the neocortex and are more capable of conscious alteration along with logical analysis. Intuitively, I would include empathy and Sevdah in the basic emotion list. Also, I can imagine cultural variations for both feelings thus labeling them as a higher cognitive emotion.⁵³ Not only does Dylan argue that: “our common emotional heritage binds humanity together”, and therefore is able to transcend cultural differences, he also argues that our emotions are due to our common biological inheritance, or human biological network of life system. Due to inhabiting human bodily forms, we are more similar than different.

The Web of Life,⁵⁴ by Fritjof Capra, also argues that with the use of higher mathematics, chaos and system’s theory, humans are more alike than dis-alike. Humans share a biology that allows for similar understandings, a consciousness that allows for

⁵² Aristotle. *The Poetics*. London, England: Penguin Books. 1996.

⁵³ Evans, Dylan. *Emotion, the Science of Sentiment*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001.

⁵⁴ Capra, Fritjof. *The Web of Life, A new understanding of Living Systems*. New York: Anchor Books, A division of Random House, Inc. 2001.

empathy both internal and external to the body. Based in Maturana's work on autopoiesis,⁵⁵ human bodies are beings of living systems in a network pattern that functions in a closed causal circle. Consciousness is interaction within the body in response to stimuli. There is nothing outside the body. And these bodies function almost virtually alike. This new understanding of the basic organization of life (systems) is a radical new understanding of cognition. Capra writes, "he [Maturana] postulates that the nervous system is not only self-organizing but also continually self-referring, so that perception cannot be viewed as the representation of an external reality but must be understood as the continual creation of new relationships within the neural network: "The activities of nerve cells do not reflect an environment [that is] independent of the living organism and hence do not allow for the construction of an absolutely existing external world." Meaning, "the cognition do not represent an external reality, but rather specify one through the nervous systems process of circular organization."⁵⁶ The book using theories of Gestalt (the whole is greater than the sum of parts), Muratama's systems thinking, Santiago's theory of self awareness, and chaos theory to argue "identifying cognition with the full process of life – including perceptions, emotions and behavior – and understanding it as a process that involves neither a transfer of information nor mental representations of an outside world."⁵⁷

Through our bodies, we share a system's architecture of communication. Communication is a coordination of behavior. This coordination can happen through music, through emotion and through the gaze. Sevdah is specific music that evolved to inspire a feeling. This manipulation has been occurring for thousands of years. Surviving evidence documents this music used for religious purposes. One could postulate that the music was also used courting purposes and evoking empathy for one another. In *Sound and Sentiment*, Steven Feld uses topographies of music to illuminate culture anthropologically.⁵⁸ With the Kaluli (Bosavi) people of Papua New Guinea, he studied the use of music for communicating and embodying emotional states and

⁵⁵ Autopoiesis means creating oneself. In, *The Web of Life*, Capra explains this term as self-making and in many different contexts from human cognition, mental and community processes to computer programs.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 285

⁵⁷ Ibid. 287

⁵⁸ Feld, Steven. *Sound and Sentiment, Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*. Pennsylvania. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1982.

sentiments of nostalgia, loss and abandonment. The Kaluli version of Sevdah comes from their creation belief and humans evolved from birds.

If one agrees with Aristotle that great art must trigger an empathic response, how does this frame work from a contemporary post-modern, post-colonial and post feminist perspective? One may also believe that today's art must be politically activating and collaboratively based as well as interactive. Also, understanding that performance and empathy is an embodied experience, this leads to the question of participant reception that is affected by identity.

Also, one's identity involves memory from an individual's perspective and the society. Song, music which can lead to identifying through selection of privileging certain culture differences (i.e. religion) that leads to strategic essentialism and the nature of exclusion and inclusion. The search for authentic identity sometimes involves looking to pre-colonized times. This is the belief that this was the time when local culture was able to express without the need of mimicking those held as power over. These past traditions establish an "ideal" for the society to which it can connect. Sometimes, this imagined heritage is gleaned from stories such as the Greek, *Ulysses* or the Persian, *Shahnama*. In modern time, the colonial State exploits the imaged identity of communities and created out of differences the "other." Then, the modern State presents an ancient cultural heritage as authentic and somehow more full truth. This carving out differences by the hegemonic state then becomes authentic by those that are colonized. This often involves gender differentiation. The social relations involving authority and power leading to exploitation trickling down from the hegemonic power systems of the elite aristocratic, or the Colonizer continues to the male towering above the female.

These tools for power that have created differences have been used for horrific acts in the name of politics. Artists such as Christian Boltanski are working to expose and defuse such practices. This artist has been motivated and inspired to give memory to those annihilated in the name of the State. His work such as "Reserve-Detective III"⁵⁹ also uses the archive, the databank for memory, is the content. The word archive began to be used in Ancient Greece as the building "the arche" that housed the documents of

⁵⁹ Boltanski, Christian. Reserve Detective III. 1987.

the citizens. Archives were created to retain memory that is crucial to connect and create the space for empathy. The archive is used to maintain memory while stimulating empathy for the “other.” In this case and millennia after, the “other” does not include the female unless she falls under the category of a “citizen” who can own property.

Also, new media is used with the understanding there must be interactivity. Leaving out the technology, digital art must have audience participation. The web art is only looked at after one has searched out address. The video is only effective when someone looks at it. This creates an emotional circuit between the viewer and the viewed. In live performance as well, the performer is responding to the audience and the music, reacts and changes. It is a shared unique experience. Jovan Stokić argues that performance is not only performing one’s experience it also the act of self-identity. In her article “Performative Bodies”, she explores two female artists from the Yugoslav art scene who represent these tendencies that involve the body as the site of artistic practice and these acts exposing patriarchal oppression. “The body enters a performative act as a main site of exchange – both of the viewing powers and the construct of the self identity.”⁶⁰ By performing with one’s body, the female transcends to the postcolonial, postfeminist epoch of gender liberation. This allows the “feminine subject to freely investigate subjectivity, masquerading it sometimes playfully and sometimes transgressively – by performing the Self.”

Marina Abramović has performed a piece entitled “Lips of Thomas” several times, first in 1975 and then again in 2005. The artist has been and continues to present a type of “body-art action”. In the “Lips of Thomas,” the artist performs of different tasks repeatedly and are as follows:

slowly eat 1 kilo of honey with silver spoon, slowly drink 1 liter of red wine, cut a five-pointed star on stomach with razor blade, violently whip on back, lay down on cross made of ice blocks and stand at attention with a white flag, a Partisan hat and army boots.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Stokić, Jovana. “Performative Bodies: Serbian Female Artists in Post-Modernist Self-Identity in the Works of Marina Abramović and Tanja Ostojić.” *Serbian Studies: Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies*. 18(2): 395-401, 2004.

⁶¹ Abramović, Marina. *7 Easy Pieces*. Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2007. 192

I relate to this piece very closely due to our shared birthplace of Belgrade and histories of migration from the former Yugoslavia. In her piece, each prop for each task has great cultural significance. While communicating in a multilayered language of actions, Abramović uses her body to manifest sources of conflict and suffering. The spectators perceive either knowingly or unknowingly unpredictable personal significance through her movements.⁶² For example, honey is treated medicinally in Balkans for attracting and killing unhealthy microbes while the red wine washes it all away as an antiseptic and anesthetic. She eats and drinks cleaning herself physically and metaphysically. Her work uses religious symbolism. Her grandfather, an Orthodox Patriarch, was killed by the ruling monarchy. She lies on the block formed cross bleeding. The star in reference to the Yugoslavian flag that is etched on her body is the politics that is etched, intervening on bodies. She wears a Serbian army cap, the Šajkača, that has been worn by these soldiers since the 19th century. It was also worn by the Partisans during the WWII. Both of her parents served the Partisan army for the communist revolution. She stands at attention while a Sevdalinke is played entitled “Slavic Souls”.

Her piece affects the viewer with empathy. When she whips herself, we sense the pain. We witness, feel and reflect back, creating a connection and circuit. In this same way, *Balkan Song* tries to connect the empowered through the pain of not having agency. *Balkan Song* also has intention to move the audience with feeling into action as well as a letting go, a catharsis. Just as Marina uses Sevdalinke to arouse subconscious resonating vibrations that stimulate the pain, my piece arouses with songs and lyrics in a more obvious way with direct dialogue and information. Ultimately, *Balkan Song* intends to educate while entertaining, and causing action.

⁶² HotReview.org. Carlson, Marla. “Marina Abramovic Repeats: Pain, Art and Theater.” 3 June 2009. <<http://www.hotreview.org/articles/marinaabram.htm>>.

“What can bring us closer together than music?”

(B. Paternak)

CONCLUSION

Dylan Evans speaks of emotions and feelings as expressions of a common language. This feeling associated with the word, in all its forms, is in languages all over the world. Language is essentially metaphor.⁶³ If I introduce the understanding to English speakers, will they be open to another way of looking at life? Would the knowledge of the music, make their lives more complete? For those in the former Yugoslavia that have just been through the hell of war, can Sevdah be used as a tool for post-reconstruction?

In a world where many people live under the threat of violence due to political military machine motives, some of which use religion as a means of divide and conquer, it is imperative to shift the focus from how we are different to how we are similar. It is essential for a vision of peace that people relate to each other as people in a “non-objectified” approach. For our world’s people to coexist, we must tolerate one another to be able to live together. As my friend Slobodan Naumović says, “There is no tolerance without understanding.”⁶⁴ How then do we get cross-cultural consideration, or in other words, a comprehension and mutual agreement?⁶⁵ A common language is paramount to this endeavor. Emotions can be used as a commonality even when there is not common spoken language. Basic feelings have been proven to show understanding cross-culturally.⁶⁶ Music has been used for thousands of years to stimulate feelings.

⁶³ George Lackoff’s defense of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This hypothesis supposes that a language expresses the culture of origin by privileging concepts with words or signifiers.

⁶⁴ Naumović, Slobodan. Personal interview with professor of Anthropology at the University of Belgrade, in Belgrade, Serbia for the documentary *Two Villages, One Heart*. June 2002.

⁶⁵ Online Etymology Dictionary, 25 April 2009.
<<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=understand&searchmode=none>>.

⁶⁶ Evans, Dylan. *Emotion, the Science of Sentiment*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001.

Music also has the ability to evoke the issue of cultural authenticity. Adela Peeva (also a colleague of Slobodan's at the University of Belgrade in the Anthropology department) directed a movie, *Whose Song is It*. In this movie, she traces the origin of one song across the Balkans. The director wanted to demonstrate a common cultural heritage. Many critics say that the movie caused the opposite to occur. She did not put forth her questions with the considerations that Andrei Simić advises. People in the movie were angered that another culture, especially with which there had been recent violent conflict, would claim the song to be theirs.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, her actions in pursuit of content for her movie caused division instead of connection. All the cultures claimed the song as their own. After I explained to Slobodan the idea for my field research, he suggested titling my documentary, "What is Your Song?"

Individual experience and testimony can be used give insight to larger cultural issues. I know my subjects very well. I am very concerned with protecting and preserving the dignity of the subject particularly my parents and my community. I am a filmmaker who chooses to engage in participatory, conversational, or interrogative fashions of interactivity. I also maintain faith in the force of our collective acts of empathy and witness. We started out the century by believing the photograph and ended the century distrusting it. Videographers are forced to deal with the complexities of representing the "other." We are forced to realize that our character, based upon our actions, and reputation is what will give our work believability and authenticity.

As they [documentary photographers] evolve and mature, democratic and humanistic traditions recognize that our commonality lies not just in our similarities, but our multiplicity, and that this multiplicity cannot be contained within any one country, culture or ideology. We can value each other although we are not the same. We can experience one another through one or another aspect of our multifaceted selves." A widened consciousness of other human being and cultures invites compassion and yields some working truths.⁶⁸

Having been born in Yugoslavia and traveled extensively for forty years, I am a part the Diaspora and also the "other." I have the advantage of both belonging and

⁶⁷ *Ferdy on Films*. 25 April 2009. <<http://ferdyonfilms.blogspot.com/2006/02/whose-song-is-this-chia-e-tazi-pesen.html>>.

⁶⁸ Light, Ken. *Witness in Our Time, Working Lives of Documentary Photographers*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. 2000. Page 10.

being a guest. It is a typical immigrant story, where one feels like a part of something and yet torn apart. When immigrants bring their families to another place, severing themselves from their cultures in the hopes of making a better life for themselves and their children, they leave their birthplaces and are frozen in time. One is torn from a piece of a world that is no longer there. They impart the cultural norms of a place no longer there, gone and in the past. Time moves on, and with it change is inevitable.

I immigrated at the age of three. I remember having a thought when I was seven years old and returning from my first visit to the old country. I realized that I could choose to have an outlook in life that was based on the best parts of both countries, the US and the former Yugoslavia. It was obvious even to a child how distinct the cultures were. Everything was different, the food, the language, the dress, the music, the greetings, the values. I felt lucky to be able to pick and choose cultural attributes that I liked and disregard the rest.

Maybe if we took just a tiny piece of the concept of millet system from the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, we could mine that co-existence between people, or what is today called "diversity". The Iberian Muslim's had a similar system for religious tolerance called *convivencia*,⁶⁹ translated to mean to live together, that allowed peoples in spite of differences to coexist in Cordoba, Spain until the end of 15th century. Both these systems of tolerance were directly taken from the Holy Koran stating "you have your religion, I have mine" and "there should be no compulsion in religion."⁷⁰

Balkan Song focuses the concept of Sevdah and relates the similarities of disenfranchised ethnic groups as opposed to magnifying the differences. The activists in Bosnia as well as for my own purposes used Sevdah strategically because it is a word and emotion that is understood across the Balkans. The people of the former Yugoslavia are united under the umbrella of Sevdah. Even in places that do not have the word, such as here in the US, most people can relate to the emotion. It is also true that the peoples of Balkans privilege this feeling with signification. It is an important part of their culture. By focusing on individuals explaining their understanding of Sevdah,

⁶⁹ Acocella, Joan. "A Better Place". *The New Yorker*. 4 Feb. 2008. 25 April 2009. <http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2008/02/04/080204crbo_books_acocella>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

using the power of music, people will be affected in an emotion that unites them to a multi-cultural worldwide audience.

This work investigates artistic tools that rely on concepts particularly important to the field of new media. One aspect of the Sevdah performance is that it is potentially unable to be mediated. The performance provides a live experience of ephemeral emotions that cannot be captured in another form. These concepts are embodiment, interactivity, site specificity and performative art activism are found in the work. *Balkan Song* examines the physiological affects of different media approaches of stimulating the emotion of Sevdah while using its associated musical tradition.

Using contemporary theoretical concepts and various digital media technologies for an enquiry into the feeling and musical tradition of Sevdah, *Balkan Song* aims to aid in dialogue between peoples experiencing post-conflict trauma and allow for the opportunity of healing. *Balkan Song* also aims to heighten the awareness of forced marriages that are still happening today. Ultimately, *Balkan Song* hopes to demonstrate the idea that participatory, collaborative and activist art is inextricably bound to the creation of a better world. My goal is to inspire a feeling that promotes an empathetic response that can be used to connect people of different cultures that are at odds, due to political forces such as those in the former Yugoslavia.

I argue through dialog and experiences one can feel 'in another's shoes'. This empathetic response can be stimulated through a response to art as well as social activism. London-based art Claire Bishop researches on the ethics and aesthetics of contemporary art. She argues that art today must be dialogic, performative, collaborative, and site specific. She challenges that artists of today must negotiate between social intervention and artistic autonomy and be able to withstand critical analysis. Through *Balkan Song*, I aspire and agree with her following statement:

The best collaborative practices of the past ten years address this contradictory pull between autonomy and social intervention and reflect on this antinomy both in the structure of this work and in the conditions of its reception...since the aesthetic is, according to Ranciere, the ability to think contradiction: the productive contradiction of art's relationship to social change, characterized precisely by the tension between faith in art's autonomy and belief

in art as inextricable bound to the promise of a better world to come.⁷¹

Urged by the unexpected tie to the tradition of cloistering women and arranged marriages, another goal of *Balkan Song* is to bring attention to forced marriages happening now. It is understood that arranged marriages be not always necessarily forced. The difference between these two types depends upon the amount of agency for those involved. Forced marriages do happen to men, yet, the majority of the time and in places around the world, it is the women that have less choice due historical and global chauvinism and misogyny. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to alter deep-rooted prejudices while most of the world continues to undervalue and objectify females. There is hope. Change is happening now. There are individuals, NGOs⁷² and lawmakers that are trying to reduce these outrageous practices.⁷³

At the end of April 2009, Saudi Arabia allowed a marriage to be annulled between an eight year-old girl and a fifty year-old man. Her father had sold her due to a debt owed to the fifty-year old. The country is contemplating changing laws to stop under-age marriage. Last year, for the first time, Yemen allowed a nine year-old girl to divorce. In 2007, Great Britain enacted a law entitled Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act that helped over 1800 cases within the first nine months of its existence.⁷⁴ Here in the US, a bill to end child marriage based on the British law has been introduced by Representative Betty Mc Collum (D-Minn.) and has yet to be debated on the floor of the Senate.⁷⁵ This bipartisan bill is entitled, The International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2009 (H.R. 2103). Through the discovery of Sevdah and the investigation of various media for effectiveness, the need for empathy has provided yet again another opportunity to be inspired to be actively

⁷¹ Bishop, Claire. "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents." ArtForum. February 2006.

⁷² Non governmental organizations.

⁷³ For specific examples please see chapter 8 of Andrea Parrot and Nina Cummings's book, Sexual Enslavement of Girls and Women Worldwide. Connecticut & London: Praeger. 2008.

⁷⁴ OPSI, Office of Public Sector Information. 10 May 2009.
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070020_en_1>.

⁷⁵ Congresswoman Betty McCollum. 10 May 2009.
<http://www.mccollum.house.gov/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={638D6471-5086-4EE8-B778-1DF1727C3F02}&DE={2F3701F9-3C89-4935-89BC-BA9E23A9353B}>.

creating the change in the world we want to see. Through education, dialogue, activism, and art, the scourge of forced marriages can be eliminated.

Through the use of performance, a multi-channel video installation and social network, *Balkan Song* explores the pain from separation of love. The tradition of Sevdalinke historically ties to those that were forced to marry in an extreme patriarchal society that objectifies women as commodity. I argue that this tradition is an articulation of slavery that continues today all over the world. Through the interaction with *Balkan Song*, in whatever form, inspires the participants to reflect upon gender, agency and move to action.

APPENDIX I - Lyrics and Translations of Sevdalinke

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Moj Dilbere</p> <p>Moj Dilbere, kud se šećeš haj što I mene ne povedeš. Povedi me u čaršiju haj pa me prodaj bazardžanu. Uzmi za me oku zlata haj pa pozlati dvoru vrata. Što te volim, ah što te ljubim, aman, aman bože moj.</p> | <p>My darling</p> <p>My darling, where are you going? Why don't you take me with you? Take me to the old part of town Sell me at the Bazaar Take for me two pounds of gold And gild the front gate to your palace Why do I love you? Why do I kiss you, Help me, my God.</p> |
| <p>Mito Bekrijo</p> <p>Ponoc vec je prosla, vreme da se spiye, srce jos je budno, davnu zelju krije. Ej, kraj pendzera stojim, cekam da ti vrata otvorim. Zasto duso ne dodjes, da me kuci povedes, da ti svoje srce predam, da ti staru majku gledam Mito, Mito bekrijo. Obeco si Mito, da ces jedne noci,kad se varos smiri, ti po mene doci. Ej, cvece tvoje belo, vec je cekajuci uvelo. Zasto duso ne dodjes, da me kuci povedes, da ti svoje srce predam, da ti staru majku gledam Mito, Mito bekrijo. Sa drugari svoji, pome a ne odis, s vino i sa pesma, noci ti provodis. Ej, mladost pusta prodje, Mito ti po mene ne dodje. Zasto duso ne dodjes, da me kuci povedes, da ti svoje srce predam, da ti staru majku gledam Mito, Mito bekrijo.</p> | <p>Mito Bekrijo</p> <p>Midnight has passed, time for sleep The heart is awake, hiding old desires Standing By the gate, waiting to open your door. Why darling, don't you come? To take me to your home, to let me give you my heart, to let me take care of your old mother, Mito, Mito Bekrijo. You promised me, Mito, one night after the city is sleeping, you would come get me. Your white flower is waiting and fading. Why darling, don't you come? To take me to your home, to let me give you my heart, to let me take care of your old mother, Mito, Mito Bekrijo. With your friends, for me you don't come, with mine and song nights are spent. Hey, youth is used, gone, Mito, you didn't come get me. Why darling, don't you come? To take me to your home, to let me give you my heart, to let me take care of your old mother, Mito, Mito Bekrijo.</p> |
| <p>Kad ja Podjoh na Benbasu</p> <p>Kad ja podjoh na Benbasu</p> | <p>When I wen to Benbasa the dam</p> <p>When I went to Benbasa the dam</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Djudjevdan</p> <p>Proljece na moje rame sleci djurdjevak zeleni djurdjevak zeleni svima osim meni drumovi odose a ja osta nema zvijezde danice nema zvijezde danice moje saputnice evo zore, evo zore Bogu da se pomolim evo zore evo zore ej djurdjevdan, a ja nisam s onom koju volim ej kome sada moja draga na djurdjevak mirise na djurdjevak mirise meni nikad vise njeno ime neka se spominje svakog drugog dana svakog drugog dana osim djurdjevdana evo zore evo zore Bogu da se pomolim evo zore evo zore ej djurdjevdan je a ja nisam s onom koju volim.</p> | <p>St. George's Day</p> <p>The spring is landing on my shoulder. The lily-of-the-valley is blossoming. The lily-of-the-valley is blossoming, For everyone except for me. The roads have gone, but I have stayed behind. There is no North star. There is no North star, my co-traveler. Here is the dawn. Here is the dawn, Let's pray to God. Here is the dawn. Here is the dawn. Hey, it is St. George's day and I am not with the one I love. Where are you now my dear, The lily-of-the-valley is blossoming The lily-of-the-valley is blossoming For everyone except for me Speak her name Every other day. Every other day. Except, Saint George's Day. Here is the dawn. Here is the dawn. Let's pray to God. Here is the dawn. Here is the dawn. Hey, it is St. George's day and I am not with the one I love.</p> |
| | <p>38</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Bolujem Ja Boluješ Ti</p> <p>Bolujem ja, boluješ ti bolujemo od ljubavi. Jer nikoga ne ljubim ja osim tebe, dušo moja</p> <p>Zar ne znaš ti, odavno već da ljubav sja među nma. Jer nikoga ne ljubim ja osim tebe dušo moja.</p> <p>Otići ću u dalek svet da srcu svom pronađem lek. Jer nikoga ne ljubim ja osim tebe dušo moja.</p> | <p>I am in pain, you are in pain. We are in pain from love. For I kiss no one, Except you, my soul-mate. Don't you know, for a very long time Love has grown between us? For I kiss no one, Except you, my soul-mate.</p> <p>I am going out far into the world, To find my medicine for my heart. For I kiss no one, Except you, my soul-mate.</p> |
|---|--|

APPENDIX II - Song Stories

Kad Ja Podjoh

What I wear is a little from everywhere. My shoes are opanke, my vest hides my chest and my scarf hides my long hair. I am treated well because I am chaste and clean. I must be careful for I have no man to defend my honor. I stay unseen to stay untouched.

Sometimes, I hear the young women. As a servant, my employees do not see me and I hear very much. I hear the poor young girl's crying because they are forced to marry and leave their homes, their mother, and their siblings.

Sometimes, I hear their singing and the songs they change the words. They know that they may see their homes again. They are sold like the pots in the Bazardjiji.

This song, Kad Ja Podjoh Na Benbasu, is about a beautiful Jewess. So beautiful and young. She loved a simple shepherd boy from the village. Ahh, he was so beautiful with blue sky eyes and shiny black curls. The last time they saw each other, he brought her a beautiful white lamb. She planned her escape for months. Everyday saying, tomorrow I will go and leave this walled garden. She told her sisters that she would rather work the fields with her bare hands if she could by his side. But, she was fearful, for good reason. Her father was a nasty man, mean, a tyrant. The type that got meaner as he got richer. He called his own wife a dog. She waited for her shepherd until the very last night before her wedding to an unknown man three times her age. She was 15 and her new husband 45.

One of her sisters, younger yet wiser, said to her, "Wait, I do not trust your love. Let us give him a test to see if he is sincere. Tell him to come tonight. If he does, go with him. If he does not, they you will know."

The beautiful Jewess heeded her sister's words and asked him that night to come later. He did not. The next day she was married and gone, both forever heart-broken. Why did he not come, you ask? I do not know. Some say, he drank too

much brandy at the Cafana. Others say, he could not leave his sheep because of a bear. What I know for sure, is that they both lived their lives in regret.

Let us sing the song together, one more time, this song, Kad Ja Podjoh Na Benbasu. We sing for them and their beautiful love.

Ederlezi/Djurdjevdan.

Let me tell you the story about the beautiful gypsy boy who fell in love with a Gajo, that is a girl that is not Romi, instead she was a simple Balkan girl with a beautiful voice.

They would meet in the fields at sunrise and part at sunset. Because, she was very poor, she had to keep the goats alone. Her family had no idea that she was spending her days playing, dancing and singing with her Gypsy lover. But you know how the village talks, and the hills have eyes that watch and talk. The talk became so loud that her father knew that he must marry her off to some neighboring village before she lost her value. With that, one dawn came and the boy waited for his girl. She never came. The Romi never learned of his love's fate. He sang this song for the rest of his life. His love became the North Star forever guiding his way.

Moj Dilbere

There once was a very beautiful cultured girl. She was not of the Balkans. Her family had come from far away from the West. They spoke both Arabic and Ladino, the language of Spain. They were Muslim before they came to Sarajevo. She was known to have a voice of a songbird. She loved her neighbor, a boy she had known from childhood. He loved her as well.

Her father was a good man and loved his daughter. Only he had a terrible problem with cards playing and gambling. One night, playing Tabla, the father had a winning streak that was the best of his life. He was unbeatable. His friends lost over and over, constantly changing seats as they lost all their money.

The father drank heavily. He had to do a shot every time was bragging of his winning a stranger sat beside him. The stranger told the father that he would beat him. The father laughed and replied that would never happen. Of course, the father lost, everything. With nothing left, he still wanted to keep playing, foolishly believing that he would win. He told the stranger, he would bet his beautiful daughter. The stranger accepted the bet and won. The girl, hearing the gossip that flew like fire, knew her fate. She begged her lover to sell her at the bazaar for two pounds of gold so that he may gild his front gate.

Mito Bekrijo

There is a story that I heard of a very stubborn Serbian girl who fell madly in love at a very young age with a young man by the name of Mito Bekrijo. Not only was she stubborn she was very beautiful with long shiny blonde hair and many good (wealthy) men asked for her hand. Her father loved the girl very much more than most fathers. You see his wife, the girl's mother had died in childbirth. His daughter was all he had left of his dead love. His daughter also was the spitting image of her mother. Some say, he indulged her spoiled her by allowing her to be so stubborn and think for herself. His father even looked away when he saw her by the gate late at night. Soon, the whole varosh, town, knew of her love for Mito and her reputation was ruined. She begged Mito for years to take her to his home. Now, Mito was a typical man. He was indulged by his parents, as parents with an only child do. His father was gone, dead many years. His mother was left alone. Mito, loved to go out with his friends to the cafana and drink and gamble. He went out every night. Sometimes, he would visit the girl but only midnight. The girl knew the Mito's mother was alone and needed care. She told Mito she loved his mother and wanted to take care of her. But, Mito did not care. He never came for the girl who grew old and lost the bloom of youth. Mito's mother died alone.

The one happy person in this story was the girl's father because he was not alone and could look upon his daughter and remember his wife. Some say that is why he looked away and pretended not to know. He knew that Mito would never take his daughter away.

Bolujem Ja Bolujes Ti – Bolujemo of od Ljubavi

There is another story that the girls would sing. It is a story of two lovers, only in mind for they were good, chaste, village folk. They loved each other their entire lives from birth. When, they became of age, they went to their parents and asked for each other's hands. Unfortunately, there had been history between the potential in-laws, the worst kind of history, romantic history. The mother of the girl knew the mother of the boy because the mother of the boy had wanted the mother of the girl's father. Yes, the girl's father had been promised to the boy's mother. But, the girl's mother loved him and got him to elope with her. When they came back, the parents of the father took the mother's mother in. They were the only couple in the village that married in spite of arrangements. The girl's mother's heart grew cold and she told her lovely daughter that she could not marry the boy. The daughter's heart became broken again. Her heart had broken the first time when her father left her for the war when she was seven. She did not see him again for fourteen years. The boy and girl married other people, forever heart-broken.

Bibliography for *Balkan Song*:

- Abramović, Marina. Balkan Epic. Ed. von Furstenberg, Adelina. Milano: Skira Editore S.p.A., 2006.
- Abramović, Marina. 7 Easy Pieces. Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2007. 192.
- Abramović, Marina. Student Body. Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2003.
- Aloni, Udi. Local Angel, Theological Political Fragments. London: ICA. 2004 PP. 24-29 What does a Jew want? Taken from a conversation with Slavoj Žižek.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. The Ethics of Identity. Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2005. 213.
- Aristotle. The Poetics. London, England: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Bakić-Hayden, Milica and Hayden, Robert. "Orientalist Variations on the Theme "Balkans": Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics." *Slavic Review*, Vol. 51. No. 1 (Spring) 1992. 1-15.
- Benhabib, Seyla. Another Cosmopolitanism. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Benjamin, Walter. Illuminations, Essays and Reflections. New York: Schocken Books. 1968.
- Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. London & New York: Routledge Classics. 1994, 2007 Reprint.
- Bishop, Claire. "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents." ArtForum. February 2006. 183.
- Bjelić, Dušan. Balkan as Metaphor. Ed. Bjelić, Dušan and Obrad Savić. Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 2002.
- Capra, Fritjof. The Web of Life, A new understanding of Living Systems. New York: Anchor Books, A division of Random House, Inc. 2001.
- Childinfo. Monitoring the situation of Children and Women. 24 April 2009. <<http://www.childinfo.org/marriage.html>>.
- Derrida, Jacques. Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression. Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press, 1996.
- English Hindi Dictionary. 2003-2009. <<http://www.shabdkosh.com/en2hi/search.php?e=pain&f=1&p>>.
- Evans, Dylan. Emotion, the Science of Sentiment. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001.

fados, Carlos Saura. 18 April 2009. <http://www.fados-saura.com/index_pt.html>.

Feld, Steven. Sound and Sentiment, Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1982.

Freud, Sigmund. "Fetishism" Miscellaneous Papers, 1888-1938. Vol. 5 of Collected Papers. London: Hogarth and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1924-1950. 198-204.

Gocić, Goran. The Cinema of Emir Kusturica, Notes from the Underground. London & New York: Wallflower Press. 2001.

Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. Dangerous Border Crossers. London & New York: Routledge, 2000.

Gonzalez, Jennifer A. "Autotopographies". Prosthetic Territories, Politics and Hypertechnologies. Ed. Braner, Gabriel. Jr. & Driscoll, Mark. Boulder & SF: Oxford Westview Press. Politics & Culture 2, 1995. 133.

Herzfeld, Beth. "Slavery and gender." Gender Trafficking and Slavery. Ed. Masika, Rachel. Santa Cruz: University of California, Santa Cruz Press. 2002.

hooks, bell. All About Love. New York: William Morrow and Company Inc. 2000. 11.

Karaca-Beljak, Tamara. "On Sevdalinka, Urban Songs of Bosnia and Herzegovina An excerpt from the CD Notes. Antologija BH Sevdalinke. Croatia: CroArt. 2008.

Jones, Huws Edward and Velagić, Mehmed. "Moj Dilbere." Sevdah, Traditional Music from Bosnia. New York: Boosey & Hawkes. 1997.

Kester, Grant H. Conversation Pieces, Community + Communication in Modern Art. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2004. 13.

Koljević, Svetozar. Yugoslav Short Stories. London: Oxford University Press. 1966.

Kundera, Milan. The Book of Laughter and Forgetting. New York: Harper Collins. 1978.

Kwon, Miwon. One Place After Another: Site-specific and Locational Identity. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: The MIT Press, 2002. 138.

Marx, Karl. Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859. Moscow: Progress Publishers. 1977.

Mikhail, Susanne Louis B. "Child marriage and child prostitution: two forms of sexual exploitation" Gender Trafficking and Slavery. Ed. Masika, Rachel. Santa Cruz: University of California, Santa Cruz Press. 2002. 46

- Montano, Linda. Letters from Linda M. Montano, London & New York: Routledge Classics. 2005.
- Parrot, Andrea and Nina Cummings. Sexual Enslavement of Girls and Women Worldwide. Connecticut & London: Praiger. 2008.
- Petrović, Ankica. "Islamic Echoes in Bosnia and Hercegovina Tradition and Modernity" Los Angeles: Conference on Music in the world of Islam. Assilah. 8-13 Aug. 2007.
- Prakash, Gyan. "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of The Third World: Indian Historiography Is Good to Think" in Colonialism and Culture Ed. Nicholas B. Birks. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992. 353-388.
- PRI. The World. Damir Imamović Trio. 4 Aug. 2008. <<http://www.theworld.org/?q=node/19876>>.
- Sevdalinke. Rivić, Muhsin. 18 April 2009. <<http://sevdalinke.com/english.php>>.
- Simić, Andrei. "Sevdah: the Ritual Containment of Machismo in the Balkans." U.C.L.A. Journal of the Association of Graduate Dance Ethnologists. Volume 3, Spring 1979.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988: 271-313.
- Stokić, Jovana. "Performative Bodies: Serbian Female Artists in Post-Modernist Self-Identity in the Works of Marina Abramović and Tanja Ostojić." Serbian Studies: Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies. 18(2): 395-401, 2004.
- Todorova, Maria. "Introduction: Learning Memory, Remembering Identity." Balkan Identities. Ed. Maria Todorova. London: Hurst & Company, 2004.
- Eds. Turino, Thomas and Lea, James. Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities. Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Part Press. 2004.
- Ugrešić, Dubravka. "Balkan Blues." Balkan Blues. Ed. Joanna Labon. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press. 1994.
- Ugrešić, Dubravka. Nobody's Home. London: Telegram. 2008.
- Yamashita, Karen Tei. Circle K Cycles. Minneapolis, MN. Coffee House Press. 2003.
- Yemen Post. 4 Jan. 2009. <<http://www.yemenpost.net/28/Reports/20083.htm>>.