GENDER DIFFERENCE IN THE BALKANS

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Abstract

This dissertation deals with the issue of gender difference in the Balkans. In order to evade the many assumptions and presumptions that posit gender difference in the Balkan region as being necessarily subsumed to established orders and regimes of representation, this dissertation focuses on an array of visual materials. This singular material consists of nineteenth and twentieth century photographs, and a series of contemporary art works (objects, installations, videos, etc.) This material draws attention to overlooked images of women (some of them taken by women) that resist the logic and rhetoric of the patriarchal order and emphasises the ambiguous rhetoric of gender difference within the field of representation in visual culture.

The aim of this dissertation and of this collated visual material is to challenge and deconstruct the problematic understanding of institutional archives as places dedicated to guarding and preserving the truth of written documents and visual imagery. Instead of focusing on the archive as the repository of truth (e. g. about national identity), I attempt to "perform" an archive of the act of *becoming a different gender* as a result of a way of acquiring knowledge and making art that is specific to the Balkans.

The main argument is that gender difference is the product of a discourse that is not necessarily constituted out of a negative differentiation of the subject. This act of becoming one's gender through difference can stem from other patterns and relationships towards the state and the dominant regimes of representation that infiltrate art and visual culture. The relationship between a conventional understanding of gender difference and a discourse stemming from the acquisition of gender difference is what I call the "becoming of gender difference."

The overarching concept put forward to support this argument is *the neither*. This concept, explored throughout this dissertation, enables the deconstruction of pre-existing discursive figures of alterity already used in non-western cultures and an up dated discussion of the specificities of gender difference in the Balkans.

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Acknowledgments

INTRODUCTION

An introduction is always placed at the beginning of a text. However, most commonly, the introduction is conceived after the rest of the text has been written. Once the chapters of a thesis have been formulated (if not even thoroughly written), the researcher pretends that he/she is just about to start writing. The introduction announces the contents that are to be discussed later. Thus, by using the future tense to express intention, the researcher projects into the future something that has already happened.

The deferment of the narration results in a certain temporisation of the text and puts the writer/narrator in an ambivalent position: the position of someone who *already knows,* but cannot tell yet. The author of an introduction is expected to be prudent with the information about the issues explored and to distribute it in various portions throughout the text.

Writing an introduction is about being economical with writing. It is about *"constituting a reserve (Vorrat)"* for the future, as with any other inscription.[1] The ultimate outcome of this procedure is to *defer* the moment of revelation of the *event/text* itself.

In a similar way, the archive *saves* and *preserves* its contents: documents, images, letters, *"traces"* are saved for future research and distribution. This effort in a way assumes that this "investment" can protect the memory, and ultimately the truth.[2] But the archive, being simultaneously an "introduction" into both the past and the future, does not itself have an introduction. At least, it cannot be properly announced with one single introduction because there is no one single *archē* to the archive (its true beginning). There can be no single threshold, neither temporal nor spatial, from which one can enter and start one's own research. When entering an archive, one cannot hope for one relevant introduction, an *entry/point* (meaning also record). One has to deal with multiple and erratic beginnings, in a temporal or spatial way.

On the one hand, even an organised and vigilant researcher who has made all sorts of necessary preparations may overlook an important piece of evidence because of the vastness, and idiosyncratic order, of the archive. Therefore, the desired event, the encounter between the researcher and the sought document/image, might never occur. On the other hand, an important *event* may take place unexpectedly; an image or document may appear by accident. The multiple *entrances* to the archive make contingent the *event* of its entering.

Moreover, an archive is a labyrinth with many dead ends and no short cut exits that confuses and seduces at the same time.

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Before I proceed with the presentation of the four entries/points to this dissertation, I want to give a quick overview of the locations and research processes, the visual material found in the process of the research, and the methods of selection.

a) *Research spaces and processes*

The research that preceded my dissertation resembled a site-specific curatorial project that looked into issues of gender difference and of its representation in the cultural context of the Balkans. The archival spaces that enabled this project are the historic, national, state, museum, or library archives in Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Zagreb, Skopje, and Bitola; several historic or contemporary exhibitions; some private collections; antique shops and the flea markets in Bucharest, Belgrade and Sofia, as well as the homes and studios of several contemporary artists.[3] My research file started gathering and accommodating images and details about many protagonists, events and places. While selecting and gathering the archive, I employed different criteria from the historically determined ones. Finally, for the presentation of the research, there was no other, more adequate archival, museum or gallery space but the space of the research folder itself.

Most of the national archives in the Balkans that I approached allowed me to enter their well-kept premises. However, I could only proceed with my research project if I was dealing with the issue of the representation of women. Only the most valued contents of the Balkan archives (the 'big historic truths' about the origins of nation and national identity, nation-state, territory, national heroes, or ethnic minorities), were considered out of bounds. Regardless of the relevance of the issue of representation of gender difference from a linguistic, anthropological, cultural, psychoanalytical, or feministic academic perspective, the archive authorities in the Balkans treated this issue as if it was of little importance and of no scientific value, even naïve in nature. They behaved as if it mattered little how this issue was explored and developed by the human and social sciences of the West.

The archive authorities in charge of verifying external researchers would rigorously look at my application and usually, after presenting a letter of intent and an official letter confirming my identity and the aims of my research, I would still have to wait several days

for approval. However, no threat to archival policy was ever detected, neither within the initial application, nor in the contents of the archival materials researched. The decisions to approve my research might have also been based on my national, cultural, and professional background, discarding the conceptual framework of my research as irrelevant.[4]

One can of course argue that this is a common bureaucratic procedure practised by all archives. However, it is important to stress that bureaucratic rigidity in historic, national, library and museum archives in the Balkans is accompanied by a strong political influence. This is often accompanied by strict control over the management and leadership of archives. Archive directors are usually appointed members of ruling political parties. They are often appointed regardless of their professional competence. Each time another party wins an election, the directors are usually immediately changed. Although the directors are given responsibility and power to lead these institutions ostensibly in the name of some "inherent" idea of the "national interest", in actual fact these appointments are simply an extension of governmental politics.

As I proceeded with my research, the project gradually started shifting its focus. As is so often the case with research, the initial structure of the project was inevitably transformed through force of contact with the actual archives. This meant that the research in itself became an unstable archive in its own right, in permanent motion and transformation, unexpectedly breaking free from the boundaries of "the project".' While establishing and constituting its subject, it retrospectively started to re-determine the nature of the research archive itself. Because of the contingent and continuously changing concept of the research, gender difference could no longer be looked at in isolation from the *"truths"* of national and cultural identity and difference. Not unlike the research conducted for a curatorial project, in which each new individual project included can affect the overall direction of the project and can change the initial object of the research, the issue of gender difference started deconstructing both my initial assumptions and those attached to the archive.

The notion of the representation of gender difference inevitably became intertwined with notions of national identity and difference. It was affected by the issues of fights for independence and uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, the formation of nation states, and the recent inter-ethnic conflicts in the Balkans. The discussion about the representation of women who positioned themselves within these conflicts required a discussion about the relation between state power and these representations. Although the regime of representation was controlled by the authorities, it turned out to be unstable and was always

already marked by a certain crisis. Thus, I started looking at the representation of gender difference as if it were a *"dangerous supplement"* to, and a source of, this crisis.[5]

b) *Selection method*

The complex rhizomatic structure of the archive defies any linearity in terms of the selection, gathering, historical periodisation, and systematisation of the images and their authors. The most obvious selection process is that of classifying the images from the region of the Balkans, with only a few exceptions of art works originating from different parts of the world. This was not always an easy strategy to follow because, as I will show, there are many problems with defining the geographic, political and cultural delimitations of the region. The second and more important criterion is to follow the path of selection of the images, their connections and relations to other images.

Although belonging to a different national, cultural, and artistic background than the authors, it was important that I trace and re-think the existing correspondences and contradictory relations among all these images. Most importantly, certain additional relations among all of these different images and concepts emerged during the research itself and affected further the selection process.

On the one hand, this archive seems to include everybody. On the other hand, this could have been exactly the problem with the *archive of gender difference:* that such a tendency towards all-inclusiveness could have led to a confusion between different regimes of representation and could have left the impression that this could overcome the hierarchy between them. The *archive of gender difference* does not employ the simple method of adding and including neglected or excluded images. It is actually an attempt to apply simultaneously the same two movements of deterritorialisation: one through which the subjects would have to be isolated from the majority, and another through which they needed to rise up from minority.[6] It is clear that the majority of images portrayed men. However, not all representations of women were relevant for discussing gender difference.

I elaborate this double movement of deterritorialisation throughout the chapters when reflecting on individual images or artists and their projects. I stress the way in which the images I select exemplify the *becoming* of *gender difference*. I try to explain how they differ from the majority of archival images that I encountered, and how one can interpret the difference between them.

c) *The visual material*

The images of women and images created by women, either historic or contemporary were created in different contexts: documentary, ethnographic, anthropological, or in an art context. All and all, this archive gathered images that, while telling something about gender difference in the Balkans, often resisted a definite classification and systematisation. The grand narrative about the "big" heroes began to intertwine itself with stories about "less" important ones. The "grand" truths began to intertwine themselves with the "small" ones; this raised the question of whether there can be such thing as a "small truth" and if the discourse on gender difference can be qualified as a kind of *truth*.

Four intertwined modes and problems of representation derived from, and started playing, the pivotal role of focusing the research and clarifying the overall problematic:

- the neither as a kind of indecisive discursive and visual model that I offer for looking at gender and cultural difference in the Balkans
- the representations of Balkan women warriors
- the visual and cultural aspect of the question of the veil
- the tension between representation and performativity contained in images of cross-dressing or images showing women changing into clothes of different ethnicities and professions

During the research process, I examined these phenomena in the context of the relation between Orientalism and Balkanism, the notion of archive and the relation between historic and contemporary imagery. The uneven history of photographic representation and its role in the development of modernism in the Balkans also occurred as an important issue to be addressed while discussing the emergence of new subjectivities in the Balkans.

Entries:

Gender Difference

The Balkans

Archive

Photography

The introduction to this *text/archive* has four different *entries* that are not parallel to the chapters. The research on gender difference in the Balkans is a multiple entry archive of its own. It functions as a kind of rhizomatic hypertext that one can browse and enter from different directions and angles. It opens up folders through four different introductions to various aspects of the research and thus announces its various methodologies. Simultaneously, it saves important details for the chapters that follow the introduction. The fragmented introduction reveals the ultimate limitations of this research and may be understood as an invitation for future research on this issue.

I. The first entry deals with the importance of the issue of gender difference and my understanding of it. In this part of the introduction, I introduce the reasons behind the selection of this particular topic as the central problem to be addressed in my dissertation and the main argument of my thesis.

II. The second entry will be all about the specificity of the Balkans, more precisely about the contemporary problems associated to geographical, political, and cultural definition. I also want to emphasise the urgency of tackling gender difference in this particular context in comparison with the regional obsession with national identity and difference.

III. The third part introduces my research experiences in the Balkan archives. Its aim is to raise a discussion about the contemporary notion of archive. In this part, I point to some recent theoretical critiques of this auxiliary methodological resource, mostly used by historiography and other human sciences. In particularly, I reflect on the hierarchical notion of archive that claims to protect the origin and authenticity of identity. More importantly, I explore the possibilities for a re-structuring of the hierarchical archive into an archive of difference.

IV. The fourth part of the introduction relates to the crisis of representation through a discussion of photographic representation. It deals with the intrinsic *'crack within the truth*

of sign' that affects any representation of truth since this crisis inevitably affects the signification of the archive.[7]

All four entries also extrapolate on different contemporary theories and methodologies whose arguments helped to shape my research such as poststructuralism, deconstruction, Deleuze's philosophy of *becoming,* Orientalism, postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, and feminism. I give a particular emphasis to a proposed term, the *neither,* that lends its logic from negative theology, as a supplement to the postcolonial concept *hybrid.*

At the end of this introduction, I will present the content, the structure, and the aims of each of my four chapters that stemmed from these separate problematics.

Entry I
Gender Difference

If the word "history" did not by and of itself convey the motif of a final repression of difference, one could say that only differences can be "historical" from the outset and in each of their aspects. [8]

Somewhere, something can be filled up of itself, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself.[9]

The main motivation for my project derived from the fact that the issues of crisis in the representation of gender difference in the Balkans are still overlooked, or seen as unimportant. In order to challenge the preconception that gender difference in the Balkan region is stereotypically determined by the already known and established orders and regimes of representation, I look at various visual materials, thus creating a unique archive.

It has often been stated that different representations of gender contribute to enforcing the asymmetry and hierarchy between genders. On the contrary, my archive, consisting of late nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs, and of different contemporary art works such as objects, installations, videos, etc., brings forward overlooked images of women (or taken by women) that resist the well accepted logic and rhetoric of hierarchical orders of representation. It is meant to emphasise the ambiguous rhetoric of gender difference within the field of representation in different visual cultures.

Starting from the deconstructive premise that difference is something "historical" coexisting within identity from its outset, I do not aim to explore gender difference in the Balkans as something new. I rather look at gender difference as something that has *always already* been there, as an ever plausible and needed supplement to fill the intrinsic "lack" in the identity.

This is not the same as saying that the *hierarchy* within gender difference has always already been there. The valorisation of certain biological/sexual differences between men and women are established within culture. Yet, not all cultures have the same hierarchical order of valorisation. Even if we agree that hierarchies have *always already* existed within culture, they can still differ in kind and strength depending on cultural contexts.

Gender difference acquires its double definition from Derrida's definition of *différance,* as both spatial and temporal difference. This double movement within gender difference emphasises the deferment of the definition of gender brought forward by difference. Instead of talking about becoming woman, becoming man, or becoming one's own gender, I shall write about becoming gender difference. A *becoming* that focuses on becoming any gender, even it has to be transgendered, still limits the notion of *becoming.* It imposes certain obstacles produced by the already established distinction between genders and reduces gender to a fixed task that needs to be fulfilled during a certain process. Becoming-gender-difference on the contrary, enables a constant movement of negotiation between genders, thus defining one with or against another, but never expecting to *become* a final movement of closure.

Throughout my project, I attempt to focus on the performativity of the visual archive of *becoming-gender-difference* that is to be seen as an effect of certain knowledge and art practices in the Balkans. Let me first extrapolate further on the movement of *becoming-gender-difference.* The *"gender difference"* part of the expression derives from Derrida's *différance;* the *"becoming"* part derives from Deleuze's concept *becoming-woman.* [10] *Becoming* for Deleuze is above all an affirmation of difference. The flux of becoming opposes any fixed identities. The multiple processes of transformation that are at the heart of any becoming, allow a new kind of subjectivity to emerge. In order to circumvent the concerns that the privileging of *becoming-woman* can again lead towards a woman being caught in male configurations, I suggest the concept of *becoming-gender-difference* instead of *becoming-woman.* [11]

It is important to emphasise the fact that the concept of *becoming* also relates to other categories: *becoming-animal, becoming-minor, becoming-child.* [12] All these categories, as well as *becoming-gender-difference,* are concerned with the coexistence of multiplicities and refusal to settle with pre-established identitarian politics.

I want to argue that the images present in the Balkans, either gathered in national archive or scattered in different places (family homes, media, artists' studios, museums, etc.) are a compound of an amazing array of unexpected representations of gender and cultural difference. The production and circulation of these images and art objects in the Balkans is necessarily connected with *becoming-gender-difference.* They invite various research projects that can help to defy the clichés about this region and produce new and different interpretations. *Becoming* means to deterritorialise, and this is what these images and projects do: they destabilise the known regimes of representation, and they disorganise the strict social and political orders. Often state power cannot recognise the imaginary and symbolic order that is developed within this imagery according to a different set of rules and with a different strategy.

There is a set of questions that I want to tackle in my dissertation. One of the most important questions is how are the highly appreciated and concealed truths about the origins of nation, state, or language related to the problematic of gender difference? In other words, have these "big truths" not *always already* been marked by gender difference as if a kind of "supplement"? Gender difference understood as a "supplement" to difference and national and cultural identity is not merely a supplement added to what is present but marks the emptiness of these structures. [13] Gender difference destabilises the "fixed" and "pure" structure of identity from the outset.

The negative paradigms attached to subjectivity through confrontation and sublation overlook the fact that gender difference has been present historically. It means that the conceptualisation of a linear historic formation of subjectivity and gender difference is problematic. The argument that I develop in my dissertation is that there is a production of discourse of gender difference not necessarily overburdened by an essentially negative understanding of subject formation. This discourse stems from other norms and relations towards state power, and regimes of representation that ultimately come forward through art and visual culture. The relation between "historic" gender difference and the discourse of gender difference (in constant movement) is what I call "becoming of gender difference."

Since gender difference in the Balkans (as elsewhere) is necessarily linked to socio-cultural differences, I also look at the relation between gender and cultural difference. The problems of gender and cultural difference are mutually entangled and reciprocally affected by each other. Still, from the very first moment of endorsing the need to define gender and cultural identity, their specificity does not become apparent unless it has been distinguished and formulated as such within the discursive realm. *Becoming gender difference* is thus marked by this double and simultaneous movement of exclusion and inclusion in which *becoming* is an *event* that occurs when one becomes "worthy of it", self-aware through discursive and artistic practice.[14]

Entry II

Balkan Troubles

There is no consensus over the term "Balkans" so it is no surprise that it is impossible to define its geographical, historical, political, or cultural meaning. From its first application in the eighteenth century, "the Balkans" were assigned constantly changing definitions. The fact that many different ethnicities inhabit this region makes this task even more difficult. The Balkan scholar Maria Todorova emphasised many times that there is no such thing as "a common Balkan identity" and that, like elsewhere, national identities in the Balkans *'have operated in opposition to each other.'*[15]

The countries in the Balkan region are well known for still having ongoing disputes over historic and heroic figures from the past. There are all sorts of absurd appropriations of personalities, toponyms or dates and attempts to prevent others from using them. Each of the troubled ethnic communities considers these "facts" as important for establishing the truth about its national identity and authenticity.

Therefore, to connect the cultural and the territorial aspects of gender difference is problematic. In the context of the Balkans an important distinction should be always made between culture, nation, and identity based on geographical and regional belonging. The fact that the biographies are always attached to a certain geography was emphasised by Edward Soja's critique of the *'silenced spatiality of historicism.'*[16] Due to its historicised structure, culture does not overlap with geography and territory. The relation between cultural and spatiality is not stable and changes reciprocally.

a) *Contemporary politics of the Balkan archive*

In cases where war conflicts are incited by discussions about ancient (archival) maps and borders, the importance of archive is usually overestimated. At the core of this

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overestimation is the belief that the images and documents kept in the archive shelves are of an irreplaceable value. What I want to emphasise here is that, regardless of how paradoxical this might sound, only an overestimation of the importance of the archive and its capacity to preserve the truth could enable the biggest inventions and forgeries of "important" and "historical" facts.

It seems that even the contemporary international legal system of justice shows a lack of immunity towards this 'objectification of truth.' A good example is the loop in the law caused by the rule that the lack of archival evidence results in the impossibility of proving the perpetuation of a crime. This legal loop slows down and prevents the successful completion of the trial and any trial can turn into a perversion of the course of justice.

In the context of the Balkans the best example of such paradox would be the duration of the trial of Slobodan Milošević in the Hague Tribunal. The Serbian leader is charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, carried out during the war conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia in the last decade of the twentieth century. The duration of his trial is mainly blamed on the lack of archival evidence, in contrast to the abundance of written and signed documents that were available during the much shorter Nuremberg trials against leading Nazis. The comparison between the two trials is usually made by applying the typical distinction between German and Balkan mentality, the former being marked by a rigorous obsession with keeping a record of events/crimes, and the latter being marked by the negligence of archival procedures and the preference for oral orders. [17]

Because of such a complex political and cultural climate in most of the Balkan states with their unresolved historic disputes, it is often made difficult for scholars from neighbouring countries to visit and research each other's archives. Such institutional paranoia emphasises the fragility of the 'truths' and 'secrets' kept therein. It comes as no surprise that in such a political and cultural climate the question of gender difference is considered of a lesser importance.

b) *Orientalism and Balkanism*

When dealing with visual culture, the question of methodology becomes extremely important and delicate. Because of the large number of issues that are intertwined with the content and material that constitutes the subject of visual culture, the relevant methodologies are varied. When Edward Said's book *Orientalism* was published in 1978, it came as a provocation in its use of methodology and it sparked many different interpretations.[18]

Even though most scholars agreed that Said had introduced an interesting and helpful theory for interpreting other cultures, his writing was subject to a great deal of criticism. Said's notion of Orientalism was criticized for reducing complex and 'exotic' otherness within the framework of Western rational categories. His way of looking at the East as the Other of the West turned the East into an object of knowledge assuming power of interpretation over it.[19] Additionally, feminist theorists such as Reina Lewis or Meyda Yegenoglu found Said's interpretation of the relation between East and West incomplete because of the absence of gender issues, an omission that Said tried to revise in his later writings.[20]

In the context of my research, I found *Orientalism* and its critique useful for discussing the question of the veil, but more relevant for my project was the difference between Orientalism and Balkanism formulated by Maria Todorova. Balkanism differs substantially from Orientalism because the Balkans are a more concrete geographical and political term than the East.[21] The debate surrounding the application of Orientalism in the context of Balkan studies continued but however it was not before the reader *Balkan as a Metaphor - Between Globalization and Fragmentation* was published, that the whole debate received wider academic attention.[22]

c) *Modernism and photography in the Balkans*

The early photography in the Balkans (from mid- nineteenth century to the first decades of twentieth century) is one of the most appropriate art mediums for discussing the specific context and the relation between modernism and Orientalism. Photography also provides a context for pinning down the emergence of new subjectivities and the problems with gender difference in the Balkans. My research often refers to photography as medium and to different series of archival photographs. This is because of the significant coincidence between the discovery of the medium of photography and the emergence of different national identities in the region, as well as because of the parallelism of the discovery and development of this medium and of modernism in general.

In some of Balkan countries, profane easel paintings emerged simultaneously, or even a few decades later than the first photographs, such as in Albania and Macedonia. In different parts of the Balkans this gap between the first easel paintings and the first photographs differs, but in any case painting in the region was practiced long after many Western art styles and periods. In this way, one could understand why the introduction of modernism was closely related with the emergence of the photographic medium.

The signatures of the first known photographer in Macedonia, Hadzi Koste, *'the fresco painter and photographer'* were found on two frescoes, in the church St. Demetrius in Veles, Macedonia (1855) and in the monastery St. George in the village Čičevo, Macedonia (1860-1868). [23] This is an illustrative example of how the medieval medium of fresco painting was practiced in parallel with photography, and how modernism in the Balkans circumvented many of the periods of Western art history.

The first photographers in the Balkans were usually settled foreigners or travellers, thus easily transferring ideas between different cultural environments. Also, photographic studios were sites for meetings and exchanges of ideas, as noted by Irit Rogoff in her text 'Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Art History'. [24] Running a photographic studio usually also meant including the women of the family in the business, thus enabling the professional involvement of women at an early stage.

The more general discussions on the influence of photography in the formation of modernity and modern identity and the impossibility to extricate the photographic subjects from the photographs as objects due to the collapse of the subject/object relation in modernism was explored in Jonathan Crary's book *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, and in several texts published in *Photography: A Critical Reader*, that provided the wider context in which Balkan photography emerged.[25] When extrapolating the reciprocal impact that photography and modernity have had over each other, Celia Lury suggests that the phenomenon of the self-determined individual has been negotiated recently through photography as part of a 'prosthetic culture'. [26] I found her insights to be useful when enquiring into the phenomena of multiple personality disorder and false memory syndrome when dealing with the problem of masquerade. These will be discussed later, in the second and fourth chapters.

Unfortunately, during my research on early photography in the Balkans I had to rely heavily on a few books published on this topic in different local languages (Serbian, Macedonian, Croatian, Bulgarian, etc.), only occasionally accompanied with short summaries in English. Two books on the works of the Manaki brothers, the reader *The Creation of the Brothers Manaki* and the biography *Brothers Manaki* by Pavle Konstantinov, were of particular value. Other existing titles on the history of photography such as Petar Boev's *Photographic Art in Bulgaria*, and books about the history of Serbian photography, were helpful with dates and images. [27] I was also able to consult several texts about Romanian and Albanian photography, that were also mainly historical overviews of

the development of the medium, or dealt with the use of photographs as important documents in ethnographic research.[28] However, these texts and books mostly lacked provocative arguments or any discussion on the role of photography in the construction of different national and gender identities in the Balkans.

The attempt by Želimir Koščević in his book *Fotografska slika* to propose the thesis that photography is nationally resistant and his negation of its impact on national identity is much more ambitious than many other writings on this topic. It offers a very critical and politically influential argument: the book was published with the obvious intellectual attempt to resist the extremely nationalistic government in Croatia of the late President Franjo Tudjman.[29] Several books and texts written by the Macedonian historian Vera Vangeli, although not directly concerned with arts and photography, offered informed reflection on the way that gender awareness was first expressed among women in the Balkans.[30]

d) *Perception and presentation of contemporary art in the Balkans*

Recently, several large-scale exhibitions about the Balkans have been organised in Austria and Germany. However important they were for spreading the information about Balkan contemporary art practices, they mostly overlooked issues and discourses that were not connected with the questions of national identity and ethnicity.

The overall impression of these recent exhibitions of contemporary art and artists from the Balkans (for example: *Blood and Honey*, curated by Harald Szeemann, Collection Essel, Vienna, May-August 2003, *In the Gorges of the Balkans,* curated by Rene Block, Museum Friderecianum, Kassel, Germany, 2003), is that although they are about the Balkans, they are always conceived in order to be presented to a non-Balkan audience. The simplified titles and concepts were usually inadequate for the assigned task of addressing some urgent and highly relevant cultural, social and political issues for the region.

An additional problem with these exhibitions (similarly to the problem with the *grand exhibitions* from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) was that it appeared that their initiators could not circumvent the Orientalist approach. Usually, the titles of the exhibitions emphasise the preconceptions about the region. The prevailing criterion for the selection of artists according to their interest in issues relating to national identity created additional limitations. All this has to do with the image of the Balkans as still mired in conflict and traumas, struggling to define its national identities and differences.

However, the most problematic impact of these exhibitions is linked to a superficial attitude towards gender issues. Women artists are usually put in an obsolete and schematised theoretical framework limited by exoticism. It shows that most non-Balkan experts (writers or curators) are still not ready to hear and emphasise the voices that are already discussing these issues within the cultural specificity of the domestic cultural context.[31]

A recent debate surrounding the three mentioned exhibitions split the artists, curators and institutions, both in the Balkans and in the host countries of the exhibitions. The issues of gender difference were mostly absent or overshadowed by the discussions about the under-representation and "exclusion" of Balkan artists from international art events. Ironically, during the debate some of the interviewed male curators used explicitly sexist comments towards one of the rare interviewed curators - Marina Gržinić who pointed to the dominance of male curators and artists in these exhibitions.[32]

However, it is not enough to say that in the Balkan historic archives the images reflecting gender differences coexist side by side with images reflecting the grander issues of uprisings and national independence. To paraphrase Foucault's well-known formulation, there can be no knowledge about gender difference without a particular discursive practice, and by the same token any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that forms it.[33]

Entry III
Folds/Folders: Unfolding the Archive

> The archive cannot be described in its totality; and in its presence it is not unavoidable. It emerges in fragments, regions and levels, more fully, no doubt, and with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separates us from it...[34]

> It establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being the forgotten and recovered origin, is the dispersion that we are and make.[35]

In the context of Western traditional historiography, archaeology, and epistemology, archives are usually considered as places and means to keep the truth about origins and beginnings, about *places, events,* and about their *protagonists/subjects.* Starting from the position of "truth" understood as that which is to be discovered, archives are meant to confirm and to represent its embodiment. This understanding of the relationship between archive and truth has been challenged by Michel Foucault. Instead of accepting the presence of the subject who encounters or discovers truth in the world, the truth in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* is seen as an outcome of certain knowledge practices that shape the truth. For Foucault, archives are institutions that enable the recording and preservation of discourses, of certain *statements* that one wishes to keep in circulation in order to remember.[36] The archive is the *'system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events, '* but the archive also prevents endless accumulation in an amorphous mass of all that is gathered (Foucault *The Archaeology,* 146). It enables their grouping together in distinct figures, composed together with specific regularities, according to multiple relations established through time and space. Foucault dubbed this generative aspect of the archive as a *statement-event.* [37] The archive as *statement-event* enables the differentiation of the discourses and statements in their multiple existence and in their own duration. It becomes a practice *'that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events. '* [38] To a large extent, both Foucault's understanding of the archive as a general system that allows formation and transformation of statements, and the Deleuzean concept of 'becoming minor', have influenced my research.

Whenever one is compelled to search for the ultimate evidence that will overcome an identity crisis on the basis of archival findings one has to bear in mind Foucault's warning that the archive deprives us of our continuities. It dissolves our identities that we experience during the deconstruction of the discontinuities of history.

The crisis of truth and representation within the context of archive is inevitably linked to the epistemological crisis in sciences, and more generally to the crisis of reason, already announced as *"the crisis of European humanity"* by Edmund Husserl. [39] According to Jacques Derrida, the crucial aspect of the Husserlian call against objectivism, is his objection that *specialisation* and *expertise* can turn rationality into evil.[40] The apparent failure of rationalism tackled in Husserl's Vienna lecture is the result of the idea that truth in science requires the *unconditionality* of practical reason.[41]

The link between truth and unconditionality stresses the desire for the truth of science to be seen as the unconditional truth; furthermore, it supports the understanding that

unconditionality *'is the truth of truth.'* [42] The danger of such a trust in *unconditional* truth that can ultimately be expressed through evidence remains present in any scientific discourse and therefore it comes as a danger that necessarily accompanies the scientific appreciation of the archive.

There are two intertwined references contained in the term 'archive' that are in relation to the hierarchical notion of *origin*. One refers to the *physical, historical, or ontological* sense of the Greek word *archē* as the first, the originary, the commencement itself, and the other, emphasising the meaning of *archē* as commandment in a *nomological* sense. For Derrida, the second reference is more important since it is actually, above all, related to the *'arkheion: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded.'* [43] It therefore becomes clear that the archive is not only a specialised storage, a physical place where the official documents are filed. It is also an institution of assumed expertise where not only the *archons* guard the documents but, because of their political power and publicly recognised authority, they are also accorded *'the power to interpret the archives.'* [44]

The effect of an amalgam of authority and hermeneutics is the *legitimation* of the documents, a kind of guarantee of the truth and originality of their origin, thus imposing law and competence. Hence, Jacques Derrida's remark that the archive originates from the Greek *archeion,* points to the political power and authority necessarily linked to the patriarchal notion of the archive and the belief in absolute truth.

The other function of the *archons,* that also relies on *archons'* authority, is the function of unification and classification, the principle of "gathering together" according to certain presupposed rules, a kind of *consignation.* The main aims of this consignation are to create a system in which all elements of the archive are coordinated and articulated into a unified and ideal configuration in order to overcome any heterogeneity. However, the *consignation* could have not happened if it was not for situating or occupying the place: the *domiciliation* of the archive. The archive understood as a dwelling place of the documents accessible to the public thus becomes the *'institutional passage from the private to the public.'* [45]

The notion of archive today is not clear and there is no reliable definition of what an archive is because of the unstable borderline between public and private, between the family, the society, and the State. Nonetheless, for Derrida it is surprising that there is still a passion for archiving that he calls *mal d'archive.* This fever and passion to delve in the archive and to run after it *'right where something anarchives itself'* derives from the

compulsive desire to return to the origin, from *'a nostalgia for the most archaic place of absolute commencement.'* [46].

This kind of troubled definition of the archive makes the archive provocative for contemporary artists because its passion and permeability allows for an interpretation that would otherwise be impossible.

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Much more burdened and troubled than Foucault's and Derrida's visions of the archive is the importance given to the archive by recent historiography and politics in the Balkans. In the early 90s, when in most ex-communist countries the communist archives were made available to the public and the families of executed persons, the archives re-gained a more powerful position.

Having kept the truth about the lives and deaths of million of victims, persecuted for having different political opinions, the archives became akin to "Pandora's boxes". Not only could they not resolve the cryptic past of the victims and executioners, the archives also created new animosities. The research of secrets buried long ago in the archival depots started excavating unexpected details that were as uncertain and painful as the previous lack of information.

Entry IV

Crisis of Representation and Becoming Woman

The known orders of visibility and the rules of perspective make all representations hierarchical. All forms of representation change and distort the image *'as the crack or catastrophe that emerges in the midst of representation.'* [47] Representation is an element of metaphysics and it mediates everything, in Gilles Deleuze's words *'it subordinates difference to identity'.* [48] Therefore, in order to disavow the stability and hierarchy of representation that privileges identity over difference, there should be a correspondence between difference and questioning.[49]

What needs to be emphasised here is that there are two different hierarchies that are mutually and reciprocally intertwined. One is the hierarchy made in the realm of visual representation and the other is the hierarchy made from the point of view of political and social power.[50]

The crisis of representation is not isolated within merely visual regimes of representation since representation is doubly articulated. The first level of articulation would be multiplicity, the mobility that distorts the perfect representation. The second articulation would be *'the hierarchical distribution of power that characterises the state apparatus.'* [51] The tension between these two levels of articulation is the ultimate source of the crisis of representation.

Difference is certainly unsettling for any hierarchical and sedentary structure of representation. Deleuze's phrase the 'ruin of representation' clarified the relation between representation and difference. When the distinction between different hierarchies of representation and "state power" is placed in opposition to difference, it becomes obvious that *'in the eyes of state power difference is monstrous.'* [52]

The effects of the rules of visual representation were established already in the Renaissance with the distortion of images due to the central perspective and to the passage from three to two dimensions on the surface of the easel painting. The distortion of reality is *'a function of a state apparatus and state power'* and it takes place through establishing hierarchical orders of representation and differentiating visual politics. [53]

Olkowski emphasises the relevance of contemporary art and the activities of contemporary artists. She reminds us that to bring forward 'the ruin of representation' is intrinsic for both artists and nomads. Particularly emphasised is the gender perspective as an important subversive force that reveals the crisis of representation (even though it is not a point that necessarily derives from Deleuze's writing). This observation offered a relevant starting point for looking at the works of contemporary women artists from the Balkans. These art projects that often surprise with their ability to *perform* the hidden societal mechanisms, often manage to subvert the state order and power without direct confrontations.

The complexity of Deleuze's concept of *becoming-woman* attracted the attention of feminists and was the target of many critical interpretations. *Becoming-woman* or *becoming minor* in a Deleuzean sense is not a process that happens linearly and historically in time (in the fourth chapter I reformulate *becoming-woman* as *becoming gender-difference*). It is not a result of dialectically overcoming certain contradictions, but it is more about breaking with one's own *'carnal birth,' 'becoming worthy of what happens to us'*, and becoming *'the offspring of one's events,'* and not of one's actions. [54]

According to Olkowski, some feminist theorists such Alice Jardine, Judith Butler, and Rosi Braidotti, have expressed a few problematic outcomes of Deleuze's and Guattari's

concepts. For example, Jardine showed that the multiple sexuality of the "body without organs" and the effect of depersonalisation can accompany *becoming-woman*. Butler stated that the proposition of desire as an "ontological invariant" can turn desire into "a universal ontological truth" and "an ahistorical absolute." For Braidotti, the failure of the generalisation of *becoming-woman* results from the absence of the historical and epistemological specificities of feminism in Deleuze's writing who '*forgets that gender dichotomies result in asymmetrical relations between sexes.*' [55]

However, Olkowski emphasises the fact that this kind of criticism of Deleuze might have overlooked the fact that for him, '*active force or desire is not a matter of freeing itself or being freed from an oppressive state, religion, or family. ... it is there to a lesser or greater degree depending on the history of the forces that have taken hold of that body (and so constitute it) and the struggles between those forces for possession of it.*' [56]

Most of these different feminists' critiques of the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari are determined and limited by a certain dialectical understanding of the constitution of the subject through negativity. In support of Elizabeth Grosz's interpretation, Olkowski argues that her call for applying certain aspects of the work of Deleuze and Guattari in feminist theory offers a more constructive reading, mainly by putting emphasis on the affirmative and productive aspects of desire and the reconceptualisation of the body '*as opposed to the old conception predicated on negative and lack.*' [57]

Four Aspects of Gender Difference

1. *The Neither and Neitherness*

In the first chapter entitled '*The Neither and Neitherness*.' I introduce the term *the neither*. The neither enables the understanding of becoming as a constant flux of negotiations for different gender and cultural identities.

The idea of exploring various applications of negative procedures and anti-methodological means of negative theology in contemporary postcolonial theory is discussed through the case study of Macedonian identity. The political problems that came with the name, flag, language and other crucial insignia for defining national identity have forced this country to define itself mostly through negations and denials. The definition of Macedonian identity as *neither* Greek, *nor* Bulgarian, *nor* Serbian, is still being used colloquially because of complex inherited disputes with the neighbouring countries. In addition, the negation '*nor* Yugoslav' is assumed by the phrase 'Former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia' (or the acronym F.Y.R.O.M.) that is still in use by the UN as an official name for the country instead of "Macedonia." This name is the result of the twelve-year dispute between Greece and Macedonia about the use of the name Macedonia because of the province in Greece with the same name.

It is especially important to emphasise that the concept of *the neither* is proposed here as a kind of compensatory supplement to the concept of *hybrid* in Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory and his definition of hybridity as *'a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal.'* [58] Because of the five-centuries of the Ottoman Empire's history in the Balkans and the specificity of Ottoman rule, the concept of the *hybrid* becomes inadequate. The East-East colonisation differs from the Western Empires' colonisation in various ways to be discussed in the chapter. I apply the term *the neither* when I discuss the photographs of "sworn virgins", a cultural trans-gender phenomenon specific to the Balkans.

Because the visual material shaping my research mainly originated from the Balkan region, it is important to state that this region is extremely complex and embraces a great abundance of many different cultural, philosophical and religious concepts interwoven among each other. Negative theology is definitely one of the long-term specificities of the Balkan intellectual and cultural context. I want to argue that certain negative procedures of defying definitions can be used when discussing the Balkans.

Nevertheless, negative theology remains a highly problematic theological current that cannot be easily appropriated and applied to different theoretical discursive frameworks without taking the risk of putting forward an assumed affiliation with *hyperessentiality*. I want to challenge Julia Kristeva's assumption that negative theology, closely related to Byzantine philosophy, only marked Balkan culture in a negative way. [59] In particular, I find Kristeva's overestimation of the impact of negative theology in the contemporary social and political context of the Balkans somewhat problematic. However, I assume that the ambivalence of the cultural and gender codes in Balkan culture could be approached through specific methods inherited from negative theology that are indirectly inhabited by some other theoretical discourses and can also be applied when discussing negative definitions of national identity.

For an introduction to the origins of negative theology, I found useful Frederick Copleston's interpretation of use. His work concerned the writings of one of the most important theologians, Dionysius Areopagit. For an extensive and profound Orthodox view on apophatic theology, I referred *The Mystic Theology of the Eastern Church* by the

Russian theologian Vladimir Lossky. [60] In order to explicate the contemporary debates that were fuelled around negative theology, I refer to Jacques Derrida's texts 'Of an Apocalyptic Tone' and 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials', both published in: *Derrida and Negative Theology.* [61] I was especially interested in extrapolating the strategies derived from negative methodology as they are appropriated for defining the subject or object/subject relation in Alain Badiou's text 'On a Finally Objectless Subject'. [62]

2. *Women Warriors, Lack, and Agency:*

Certain negative procedures that are used within Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis and Lacan's negative definition of woman as *lack* are similar to the paradoxical logic of negative theology. This can be recognised in some of the feminist critiques of Lacan's theory. Interpretations of sexual difference through negativity and negative dialectics that recall certain procedures of negative theology can be, for example, pinned down in most of Luce Irigaray's texts. An obvious negative definition is implied already in the title of her famous book *The Sex Which Is Not One.* Such examples of negativity are also present in Judith Butler's applications of Hegel's negative logic of difference. Also of importance is the way in which Kristeva, in her *Powers of Horror- An Essay on Abjection*, defines abjection as an important concept for the construction of the subject, especially in her conceptualisation of abject as being neither subject nor object. [63]

The issues of aggression, lack, and agency in gender difference are developed in the second chapter. This chapter mainly deals with images of women from the Balkans that participated in the ninetieth and early twentieth century uprisings and liberation movements of different peoples against Ottoman rule. These armed conflicts of differing scales, that largely contributed to the weakening and ultimately dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, invariably included women. This little known phenomenon was documented in many photographs. In addition to documentary photographs, the phenomenon of female *haiduks* and *voivodas* (haiduk leaders) was also translated into a photographic practice of staged photographs of women warriors. The complex relation between the two different photographic practices, the practice of taking photographs of women soldiers outdoors, presumably in the fields where they fought, and the practice of staging similar photographs in the photographic studios with props and uniforms, will be discussed in the realm of performativity and its lineage as part of the crisis of photographic representation.

The examples of series of photographs of women dressed in male uniforms from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century, or the photograph of *Unveiled*

Woman (1906-1916, Milton Manaki), as well as the series of photographs of the Romanian Queen Marie dressed as a nurse, soldier, and as a Romanian peasant (although she was a daughter of Queen Victoria) emphasise the relevance of the performativity and the ritual of masquerade for the research of the economy of gender and ethnic differentiation in Balkan photography. This relation between masquerade and womanliness has already been discussed by the psychoanalyst Joan Riviere in her text 'Womanliness as a Masquerade.' [64]

When looking at photographs of women warriors in the rebellions against Ottoman rule (in Bulgaria and Macedonia) and women photographed in photographic studios with uniforms/props, there is a certain mutual interference of these otherwise independent photographic statements. This allows for a kind of reciprocal reading of both series of photographs as a masquerade, and as a search for unfixed identities. René Grémaux's text 'Woman Becomes Man in the Balkans' discusses at length the phenomenon of sex and gender ambiguity in the Balkans as a cultural specificity of some Balkan areas. [65]

Finally, it was the book *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory* by Lois McNay and the possibilities offered by the term *agency* that provoked my exploration of Mc Nay's arguments. In the framework of the discussion about the crisis in different regimes of representation and subjectivity, I employed the principle of agency as a relevant complementary approach to Deleuze's affirmative concept of *becoming-woman.* [66]

3. *Veils/Events/Truths*

The third chapter deals with the persistent issue of the veil. The image of a veiled woman has been used as a frequent metaphor for unveiling/revealing the truth. The conception of truth as a veiled woman has a long tradition in Western philosophy, one mainly based on the understanding of East/Asia as a woman, a veiled, mysterious, irrational, sensitive, and exotic woman that is inaccessible to 'Western men'. The veil as *object* of Oriental origin has also been inspirational for many photographers.

Once a trope, a metaphor used by philosophers and poets to relate women to truth, the veil today becomes an urgent political, social, and legal question. With the extensive movements of populations and the increase in migration, the result has been a mixing of different cultural codes. The question of the veil became one of the most relevant issues in multicultural and multiethnic societies. Old rules and laws have been called into question; the schools regulations began to change and individual cases ended in courts sparking everyday debates pro and against the veil becoming lucrative media news.

The discussion of this urgent issue in my project was not initiated by the fact that the veil acquired a cultural and media status. I was in fact intrigued by a single photograph of an unveiled young Albanian girl, taken in the photographic studio of the Brothers Manaki in Bitola, Macedonia [c. 1908 -1916] and the strange coincidence that the first demonstration against the veil took place in Macedonia almost at the same time (1908). The fact that almost one hundred years later the question of the veil retains the same relevance for contemporary cultural, religious, and gender debates in the Balkans and elsewhere added to my interest in this unique garment.

The persistence of the veil marks cultural and religious difference and defines gender difference in many cultures. One could argue that the veil also confirms the rule that fashion in general has recurrent cycles. This argument could work only if one were to discard a number of other relevant issues surrounding the question of the veil. This kind of attempt to reduce the veil to another fashion garment would be highly problematic and a terrible simplification of its manifold cultural connotations. However, Roland Barthes' statement that *'the fashion system far exceeds human memory'* seems applicable beyond the fashion system. [67] Not only does the veil exceed the human visual memory, but it also exceeds the cultural memory of the debates that envelop it.

The interpretation of *veil/fold/event* can be relevant only if it considers the understanding of the veil as both a philosophical metaphor and a cultural phenomenon with its complex implications in various contexts. For example, Ellen K. Feder and Emily Zakin criticised the way in which Jacques Derrida posited the veil between the man and woman/truth. [68] In Feder's and Zakin's opinion Derrida's attempt to distance his writing from the old philosophical tradition that interprets woman as truth, was not completely successful. The text 'The Discourse of the Veil' by Leila Ahmed, offered some further thoughts on the relevance of the veil as a cultural and religious object for understanding gender difference in various historic and art contexts. [69]

In the third chapter, I work with Gilles Deleuze's concept of the fold. [70] I am interested in the *veil* as *fold/event*. This link is discussed with reference to difference and temporalisation. I explore the problem of representation in terms of the relation between gender difference and Deleuze's critique of the limits of representation. Dorothea Olkowski's book *Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* provoked my circumvention of this term in the title of my thesis. It also provided a context for discussing the importance of contemporary artistic activities for promoting difference and 'the ruin of representation' within the established orders.[71]

4. Becoming Gender Difference

In the fourth chapter, I am interested to raise a debate on the input of social, cultural and political circumstances on the process of constructing gender identity, gender difference and gender ambivalence. However, I also argue that different and unique forces and relations are often activated not through direct confrontation, but through various transgressive re-enactments (often recorded with documentary and staged photographs, or in some video art projects). This chapter is an attempt to reformulate *becoming-woman* with *becoming-gender difference* following Deleuze's concept.

I found relevant the arguments of the allegory of woman as nation/state in Linda Nochlin's book *Representing Women,* Marina Warner's *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form,* and Lisa Tickner's *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914.* [72] However, I think that such iconological interpretations are related to constative speech acts rather than with the performative utterances. I refer to the difference between constative (or descriptive) and performative speech acts made by J. L. Austin's in his book *How to do things with Words* and later developed in Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble - Feminism and the subversion of identity* and *The Psychic Life of Power,* both providing an argument for the interpretation of visual representations of woman. [73]

Here, I want to emphasise that I look at new ways through which we might develop the discourse of gender difference in ways that do not privilege negativity in the processes of overcoming the exclusion of difference. I employed Butler's warning about the limitations of patriarchy as a model of thinking gender relations from her reading of Louis Althusser's concept of "interpellation," but I also point out some limits to her theory. [74] I argue that the processes of contradiction and negation, so important for Judith Butler and other writers discussing performativity as a dominant model in contemporary art projects should be looked at in parallel with certain theories and practices of positive agency, whose power is put forward through different theoretical and art concepts.

Throughout this chapter, I mainly discuss contemporary art works produced by women artists from the Balkans that deal with archives, or are structured as archives. The projects by Sanja Iveković, Milica Tomić, Tanja Ostojić, and Liljana Gjuzelova, are case studies producing the concept of *becoming-gender difference.* I also reflect on the personal photographic archives of Queen Marie of Romania, that in my view correspond to the contemporary archives of Balkan women artists. By putting archival photographs next to contemporary art works I emphasise the non-linear structure of gender difference.

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The archive of gender difference in the Balkans that I propose throughout this thesis is based on different assumptions than those explored in scientific/historic, political and social terms. Although it would be an overstatement to claim that it is a-scientific, it does aim to deconstruct the scientific belief in truth, facts and evidence to a certain extent. It does *anarchive* the archive.

Texts by Rebecca Schneider 'Archives Performance Remains' and Ingrid Schaffner 'Deep Storage: On the Art of Archiving' or projects such as *Lost in Archive, Alphabet City,* and some artistic projects by female artists from the Balkans dealing with archives also have an important impact on the contemporary understanding of archives.[75] These projects offered some new ideas that can reformulate the conceptualisation of archive as a means for the production of knowledge and in addition can compensate for the "split" within the hierarchical regimes of representation. [76]

Since I started this process of investigation of gender difference in the Balkans, photography and performativity, veil, contemporary art, etc., the research has produced an imaginary folder of events, thoughts, and images. While unfolding the old files, they created new folds. The folds/events thus enabled rhizomatic relations and convergences to occur between different files, a kind of multiple openings of a silkworm cocoon that *'reveal and veil the unveiling of truth.'*[77]

The *neither,* women warriors, folds/veils, or *becoming gender difference* intersect and inform each other with supplementary links that time and again incite new links that supplement and deconstruct the identitarian politics. Performing the archive allows the subject who unfolds the archive to create new interpretations and opens up new events and spaces for new folds that point to the possibilities of different interpretations of political power and authority.

NOTES:

[1] Jacques Derrida, 'Différance,' *Margins of Philosophy,* trans. Alan Bass (London: Prentice Hall, 1982) 18.

[2] Derrida *Margins,* 18-19.

[3] For the purposes of this research, I worked mainly with collections of photographs from the following archives: Bucharest (Romania): The Library of the Academy of Science, the Print Department (Cabinet d'Estampe), The Library of the Municipal Museum and the exhibition "Photographs and Photographic Studios in Bucharest", Curtea Veche Gallery, 2001 *(Fotografi si Ateliere Fotografice Bucurestene,* organized by Museului Municipiului and Corneliu Beda, the Muzeul National de Arta, the Muzeul National de Istorie a Romaniei and the Muzeul de Istorie si Arta al Municipiului Bucuresti), The Library at the Contemporary Art Centre and gallery S.P.A.C.E; Sofia (Bulgaria): National Library "Kiril and Methodius"- the Print and Document Department; Belgrade (Serbia and Montenegro): Archive of Yugoslavia, City Archive of Belgrade, The Archive of the Ethnographic Museum, The Library of the Museum of Modern Art; Zagreb (Croatia): The Library of the Museum of Contemporary Art; Skopje (Macedonia): National Archive, The City Archive, The Museum of the City of Skopje – photographic collection of the Historical Department; Bitola (Macedonia): Historic Archive. I also visited the private collections of the photographer Mihai Oroveanu consisting of 8000 copies and originals of early Romanian photographs by various photographers, and the photographic collection of the artists Roxana Trestioreanu, Head of Dept. of Photography and Video in Bucharest, (photographs from Moldova) and the artist Zoran Naskovski. Browsing in the flea markets in Kalemegdan in Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia provided additional information.

[4] The most difficult for entry and research was an institution called Archive of Yugoslavia, an archive of a nowadays no-longer-existing state. The amazingly large building in Belgrade (today the capital of Serbia and Montenegro and formerly the capital of a state with fluctuating borders in the past called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, SFRJ, or

Yugoslavia), with its large bureaucratic structure emphasises the paradox of the Balkan national archives. Only after long negotiations, I entered the archive and I was given the opportunity to use the complicated and slow system. As a Macedonian, I could not proceed

with my research in the Greek archives because of the dispute between Macedonia and Greece, with regard to the right anchored to the name 'Macedonia'.

[5] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976) 149 + 144-157.

[6] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 291.

[7] Derrida *Margins*, 10. The crisis of representation as conceived in Jacques Derrida's deconstruction is an outcome of the crisis within the arbitrary structure of the sign and the troubled relation between the signifier and signified.

[8] Derrida, *Margins* 11.

[9] Derrida, Of Grammatology 145.

[10] Deleuze and Guattari A *Thousand Plateaus,* 291.

[11] The feminist critics of Deleuze's concept *becoming-woman* claim that by privileging the concept *becoming-woman* the woman is interpreted as "other" and is still subjected to the man who determines the norm of becoming. For a more detailed feminist critique of Deleuze's concept becoming-woman see: Dorothea Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory,* ed. Carolyn C. Heilbrun and Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[12] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 272.

[13] Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 145.

[14] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense,* trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin V. Boundas. (New York: Continuum, 2004) 170.

[15] Maria Todorova, 'Learning Memory, Remembering Identity,' *Balkan Identities – Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004) 9.

[16] Edward W. Soja. Postmodern Geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory (London: Verso, 1989) 14.

[17] Peter Quayle, 'How long should it take to try a man for genocide?' *Times* 21 June, 2005, 3.

[18] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) 1978.

[19] Michael Spinker, *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Bryan S. Turner (Bryan Stanley), *Orientalism, postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994); *Orientalism. A Reader,* ed. A. I. Macfie (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

[20] Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: race, femininity, and representation* (London: Routledge, 1996); Meyda Yegenoglu, Colonial Fantasies: towards a feminist reading of Orientalism (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[21] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[22] Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania:* The Imperialism of the Imagination (London: Yale University Press, 1998); Slavoj Žižek, The Spectre of Balkan. *The Journal of the International Institute.* 6. 2: Winter 1999, 15 May 2002 <http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/journal/vol6no2/ïek.htm>; *Balkan as a Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation,* ed. Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) published on the occasion of the exhibition *In Search of Balkania,* curated by Peter Veibel, Eda Čufer and Richard Canover, Neue Galerie, Graz, 2002.

[23] Photographs of the both signatures were reproduced in the magazine *Kinopis,* [Skopje], 16, 1996: 122.

[24] Irit Rogoff, 'Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Art History,' *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies.* 4. 3, 1992: 35-65.

[25] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Abigail Solomon-Godeau, 'Wining the game when the rules have been changed: art photography and postmodernism,' *Photography: A Critical Reader,* ed. Liz Wells (London: Routledge, 2001); Andy Grundberg. 'The Crisis of the Real: Photography and Postmodernism,' *Photography: A Critical Reader,* ed. Liz Wells. (London: Routledge, 2001).

[26] Celia Lury, Prosthetic Culture – photography, memory and identity (London: Routledge, 1998).

[27] Aleksandar Krstevski, et al., *The Creation of the Brothers Manaki,* (Skopje: Archive of Macedonia and Matica Makedonska, 1996); Павле Константинов, *Браќа Манаки.* (Скопје: Млад борец, 1989); Петър Боев, Фотографско изкуство в България (1856-1944) (София: Септември, 1983); *Фотографија код Срба* 1839-

1989 (Београд: Галерија Српске Академије наука и уметности, 1991); Milanka Todić, *Fotografija u Srbiji u XIX veku 1839-1989* (Beograd: Muzej primenjene umetnosti, 1989).

[28] Mark Cohen, 'Early Photography of Albania and Macedonia by Josef Szekely,' *History of Photography,* 27. 2, Summer 2003: 144-153; C [onstantin] Săvulescu, 'Early Photography in Eastern Europe – Romania,' *History of Photography,* 1. 1, Jan 1997: 63-77; Nada Grčević, *Fotografija devetnaestog stoljeća u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti Hrvatske, 1981).

[29] Želimir Koščević, *Fotografska slika* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2000).

[30] Vera Vangeli, 'Macedonia,' *Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Leksikografski zavod "Sveznanje", 1972), D-r Vera Veskovi} - Vangeli, *@enata vo osloboditelnite borbi na Makedonija (1893 - 1945)* (Skopje: Kultura, 1990).

[31] There are already many women philosophers, historians, art theorists and art historians originating in the Balkans that publish internationally such as Julia Kristeva, Joan Copjec, Renata Salecl, Vesna Goldsworthy, Milica Bakić –Hayden, Maria Todorova, Marina Gržinić, Bojana Pejić.

[32] The whole debate was published in several issues of the Austrian internet magazine Kontakt. For more details see: Marina Gržinić, 'Global capitalism and the genetic paradigm of culture' *Kontakt,* 2, 12 Jan. 2005 <http://www.kontakt.erstebankgroup.net/magazines/issue2/stories/essay+grzinic/en/>; Rene Block, 'Statement' *Kontakt,* 5, 12 Jan. 2005 <http://www.kontakt.erstebankgroup.net/magazines/issue5/statement-collections/statementreihe/Rene+Block/en/>; Harald Szeemann, 'Statement' *Kontakt,* 5, 12 Jan. 2005 <http://www.kontakt.erstebankgroup.net/magazines/issue5/statement-collections/statementreihe/Harald+Szeemann/en/>; Peter Weibel, 'Statement' *Kontakt,* 5, 12 Jan. 2005 <http://www.kontakt.erstebankgroup.net/magazines/issue5/statement-collections/statementreihe/Peter+Weibel/en/>.

[33] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. (London: Routledge 2003) 201.

[34] Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge 147.

[35] Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge 147-148.

[36] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* 145.

[37] Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge 145-146.

[38] Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* 146.

[39] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1970).

[40] Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays of Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) 124-125.

[41] Derrida, *Rogues* 130.

[42] Derrida, *Rogues* 134.

[43] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998) 2.

[44] Derrida, *Margins* 2.

[45] Derrida, *Archive Fever* 2.

[46] Derrida *Archive Fever*, 90 – 91

[47] Olkowski elaborates the representational order and perspective rules in Renaissance art and puts them in relation to state power. Dorothea Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, 25 + 16-17.

[48] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004) 78.

[49] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 79.

[50] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* 46.

[51] Olkowski 28.

[52] Olkowski 28.

[53] Olkowski 24.

[54] Deleuze, The Logic of Sense 170.

[55] Olkowski 40-47.

[56] Olkowski 46.

[57] Olkowski 56.

[58] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge. 1994) 114.

[59] Julia Kristeva, 'Which Language?' *Crisis of the European Subject*, trans. Susan Fairfield., ed. Samir Dayal (New York: Other Press, 2000).

[60] Frederick Copleston, *S. J. A History of Philosophy Vol. 2. Mediaeval Philosophy. Part I – Augustine to Bonaventure* (New York: Image Books, 1962);

Vladimir Loski, *Misti~na teologija na crkvata od istok* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 1991).

[61] Jacques Derrida, 'Of an Apocalyptic Tone,' trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. and 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials,' *Derrida and Negative Theology*, trans. Ken Frieden, ed. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

[62] Alain Badiou, 'On a Finally Objectless Subject,' trans. Bruce Fink, *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy, (New York, London: Routledge, 1991).

[63] Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[64] Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade,' *The Inner World and Joan Riviere: Collected Papers: 1920-1958*, ed. Athol Huges (London: H. Karnac (Books), 1991).

[65] René Grémaux, 'Woman Becomes Man in the Balkans,' *The Third Sex*, ed. Gilbert Herdt (New York: Zone Books, 1996) 241-281.

[66] Lois McNay, Gender and Agency Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000).

[67] Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 298.

[68] Ellen K. Feder and Emili Zakin, 'Flirting with the Truth: Derrida's Discourse with 'Women' and Wenches,' *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the question of Woman*, ed. Ellen K. Feder, Mary C. Rawlinson, Emili Zakin (London: Routledge, 1997); Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[69] Leila Ahmed, 'The Discourse of the Veil,' *Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art*, ed. David A. Bailey and Gilane Tawadros (London: inIVA, 2003). For further sociological interpretation of the veil see also Jackie Freppon, 'The Unveiled Woman,' 24 Feb. 2002 <http://web2.iadfw.net/~carlsch/MaterDei/Library/the veil_veil.htm> and Semina Jaffer Chopra, 'Liberation by the Veil.' 24 Feb. 2002 <http://www.islam101.com/women/hijbene.html>.

[70] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Athlone Press, 1993); Meyda Yegenoglu criticised Deleuze for not taking into account the issue of gender when discussing the relation between the fold and the veil in *The Fold - Leibniz and the Baroque*.

[71] Olkowski 1-31.

[72] Linda Nochlin, Representing Women (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999); Marina Warner, Monuments & Maidens – The Allegory of the Female Form (London:

Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985); Lisa Tickner, The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987).

[73] J. L. Austin, *How to do things with Words?* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble - Feminism and the subversion of identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

[74] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[75] Rebecca Schneider, 'Archives Performance Remains,' *Performance Research.* 6. 2, 2001: 100-108; Ingrid Schaffner, 'Deep Storage: On the Art of Archiving,' *Frieze,* No. 23, 1995: 58-61; Rebecca Comay, ed. *Lost in Archive. Alphabet City, Alphabet City Media,* 8, 2002.

[76] I refer to the art projects Double Life, Triangle, and Searching for my mother's number by Sanja Iveković, Eternal Retur...n by Liljana Gjuzelova, I am Milica Tomić by Milica Tomić, Integralism 3 by Žaneta Vangeli, Looking for a Husband with a EU passport by Tanja Ostojić, and other art works to be discussed throughout the forthcoming chapters.

[77] Derrida, *Rogues* 131.

<center>**Chapter One**</center>

<center>**THE NEITHER**</center>

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of *the neither* and explore the theoretical potential of this term. I suggest the term *neither* in order to emphasise the necessity of an operation that draws on a variety of methodologies to define gender difference. The concept of *the neither* brings into sharp focus different aspects and paradoxes of gender difference in the Balkans. I consider *the neither* as a discursive mechanism that can be identified and examined by means of a theoretical focus on the constant movement and transformation of gender difference. *The neither* is a shifting force that breaks through established representational codes and dichotomies. It pushes forward and backwards, and thus creates new "folds" in the regimes of representation. At the same time, it makes things visible that might have not been visible before, and it can obscure and make questionable something that had looked clear.

The neither of *becoming-gender-difference* acquires its meaning not through a linear movement in space or time, but through constant fluctuations in multiple directions. *The neither* is not the same as the idea of *becoming* one's own gender. *The neither* is not about going through a process of identifying a desired gender as opposed to a pre-destined one. Although it does not accept predestined gender roles and allows for their subversion, the act of becoming one's own gender still rests on the idea of fixed gender distinctions. In contrast, *becoming-gender-difference* is necessarily marked by a restless chain of negotiations between genders. *The neither* is exactly that unstable state that can be described as neither one, nor the other, the meandering shifts in-between neither and nor that bring forward the *deferring of differentiation*, or the *différance* of difference. [1] *The neither* enables the *becoming* of *gender-difference* as a kind of temporalised negotiation.

1. A conjunction that disjoints

According to the Webster dictionary, *the neither* is a conjunction that is usually followed by *nor*, although the use with *or* is neither archaic nor wrong. More precisely, it is not used on its own, without the "nor" of the pair "neither/nor" or without "or" in the less used pair "neither/or". It works as a negative distinction, in contrast to the "either/or". Therefore, it can be stated that it does not have a meaning of its own, and acquires its meaning only through a negation within the sentence. It is a conjunctive word but it

disjoints. Furthermore, grammatically is not wrong to use it in a chain of negations: *'a few commentators think that neither must be limited in reference to two, but reference to more than two has been quite common since the 17th century.'* [2]

Leaving its grammatical properties aside, it becomes one of those *'words which are not given sense by use but possess force precisely by lack of use'.* [3] Richard Rorty discussed Derrida's insistence on introducing new ideas through the different use of language and words: *'This contrast between "assimilable meanings" conveyed by words which we don't notice as words and "words [which] stand as words" seem to me on the right track.'* [4]

According to Rorty one can distinguish two sorts of conversational situations. The first is the sort of situation encountered when people more or less agree on what is wanted. In this case the argument is mostly about the truth of assertions rather than about the mutual understanding of vocabularies. The other situation arises when the terms of the discussions are equally unclear to all involved so that the content of used words are continuously mixed up. [5]

Rorty points out the paradox of using new, non-existing words or misspelled words (such as *différance*). After these new terms have been used a few times in a row they inevitably become ordinary words. He insists that this happens and it happened even to *différance,* despite the fact that Derrida repeatedly asserted that *différance* is *'neither a word nor a concept.'* [6]

> Any word that has a use automatically signifies a concept. It can't help doing so. It is no use Derrida telling us that since différence 'cannot be elevated into a master-word or a master-concept, since it blocks every relationship to theology, [it] finds itself enmeshed in the work that pulls it through a chain of other 'concepts', other 'words', other textual configurations. [7]

In Rorty's opinion, words that become tropes because of their use in philosophy and theory can still be used despite the fact that their previous meanings were associated with different discursive structures and systems of thoughts:

> The attempt to find a closed and total vocabulary produced lots of great binary   oppositions which poets and essayists and novelists then proceeded to use as tropes. But one can use a trope perfectly well without taking seriously its claim to be part of such a vocabulary. One does not need to see

it as deconstructing itself, as committing suicide, in order to escape its baleful totalising influence. [8]

***

Here I want to present the theoretical background of the proposed concept of *the neither* and to discuss some terms that are of discursive relevance for the comprehension of its operational structure.

a) *the neither* and *the hybrid*

While drawing on the insights of Rorty, I propose that in certain cases it is very difficult not to take "seriously" the tropes that circulate in theory. To use them in a context that is different from the one through which the tropes acquired their meaning as tropes requires a great deal of distancing and explanation. It also means concealing the original meaning of the words-turned-tropes.

It is important to note that *the neither* is not envisaged as a replacement for the already known concepts in postcolonial theory, socio-linguistic theory, deconstruction, or psychoanalysis, but rather that its function is to serve an important supplement to them. One useful point of departure for negotiation of *the neither* and its neutrality is Louis Marin's concept of "utopics". Marin defines the "neutral" as *'the span between true and false, opening within discourse a space [that] discourse cannot receive. It is a third term, but a supplementary third term, not synthetic'.* [9] The neither does not synthesise because while it is conjunctive it also disjoints, but it also allows supplementation of disjointed elements through its "neither/nor" operation. However, it was not necessary to further expand Marin's concepts of "neutral" and "utopics" in the context of my research, mostly because in his theory Marin deals with spatiality and supplementarity of the spaces. My research is rather more concerned with subjectivity and supplementarity of gender difference.

I want to state that the postcolonial *hybrid* or "third space" (as the term was coined in a series of texts by Homi Bhabha) and *the neither* are closely related but the difference between the two concepts lies exactly at the heart of the difference between synthetic and supplementary. [10] I will later come back to this comparison and elaborate at greater length upon the relations between *hybrid* and *the neither*.

The neither aims at a better understanding of certain specific phenomena that I encountered throughout my research on the entanglement between culture and gender difference in the Balkans. Its open structure allows me to encompass a certain potential for a positive force and agency within the construction of gender difference in the Balkan region. This agency is not present in the other available tools of discourse analysis (for example, *the other* or *hybrid*) that mostly have a dominant discursive attachment with negative and dichotomous aspects of the constitution of the subject. I want to state that an uncritical acceptance of these theoretical concepts can become a serious obstacle when attempting to grasp the complex specificity of the construction of new Balkan subjectivities. Also, they can overshadow the importance of the question of *becoming-gender-difference.*

In particular, I want to consider the reasons that, in my view, make Homi Bhabha's *hybrid* one of those words that are not easily applicable to, and in, different contexts. First, I will try to clarify the difficulties involved in separating the concept of *the hybrid* from the original meaning of the word itself. Second, I will state the reasons that I consider *the hybrid* an inappropriate term for discussing cultural and gender difference in the Balkans.

The other and *hybrid* function as theoretical tools within psychoanalytical theory, socio-linguistics, and postcolonial theory. However, in my view, they are not the appropriate ones to deploy in examining the specificity of the gender difference issue within the Balkan context. This said, it is important to emphasise that these tools of discursive analysis, as they are given in their original disciplines, acquire their power by rearticulating and reinventing narratives of identity, self, origin, displacement, and culture. In that sense, they are still useful in certain aspects, especially when taking into account that the issue of gender difference is highly influenced by the issue of cultural difference.

The need and the urgency for further modification of theoretical tools and concepts when tackling the issue of gender difference in the Balkans, the need for *the neither,* derives from various problems attached to the specificity of the historic, social and political context. These problems cannot be resolved with the simple application of previously known theoretical concepts of otherness that derive from Western theory. The contextual cultural issues can be seen clearly only by questioning and evaluating the viability of pre-existing theoretical concepts – the concept of *the neither* enables this.

b) *the neither*, negative theology and the Balkans

At first, the logic of *the neither* resembles that of a concept that derives from the indecisive logic and basic concepts of negative theology. Indeed, its conception is theoretically influenced by the strong tradition of negative theology in the Balkans. However, *the neither* in the context of my thesis is not intended to address the religious aspects of *radical other*.

An important element in the Eastern Christian understanding of God is the triple negation: neither the Son, nor the Father, nor the Holy Spirit, expressing the denial of the possibility of defining God, *'that God, in his essence, is totally transcendent and unknowable and that, strictly speaking, God can only be designated by negative attributes: it is possible to say what God is not, but it is impossible to say what he is.'* [11]

Negative theology is actually about *'analysing various concepts of God to show how they are all insufficient articulations of the nature of God.'* [12] Negative theology therefore has two characteristic aspects. One is to discover and to list accurately the proper names and descriptions of the Divine. The second aspect is more important because it shows that these names are inadequate. [13]

Although it seems that *the neither* operates in a similar way to the fundamental logical operations of mystic theology entailed in its very grammatical origin (not-either), this is not entirely the case. What I am trying to do here is to apply *the neither* through an operation that goes beyond dialectical negation. The questioning of negativity implied by the discursive concepts of subject constitution, opens up the possibility of understanding the performative and positive aspects of *the neither*. The chain of negations can have effects in unexpected positive outcomes.

In a short text titled 'Which Language?' Julia Kristeva expressed her troubled relation towards her own origin, mother tongue (Bulgarian) and, in particular, a very clear and strong aversion to negative theology. [14] As rarely before, in a strikingly personal and confessional tone, Kristeva wrote openly about the internal split in her own cultural identity. She discusses her destiny, that of being torn between her Bulgarian origins and the difficulties she went through while trying to absorb the new environment and immerse herself in French culture. It is not by accident that the last chapter in her book has a very emotional title: 'Bulgaria, my Suffering,' although "suffering" may sound like an exaggerated term.

The text has an abundance of very poetic but at the same time disturbing references to the author's difficulties in coming to terms with her own cultural difference, as well as to some historic and political conflicts in her native Bulgaria. However, it is not the different language or the distinct cultural, historic and political background that she blames for her strong feeling of displacement. The resistance towards the irreversible process of integration, towards 'hybridization' of the old and newly accepted culture, in her view, comes mostly from the inherited negative theology. According to Kristeva, the biggest obstacle to the cultural immersion of Orthodox Christians within Western culture is their specific faith based on a very strong nihilistic religious system that is *'from the outset a negative theology'*, a cult of unknowable God. [15] This religious difference in her view infected the Orthodox world's thinking in a much more general way so that ultimately it affects its culture, philosophy and logic.

The act of disregarding negative theology and its predominant link with the Eastern and the Orthodox does raise three problematic issues that merit further discussion:

I. When Kristeva emphasises the importance of negative theology for her region, it seems as if she wants to ignore or discard the importance of negative thinking for the Western philosophical world. Although negative theology, as embraced in the West, is different from the doctrines of the Orthodox Church, its main principle of negative mysticism is on the borderline of agnosticism and resonates with the logic and metaphors of Eastern negative thought. This tradition can be traced back to Erigena and Meister Eckhart (especially evident in the Rhineland school). According to Meister Eckhart, being and goodness are "garments" or "veils" under which God is hidden and that is where his thought resembles Pseudo-Dionysius' mysticism. [16]

Some of the historians of philosophy would agree with the hypothesis that the source behind this Western tradition of negative thinking is the influence of the philosophy of the Syrian mystic philosopher and theologian Pseudo-Dionysius. The Latin translation of his writing by the nine-century Irish philosopher-humanist John Scotus Erigena and Thomas Aquinas's commentaries had an important role in the reception of Pseudo-Dionysius's negative theology. The fourteenth and fifteenth century northern European mystics, and the sixteenth-century Spanish mystics, were all influenced by his thought.

The fact that Western philosophers, for example Hegel, Adorno, Lacan, and Sartre, often relied on oppositional and negative dialectics has been somewhat overlooked in this particular argument of Kristeva's. Her argument is that negative theology had negative

effects in the East because it allowed relativity to rule many spheres of life.

II. Secondly, a further discussion would be useful regarding Kristeva's assertion of the importance of negative theology for the resistance towards Western culture among the immigrants from the Balkans. In my view, Kristeva may be appreciating less fully than necessary some elements of her cultural past. More specifically, she risks attributing the problems of cultural integration of Balkan immigrants to only one problematic sphere of their culture, the assumed previous influence of negative theology.

In fact, Kristeva herself offers the first important reason why her thesis should be scrutinised with greater attention. When pointing to the fact that the Balkan people are the least homogenous humble Christians, blindly pious and religious, she admits that pagan cults and folklore are intertwined with mysticism (and negative theology), often resulting in a strange and unrecognisable mixture of ideas. [17] Thus, it is very difficult to believe that the immigrants from the Balkans coming from all sorts of social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds had their outlook influenced only by negative theology: they identify with a range of other values/codes/symbols/understandings and defined themselves also according to a variety of non-religious practices, places, and ways of life, in addition to Orthodoxy. This is especially problematic if they come from ex-communist countries (as Kristeva herself), where faith, religion, and theology for almost fifty years were suppressed and marginalised, by a different hegemonic order and a different way of life. It would be a very difficult task to argue that there is a strong continuity in the tradition of negative theology that resisted and maintained a dominance in culture under all political regimes, if we take into account that mystic theology, even before the communist regime, was known only to experts: theologians, philosophers and other scholars.

III. The third reason for questioning Kristeva's argument is that even if we accept that negative theology permeates the outlook in the Balkans, Kristeva's representation of negative theology does not take account sufficiently of the positive aspects of negative theology. Kristeva's argument does not take into account that for the mystic theologians, the positive (kataphatic) theology is equally as important as negative (apophatic) theology and that this pair of mystic systems is necessarily linked to one complex system of theological enquiry. More specifically, this is because, according to the tenets of Orthodox Christianity, God reveals himself personally--as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and through his acts, or "energies". Therefore *true knowledge of God always includes three elements:*

religious awe; personal encounter; and participation in the acts, or energies, which God freely bestows on creation.' [18]

Taking into account all of these reservations, we may conclude that the cultural heritage of negative theology that is pivotal to Kristeva's argument should not be neglected and ignored. The important point that Kristeva makes is that negative theology is important for the Balkans and also that it could have become part of Orthodox culture through other locally inherited cultural, religious, historic, or art orthodoxies; not so much as a widely-known scholarly discipline, but rather as a simplified cultural doctrine based on relativisation of knowledge and truth.

It is also a valid claim that one can easily be seduced by its relativity and flexibility in its conception of truth, things that are not akin to the hallmarks of the Aristotelian *either/or* logic. The dominance of the bivalent and decisive logic has already been questioned in contemporary philosophy. Such scrutiny, especially in postmodernist philosophy, has opened the way for different logical systems that relativise such dichotomous thinking. Therefore, it is perplexing that Kristeva focuses upon the relativity resulting from negative theology as being one of the crucial problems specific to the Balkans, concluding that it has a great deal of negative significance for this region.

Also, it can be argued that in her text, Kristeva may have overlooked some positive aspects of the relativism implied by negative theology: the fact that it entails a certain degree of openness towards questioning of truth. It is especially important to look at negative theology in parallel with positive (kataphatic) theology because of its interest in *acts* and *energies*. The prayer is one of the most important performative aspects attached to positive theology. It addresses the *radical other* and therefore it affirms the seeming negation of its existence by negative theology. [19]

I want to state that it is important to start re-thinking the Balkans in terms different than those given by the framework of Kristeva's text. Perhaps Kristeva also wants to think the Balkans in a more positive way and perhaps that is the reason for her critique of negative theology. This can be a relevant direction for future Balkanist theorisation of the cultural specificity of the region. Nevertheless, the problem with negative theology in the Balkans can be approached from another perspective. For example, one may well also expect that the relativity of negative theology might have helped the Balkans, if it was understood less rigorously. Also, instead of holding that the tradition of negative theology in the Balkans is too strong, I would suggest that it might be closer to the truth to assert that there is a certain gap in the interpretation of its main logical principles, especially evident in

the lesser attention given in its theoretical interpretation to its complementary part: the positive theology.

It is an open question whether a wider access to this thought, and a more thorough discussion of the main postulates of negative and positive theology, might have changed the Balkans. The conflicts between different religious confessions still cause a great deal of strife in the region and they overshadow the significance of subtle theological disputes that only confirm the rule that religion, theology and theory do not necessarily work in parallel.

c) *the abject,* negative theology and *the neither*

> The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jes[c]t, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less attached or autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I. [20]

> Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognise as a thing. [21]

> In abjection, revolt is completely within being. Contrary to hysteria, which brings about, ignores, or seduces the symbolic but does not produce it, the subject of abjection is eminently productive of culture. Its symptom is the rejection and reconstruction of languages. [22]

Leaving aside the discussion for a moment, an interesting aspect of Kristeva's work is her apparent affiliation with negative paradigms. She often borrows some negative logical procedures from negative theology. This is particularly evident in her earlier writing, for example, when she coined her concept of *abject.*

She wrote about the abject as marked by the borderline between subject and object, as something that cannot be recognised as either "me" (subject) or "that" (object). The concept is not positively defined, it is emptied of its own meaning, and thus it is simultaneously a receptacle and a productive act for culture.

For her, the constitution of the subject takes place at this moment of abjection, through a kind of rejection and reconstruction of language. When Kristeva avoids defining the abject, and instead she ascribes negation and rejection to its function, this resembles the procedures of negative theology. [23]

The complex relation between subject and object (in the concept of *the abject*) is also relevant for *the neither*. *The neither* similarly opposes the dichotomous distinction between the two. In particular, it refutes the subject-object relation between different genders. The sequence of negations invoked by *the neither* facilitates the constitution of subjectivity in a similar fashion.

However, the process of rejection, for Kristeva so important in the process of production of culture, is solely a one-term negative operation that is specifically attached and attributed to the abject. Although the logic of *the neither* is also affected by negativity from the outset, *the neither* does not work through rejection. The modalities of identity it negates ultimately are all *compossible* events of different subjectivities that result in the multiplicity of *the neither*. The *compossibility* makes the way for the affirmative aspect of *the neither* for the constitution of subjectivity that takes place through time.

2. Difference/Différance

The law of identity according to Hegel's *Science of Logic* '*expresses only a one-sided determinateness, that it contains only formal truth, a truth which is abstract, incomplete. In this correct judgement, however, it is immediately implied that truth is complete only in the unity of identity with difference, and hence consists only in this unity.*' [24] Hegel insisted on the importance of one of the basic laws of his logic - the law of contradiction, as an important law for defining identity since identity in itself is tautological and cannot express anything but itself. Therefore, for Hegel identity is represented as '*distinguishedness in one relation or as simple difference in the terms themselves.*' [25] Furthermore, for him difference is pure negativity, the difference is '*not of an other, but of itself from itself.*' [26]

According to Hegel, the Notion of identity has also a negative form - it is "a self-related negativity" that is a result of the truth that '*in its own self everything in its self-sameness different from itself and self-contradictory, and that in its difference, in its contradiction, it is self identical, and is in its own self this movement of transition of one of these categories into the other, and for this reason, that each is in its own self the opposite of itself.*' [27]

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The mutual relatedness and dependence of identity and difference for Hegel is the basis of the law of contradiction and they are both mutually and reciprocally positioned on the negation and exclusion of each other:

> Difference as such is already <u>implicitly contradiction</u>; for it is the unity of sides which are, only in so far as they are not one-and it is the separation of sides which are, only as separated in the same relation. But the positive and negative are the posited contradiction because, as negative unities, they are themselves the positing of themselves, and in this positing each is the sublating of itself and the positing of its opposite. They constitute the determining reflection as exclusive; and because the excluding of the sides is a single act of distinguishing and each of the distinguished sides in excluding the other is itself the whole act of exclusion, each side in its own self excludes itself. [28]

Hegel's logical laws of identity, contradiction, and diversity, have influenced most of the different Western philosophical systems. However, regardless of the difficulties that one has to face when attempting to challenge this closed system, many philosophers have felt it necessary to distance themselves from the complex definitions offered, mostly because of the emphasised negativity.

According to many critics of Derrida's *différance* he did not succeed in completely distancing himself from Hegelian negativity. Derrida, however, wanted to see his writing in opposition to Hegel's dialectics: *'If there were a definition of différance, it would be precisely the limit, the interruption, the destruction of the Hegelian dialectical synthesis wherever it operates.'* [29]

Derrida's desire to distance his philosophy from dialectics was already announced as a confrontation with Hegelian concepts and with his speculative economy in his text *Différance.* [30] In contrast to Hegelian dialectical and metaphysical thinking of "speculative" philosophy, Derrida sees *différance* as an uncertain investment, *'a play in which whoever loses wins, and in which one loses and wins on every turn.'* [31]

He actually points to the double meaning of the Latin verb *differre,* both to *differ* and to *defer.* This is the starting point of his interpretation of *différance* as postponed presence that *'delays the perception of its profit and the profit of its perception.'* [32] His famous graphic intervention (replacing *e* with *a*), even though it looks as *'a kind of gross*

misspelling mistake' is a very cautiously conceived attempt to draw attention to the visual aspect of *différance*. By this displacement of letters, that can be differentiated only visually but cannot be heard when reading, Derrida acknowledges the importance of writing. [33] The relation between speech and writing has been tackled in Derrida's philosophy since his first texts. In his view, especially in phenomenology, speech has been always privileged over writing. Hence, for Derrida *différance 'belongs neither to the voice nor to writing'* and has *'neither existence nor essence.'* [34] He underlines that from each process of presentation there is a certain otherness that is exempt and created out of differences, without a chance to become conscious. [35]

What is the most important aspect of Derrida's *différance* for my project is that it puts into question *'the quest for a rightful beginning, an absolute point of departure, a principal responsibility.'* [36] It deconstructs the presentation as always already split and postponed and calls for a questioning of the understanding of the past as *'becoming-past of what has been present.'* [37] It is not a certain present that exists, but is forever hidden. *Différance* rather *'maintains our relationship with that which we necessarily misconstrue, and which exceeds the alternative of presence and absence.'* [38]

While Derrida has never denied his affiliation with Hegel, Deleuze stressed his strong dislike for negativity of Hegelian dialectics, sometimes without even mentioning Hegel. However, in his letter to Michel Cressole he clearly wrote: *'I find among Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza and Nietzsche a secret link that resides in the critique of negation, the cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the exteriority of forces and relations, the denunciation of power, etc.) What I detested more than anything else was Hegelianism and the Dialectic.'* [39]

James Williams noted that Deleuze does not abandon dialectics thoroughly but he rather wants to transform it. *'Deleuze transforms dialectics by insisting that synthesis is not about reconciling or subsuming oppositions, negations or contradictions. It is about completing a differential reality through syntheses that are at once critical, transcendental and destructively creative.'* [40] According to him, Deleuze's problem with the difference of Hegel's logic is that *'Hegelianism "unnecessarily" translates difference into negation; by so doing, it endorses what I shall call, glossing Deleuze, an inauthentic conception of difference. By contrast, Bergson offers an authentic conception of difference because his interpretation makes difference, instead of negation, a primitive. For Bergson, writes Deleuze, difference needs to be kept separate not only from negation but from alterity and contradiction as well.'* [41]

In his attempt to overcome Hegel's dialectics Deleuze found useful some of the assumptions of Bergson's metaphysics. According to Giovanna Borradori, *'The section of Bergson's metaphysics that Deleuze finds crucially helpful for the sake of overcoming inauthentic difference concerns how temporality affects the notion of substance.'* [42]

For an understanding of Deleuze's concept of becoming, and the concept of *becoming-gender-difference* proposed throughout this thesis, it is very important to understand the distinction made by Deleuze between entities that are substances when they are "in" time, and are "phases of becoming" when they are "through" time:

> In order to get to authentic difference, so Deleuze's argument goes, we need to bracket the notion of substance as we have inherited it from the Greek tradition. This phenomenological reduction will reveal that thinking in terms of substance forces us to assume that entities are only located "in" time, while, instead, entities become "through" time too. From the standpoint of their being substances, entities are thus "in" time, whereas from the standpoint of their becoming "through" time they are something else. What are they? "Phases of becoming" is Deleuze's answer. [43]

While the dialectical negation entailed in the constitution of the subject is rooted in the aim of overcoming the opposition between two supposedly contrasted entities, *the neither* aims to create a field of interrelations and interactions "through" time. It aims to enable multiple expressions of *surprising e-vents,* to enable the phases of *becoming.* Not unlike *différance* from Jean-Luc Nancy's interpretation of Derrida's text, *the neither* is also not a temporisation or only a *'spacing out of successive moments into a distension of linear time.'* [44] It can be understood as an infinite *'interior spacing of the very line of time: that which distances from one another the two edges of this line, which, however, has no thickness whatsoever, in accordance with the coming of being, the coming of a singularity, of an "instant" (or of an "eternity") of existence.'* [45]

Thus Nancy's interpretation of Derrida's *différance* somehow brings Derrida and Deleuze closer together, especially concerning their understanding of time and temporisation. I want to point to the similarity between Derrida's *différance* as differing and deferring, and Deleuze's movement "through time," that is especially evident in the following passage about *différance* highlighted by Nancy:

The coming is infinite: it does not get finished with coming; it is finite: it is offered up in the instant. But that which takes place "in the instant" – in this distancing of time "within" itself – is neither the stasis nor the stance of the present instant, but its instability, the inconclusiveness of its coming – and of the "going" that corresponds to that coming. The coming into presence of being takes place precisely as nonarrival of presence. [46]

3. *Hybrid* and representation

In the postcolonial theoretical writing of Homi Bhabha, *the Other* and *the hybrid* are necessarily linked and impossible to think in isolation from each other. The discursive concept of *the hybrid* was coined exactly in order to express the shortcomings of the dichotomous structure of the pair *self/other*.

The tendencies either towards exclusion, or towards inclusion, entailed by the contentious structures of these concepts inevitably result in a certain negativity. Exclusion is a negative operation that is at work in the pair self/other, even when the *other* is conceptualised as a part of the *self* as in psychoanalytic theory. Hybridization has also a negative effect that is indirectly implied through the impossibility of a complete inclusion and merging of two or more original elements within the third term – *hybrid*.

Homi Bhabha insists that

> colonial hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures which can then be resolved as an issue of cultural relativism. Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition. [47]

According to Bhabha's understanding of mimicry:

> colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, <u>as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.</u> Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its

difference.[...]. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualises power. [48]

The presence of the colonial subject is always "partial". By 'partial' Bhabha means "incomplete" and "virtual", *"an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as "partial" presence."* [49] The emergence and representation of the colonial depends for him on some strategic limitations or prohibitions *'within the authoritative discourse itself.'*

The importance of discourse and writing is crucial to Bhabha's postcolonial theory. Hybridity for him functions as *mimicry,* that *"repeats rather than re-presents,"* a different mode of representation that actually mocks the monumentality of history, and its power to be a model for miming. [50] For Bhabha *hybrid* and *hybridity* function in the realm of representation within the discourse:

> Hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority[...]
> Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. [...] For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory – or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency. [51]

The transition from symbol to sign is at the core of hybridisation and the split of the authoritative, that for Bhabha is simultaneously the same as representative. *'Hybridity represents that ambivalent 'turn' of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification – a disturbing questioning of the images and presences of authority.'* [52]

· This questioning of state power and authority is something that I find important for discussing *the neither.* Interestingly enough, Bhabha denies *hybridity* the power to be a third term that can resolve the tension between the different cultures in a dialectical play of 'recognition' since it *'has no such perspective of depth or truth to provide.'* [53]

What is at issue is the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, contingently, 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference – be it class, gender or race. Such assignations of social difference is neither One not the Other but something else besides, in-between – find their agency in a form of the 'future' where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory. It is, if I may stretch a point, an interstitial future, that emerges in-between the claims of the past and the needs of the present. [54]

This is what makes *the hybrid* still a vivid and relevant concept today. It cannot be a discourse about origins because it calls for a distinction to be made between the discourses about the origins and the discourses about the past. By doing so, it enables resistance towards any search for the origin in political purposes under the disguise of scientific and historic discourse because it is open to the future. In these terms it functions similarly to *the neither* ('neither One not the Other'), through denying any claim to autonomous difference. However, I find important some critical interpretations of the hybrid and the emphasis that critics have placed upon the overwhelming negative definition of hybridisation based on discrimination (for example, Robert Young, Hardt and Negri, and Peter Hallward).

Needless to say, they all agree on the importance of Bhabha's project. For example, according to Hardt and Negri, Bhabha's project is a critique of dialectic oppositions and of the binary structure of power in which the logic of liberation implies that:

Power, or forces of social oppression, function by imposing binary structures and totalising logics on social subjectivities, repressing their difference. These oppressive structures, however, are never total, and differences are always in some way expressed (through mimicry, ambivalence, hybridisation, fractured identities, and so forth). The postcolonial project, then, is to affirm the multiplicity of differences so as to subvert the power of the ruling binary structures. [55]

Nevertheless, Bhabha's view that the world has always been fragmented and defined by mobile differences and not divided into two opposing camps (for example centre versus periphery), has provoked Hardt and Negri to question the efficacy of Bhabha's

scepticism. They underlined his fear of the Hegelian dialectic that would subsume *'within a coherent totality the essential social identities that face each other in opposition.'* [56] Their critique of Bhabha's hybridity project is based on their doubt in the results of the utopic nature of the new form of community, the "unhomely", "internationalism" and the "gathering of the people in the diaspora." [57]

Peter Hallward also expressed his suspicions towards Bhabha's exaggeration of the heuristic value of "language metaphor" and towards overestimating the power of discourse and its effects. Therefore, after reminding us of Bhabha's Habermasian statement that *'the political subject – as indeed a subject of politics – is a discursive event'*, Hallward quotes Brathwaite's point about revolutions being made by people, not by language. [58] Hallward points to Bhabha's understanding of Derrida's *différance*: according to him Bhabha presents it as an alternative to cultural specification in the "non-relational" such as "incommensurability" and "untranslability" that makes *difference* an *'essentially singular category of difference.'* [59] Hallward also finds problematic Bhabha's understanding of Deleuzean "emergence-as-enunciation" because according to him it is conceived as a *'pre-eminently singular operation.'* [60] Furthermore, according to Hallward, in Bhabha's writing *'politics and culture blur into a single discursive continuum,'* and that because of the claim that *'duality of hierarchical discrimination seems to effect in a "splitting [of] the language of authority" all forms of dominance and lasting oppressions seem to be 'precluded as an enunciatory impossibility.'* [61]

Robert Young is one of the writers who, in his writing on imperialism and postcolonialism, has also commented on the negativity associated with the term hybridity that is in contrast to Bhabha's positive interpretation of its outcomes. He emphasised the negative influence that *hybridity* had in imperial and colonial discourse in giving damaging reports on the union of different races in biological terms.

Young argued that at the turn of the century, *hybridity* had become part of a colonialist discourse of racism and thus there is still a danger of unearthing wrong resonances when using this term. According to him,

> such hybridity is still repeating its own cultural origins, that it has not slipped out of the mantle of the past, even if, in its appropriation by black theorists, hybridity has been deployed against the very culture that invented it in order to justify its divisive practices of slavery and colonial oppression. From that historical perspective, we may say that the identification here of hybridity with carnevalization and

creolization as a means towards a critical contestation of a dominant culture suggests that the threat of degeneration and decay incipient upon a 'raceless chaos' has not yet been fully redeployed and reinflected.[62]

Young stated that it is very important to remember that *'hybridization as creolization involves fusion, the creation of a new form, which can then be set against the old form, of which it is partly made up.'* [63] Thus, regardless of the fact that Bhabha distances himself from synthesis as the ultimate aim and result of hybridization, such an understanding of the hybrid remains possible. For example, Young's criticism of Bhabha's use of the term *hybrid* does not support Rorty's belief that the old meanings of concepts can easily be replaced with new ones. Perhaps this negativity prevents the free performativity of the concept of *hybrid*. It is constantly being drawn back towards its complex structure established in the past, it is repeatedly pushed into a close relation with the dominant discourse even when the power of the dominant discourse has been weakened or lost.

The fact that *hybrid* deals with the representation of power, and the subversion of its binary structures, is important. However, I find all too optimistic Bhabha's claims that the *hybrid* is a social assignation that finds its agency in a form of the 'future,' that its past is not "originary" and the present is not transitory. Perhaps Hallward is right to underline that the main problem of *hybrid* comes when it is not discussed in different specific contexts where the dominance of the colonisers and their oppression lasted much longer: Hallward mentions Caribs, Sioux, Palestine, and I can add the Balkans. [64]

One cannot but agree with Hallward's scepticism towards the applicability of the *hybrid* in such contexts. It can be assumed that if *hybrid* is discussed in the framework of a specific conflict, exposed in details and giving the relations between the conflicting sides in the past and present, it will become evident that it cannot function, as Bhabha would have expected it. In this context, the claim that *hybrid* is a positive agency for the future sounds problematic.

Finally, it should be noted that although the logic of *the neither* to a certain extent resembles the ambivalent and dialectical operations at work within the self/other relation or *hybrid*, it differs because it is marked by a kind of multiplicity. Therefore, it works as a *supplement* - it is not a call for a *third* term. Being only a conjunctive means that *the neither* is an empty word, it has no content of its own. As a kind of *receptacle,* it embraces the logic of continuous movement of successions of denials. It is a relational term that simultaneously acts as a conjunction and a disjunction. It enables a multitude of possible

differences that continuously exhaust the language through the "neither/nor" operation, so it is never synthesised in some new or already existing third concept. All movements from *one* to *another* that are possible with *the neither* can deconstruct the bivalent structures and dichotomies and can allow for new meanings and deterritorialisations. *The neither* in the Balkans marks the complex multiethnic and multicultural situation wherein gender difference cannot be thought outside of its entanglement within multiple trans-ethnic relations.

The neither offers possibilities for *surprising events* of becoming. Representation cannot sustain something to happen besides and beyond its pre-established regimes. It does not allow for a comfortable relation with any representation as image of authority. On the contrary, *the neither* questions images of authority while making clear the ultimate impossibility of representation as a fixed order, since it allows the proliferation of ambivalent meanings without resolving this ambivalence in a third sign.

4. Representation and the male dress code in the Ottoman Empire

One of the main reasons for deployment of the term *neither* (and not *hybrid*) in the Balkan context is the unique policy of the Ottoman Empire towards its colonised subjects. It has often been stated that the Ottoman Empire (as the common past of all Balkan states) did not discriminate or exclude its subjects on grounds of faith, race, or ethnicity. In these terms, it is a model of Empire and colonialism that differs from the other European models discussed by postcolonial theory.

Without a strict written law and relying only on edicts, the complex hierarchical system called *millet* (Turkish: nation) allowed the various religious entities to retain their specific religious, ethnic, and cultural insignia. Although the nature of this practice changed during its long rule, the colonised subjects for a long period were treated equally, but only as long as they accepted the supremacy of Islam. [65] The entities consisted of different ethnicities grouped mainly around their faith in one region. Ottoman Greeks, Slavs, Jews, etc., enjoyed a large degree of autonomy within Muslim society. They were all allowed, at least during the first four centuries of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, to have control over their own educational, religious, and social affairs. [66]

The dress code in the Ottoman Empire reflected and guaranteed the unique status of the subjugated peoples as integrated minorities. This is documented in many photographic collections. Especially impressive, with its large variety of costumes, is the collection of the

Sultan Abdul-Hamid II that consists of 1893 photographs. [67] [Fig. 1] Until the nineteenth century, the Ottoman rulers decreed a dress code to ensure the social hierarchy in which Muslims were distinguished above all others. For example, non-Muslims were not permitted to wear the holy green shade of Islam or white turbans.

On the one hand, for a long period, the policy of local autonomy enabled the peace to be maintained in the provinces of the Empire (until the nationalist movements emerged during the first decades of nineteenth century). On the other hand, it is very plausible that the hierarchy between non-Muslims and Muslims must have had a certain oppressive effect on the masculinity of local men. This could be one of the arguments explaining the emergence of a different structure of patriarchy in the Balkans later, during the twentieth century (for example, the phenomenon of "sworn virgins" to be discussed later in this text).

The strict distinction between the different ethnic subjects of the Empire confirmed that assimilation or hybridisation was not welcomed or popular on either side.
That is not the same as to say that there were no subjects trying to bridge the cultural and ethnic borderline that divided the two sides. On the contrary, it was possible and acceptable (although not popular) for Christians to convert to Islam, presumably in search of a better life. In so doing, they acquired a higher social status and different customs and dress codes otherwise unavailable to them, e.g. wearing the turban. [68]

Another, more radical, phenomenon related to hybridization was the *janissary*. These were army units consisting of young non-Muslim male children that were often recruited against their own will or against the will of their parents. Such phenomena represent two possible examples of the ambivalent operation of *mimicry* that for Bhabha was so important in defining the complex relation between the coloniser and the colonised. [69] Both phenomena were accompanied by lots of negative force and criticism, even though the first, a kind of assimilation of the Christian population from the Empire's provinces, was mostly deliberate.

The third phenomenon, sexual intercourse resulting in certain 'hybridization' (or even miscegenation) rarely took place. When it did occur, more often than not it would be Ottoman men with local women, not other way around. In fact, such cases were mostly linked with aggression (rape or abduction of local women for harems) since mixed marriages were not permitted and were deemed culturally unacceptable. However, there have been some rare cases of forbidden relationships, often stereotypically represented in songs or literature.

All these relations between the *millet* and the Ottomans started to change with the slow modernisation of the Ottoman state announced in a series documents between 1829 and 1856. *'These enactments were intended to make male subjects equal in every respect: both in appearance as well as matters of taxation, and bureaucratic and military service.'* [70]

The important Rose Garden decree (Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhane) of 1839, and the later decree (Hatt-i Humayun) from 1856, marked the beginning of the era of reforms of the Ottoman Empire known as the Tanzimat. The need to eliminate inequality and create justice for all (which promised equality to Muslim or non-Muslim, rich or poor, but not between men and women) was the main aim of these royal documents. The Rose Garden decree *'promised a host of specific measures to eliminate corruption, abolish tax farming, and regularize the conscription of all males. In return for equal responsibilities, it promised equal rights.'* [71] The decree from 1856 reiterated the state's duty to provide for the equality of all subjects, including equal access to formal education and to state employment, but mostly stressed obligatory military service for non-Muslims.

In fact, in the nineteenth-century the Empire started making every effort to eliminate groups such as guilds and tribes, Janissaries, and religious communities, that had an intermediating status, in order to bring all subjects directly under its authority and to transform the relationship between Empire and subject. In earlier centuries, the Ottoman social and political order had been based on differences among ethnicities, religions, and occupations and on subordination to the monarchical state. This order was based on the presumption of Muslim superiority and a contractual relationship in which the subordinate non-Muslims obtained state guarantees of religious protection in exchange for special taxes.

In 1829, a clothing law aimed to transform the order based on difference that had existed for centuries. Its final goal was to eliminate the visual differences among males by stipulating identical headgear for all (except for the "ulema" and priests).[72] The presumption that while appearing the same, all men would become equal was not applied to women, though. More importantly, there was not even mention of women in all these three decrees and they seemed not to be included in the announced changes so they continued to be differentiated by community according to their clothing. Even though the formal education of women that started to increase from 1840s, and the ever changing fashion that was rapidly changing the visual codes, did affect the status of women, very few women entered state service, those who did so mostly as teachers, while the religious, military, and civil bureaucracies remained strictly male. In the late nineteenth century, women could still

be punished for publicly wearing immodest and improper clothing and, gradually, even the women's legal rights to property that were guaranteed under earlier Islamic laws actually disappeared during the reforms. [73]

The inner contradictions of the Ottoman society after the transformation, that upset both Muslims for losing their supremacy and non-Muslims for not gaining all the promised rights, led to the uprisings of the regional population in the provinces and the Young Turk revolution in 1908, and ultimately to the gradual fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire with different regions establishing their independence as a result both of the weakening of the transformed state and of the direct interference of the Great Powers.

5. The neither: "sworn virgins"

While societal codes concerning men and the cultural hierarchisation among them were structured precisely, women belonging to the subjected population were somehow left outside. The local customs, as long as they did not oppose to Islam were not tackled.

The phenomenon of "sworn virgins" or *tobelije* is a rare transgender societal structure traced in some Balkan villages. It has been traced to the Northern Albanian Alps, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Metohija, and it was mostly practiced during the Ottoman Empire's rule. [74] It is a residue of the ancient patriarchal rules established among the local population, and can be interpreted as a means that enabled the local communities to deal with the constant clashes between different cultures. [75]

"Sworn virgins" is a term that signifies women who, for various reasons, take on a male appearance by dressing as men. According to Aleksandra Djajic Horváth the phenomenon of women who wore male clothes and arms, and were accorded the same respect in her community as men, was first recorded in 1855 by the Serbian ethnographer Milorad Medaković. [76] While he traced his case in the Rovci tribe on the border of Herzegovina and Montenegro, almost simultaneously Johann Georg von Hahn, an Austrian (consul and a distinguished Albanologist) spotted similar cases among the tribes of northern Albania. [77] Later other ethnologists continued researching this phenomenon specific for the Balkans. [78] [Fig. 2-3]

'Women Who Become Men,' the title of anthropologist Antonia Young's book, clearly addresses what is at stake in this old but still existing phenomenon. [79] The emergence of this phenomenon can be compared to some similar radical transgender phenomena in other cultures (for example, the Indian "hijra") but it is important to understand its specificity.

According to A. Young, these women make the vow to live like males, dress and behave like males, and thus 'become' men. They take on the lifestyle, appearance, and rights of men. The most interesting aspect is that they are completely accepted and appreciated as men, and are 'even revered within their communities.' [80] The fact that to dress as a man and to behave as a man could earn them a similar respect and place in society makes this phenomenon in many ways different from the known examples of cross-dressing in Western societies. 'Sworn virgins' can inherit and manage property, and in certain cases are raised to assume the male role by their own parents (when there are no male heirs). [81] But the question remains if all this is the same as *becoming-man*.

The Serbian anthropologist Predrag Šarčević argued that there are two different types of "sworn virgins", depending on the stage of life when the "shift" of the gender takes place. A "sworn virgin" can *be* a biological woman who is raised as a "boy" from her early childhood, or a woman who reconstructs herself as a "man" at some later stage of her life. [82] [Fig. 4-5] In the first case it is usually kept as a secret and it often results in situations of confused or mistaken identity.

The reasons for this cross-dressing and trans-genderism are various.

a) The first reason is related to the decision of a certain women to resist the arranged marriage to a man chosen by her family. According to early records, the vow not to have sexual intercourse with men and to live the life of a male would have been the only acceptable way out of this otherwise unacceptable social behaviour (also, the only way to avoid the blood-feud of the family of the abandoned husband to be). This breaking with the patriarchal order was not sanctioned because the vow was seen as a kind of sacrifice of family life, a punishment for uncontrolled desires.

b) The other reason for becoming a "sworn virgin" is directly connected with the war conflicts that were quite often in the region. The fact that until the 1920s, especially during the Balkan Wars and the First World War, up to a third of the male population would have died of violent deaths meant that the male descendants had a special place in the family and societal hierarchy. The honour of the family and the father was thus endangered unless there was a son in the family. In these cases, a newly born baby-girl would be designated to become a boy and then a man, later in her life.

c) Especially important for the emergence of the phenomenon of "sworn virgins" were the blood-feuds (according to some recent reports they have been revived in the Northern Albanian Alps). In order to fulfil the tradition of feuding, the women would replace their killed husbands, brothers, or fathers.

This custom is in opposition to how most people conceive gender: as a culturally informed response to a biological imperative. I want to argue that the existence of "sworn virgins" questions the relation between gender difference, the patriarchal hierarchy, and representation. The women sworn to remain virgins are hardly recognisable as women to the others but to the members of their own family and close friends who knew them from before. When all these different cases of 'becoming man' are revealed, it is clear that this phenomenon is manifold and in a way relates to Deleuze's *becoming-woman*. The discontinuous process through which all these women go while living their lives, the ruptures and shifts in their identities, makes it related to *becoming-woman*. Perhaps their life was not always a life that they chose, with which they would have been the most happy. However, for my comparison it is important that these women, regardless to whether they choose, or are forced to go through this kind of life, they perform constant negotiations of their own gender with the society.

Surprisingly, the society allows them to find other *paths,* even though often, as in the cases where the women refuse to marry according to the plans of their family, their rebellion actually endangers the very institution of patriarchal society – the family.

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The film *Virgina* (dir. Srdjan Karanović, 1991, Yugoslavia, 100 min.), tells the story of Stevan. Stevan is a young heir of a family that is cursed because of having too many female children. Stevan is thus designated to live as a boy by "his" own family, although she was born as a girl baby. Actually, the family follows the ancient custom of "sworn virgins" ("virgina" or "tobelija") in order to avoid the heavy social censure of an all-girl offspring. The loud celebration accompanying the hoax announcement of a boy-birth later turns out to be a heavy burden in Stevan's life. Being stamped by the ancient custom, Stevan goes through confusing situations being both a girl and a boy - having much more than the usual secrets to hide.

As Stevan grows older, the usual gender problems in adolescence start conflicting with each other. For Stevan, the process of gaining maturity becomes a painful experience, a real ordeal. The first menstrual cycles, the first love, as well as the macho rivalry rites with the other boys, she has to go through all of these experiences. To hide her real gender identity, and to fight through the struggle of establishing the imposed male identity in the highly strict cultural environment, turn out to be difficult tasks for only one person.

Karanović's shows his heroine struggling to express her desires to live the life of a woman. Paradoxically, in Stevan's case to live her life as a man becomes the effect of patriarchal constraints and oppression, and not a privilege. This gender change is not a question of personal choice.

Finally, the woman "wins", she breaks with the imposed rules and escapes, but she does this by fleeing the country and the unwanted life as a man together with her newly found freedom in a life with a man, her secret lover. She escapes one patriarchy and enters another one. The film ending does not leave a place for any feminist reading because it suggests the heterosexual marriage as the only way out for Stevan.

In a text about transgenderism in Yugoslavian cinema, in the part devoted to the film *Virgina,* Kevin Moss discusses the difference between transgendered people in the West and "sworn virgins" in the Balkans. [83] According to Moss, the "sworn virgins" *'support Judith Butler's argument that gender is a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.'* [84] Moss reads this custom as the exemplification of the constructionist claim that the system of gender roles and the repetition of the assigned acts replace the subject and his/her own gender, and that gender is only an effect of these acts that makes them appear as something natural. [85]

In his article, Moss holds that this phenomenon, although similar to transvestism, opposes Judith Butler's claim that the performance of another gender necessarily means subverting hegemonic assumptions of patriarchy about the essential nature of gender. [86] Referring to Judith Butler's analysis of the relation between patriarchy and transgender, he states that *'in the West we usually think of transvestites and transgendered people as going against societal norms to perform their desired identities, but in the case of sworn virgins, it is the patriarchal society that forces the women to live as men.'* [87] He quotes and mentions the research of many ethnologists and anthropologists who researched this particular phenomenon in order to support his arguments. [88]

Moss is definitely right when he considers this custom as completely different from Butler's performances of trans-genderism. In fact, I find all too obvious the difference between the performativity of the "sworn virgins" within the confinements of society, and the performativity of transvestites who struggle to adjust their own gender with a desired one. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the "sworn virgins" phenomenon is manifold because of the difference between the girls assigned to become men at early stage of their lives, and the women who made this decision on their own. Therefore, there is a danger that

some of the aspects of the phenomenon can be left out if one follows Moss' arguments as if they relate not only to the story of the reviewed film, but to the phenomenon in general.

To put it in simple terms, the question of choice is the most important issue for the comparison between the "sworn virgins" and "transgendered" persons. But, as it has been explained by Šarčević, this is precisely the issue that is at stake among different cases of "sworn virgins. Even though for all these cases the patriarchal rules are crucial, there is a subtle difference among them. To make the choice to live like a man when a woman does not want to marry the unwanted husband chosen for her by her family must be different from having no choice, for example when the baby-girl is designated to be a boy from her birth. In both cases, the final effect may be the same, but I find important the difference in the initial conditions and the motivation or the enforcement of the oath.

What I also find problematic throughout Moss' text is his general view that Karanović's film (and the "sworn virgins" phenomenon) is *'less about the transvestite figure causing gender trouble than about reaffirming essential gender difference.'* [89] This sounds like a paradoxical claim, as if Moss confuses two different things: the biological difference between sexes and the difference between genders, even though he presents the known arguments among feminist theorists concerning this issue. In fact, it is not very clear why he insists on justifying his critique of Butler's arguments with this rare phenomenon and with the film's narration. It is clear that "sworn virgins" are different from transvestites but their existence does not contradict Butler's claim that the performances of gender in what is known as transvestism in the West are subversive actions. If Butler had ever written about "sworn virgins," she would have agreed with Moss about the certain conformist aspects of this phenomenon.

Gender difference itself is about defying the essential symmetry between sexual and gender difference. Moss deliberately ignores this and invents the oxymoron 'essential gender difference'. If there were "essential gender difference" then there would have been no difference between nature and culture. This confusion of arguments comes from contrasting patriarchy and the "(essential) gender difference". "Sworn virgins" do not deny their essential (biological) identity; they only conceal it. They are forced to deny their own gender difference, but that was never essential anyway, if we agree with constructionists. Sexual difference and gender difference do not always overlap, and that is what transgendered people and "sworn virgins" definitely have in common.

When Moss concludes that the tradition of "sworn virgins" and Karanović's film do not challenge the patriarchy, and that the moral of Karanović's film can hardly be received

as feministic, he just confirms the obvious. In a way, he simplifies the ancient anthropological phenomenon of "sworn virgins" by comparing them with contemporary transvestites. This confusion is often the case when Western theorists want to interpret this phenomenon: they either reduce it to a simple re-enforcement of patriarchy, or overestimate its transgressive power and its similarity with transvetitism.

Besides the otherwise interesting comparisons between ancient customs, Butler's theory, and contemporary mainstream film, Moss's article falls short of some more profound conclusions about the effects of "sworn virgins" in their own society. This occurs because of what I would regard as the misplaced expectations of the writer from the outset. He is disappointed that he could not trace any transgressive agency. If it is obvious that "sworn virgins" are not genuinely sexually or gender troubled subjects, because their troubles come from the gender that is imposed on them by the patriarchy, the criticism and the unfulfilled expectations to trace subversion or agency of transgender subjectivity sounds as if it is the wrong track. Perhaps Moss could not resist the visual similarity of the photographs of "sworn virgins" with Western transvestites and wanted to find additional proof for their genuine similarities? The article continues with analysis of another film that is much closer to the Western transgenderism but it still seems as if the comparison does not work because of the big difference between both films and the phenomena depicted in them.

In addition, I want to suggest that Moss overlooks certain positive aspects and agency that are at work within the phenomenon of "sworn virgins." It may be true that the societal structure of "sworn virgins" enables the very functioning of patriarchy rather than the subversion its general structure, and that 'they still do not confound culture.' [90] What is also true (and overlooked by Moss) is that "sworn virgins" live at the margins of their society (especially the ones who chose to enjoy this status). However, they do negotiate some parallel ways of life that are available to then exclusively. The new life to be lived in a kind of constant movement empowers their subjectivity. Once they enter the parallel societal structures they start to enjoy a certain nomadic freedom full of the possibilities of moving through different genders, ethnic and class structures, otherwise inaccessible to either gender. This in a way multiplies the possibilities available to other subjects that are forced to function in patriarchy, but for various reasons are different and misfit. The "sworn virgins" reveal that patriarchy is not such a homogenous structure after all and that it allows certain irregular behavior that has been used in other cases of transvestitism.

It has to be stated that there are some known examples of transvestism and gender crossing among women in the Balkans that are not necessarily connected with "sworn virgins" or "tobelije." [91] [Fig. 6] They are known as "tomboys" (Serb. "muškobanje"), and there are open lesbians (Serb. "lezbike"). These women are much closer to the lesbians and transvestites in the West. They often dress and behave as men, but are not socially forced to become "sworn virgins". Not unlike in the West, they often do not identify with their own biological sex. Moss mentions them, but most of the time he confuses them deliberately with "sworn virgins". Perhaps a closer look at these particular cases would have had provided a much more productive discussion.

In the context of my thesis it is important to mention that the known photographs of "sworn virgins" published by anthropologists researching this phenomenon resemble another group of photographs, the one showing women warriors who fought with the local insurgents against the Ottomans. I will expand more on these photographs in my second chapter. [92] I will discuss the images of Balkan women warriors who were not "sworn virgins" but did dress and fight as men in the period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I will compare some of them with images of sworn virgins. The difference between these phenomena that were all documented in different series of archival photographs in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo, are neglected in Moss's article.

Interestingly enough, Moss retells the first version of the screenplay of the film that for various reasons was never filmed. It should have been a film dubbed *Virgina – a story about love and freedom*. Stevan in this early version was depicted as a fighter in the Second World War who while fighting for her country's freedom, fights for her own liberation. [93]

6. Cultural *neitherness* – the Macedonian case

The difficulty encountered when delimiting the Balkan region was pointed out by Slavoj Žižek, when he said: *'It is as if one can never answer to the question: Where does it begin?'* [94] [95] This question is often solved by demarcating its northern border according to what was the old Ottoman borders. The fact that certain Balkan states belonged to the Ottoman Empire was also one of the main reasons for making distinctions and hierarchisation between them. Especially important for this hierarchy is their earlier or later emancipation from the Ottomans. This process of differentiation can be the main argument for clarifying Slavoj Žižek's statement: *'So Balkan is always the Other: it lies somewhere else, always a little bit more to [the] southeast, with the paradox when we reach the very bottom of the Balkan Peninsula, we again magically escape Balkan.'* [96]

However, the Balkans does not belong to the East either. Interestingly enough, the negation *neither the West, nor the East* does not stop there. In each particular case of the Balkan states, such a differentiation through a negation can go further. The most radical is the case of Macedonia where these negations are multiplied.

It is not an accident that Macedonia always had a troubled relation towards its cultural and political identity. Until 2001 when Macedonia split from Yugoslavia and gained independence, Macedonians have never had an independent state. Moreover, Macedonia is the only region in the Balkans that did not succeed in gaining its independence from the Ottomans through an authentic uprising. All nineteenth century local uprisings in this part of the Balkans were successfully silenced by the Ottomans. It was only by the decision known as the Berlin contract from 1878, agreed between the Ottomans and Western powers, that Macedonian territory could have been cut off from the Ottoman Empire. However, even then Macedonia was not credited with an independent status. It was put under Serbian control and later, when after the World War II the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (in 1963 renamed in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) was established, it led to the inclusion of Macedonia as one of the Yugoslav Republics.

Here I want to examine the way in which the cultural identity of the Macedonian people and state is continuously being built based on a differentiating process that excludes other neighbouring nations. This process of differentiation takes place through a negative definition that insists on *not-being,* rather than on *being.* The country has been established as an independent entity only recently, gaining its independence through the split of Yugoslavia, and was accompanied by many unresolved political problems. These issues are mainly the result of continuous disputes with other countries in the region of the Balkans and their objections to the following important insignia of any national and cultural identity:

a) *The language*

The dispute about the Macedonian language is not new. Even though already in the nineteenth century there was a distinctive national and cultural movement that stood behind the uprisings against the Ottoman rule, the independence required much longer battles. When in 1913 the Turkish rule was supplanted by Serbian rule, the Serbs officially denied Macedonian distinctiveness. Macedonia was dubbed 'Southern Serbia' and the Macedonian language was treated as a Serbian dialect. Only in 1944, when Macedonia became one of

the constituent republics of communist Yugoslavia, was the Macedonian language accepted as one of the official languages of Yugoslavia. Ironically, the con-federation and the status of republic meant a big step forward towards independence for the population of this region. This paradox results mainly because of the simple fact that Macedonia had never before had an independent state. This explains a long-term political friendship with Serbs although linguistically the language is much closer to Bulgarian.

In contrast, the Bulgarians thought of Macedonians as Bulgarians. Even today Bulgaria officially treats the Macedonian language as Bulgarian, although politically they do recognise Macedonia as an independent state. The Grammar of the Macedonian language by Blaže Koneski was published in 1946 in order to prove the distinctiveness of the language. Since this period, although these three languages, the Macedonian, Serbian and Bulgarian, all had the same roots in Old Church Slavonic, they started to differ and develop in different directions. Today, they already function according to a different grammar and have distinguishable vocabulary that calls in mind the famous Hubert Lyautey's quotation: *'a language is a dialect which owns an army, a navy and an air force.'* [97]

b) The name

"Macedonia" as is the constitutional name of the newly established country (1991) has been disputed by Greece since 1993. The main reason behind that was that Greece claimed that the name implied a territorial claim on a province of Northern Greece that bears the same name (along the border with Macedonia). Because of this dispute, the country had to agree to enter the United Nations under the name 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' and/or the acronym F. Y. R. O. M. This is still used instead of the name Macedonia in all official documents and correspondence in the UN. This usage gradually spread even within cultural and art institutions and events (for example, Venice Biennial exhibitions, 1992 - 2003, Byzantine Art exhibition in MoMA, New York, 2004, etc.).

The description is not acceptable to either the people or the government of Macedonia due to its reference to the past. Any comfort from the philosophical assumption of Bertrand Russell and his description theory that all names are only descriptions cannot be expected during the on-going political disputes surrounding such a conflict. [98] Despite the economic blockade of Greece (1994-1995) and other political pressures, there is still no agreement on this issue between Greece and Macedonia. [99]

Even though many countries (e.g. USA) officially recognised the full constitutional name of Macedonia the problem still needs to be resolved between the two countries. This dispute is one of the main obstacles to the acceptance of the country in the EU where Greece is a full member.

In the light of this dispute Jacques Derrida's reflections on the name and naming sound as though they can be an interesting starting point for a discussion between the disputing parties: For Derrida, the name is "an oblique offering" because *'the gift of the name gives which it does not have.'* [100] *'And still, if the name never belongs originarily and rigorously to s/he who receives it, it also no longer belongs from the very first moments to s/he who gives it.'* [101] Derrida's question: *'To give a name, is that still to give? Is that to give some thing?'* can be also re-formulated in the opposite, whether it is possible to take a name. [102]

In the context of Macedonian-Greek dispute, such a formulation of the question about the disputed name emphasises even more the absurdity of the whole case from its outset. Moreover, if the names are arbitrary and can be neither given or taken back, any additionally given names can be interpreted as addresses of love and friendship. [103]

c) *The flag and coat of arms*

Soon after the newly gained independence in 1991, voted through referendum mainly by the Slav population (the Albanian minority that makes almost a quarter of the population boycotted or voted against the referendum) the first flag of Macedonia was also the subject of a dispute by the Greeks. The flag was withdrawn mainly for its similarities to the 'Verghina sun'. Its red surface with a sun-like yellow symbol with sixteen rays of uneven length really resembled the coat of arms used on the shields in Ancient Macedonia. Philip of Macedon (359-336 BC) and his son Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia (336-323 BC), used it, possibly as symbol of Helios (God of sun). The first flag was soon changed to a flag with a similar symbol, only with fewer rays (eight). The absurdity of the fight over the ownership of the symbols is clear when taking into account that this graphic image is not uniquely related to either of these regions. The case of the coat of arms is similar. Namely, at the beginning of the independence, the golden lion was suggested as the main symbol. Soon it was also disputed because again, the lion was one of the symbols used in Ancient Macedonia.

All these obstacles to establishing of a fixed Macedonian identity and a stable, internationally recognised state created a specific situation. The citizens of the newly born

country do not have much choice: they can only define their own identity through a negative differentiation. By distancing themselves from people living in the neighbouring countries, denying their belonging to the *other*. Being neither Serbian, nor Greek, nor Bulgarian became the only formula for defining the Macedonians.

It should not be forgotten that there is another link in this chain, the denial of being Yugoslav. This denial inevitably complicated the whole identity crisis of the Macedonian citizen after the break up of Yugoslavia. In particular, it did not come so easily to the generations born after the World War II. They were raised in conditions where the national identities of the six republics and the minorities (called nationalities) were suppressed in favour of *brotherhood and unity*. According to the general politics of Tito's Yugoslavia *brotherhood and unity* were the most emphasised principles. They were designed to hold different nations together with the working class put above the nation in order to transcend the differences between nations and to fight the possible disjunctive nationalist movements. [104] The younger generations first had to overcome their safe "refuge", the Yugoslav identity, and to cope with all the re-enacted denials that were not seen as important during the Yugoslav period. The more recent fifty-year Yugoslav identity had to be replaced by the old and weakened Macedonian one.

The recent conflicts caused by the Albanian minority groups of rebels (2001) only added fuel to the national and cultural identity crisis in Macedonia. What seemed easier to fight when it was thought to be only external danger, started to be more difficult when certain questions about the origins and history were asked again by the ethnic minority groups consisting of a quarter of the local population.

Any claim insisting on the uniqueness of such a situation would not be tenable. There are other borderline cases of territories or peoples in Europe having problems with territories, language and naming, especially with the dissolution and partition of the largest communist countries after the fall of the wall: USSR, SFR Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. For example, the closest situation in terms of the recognition of language would be the Moldavian case. When Moldavia separated and gained its independence from Russia, the Moldavian language was also not immediately recognised by the Romanian state as a separate official language, treating it as only a dialect.

I want to point out to the familiarity of this double operation of denying. It is so predictably rooted in the dialectical understanding of identity that insists that identity can be thought only through difference. On the one hand, the nation attempts to define its own identity and distinguish itself through a process of denying other nations. On the other

hand, its existence is denied by these very other nations. In fact, all these multiplied denials do not contradict or erase each other. On the contrary, they can result in some uncanny non-space of identity where the difference is at work rather than the identity.

7. Mapping in reverse perspective

The problem of construction of identity and new subjectivity in the Balkans is an important issue in the art works of Žaneta Vangeli, (b. 1963), an artist from Macedonia of Vlach minority origin. In particular, her project *Social Sculpture of Macedonia* (1996) created for the group exhibition "Liquor Amnii I" (Turkish Bath "Cifte Amam", Skopje), exemplifies the metaphorical way in which this artist plays with the complex inter-relations between the state, its subjects, and state insignia. She usually uses objects that are either industrial ready-mades, or objects and materials found in nature, and juxtaposes them with photographs of carefully chosen individuals. In this work, the artist focused on the problematisation of the Macedonian nation and state. Her metaphorical interpretation of the exhibit's main concept was through the reference to the relation between the mother and the child from the title (eng. *Amniotic Fluid*) to discuss the problem of national identity of the newborn state of Macedonia and its citizens going through a transitional stage, in fact, the troubles of *becoming* before even being born.

The project consisted of three installations in different rooms of the main venue. In the first room, Vangeli placed six black and white photographs; there were three on one wall and three identical, but blurred ones on the opposing wall. These were life-sized photographs of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and a well-known, local underground figure, Baškim Ademi. [Fig. 7] The composition of the three standing, blurred figures in the photographs was an ironic reference to the Holy Trinity, and was meant to emphasize the major problem of the government, namely the fight with corruption and the alleged involvement in illegal drug activity, but at the same time referred to the problems of the national church that is still unrecognised by the canon of the other Orthodox Churches. Visually, the three standing male figures inevitably reinforced the assumption of patriarchal state order.

However, while one would have expected to see the Archbishop or the Minister at the centre of the composition, as it would be the expected position reserved for the omnipotent figure of a church or a state leading figure, it was in fact the drug addict Ademi who was placed in that position. Thus, the work alludes to the more contemporary "religion" and to the weakened state and church powers.

The exhibit in the second room was an installation titled *Spiritual Macedonia, or anything Goes,* including ten Macedonian flags, two plates of gold and lead, and framed objects with poppies. [Fig. 8] This was an obvious reference to the chaotic situation in the country where neither the state, nor the church were recognized in the wider international context and all state insignia are still questioned due to the political pressure that Greece applies over the UN authorities. The well known problem with the recognition of the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia that was replaced, and still is, by the short F.Y.R.O.M for Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was emphasised by putting the new flags opposite the opium poppies. It was a deliberate metaphor of its uncertain structure and future.

The third part of the project *Social Sculpture of Macedonia* included a video installation showing a drugged Baškim Ademi watching the artist Al Hanson, one of the leading members of the "Fluxus" movement, while he recites his own poem. The title obviously referred to Joseph Beuys. The scene, being also blurred, alluded to a hallucination, although each of the two video scenes was so documentary and realistic, as ordinary *readymade* image from the everyday life. The presence of Baškim Ademi as a witness of the performance of Al Hanson, and at the same time the absence of his conscious and rational thinking, his blurred vision, underlines the complex meanings deriving from the first part of the installation: as if the three figures on the one wall were watching themselves in a hallucinating fuzzy vision, no matter whether in a higher state of mind during a prayer, or in a 'higher' narcotised state. The identity is split, as its own reflection, and we can talk about its becoming only through the reflection and the difference.

Interestingly enough, for the second phase of the "Liquor Amnii 2" project that took place during the Convergence X Summer Festival in Providence (RI, USA) in 1997 Žaneta Vangeli created another site specific installation still dealing with the same issue of the troubled national, cultural and political situation of Macedonia, but using the latest model of life vests, perfectly produced in the States. She placed thirty bright orange objects to float on the dark surface of the Providence River in order to stand for the optimistic concept proclaimed by the title of the work itself: *The Constant Desire for Eternity* (1997).

The obvious irony towards any belief in eternity achieved by mundane values emphasised once more the overall strategy of Vangeli: instead of offering easy choices and direct criticism of globalisation she opts for a more profound and complex way to put the questions. The neutral industrially produced ready-mades in the USA – e.g. the life vests

thrown in the polluted, almost black river waters was the metaphor of the alleged support to the small country as a hope for salvation, but constrained by many inauspicious contracts.

Becoming-subject is not a process that can be facilitated with life vests, or with the means of cultural cartography and geography. Neither can this process take place through mechanical procedures imposed from outside authorities.

In her work *Ex-Fyromism* (1999, *"After the Wall,"* Moderna Museet, Stockholm) Vangeli referred to this issue once more. It was an installation of three photographs from which the ones showing a man in two positions: preparing to jump on his arms, and one with his legs already in the air, make a diptych. The inscriptions NATO and META DESIGNER, with this order, over the person in the photographs (the artist herself) were obvious ironic references to the most powerful geographer and cartographer of the world that may explain the popularity of this work. [Fig. 9]

The work *Integralism 3* (2002) is actually a map of the world, duplicated in two copies and exhibited one above each other. [Fig. 10-11] The colours are in the range of magenta and orange. Within the left side of the map that is in fact showing the East part of the world (in reverse way, as one is looking at it from inside of the globe), it is written "ceci n'est pas l'Orient; and on the Western part (North and South America) it is written: "ceci n'est pas une mappe"; with letters that are put upside down there is inscription: "Integralism III". The second part of the work, the bottom copy of the same reversed image of the world that is exhibited bellow the first part, is actually the same map, and looks as a mirror image of the first one. There are two inscriptions with upside down letters: "AVANT GUERRE" and "Integralism III".

The artist's interest in reverse images, reflection, and reverse perspective is closely related to the tradition of reverse perspective in Byzantine fresco and icon painting. The use of reverse perspective in Byzantine religious art is a result of the Orthodox belief that the painted images should be drawn in reverse perspective because they are to be looked at by God who is 'inside' of frescoes and icons. According to the main postulates of the fresco canons (*erminie*) the depicted image of God is not to be his representation ("idol") but it is equal to God's nature. It means that the perspective is also central, only that the centre is not in the eye of the ordinary beholders as it is the case of Renaissance painting, under the influence of humanism.

This profound interpretation of Byzantine perspective and aesthetics is the context used by Vangeli in order to ridicule the conspiracy theories and New World Order. In her view, the New World Order may be powerful but its power is ridiculous in comparison to

God's 'point of view.' It imagines that man is the centre of the world and ignores the reversed point of view, the one that is ultimately above any mundane supremacy. Therefore, she maps the world as if it would be mapped by fresco painters, from an imagined "inside of globe" point of view.

According to Vangeli's ideas, fed by both the negative and positive theological paradigm, even if negative thinking prevails in the world, there are still possibilities of belief in *enunciations, expressions,* and positive acts such as the prayer, or miracles. If only the world and the political geography are subsumed and perceived by different perspective rules and synthesised in different representational order, the world could look differently.

The theological discourse in these works is used as a contrast to any political or religious dominance. Vangeli's works are not an outcome of the political or religious ideological system of hierarchisation. She rather uses theological concepts as radical tools for questioning and mocking the questions of national identity based on state power. Her counter-mapping makes her a kind of counter-cartographer who ridicules the constant quests of the state cartographers for delineating the "original" borders between different territories and identities, especially because in the Balkans they have been reshuffled so many times in the past, anyway. The absurdity of this task can be resolved only arbitrarily and through pragmatic negotiations that, for Vangeli, need to follow certain ethics and openness that she finds in negative theology.

Concluding remarks: Archiving the multiplicity of *the neither*

Because of the impossibility of representing the continuity and completeness of identity *the neither* also entails a kind of responsibility. It is not to represent any complete dialectically sublated difference or to deal with the representational regimes while trying to bridge the gap between the past and the present times. *The neither* endorses a kind of synthetic logic while listing all the impossibilities for identification and representation, such as when

> Deleuze constructs his dialectics around the problem of how to affirm a
> productive continuity through a search for completeness, whilst also
> responding to the proposition that continuity is never a matter of identities or
> representations. In other words, we can never represent or identify

continuity, even relatively and in an open-ended transforming way. Yet reality is continuous and it is possible to speak of better or worse affirmations of that continuity in accordance with individual problems. This is the paradoxical challenge of his dialectics. [105]

In contrast to the other pre-existing terms and their closure as an inevitable result of their inclination towards inclusion or exclusion, the *e-vent* of *the neither* aims at constant motion, event-ness, and becoming, whereas, operations of inclusion or exclusion become irrelevant. *The neither* does not allow the negation of any of the concepts to prevail and thus they all remain as *"not quite enough"*, but not at all thoroughly abandoned possibilities. *The neither* can be understood as an agency of continuous change of plans and perspectives. It establishes new multiple relations that instead of clinging to pre-established figures and representations that entail theological or teleological propensity, propose positive openness towards unexpected *surprising events* of gender difference.

The photograph of the unveiled Albanian woman, the images of "sworn virgins", women warriors, or the private photographic archives of the Romanian Queen Marie dressed as a nurse or a peasant, are all examples of corresponding slippery signs that mark the complex entanglements of cultural and gender difference. More importantly, they do not create a fixed third sign. Even more explicitly, in the *Double Life* archive by Sanja Iveković one witnesses the *becoming* of gender difference only through listing and flipping the pages of the archive. All these images do not freeze and create a hybrid sign simply because the used signs are not and cannot be overwritten by an overall regime of signification.

Whether a woman *becomes* a warrior, a nurse, or a famous film star, simulating a pose in front of the camera, she uses the possibility to act, to express, to *become* gender difference. The moments of configuration of these images of unstable identities, but yet strong messages of becoming, crossing over the borders without erasing them, not claiming for a third known entity, make *the neither* a useful device to discuss these movements. In particular, it is important to note that *the neither* combines the problems of cultural and gender difference, and allows to the viewer to recognise that the unexpected *events* of *becoming-gender-difference* take place differently in different cultural contexts.

NOTES:

[1] Derrida, *Margins* 2.

[2] *"neither"*: nei.ther *conj* [ME, alter. (influenced by *either*) of *nauther, nother,* fr. OE *nahwaether, nother,* fr. *na, no* not + *hwaether* which of two, whether] (12c), *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Tenth Edition. Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Deluxe Millennium Edition (Rugelet, UK: Focus Multimedia Limited, 1994-2000), Windows CD Rom.

[3] Richard Rorty, 'Deconstruction and Circumvention' *Critical Inquiry,* 11.1, Sep. 1984: (1-23), 10.

[4] Rorty 4.

[5] Rorty 4.

[6] Derrida, *Margins* 7.

[7] Jacques Derrida, *Positions* 40, quoted according to Rorty, 18.

[8] Rorty 20-21.

[9] Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial* Play, trans. Robert A.Vollrath (London: Macmillan Press, 1984) 7.

[10] The hybrid is most thoroughly explained in: Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse' *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge) 1994.

[11] 'negative theology,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Deluxe Millennium Edition.

[12] Copleston 1962, 108-110. According to Copleston the affirmative method starts 'with the most universal statements' and then approaches God through intermediate terms. It ascribes to God ultimate perfection and beauty as the One. On the contrary, the negative method starts with denying to God the attributes that are the furthest from him.

[13] James E. Faulconer, 'Deconstruction,' 18 Oct. 2004 <http://jamesfaulconer.byu.edu/deconstr.htm>.

[14] Julia Kristeva, 2000. Julia Kristeva left Bulgaria at 25 as an educated linguist, after she graduated from the Bulgarian University in Sofia. It is not an accident that, as she writes in her book, she felt so attached to her cultural and linguistic origins.

[15] Kristeva, *Crisis* 178.

[16] 'Pseudo-Dionysius,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Windows CD-Rom.

[17] Kristeva, *Crisis* 177.

[18] 'Meister Eckhart,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Windows CD-Rom.

[19] Glenn Mason-Riseborough, 'Theology without a Metaphysics of Presence,' 14. Nov. 2000, 12. May 2003 <http://www.geocities.com/griseborough/37.htm>.

[20] Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror* 1.

[21] Kristeva, The Powers of Horror 2.

[22] Kristeva, The Powers of Horror 145.

[23] Kristeva's assumption that negativity of the rejection that is outcome of the abjection is a force that pushes the subject into a position in which he/she becomes self-aware also calls to mind the moment of *interpellation*. Interpellation is the effect of the fear that has any authority when it addresses the subject who thus becomes aware of the borderline that separates him/her from what is not-subject. This process of constitution of the subject was first discussed by Louis Althusser, but in gender theory was developed by Judith Butler (Butler 1997, 83-105).

[24] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic,* trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanity Books, 1999) 414.

[25] Hegel 416.

[26] Hegel 417.

[27] Hegel 412.

[28] Hegel 431.

[29] Jacques Derrida, *Positions,* trans. Alan Bass (London: Athlone Press, 1981) 40.

[30] Derrida, *Margins* 14+19-20.

[31] Derrida, *Margins* 20.

[32] Derrida, *Margins* 20.

[33] Derrida, *Margins* 3.

[34] In his seminal text *Différance* Derrida separates his *différance* from the similar aspects of negative theology although he admits that its strategies often resemble or are even indistinguishable from the ones of negative theology because *différance* cannot be exposed (Derrida, *Margins* 5-6).

[35] Derrida, *Margins* 21.

[36] Derrida, *Margins* 6.

[37] Derrida, *Margins* 21.

[38] Derrida, *Margins* 20.

[39] Gilles Deleuze, 'I have nothing to admit'. *Semiotext(e)*, 2.3, 1977, 111-116. [The Anti-Oedipus_ Issue] (Janis Forman's translation from 'Cher Michel, je n'ai rien a avouer,'

La Quinzaine litteraire, 116 (April 1-15, 1973), 17-19, 12 Jan. 2005 <http://www.csdl.tamu.edu/~erich/misc/nothing_to_admit>.

[40] James Williams. 'How radical is the new? Deleuze and Bachelard on the problems of completeness and continuity in dialectics', 1, 12 Jan. 2004 <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/philosophy/williams/Deleuze%20and%20Bachelard.doc>

[41] Williams, 'How radical is the new?' 1.

[42] Giovanna Borradori, 'The Temporalization of Difference: Reflections on Deleuze's Interpretation of Bergson,' 10 Jan. 2004 <http://www.zampaglione.com/the_temporalization.htm>.

[43] Borradori, 'The Temporalization of Difference.'

[44] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World,* trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 35.

[45] Nancy 35.

[46] Nancy 35.

[47] Bhabha 114

[48] Bhabha 86.

[49] Bhabha 86.

[50] Bhabha 86.

[51] Bhabha 112.

[52] Bhabha 112.

[53] Bhabha 113-114.

[54] Bhabha 219.

[55] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) 144-145.

[56] Hardt and Negri 144.

[57] Hardt and Negri 145.

[58] Hallward 27.

[59] Hallward 24.

[60] Hallward 26.

[61] Hallward 26.

[62] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995) 25.

[63] R. Young 25.

[64] Hallward 26.

[65] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, Wars, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1999) 72 – 94.

[66] Dennis P. Hupchick. *The Balkans: From Constantinopol to Communism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 130-135. Hupchick argues that the Ottoman system "millet" was not a new system known only to Ottomans and that previously it was practiced in the Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, and Seljuk states. He also states that ethnicity was relatively unimportant to the local communities that had each their own autonomy under the sultan's government.

[67] In 1894, the Sultan himself donated his collection to the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. that today is part of its Print and Photographs Department. Copies of the same photographs were donated to the British Museum in London that makes clear the importance given to the photographic medium by the Ottoman rulers.

[68] Misha Glenny, *The Balkans* 72. According to Glenny, wearing turban was an obvious sign of the barrier separating belief and unbelief.

[69] This is the elaborated mostly in Bhabha' text 'Of Mimicry and Man,' 85-92.

[70] Donald Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire: the Nineteenth Century.' From *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000),   5 April 2005 <http://arabworld.nitle.org/texts.php?module_id=3&reading_id=72&print=1>.

[71] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire,' 2.

[72] Quataert, 'The Ottoman Empire,' 2.

[73] Madeline Zilfi. *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern women in the early modern era*, Leiden, 1997.

[74] Serb. zavetovana devojka, alb. vajzë e betuar; in Monenegro are used the terms: tobelija ("person bound by a vow") and virdžina (alb. virgjinéshë – "female committed to virginity").

[75] Predrag Šarčević, 'Sex and Identity of "Sworn Virgins" in the Balkans,' 10 June 2005 <http://www.udi.org.yu/articles/genderPS.pdf>, 1. According to Šarčević "sworn virgins" exist in these areas because they are the most patriarchal in the Balkans. For example, in some villages a kin-tribal organization of society can still be traced.

[76] According to Šarčević in Serbia and Monenegro the "sworn virgins" are of Slavic ethnic origin and in Albania they are Albanian. Confessionally, they can belong to any of the religions dominating in the region: Orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians, and Muslims).

[77] Predrag Šarčević, 'Sex and Identity of "Sworn Virgins" in the Balkans,' 1.

[78] Dr. E. Schultz, 'Albanisches Mannweibertum' *Die Woche – Moderne Illustrierte Zeitschrift*, 1907: IV (40-52), no. 40. Berlin: 1758-1763.

[79] Antonia Young, *Women Who Become Men: Albanian Sworn Virgins* (Oxford: Berg. 2000).

[80] Aleksandra Djajic Horváth, 'A tangle of multiple transgressions: The western gaze and the Tobelija (Balkan sworn-virgin-cross-dressers) in the 19th and 20th centuries,' *Anthropology Matters Journal*, 2003-2, 10 July, 2005 <http://www.anthropologymatters.com/journal/2003-2/horvath2003_tangle.htm>.

[81] Horváth mentions J. G. Hahn, *Reise durch die Gebiete des Drin und Wardar*. Wien: Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, XV. 1867.

[82] Antonia Young, 92, qtd. in Moss 348.

[83] Kevin Moss, Yugoslav Transgendered Heroes: "Virgina" and "Marble Ass", 347-367, 8 July, 2005 <www.fabrikaknjiga.co.yu/rec/67/347.pdf>.

[84] Moss 349.

[85] Moss 349.

[86] Moss 348.

[87] Moss 348.

[88] The enormous bibliography quoted by Moss in the footnote 5 (348) emphasises the importance that this issue has for Balkan scholars. I present it entirely here because I find it relevant for further research of this topic: Barjaktarović, M. (1965) 'Problem tobelija (virdzina) na Balkanskom poluostrvu.' *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja*, Knjiga 28-29 (1965-66): 273-286; Vukanović, T. P. (1961) 'Virdzine.'*Glasnik Muzeja Kosova i Metohije* 1961, 79-112; Dickemann, M. (1997) 'The Balkan Sworn Virgin: a Cross-Gendered Female Role,' in Stephen O. Murray, and Will Roscoe, /eds./ *Islamic Homosexualities*. NY: NYU Press, 197-203; Grémaux, R. (1989) 'Mannish Women of the Balkan Mountains,' in Jan Brenner, /ed./ *From Sappho to De Sade*. NY: Routledge, 143-172; Whitaker, I. (1981). 'A Sack for Carrying Things: The Traditional Role of Women in Northern Albanian Society.' *Anthropological Quarterly* (54): 146-56.'

[89] Moss 355.

[90] Moss 349.

[91] Grémaux 267+273.

[92] The most quoted are the first known photographs of "sworn virgins" published as illustrations of the anthropological writings of J. G. Hahn, in, *Reise durch die Gebiete des Drin[m] und Wardar* from 1867, and by Dr. E. Schultz in his 'Albanisches

Mannweibertum' *Die Woche – Moderne Illustrierte Zeitschrift* from 1907. Some of these images have been re-published in Aleksandra Djajic Horváth's article.

[93] Moss 350-352.

[94] Slavoj Žižek, 'The Spectre of Balkan,' *The Journal of the International I8ytgnstitute*. 6.2: Winter 1999, 15 May 2002 <http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/journal/vol6no2/ˆi`ek.htm>.

[95] According to Peter J. Taylor Jovan Cvijić was the first physical geographer and cartographer of the Balkans. He published the first geographic maps of the Balkans in 1906 and wrote the first book on human geography of the Balkans in 1918. See.: Peter J. Taylor, *Political Geography: World-Economy, State and Locality* (London: Longman Group, 1989) 185-188.

[96] Žižek, *Why are Leibach* 2.

[97] 'Hubert Lyautey,' Wikipedia, 20 April 2005 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubert_Lyautey>. According to Wikipedia, this definition of a dialect by the colonial administrator who established contemporary Morocco, Lois Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey (1854 – 1934) was often wrongly attributed to the Jewish linguist Max Weinreich.

[98] Russell's theory was often criticised for not taking into account specific social and cultural conditions when uttering certain names. This kind of criticism is especially evident in the texts written by Saul Kripke or by the speech act theorists: John Searle and J. L. Austin. However, his theory of words or names being replacements for definite descriptions is still valid in a strictly philosophical context: *'Common words, even proper names, are usually really descriptions. That is to say, the thought in the mind of a person using a proper name correctly can generally only be expressed explicitly if we replace the proper name by a description. Moreover, the description required to express the thought will vary for different people, or for the same person at different times. The only thing constant (so long as the name is rightly used) is the object to which the name applies. But so long as this remains constant, the particular description involved usually makes no difference to the truth or falsehood of the proposition in which the name appears.'* Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Home University Library, 1912 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), Reprinted 1971-2, ed. in hypertext by Andrew Chrucky, 1998, 20 April 2005 <http://www.ditext.com/russell/rus5.html>.

[99] Kevin Adamson and Dejan Jović, 'The Macedonian-Albanian political frontier: The re-articulation of Post-Yugoslav political identities,' *Nations and Nationalism*, 10.3. 2004: 293-312.

[100] Derrida, *On the Name* 85.

[101] Derrida, *On the Name* 84.

[102] Derrida, *On the Name* 84.

[103] Derrida, *On the Name* 45.

[104] Adamson and Jović 207.

[105] James Williams, 'How radical is the new? 2.

Chapter Two

WOMEN WARRIORS, LACK, AND AGENCY

The impossibility of a simply empirical description of our sexual difference means there is no truth to who we are as women. [1]

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies-for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text-as into the world and into story-by her own movement.[2]

When we encounter photographs of contemporary women warriors from different corners of the world that daily circulate in the media, the seeming contradiction between components of these images results in a certain conceptual unease. The bewildering feeling about these images of women, regardless of whether they represent active participants in combats, suicide bombers, or just supporters of some remote liberation movements, comes from the fact that the existence of women warriors is still seen as an exclusion from the rule. [Fig. 12] The fact that these photographs show women, mothers with children or very young girls, often in ill-fitting uniforms and fully armed, does not lend itself to a straightforward explanation of this unease. The feeling that something is not right with such images emerges instantaneously, as a kind of conditioned reflex.

This comes as a surprise if it is taken into account the fact that women who participate in wars and conflict as combatants is not a new phenomenon. Also, after almost two centuries of continuous feminists' fight for equality between men and women in every societal realm, one would be right to expect that by now this type of image should have come to be as "normal" as the images of women advertising cleaning liquids.

In this chapter, I am concerned with a number of questions that I consider to be relevant with regard to images of women warriors. I first want to investigate the stereotypes that often obscure the basic historic facts and phenomena surrounding women warriors. There exist all sorts of preconceived ideas when it comes to the ancient representations of

the myth of the Amazons or the imagery of historic women warriors. The representation of mythic women warriors and the frequency and accuracy of the representations of women warriors in general, as well as the meaning accorded to such representations through history and culture, are going to be tackled in this chapter.

These images have often provoked disagreements and distrust. The interpretation that such representations were only products of the imaginary was preferred and privileged through history simply because of the assumption that women warriors have never existed. I actually want to explore the provenance of the images of women warriors and their reciprocal relation with the context in which they occur.

I was provoked into taking a closer look at this phenomenon after I came across a series of images of women warriors from the Balkans, dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. My main concern is not related to the factual basis of these images, although it is discussed whether the represented women really participated in combats and who they were. My efforts are rather invested in examining the reasons for the ambivalent interpretation and disagreements surrounding these images, the reasons for their production, and the frequency of their circulation. Most importantly, I am interested in exploring how these images relate to the issue of gender difference and how they may affect the possibility for construction of new subjectivities in the Balkans.

The other set of questions that I will look at is guided by psychoanalytic theory. What is my main concern here is the phenomenon of aggression and the notion of *lack* as they were elaborated by different psychoanalytic theorists who looked at the difference in the extent of aggression between men and women. I want to discuss the specific modes of representation applied in these images that were mostly recorded by male photographers.

While trying to offer a better understanding of the reasons for conflicts between sexes, some theorists have assumed that aggression was simply biologically determined, destined more to men than to women. The limits of these essentialist assumptions that lie behind most of the theories on aggression have recently been challenged by different writers who support constructionist views and therefore assume that various cultural contracts and disagreements have more to do with the difference between men and women. One of the main assumptions provided by constructionist theory is that gender differences are products of cultural and societal constraints and are not parallel to sexual differences between men and women.

However, I find it important to draw attention to some early psychoanalytic accounts that stated the difficulties in distinguishing a different extent of aggression

between male and female. Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, and Jacques Lacan have all dealt with aggression, but they did not give equal accounts of the relation between sexual and gender difference and aggression.

Melanie Klein's and Jacques Lacan's explanations of the reasons behind the emergence of aggressivity among children of both sexes rely on the important notion of *lack*. The strong negativity behind this crucial psychoanalytical concept gives an interesting direction but it somehow does not allow sufficient possibilities for the interpretation of the images of women warriors as an impetus for an individual stand or subjectivisation.

Thus, I also focus on another important set of issues that is related to the notion of *agency*. I see the concept of *agency* as necessary when it comes to different attempts to understand and interpret the images of women warriors as positive vehicles to set in motion and open up various possibilities for a more complex intertwining of gender roles. Therefore, I will try to apply Lois McNay's account of agency behind the "imaginary institution" (a phrase coined by Cornelius Castoriadis).

1. Images of women warriors in the Balkan archives

I first came across the photographs representing women warriors in 1993, when I entered the Regional Historic Archive of Macedonia in Bitola in order to research the Fund of the Brothers Manaki (no. 580). My research of the fund was commissioned by the Film Archive of Macedonia in Skopje (the Brothers Manaki were also the first cinematographers in the Balkans) but it was never completed. Consisting of eight thousands photographs that were donated to the archive by the Brothers Manaki (photographers from the end of nineteenth and at the beginning of twentieth century, working in Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey), the fund was fascinating but impossible to grasp. The abundance and variety of images of women of different generations, social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds stayed with me much longer, in particular the few images of women in soldiers' uniforms.

One of the reasons for my surprise, and fascination for these images of women warriors, and for the desire to go back to the archive was the obvious clash between these images and my general knowledge of the conservative and patriarchal social structure of Macedonian society at the beginning of twentieth century. The time of the first signs of national awareness of the local population during the period of Ottoman rule was presumably represented in these images. The late nineteenth century was in fact the period when the first insurgencies against the Muslim rulers took place. [3]

Indeed, one does not expect much or any representation of women in the historical archives of the troubled regions during that period. On the contrary, although the archival collection of the photographs of the Brothers Manaki contains an immense number of images of men, be they insurgents from the 1903 Ilinden uprising in Macedonia, soldiers from the two Balkan Wars, World War I and World War II, or just ordinary men, it also contains an unexpected number of images of women. [Fig. 13-15] Some of them are dressed in war uniforms and hold weapons. [Fig. 16-17] However, all the images of women warriors that I saw there were taken in the photographic studio(s) of the Brothers Manaki [4] and this fact alone made these images even more curious.

I have never finished the commissioned text that was supposed to emphasize the importance of the photographic production of Milton and Janaki Manaki for Macedonian cultural heritage. Perhaps because of the feeling of debt and guilt, that was a result of the unaccomplished assignment, these images and female faces have haunted me for a long time, and thus provoked my curiosity to proceed with another, more ambitious project. [5]

The photographs themselves could not be said to convey any explicit or immediately accessible message. Moreover, as the photographs 'waited' there to be 'revealed', and not much-circulated in the media or elsewhere, they showed a kind of resistance towards interpretation by the application of ready-made theories. What can one make out of such unexpected objects found among the mass of expected photographs of women in a typical patriarchal environment? In a way, these images prevented the possibility of drawing any form of stable conclusions sticking out of the mass of family photographs. [6] [Fi. 18-19]

In 2001, I started my research in the libraries, museums, and archives in Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. I should emphasise here that photographs can hardly be found displayed in the Balkan museums since they are usually not treated as artefacts but are taken only as objects of historic and documentary value. Therefore, photographs are usually kept in archives and libraries. Due to their secondary status as objects, they are kept in very poor conditions: piled in folders covered with dust and by no means conserved. Also, it should be mentioned that even the general history of photography in the Balkans is not thoroughly researched and that this lack of systematic and comprehensive knowledge was one of the obstacles that sometimes makes research difficult, and prevents any interpretation. In order to locate some complementary images to the ones I have found in the Fund of Brothers Manaki, the few images of women dressed as men, in soldiers'

uniforms, but obviously in staged circumstances, I had to go through thousands of images that were not in any way related to my research.

The curious artificial poses provoked my curiosity and the following questions: were such staged rituals a usual practice? Why did they come into being? And most importantly, was the reason for the staging of this ritual the actual existence of women warriors? Could this phenomenon be a precedent to contemporary celebrity culture phenomenon known as "A.S.O.S."? [7] The lack of appropriate information in most of these cases makes it impossible to attempt to establish a detailed account of the psychic life of these women and their direct relation to the insurgents (only one entry is more specific and points to the fact that the photograph shows a woman in a carnival costume). What is certain is that the new medium of photography in these countries that were still provinces of the Ottoman Empire brought curiosity and courage for other roles than the ones assigned to women.

The discoveries of the more than one hundred years old material, collected there, in these forgotten and hidden places of "public" interest, but quite often, not really researched or challenged in any theoretical way, were really exciting. [8] It was obvious that the cultural and social practice of photographers and their studios played an important role in the urbanization of the rural Balkan environment. It resulted in an inevitable change of the cultural and political circumstances under which all these female "models" allowed a record to be made of their weird appearances, presumably not only for their own pleasure, but also for the amusement of others. The images appear to be more exceptions than rules, more isolated acts than daily routines, but they destabilise the usual assumption of a strict and consistent patriarchal regime of representation.

2. Nationhood and women warriors

While experiencing a hundred years of dust and cartons that were in a state of gradual decay for decades and were almost fragmenting in my hands, a series of photographs of the women soldiers in the National Library in Sofia captured my attention. In fact, they were images spread around different packets and boxes that made a series only in my mind. [9]

Not that they were so exceptional in some 'sensational discovery' sense (even though they are known to only a few historians), or radically different according to the quality of the execution or the craft and knowledge of their authors. Most of these photographs were taken by the family Karastoyanov (Anastas, Dimitar and Ivan), Bulgarian

photographers acknowledged as some of the first established photographers who had a studio in Bulgaria during 1870s and known for many other historically important photographs of revolutionaries of the Bulgarian April uprising. [10]

The series of documentary images of real women warriors differ from the previously discussed photographs, and from the other images taken by the same photographers, in a subtle way. [Fig. 20-24] The women are photographed both in studios and in the open air, presumably near to their hide-outs. These photographs also differ from the other images of women by the same photographers exactly because of the obvious desire to make them part of the ordinary repertoire of images of warriors: the women are represented as any other men warrior.

Of course, it was not only in this series that images of women were present: there were thousands of photographs of women shown surrounded by their families: parents, husbands, children and other relatives, or other women friends. The reason I became more interested in these objects was that no matter the intention of the photographers, they persistently emitted a certain visual ambiguity. The ambivalent gender of the photographed subjects inevitably causes a kind of uneasy feeling in the viewer (as if one faces a kind of riddle with many plausible answers).

First of all, both series of photographs, the ones representing Bulgarian women from the 1878 uprising against the Ottoman Empire that are known by their names and biographies, and the ones taken by the Brothers Manaki in their studio showing Macedonian women after the1903 Ilinden uprising (women that remained unknown and probably were only 'models'), are actually lacking in visual signs of aggression. This ambivalence of the gender and the lack of aggressivity can paradoxically serve as an important and provocative starting point for interpretation of this imagery.

What can also attract attention to this particular series of images is the way in which all these women dressed in male uniforms are always photographed isolated and alone. On the one hand, historically these photographs are a direct reference to the one of the most crucial and severe periods in the history of the region (April uprising of the Bulgarian people against the Ottomans in 1878 and the Ilinden uprising in Macedonia in 1903 that both were part of a significant resistance to the Ottoman Empire's rule with the Balkans). On the other hand, the unexpected and complete absence of visual signs of violence and aggression in these photographs reveals the role of these women in the battlefields as questionable and unimportant.

Here it should be noted that there are photographs showing the atrocities from that time, usually showing brutally massacred children and women – the victims of Ottoman revenge after the rebellion was crushed, or photographs of male warriors from the same historical period are usually group photographs accompanied by many of bodies and weapons. In both series of photographs the violence and aggressivity is more likely to be detected. While the dead bodies of the innocent victims were obviously subjected to aggression prior to the act of taking the photographs, the impression radiating from the latter series is that the men appear ready to fight and kill. Both series differ from the images of women warriors exactly in the way that women's expressions are somehow calm and thoughtful.

Although the men in the group photographs of battalions have long hair (usually a female attribute that in this context might be an outcome of pragmatic reasons – the difficult life conditions in the mountain hide-outs), their grown beards and body position emphasise the cliché of maleness. [Fig. 13-14] It is no accident that the phrase 'armed to the teeth' was coined after the soldiers from that period. Some photographs from different regions, for example even from the period of the Wild West in America have similar iconography: man wore two diagonal belts with ammunition, starting from the waist, and going all over the shoulders, accompanying the unavoidable guns and rifles.

On the group photographs of warriors, the women members of the same battalions neither are photographed together with their country-men nor are they photographed as a group on their own. By contrast to male soldiers, the women warriors (interestingly enough, usually having a short haircut) are always photographed alone, in several different poses, very serious and static. [Fig. 20-23] It is almost impossible to track any attempt from the photographer to show a kind of dynamic movement that could at least anticipate what happened before or after the moment the photograph was taken.

One can easily imagine 'performances' that must have taken place prior to the photographs. After the photographer would have climbed to the mountains with all necessary equipment, probably led by some of the insurgents, warriors would have to pose on the battlefields in between two battles. Although these circumstances were the same for men and women, the fact that the women are presented alone results in the female warriors' series having an even more unusual atmosphere. The time is somehow collapsed, as if nothing actually occurred, as if there were no combat situations to come, or as if nothing had happened that preceded the moment of the taking of the photograph. The absent-

minded gaze of all of these women introduces a kind of doubt in the reliability of the identity of these women, even though they are known historical figures.

The ritual of taking photographs of all warriors obviously had an important significance for the insurgents but there is no reason that one should suspect that they would arrange the compositions of these photographs. It is without doubt that the photographers' imagination led to these unique images of women who "perform" as warriors even when they are warriors.

Let me also clarify here the relationship that the photographs of women warriors have with the previously discussed images of "sworn virgins." What both series of images have in common is that they are both representations of cross-dressing: women dressed according to the male dress codes of a certain era or profession. There are actually photographs of "sworn virgins" wearing soldiers' uniforms and weapons and sometimes they also fought in the same uprisings. These cases of a double performativity, one that continues through the life span of "sworn virgins", the other that takes place "through the time" of the photograph, is something unique to the photographs of "sworn virgins". [Fig. 2-6] However, it is impossible to make the distinction between these two different series simply by looking at them, unless there is no additional written source available. It is to these sources that we now turn our attention.

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Some of the arguments Linda Nochlin has made in the chapter "The Myth of the Woman Warrior" in her book *Representing Women*, offer a starting point for the interpretation of the photographs that I am examining. She writes *'the case of women warrior* [is] *the most extreme exemplar of a feminine being as independent agent of her destiny,'* or a kind of *'visual oxymoron.'* [11] The photographs of Balkan women warriors emit a very similar mixture of messages, visual or contextual. They can hardly be seen as 'pre-existing entities', but rather as images *'resisting fixed interpretation or positioning.'* [12]

However, what I want to emphasize here is that these photographs differ from the images that were the basis for Nochlin's research: it is not only the region and period but also more importantly, their medium. Namely, the case studies in Linda Nochlin's book are focused on several different paintings from the French history of painting, i.e. Claude Deruet's *Mme de Saint – Balmont* (1643), Jacques-Francois Le Barbier's *Jeanne Hachette*

at the Siege of Beauvais (1781), or Eugene Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830).[13] Therefore, even when the women warriors represented are actual historical figures, one can assume that the way in which their representation was executed could easily be only a result of the imagination of the painters.

It is important to recognize the fact that when Nochlin makes the distinction between the real and allegorical representations of women warriors, she more or less intentionally focuses only on the mediated representational practices. For her, this kind of depicted imagery is interesting for the ability to establish a reciprocal relationship between the two distinguished orders, the real and the allegorical. It is as if the painting of a historically existing woman is easier to subject to allegorisation, or fictionalisation. At this point however I will avoid giving a detailed explanation of the descriptions and interpretations of the images by Nochlin, drawing only on some of the distinctions she makes between different images of women. She distinguishes the images of women that were historic warriors, and women – allegories, as the woman - *Liberty* depicted in Delacroix's painting. [14] I want to argue that photography lends itself just as well to allegorisation as it does to representation of the 'real', even though we intuitively believe that photographic images are less mediated and therefore closer to *the real*.

The series of Balkan photographs that are discussed here vary a great deal according to the levels of reality of their context. Things are complicated further because there are three distinguishable "orders": the real, the allegorical, and the staged. Although all the photographs represent women warriors, while some of them were obviously taken in studios as staged photographs, some photographs represent well known women heroes.

a) The first group of women are women dressed in their own uniforms with the weapons that they probably used while fighting against the enemy. The names of the women are mostly known as historic figures in Bulgaria. In this series, there are also photographs of women carrying a flag that are actually women that were not leaders of the rebellion but were known as women who sewed and embroidered the flag and the symbols of the organizers. The photographs look as if the women were "trying on" the flag. [Fig. 24]

b) The other series of photographs show women dressed in uniforms that were most probably borrowed from the fund of the photographer, not to mention the weapons which were likely to have also been borrowed as props. This is particularly the case in two photographs from the Brothers Manaki archive. This practice was usual for photographing

the male insurgents so it comes as no surprise that women were recorded in the same fashion.

c) The third case is a photograph of the actual flag that depicts a woman – a flag carrier. [Fig. 25-26] The flag is embroidered on the flag of the first ever Balkan republic, the Ilinden Republic that lasted only ten days, from 2-12 August 1903. It was organised in liberated Kruševo (Macedonia), until the Ilinden uprising was crushed by the Ottomans. There are several different flags of different uprising bands but only the flag of the band of the insurgents from Ohrid depicts a woman - ensign that carries a flag. The image is schematic and emblematic and obviously is closely connected to the French Revolution allegorisation of the nation as a woman. [15]

The questions of performativity, cross-dressing and constructed identities, are to be tackled through the theory of performativity based on J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* and on Joan Riviere's article 'Womanliness as a masquerade'. The cases of mimicry, 'mask of the Other' and "staged" heroism are relevant to my project. I see them in relation to the discussion about the possibility of making the distinction between constitutive and performative acts and the success or failure of performative acts.

However, the distinction between performative, "authentic" and allegorical photographs, while being necessary, only works to a certain extent. In fact, it is important to acknowledge the fact that these three different registers often are mixed and may easily be confused, as one might easily confuse successful and failed performative speech   acts. [16] According to Jacques Derrida's interpretation of speech act theory, the opposition "success/failure" made by Austin in the context of performative sentences is "insufficient or derivative." [17] Austin posits context as the most important factor in the success of the performative speech act because the utterance of a certain phrase or sentence can be "happy", or can actually *do* things, only if the required juridical, teleological or cultural conditions are met during the performative speech act. However, because of the problem with citationality and the impossibility of listing all possible contexts and criteria there can be "no pure performative." [18] Derrida argues that Austin is aware that his distinction between *constative* and *performative* speech is *'hopeless from the start.'* [19]

In the context of the discussion of the illocutionary force of the photographs of women warriors and the "successfulness" of the performative speech of these photographs, one has to state that the promise of the photographs of women in uniforms is not very "happy" – the viewer is not convinced of the authenticity of the role of these women.

In the first attempt to answer the, perhaps predictable, question of whether the main reason for the dubiousness of the images stems from the lack of aggression and from the fact that the represented subjects are women, one way to avoid the positive answer is to start the discussion from the perspective of the history and the nature of the photographic medium. That is to say that, in 1878, when the second series of photographs was taken, not only in Bulgaria but also in the wider European context photography was still relatively undeveloped. It was still a slow, immobile process that needed time and special conditions for exposure and the processing of negatives and prints. Regardless of whether the "sitters", in this case the photographed warriors, were men or women, it was still difficult to realise a typical journalistic photo-report from the fields of battles at that period. [20]

Although the first known reportage photographs were taken as early as the time of the Crimean War (1853-1856), it has to be stated that the usual time for exposure, processing the film and developing the prints in that period would still have been more than fifteen minutes. Therefore, it is no accident that most of the photographs, even when showing real women soldiers, would have to be taken in a photographic studio. [21] Paradoxically, this argument calls into question the authenticity of the argument about "staging" - the emergence of the series of studio photographs of women warriors can be understood rather as a limitation of the medium than as a result of a copying the look of the women *haiduks*.

Few photographs are clear examples of playing around with cross-dressing and staging, not unlike the way in which the procedures of cross-dressing or putting on different uniforms are used by contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman's self-portraits in different roles, or the group photographs of battlefields by Jeff Wall. [22] However, this "masquerade" was performed with completely different aims.

Even when the 'stage' was the woods where the women *comiti* or *haiduks* (rebels against the Ottoman soldiers) were hiding between two battles, the compositions were static and the expression on the faces were far from being frightening and dangerous, despite the fact that the uniforms were full with arms and equipment. [23]

To go back to the lack of difference between the studio photographs and the ones made 'in nature', what really links them is exactly the lack of evidence of aggression. One might have expected that if there were signs of aggression they could have helped in distinguishing the more or less "authentic" warriors, but that is also disputable. Furthermore, it can be argued that even though the staged photographs sometimes look more convincing because they were made with a careful professional approach to the

posing and the lighting, put side by side with the 'authentic' ones they create a kind of uncanny discomfort. It perhaps has to do with the fact that they create a certain confusion, and a call for a more careful understanding of the phenomenon.

3. Engendering war

In order to understand how these ambivalences in the creation of the staged and un-staged images of women warriors are related to the ambivalences in the actual circumstances that were important for the emergence of women warriors, we should look at Joshua S. Goldstein's book *War and Gender*. [24] It is one of the most comprehensive accounts of the complex and reciprocal way in which sex and gender relations influenced warfare and vice versa. In reviewing various historical, archaeological, biological, and cultural debates, he offers a range theories and statistics in order to draw together a very well balanced mixture between theoretical arguments and empirical data.

At the beginning of his book Goldstein states that, in war, fighters are usually all male and although there are exceptions to this rule women amount to 'far fewer than one percent of all warriors in history.' [25]

However, he emphasises the importance of the subtle differences that diversify this uniformity through the different war roles that women have in different cultures and societies (support troops, peacemakers, psychological war-boosters, etc) and during different types of wars.

He states that *'in guerrilla war, by contrast with conventional war, women's participation is not rare. One often finds combat units with a nontrivial minority of women in the ranks.'* [26] But further on in the text Goldstein mentions that even though women who had participated in combat during guerrilla wars were as capable of fighting as men, sometimes showing even greater skills and bravery than men, whenever their fighting units have acquired substantial power and have become regular armies, women have been excluded from participating in combat.

Goldstein gives an interesting account of different societies' attitudes towards women's participation in combat. According to him, it does not come as a surprise that in the most sexist warlike culture of Sambia in New Guinea, warfare is strictly a male occupation – he mentions that even the villages are laid out with different paths for men and women. He finds that much more surprising is the attitude of the extremely egalitarian culture of the Vanatinai Island. Although men and women have virtually equal power,

warfare in the Vanatinai Island is still one of the rare activities reserved exclusively for men.

According to Goldstein, the only example of a society that resembles the presupposed domination of women among the Amazons is in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Dahomey Kingdom of West Africa. Dahomey's army, although not primarily female, consisted of women soldiers with recorded important role in the combats. Despite the known myth of Amazons and the more recent records of the Dahomey Kingdom women warriors, for Goldstein there is no sufficient historic evidence that would prove the existence of a society that functioned as a complete matriarchy with solely women warriors. [27]

However, besides the lack of hard evidence that Amazons ever existed, some historians do not entirely discount the possibility of all female societies who were believed to be mostly warriors. Besides Herodotus's mentioning of the Amazons, in some ancient manuscripts of *The Iliad,* there is an added verse mentioning that Amazons fought against the Greeks in the Trojan War.

> The Amazons of Greek myth not only participated in fighting and controlled politics, but exclusively made up both the population and the fighting force. They supposedly lived in the area north of the Black Sea about 700 years before the fifth century BC when the historian Herodotus reports hearing stories about them. According to myth, Amazons were an all-female society of fierce warriors who got pregnant by neighbouring societies men and then practiced male infanticide (or sent male babies away). Supposedly they cut off one breast to make shooting a bow and arrow easier, although most artistic renditions do not show this. (The word 'Amazon' is no longer thought to derive from "without breast" although the word may have some connection with breasts. [28]

In *War and Gender* Goldstein mentions several archaeological sites from the early Iron Age that indicate the existence of *'women who rode horses, may have used weapons, and may even have had some degree of political influence, though probably not dominance.'* [29] For example, he mentions Jeannine Davis-Kimball's site (IV c. BC to II c. AD), near the Russian-Kazakh border, but according to Goldstein it is too far east to be an Amazon site.

Although some feminists embrace Amazon myths, the various representations of Amazons through history according to Goldstein have carried a mixed message because *'men use those myths to reinforce their own masculinity.'* [30] At this point Goldstein actually refers to the mix of objectification of women's body and dominatrix power figure that often recurs in the Amazon genre.

As the most obvious example of a contemporary take on the myth of Amazons with such type of ambivalent message, Goldstein mentions the British digital character 'Lara Croft' from the animation of Sony's Playstation 'Tomb Raider' game, and embodied on the film screens by the actress Angelina Jolie. [Fig. 27] According to Goldstein's own statistics, over half of the 25.000 internet sites that mentioned Lara Croft in 1999 contain the word 'nude'. [31] To interpret Lara Croft as a self-aware independent woman is not that easy, especially if one takes into account the design of her cyberbody. According to Goldstein, it resembles the costumes worn by "old school" Hollywood actresses from 50s and 60s, and with the accentuated breasts and hips, seems aimed to appeal more to male (or lesbian) viewers than to feminists. [32]

However, there are certainly other contemporary images of women warriors (for example, Tina Turner's embodiment of a post-apocalyptic woman warrior in the film "Mad Max II") that do not fall into the old trap of deliberately representing women warriors as desired objects for sexual pleasure, but Goldstein does not bring forward this kind of example.

The fact that the archival photographs from the Balkans do not show any tendency towards sexual objectification (because they are objectified in other ways, national for example) of the represented women is also a counter example to the thesis that the images of women warriors are only excuses for even stronger submission to the patriarchal codes of representation.

4. Aggression, negativity, and lack

The second set of questions that I would like to raise here does not necessarily stem from the previous line of thinking, but rather seeks to clarify some of the issues found in Goldstein's account of the relation between war and gender. These questions are far more complex because they deal with aggression and address the relation between aggressivity and gender difference. The notions of aggressivity, its origin, images, and corporeal or psychical manifestations are discussed in Lacan's famous article 'Aggressivity in

Psychoanalysis.' [33] His analysis needs a profound elaboration as it is difficult to present it thoroughly in only a short overview.

What needs to be emphasised here is that for Lacan, aggressivity played a very important role in the process of constituting the subject and is closely related with the "mirror phase" and "lack." According to Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, the mirror stage starts with the moment when the child recognises her/his own image in the mirror for the first time. All the infant can see until this moment are fragments of his/her own body. Actually, at the age of six months it is the first time that the child becomes able to sense a coherent identity through the specular image. At the same time, the new gained identity is actually based on the misrecognition of the fragmented self as completed and autonomous image. This fragmentation is based on another split, the split between self and its image in the mirror through which the self is constituted, in fact the exterior presence of the self as an other. [34]

The mirror stage is part of the imaginary order that for Lacan is inevitably a negative moment because it covers up the lack in the subject and plays an important role in the impossibility of acquiring a stable identity in the symbolic order.

This issue of negativity and aggressivity was also quite often linked with the differentiation of the genders, especially in Freud's writing. The notion of aggressivity itself that very predictably accompanies the images of war and warriors, in Freudian psychoanalysis is usually subjected to a very stereotypical set of constructs that necessarily lead to the linking of the notion of aggressivity with men, despite the fact that aggression is found both among men and women. The question of its gender-specificity, raised but unanswered by Sigmund Freud, remained on the level of just a common sense preconception: that the female passive principle is probably less porous to aggression than the male active principle. It is in the *'Three Essays on Sexuality,'* and particularly in the third part called 'Transformation of Puberty' that Freud faced the difficulty of gendering aggressivity. [35] Interestingly enough, in his view, put forward in this early essay, the libido is *'invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in man or in woman and irrespectively of whether its object is [a] man or [a] woman.'* [36]

In the long footnote in addition to this passage Freud tries to make a clear dichotomous distinction and differentiation between men and women according to their activity and passivity when addressing the activity and aggressiveness as typical male, but when he comes to the biological distinctions he mentions the examples found among the animals that, in the end, serves to blur the distinction. [37]

Of course, the issues of aggression and aggressiveness are to be found in many other writings by Freud, in particular in the writings on narcissism (i.e. in the 'Libido Theory and Narcissism,' and in the later renowned essay 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), (also whenever he tackles the issue of homosexuality and bisexuality). [38] Interestingly enough, perhaps the most influential essay with the issues of fear, aggressivity and sexuality was his very short writing 'The Medusa's Head.' [39]

At the very beginning of the essay, Freud makes an equation between decapitation and castration and he develops a whole theory out of this equation.

Freud's distinctions between male as active and more aggressive, and female as passive and less aggressive, for many writers were not particularly productive ones. Therefore, an attempt to understand why the text on Medusa became so important and frequently quoted would encounter many obstacles, especially when taking into account its rough leaps from one statement into another without any argumentation to be made. It also sounds strange how quickly Freud transfers from the notion of decapitation (mythological Medusa is not decapitated at all, and neither are her victims to be stoned after looking at) to the castration, interpreting the snakes in Medusa's head (after the curse of Athena her hair is turned into many snakes) as a kind of supplement for the castrated penis. [40]

The conclusion that the representation of Medusa in Greek art comes from the fact that Greeks were *'in the main strongly homosexual'* and therefore it was inevitable that they represent women as frightening and "appalling" is also questionable but it has to be acknowledged that it influenced many other writers to further exploration of this thesis. [41] Although one can find many inconsistencies in the text and criticise the provisional conclusion offered at the end, its model is in a way an important starting point for any psychoanalytical analysis of this topic.

It is also the Greek mythology and art that was the first to offer the images of women warriors: the mythic Amazons, women that were not only fighters, but according to Robert Graves, also created an exclusively female society consisting of women virgins that were hunters inhabiting the region of the Black Sea. [42]

What struck me while consulting several sources about these mythic women and some anthropological research on the Greek Amazons, was that the well known fact that in some of the sculptures and Greek vases representing Amazons they are shown lacking their left breast, was never, to my knowledge, questioned further. The usual pragmatic explanation was that their breast had to be cut in order to enable them to stretch easier the

bow and throw the arrow more accurately. But this has never been explored from a psychoanalytical point of view. [43]

I have not traced any attempt at a psychoanalytic interpretation of the aggression that those images of 'de-breasted' women inevitably activate and the plausibility of its relationship with its first appearance in early childhood in the period of weaning. Here, I want to refer to the notion of *bad internal objects,* as understood by Melanie Klein, especially in her *Envy and Gratitude* essay from 1957. Melanie Klein's account of *good* and *bad objects* is still a very important starting point of analysis of the behaviour amongst young children in psychoanalysis. In this context it is important is to note that it is the same breast of the mother that is accounted as *good* or *bad object* by her infant. Depending on the mother's presence or absence, the child feels her as a good or bad mother. Such a division, according to Klein, creates the first frustration among children. When feeling dissatisfied they attack the breast as a *bad object,* the same breast that once was *good* when it was nourishing them. [44]

It is the first dependent relation between the child and its mother, irrespective of whether it is a girl or a boy, that gives way to aggression when this first idealized relation gets disturbed for the first time. More precisely, at the first moment that the inevitable period of weaning has to start, it is seen as a deprivation of love and as a rupture in the established love relation so that the loving object – the mother's breast thus becomes the *bad object* and a certain relation of hate provokes in the child the drive to bite or even to scoop off the *bad breast:*

> If we consider that deprivation increases greed and persecutory anxiety, and that there is in the infant's mind a fantasy of an inexhaustible breast which is his greatest desire, it becomes understandable how envy arises even if the baby is inadequately fed. The infant's feelings seem to be that when the breast deprives him (her), it becomes bad because it keeps the milk, love, and care associated with the good breast all to itself. He hates and envies what he feels to be the mean and grudging breast. [45]

The images of Amazons are images of half naked women, shown dressed in *chiton* that was deliberately slipping from the left shoulder in order to emphasize the lack (according to Marina Warner's *Maidens and Monuments)* of one breast. [46] They were to be

virgins, without children, hunters and warriors, constantly dynamic and, in order to survive, very strong and aggressive.

How are these images linked with the images of warriors from the Balkans of the nineteenth century rebellions against the Ottoman Empire? The ambiguous gender of the Macedonian, Bulgarian, Romanian, or Serbian women is not a result of an internal, individual problem with gender identity and difference for each of the women who decided to be soldiers. It is obvious that women warriors (similarly to the social practice of "sworn virgins" discussed in the chapter one), are not cases of individual identity crisis but they are "symptoms" of a well spread phenomenon. Even if some of them were the outcome of a certain individual unease with one's own gender, today it is almost impossible to trace any proof for any form of a mistaken identity among these women.

It is the life and the 'profession' of a warrior, not a very feminine one, that links these different sets of images of different ethnic and cultural provenance. The argument in favour of "real existence" or "authenticity" is not essential: the fact that there are no certain historic documents confirming the existence of Amazons, while there is a proof of the existence of Balkan women warriors, does not necessarily make a significant difference. Namely, the images of both phenomena do exist and the reasons for their emergence are to be discussed here.

According to E. Hobsbawm the Balkan *haiduk* band (Serb. četa) was *'an abnormal social unit'* because it lacked family life, women, children and land or any other property:

> The haiduk ballads sing of men whose swords were their only sisters, whose rifles their wives, and who would shake hands silently and sadly as the četa broke up, to disperse as lost individuals to the four corners of the earth. Death was their equivalent to marriage, and the ballads constantly speak of it as such. [47]

Hobsbawm mentions that unlike *krdžali*, Ottoman disbanded soldiers who by the end of eighteenth century carried their own harems, *haiduks* did not have women or families around. However, he quotes the ballads who acknowledge some women who fought and even became leaders, *voivode*. [48] *'But it seems that for the time of their haiduk life, these runaway girls were men, dressed in men's clothes, and fighting like men.'* [49]

The breasts that in the case of half-naked Amazons were cut off, in the cases of images of the nineteenth century Balkan woman warrior were made invisible by the

clothing. Due to the male design of the uniforms that were covering any female body curves, the breasts became inevitably absent, covered with the inelegant design and the thick weave of the fabric.

The woman in war could not be simultaneously represented as a good mother: while being absent, she becomes a *bad object*. The absence of the *good object* was the inevitable sacrifice in order to enter the family of male warriors. Klaus Theweleit, in the context of the discussion about the Nazi army, argues that the army offered a 'new form of nuclear family' to the young and lonely male soldiers, with the Fuhrer as a new father. Having in mind Theweleit's account of the 'white terror' and similar psychoanalytical interpretations of Nazi soldiers' fear from women, the strict exclusion of women fighters from combat within the Nazi forces mentioned by Goldstein becomes easier to comprehend. [50]

The military, but not militant women in these images were deprived of their femininity despite the fact that this probably had nothing to do with any problems with their sexual identity or their individual gender attitudes. While their bodies were subjected to a certain visual aggression, being deprived of feminine features, these women became a part of a military aggressive group fighting against the enemy. This double movement is one of the main sources of ambivalence that is emphasized by the visual confusion and the problems of identification of the gender of the figures in the photographs.

Having said that, the most important question that remains unanswered would be how all these women from the late nineteenth century, namely, the period of the centralized and patriarchal family, when in the Balkans women could not even think about any kind of rights, would come to the idea of giving up their family life and accept the war. The fact that this is taking place simultaneously to the suffragettes' struggles, that according to Lisa Tickner in her *The Spectacle of Women* and the chapter "Militant Women" were mocked as being be women-less, may be a partial answer. [51] The socialist movements and revolutionary ideas in the West were not unknown among Balkan intellectuals and leaders of the uprisings. However, the suffragettes' ideas were not widely spread and were overshadowed by the more urgent struggles for independence from the Ottomans.

Fighting in the uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, in order to liberate and establish a free state, was the dream of the rebellions in the Balkan region, most of them men, with clear ideas about the importance of fighting for the establishing of the national identity. My argument would be that in such a battle for gaining and establishing the distinctive national and cultural identity and nation-state, women had another battle to fight – the battle of independence of their own gender identity. Unfortunately, it seems that at

that time this struggle could only be fought indirectly and individually. Paradoxically, through cross-dressing and fighting in the war for freedom from the symbolic authority of one patriarchal state (the Ottoman Empire), these women entered the fight for establishing another patriarchal order, the nation-state. However, regardless to the failure of the uprising and the deferred constitution of an independent state, women started the modification of the patriarchal order of representation.

The images of women warriors or women depicted with flags, acting as imagined leaders, ironically are only women that had sewn the flags and thus hide a very important and inevitable paradox. These images, often distributed as postcards, were a part of the imaginary repertoire that played an important role in re-enforcing the phantasm of nation-state as one the main motive for the rebellions against the Ottomans. However, simultaneously, they became an important part of the long process of fighting for the rights of women to certain images, meanings and powers, rights to be an equal part of the representational system. These images are inevitably giving way to their interpretation as the first signs of invariant representations of gender difference in the Balkans.

5. Images of women warriors as agency

According to McNay most feminist concepts are still premised upon notions of patriarchal domination and

> do not explain sufficiently the types of behaviour and action exhibited by men and women in their negotiation of complex social relations. In short, underlying the move away from what are regarded as relatively ahistorical theories of patriarchy and female subordination is an attempt to re-conceptualise agency which, in feminist theory, is often formulated as explanations of how gender identity is durable but not immutable phenomenon. [52]

Mc Nay argues that according to psychoanalysis woman's entry into the symbolic is always determined by a double negativity or a "masquerade". She obviously refers to the work of Joan Riviere. In her famous article 'Womanliness as a Masquerade,' first published in 1929 in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 9 (1929): 303-313, Joan Riviere interpreted femininity as a *masquerade*. In her view, women often hide behind the mask of femininity from fear of expressing their non-feminine qualities. She suggests

that there is no difference between a "genuine womanliness" and the "masquerade". The identity constitution appears to be always already trapped by patriarchal dominance. Femininity in Riviere's text is assumed to be *'worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it – much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not the stolen goods.'* [53]

The central claim in McNay's *Gender and Agency* is that the recent theoretical work on identity remains burdened by an *essentially negative understanding of subject formation* and her main question is *'how social power may be composed of other norms and relations, which may reinforce or conflict with patriarchy.'* [54]

She states that *'the predominance of a primarily negative paradigm of identity formation – of subjectification as subjection – comes from poststructuralist emphasis on the subject as discursive effect'*, a theme that was common to both Foucaultian constructionism and Lacanian psychoanalysis. [55]

By quoting Foucault's claim that *'the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty'* McNay emphasizes that Foucault influenced a great deal of theorists who elaborated the process of identity construction by privileging the negative moment of subjection. Within constructionists circles the subject is understood as being formed through *'an originary act of constraint'* which, for McNay does not offer a broad enough understanding of the dynamics of subjectification. [56]

In this context, if power is always already patriarchal, McNay underlines that it is unclear how any position outside of the "phallocentric matrix" could be acquired. For example, in the context of my research, if one accepts such a negative and hegemonic perception of patriarchy, all of these cases of women warriors, "sworn virgins", or other borderline gender phenomena, would have been impossible to understand and interpret.

Furthermore, McNay questions the extent to which the idea that the individual emerges from constraint can offer any understanding of the agency and the dynamics of subjectification. Actually, she objects to the main contention of the 'negative paradigm' that *'coherent subjectivity is discursively or symbolically constructed'* because this idea of discursive construction according to her becomes a form of determinism that holds the subject as essentially passive. She calls for overcoming of the symbolic determinism of the negative paradigm by *'a dialogical understanding of the temporal aspects of subject formations.'* [57]

Unravelling some of these dialogical relations replaces the stasis of
determinist models with a generative logic which yields a more persuasive
account of the emergence of agency. The main implication of this generative
logic for a theory of agency, which is taken up in this book, is that it yields
an understanding of a creative or imaginative substrate to action. It is crucial
to conceptualise these creative or productive aspects immanent to agency in
order to explain how, when faced with complexity and difference,
individuals may respond in unanticipated and innovative ways which may
hinder, reinforce or catalyse social change. [58]

In McNay's opinion

a more rounded conception of agency is crucial to explaining both how
women have acted autonomously in the past despite constructing social
sanctions and also how they may act now in the context of process of gender
reconstructing. I also argue that attendant on the conceptualisation of a
creative dimension to agency are renewed understandings of ideas of
autonomy and reflexivity, understood as the critical awareness that arises
from a self-conscious relation with the other.[59]

Judith Butler also emphasised that the symbolic order has to re-gain its social
meaning rather than insisting on the pre-social structure of the psyche. [60]
However, McNay favours the ambiguities and dissonances that exist in the way that both
men and women occupy masculine and feminine positions, and that according to her are
reciprocally available to both (something that is not obvious in Butler's writing). She also
criticises Bourdieu's work for his views that the subordinate position of women means that
women basically remained complicit in these games and thus participate in their own
subordination and serve as "flattering mirrors" to the games of men. Although the exclusion
from the field of masculine privilege accords women a certain insight into masculinity - the
'lucidity of the excluded' – she objects to Bourdieu's inability to recognise potential
dislocation and instabilities on the part of individuals that can destabilise the monolithic
account of the reproduction of gender relations. [61]

In McNay's view, it should be acknowledged that even though feminists distance themselves from the patriarchal schemes of psychoanalysis, it was Jacques Lacan's tripartite system, of symbolic, real, and imaginary, that led many feminists to conclude that masculinity is as imaginary as femininity. For Lacan, the formation of sexual identity was not determined by anatomy and is not a biological phenomenon but is rather a part of the symbolic order situated within the language, a kind of continuum of unstable positions that are available to be occupied by both women and men in different daily or radical situations. Moreover, his analysis of the symbolic helped feminists to understand that the attempts to occupy the position of the masculine must result in parallel to a certain extent of aggressivity and feminisation.

Interestingly enough, Goldstein shares similar views when he states that war victims are often "feminised", castrated, or sodomised, only in order to overcome the possible failed expectations from the side of masculine male warriors. [62] The understanding of the conditions of emergence of subversive behaviour and the conceptualisation of political agency is at the core of understanding phenomena such as women warriors or women terrorists that deconstructed the dichotomy of domination/resistance. Various theorists have tried to deconstruct this dichotomous relation with notions such as *regulated liberties* (Bourdieu) or *field* (Butler). Nevertheless, McNay claims that some constructionist theories of reflexive transformation overestimate the relevance and the extent of the expressive possibilities of the images available to both men and women. *'The questioning of conventional notions of femininity does not arise just from identification with a greater array of alternative images of femininity, but from tensions inherent in the concrete negotiations of increasingly conflictual female roles.'* [63]

McNay insists that any critical understanding of the process of identity formation cannot take place during the direct instantiation of the subject within symbolic structures. *'Reflexivity in the sense of self-conscious shaping of identity would presumably involve a greater degree of cognitive expectation than the notion of direct instantiation.'* [64] McNay is right that the burden of poststructuralist theories is their preference for demonstrating the constitution of a fragile subjectivity through contradiction, conflict, and exclusion and not towards explaining how, despite the fragmented subjectivity, individuals are able to act autonomously. Therefore, I point to the importance of the access and the examination of the existing radical images of gender difference as a relevant starting point towards a better understanding of these unique phenomena: in other words, how the agency of self-reflexivity and self-awareness was put in motion by certain women in spite of the

patriarchal order. This is an important aspect of my archive of *becoming-gender-difference*. In the Balkans, certain types of images untypical of patriarchy do exist, but they are often neglected and overlooked. Only through a constant re-thinking of these images, is it possible to re-inscribe the stereotypical understanding of patriarchy.

Mc Nay's critique of Lacanian triadic system of Boromean knots between the real, imaginary, and symbolic, is based on Cornelius Castoriadis' critical interpretation of these concepts. She finds Castoriadis' "imaginary institution" for the construing of psyche more relevant than the psychoanalytically overestimated realm of the symbolic. What Castoriadis objects to in Lacan, is his failure to capture the constitutive nature of the radical imagination in the formation of the psyche. Cornelius Castoriadis offers a kind of alternative to Lacan's theory of identity formation (around a lack) suggesting that identity is rather formed

> around originary capacity for figuration – the radical imaginary [...] This idea counters the tendency of the negative paradigm towards symbolic determinism by suggesting that the relation between the psyche and the social be understood as one of mutual inherence and interdependence. [65]

Castoriadis's understanding of the notion of the imaginary differs from the Lacanian negative conception of it, wherein *'the subject to become a subject must necessarily introject the uniform, repressive law of the father.'* [66] In Castoriadis's opinion, the Lacanian imaginary does not explain what motivates the infant to identify, invest and recognise itself in the mirror. In McNay's reading of Castoriadis his concept of 'imaginary institution' is a *'subsequent evolution of the subject,'* or more precisely, *'the process through which the subject is instituted as an individual within the socio-historic realm.'* [67]

For McNay, the final consequence of the understanding of the symbolic as repressive is that the concept of agency is confined to an invariant logic of displacement that does not recognise the extent to which the symbolic is composed of conflicting resources that may contribute to new formations of future subjectivities. As long as in the psychoanalytical and other poststructuralist theoretical frameworks the subject is a passive and submissive entity trapped beneath the oppressive rule of society, there is not much room left for positive notions such as creativity, agency, and change.

The necessity of maintaining the distinction between the symbolic and the social, and/or between the symbolic constructions of femininity and the actual lives of women, is

significant for the reconstruction of the feminine imaginary that eludes the existing patriarchal order and the constraints of femininity within this order. The historicity and, therefore, inherent instability of identity prevents its full institution and points to the ethical reworking of identity. This dialogical notion of temporality, of a past that cannot be fully recollected, which yields a notion of futurity undetermined by the already actualised past is inherent in the Lacanian notion of the 'future anterior' and is central to various definitions of ethical feminism, for example, Drucilla Cornell's ideas based around a re-exploration of the past. [68]

6. Archive as a lack

> There is an imaginary universe where one meets the armed woman... Did the Amazon exist? She may have been fantasy, or historized reality- I know nothing about it. In the most ancient stories, women go forth to meet men as equals in the exercise of power and war, and this always turns into love. I would like to know who "in truth" the "author" of this story is.' [69]

The photograph of a woman in a partisan uniform standing between two sculptures is difficult to read unless the story of its production is told in detail. The photograph is not a historic image of a woman warrior – but it is a contemporary art project by the artist Milica Tomić titled *Zagreb Remembers*, 2000. [Fig. 28] She staged this photograph after being invited to contribute to the public art project called "Erlauf Remembers" and it was part of the series of billboards with different local people taking the same post. The project was organised in Erlauf, the small town in Austria that was simultaneously liberated by American and Soviet soldiers during World War II. To celebrate the anniversary of the victory over fascism among the invited artists were the American artist Jenny Holzer and the Russian artist Oleg Komov.

Tomić's work actually takes place in the space of Komov's work: a three part sculpture of two soldiers and a girl who gives flowers to the liberators of her city. She actually replaces the figure of the girl. It is not certain whether Tomić with her work questions the stereotypical representation of Eastern art with deconstructing the work executed in socialist realistic fashion but what is certain is that her work deals with the need of recollecting and representing the past. Her ambivalent position, while standing in-between two armies, in-between East and West, lends itself to various interpretations.

What can one gain from this archive of images of 'representations of representations'? The meaning of this photograph is not fixed: the woman in uniform had never fought, the sculptures of men warriors are even more ambivalent, referring both to historic past and to the unpleasant period of socialist art history. There is no truth in this photograph. The only certain effect it has is that it activates the memory and questions the past.

The woman dressed in a partisan uniform supplements the *lack* - the absence of an image of a woman from the heroic sculptural representation of the moment of liberation. Regardless as to who rescued the village, the question that inevitably arises when looking at the public sculpture of Komov is why the represented soldiers have to be men. Instead of the image of a young innocent girl who is there only to praise the victories of the men soldiers (still a stable patriarchal image) the artist inhabits the position of an equally engaged female figure. She stands there in-between the soldiers but she does not look at the soldiers, as it was in the case the sculpture of the girl. She stands frontally and directs her gaze directly to the audience, aware of the relevance of her newly established position. By so doing, Tomić in a way *'writes her self'*, 'she *puts herself into the text-as into the world.'* [70]

In order to get to the activation of the recollection and reconsideration of the past Tomić often engaged in different kinds of performative actions casting herself in different roles in her staged photographs and videos. *'What all of these depend upon is memory, and it is this which engages the conceptual and the affective in her work. There is a gap between remembering one's own past and remembering a public past, a learned history, and both of these are distinct from memory as affect.'* [71]

In fact, the work of Tomić re-writes this memory as if she, a woman warrior, has always been there.

<p align="center">***</p>

The urgency of investigating the ambivalent and conflict-laden nature of the images of women engaged in warfare is even more emphasised today, in a contemporary world bombarded with a much more frequent circulation of images through printed, electronic, or digital media. When tackling some of the most radical contemporary images of women warriors, the media images of female terrorists, Irit Rogoff wrote:

Traditional understandings of femininity and of terrorism, it could be said, would make both unconceivable to think of as inhabiting the same subject. Thus terrorism became not just a political abject but also one of the natural order of nurturing women and the domestic regulation of the family, a double abhorrence. In the same vein, this unimaginable duality would be used to make them, the women, monstrous and unthinkable. Woman, the over determined and over invested sign of femininity, becomes in the instance of this popular reception of numerous political movements, both the marker of its ultimate rebellion and of its greatest tragic loss; the submission to a patriarchal order of both state and family. Equally, it is the marker of the most extreme form of liberation, a literal smashing of those constraints. [72]

The participation of women warriors in combat and wars might not be the right way to transform society and to erase the social inequalities between women and men. However, the representations of women who fought in the past in different contexts can be important for similar reasons to those mentioned by Rogoff in reflection on the importance of the images of women terrorists:

> Perhaps their constant presence among us as image referents, is precisely not to do with the impossibility of "woman" and "terrorist" co-existing, but with the possibility of regaining a semblance of the critical ambivalence and scepticism which characterised their political movement, propelled them to action and communicated itself to so large a public. [73]

Rogoff points to the important effect of the circulation of these recurrent images and the 'unexpected connections and legitimations' they may have in future, *'unyoked from a moralising discourse on femininity.'* [74]

It is a range of different questions that recurrently arise, questions similar to the ones that Hélène Cixous asked when questioning the reasons for writing ancient stories about Amazons. She actually calls for a re-writing of these stories, for coming to terms with writing-self. [75]

What if the whole archive of women represented as warriors was to function as a kind of horrifying Medusa? Whether the images were to prevent the possible defeat by

"frightening" the enemy with images of stiffened women (perhaps representing castrated men), or were to reinforce the national liberation movements with circulating the information of the all-embracing uprisings, these images supplement a certain *lack*. If the archive of the images of women warriors stands for a *lack* it is not the lack that is an outcome of the castration, as was the case of Medusa's head. On the contrary, it is the lack within the patriarchy itself, the always already existing possibility for a reversed patriarchal order.

The archive of images of women warriors inevitably opens up a possibility, a crack within the patriarchal order of society and history. Regardless of the initial reasons for the taking of these photographs and for their distribution and circulation, they are continuously having an inevitable impact on cultural memory, filling the lack of representations of gender difference. [76]

NOTES:

[1] Drucilla Cornell, 'What is Ethical Feminism,' Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange, ed. By S. Benhabib (London: Routledge) 1995, 86.

[2] Hélène Cixuos, 'The Laugh of the Medusa,' (1975) *Feminism – an anthology of literary theory and criticism,* trans. Leith Cohen and Paula Cohen, ed. Robyn R. Warhol, and Diane Price Herndl (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1997) 347.

[3] The first smaller rebellions against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans date as far back as the late eighteenth century, but the first more organized uprisings took place in the nineteenth century. For example, in Macedonia there were three major uprisings against the Ottoman regime following the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78: The Razlovci Uprising, May 1876; The Kresna Uprising, October 1878; and The Ilinden Uprising of August, 1903. On August 2, 1903 (July 20 in the Old Calendar), the Ilinden Uprising was launched on the Orthodox Feast of St. Ilija's (or Elias). Its goal was to obtain autonomy for Macedonia. The Ilinden uprising was actually one of the last unsuccessful uprisings in the region before the dissolution of the Empire and its consequence were the most severe for the local population.

[4] The Brothers Janaki Manaki (1878-1948) and Milton Manaki (1882-1964) were real travellers that moved around in several different countries in the Balkans. They were born and they started their photographic activities in Greece, in their village Avdela but in 1904, they moved to Bitola (at that time part of Eastern Rumelia province of Ottoman Empire, today Macedonia). In 1905, they built their photographic studio where they took most of the photographs discussed here, until 1916 when the studio was destroyed during the World War I bombardments. In 1905, they also bought the first cine-camera in the Balkans in London and later built one of the first cinemas in the region.

[5] *The Creation of The Brothers Manaki* (Skopje: Archive of Macedonia and Matica Makedonska), 1996 is one of the rare comprehensive publications with biographical details and texts about different aspects of the photographic careers of Milton and Janaki Manaki.

[6] The majority of family photographs have the usual *pater familias* composition wherein the oldest man in the family sits in the middle, surrounded by the other family members. The other most frequent compositions are married couples or single-sex groups

of friends. However, there are family photographs with the oldest woman sitting in the middle of the group.

[7] "A.S.O.S." is an acronym of "as seen on screens". It is also a name of a well known lucrative Internet website that sells fashion merchandises, claiming that its stocks copies the personal fashion styles of celebrities. 17 July 2005 <www.asos.com>.

[8] While looking at many different series of photographs showing women in different contexts, I came across few records about the first women photographers in the Balkans. Although my research was not focused on women photographers, I want to mention here for example the fact that the first photographer in Romania having a studio in Bucharest was actually a woman: Wilhelmine Prietz had a studio in the famous street Calea Victoriei as early as 1843. Charlotte de Szathmary (active between 1872-1887), the daughter of the Romanian photographer Carol Pop de Szathmary, was also a photographer who won a medal at the Universal exhibition in Vienna in 1873 (according an interview with Emanuel Bădescu (curator at the The Library of the Academy of Science, the Print Department (Cabinet d'Estampe), 15 August 2001). From 1892, there is a record of Raina Keremidcieva, a woman photographer from Ruse, Bulgaria, winning a golden medal at the Plovdiv exhibition (Boev 114). Later, in Bulgaria there were several other women running photographic studios under the name of their husbands (Ottoman law prohibited any independent businesses to women). The presence of women in this profession at this early stage of the development of the photographic medium is usually interpreted as a direct result of the early deaths of men running the business, because of the over-exposure to the health damaging chemicals. There is an assumption that the Romanian Queen Mary might have had a photo camera because there are many photographs that look as self-portraits (according to the interview with Mihai Oroveanu, 27 July 2001, Bucharest).

[9] It should be stated that these several photographs were not kept together as a compact archive, but were systematized under the name of the particular woman, so that they could be found only through such an intentional research.

[10] Anastas Karastoyanov (1822-1880) studied photography in Belgrade with Anastas Jovanović (1817-1899), a Bulgarian photographer who lived in Belgrade (Boev 19-25).

[11] Linda Nochlin, *Representing Women* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 35.

[12] Nochlin 35.

[13] Nochlin 35-58.

[14] It seems that the distinction between the allegories of heroism and real heroic figures is vague and difficult to accomplish because more than being heroic, the images Nochlin interprets as representations of real historic figures also function as allegories.

[15] In the catalogue for the exhibition *1903-2003 Kresna Ilinden ASNOM*, organised by the Museum of Macedonia there are two photographs of this flag. One of them shows the flag alone and the other shows the flag carried by the insurgents. *1903 – 2003 Кресна Илинден АСНОМ*, каталог (Скопје: Музеј на Македонија, 2003) 50.

[16] In his article 'Signature Event Context' Jacques Derrida,1982 (309-330) discusses the first two lectures of J. L. Austin's book *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975). I will go back to the "success/failure" of the performative speech acts in the chapter four in which I focus on the case study of the Queen Marie, the Romanian Queen that was probably taking photographs herself. There are hundreds of images of Queen Marie dressed in a Romanian uniform, as a nun, or in a national Romanian folk costume.

[17] Derrida, *Margins* 324.

[18] Derrida, *Margins* 325.

[19] Derrida, *Margins*, 325.

[20] According to Constantin Săvulescu in his article 'The first photographic reportage' in Journal of Photography, 16 (March 1973): 13, the Romanian pioneer photographer Carol Pop de Szathmary (1812-1887) took the first war photographs on the fronts of the Ottoman/Russian - Crimean War in 1854 and in Ottoman/Russian war of 1877-1878.

[21] Although by the 1870s the time of exposure was already cut to less than a minute, the process of processing of the film and development of the prints was still complicated enough and therefore war photography was still rare. The conditions on the battlefields would hardly allow documentation of direct combat. However, there were some courageous photographers from the Balkan region of that period who recorded war events, for example the already mentioned Romanian pioneer photographer of Hungarian origin, Carol Pop de Szathmary or the Bulgarian photographers Anastas Karastoianov and his sons Ivan and Dimitar Karastoianov (Petar Boev 80-83).

[22] Interestingly enough, it has only recently been revealed that the first films ever made about the Ilinden uprising were actually staged in the film studio "Pathe Freres Company" near Paris. This means that the scenes were performed by actors and directed according to a screenplay. The photograph published in the Company catalogue, gives an

impression that the event was convincingly reconstructed in terms of contents, scenery and costume design. The film was titled *The Massacres in Macedonia* (Massacres de Macedoine) and was filmed by Lucien Nonguet for the Pathe Brother Company (Pathe Freres) - France. The intention of the director was to reconstruct the reprisals of the Ottoman army and police over the Macedonians. No print of this film has been found yet, but according to the newspapers of that time the audience could see the scenes: "Ambushed rebels", "Rebels' leader against Turkish slavery", "Dynamite raid of the eastern express". Besides France, "The Massacres in Macedonia" was screened in Great Britain too, but under the title "Turkish Brutalities" (Atrocites Turques). See: 'Chronology,' Macedonian Cinema Information Centre, 2 September 2005 <http://www.maccinema.com/e_hronologija_detali.asp>.

[23] Srdja Pavlovic gives the best references of the term *haiduk* in his article *'The Mountain Wreath: Poetry or Blueprint for the Final Solution,'* 18 Nov. 2004 <http://www.univie.ac.at/spacesofidentity/Vol_4/_HTML/pavlovic.html>. (note 14) *'The term Hajduk (Haiduk) has a complex structure whose semantics have varied in time and depended on constantly shifting power relations in the Balkans. During the Ottoman rule in the region, Hajduks were "...individuals accused of crimes or protesting injustice," who would then "characteristically head for the hills or forests to live the life of the the haiduk, or outlaw. Both of these forms of resistance increased from the 17th century..."* (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 14, 1998: 675). *Morton Benson defined them as "anti-Turkish highwayman," while the Enciklopedija Jugoslavije states that Hajducija (living the life of Hajduks) '...during the Turkish period it had the form and character of highway-robbery...'* (see: Morton Benson, *Srpskohrvatsko-Engleski Recnik, Drugo preradjeno i dopunjeno izdanje*, Beograd: Prosveta, 1982 and *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, Vol. 3. Zagreb, MCMLVIII, Leksikogrfaski Zavod FNRY, 652-54).'

[24] Joshua S. Goldstein. *War and Gender – How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[25] Goldstein 10. This argument can be disputed in the context of Yugoslav partisans. Tito's Resistance Army included more than 100,000 women (partizanka) who made up more than ten percent of the whole Army. At least 2,000 women were promoted to officer ranks The first all woman partisan unit was formed in the Serbian village of Lika on August 25, 1942. At least 700 women volunteered for the 110 positions available. 'Women as Warriors in the 20th Century Lothene,' *Experimental Archaeology*, 5 May 2002 <http://www.lothene.demon.co.uk/others/women20.html>.

[26] Goldstein 83.

[27] Goldstein 19-20.

[28] Goldstein 11-12.

[29] Goldstein 13.

[30] Goldstein 17-19.

[31] Goldstein 19.

[32] Goldstein 19.

[33] Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits – A Selection* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1977) 8-29.

[34] Lacan, *Ecrits* 1-7.

[35] Sigmund Freud, 'Three Essays on Sexuality,' *A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Essays,* ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1905, S.E. Vol. II, 1978) 135-245.

[36] Freud 1978, S.E. Vol. II, 219.

[37] Freud 1978, S.E. Vol. II, 219-210. ff. 1: *'It is essential to understand clearly that the concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine', whose meaning seems so unambiguous to ordinary people, are among the most confused that occur in science. It is possible to distinguish at least three uses. "Masculine' and 'feminine' are used sometimes in the sense of activity and passivity, sometimes in a biological, and sometimes, again, in a sociological sense. The first of these three meanings is the essential one and the most serviceable in psychoanalysis. When, for instance, libido was described in the text above as being 'masculine', the word being used in this sense, for an instinct is always active even when it has a passive aim in view. The second, or biological, meaning of 'masculine' and 'feminine' is the one whose applicability can be determined most easily. Here 'masculine' and 'feminine' are characterized by the presence of spermatozoa or ova respectively and by the function proceeding from them. Activity and its concomitant phenomena (more powerful muscular development, aggressiveness, greater intensity of libido) are as a rule linked with biological masculinity; but they are not necessarily so, for there are animal species in which these qualities are on the contrary assigned to the female. The third or sociological, meaning receives its connotation from the observation of actually existing masculine and feminine individuals. Such observations shows that in human beings pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found either in a psychological or a biological sense. Every individual on the contrary displays a mixture of the character- traits belonging to his*

own and to the opposite sex; and he shows a combination of activity and passivity whether or not these last character- traits tally with his biological ones.'

[38] Sigmund Freud, 'Libido Theory and Narcissism,' *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,* ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1917, S.E. Vol. XVI. 1978) 412-430; Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle,' *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1920, S.E. Vol. XVIII, 1978) 7-61.

[39] Sigmund Freud, 'Medusa's Head,' *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works,* ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1922-1940) S.E. Vol. XVIII, 1978, 273-274.

[40] For a feminist critique of Freud's account of the castration and lack, as well as its link with the gaze, as conceived within French feminist circles during the seventies, see: Luce Irigaray, (1974), 'Another "Cause" – Castration,' *Feminism – an anthology of literary theory and criticism,* ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Price Herndl, Diane (Houndmills: Macmillan Press,1997) 430-437 (from *The Speculum of the Other Woman,* trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) and Hélène Cixuos, 'The Laugh of the Medusa,' (1975) 347-362. Irigaray in her text puts the emphasis on Freud's claim that the female sexual identity results from a "castration complex": the girl's envy directed to boys who have something she does not. When a girl becomes aware that she lacks a penis, her *lack* and desire for having one will push her to submit to the social patriarchy. Irigaray suggests that for Freud the woman is defined by this "having nothing." For her, *'nothing to be seen is equivalent to having no thing' that in fact means having 'no being and no truth'* (Irigaray, 1985 48).

[41] Freud 1978, S.E. Vol. XVIII, 274.

[42] Lyn Webster Wilde, *On the Trail of the Women Warriors* (London: Constable, 1999). References to the Amazons can be found in most books concerned with images and history of women warriors as Lisa Tickner's *The Spectacle of Women,* Marina Warner's *Monuments and Maidens* etc. and most of them refer to Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin,1984).
Sharon W. Tiffany, and Kathleen J. Adams, *The Wild Woman: An Inquiry into the Anthropology of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1985).

[43] Sharon W. Tiffany, and Kathleen J. Adams, *The Wild Woman: An Inquiry into the Anthropology of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1985).

[44] Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude and other works 1946-1963*, (London: Virago Press, 1988) 176-235.

[45] Klein 183.

[46] Marina Warner, *Monuments & Maidens – The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985) 267-293.   In her chapter "Slipped Chiton" Warner argues that a specific iconography device – the *slipped chiton* - has been deliberately developed by the Greek masters of sculpture in order to emphasize the lack of the left breast among Amazons. In the same line of thought, among certain writers a very problematic etymology has been accepted: they try to link the Greek word "mast" (Greek: "breast") to the name of the "Amazons" in order to translate it literally "breast-less", translating the "a" from the beginning of the word as a negation. According to Goldstein this etymology is questioned by more recent writers.

[47] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) 77.

[48] Hobsbawm 77-78.

[49] Hobsbawm 78.

[50] Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, Volume 2: Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, trans. Erica Carter and Chris Turner in collaboration with Stephen Conway (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) 373.

[51] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987) 205-213.
Tickner argues that the World War I and World War II were indirectly used by the suffragettes as a kind of advantage in their fights for voting rights while being active in the war campaigns, the civil, social and militant actions.

[52] McNay 2.

[53] Riviere 94. This masquerade in Riviere's view results from the frustrations during the early stage of the development of women, with *'the desire to bite-off the nipple sifts, and desires to destroy, penetrate and disembowel the mother and devour her'* followed by the desire *'to castrate her father with biting off his penis'* (Riviere 97-98).

[54] McNay 126.

[55] McNay 2.

[56] Michel Foucault, 'An Aesthetics of Existence,' *Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. by L. Kritzman (London: Routledge 1988) 50 qtd. in Lois McNay 2.

[57] McNay 4.

[58] (McNay 4-5)

[59] McNay 5.

[60] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge, 1993) 106, qtd. in McNay, 43.

[61] McNay mainly refers to Cornelius Castoriadis. *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press) 1987, 118.

[62] (Goldstein 356-380).

[63] McNay 69.

[64] McNay 65.

[65] McNay mainly refers to Cornelius Castoriadis. *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press) 1987, 118.

[66] The lack, according to Lacan, 'is real because it relates to something real' and that is what is lost. However, it is important to note that in his writing 'the phallus is a symbolic, not a literal, term, to which value accrues. Yet, the anatomical differences acquire significance because the actual penis plays a relevant role in the representation of lack, marking the castration in the symbolic order. The penis of the little boy lends itself to a kind of symbolisation of the phallus.' (McNay 127). For Lacan, the phallus is a signifier, an algorithm. The problem, however, is that the penis is not a phallus and, therefore, the boy struggles to have a phallus. Moreover, he recognises that his mother does not have a phallus. On the other, hand, the little girl does not posses the penis, which means that she has no means to represent her lack (Lacan 287-289).

[67] McNay 137.

[68] McNay 124.

[69] Hélène Cixous, *Coming to Writing and Other Essays,* trans. Sarah Cornell et. al., ed. Deborah Jenson, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) 173. The essay 'The Author in Truth' questions the authenticity of the stories about the Amazons, as written in ancient literature and their authors' motivation for such a mocking of women warriors.

[70] Cixous, *Coming to Writing* 347.

[71] Elizabeth Cowie, 'Perceiving Memory and Tales of the Other. On the Video Art of Milica Tomic,' *CAMERA AUSTRIA,* 72/2000, 14-16.

[72] Irit Rogoff. 'Engendering Terror' Geography and the Politics of Mobility, ed. Ursula Biemann (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2003) 60.

[73] Rogoff, *Engendering Terror* 62.

[74] Rogoff, *Engendering Terror* 60.

[75] Cixous, Coming to Writing 347.

[76] Irit Rogoff, 'Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Theory,' *Differences,* 4, 3. (1992): 35-66.

The idea of considering the whole archive as a possible 'horrifying Medusa' is an outcome of several discussions with Irit Rogoff and after comparing my experience of the archive with her specific experience in the Munich archive suggestively conveyed in her article on Gabrielle Munster's correspondence with Kandinsky.

Chapter Three

ARCHIVE OF VEILS/FOLDS/EVENTS

Where can one start a text about the veil, about the folded fabric that while covering one's identity creates endless inflictions, divides the space into manifold proliferated outsides and insides? Should this text start with un-folding its subject from the outside: from the macro-politics of the cultural, the religious, or the political realm of the issue of the veil, or should it start from the inside: from the micro-political space underneath the folds that veil female subjectivity?

One can understand the spatiality of the veil in the following ways:

a) as a space of the hidden truth that is not in possession of the woman as the truth. [1]

b) as the hidden space of the confined and erased female identity. [2]

c) as a protected and productive space for a new subjectivity to result despite this confinement. [3]

In fact, this text attempts to circumvent the danger of any division in outside/inside metaphors. Rather than focusing solely on the spatial and the visual appearance of the veil, in this text I am concerned with the veil structured as *event*. The *event* marks simultaneously the fold of the space and the time of the veil. I want to focus on the event and on the meaning of the "eventual" as it is formulated by Alan Badiou: *'having to do with an event.'* [4]

This text follows the veil as it folds and unfolds through spacetime.

1. Spatialisation of the veil

Several different conceptualisations regarding spatialisation of the veil should be mentioned here before starting to explore the importance of the *eventual* for understanding the veil:

a) The conceptualisation of woman as veiled truth is a romanticized Western metaphor that in philosophical tradition repudiates the possibility to attribute gnoseological or epistemological capability to women. It still entails a kind of modernist belief in only *one* truth and in one available epistemology that is not accessible to women. According to such assumptions, woman herself can be only a visualised and spatialised metaphor for the multilayered, veiled truth.

The Greek word for truth *alētheia* entails a presupposed relation with *apocalupsis* (disclosure, uncovering, unveiling, or revelation). This is the ultimate source for the understanding of truth as something that should be revealed, uncovered, and disclosed. The truth is thus imagined as a core hidden within the manifold and many layered structure to be reached at the end of the process of removing the layers. On the relation between the truth, its disclosure and the apocalyptic nature of this event Derrida says:

> Unveiling or truth, apophantics of the immanence of the end, or whatever comes down, finally, to the end of the world. Not only truth as revealed truth of a secret on the end or of the secret of the end. Truth itself is the end, the destination, and that truth unveils itself is the advent of the end. Truth is the end and the instance of the last judgement. The structure of truth here would be apocalyptic. And that is why there would be not any truth of the apocalypse that is not the truth of truth. [5]

b) The feminist critique of logocentric philosophical thought and of the long tradition of metaphorisation of woman usually focuses on the hidden phallogocentricism inscribed in such metaphors. A very rigorous critique of understanding femininity as unjustifiably opposite to rationality and logic (the position that derived due to the denied achievability of truth by women within the context of psychoanalysis and philosophy) is mostly developed by American and French feminism. [6] However, there is a fundamental risk in such a critique. It limits itself to circulating within the realm of belief in one truth. It certainly invests in something that it negates. It is again confined to a kind of mission that is prescribed to woman: to be included in the competition for acquiring the right to truth even though she is denied the access to it. To this feminist position, I shall return later in this text, when I will be discussing the veil(s)/truth(s). [7]

c) When it comes to a different interpretation of the veiled woman and her truth, some non-Western feminists emphasise the fact that women hidden behind the veils are actually more protected from the lust, the masculine gaze and the scopic regime. The space underneath the veil, according to such arguments, is a private space that women in Muslim countries are allowed in contrast to the over-exposed Western women, argue the non-Western feminists. [8] Moreover, the Muslim women that live in the West need such a space even more than when living in their own cultural environments (which are more familiar with the practice of the wearing veil). Another very complex argument, different from the

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Western feminists' demand that the veil should be abandoned, is developed by Leila Ahmed in her text 'The Discourse of the Veil.' [9] She criticises not only the feminists from the West, but also Eastern women for the uncritical acceptance of the arguments against the veil and its abandonment that, according to her, were originally based on *'a vague and inaccurate understanding of Muslim society.'* [10] In her opinion it was the Victorian colonial paternalistic establishment that

> appropriated the language of feminism in the service of its assault on the religions and cultures of Other man, and in particular on Islam, in order to give aura of moral justification to that assault at the very same time as it combated feminism within its own society [...] can easily be substantiated by reference to the conduct and rhetoric of colonizers. [11]

2. Veil(s)/Truth(s)

'It is woman who will be my subject,' is the promise that Derrida gives us at the beginning of his adventure in the wrapping of woman as truth in his *Spurs: The Nietzsche's Styles.* [12] At that very moment he fails to keep his promise: the dual implication of the word "subject" indicates to the reader that while emphasizing the fact that it is **he** who makes the woman his subject, he can hardly avoid the implication of positioning himself within the history of Western metaphysics that conceptualised truth as woman and where the woman is made subject when the male philosopher decides so. [13]

When Derrida aims to question the metaphorisation of the woman as truth and to dislocate truth from duality and violence of sexual domination, known from different philosophical systems within the vast context of Western philosophy, he tries to achieve this by introducing multiple truths and deconstructing each of them, but still negating that woman can achieve any of them:

> Because, indeed, if woman is truth, she at least knows that there is no truth that the truth has no place here, and that no one has a place for truth. And she is woman precisely because she herself does not believe in truth itself, because she does not believe in what she is, in what she is believed to be, in what she thus is not. [14]

But the metaphorical linkage between truth and woman underlies the *real*, necessitates a conception of truth, which would be its absolute representation. [15] Even when Derrida re-names, inaugurates 'woman' in subject it *'both assumes responsibility of the historical subjection of woman in philosophy and it displaces man as subject of philosophy.'* [16]

3. Veil(s)/Event(s)

The multiplied events that move and create the folds of the veil through time and space as a chain of turbulences can be understood as an agency that enable us to overcome the traps of the previous conceptualisations of the veil: as either a visual/perceptual obstacle on the path to truth (and as a means of preservation of the patriarchal order), or as a defensive mechanism that would serve to justify its own politics. The question of the spatial and timely construction of female subjectivity in the Balkans is marked by the question of the veil, but the veil conceived neither as a historic object of Oriental origin, nor as a universal obstacle to the woman/truth.

Although it is true that the veil in the Balkans was "imported" together with the colonial dominance of the Ottoman Empire, the object as such remained long after the Empire dissolved. Actually, it never disappeared completely. In fact, due to certain events it becomes more visible and actualised. It is the endless movement of the spaces through time produced by the folding of the time before or after an event, that actually structures the veil not as an object but as an event. [17]

The notion of "point event" in physics is more fundamental than are objects and properties. The term is closely related to the "event" and it was introduced by the physicist Hermann Minkowski in 1908. [18] All objects and events are made of "point events" in the spacetime. According to this theory "point event" is *'a spacetime point having some property other than those it has just by being in location of time.'* [19]

Such notion of an event differs from the common sense understanding of the phenomenon of event where the event entails infinitesimal duration, but also differs from its conceptualisation by different philosophers. The usual definition of the event as found in textbooks of philosophy *"whatever is temporally before something else"* was challenged by many philosophers, for example by Leibniz, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, Derrida, Deleuze, and Badiou, among others. [20] Perhaps the closest philosophical account approaching a common sense understanding of an event can be found in Bertrand Russell's and A. N.

Whitehead's definition from 1936 that is based on the assumption that *'all the events in spacetime have finite duration, [...] but still any finite part of an event is an event.'* [21]

For Deleuze the concept of event is interrelated with the concept of fold and according to him *'It can be stated that what is folded is only virtual and currently exists only in an envelope, in something that envelops it,'* and *'the inclusion or inherence is the final cause of the fold.'* [22]

The question that should be asked here is whether the event can be that "envelope." The veil can be understood as one of the eternal objects and the relation of the veil/fold to the event could eventually follow from Deleuze's statement: *'The eternal objects produce ingression in the event.'* [23]

According to such an understanding of the relation between the fold/veil and event there is a kind of retroactive and reciprocal impact of the fold and event entailed that causes "folds" in the past and resonates with a similar paradox to the one of the relation between the cause and effect (in Nietzschean terms).

Event 'a': Against the Veil

In 1908 (the same year as the *spacetime* concept was introduced in physics) a constructive co-operation between the local Christian female population and the Muslim women took place in Skopje, Macedonia (today Macedonia during that period was a part of the Ottoman Empire's province Eastern Rumelia). This resulted with the first protests against the wearing of the veil. There were approximately twenty protestors and some of them were imprisoned on that occasion. Today we know only the names of two friends, the Macedonian Rosa Plaveva and the Turk Nakie Bajrami, who participated in the protests and were imprisoned together. [24]

This particular event was a direct result of the Young Turks' Revolution and of the influence that the European socialist movements had among the Balkan female intellectuals. Both women used to be school teachers whose activities were informed by the programs of the women socialist movements and organisations of that period. Rosa Plaveva is even believed to have been in a direct communication with Rosa Luxembourg several years after the protests, and was said to be informed about the first international conference of women socialists in Stuttgart. [25]

The 1908 event demonstrates the very specificity of the Balkan situation. The constitution of different female subjectivities under such conditions stems from the greater turbulence in the region, and is not the effect of some isolated or particular event.

However, the women leading the protests sparked these negotiations within the manifold and conflicted patriarchy in the Balkans. The questions of class, and national and gender awareness, entangled as they were, created the background and general framework for these early struggles that could be fought by these rare agents of female subjectivities. These unique women had their shaped arguments and opinions that could be recognised as new and at the same time dangerous. In Deleuzean sense, they made a rupture within majority and also they stand up from the minority. [26]

While the encounter of different religions and cultures between the local Christian population and the Ottoman invaders was continuously taking place among their male representatives, the contacts among women of different origins were not very likely. Hoever, it took several centuries until a kind of partial identification with the invaders would happen to Balkan men. They underwent a process that can be interpreted as a kind of "Orientalisation": a process of re-definition of masculinity in the Balkans that became internalised during the five centuries of Ottoman rule.

The Balkan women, besides going through the same five-century period of the rule, underwent an entirely different process of subjectification. The confinement of the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters of the Ottoman rulers to their homes was not unique and culturally specific. The movements of Christian women in public were also restricted. Nevertheless, the fact that both Christian and Muslim women were not very active in public does not mean that they could never meet and interact with each other. Public places such as bazaars, hamams (Turkish baths) and schools were the social environments accessible to women of all origins for work or leisure, spaces where they could interact and communicate issues of common interest. Perhaps even the protests against the veil were conspired in one of the numerous hamams in Skopje of that period.

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In the exhibition *Čifte Amam I* that took place in Skopje in 1996 there was one work of art that included a veil. It was in fact a piece of white muslin put in a glass box that was divided into two parts. The fabric was put in the upper part of the box, above a typical man's (black and large) umbrella. The work's title '*I have forgotten my umbrella...*' was meant to refer the viewer to Jacques Derrida's book *The Spurs: The Nietzsche's Styles.*

The work of Liljana Gjuzelova (b. 1935) was deliberately installed in the female part of the fifteenth century Turkish bath, thus also referring to the ancient practice of

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seclusion of women and men in the public realm. However, even though *Čifte Amam* was divided between male and female sections, because of its size (it is believed to be the largest Turkish bath in the Balkans) it used to be one of the rare examples of baths that allowed to men and women to have a bath at the same time. The eroticised stories of hidden holes in the dividing wall (destroyed by the 1963 earthquake in Skopje) the forbidden gazes and the Orientalised and exoticised approach towards the venue is not in the focus of the artist though. It is the divided access to truth that motivates the artist to select the title, the objects, and Derrida's book as starting references.

Gjuzelova takes the umbrella and Derrida's quotation of Nietzsche's note (found after his death among his belongings) as a trigger for questioning the privilege that men have over philosophy and truth. For Derrida, the note of the forgetful philosopher is a means through which to discuss Heidegger's philosophical attempt to return *Being (Das Sein)* into philosophy because *Being* is a concept that (similarly to an umbrella) was in Heidegger's view forgotten by the philosophers. [27] However, the paradox of making a note about something that one has forgotten is also the framework of Derrida's discussion about truth, style and writing. He asks: *'How is it possible that woman, who herself is truth does not believe in truth?* [28] In his view, the sharp object of the umbrella is usually used as a metaphor for a style that belongs to man, in contrast to writing, that belongs to woman.

For Gjuzelova this sentence means something else. It opens up questions such as why is it the man who is assigned to ask the "big" questions about the truth, Being, or origin; why the position available to woman is only the position of the mysterious truth hidden underneath the veil; and why is it believed that she needs access to truth anyway.

For Gjuzelova it is more problematic that woman does not have access to writing, to thinking, to theoretical discourse in general. In her later works, the same artist goes back to this theme, referring to Cixous's "writing self" phrase, using it as a title for another work that she made in 2003. [Fig. 49] Gjuzelova's *Writing Self* consisted of texts written on paper patterns of clothes that were suspended on strings in the gallery of Open Graphic Art Studio in Skopje. The texts were referring to her father's tragic biography and the installation was a part of four-project series to be discussed in the chapter four.

4. The Balkan subject: Neither Eastern nor Western

When dealing with the East (the Balkans, although part of Europe, are usually considered as East due to the long history of being colonized by the Ottomans) academic discourses are mostly marked by the term of Orientalism, widely discussed and questioned during the seventies and eighties of the previous century, particularly after Edward Said's

book *Orientalism* was published in 1978. [29] Orientalism is a discursive phenomenon established in the West as a way to comprehend and represent the East as the Other of the West, and to reduce its complex and 'exotic' otherness within the framework of the definite order of Western intelligible and rational categories.

The notion of Orientalism, as it was conceived by Said, has usually been questioned because it neglects the heterogeneity of East. According to its critics, it undermines the complex entanglements that take place among the different cultures, ethnicities, or genders within the complex and unstable Orient and Oriental identity. Also, Said's critics emphasised the troubling status that the "real Orient" gained in Said's concept of Orientalism, one that is conceived both as a *'construct and real.'* [30] Therefore, Orientalism is a phenomenon where the East is regarded as an object of knowledge, with West assuming power of interpretation over it, and thus it becomes inferior, exotic and univocal Other.

Although acknowledging her gratitude to Said for some aspects of his *Orientalism,* the well known Balkanist scholar Maria Todorova has strongly criticised him for essentialising not only the East, but also the West. [31] In addition, when formulating the crucial thesis of her book *Imagining the Balkans,* she tries to distinguish Orientalism from the discourse on the Balkans, that she calls *Balkanism.* She starts out from the point of view that it is difficult to have a clear-cut definition of the term 'Balkan' in a historical, geographical and political sense. Todorova continues with her even more critical views on the application of the word Oriental in the Balkan context:

> Whenever employed, its persuasive power was based on its haziness in combination with emotive component. Moreover, it was used alongside other generalizing catchwords, of which "Oriental" was most often employed, to stand for filth, passivity, unreliability, misogyny, propensity for intrigue, insincerity, opportunism, laziness, superstitiousness, lethargy, sluggishness, inefficiency, incompetent bureaucracy. Balkan, while overlapping with "Oriental", had additional characteristics as cruelty, boorishness, instability, and unpredictability. [32]

In Todorova's view, the term "Balkan" is so vague and full of stereotypical classifications that its characteristics can also be applied to other regions and peoples. [33] She states that Balkanist discourse was, until now, mostly confined to journalism, and was

largely undeveloped as an academic discourse. Other differences, in her opinion, are related to geopolitical factors (e.g. the Balkans as a strategic region distinct from the Near or Middle East), and also due to the absence of a Western colonial legacy.

Furthermore, she reminds the reader that before the Ottoman Empire dissolved and succumbed to colonisation (the rule of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans had largely collapsed by 1912, starting with the proclamation of the Constitution following the Young Turks' Revolution in 1908, and ending with the Balkan Wars), the Ottomans were engaged in the continuous expansion of their territorial control in Europe and Africa. Having power over a big part of South Eastern Europe and North Africa, the Ottoman Empire was itself established as a colonial force. The Empire governed not only foreign lands, but also governed the inhabitants of these countries, the subaltern Others - so called 'raya' (Turkish: people).

The Balkans could mostly be distinguished according to its mainly Christian character, this being the main distinction from the Orient and its other religions. *'Finally, the construction of an idiosyncratic Balkan self-identity, or rather of several Balkan self-identities, constitutes a significant distinction: they were invariably erected against an 'oriental' other.'* [34]

In her book, so influential among Balkan scholars, Todorova quotes different sources that insist on an understanding of the Balkans as a region that is full of contradictions. *'In short, the Balkan Peninsula is, broadly speaking, land of contradictions. Everything is exact opposite of what it might reasonably be expected to be.'* [35]

Todorova tries to avoid entering in the trap of thinking in contradictions with employing Mary Douglas's notion of ambiguity from *Purity and Danger* when noting that *'unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity.'* [36] She argues that the "in-betweenness" of the Balkans due to their transitory character

are considered dangerous both being in danger themselves and emanating danger to the others. In the face of facts and ideas that cannot be crammed in pre-existing schemata, or which invite more than a single interpretation, one can either blind oneself to the inadequacy of concepts or seriously deal with the fact that some realities elude them. [37]

Especially influential among the balkanist scholar was her idea that *'this in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitionary character, could have made the simply incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other but as incomplete self.'* [38]

The difficulty and the relativity of the geographical delimitation of the Balkans can be exemplified with the anecdote that Slavoj Žižek re-tells whenever writing about the Balkans and the difficulty.

> It is as if one can never answer to the question: Where does it begin? For Serbs, it begins down there in Kosovo or Bosnia, and they defend the Christian civilisation against this Europe's Other. For Croats, it begins with Orthodox, despotic, Byzantine Serbia, against which Croatia defends the values of democratic Western civilisation. For Slovenes, it begins with Croatia, and we Slovenes are the last outpost of the peaceful Mitteleuropa. For Italians and Austrians, it begins with Slovenia, where the reign of Slavic hordes start.' [39]

The list ends with *'some conservative anti-European-Union Englishmen for whom, in an implicit way, it is ultimately the whole continental Europe itself that functions as a kind of Balkan Turkish global empire with Brussels as the new Constantinople.'* [40] Finally Žižek concludes with pointing to the Balkan paradox: *'So Balkan is always the Other: it lies somewhere else, always a little bit more to southeast, with the paradox when we reach the very bottom of the Balkan Peninsula, we again magically escape Balkan.'* [41] Instead of discussing further all the discursive problems deriving from the essentialisation of the Orient as Other in Orientalism as a concept, or other similar interpretations of the Balkans in balkanist theory, I want to move on. The fact that the Balkans is a region where the East met the West and vice versa and that for a long time the Balkans stood for the Orient, as a kind of milder or digested version of the Orient for the less adventurous, are already exhausted points.[42]

However, the usual metaphors of the Balkans as a bridge or crossroad are based on historic, geopolitical and cultural arguments. Therefore, instead of appropriating the concept of the Other where the East and West are understood as mutually dependant terms, but still isolated from each other, I choose the conceptualisation of the Balkans as *neither*. It is a different theoretical concept that results from all sorts of numerous encounters that were taking place during the Ottoman rule that escape simple definitions.

I am aware of the risk that it can be understood as a continuous negation of previous experiences but, in my view, *the neither* enables the construction of a different kind of subjectivity, especially among the local female population. Neither Western in its inherited culture (the five centuries of the Ottoman dominance became deeply embedded in the Balkan culture), nor completely Eastern-ised for its preservation of the Christian and Slavic origins, woman in the Balkans cannot be defined only through their own cultural background, regardless to their belonging any one of the Balkan ethnicities.

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At this point, I want to return to the apophatic logic of the concept of *the neither*. [43] The Aristotelian logical model where Self and the Other are mutually excluding each other through the either/or logic and the dialectical models attempting to overcome the binary logic with the category "both" - with these two terms being endlessly interchanged with one another (and thus still retaining the distinction of the other of the pair) are both circumvented by the concept of *the neither*.

There are certain important implications that emerge when attempting to apply the logical principles of apophatic theology to any discourse outside theology. It is not by accident that Jacques Derrida denied the affiliation of deconstruction with negative theology and stated that he refrains from accepting its methods although in many interpretations of his works his critics noticed that his concept of *différance* is based on denying what *différance* is not. [44]

One of the problems, perhaps the crucial one, in accepting the model of apophatic theology, derives from the assumption that there is always something undeterminable that escapes definition. In negative theology there is the assumption of *hyperessential being* (God) that lingers on the border between rational and mystical, with the ambivalent status of its concept that creates all sorts of epistemological problems if applied in philosophy: *'I thought I had to forbid myself to write in the register of 'negative theology', because I was aware of this movement toward hyperessentiality, beyond Being,'* said Derrida when answering why he doesn't want to be affiliated with apophatic theology. [45]

In order to avoid the traps of the possible interpretations of *the neither* as only another metaphysical concept it should be emphasised that through the process of successive negations a positive outcome can be still expected. This is not expected in a form of a positive definition of what *is* the moment, the event, or the space in which the

female subjectivity was constructed in the Balkans. Woman/neither should be understood as an agent for negotiating different aspects of subjectivity in the Balkans that arise through various cultural, social and political links with either West or East.

The definition of any of the two terms, West or East, is not given as a positive statement (this is....) but only through a chain of negation of what 'this' is not. There is no comfort of a resolution at the end but the pursuer of meaning is forced to follow the operation and to come to a conclusion through this motion of following the endless chain of negative determinations.

A similar procedure is applied by Alain Badiou in his attempt to define the subject without defining it in a positive way. He named this procedure *'Negative Delimitation of the Concept of the Subject':*

a) A subject is not a substance. If the word substance has a meaning, it designates a multiple that is counted as one in a situation. The intrinsic indiscernibility into which a generic procedure resolves excludes a subject's being substantial.

b) Nor is a subject an empty point. The void, which is a proper name of being, is inhuman and a-subjective. It is an ontological concept. In addition it is clear that a truth is realized as multiplicity and not as punctuality.

c) A subject is in no sense the organizing of a meaning of experience. It is not a transcendental function. If the word "experience" means anything, it designates presentation as such. Now a generic procedure, hinged as it is on the event that a supernumerary name qualifies, in no way coincides with presentation. We should also differentiate meaning and truth. A generic procedure realizes the post-eventual truth of a situation, but this indiscernible multiple in which a truth consists yields up no meaning.

d) A subject is not an invariant of presentation. The subject is rare in that the generic procedure runs diagonally to the situation. One could add that such subject is rigorously singular, being the generic procedure of a situation that is itself singular. The statement "There is subject" [il y a du sujet] is uncertain or haphazard: it is not transitive with respect to being.

e) A subject is neither a result nor an origin. It is the local status of the procedure, a configuration that exceeds the situation. [46]

Neither Western, nor Eastern: Within the framework of the national movements on the one hand, and the rebellions against the Ottoman Empire on the other hand, the construction of female subjectivity as a negation of the old subaltern woman actually never took place as a finalised model. Also, before the Young Turks' Revolution, the new construct of the self-aware woman among the Turkish women of the Ottomans also could not come to being through the negation of the veiled Ottoman woman because of all the obstacles and constraints prevailing in the other known social models. For example, one has to bear in mind all the problems with the construction of the female subjectivity in the West of that period.

While being faced with the danger from the different cultural entity that entailed all sorts of different policies towards women, it was inevitable that women started taking part in the local rebellions against the Ottomans. It was partly in order to protect the general religious and cultural specificity, but also the different mode of patriarchy. The struggle to preserve Christian and Slavic identity therefore was also an act of aiding the preservation of the already existing patriarchal order, only that there was a difference between the two patriarchal orders: the Christian and the Muslim one.

In this sense, the participation of women in the rebellions was ambiguous in its nature. On one hand, women leaving their families to assume the radical role of a woman soldier, on the other hand acting in the realm of the most conservative way to reproduce and confirm the patriarchal order. This would be the Neither-ness of the Balkan woman: neither an obedient family woman, nor a radical rebellion, as I have discussed in the chapter on women warriors.

When discussing the case of the Balkan situation and the construction of female subjectivity by the end of nineteenth century, the model of the Orientalist understanding of the East is inapplicable in attempting to explain the different phenomena that derived from the intertwining of the Christian and Islamic religion and the impact this had on cultures and on gender relations. It shows that Orientalism actually relies on its own definition, in a vicious circle of argumentation and that Orientalism as a moral negative of the West tells us more about the West than about the East. The correspondence or contradictions between the "actual" Orient and its representation are tackled by many theorists. [47]

For example, for Yegenoglu, *'the 'truth', identity, or 'reality' of the Orient as well as the declaration of its exteriority to discourse is constituted by the very discourse of Orientalism as founding principle of its claim to legitimacy.'* [48] In a remark *in passim*

about the Deleuzean concept of fold, Yegenoglu, as many in many other critiques of Western philosophy by feminists, focuses on Deleuze's *'overlooking of sexual (and cultural) difference in the fold/veil.'* [49]

The protest against the veil is an encounter, an event that marks the question of the veil with a quest for its disappearance, and simultaneously opens up a possibility for its duration and return. It also reveals the continuous existence, its *durée*, during the Ottoman rule in the Balkans without it being questioned by any institutionalised oppositional structure. The veil/event discloses its resistance to any discourse, to any completed truth about it and, although for that reason it became a powerful tool both of Western philosophy in the attempt to conceptualise it as the obstacle between the man and truth/woman, and of Western politics, by the same token it can be understood as the *neither*, as a kind of residue that always demands new and different attempts at interpretation. [50] Each event of appearance or disappearance of the veil, each time the veil is put on or taken off, a kind of restructuring, re-sedimentation or refolding of the spacetime takes place.

Event 'b': Performing the veil – *site event*

The photograph of a young unveiled Albanian woman, taken sometime in the early twentieth century in Bitola by Milton Manaki, the younger of the two brothers Manaki, in their studio in the 'Sirok sokak', marks an event itself: the event of the staging of the photograph as a photographic performance. [Fig. 29] It can also be understood as a *site event* (a term defined by Badiou) where the event of lifting the veil is determined by the site – the photographic studio. [51] In that sense the concept of event differs from the every day understanding of the event as something that happens independently of the space and only in a particular time sequence.

A young beautiful Muslim woman stands in front of the camera. She leans on a bamboo armchair that is strangely standing on two legs only; awry, and unstable, it makes us feel as both the chair and the woman can easily succumb any moment...
The photograph itself underlines this instability: it has a diagonal crack starting from the left upper corner going all the way down to the right corner. The small transparent tape so unwillingly visible in the bottom, witnesses the physical violence, the division of the image put together in order to reconstruct the original setting. The paper positive obviously was made only later, from the original broken glass negative.

Having her veil undone, the woman in the photograph smiles very discretely. Her smile reveals that she is not shy. Still, she knows that although showing her face at least she shouldn't look at the camera lenses directly. It is not only the taking off the veil that creates the impression of tasting the forbidden.... It is that flirting pose, the open invitation to looking frozen, documented by the photographer that disturbs and at the same time conforms and confirms the patriarchal order.

She directs her gaze in the mysterious space out of the frame, somewhere in the invisible part of the studio, off the right edge of the frame. She doesn't give any sign of fear from this uncomfortable position of overcoming the cultural and gender codes. There is no sign of awareness of any representational violence while the unveiling was taking place. The taking off the veil was obviously a voluntary act. The excitement of having been photographed and a kind of unexpected confidence of the woman prevails over any fear from the consequences that she might have had after the moment of taking the photograph, due to the broken rules of social behaviour.

5. Performing the production of a face: flirting or historic shift?

'The face is a politics' wrote Deleuze and Guattari in their *A Thousand Plateaux.* [52] When discussing the *"faciality machine"* they write about the *'social production of face'*, about *'the relation of the face to the assemblages of power that require that social production.'* [53]

The face behind the veil, revealed by the simple act of raising the piece of black fabric becomes the *faciality machine* that in the case of the photographed woman can document exactly this process of social production. The subject needs a face, needs to be signified. According to Deleuze and Guattari, faces are not individual signifiers because they define *'zones of frequency and probability, delimit a field that neutralizes in advance any expressions or connections unnameable to the appropriate significations. The face itself is redundancy.'* [54]

By the same token, the uncovered face of the Albanian girl announces the frequency and probability of many revealed faces in the future. When the photographer documented the 'performance' of taking off the veil, he documented the possibility of the event "production of a face."

'The face constructs the wall that the signifier needs in order to bounce off; it constitutes the wall of the signifier, the frame or screen. The face digs the hole that

subjectification needs in order to break through; it constitutes the black hole of subjectivity as consciousness or passion, the camera, the third eye.' [55]

While documenting the agency of the social production of the face, the photographer points to the face that was not one while being hidden behind the visual obstacle of the veil. At the same time, the photographer documents this very event of singularity of the female face of the young Albanian from Bitola. She happened to live through these turbulent times and tried to resist the limitations of that very moment in history by allowing herself to be photographed isolated from the others in her revealed uniqueness. Thus, she helps the agency of subjectivity to start unravelling.

However, the business of 'production of a face' cannot be expected to have happened so smoothly. Many questions arise and make problematic the definition of this unique staged photograph as an event of production of face. For example, could the photograph of a young Albanian woman be taken before the protests of 1908, before the debate around the issue of the wearing the veil took place as a part of the programme of the Young Turks' and women's movements? This historical question could have been easily answered with a confirmed dating of the photograph, but even its definite answer would still not entail a revelation of a possible relation between the two events. The reason for the impossibility of answering this question lies in the fact that these two events operate in two different registers: the imaginary and the real. Nevertheless, such a comparison can still trigger a relevant discussion.

Here it should be stated that both brothers/photographers Janaki and Milton Manaki, were informed and were deeply involved in the movement of Young Turks that emerged in this provincial part of the Ottoman Empire. Milton Manaki, who took the photograph of the unveiling, must have been aware that one of the aims of the programme of Young Turks was the abolition of the wearing of the veil because it was also he who took the first photographs of the protests of the Young Turks in 1908. The first leaders of the movement Niyazi Bey and Riza Pasha were the most active during the constitutional events in Bitola and their photographs, mostly made by the Manaki brothers, either in their studio or at the sites of the protests, are still preserved in the archive in Bitola. [56]

The leader, usually called the "father" of the Modern Turkish society Kemal Ataturk, also photographed by the Manaki brothers (who were pronounced official court photographers of the Empire), was educated in the Military Academy in Bitola. Perhaps during his student times he was influenced by the 'Young Turks' for his later speech in Kastamonu. His take on the veil is as militant as it was possible:

In some places I have seen women who put a piece of cloth or a towel or something like that over their heads or huddle themselves on the ground when a man passes by. What are the meaning and sense of this behaviour? Gentlemen, can the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation adopt this strange manner, this barbarous posture? It is a spectacle that makes the nation an object of ridicule. It must be remedied at once. [57]

The question that arises here is: how can one be sure that the photograph in question *really* shows 'unveiled Albanian woman'? It is only because Milton Manaki registered this photograph under such caption in the archive when donating his preserved negatives six months before his death. Unfortunately, the photograph was not dated by its author. At the end of his life, perhaps the photographer could not recall the dates or names as precisely as the historians would have expected. [58] Only because of the recognizable mural in the background we can be sure that the photograph was taken between 1905 (the date of the building and painting the studio) and 1916 (when the studio was destroyed by the bombardment of Bitola during World War One).

Besides all these uncertainties surrounding the actual event of taking the photograph, the caption is so precise: it inevitably directs towards the possible association of the photograph with the reality outside of the studio. The image makes a spectacle out of the historic event of unveiling. As Allan Sekula puts it: *'The widespread use of photographs as historical illustrations suggests that significant events are those which can be pictured, and thus history takes on the character of spectacle.'* [59]

The ritual of rebelling against the veil in a photographic studio and making a spectacle out of this event was not a unique situation. *'Another way to break the taboo of the veil was to go back to the studio where the photographer, using models, had the power to decide what should be exposed and what covered [...]'* [60]

However, it should not be forgotten that the meeting between the photographer, a Christian member of the dominated local population and the unveiled woman who is representative of the ruling Muslim population is also a meeting between a man and a woman. That brings in mind the arguments of Linda Nochlin about Orientalist painting. [61]

There is one significant difference, though, between this photograph and a typical Orientalist painting. It is the fact that the man who took the photograph is a representative neither of the colonisers nor of the Slavic majority. On the one hand, he belongs to the

subjugated population. On the other hand, Milton Manaki was of the Vlach minority origin. Therefore, the representational codes established in this photograph can be interpreted as an attempt to confront the Ottoman Empire's representational regime.

However, the historic significance of this photograph is questionable and thus is the 'truth,' the authenticity of the shown unveiling of the veil as a historic event. On the one hand, it is true that the photographic studio and the photograph itself become sites where the significance of the removal of the veil, as agency of the new subjectivity, was documented. On the other hand, the force of this agency, the illocutionary strength of this performative is undermined by the flirtation that is documented by that very photograph. However, we have no other clues about the authenticity of this particular woman: whether she was a 'young Albanian woman' at all and whether she was ever under the veil (that was presumably taken off for the sake of the event of photographing the image of unveiled woman). We have to trust the archival caption of the photograph given by the photographer himself.

The clash between the agency of the unveiling as a social shift and the agency of the flirt - revealed underneath the veil as an inevitable part of the ritual of seduction and the objectification (the exchange of gazes between the photographer, male/Christian, and the photographed female/Muslim) adds more folds to the binary oppositions.

The photographer, who documents the unveiling of the young 'liberated' Woman, in a way also denies that the act of unveiling can be revelation of any truth of woman. Woman may be the truth but she also does not believe in it – at least, she knows that she herself has no access to it. However, she allows the photographer to behave as if there is a truth, and that it can be unveiled, revealed as simply as that: with photographing her unveiled. She becomes a conspirator in this unveiling business. But let us face the only truth here. What can be true about taking off the veil if all you can see underneath is another cultural deception: the seduction as inherited Western strategy of sexual domination?

The performance of unveiling becomes only a stage on the way to the re-veiling of the truth. In that sense the "social production" of the face in this context, the faciality machine of Deleuze and Guattari, can be questioned. On the one hand, in Austin's terms, one could argue that the event of staging the photograph of the unveiled woman is an "infelicitous performative": the production of a face happens only as a masquerade, as a repeating of something that happened already under certain "appropriate" circumstances elsewhere (presumably during the protests).

However, while allowing this particular event to be "frozen" by documenting it, and at the same time by making it available for further repetitions in the visual regime, this event becomes simultaneously a "happy" or "successful" performative. Therefore, Derrida is proven right when he doubts that there can be a clear distinction between happy and unhappy performatives because it is difficult to determine what are the "appropriate" circumstances for each performative and to list and anticipate all of them. [62]

Event 'c': The return of the veil

The latest protests in Macedonia that took place in 2002 in Tetovo (the second big Macedonian city inhabited mainly with citizens of the Albanian minority) were in favour of wearing of the veil in high schools. They explain the urgency of reassessing the question of the veil. [63] The veil haunts one from behind 'each corner', and it is far from being only a philosophical tool for playing around with the truth. Instead of the veil being a predictable historical event, it positions itself in the middle of the entangled knot of events interlinked in the realm of the real, imaginary and symbolic. There is actually more to the question of the veil than is expected by the philosophers who romanticise this issue.

'It all started when I passed the

university entrance exams.

We were at unease from beginning on, I mean going to school.

One is scared you know: 'Will they take us in?'

'Will they put us out of the class-room?' These are one's daily fears.

Then, they started to notify us.

We were given a certain time limit.

- What sort of notifications?

Not to come to school, I mean not to attend class wearing head-scarfs.

They tell you it is forbidden and

that it is not suitable to attend school like that.

Not that we wanted to,

we had to, we were given a time limit. A little later, they said

they could no longer let us in like this.

We started thinking of ways of

being accepted,

of going into the university. Some of us came up with the idea of berets,

they thought of wearing berets. They.

This way, they managed for a couple of days.

I don't know how they did this, but it was unacceptable for us.

We thought of wearing wigs, so as not to feel remorse.

Not showing our hair, this was,

we would at least feel better.

Thinking of what happened to those before us, we bought wigs. '

<div align="center">

Kutlug Ataman, *Women Who Wear Wigs,*

video installation, 1999 [64]

</div>

This extract is from the beginning of the third video included in the installation of four documentary video interviews by the artist Kutlug Ataman. [Fig. 30] The work is devoted to four different women who for various reasons had to wear wigs at certain stage in their life. The voice of a young female student explains her reasons for wearing a wig at the university. Her religious beliefs oblige her to wear a veil outdoors, but she is not allowed to wear it at school by the school authorities. The compromise had to be made: for her it was the choice to wear a wig (a case remote, but related, to the one of the Tetovo high school where one can expect similar clashes between the pupils and authorities in near future).

After making the interview, in order to preserve the girl's anonymity, the artist actually chooses not to show her face so that all we see in this fourth of the installation screen is a black background with the English translation: the subtitles change continuously while we hear the Turkish language of the original story narrated by the young girl. Several times this narrative is interrupted by questions from the artist.

Interestingly enough, this play with the voice is also not without a reference: according to Hamid Naficy Islam prescribes that

> women must not only veil their bodies from unrelated men but also to some extent their voice. Veiling of the voice includes using formal language with unrelated males and females, a decorous tone of voice and avoiding singing, boisterous laughter and any emotional outburst in public other than expression of grief or anger. [65]

The face remains unknown in terms of features, but can we really say that it is not 'socially produced'? The defence of one's own beliefs and the passive resistance in the case of this young girl speaks about the power of the absence of the face as another type of social production of a subject: the voice without the face.

The demand for a return of the veil in the high schools, the call for re-covering of the face, is also an event of a demand for the production of a face, the covered face. At this point, it should be underlined that there is always a danger that a kind of misinterpretation of the eternal return can take place. As Alan Badiou warns when writing about the return of One in Deleuze's philosophy (especially in his *Identity and Difference),* the eternal return is never the return of the Same. [66] The mistake usually is the result when the One is thought according to its identity. [67]

According to Badiou One cannot return as a subject, or as identity, its occurrence cannot be specified as identity, it escapes the tautology One=One, because it is the *'open, change, duration, Relation.'* [68] The truth is memory that can re-occur - it is a return. Its return is eternal, but no thought of the One exists that would permit its identification and recognition when it returns. The eternal return/repetition, according to Badiou's reading of Deleuze, is not the permanence of the One and *'the subject of the eternal return is not the same.'* [69]

The other danger involved in the misinterpretation of the eternal return arises if it is conceived not as return of the One, but as a dual composition of *'formal law imposed on chaos.'* [70] Neither the identity of the One, nor the external law of the multiple, the return is the creation of the Same for the difference, and by the different.

The eternal return of the veil is never the return of the veil without a difference, and here I do not refer to the different ethnic versions of veils, with more or less folds, transparent or opaque, covering more or less flesh, etc. No matter whether it is put on, or it is taken off, the face, the produced subject that is hidden behind the veil or uncovered by it, is what makes the veil each time different.

6. The archive as veil/event

What is my subject then, if not woman as a subject? May I take on the question of woman as my subject without making an object of her only because I am a woman? The photographs of women and women on the photographs are not two separate and isolated questions; they are intertwined, and while folding and unfolding around each other, they give way to a kind of *eventful* place. The archive of objects and events that allows the different levels of consistency of the question of the veil to come in mutual constitutional

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relation might not be the subject of the text, but it can provide a *site event* where the continuous folding and unfolding can take place, where something can happen. [71] A subject? Perhaps.

The territory of the archive is not a stable site where all the levels and segments are given once forever. Whenever a researcher enters an archive, the content of the archive is replaced and re-sedimented. The force that influences the internal pre-established order of the archival material each time creates new turbulence in the interpretation. The guardians of the archive are always suspicious towards the intruders, the newcomers who threaten the "order of things".[72]

The suspicion does not come only from the fear that something will go missing, or from the danger that some unwanted political truth will be revealed. It is often the fear of some possible important discoveries of documents or images that were not seen by them before, although they have been stored in the archive always already. The possible event of revealing the overlooked, the threat of unveiling of some object or fact that remained invisible underneath the layers of dust of previous ages, is the threat brought into the archive any time that a new researcher enters it. Such a fear is closely related to the treatment of the photographs as subjects/witnesses that are under a special programme of protection.

Actually, whenever a new research takes place in an archive, a new archive is being born from that very archive: an archive of events and folds, an archive of turbulences in the site/event, because the archive is an event that takes place, returns each time when it is entered with a particular project. And the return is never the return of the Same, although the objects might be the same. As if each time when some parts of the body of the archive – the archival registers and folders, are folded and unfolded, the event that takes place is the return of the remainder that was there all the time, but it was covered by a kind of invisible veil, a 'purloined letter' that was sitting there waiting to be seen.

The researcher, as the photographer himself, is predestined to uncover, to unveil, and to unfold the folders that are placed differently each time by any of the previous researchers. Only that the truth to be found in this remainder is not one. Obviously, the remainder of truth always already includes the truth of the previous quest for it.

Therefore, the archive of the photographs of women happens each time when I start writing a text. Neither is it any of the dusty archives that I have re-visited for the purpose of this project, nor is it a portable case that I carry around with some of the copies of the most interesting photographs and the texts about them. The archive is not even this text, or any of

the future texts to be written when writing on woman as subject. The archive performs itself exactly through its disappearance, through its eternal return and repetition, the endless rituals/events of entering its folds and when leaving them. [73]

The archive takes place in the form of a subject who is constituted, constructed differently each time when the subject/researcher tries to find his/her subject for a research or text. Thus, while attempting to discover, revealing the truth of the subject of exploration, e.g. the unveiled woman from Bitola on the photograph taken at the beginning of the twentieth century, many other questions about female subjectivity in the Balkans provoked another type of research, of a more personal and introspective nature.

The inevitable questioning of the need for such research, the difficulties in defining the subjectivity of the Balkan woman as the Other of the West, or neither the West nor the East, and many other more specific historical and cultural issues became tied together with the questioning of the personal motivation and the contemporary urgency for such research, such as the effect of the return of the veil in the every day life of women in the Balkans. The story of the interviewed student from Ataman's *Women Who Wear Wigs,* and the news from Tetovo's high school, emphasise the fact that the veil needs to be re-examined from various different perspectives and that the archive of veils/events is neither closed, nor is it yet completed.

At this point, I want to mention a few other artistic perspectives on the veil. Although these are not specifically the work of Balkan artists, they are nevertheless highly relevant for this discussion. These works were mostly presented at the exhibition *The Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art,* and elsewhere. [74] For example, the photographs of Jananne Al-Ani from the series *Untitled* (1996) show five women of different ages and cultural origins in different stages of veiling and unveiling. Therefore, they emphasise the perpetual *veiling machine* that creates different meanings and archives - a kind of *archival machine* of veils/events. They are all put together as if the artist wants to point to the fact that the veil, although seeming to unify or homogenize the appearance of the women who wear it, cannot erase the difference between them.

A series of three photographs by Zineb Sedira (also exhibited in the exhibition *"Veil")* points to even more complex aspects of the *veil and veiling.* Sedira looks into an interesting entanglement between gender and religion. The title of the series *Self-portraits or Virgin Mary* (2000) announces the ambivalence that is emphasised by these images: the artist is shown dressed in a long white veil, stating neither the Christian nor the Muslim origin of the outfit. The photographs are to emphasise the incredible similarity of the

female outfits of these so distinct religious. Thus the artist tries to transform the separation between the two faiths into a possibility for communication, exactly through pointing to the similar look of the pious women belonging to either of these faiths. [Fig. 31]

The series of films *Me* (2002) by the Iranian artist Ghazel usually involves a woman engaging in certain activities that one does not readily imagine to be easy to perform when one wears a veil (for example, smoking, ice-skating, or motorcycling). The events in this short-film series (consisting of forty eight minute-length films) are ordinary everyday events that look odd and at times cynical only because of the additional garment. The humour of these films is not that innocent, though, when one takes into account that in Ghazel's country women can be hanged for smoking or for being "fashion victims". However, Ghazel invents a completely new performative "vocabulary". Each time she <u>does</u> something with the veil on, she activates a different "eventual" machine (instead of a facial machine or production of a face). She is a real *protagonist* of her films, she is *'an active woman rather than a politicised or aestheticised sign system, and because the veil does not totally represent, subjugate, or define the woman, Ghazel's films widen the rather narrowly defined discourse of the veil.'* [75]

Instead of conclusion

Event 'd': Naming the bridge

Shortly after I had written a first draft of the present chapter, I had the opportunity to have a discussion with the young Macedonian artist Hristina Ivanoska (b.1974). During our conversation, I vaguely mentioned an event dating back to 1908 that originally triggered my interest and this part of my thesis. She immediately became interested in working on this topic, taking it as a starting point for one of her future art projects. Something that for me meant a provocation to a theoretical extrapolation for the artist became a point of departure for an art experimental project.

Soon after our meeting, she started following some of the footsteps that I made in the trail of my own research. She did not intend to pursue a similar historical and theoretical journey, but instead was seeking a means to express artistically the potential of this historic event. She became involved in the biographies and personalities of Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajrami and it was in January 2004 that Ivanoska had conceived her concept. [Fig. 32] She had come to her idea for the structure of her project after reading in the local newspapers an open call for submission of name proposals for the naming of a

new bridge that was to be built between the south and north bank of the Vardar river in the centre of Skopje. [Fig. 33]

Ivanoska's project *The Bridge "Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajrami"* is imagined as a unique initiative devoted to the first women protestors against the veil in Macedonia. Instead of putting emphasis on the veil as an object, in her project Ivanoska uses another strategy. She deals more with the event itself and her aim is actually to use this event as a kind of trigger for another event – naming of a bridge. Therefore, she put forward a formal initiative for naming the new bridge.

In 2001, Ivanoska worked on a similar project. She made an art work involving research into the number of streets and boulevards that carry names of famous women – heroes, intellectuals or public personalities. Her research showed discouraging results: only 24 streets out of 1078 officially named streets in Skopje turned out to have been named after women or events in women's history, and none of the names of the boulevards included female names. The project at the end consisted of a metal plate that Ivansoka created according to the established and official standards for such signs, with her own name and nick-name written on it. Thus, she named a virtual boulevard referring to the lack of presence of the names and other information recording important personalities and events in lives of women in the public spaces in Skopje. [76]

The project *The Bridge "Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajrami"* is an on-going project that officially started on 28 April 2005, when Ivanoska submitted her proposal to the Committee for Naming Streets, Squares, Bridges and Other Infrastructure Objects. Her proposal, handed over to the Council of the City of Skopje office in charge of public initiatives, states her proposal to name the newly built bridge after the two women who protested together.

In parallel to the proposal/request, she arranges numerous public appearances on local TV and radio shows. In addition, the artist keeps a journal of the events taking place concerning the project. [77] In her personal journal, she keeps records of some private discussions, the official meetings, interviews and all other events when the event of the protests is brought up and the names of the two women are mentioned.

Here, I want to focus on several issues present in Ivanoska's project that I find relevant for my archive of veils/events. First, I want to focus on the procedure of naming as one of the most complex performatives that is discussed in speech act theory. For Ivanoska and her project, it is as important to assure a media airing of the story, and the issue of the veil, as is whether the proposal will be accepted as it is. The main aim is actually to open

the up the question in the domain of public discussions. Although it is clear that she would be happy if her action has a positive outcome, even if the act of naming will not take place in the near future, the artist does not limit her project only to the success/or failure of her formal initiative.

One cannot easily estimate what would be the "success" and illocutionary force of this project. If the Committee as the ultimate authority does not accept the proposal and therefore the appropriate conditions for a felicitous performative are not met that still does not mean that the naming does not take place at all. In the context of Ivanoska's project, in the media (local newspapers, magazines, radio, TV) and finally in this text these two unfamiliar female names are already attached to the new and as yet unnamed bridge.

The event of naming has a certain effect in the realm of the real in particular because the bridge at this very moment has not "received" any other name yet. The frequent circulation of the names: Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajrami before any other name, establishes a new agency of appropriate conditions and thus makes this proposal a "happy" performative. As we have seen in Derrida's argument about giving a name, the name is an arbitrary and "oblique offering," giving of something that one does not have, and that anyway cannot be possessed, taken or given away. [78] It is an effect of an agreement and that is what actually Ivanoska attempts to establishing between herself, the Committee, and public opinion.

Taking into account that the Vardar passes through the city dividing it in two parts, one mostly Macedonian (Orthodox-Christian), the other predominantly inhabited by Muslims (mostly Albanians and some Turks), Ivanoska's concept is very clearly pointing to the urgent need to re-establish the silenced communication between these two recently strictly divided parts of the city. Since the conflicts between the Albanian ethnic minority troops and the Macedonian Army in 2001, the trust between the two previously cooperating communities has been further shaken. Some more recent incidents of fundamentalist origin (after both sides of the conflict signed the Ohrid Agreement) do not help the ethnic and religious tensions.

It is very possible that in such a politicised context Ivanoska's proposal, although is based on a public call for submission of proposals for naming the new bridge, will not even be considered, as it has been hinted during one of her interviews with the president of the Committee. Now that the submitted proposals have been revealed to the public it is very plausible that the bridge will be named after the late president Borislav Trajkovski who died in a plane crash in 2004. In the meantime Ivanoska has not given up. She continues to

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write texts in newspapers and magazines, gives interviews and plans other events in connection with this project.

In the Balkans, the issue of the veil is still not discussed openly and its urgency is not very clear to the authorities dealing with the issues stemming out the multicultural environment. Many regulations still have to be adjusted to the recent re-actualisation of the veil. Until recently, before the Balkan countries started the application process to enter the European Union, the question was completely neglected and treated in a way comparable to how it was treated during the communist period: the authorities could still get away with unwritten practices or restrictive laws being voted without discussions in the public realm. In these terms, Ivanoska's project is still a rare example of individual initiative for looking at this issue with sensitivity that would not be burdened only by the conflicts from the past but looking for some positive examples. Instead, it offers an appreciation towards culturally different gender difference and an attempt to build a bridge between the different stances towards the veil in conflicting intellectual and cultural camps.

NOTES

[1] Truth, as it is conceptualised among Western philosophers, by either Nietzsche or Derrida, or by other writers that are concerned with truth and scopic regime. Derrida's account of the relation between philosophy and vision as a questioned medium for acquiring the truth refers back to Kant, Schleiermacher, and others who have introduced the 'hermeneutics of the veil' (Derrida, 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials'1992, 41-42).

[2] Truth, as interpreted by the feminist discourse that was developed around a critique of the metaphors of 'penetration' in the truth.

[3] A view accepted by some of the third wave feminists who defend the existence of the veil with the argument that it can be a protection as well as limitation.

[4] Badiou, *On a Finally Objectless Subject* 32.

[5] Derrida, 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials' 53.

[6] Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger, are only a few of the feminists concerned with the issues of the relations between woman and truth as taken in philosophy, psychoanalysis and deconstruction who have tried, with more or less success, to avoid the dangerous paradoxes of the quest for right to truth.

[7] Feder and Zakin 21-51.

[8] After the events of 11.09.2001 so many different voices with different attitudes towards the veil appeared on the internet discussing the notion of the veil from other than Western feminist perspective, such as Jackie Freppon's article 'The Unveiled Woman' or Semina Jaffer Chopra's article 'Liberation of the Veil.'

[9] Leila Ahmed, 2003 42-55. While trying to euphemise the Western feminist position towards the veil Ahmed is still entrapped in interpreting the veil as confinement and result of misogyny: *'It was incorrect in its broad assumptions that Muslim women needed to abandon the veil the native ways and adopt those of the West to improve their status; obviously, Arab and Muslim women need to reject (just as Western women have been trying to do) the androcentrism and misogyny of whatever culture and tradition they find themselves in, but that is not at all the same as saying they have to adopt Western culture or reject Arab culture and Islam comprehensively. The feminist agenda as defined by Europeans was also incorrect in its particularities, including its focus on the veil. Because of this history of struggle around it, the veil is now pregnant with meanings. As an*

item of clothing, however, the veil itself and whether it is worn are about as relevant to substantive matters of women's right as the social prescription of one or another item of clothing is to Western women's struggles over substantive issues' (54).

[10] Ahmed 54.

[11] Ahmed 43.

[12] Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 37.

[13] Feder and Zakin 22

[14] Derrida, *Spurs* 53.

[15] Feder and Zakin 31.

[16] Feder and Zakin 33.

[17] Event, event site, or eventful, are all concepts to be found questioned in Alain Badiou reading of Deleuze's philosophy: Alan Badiou, *Gilles Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Although Badiou offers usually an affirmative interpretation, he sometimes points to some arguments exactly about the concept of event and the chance, never fully accomplished between him and Deleuze due to Deleuze's death that Badiou, not without irony, denies can be event in itself.

[18] 'What is an event?' Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 23 Feb. 2003, <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/t/time.htm#EVENT>.

[19] What is an event.'

[20] What is an event.'

[21] What is an event.'

[22] Deleuze, *The Fold* 22.

[23] Deleuze, *The Fold* 79.

[24] Vera Vangeli wrote a short but exhaustively researched introduction of the agonistic history of women in Macedonia published in her article 'Makedonija.' In the text, she mentioned for the first time the records of the 1908 event of protests against the veil (Vangeli 1972, 119).

[25] Vangeli 'Macedonia,' 120. *The Law of Prohibiting the Wearing of the Veil (hijab and burka)* from 12 January 1951 proves that the veil survived much longer. According to the historian Vera Vangeli, the act was treated as a violent intrusion among the Muslim population, as a direct result of the communist dogma, and therefore it was never thoroughly obeyed. The Muslim women compromised and started wearing a more

Westernised version of the veil (common dress code for Muslim women in some other parts of the Balkans), which is a unique combination of a trench coat and a scarf. It also covers their bodies and head but is not as obvious as the veil. For an expanded discussion on the communist policy towards the veil, see: Vangeli 1990, 88-89.

[26] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 291.

[27] Derrida, *Spurs* 119.

[28] Derrida, *Spurs* 55.

[29] For criticism of Said's take on Orientalism see for example: Michael Spinker. Edward Said: *A Critical Reader.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, Bryan S. Turner. (Bryan Stanley). *1945- Orientalism, postmodernism and globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994); Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: race, femininity, and representation* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[30] Lewis 16-17. Reina Lewis is one of the feminists who severely criticised Edward Said for neglecting to discuss gender specificity in the framework of Orientalist discourse. As an outcome of these remarks and other feminist criticism, Said in his later books tried to revise his earlier views.

[31] The fact that a great deal of Maria Todorova's introduction to her book *Imagining the Balkans* is devoted to the difficulties in defining "the Balkans" from geographic and historic perspective does not come as a surprise. Because these problems are all too complex and have a very long history, I will not be able to discuss them here at any great length (Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 3-20). However, I experienced certain aspects of this problem when trying to define the extent of my research. Although it was not my aim to do a research that would cover the issue of gender difference in all Balkan countries, I faced many dilemmas when deciding whether some of the researched materials were appropriate (simply because it was not clear whether it belonged within the Balkans' borders). Nevertheless, one needs to be aware from the outset of the enormity and impossibility of carrying out a thorough Balkan project through an individual research project.

[32] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 119.

[33] Todorova states that the category was utilized mostly to signify some regional characteristics and clichés that, such as hospitality, dirtiness of the rural environment full of peasants and mountaineers, etc., can be easily attributed to other peoples (Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 119).

[34] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 20.

35 William Miller, *Travels and Politics in the Near East* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898) xvi., qtd. in: Maria Todorova 1997, 17-18.

36 Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 17.

37 Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 17.

38 Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 18.

39 Žižek, *The Spectre of Balkans* 1

40 Žižek, *The Spectre of Balkans* 2.

41 Žižek, The Spectre of Balkans 2.

42 In her chapter 'Why the Balkans Attract Women' of the book Inventing Ruritania Vesna Goldsworthy argued that 'the argument that the Balkans attracted British woman as a form of substitute, accessible Orient (merely 'semi-civilised and more than half Orientalised'), an area not quite as oriental as the Orient proper – which was fully open only to male travellers' is not satisfactory (Goldsworthy 199). In her view, British women were attracted by the Balkans because there they enjoyed 'a chance of real equality with men.' According to Goldsworthy, they travelled to the Balkans because there they were offered to participate the political, military or religious affairs that were not accessible to them in their home country (Goldsworthy 200).

43 The biggest problem, according to Pseudo-Dionysius, it is not that the concept, the object of interrogation, is unintelligible considered in itself, but the problem is that it stands outside of the human faculties for understanding. (Copleston 110 + 106-115).

44 Derrida, 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials' 73-142.

45 Derrida, 'How to avoid Speaking: Denials' 79.

46 Badiou, On a Finally Objectless Subject 26-27.

47 In her critique of Said's *Orientalism* Yegenoglu refers to the concept *mental character of discourse* borrowed from Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. According to Yegenoglu Said falls into the trap of opposition between realism and idealism when he claims that there is no correspondence between the real Orient and its constructed image. She supports her argument by referring to Mouffe's and Laclau's statement that *'to suggest that the object of discourse is constituted does not imply a rejection of the materialist idea that there is a world external of thought.'* (Yegenoglu 19).

48 Yegenoglu 42.

49 Yegenoglu suggests that the Melek Alloula offers an appropriate way to discuss the fold in the cultural and gender framework in his book *Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), (Yegenoglu 42).

[50] Yegenoglu 43.

[51] About the importance of the photographer's studios during modernism and for the emergence of the process of construction of female subjectivity see: Irit Rogoff's text 'Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Art History'(Rogoff 1992).

[52] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaux* 181.

[53] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaux* 181.

[54] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaux* 168.

[55] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaux* 168.

[56] Kočo Sidovski. 'Bitola at the Time of the Young Revolution,' *The Creation of the Brothers Manaki,* 1996, 237-248.

[57] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 165, Kemal Ataturk's speech, 1925, qtd. in Leila Ahmed, 55, ref. 13. Ahmed's argument for this and similar statements by Muslim male leaders are closely related to the *'global dominance of the authority of its discourses, and also against the background of the ambiguous position of man and women of the upper classes, members of Muslim societies whose economic interests and cultural aspirations bond them to the colonising West and who saw their own society partly through Western eyes'* (qtd. in: Ahmed 51).

[58] There are lot of inconsistencies in the donated and registered material of Brothers Manaki due to the impossibility of recollection of the dates of making each of the negatives. All these materials: the glass negatives, the photographs, the official documents and the private letters were subjected to chronological ordering only in 1964, six months before the death of the younger brother Milton. He has spent his last days in the Archive while the team of historians tried to 'squeeze' his memory and drag any precious information, many times unsuccessfully.

[59] Allan Sekula, 'Reading an Archive: Photography between Labour and Capital.' *The Photography Reader,* ed. by: Liz Wells (London: Routledge, 2003) 448.

[60] Sarah Graham-Brown, Images of Women, Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950 (London: Quartet, 1987) qtd. in: Ahmed 184.

[61] Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient,' *The Politics of Vision* (London: Themes and Hudson, 1989) 45. According to Nochlin, the Orientalist paintings (in particularly those by Gérôme) by depicting highly charged erotic scenes of lascivious encounters of men with naked women brought forward *'two ideological assumptions about power'* and the

hierarchical order of representation: one about the power of men over women; the other about the power and superiority of white men over 'inferior' dark races that cannot control their drives. The absence of time and history, absence of any Westerners and any details revealing that these scenes were art and not reality only emphasises this vacuum of fantasy and the absence of any reference to outside reality where the dichotomous symmetry was not that tenable.

[62] Derrida, *Margins* 325.

[63] The news from the local daily newspaper: High School in Tetovo. *Dnevnik*, Skopje, 9.11.2003, <www.dnevnik.com.mk>, does not give away many details about the event, its initiators, and whether they were man or women. It is reported only that flyers calling for return of the veil for girls and wearing bears for boys at school were found in the yard of a high school in Tetovo.

[64] The four screen video installation of *Women Who Wear Wigs*, presented at the 48th Venice Biennial in 1999, was shown in the framework of several more recent Ataman's solo exhibitions in Vienna (2002) and in London (Serpentine Gallery, 2002/2003). For a more comprehensive interpretation of this and other of his works see: Kutlug Ataman, *A Rose Blooms in the Garden of Sorrows*, Catalogue, text: Irit Rogoff (Vienna: BAWAG Foundation, 2002).

[65] Hamid Naficy, 'Poetics and Politics of Veil, Voice and Vision in Iranian Post-revolutionary Cinema,' *Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art*, 140.

[66] Alan Badiou, *Deleuze. The Clamour of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill. (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

[67] Badiou, *The Clamour of Being* 68.

[68] Badiou, *The Clamour of Being* 68.

[69] Badiou, *The Clamour of Being* 69.

[70] Badiou, *The Clamour of Being* 69.

[71] Badiou, *The Clamour of Being* 85.

[72] The impossibility of entering any archive alone, without mediators, letters of intention and proof of identity, creates a similar atmosphere and feeling of discomfort, of being under surveillance for something that hasn't happened yet but might occur there, in the middle of the archive.

[73] Schneider 100.

[74] Jananne Al-Ani's series of photographs is among the works on the veil that have been included in the exhibition "Veil" and in the publication: *Veil: Veiling, Representation*

and Contemporary Art to accompany the exhibition in its different venues in Walsall, Liverpool, and Oxford during 2003/2004 tour.

[75] Naficy 158.

[76] Ivanoska's project was titled *Hristina Ivanoska – The Beast,* and it was commissioned for the public art project *Shining the Place.* The project's title deliberately followed the usual format of the names of streets with names of women partisans. Usually these street names state the name, the surname and the partisan pseudonym of the woman (for example: "Mara Ciriviri – Trena"). The plate with the title of the work/the name of the boulevard was exhibited on the façade of Museum of Contemporary Art in 2001, during the exhibition V Biennial of Young Artists.

[77] Hristina Ivanoska, 'Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajrami,' *Forum,* [Skopje]162 (May 2005), 52.

[78] Derrida, *On the Name* 85.

Chapter Four

BECOMING-GENDER-DIFFERENCE

At this point I want to propose an archive, a contingent yet plausible archive, consisting of five *folders*. Its *folders* are mutually linked and converge around a wide array of rhizomatic cross-references, planes and flows. While the first folder is a research file of the historic figure Queen Marie of Romania (1875-1938) (in some written sources Queen Mary or Maria), the other four are the folders of contemporary women artists of different generations and nationalities: Sanja Iveković (b. 1949) from Croatia, Milica Tomić (b. 1960), and Tanja Ostojić (b. 1973) from Serbia, and Liljana Gjuzelova (b. 1935) from Macedonia. The folders are not classified according to names but they are marked by different *becomings*. However, it is also important to mention four different points of departure, four archival reference subjects that enabled the imagining of this archive as one plausible outcome of an archival search.

a) All these five women come from the Balkans. Queen Marie, while being British, lived in Romania for most of her life and, in a way, had internalised the Romanian identity.[1] Therefore, she was concerned with the Balkans and reflected on its specificity.[2] The four artists were all born and lived in ex-Yugoslavia that was the second biggest Balkan country (after Romania) until 1991. However, as a result of the split of Yugoslavia, they all ended up living in different independent states. The Balkan identity is also present in their works, although not always as a direct reference, with all the complexity attached to this issue. However, the Balkan context is not the only link between these women.

b) What is more important to mention at this point is that these five women share a very specific affection and built-up approach towards archiving; towards collecting, selecting and classifying photographs. While accumulating all items of their archives they themselves become *site events* in which all these informational threads and flows merge, interconnect and make cross-reference to each other (not unlike to what happens to a researcher while writing a text that summarises a research).

The development and maintenance of a massive photographic archive was an inextricable part of Romanian Queen's private life, but this obsession also grew up in an important part of her public life as a member of the Royal family. Not only did she keep precise records of her private activities but she also went on 'staging' her public

appearances (as an Honorary Colonel, as a Romanian peasant, or as a nun). [Fig. 34-38] These roles merged exactly through her obsession with the ritual of archiving. For the four women artists the archiving is most of all a model of art practice, part of their professional public activities as artists. The art practice of archiving is nevertheless inextricably linked to their private lives: it is profoundly intertwined with their biographies and daily routines.

c) It is important to underline the rationale behind the links between Queen Marie's biographical archives and the art works and projects of the contemporary women artists in the Balkans. This rationale is not based on any attempt to define the issue of gender difference as a process of progressive development. I argue that *becoming-gender-difference* cannot be disclosed through a chronological linear narrative in time. On the contrary, the intention here is rather to locate and make visible the singular thoughts of *becoming-gender-difference*.

These thoughts may develop later in a story that can be retold in a chronological way, that can be turned into narratives but in fact, these thoughts are transcoded and initiate the transcendence of events into tropes. [3] The rhizomatic weaving that constitutes the archive of *becoming-gender-difference* allows a kind of proliferated reading of gender difference back and forth *through time*, through various stages of micro/macro history of the 'gendered' Balkans.

d) The fourth linking point between the five chosen women is the performative aspect of their personality and of their artistic careers. This issue is definitely determined by the archiving process that somehow enabled the initial conditions, and the appropriate framework, for the performatives to take place. In terms of Austin's theory of performative speech acts, the archive, even when it is the most private and created of the most personal events, is the appropriate institutional framework that provides the circumstances within which the performatives can take place successfully: *'the particular places and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.'* [4]

The archive requires *variety*, aspires towards *eventfulness* and the crucial meaning of its folders is the possibility of the return, of coming back time and again to conduct new consultations of its content. That is how it functions, through lending itself to possible performances of ever newer interpretations that draw on its existing contents. It does not need to involve objects, protection, preservation, guarding and the other specificities of the archive *'predetermined by a cultural habitation to the patrilineal, West-identified (arguably white-cultural) logic of the archive,'* [5] as long as it can be re-visited and unfolded.

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1. Unfolding the folder: *becoming-face*

While looking at a 1904 photograph of the Romanian Queen Marie, with her face covered up in bandages, taken after the fall from her horse Cerkez during her daily riding ritual, several questions inevitably pop up about her inner life and personality. [6] [Fig. 39-40] Why did the famous Queen want to be photographed when her face/image and personal features were invisible, and when only her anonymous gaze piercing through the holes in the plaster mask could be seen?

Thought to be a very beautiful and attractive woman, at least when younger, and therefore obsessed with her looks, she was probably aware of the kind of uneasy feelings this photograph would provoke today as it probably would when it was taken. Was it simply her life-long eccentricity confirmed in many documents that made her request this photo session? Her interest in the photographic medium as a documentary means and her obsessive urge to collect photographs as documents of different events, were some of the aspects of her personal creativity that could provide a possible explanation for this photographic document of the unhappy event.

Queen Marie was known for keeping written diaries and writing autobiographic texts with amazing commitment, and the photograph taken after her riding accident was obviously part of the ritual of keeping another kind of diary, a visual one. In fact, the ritual of making a photographic album seems to have been a daily routine when taking into account the number of photographs and albums. [7] Page 97 of her 1904 album of photographs documenting various events that happened in her life from March to October (part of the section titled Equestrian Events) contains three photographs titled *After a Fall with Cerkez* showing the Queen in bandages with a friend, one photograph of a landscape (probably the site of the fall), and one under the title *The First Ride again after*, showing the healed Queen riding again. [Fig. 39-40]

Being aware of the relevance of her personal and public life trajectory she went on documenting even the least important events with the same obsession. [8]
On the other hand, perhaps it was the case that she believed that all these photographs could prove that even in this kind of wounded condition her sovereign self, her body without the face still radiated the same power and authority? The wounded face hidden behind the bandages was still the face of the powerful woman, of the sovereign who needed neither visibility nor the social production of a face.

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In the video performance *Personal Cuts*, (1982, 3:40, b/w and colour, sound) Sanja Iveković in a very peculiar way also links the *face* and *event*. [Fig. 41-42] The video is made of one close up of a woman (the artist herself) cutting holes into the black stocking that covers her face. Each 'cut' reveals a part of her face and thus a short sequence of the Yugoslav state TV documentary programme *The History of Yugoslavia*. What was thoroughly hidden at the beginning, by the end is revealed, as if the history was simultaneously cutting through the artist making its way to the complete unveiling.

The structure of the video somehow recalls a diary structure where the 'subject' is *becoming*, becomes revealed and thus visible in parallel to the occurrence of the unhappy events. The personal and political are interwoven and reciprocally determined. Therefore, the personal "diary" cannot be considered and understood without the state 'diary'. The title suggests that each of the historic events cuts a hole through the body of the subject, a wound in the personal. The result is a kind of Deleuzean *production of a face*.

Sanja Iveković's project *Searching for my mother's number* (2002) emphasised this entanglement of the personal and political in an even more drastic manner. It actually deals with the biography of the artist's mother Nera Safarić, who died in 1988. The main motivation behind this project is the horrible secret that the artist's mother managed to hide all her life from her daughter. Namely, she never told her daughter about her internment in Auschwitz, and managed to keep from her sight her tattooed 'prisoner number'. Only during the ritual bathing of her dead mother's body Iveković became aware of her mother's secret.

The sad biography of Nera Safarić's is one of many of the kind – a woman partisan that fought against the Nazi occupation, but did not receive adequate recognition for her loyalty from the communist party during the communist regime. Born in Croatia in 1919, Nera Safarić joined the Croatian resistance movement in the 1930's. In 1942, the Nazis arrested her as a partisan and deported her to Auschwitz. After her liberation in 1945, she returned to her homeland, where she became an actress and writer. She withdrew from the communist movement that she had trusted for many years due to disagreements with the policy of the party.

The project *Searching for my mother's number* was imagined as a 'research in progress'. As part of the exhibition Documenta 11 (2002) in one room of the Museum Friderecianum in Kassel, Sanja Iveković set up an archive-like research office. The space

of the project became a *site event* where visitors could watch and accompany her and her team in the search for clues and could become witnesses of the events of revealing relevant and until then unknown details. Organisations and contemporary witnesses were asked to provide detailed information on her mother's internment in Auschwitz. The continually updated exhibition showed the current status of the research, as it accumulated new details and developed in different directions.

Although the motivation behind this project meant a great personal investment for Iveković, the artist did not consider it exclusively biographical work. Paradoxically, since different research procedures have been both the theme and foundation of many of her previous artistic projects, this project became yet another archive and thus stressed even more the thin line between personal, public and professional.

2. Embodiment of different roles and voices

The fact that the personal life and body of Marie - the person, woman, wife, and mother, could not be separated from the official life and public body of the Queen – the highest sovereign of her adoptive country, a soldier, a nurse, a national icon, or celebrity, emphasises the need for this complex "Leviathanean" body to be discussed at great length. This can be carried out through an analysis of different photographs from various periods of Marie's life as the Romanian Queen, documenting as they do this collapse of different bodies into one.

The present discussion owes a debt to the discussion of Giorgio Agamben on the distinction between two different bodies of the king. The mediaeval juridical doctrine that distinguishes between the "mystical" and "political" body was extensively discussed in Ernst Kantorowicz's book *The King's Two Bodies* and was developed further by Jean Bodin, Elias Bickerman, Julius Sclosser R. E. Giesey. [9] According to Kantorowicz, the 'mystical' body (usually represented in imaginary burial rituals as a wax effigy) allows to the King's physical body to 'survive' his own death. In Giesay's view this doctrine is *'a milestone in the history of [the] development of the modern state.'* [10] In fact, Agamben distanced himself from such an overestimation of the importance of the perpetual nature of sovereignty. On the contrary, in his view, it is the political sovereign power and its absoluteness that is entailed in the ancient proverb 'The king never dies'. In his parallel between the sovereign and 'homo sacer' – *'the life that can be killed but not sacrificed'* Agamben finds proof that the sovereign power's continuity is not based merely on the

perpetual mystical body but that it has an eminently political character and is embedded in the juridical system. [11]

When looking at Queen Marie's case, this text is not concerned with the 'perpetual sovereign power' based on the mystical body of the sovereign. Agamben's emphasis on the juridical and political nature of the sovereign's power has provoked an investigation of the influence of the sex of the sovereign over the structure of power and gender politics. In fact, I want to argue that the case of the confluence of several different functions in the same body of the female sovereign, the Queen, sheds a different light on this phenomenon.

Queen Marie performed, more or less successfully, several roles. These roles are documented by numerous series of photographs. Some of these roles complemented each other, and sometimes they contradicted and even negated each other's impact. Her life sounds as an opera in which all the roles and voices are mixed up. [12] To put it in J. L. Austin's words, the various roles may weaken each other's 'illocutionary force'. [13]

To use one of Austin's examples of a performative speech act, the utterance of 'I do' or 'Yes' – uttered during wedding ceremonies: if one of the wedding partners utters the same sentence in another ceremony with another partner (without getting a divorce in the meantime) it would be a clear case of bigamy and thus the performative cannot be treated as "happy". However, in the case of the unquestioned power of the sovereign whose body and actions are outside the law (Agamben mentions the difference in the law between the murder of a King, or homo sacer and that of an ordinary man) the 'performative act' will always be "happy".

It was not the first time that the border between these two opposite poles, between the private feminine role of a woman interested in fashion, cosmetics, etc., and the official sovereign role, blurred and that the femininity of the ruler was not necessarily taken as a disadvantage, being subsumed by the unquestionable power. The female royals in power and their specific strategies of rule were not anything new at the beginning of twentieth century, especially not in Britain - Queen Marie's country of origin where the different sex of the ruler was accepted both legally and practically long before. Although the *'contradiction between the ideal of a monarch and the ideal of a woman: the monarch should rule, a woman should obey'* was still relevant in social terms, the different sex was used as a means for gaining and preserving authority. This led many historians to disagree over the question of whether the female sex of the royals really made such a big difference. [14] For example, some historians interpreting the public image of Elizabeth I, suggested that it was entirely built up exactly around her sex and that *'Elizabeth dealt with*

the problems of her gender by adopting strategies that turned her into the iconic Virgin Queen: first by deciding to remain unwed and second by fashioning herself into the Virgin Mary for propaganda purposes.' [15]

When discussing the specific iconography of the portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and pointing to the proclamation from 1563 that set out the rules for her portraits Tarnya Cooper concludes that her public profile as a potent ruler *'had to attest to her unique status as a woman apart from her sex'* and that the constant iconography indicated *'that the articulation of female power needed careful branding.'* [16]

On the contrary, Susan Doran argued that in the case of Queen Elizabeth her gender did not affect her authority and ruling strategy as much as it is generally assumed, mainly because she adopted the pre-existing conventions and strategies of male monarchs. Explicitly stating that *'Elizabeth was no feminist icon'* Doran still has to admit that Elizabeth's case, even though it cannot be used as an example of an early feminist figure, still demonstrated that a woman can rule successfully in difficult times. [17] [Fig. 43]

In several texts written by Queen Marie she addresses the issue of the contradictions faced by contemporary women. In these texts she takes on the voice of any contemporary woman concerned with gender issues. Her views on the role of contemporary woman are somewhat confusing and inconsistent and, similarly to Queen Elizabeth I, she can hardly be called a feminist. Her statements vary between constrained feminist and conservative claims, depending on the different contexts and periods that these texts were published, but they never allow one to forget that she was speaking from the position of a ruler. Her statements such as *'If only I were a man, with a man's rights and the spirit I have in my woman's body'* are paradoxical evidence of her desire to identify rather with common women than with men. [18] Otherwise, to long to be a man from a position of a female sovereign does not make much sense since her rights as a sovereign were incomparably bigger than the rights of any common man.

However, she could not play the role of the Virgin Queen (believed to be crucial for the long duration of Queen Elizabeth's reign) either. A wife and a mother of four children, and having even a different religion (Romanians are Orthodox Christians) she had to rely on a much more profane profile. It is difficult to answer the question whether the sex of the foreign Queen made a significant difference when she was forced to perform the national identity of the country that was lacking any national awareness. The main reason for this difficulty is that, in contrast to Queen Elizabeth I, she did not sit upon the throne on her own. She shared this position with her Austrian husband, King Ferdinand, who found

himself in an even bigger quandary when 'exercising' Romanian national identity. He accepted the throne offered officially by the hospitable Romanian officials but faced the problem that his ancestors from the Habsburg Monarchy were still seen as enemies and conquerers among the people of Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia. [19]

When looking at performativity and the gender difference issue the position of having the ultimate power and yet speaking from a feminine 'throat' differs depending on the perspectives that are applied. If, on the one hand, only the juridical and political perspective of gender difference are taken into account then the effect, the 'illocutionary force', of gender difference is strengthened but at the same time its relevance becomes subordinated to the issue of sovereignty and the urgent issue of national identity. In this case, the female sex of the Queen does not play any significant role. On the other hand, if the cultural perspective of Queen Marie's photographic archive is also included in the overall discussion then it is exactly the "archive" of complex cultural relations between the issues of sovereignty, nationality and gender that makes her an example worth investigating.

3. Becoming - minor

Paradoxically, Queen Marie of Romania was dubbed 'the mother of the Balkans' although she was born a British Princess and was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria. This name attributed to her was a result of the mere fact that three of her children became rulers in the Balkans, but was also related to her wider popularity. [20]

This was the first split in her identity: the paradox of being a foreigner not knowing the language and culture of Romania and at the same time having the unique duty to consolidate the Romanian nation. She fought with all the problems deriving from this paradox in order to fulfil the mission given to her. 'At first it was not easy', she admits in her letter. 'I had to still [steal] my way into hearts that were foreign to me, to get accustomed to strange faces, to strange habits, to a foreign tongue. It was years before I felt at home. Yet from the very beginning I loved the land and its people.' [21]

The mere exuberant personality of Queen Marie, her complex biography full of affairs and suspected adulteries, and the photographic documentation of the wider influence she had on the European cultural world of her time, is even more relevant to the discussion surrounding the photographic representation of female subjectivity in the Balkan photography. It therefore deserves a more elaborated analysis. The vast photographic

archives scattered around the world in different libraries, museums and archives invite many various questions and interpretations. [22]

All these photographs that documented the different activities and different phases of her life show the complexity of her historic and personal position and in a way invite an attempt for a profound comprehension of the uniqueness of this woman.

To try to unravel, to 'unveil' all the layers of the bandages that cover up the damaged face of the beautiful Queen is a metaphoric attempt to reveal the different layers of her complex personality and to expect that through this process her singularity will be revealed. Or, to put it differently, to do so is to reveal how she negotiated her official duty and function as a ruler of the country and to reveal how her public life as a dutiful Queen might have influenced and shaped her private world.

This may not be that easy a task, even though there are piles of letters, texts and books written by Queen Marie, some of them directly addressing and questioning this issue, such as in her article 'A Queen in Crisis: It is no Sinecure to be the Queen of a Country' or in her letter from 1926. [23] Especially the letters and texts written during the war show her ability to transform herself into a powerful leader and not only to identify with the troubled situation but to give strength to its people in order to overcome the harshest times.

The photographs and moreover the postcards of Queen Marie dressed in national folk costumes of her appropriated country, dating from different periods, are thought to be the result of the influence of her mother, the Queen Elizabeth who also had a romantic attachment to Romania although it was not her native country. There are texts written in an official tone wherein the Queen Marie writes about her people, her country, her army, always meaning by that Romania and Romanians.

"Becoming-minor", to use the Deleuzean concept, for the British Royal ascendant could mean exactly to ditch the inherited imperial position and not only to identify with the position of the other, the weaker or minor identity, but also to foster such an identity by giving an example. According to Deleuze, *becoming- minor* simultaneously needs two different movements: one by which the subject will be withdrawn from majority, and another by which a new term will rise up from minority. [24] In this case that is how the British royal reinvented herself into a Romanian Queen.

During the war, Queen Marie dressed as a soldier, in fact in a full uniform of an Honorary Colonel, but also as a nun/nurse (postcard from 1916 – postdated 1922) [Fig. 38]. Postcards were made of the same photographs. That was also a kind of support, 'prosthetic' device to the identity put in danger by external circumstances.

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The practice of putting on a folkloric national costume, a soldier's uniform, or a nun's robe was not invented by Queen Marie, or her mother Queen Elizabeth. The relation between photography and national identity in the Balkans was established early on and photographic studios practiced there since the beginning of national movements that happened in parallel to the opening of the first studios. The Bulgarian Queen Eleonora also posed both in national costumes and as a nun/nurse. [Fig. 44] This proves the commonality of such a practice. The paradox in these photographs of Queen Marie is the most exemplary case in the way that her original national identity, the British one, was deliberately hidden, "veiled", by another one, yet to be established. This strategy of "veiling" was aimed at persuading the members of three different provinces that they share one common identity - the Romanian. Queen Marie simultaneously simulated and appropriated the imaginary identity yet to become through the photographic representation of it.

At first sight, it can be stated that while affirming the new yet to be born identity she denied her real existing one. However, in this constant movement of disjunctions and conjunctions between her old and new national identity and also between her femininity and 'virility', she puts in motion a kind of differentiation process that does not allow rest in any of these categories.

The thousands of photographs and the various collections call for a different set of questions: if Queen Marie was adored for her feminine beauty and yet at the same time was so concerned with affairs of state, was she using the masquerade of exoticism only as a counter point to the rough images of her in a full Colonel's uniform? The romanticised image of the Eastern woman in the iconography of the images of Queen Marie was used in documenting most of the events in which she participated in a double movement: firstly, to unify the heterogeneous population of the fragmented region, and secondly to reaffirm her own gender identity.

In order to spare herself from overshadowing her femininity when serving the national need for unity and courage, she regularly posed in long white veils that somehow *orientalised* her Western 'otherness'. Thus, she invented her public image as something indefinable as neither Western, nor Eastern, neither self, nor other, something that could never be represented and can only be called *neither*.

Having said that, it is important to state that *neither/nor* does not subsume the third, *the neither,* as a kind of sublation of the dialectical contradiction between the self and the other, East and West. *Neither* is a kind of multiplicity, multiplied events of "neither/nor" negations and movements that are not resolved through representation. It consists of

'collective agents', multiplicities that produce each new statement, so that any individual statement is already marked by the statements of the next 'agents,' and thus builds up to completeness. However, completeness is non-representable.

> Deleuze constructs his dialectics around the problem of how to affirm a productive continuity through a search for completeness, whilst also responding to the proposition that continuity is never a matter of identities or representations. In other words, we can never represent or identify continuity, even relatively and in an open-ended transforming way.' [25]

Furthermore, Williams explores the relation between identity and event, as this relation is elaborated by Deleuze: *'Identities are encountered in events that vary according to a 'drama' of multiple sensations and hence intensities.'* (Williams, 'Deleuze').

<div align="center">***</div>

'*Yo soy Milica Tomić, yo soy espanola , Je suis Milica Tomić, je suis francaise...*'

<div align="right">Milica Tomić [26]</div>

In *I am Milica Tomić* (1998, video, 9, 30" loop) the artist Milica Tomić is slowly spinning around her axis and continuously repeats the same statement from the title. [Fig. 45-46] Each time she utters the phrase *I am Milica Tomić* translated into different languages she also claims different national identities: Yo soy Milica Tomić, yo soy espanola , Je suis Milica Tomić, je suis francaise, Ich bin Milica Tomić... The first association is that she embodies the voices of different personalities although they all have her own name. The edited effect of the whip-like wounds that appear on her body after each turn until all her body is smothered in fake blood and wounds inevitably adds to the complexity of the work and emphasises different sets of meanings.

In her short text *I am Milica Tomić* written about the background of the video the artist confesses that during her childhood she somehow felt embarrassed by her own name. According to the artist this feeling was closely related to the fact that Milica was also the name of one of the first Serbian Queens and during 1960s and 1970s – a period of intensified modernization and banned nationalist movements in ex-Yugoslavia, it was considered to be old-fashioned. It was only in the early 1980s that the artist noticed that

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some people started pronouncing her name with awe and admiration, but knowing the real reason behind this change of attitude (the renewed nationalist politics), she "felt pierced by the arrow of necessity to equate the following elements: I=Milica=Serbian=Orthodox Christian".

She continues:

> That which I considered to be my most intimate identity, the fact that I am an Orthodox Christian Serbian, in the late 1980s set in motion a hypnotic pendulum of state politics that produced the mass hallucinatory effect of a collective identity, in which there was no place for those who did not feel like Serbs or Orthodox Christians. Moreover, ideologists of this policy claimed that the intimacy of the personal identity was biologically determined, written into the genes, and that the Serbs who do not feel like that were bastards with genetic defects, and that they should be destroyed since they were a wound on the healthy body of the Serb community. Put before the impossible choice - the wound or the healthy body of the nation, I have decided to privately keep the identity of Orthodox Serbian while publicly speaking from the position of (the) wound. This paradoxical choice to publicly **deny** my national and religious identity while privately regarding it in order to be still a very important part of my personal identity, is inversely proportional to a very paradox that lies within national identity: it is a totally artificial product, but at a personal level it is still experienced as completely natural and necessary, so every community is an imagined one, but only imagined communities are real. [27]

Something that does not come through in either the video work, or through the artist's text, is the interesting paradox that only in the second part of each statement, right after uttering 'I am Milica Tomić' in any of the languages in the statement of claiming a different national identity, a new differentiation comes to being. Although stating the first and family name already is a kind of differentiation, in some of these statements the artist's gender *is* or *is not* differentiable, dependently on different grammar of the used languages.

In most European languages, you can guess the female gender already from the first name ending – the vowel 'a' but this is not a general rule. In some Slavic languages (e.g. Bulgarian, Macedonian, Russian, Czech, but not in Serbian, Tomić's mother tongue) the

surnames are also gendered, e.g. in Macedonian the suffix 'ski' for men differs from 'ska' for women, or in Bulgarian 'ov', or 'ev' for men's surnames differ from 'ova' for women's surnames. But what is most important is that in all Slavic languages including the Serbian – the mother tongue of the artist, the adjectives including nationality attributes are gendered. It basically means that when Milica Tomić utters in Serbian: 'Ja sam Srpkinja' (Eng. 'I am Serbian'), in Croatian: 'Ja sam Hrvatica' (Eng. 'I am Croatian'), or in Macedonian: 'Jas sum Makedonka' (Eng. 'I am Macedonian') she simultaneously differentiates herself stating not only her nationality but also her gender. She states that she is a woman belonging to a certain nation and at the same time she is *neither* of these nationalities since any of such statements is already a statement of multiplicity.

The final result of these complex physical and linguistic movements is the emergence of a specific *grammar* of the work that locates a certain voice - makes a difference between 'who is speaking' that becomes irrelevant and 'the speaking itself'. Claire Colebrook makes a difference between the *grammar of the Being* and the *grammar of becoming*. At first, she identifies the grammar and logic of subject as tied to certain way of speaking:

> The very concept of the subject is tied to a strategy of being and essence, rather than becoming. And this is because the subject is not just a political category or representation but a movement of grammar. The very notion of subject in the grammatical sense, as a being capable of predication, is also tied to a broader notion of grammar whereby political subjects or identities are effected through certain ways of speaking. The concept and logic of the subject as such, then, demand or provokes a movement of thought, a specific temporality and, ultimately, a strategy of reactivism, recognition, and being (rather than becoming. [28]

Instead of the *subordinate* strategy of the subject, Colebrook calls for sustained *'strategy of becoming.'* [29] According to Colebrook *'the self it effects is not an essence but an event.'* [30] Thus, she obviously objects to any conceptualisation of the subject as something fixed and given once forever. Furthermore, by following Deleuze she paraphrases his notion of *becoming*: *'before there is a genesis that can be tracked back to an origin or condition, there is a multiple and synchronic stratification and structuring, not*

something located at a single point but a creation of possible points through the event of lines, striations, and articulations.' [31]

This notion of multiplicity that always already stratifies the origin seems to be in a direct conflict with the endless quest for the origin of one's own identity. In the Balkans, such quests still cause endless backlashes and misunderstandings and actually give so much power to the historical archives. In the endless loop of Tomić's work there is no identifiable beginning or end. There is no transformation of the subject from point A to point B in 'becoming Milica Tomić' but there is only a locating of multiple selves in the rhizome of becomings. *'Every thought is already a tribe.'* [32] *Becoming,* in a Deleuzean sense, is not a process that happens through linear time and a result of dialectically overcoming certain obstacles or contradictions, but it is more about *becoming offspring of the event:*

> Nothing more can be said, and no more has ever been said: to become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and release the event, to become the offspring of one's own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one's carnal birth – to become the offspring of one's events and not of one's action is itself produced by the offspring of the event. [33]

This idea of becoming *offspring of one's events and not of one's action* resonates with the Nietzschean concept of *eternal return* as it is understood by Deleuze in what he has called *'the third figure of transmutation'* in the process of becoming:

> Becoming is no longer opposed to the One (these oppositions being the categories of nihilism). On the contrary, what is affirmed is the One of multiplicity, the Being of becoming....We now see what this third figure is: the play of the eternal return. This return is precisely the Being of becoming, the one of multiplicity, the necessity of chance. Thus we must not make of the eternal return a return of the same. [34]

To expand on this idea and to go back to Milica Tomić's video, each revolving of the artist as well as each of her new statements is a return of the *becoming multiplicity* and neither *the return of the same* nor some attempt at an eternal quest to find one's own identity origin. In one interpretation of Tomić's video work Branko Dimitrijević and

Branka Andjelković announce that they want to paraphrase Laclau's and Zac's statement: *'any identification is constitutively incomplete and will have to be always re-created through new identifications'* and in continuation they write:

> By equating identification acts with arbitrary declaration she creates an identity through agglomeration of declared identities, i.e. creating an imaginary community out of her primary narcissistic identification, in so far as "community always exists through the imagining of the group of which one conceives oneself a member. [35]

It is actually surprising how Dimitrijević and Andjelković contradict Laclau's and Zac's statement that they claim to paraphrase. In fact, there is no direct link between *'the identity is always to be 're-created through new identifications'* and creating an identity *'through (an) agglomeration of declared identities'*. Furthermore, perhaps the *agglomeration* of which write Dimitrijević and Andjelković is closer to Deleuze's notions of 'multiplicity' and 'assemblage' than to the concept of *'re-creation'*.

While using different languages and acquiring different identities Tomić does not necessarily negate each of the previously stated identities, but it is also not the same to say that all these identities create an *'agglomerate'* since the loop of her *eternal return* always stating a different ethnic origin becomes a vehicle of differences that does not allow the *third* or *One* to be thought without the notion of multiplicity.

The problem with the text lies in the fact that there is a clash of two similar and interrelated sets of thoughts: while the former is very close to what the artist herself described as a personal choice to publicly deny her national and religious identity while privately regarding it as a very important part of her personal identity, the latter statement is actually in direct opposition since any 're-creation of new identity' would subsequently entail losing each of the previous identities in question. In Milica Tomić's work, *becoming* a subject is not about re-creating new identities, but more about co-existence and expressing the *difference* without over-writing it with solely one language but emphasises the *speaking* itself:

> Subjectively, common sense subsumes under itself the various faculties of the soul, or the differentiated organs of the body, and brings them to bear upon a unity which is capable of saying "I." One and the same self

perceives, imagines, remembers, knows, etc.; one and the same breathes, sleeps, walks, and eats...Language does not seem possible without this subject which expresses and manifests itself in it, and which says what it does. [36]

The difference between the Derridean *différance,* and the Deleuzean conception of expression of difference relies on the concept of *compossibility* that entails a kind of a *disjunctive dialectics:*

> The expressed world is made of differential relations and of contiguous singularities. It is formed as a world precisely to the extent that the series which depend on each singularity converge with the series which depend on others. This convergence defines "compossibility" as a rule of a world synthesis. Where the series diverge, another world begins, incompossible with the first. The extraordinary notion of compossibility is thus defined as a continuum of singularities, whereby continuity has the convergence of series as its ideational criterion. It follows that the notion of incompossibility is not reducible to the notion of contradiction. [37]

4. *Becoming-compossible-events*

In an earlier work Milica Tomić addressed the issue of changing roles/identities while using the idea of changing clothes as a metaphor for changing identity, in fact a metaphor for an attempt to 'identify with the Other'. Its structure sounds very similar as it was based on the cliché of 'being in somebody else's shoes' or 'changing one's hat' but the ritual of changing clothes had several different layers.

The first layer is already announced in the title. Milica Tomić's video work *XY – Ungelöst - Reconstruction of the Crime,* (1997) got its name after a popular German TV crime-watch programme of the 1970s that dealt with the public interest for unresolved crime cases and mysteries, inviting the viewers to participate in solving the crimes. [Fig. 47] The work itself actually dealt with the opposite tendency in Serbian media, namely, to surround with complete silence horrible events. The work was based on one of such cases when ethnic Albanian demonstrators were assassinated in a mass murder incident by the Serbian government on 28 March, 1989. They were protesting against the new Constitution

because the existing Federal Constitution had guaranteed their political autonomy which would be abolished by the new one.

In order to put in focus the suppressed crime committed by Serbian forces, Tomić invited people from her social environment, mostly members of the Belgrade art community, and asked them to pose in shabby clothes. Actually Tomić based her reconstruction on the look of the original clothes of the murdered that she researched while looking at the photographs that she managed to obtain from various family albums of the victims. The photo-archive of the victims helped her to animate the whole group performance.

Putting on the clothes of the Other (the victims of the known but suppressed crime) – was designed to have a direct impact on the local art community. It was an attempt to provoke the artists to at least acknowledge the urgent political issues and the horrible atrocities instead of becoming engrossed in aesthetic dilemmas and enjoying the so-called "autonomous" status of art and culture (symptomatic phenomena for many ex-communist countries as a result of the despised socialist realism). In order to emphasise this aim the artist appears in the video with closed eyes, with irises painted over her eye-lids. In order to identify with the Other the changing clothes was not enough, and could not make a big difference. Still, in contrast to many who either approved and backed the governmental action or simply ignored the event by just closing their eyes this work was the only one that dared to re-enact the event (although without going through a detailed revelation and reconstruction of the crime as in the original programme).

The slightly accelerated movements of the endless changing-clothes show somehow underline the uncomfortable feeling of the "actors" putting on and off items of clothing of various sizes. The "actors" find themselves in a situation where the changed clothes do not fit perfectly, thus emphasising the fact that the process of putting on someone else's "identity" is more complex.

The real event of the murder and the event of performing the identity of the victims are related through endless convergences and divergences set by the artist when creating the conditions of the work, especially when choosing as actors the members of different classes and ethnic origins, belonging without really belonging to the opposite side of the conflict.

According to Deleuze's definition of compossibility the relation between events cannot be defined as causal and consequential but events can either co-exist or are

incompossible: *'Events are never causes of one another, but rather enter the relations of quasi-causality, an unreal ghostly causality, endlessly reappearing in the two senses.'* [38]

This quasi-causality of the events/archives happened in completely different regimes of reality. The 'archive' of the murders of the protestors that took place in the political reality of Serbia, and the 'archive' of performed identifications that took place within the art practice of Tomić are 'compossible' events converging through the situated thought of the artist. *'Two events are compossible when the series which are organized around their singularities extend in all directions; they are incompossible when the series diverge in vicinity of constitutive singularities.'* [39]

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Liljana Gjuzelova (b. 1935), one of the few mature woman artists in Macedonia in 1997 had decided to devote a project to her mother, who had reared her two brothers and herself alone, and to her father who was hanged in 1945 during the Second World War, having been accused of collaborating with the Bulgarians during the Bulgarian-Nazi occupation of the country. This was a delicate project for a number of reasons. The project was of a very personal nature and had to deal with lots of discrete information concerning unanswered questions and doubts about the historic and political implications for the country in the wake of many disputes surrounding the governmental decision to open the files kept by the Macedonian communist government in the late '90s.

Many facts that were claimed or denied in the past suddenly became questionable, and therefore once again the trust in historic truth was to be regained. Very soon this proved to be easily relativised: the files were incomplete, there were still inaccessible folders and the process of revelation turned out to be very long and uncertain as well as painful and stressful.

The events regarding the death of the artist's father had been suppressed for a very long time, even though he had been an important Macedonian figure; the first educated philosopher and intellectual to be convicted and imprisoned as a communist prior to the Second World War. The circumstances surrounding his execution have yet to be revealed. While he had been pardoned at the last moment, the execution was still carried out due to still undisclosed circumstances.

The project itself was carried out in a very discrete way - it was a tactic the artist used in order to circumvent possible political backlash as well as avoiding the interpretation

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of the project as seeking for a possible political rehabilitation. The viewing of the project was therefore by private invitation only. The event had been imagined as a strong personal statement of a woman who would transform her artistic creation into a different voice of history. If the man, the father, had the strength and position to shape the historical and political destiny of a country, then it is the mother, through her devotion, support and sacrifices, who maintained the existence of the family.

The exhibition was viewed in a private home in the same neighbourhood as that of the artist's childhood, where a large, metal case had been placed in the middle of an empty room. [Fig. 48-49] Numerous photographs had been taken out of the now empty family album lying open at the top of the case and were now resting at the bottom of the illuminated case. Slides of the artist's parents were projected on to the case and the wall behind it. The project's title *'Eternal Return...'* was an obvious reference to Nietzsche and foresaw some of the recent "developments" in the country: the continuous changes in government, political pressure, violent elections and the decision to open files on past suspects, which was, in the eyes of many intellectuals, likened to opening Pandora's box. It was conceived as a warning that the *same thing* is haunting us now: the relocation of the photographs and the movement via their continuous projection was to refer to the "eternal wheel of history", which did not cease with this unfortunate family and its tragedy.

But the artist continued with three more projects completed around the same topic concluding the series with a video performance – a project that she made on the assumed location of her father's grave. The unknown burial site was an important issue for the family because it was never revealed by the authorities, so the artist simply chose to mark a piece of land in the assumed district (Zajcev rid - a hill near Skopje) by drawing a red circle. Still, the circle was not closed forming an incomplete circle - its beginning and end did not touch each other.

The project was meant to be a kind of warning of a possible return of the same, at its end it had an accent put on the openness and infinite possibility for change. The understanding that the *circle is not closed,* that the movement of the same at the same time affirms its difference prevailed when the artist left the circular sign of the tragedy site unclosed, trying to finally put aside the life-long process of research through different archives, contacting the highest authorities and dealing with the contempt of the structures of power towards her quest for the truth of the event. While denying that the project was about her father's rehabilitation, the artist in fact affirmed the possibility of moving without

insisting on the final movement of sublation of the contradictions in the narrativity of the files.

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In a more ironic approach towards the truth the artist Milica Tomić in the work *Belgrade Remembers*, 2001 (commissioned for Belgrade magazine *Prestup)* re-enacted a scene from World War II: the photograph shows the artist hanged on electric cables on Terazija (a square in Belgrade) in a similar way to the five young members of NOP (National Resistant Movement) that were hanged on 16 August 1941 for rebellion, sabotage and attacks on the Nazi occupiers. [Fig. 50]

The scene was re-staged on the basis of the story of an actual witness of the scene whose description inspired the artist to create the staged photograph not only of her self-execution but also of the people on the central walkabout who, according to the witness, were passing by without ever showing distress or protest. The artist is actually concerned with the indifference for the hanged avant-garde resistance activists at the time paradoxically turned into a complete appropriation and identification with the whole movement in the more recent period of Serbian history.

This recent development in Serbian history saw the nationalist regime of the 1990s appropriate the history of the earlier resistance movement, claiming a historical continuity with its radical liberating ideology. While putting a loop around her neck she sets up a time loop thus re-enacting the "impossible gaze" triangle between the hanged patriot, the indifferent passers by and the nationalist regime. The awkward position of the artist as a 'play-dead' victim points to the very thin line of difference between the notions of nationalism and patriotism. The spatialisation of the gazes through time that put into relation the two separate events, the historic but already-mediated through narration of the witness, and the performed that is actually generated and thus not mediated gives way to conceptualising the impossible gaze grid as the agency that supports the compossibility of the two events.

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In her video work *Triangle*, (1979, 18 min.) Sanja Iveković created a very complex network of metaphoric relations while spatialising three different events [Fig 51-52]:

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The action takes place on the day that the President visited the city and develops as an
intercommunication between three persons:

1. *a person on the roof of the tall building across the street from my apartment,*
2. *myself on the balcony*
3. *3. a policeman on the street in front of my house*

The action begins when 1 walk into the balcony and sit on the chair. I sip whiskey, read a
book, lift up my skirt and make gestures simulating masturbation. After some time a police-
man rings my doorbell and orders that persons and objects should be removed from the
balcony.' [40]

Triangle is a work set in ex-Yugoslavia and it basically deals with privacy, surveillance
and power control, but it also deals with the moment of intertwining of different levels of
compossibility of the events that exist in different registers and seemingly are
incompossible.

The first position, the one of the man of the roof, locates the position of the
passive power concentrated on surveillance and the third position is the position of active
power. The second position is the position of convergence of the two otherwise
incompossible events: it enables the interference between the different levels of
incompossibility thus making them compossible through the position of a victim, either of
the surveillance or of the punishment.

5) Becoming-celebrity

Queen Marie enjoyed a great exposure in the media of the period. Often playing an
intellectual, a writer, even though at times lacking appropriate talents, she took part in
inventing a celebrity status for herself. She used it as a means of public relations for her
official role of a sovereign. In addition to her frequent presence in the media, she gained a
celebrity status through many public appearances during her journeys. This split within the
public nature of sovereignty between the official functions and celebrity was perhaps
possible only with the explosion of the public media at the beginning of twentieth century.
While the public image of the sovereigns during the previous eras could be still controlled
to a certain extent, the celebrity status of Queen Marie meant that it entirely became a

public property: it could be ridiculed and played around with in the most unpredictable ways.

Queen Marie's views on contemporary woman, feminism and female struggles with male authority, acting as a business woman (chocolate factory entrepreneur) etc. certainly add to the complexity of her struggle with her manifold royal identities.

In several letters, the Queen addressed the issue of feminism showing her hesitations towards the more radical feminist views of activists. She published several of those texts in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*. Although advocating a milder feminist position, she kept very independent and strong views throughout her life (sometimes her decisions and actions overshadowed the ones of her husband, King Ferdinand) and probably the celebrity status in addition to the ruling position had a certain role in her independence and self-confidence.

The texts written about her or by her in magazines like *Times* and *Cosmopolitan*, the visits to places that were not on the usual Royal agenda, such as the visit to Chicago's department store Marshall Field's, the interviews and texts about fashion, becoming the face of Pond's cream and the endorsement of Houbigant Perfumes brand, show that besides the private and political body, Queen Marie was perfectly aware of the power of the *celebrity* body. [41] [Fig. 53] At first, she was using the publicity in order to manipulate her political parties but later it became a means in itself: to preserve her fading celebrity status.

The intellectual status of Queen Marie was not flawless. On the contrary, her intellectual authority was highly questioned. In particular, if one takes into account the criticism of her books, and some ironic texts, satires and cartoons published about her personality, it becomes clear that the exposure was not always going in the direction the Queen might have wished for. She definitely had experienced the pitfalls of the celebrity status that accompany the pleasure from it. It is still inevitable to state that she exposed her own personality more than any other member of the royal family at that time, and she did that in many different ways that made her more vulnerable. It is no accident that it provoked various reactions, some of them very negative, even ridiculing her for the phantasmatic desire to preserve her celebrity status.

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In her series of 'diptychs' *Double Life* (1975) Sanja Iveković created 62 sets of photographs: one set of photographs is composed of images of the artists at various ages (1953-1975). [42] [Fig. 54-55]

The other set shows women from various women's magazines, usually advertising different beauty products. Sets are paired on the basis of similarities, symmetric compositions or postures, as well as according to similar fashion 'statements'. Images are dated with notes on the situations, represented persons and magazines and thus creating events – doubles. The reciprocity of the events exists only within the space of the artist's file due to indexicality proceeded with preciseness and enormous scrutiny. A similar archive called *Tragedy of Venus, 1975* (1975-1978) by the same artist consists of twenty pairs of pages with photographs. [43]

One set is composed of images of Marilyn Monroe from various magazines. The other set depicts the artist at various periods of her life. Photographs of Marilyn Monroe have original captions typical of tabloids. There are many coincidences and similarities in the postures between the two sets. The series *Sweet Life*, 1975/76 goes further with collecting a series of twenty one images with photos and captions from daily newspapers' 'scandal columns' combined with photo documents from the artist's life. By confronting photos of celebrities with her private photos the artist questions the issues of personal identity and privacy. The work *Diary*, 1975/76 besides seven photographs – actually 'make up' advertisements from fashion magazines - includes also objects: cottons or napkins used by the artist for make up removal. The relation between the artist, photographs and objects is used, similarly like in some other works (e.g. the work called *Eight Tears*, 1976) in order to question the line between the personal and public life, and the role of the media in drawing or erasing such a line.

The self-ironic nature of the links made between the photographs of foreign celebrities and her personal photographs is not that obvious. At first sight, Sanja Iveković's archive does not appear to be fundamentally different from Queen Marie's archive. While the celebrity events were taking place in Queen Marie's life and only later were archived in her photo-albums, Iveković 'performed' celebrity on the pages of her albums from scratch: while matching photographs of events from her life with the paparazzi photographs of events from celebrities' lives.

However, while the Queen exposed herself to a complete blunder because of her desire to remain 'in', Iveković is starting exactly from this point and re-invents herself with putting her own documented 'events' within the assemblage of events of 'becoming celebrity'.

The complex issues involved in the representation of the female body in contemporary art and the issue of 'becoming celebrity' are necessarily intertwined with the phenomenon of objectification. Regardless of the original concept of the art work and the initial intention of the female artists using their bodies, there is still this danger of objectification whenever the female body is exposed to the gaze of the viewer (either male or female), even when it is obvious that this operation of objectification was the main target of the artist's critique.

In this context, the questions that Slavoj Žižek asked while tackling the phenomenon of over-identification and the regimes of representation of power relations can be relevant for examining any possibility for subverting objectification. When discussing the Slovenian NSK artists' group and the band Laibach, he was concerned with the problem of miming the regimes of power:

> This uneasy feeling is fed on the assumption that ironic distance is automatically a subversive attitude. What if, on the contrary, the dominant attitude of the contemporary "postideological" universe is precisely the cynical distance toward public values? What if this distance, far from posing any threat to the system, designates the supreme form of conformism, since the normal function of the system requires cynical distance? In this sense the strategy of Laibach appears in a new light: it "frustrates" the system (the ruling ideology) precisely insofar as it is not its ironic imitation, but over-identification with it - by bringing to light the obscene superego underside of the system, over-identification suspends its efficiency. [44]

What I want to do here is to take on the notions of over-identification and subversion and to discuss their mechanisms, particularly in the context of several gender projects by the artist Tanja Ostojić (1973, Užice, Yugoslavia). Moreover, I want to show that with miming a certain regime an artist can retain her/his distance from the mimed regime and, as claimed by Žižek, can frustrate that very regime of power.

The question that arises as a result of most of Ostojić's art projects is: what are the options for different 'strategies' available to a woman artist in order to question the essentialist attitude, and not to be accused of 'essentialism' at the same time? Can it be true

that there is no way out of this paradox that works similarly to the body of oroboris? With the head and tail being the same obsession for claiming the natural and biological determination of the relations between men and women, essentialism cannot be easily subverted.

In order to rehearse some possible implications of the attempt to overcome such a paradox with a different approach towards the essentialist formula in Ostojić's work we may need to evoke the phrase 'strategic essentialism' coined by Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak. In comparison with the regular type of essentialism, 'strategic essentialism' would be different in two key ways:

> First, the "essential attributes" are defined by the group itself, not by outsiders trying to oppress the group. Second, in strategic essentialism, the "essential attributes" are acknowledged to be a constructs. That is, the group rather paradoxically acknowledges that such attributes are not natural (or intrinsically essential), but are merely invoked when it is politically useful to do so. Moreover, members of the group maintain the power to decide when the attributes are "essential" and when they are not. In this way, strategic essentialism can be a powerful political tool. [45]

It is necessary to point to the fact that since Spivak first used this phrase she has been highly criticised for its meaning, but it is also important to mention that most of the criticism overlooked the emphasis put on the word 'strategic'. [46] Mostly, the term was related to Spivak's opinion that in different parts of the world where feminist movements did not have the same historic and cultural impact, the strategies for its development should differ. Therefore, if one group or individual estimates that even essentialism can be fruitful as a strategy against essentialism itself, there is no reason not to accept the possible agency entailed in such a paradoxical method of feminist action.

The logic of Spivak's notion of subaltern subjects that have special strategies sound slightly different from Butler's production of subject through subjection to law and through the process of acquitting oneself from the presumed guilt:

> To become a 'subject' is thus to have been presumed guilty. Then tried and declared innocent. Because this declaration is not a single act but a status incessantly reproduced, to become a 'subject' is to be continuously in the

process of acquitting oneself of the accusation of guilt... Yet because this guilt conditions the subject, it constitutes the prehistory of the subjection to the law by which the subject is produced. [47]

While for Butler the subject internalises the assumed guilt before it is even a subject (the guilt precedes the subject) and is forced to become a subject in this continuous process of acquitting, Spivak suggests that process of subjectification is carried on by a subject who tricks the system by using its own means and strategies, that perhaps is closer to what Ostojić tries to do.

One of Tanja Ostojić's works consists of a pile of 2150 condoms in the corner of the main space of the installation, titled the same as her solo exhibition *'Strategies of Success"* (2003, Gallery *La Box,* Bourges, France). The handwritten text on the wall behind *'This is exact amount of condoms that I used during my career in order to serve curators who helped me becoming famous'* deserves some more attention and a careful elaboration being also a "backdrop" for the performance at the opening night of Ostojić's exhibition *Strategies of Success.* The scarlet environment immediately resonated with erotic assumptions that some 'event' of copulation had taken place. The exhibiting of the accumulation of condoms inevitably underlines this expectation. The boudoir environment and its erotically charged atmosphere leads to a pre-mature conclusion that nothing should have contradicted the stereotypical idea of the rituals of seduction and the sexual intercourse used as a tool for flourishing of the young artist's career. Yet it is the blunt 'confession' written on the wall that seems not to fit there.

The irony of the sentence on the wall complements the tone of the *Venice Diary* (2002) - the longer text read by the artist during the opening. The opening performance actually consisted of the artist reading the text of *Venice Diary* (after going through an extensive 'going out' ritual). The diary was written and published by the artist after the two projects that were commissioned for the Venice Biennial exhibition "Plateau of Humankind" by its curator Harald Szeemann, and is full of details about Ostojić's Venice project *I Will be Your Angel* (2001, 49th Venice Biennial, Venice) and about her commitment to accompany the main selector and curator of the most prestigious international exhibition in the world during the four days of its official preview. [Fig. 56]

When Harald Szeemann, aged but still an appreciated and famous curator, had accepted the 'rules of the game', those entailing that the young female artist, dressed as a celebrity in a fashion designer's clothes, was to accompany him as his 'guard' during his

everyday obligatory meetings, press-conferences, dinner-parties, interviews etc., it was already clear to him that the agreement also entailed many 'blind spots' - open possibilities for unexpected events to take place and to destabilise his stable curatorial position gained through many years of his international professional career.

The posh opening was imagined as a spectacular background event for another event, a kind of social and cultural critique prompted by the artist herself with her simulation of an automaton, 'an art dummy', while smiling artificially and waving ironically to the audience and art snobs. The issues of glamour and success were therefore put side by side with issues of cultural and social power. By exposing herself: her body constrained by the not so comfortable tight corsets and shoes, and her personality constrained by the strict social rituals, she created a site for deconstruction of the institutional frameworks that she deliberately entered.

Tanja Ostojić obviously used the opportunity to work with Szeemann as an opportunity to subject him to an experiment: she picked the famous curator, still an attractive man in his seventies, communicative, and not single, in order to question most of the cultural stereotypes of the international art scene. The rituals of seducing, jealousy, exoticism, age difference, and man/wife/mistress triangle, were the main "blind spots" to be challenged. Most of these themes are still taboo and preserved only for the gossiping séances, but not for public discussion and interpretation.

The everyday lascivious scene of Tanja Ostojić dressed glamorously in the Lacroix outfits, especially chosen and ordered by the artist for this occasion, walking side by side with Harald Szeemann on his daily duties during the preview for critics (press conferences, interviews, business meetings, openings, cocktails, concerts), put in movement the wheel of many paradoxes and absurd interpretations as well as the instrumentalisation and surveillance of her own body. The later development of events, the falling-out between the artist and the curator, the threats and ignoring of her work only proved that the usual 'object of seduction' can easily become the subject and that the power games are always two fold and the roles are completely reversible.

Therefore, instead of trying to acquit herself of the imagined and presupposed guilt and accusations, the artist subverts this expectation and turns it into a farce with exactly confessing the opposite: yes, I've done it. The revelation of truth was obviously not what was at stake here. The number of condoms and their presence in general are not enough to convince the viewer that what is stated with the sentence is the truth. On the contrary, the rumours eavesdropped over an official dinner might have been much more persuasive in

effect. The ironic and ambiguous effect of the graffiti is a result of the fact that the sentence was written by the artist herself.

The dominance of the objects in the installation *Strategies of Success* obviously is an excessive claim to reality that simultaneously enforces and questions the complex relation between an assumption and the truth itself. To put it in the terms of Hegel's 'master/slave' relation, the slave/artist works positively with the objects, puts a specific form to them, so that while working on them he/she becomes aware of his/her independence. [48] Although Hegel speaks neither of the gender of the slave nor of the master.

When Ostojić used the condoms as objects - proof of the presupposed guilt she changed them into the opposite, the proof of her independence and strength. It is a bold act to deal with this issue with using the same 'language of objects' that is somehow preserved for the 'boys' club' of curators. Having said that I need to clarify immediately that this Hegelian formula in Ostojić's work can be followed with a similar set of arguments that was applied in Hegel's interpretation of the struggle for mutual recognition in-between the slave and the master, but only that the final conclusion here differs significantly simply because the *telos* of this struggle does not end with the realisation of the slave that he/she is independent.

In fact the 'absolute fear', 'the discipline service and obedience', and all other requirements of 'master/slave dialectics' do exist within the artist/curator relationship, but *'the real power of self-consciousness, the 'absolute negativity' that is able to transform things'* belongs neither to the master nor to the slave. [49] On the contrary, it is the 'truth' about the necessity of mutual recognition that, although announced from the very outset, never actually takes place. Or, one can relate the truth and the objects by referring to Alain Badiou's words: *'the form of the object cannot in any way sustain the enterprise of truth.'* [50]

The complex and intriguing meaning of this project is also linked with the other project by Tanja Ostojić involving the late curator Harald Szeemann, the strange *Black Square on White* (2001, "Plateau of Humankind", 49th Venice Biennial, Venice). It consisted of her pubic hair shaved in the form of a square instead of the 'natural' shape of "triangle." The project, although invisible to the public, took place at the same time as the performance *I'll be Your Angel,* while the artist was accompanying the curator. A kind of quick gaze at the hidden critique of the modernistic appropriation of the Russian 'icon' of avant-garde and turning its mysticism into geometric or optic forms was imagined as

optional event. The play with geometry imagined as an ironic homage to Malevich's well-known painting was supposed to be accomplished at the very moment when the 'chosen' curator would have actually seen the hidden bodily intervention. That was conceived as an apocalyptic moment of 'revelation of truth', unveiling of what was 'veiled' in the most intimate place.

The artist never stated whether such an event was scheduled and whether it took place. The performance obviously refers to the symbolic of the act of showing to a man the *"mythic bauba"*. It is the sight of the horrifying truth: the "lack" that causes the men's fear from castration and the feminine powers and at the same time stiffens his body and thus transforms it into a phallus. [51] But of course, the truth is not even in its most hidden place. In the case of Ostojić' performance, the mythic "bauba" was deliberately and ironically supplemented by the 'geometric abstraction' – the modernistic privileged position to abstracting the content from the form.

The unanswered questions as to when and under what circumstances this spectacular, but private, event of revealing the 'shaved truth' took place, and whether the work existed at all, are less important than the gender overwriting and re-shaping, 'shaving' the history of art with such a courageous performative concept: to show to the famous art curator that in the most 'hidden' place of femininity there is nothing terrifying, there is only this abstract 'black square on white' that he has been accustomed to during his long career. We will never be sure whether this 'interactive' performance was really carried out, but the fact that it certainly created discomfort and tension between the artist and the curator, the curator and his family, the artist and the organizers, speaks for itself.

The social, political, and economic structures and particularly the gender issues are even more underlined in Ostojić's inter-medial projects such as the complex ongoing *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport* that started already in 2000 and is still running. [Fig. 57] The first phase consisting of a simple Internet advert with an image of the artist's shaved body and the title was followed by the distribution of leaflets and posters in a shopping mall in Skopje (2001, *"Capital and Gender"*, Skopje) and with a web site that enabled the correspondence between the artist and her 'suitors" (<www.cac.org.mk/capital/projects/tanja/>). The project has gradually transferred from the realm of 'imaginary' to the realm of 'real' when the artist met and married one of the 'virtual' suitors (the German artist Clemens Golf who deliberately delved into the 'art-marriage' adventure), but it is still not accomplished.

The final stage of this long-term art and life commitment started in the realm of a complex intertwining between the 'imaginary', 'real' and 'symbolic': when the artist started facing the German state authorities in order to acquire the long-awaited Schengen visa and started going through the seemingly endless procedure for long-term residency. [52] At this point, the artist herself no longer controlled the 'rules of the game'- it is the moment when the 'Law of the Father' enters and creates many surprising turns, but yet so déjà vu. Namely, after three years of 'fictitious' marriage the couple split and filed for a 'real' divorce. Obviously, it was very difficult to make the border-line between the 'fictitious' and 'real' and keep them apart in this context.

The ambiguity of this project is contained in the intentional play with the aesthetics of the artist's usage of her own image for the Internet advertisement: her skinny shaved body, without any traces of sensuality or the seductive gaze or gesture, conveys an opposite visual message than the usual aesthetics of the adverts. From out of this conflict between textual invitation and visual repulsion was born the gap of ambiguity between attraction and abjection.

The body, the personal and the social freedom offered in exchange for a Schengen passport, for a political freedom, still subverts what seems a classic case of marriage of convenience. The contract signed by two artists transforms and utilises the power of the social and cultural institution of marriage in another direction than in the original formal format.

For Rune Gade *'Ostojić does not construct a line of fictitious characters; she does not stage a play on identity and liminality. On the contrary, Ostojić makes herself the recognizable and, in a certain sense, stable centre of all her work.'* [53] When comparing this work with the work of other artists who stage themselves in their photographs, videos or performances, in Gade's view, Ostojić's *'employs no masquerade whatsoever.'* [54] However, Gade contradicts himself when further on in the text he states that:

> This reluctance of the artwork to assume a definite shape, which is superseded by a craving for continuous openness, has an evident parallel in the restless transformations of identity of the late-modern subject, narrating ever new stories, often commercially infiltrated, about herself, thus producing ever new subjectivities through various kinds of storytelling. [55]

In fact, this interpretation sounds as a more appropriate one and much closer to the variety of different works by the same artist. Regardless of the fact that the artist's looks are recognisable, (because in this particular work she is naked) it does not necessarily mean that no masquerade is involved.

The masquerade here is enacted differently though from the masquerade in Riviere's terms. It is true that, similarly as in the case of some other works, such as the more recent performance *Integration Impossible* in which artist performed dressed in a veil made of camouflage cloth ("Prologue: New Feminisms/New Europe," Manchester, Cornerhouse, 2005), Ostojić does not identify herself with the predestined feminine role. [Fig. 58] However, she re-invents herself as a site for producing certain discussion and negotiation of the process of subjectification. '*The sense of coherence and stability within the subject, what Giddens terms 'ontological safety', is no longer given and self-evident, but must be continuously construed through the networks and narratives that the subject enters into.* [56]

When Gade states that '*the very idea of the autonomous subject is made problematic by the work*' he in a way confirms that a type of masquerade is at work in Ostojić's work but one that does not work only by 'hide and seek' games with gender difference in isolated terms of gender only. Here the masquerade enters the very complex realm of political and state power that in fact does shape gender among all other issues.

For Rune Gade, Ostojić's work points to the problems with the idea of freedom of movement within The European Community.

> Rather than characterized by unbounded freedom, the situation of the late-modern European subject seems to be determined by social, economical, ethnic and cultural conditions. The work clearly views the subject as continuously produced in situations of conflict and negotiation between various extra-personal parties and institutions, rather than as an unambiguous, static and independent 'personality'. It is in the interplay and dialogue between these extra-personal parties and institutions that the work/subject takes its shape and achieves its possibilities of negotiation. [57]

However, in spite of its social and political commitment, the process of over-identification also makes this project humorous. It directly mocks the strict German laws

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when she on the one hand receives art grants from the German state for the project and in front of the very same state defends her marriage as a real one.

Simultaneously to the long battle through the German bureaucracy, the artist started another series of projects, much more connected to the realm of the political aspects of her own actions. Namely, she started the *Integration Project* dealing with immigration that consists of a series of workshops, free language courses, dinners, and other social activities such as the *Office for Integration* (2002, "Uncertain Signs /True Stories", Badische Kunstverein, Karlsruhe) that take place in parallel to her own integration within the German society, culture, and art scene. [Fig. 59] This project is actually a complex on-going archive that the artist moves to different spaces. By so doing, the artist transforms the gallery spaces into discursive platforms for discussing the problems of migration and integration of the migrated subjects, such as herself, into the newly inhabited social and cultural environments.

All these entwined relations between the realms of 'imaginary', 'real' and 'symbolic', to use the Lacan's triad, are challenged in the context of Ostojić's art works through the everyday problems such as the globalization, market, virtual presence, stock-exchange, gender roles etc. She uses the procedures and material used in advertising campaigns: posters, flyers, Internet advertisements in order to contrast the multiplication and proliferation of images to the uniqueness of her 'real' body, but also in order to interrupt the flickering Lacanian 'symbolic chain of signifiers' with controlled interjection of her own image within it.

The main target of Tanja Ostojić's work is the over-identification with the established regimes of power and representation through which the objectification of the female body usually takes place. Her body is only one of the media that she uses in order to stress the urgency of questioning these catachrestic relations between the field of visual representation and state power.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The question remains whether gender differentiation (not exclusively in Queen Marie's personal case) could happen aside of the complexity of the never finished processes of national and political *becoming* in the Balkans. And yet, I want to argue that it did happen besides the unresolved macropolitics that according to Deleuze is the enemy of *becoming*. According to Deleuze *becoming* is not an evolutionary question, something that happens to everybody, but it is rather a question of *micropolitics:*

Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something: neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing correspondic relations; neither it is producing, producing a filiation or producing through fliliation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, "appearing", "being", "equalling", or "producing.' [58]

Being is always already grand and in order to become other, it needs to be deterritorialised. *Becoming-gender-difference* simultaneously needs the same two movements as becoming minor: one by which the subject will be isolated from majority, and another by which it will rise up from minority. [59]

Put side by side the archival folders of Queen Marie, Sanja Iveković, Milica Tomić, Tanja Ostojić, and Liljana Gjuzelova make an archive of compossible events of "becomings", the *becoming-gender-difference* archive. The event of becoming-gender-difference is a singular event that takes place in this archive. The words "event" and "becoming" in some Slavic languages have a common linguistic root. For example, in Macedonian "nastan" stands for "event" and "nastanuva" stands for "becoming". Thus, *event* and *becoming* are mutually interwoven and inseparable.

NOTES:

[1] *'She was born in Eastwell, England, on October 28th, 1875, as the daughter of Duke Alfred of Edinburgh (son of Queen Victoria of Great Britain) and of Duchess Maria Alexandrovna (daughter of Czar Alexander II of Russia). On December 29th, 1892, she married Prince Ferdinand. Endowed with an extraordinary courage and energy, Queen Maria visited the camps of cholera stricken soldiers during the war of 1913 and of the war from 1916-1917, the hospitals in Moldavia, crowded with soldiers contaminated with typhus. She supported Romania's cause in front of the Powers of the Entente, at the Paris Peace Conference. On October 1 5-th, 1922, side by side with king Ferdinand, she was crowned as queen of all Romanians.'* Iulian Voicu and Emanuel Bădescu, The Royalty – a Page of Romania's History (Bucharest: Alcor Edimpex, 2000) 60.

[2] Queen Marie lived in the Balkans for thirty years and went through the period of World War I and through the regional conflicts that led to the establishment of the Romanian state before she actually became a Queen of Romania. Her opinion about the nation that she did not belong to by blood, but she accepted thoroughly, was often ambivalent but full of appreciation: *'They live at the crossroads of Europe and are the most resilient race on this earth'.* qtd. in Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania – The Imperialism of Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 8.

[3] According to Hayden White *'if there is any logic presiding over the transition from the level of fact or event in the discourse to that of narrative, it is the logic of figuration itself, which is to say, tropology. [...] To put it yet another way, the transition is effected by a process of transcodation, in which the events originally transcended in the code of chronicle are retranscribed in the literary code of the farce.'* Hayden White, *The Content of the Form, Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press) 1987, 47.

[4] Austin 34, A.2.

[5] Schneider 100.

[6] The photographic album dating from 1904 is kept side by side with other albums and hundreds of other miscellaneous items such as correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, texts, books, watercolours and oil paintings. They were all donated to the Kent Library by Queen Marie, her daughter, Princess Ileana, Stefan Habsburg (Ileana's

son) and Ray Baker Harris. This album and some of these materials are digitalised and can be found on the internet. For example, the album from her trip to America and Canada in 1926 shows many extravagant and courageous adventures that she undertook during her travels. All her visits paid to politicians, Red Cross officials, Women's professional clubs, Women's Athletic club for swimming, museums, operas, even department stores such as Marshall Field's (Chicago) etc., were documented by official photographers or by the press. Her voyage on 8 November to Glacier National Park in Idaho, is documented with what is definitely one of the most extravagant photographs. It shows Queen Marie with war-bonnet of feathers given to her as a gift from the Chief who gave her the names Morning Star and Pretty Dove. For that reason, for showing a bizarre desire for over-exposure in the media, she became the subject of several satirical observations and comic illustrations in the magazines in US from that period. 17 April 2004 <http://specoll.librry.kent.edu/women/triptoamerica.html>.

[7] Diana Mandache, 'Later Chapters of My Life: The Lost Journal of Queen Marie of Romania,' 17 September 2004 <http://die_meistersinger.tripod.com/marie2.html>.

[8] The variety of photographs in the photographic albums made by Queen Marie depict her exciting life. In many ways her archive and her obsession with her own image resemble the obsession for photographic 'performances' of the Countess de Castiglione. Abigal Solomon-Godeau, 'The Legs of the Countess,' October 34, 65-108.

[9] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) 91-103.

[10] Gisey, *Cérémonial,* 9, qtd. in Agamben *Homo Sacer,* 91.

[11] Agamben reflects to Bodin's interpretation of Kantorowitcz's book stating that the book should not be read as only *'a demystification of political theology'* and of the *'absolute character of political power'* but it should be stated that it is also concerned with the *'perpetual nature of sovereignty, which allows the royal dignitas to survive the physical person of its bearer.'* (Agamben, *Homo Sacer* 92)

[12] Here I want to refer to the programmatic 'German Fach system' in distribution of roles in the eighteenth century opera that works by following strict rules of distinction between sexes. The roles in German opera were distributed according to the little physical difference in the size of the larynxes and other articulators between male and female singers. The lower range of voices (bass and bass-baritone for male voices and contralto for female voices) was always linked with the roles of the authority figures such as the King, the Queen, the mother or the father, while the higher voices such as tenor or soprano were

preserved for the lyric roles of young lovers. The phenomenon of *castrati* stood between the two, as a kind of bridge between the natural endowment of the singers and the musical requirements of one epoch. See: Angus Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera*, (London: Secker and Warburg) 1956, 30-37.

[13] According to Austin 'illocutionary force' rests in the *'performance of an act in saying something as opposed to performance of an act of saying something'*, such as in the acts of 'orders' (J. L. Austin 100). In order to have a 'happy performative act' there are always several conditions to be fulfilled. When the performative acts are in a chain or a sequence, if the next performative speech contradicts the previous one for Austin it would be a clear case of contaminating the necessary conditions that having been fulfilled in the first case, cannot be successfully fulfilled and repeated in the next contradictory case.

[14] Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London: Longman, 1998) 13.

[15] Susan Doran, 'Elizabeth I Gender, Power & Politics', *History Today*, May 2003: 53. 5, 32.

[16] Tarnya Cooper, Queen Elizabeth's Public Face. *History Today*, 53. 5 (May 2003): 41.

[17] Doran 35.

[18] Quote by Romanian Queen Marie. Perhaps this statement can be also interpreted as an evidence of her desire to have rights equal to the rights of a sovereign man. 22 April 2004 <http://www.blouseroumaine.com/freeexcerpt_p14.html>.

[19] Glenny 59.

[20] HSH Radu, Prince of Hohenzollern -Veringen. *Romanian Contribution in the 20th Century Europe*, 20 April 2004 <http://heiwww.unige.ch/ped/docs/Prince_Radu.doc>. According to Prince Radu Queen Marie's attribute was a result of the fact that she was a mother of three future rulers of different Balkan states: Yugoslavia, Greece, and Romania, a result of the quite common practice for that period to have Royal marriages. Namely, most of the Royal families in Europe were trying to tie each other in order to keep and spread their political influence and power, and thus to deal with constant conflicts between the politics of different states.

[21] Queen Marie, 'A Queen in Crisis: It is no Sinecure to be the Queen of a Country'. *The Ladies' Home Journal*, December, 1918, 8, 12 April 2004 <http://die_neeisteringer.tripod.com/marie4.html>. Queen Marie sent this article to an American friend during war times via the Head of the American Red Cross Mission, the Colonel Henry W. Anderson. In the text Queen Marie describes in details the circumstances

surrounding her moving to Romania and different emotional phases that she had to go through the process of adaptation.

[22] Among the more important photographic collections of Queen Marie's photographs kept in various archives are the collections in the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, Kent State University Libraries, Ohio, US, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford, California, Maryhill Museum of Art, Goldendale, Washington, and in the British Archives – Victoria and Albert Museum and National Portrait Gallery.

[23] Queen Marie, 'Is Royal Blood a Blessing', Box 1: Correspondence in the Kent State University Libraries 15 April 2004 <http://specoll.library.kent.edu/women/queen.html>.

[24] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 291.

[25] James Williams, 'Deleuze,' University of Dundee, 12 January, 2004, <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/philosophy/williams/Deleuze/ >.

[26] Milica Tomić, 'I am Milica Tomić,' *Milica Tomić*, catalogue, ed. Silvia Eiblmayr (Innsbruck: Galerie Taxispalais) 1999, 43.

[27] Tomić 43.

[28] Claire Colebrook, 'A Grammar of Becoming: Strategy, Subjectivism, and Style.' *Becomings – Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, ed. Elizabeth Grosz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999) 117 – 118.

[29] Colebrook 118.

[30] Colebrook 132.

[31] Colebrook 132.

[32] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 377.

[33] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* 170.

[34] Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence Essays on A Life*. Introduction: John Reichman (New York: Zone Books. 2001) 86.

[35] Branislava Andjelković and Branislav Dimitrijević, 'Traps of Identification: Three videos by Milica Tomić,' *Milica Tomić*, 26.

[36] Deleuze, The Logic of Sense 89.

[37] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* 127-128.

[38] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* 39.

[39] Deleuze *The Logic of Sense*, 196.

[40] *Sanja Ivekovič – Personal Cuts*, Catalogue, Texts: Silvia Eiblmayr, Bojana Pejic and Natasha Ilic, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, 2001, 96.

[41] Houbigant Parfumes,' Queen Marie of Roumania, *National Geographic* 1922, 12 September 2004 <http://www.tkinter.smig.net/QueenMarie/Houbigant/index.htm>.

[42] The captions underneath the photographs refer to the magazines and years of the cut out images. Elle, December 1975/ 1972, Duga, 1975 – 1962 in flat of aunt Koka, Krajiska 19 (*Sanja Ivekovič,* 19).

[43] *Sanja Ivekovič* 32-33.

[44] Slavoj Žižek, 'Why are Laibach and NSK not Fascists?' Originally published in *M'ARS* (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija), 3/4, 22 March 2002 <http://www.nskstate.com/appendix/articles/whyarelaibach.php>.

[45] Sara Danius and Stefan Jonsson, 'An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak', *Boundary* 2 20:2 (1993): 24-50.

[46] Suzana Milevska, 'Resistance that Cannot Be Recognised as Such – interview with Gayatri C. Spivak'. *Identity*. 2. [Skopje], 2003: 14.
In the interview, Spivak claims that even though she had given up this phrase she could not give up the concept itself, in particular because it already entered the language and found its applications.

[47] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press) 1997, 118.

[48] Shou-Bang Jian. 'Hegel's account of master/slave relation in Phenomenology of Spirit.' 8 Sept. 2002 <http://www.geocites.com/shoubang/files/Hegel-master-slave.htm> 9.

[49] Eric Steinhart. 'The Master/Slave Dialectic.' 1998, 16 Oct. 2002 <http://www.wpunj.edu/cohss/philosophy/courses/hegel/MASLAVE.HTM>.

[50] Badiou, *On Finaly Objectless Subject* 24.

[51] Interestingly enough, in several Slavic languages (for example in Macedonian, Serbian and Bulgarian) the word "curator" sounds vulgar because its first part *"cur"* means "prick". There is no any etymological significance in this coincidental link but it somehow acoustically "assigns" the curatorial profession to men and it creates awkward situations to women involved in curating.

[52] The Schengen agreement is a document that was first signed in 1985. The number of seven countries of The European Union who first signed the contract grew to fifteen with the enlargement of Europe and is still growing. The initial aim of the Schengen treaty was to end the internal border control within The European Union. Evidently, it soon turned

into its opposite: a justification for a strict control over the larger border, the one dividing European Union from the rest of Europe.

[53] Rune Gade, 'Making real Strategies of performing performativity in Tanja Ostojic's Looking for a Husband with a EU Passport,' *Performative Realism*, Museum Tusculanum Press (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2005) 189, (181-207).

[54] Gade 180.

[55] Gade 190.

[56] Gade 191.

[57] Gade 190 – 191.

[58] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 239.

[59] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 291.

CONCLUSION

Reflections

What was announced in the introduction and was "saved" and put in reserve for the conclusion is what in the form of an open question still has potential for the future. The question of gender difference is manifold. Not all of its aspects can be grasped and elaborated in the framework of this particular research project on the visual cultures of the Balkans. It is therefore difficult to conclude, to lock the issue of gender difference from a central perspective (the root of the word "conclusion" in some Slav languages is the same as of the word "key" or "lock").

It is particularly difficult to offer conclusive comments that are not overburdened by preconceived representational categories originating in the past. The scarce knowledge about the visual culture(s) of the Balkan region and many preconceptions still circulating in the West about this part of Europe can prevent the understanding of *becoming-gender-difference*. Straightforward conceptions of sexual and gender difference as given and unchangeable categories often prevail over more subtle understandings of *becoming-gender-difference*. This research could easily remain trapped within the parameters of these preconceptions, haunted by the remnants of the past and by the burden of patriarchal representation.

Therefore, in order to enable the update of gender difference, it is important to question the theories that interpret this issue in isolated terms. A more focused discussion of gender difference with an emphasis put on the way in which this issue is embedded in the cultural and political spheres of life, can facilitate its contextualisation and spatialisation.

1. Political and cultural context of gender difference

Let me start with an old Balkan joke that best exemplifies the "dangerous liaisons" between politics, culture and gender difference in the Balkans. The question is this: 'why does a Bulgarian man not enjoy a blow job from a Macedonian woman?' It is followed by the answer: 'because he can not recognise her mother tongue.' The pun can be instantly understood by local audiences because the word "language" in most Slav languages in the Balkans (Mac. "jazik", Bulg. "j'zik", Serb. "jezik") stands for both "tongue" and "language". This crucial pun rests on the old, politically driven conflict between Bulgaria

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and Macedonia. It reveals that even today Bulgarian linguists officially negate the possibility of linguistic differentiation between the two neighbouring languages. They interpret the Macedonian language as a Bulgarian dialect, up-graded into language during Tito's period after the Second World War.

The joke invites many interpretations. A psychoanalytic analysis of the structure of the joke, for example, can deal with the link between language, symbolic order, the unconscious, and gender difference. According to psychoanalysis, the subject is an effect of language. Therefore, the crisis in representation begins already within language. Consequentially, by denying the existence of a woman's language (and her nationality), the man denies her status as a subject. The woman is once again denied the possibility to be present and represented. She is defined as absent, as "lack". Therefore, the pleasure fails to take place.

One can argue that the joke is not accurate. If one takes into account the political argument properly, the pleasure should have taken place: it is not the language but the *difference* between the languages that is not politically recognised. That should have resulted in recognising the Macedonian mother tongue as the same as the Bulgarian, but such logical subtleties cannot be expected from a joke.

At first, the joke sounds typical in that the woman's actions are stereotypically reduced to that of pleasuring men. However, from the outset, it is clear that the joke is not only about the relationships between men and women. It actually deals with both symbolic order and state power. The woman is represented as confined by patriarchal rule, on both a political and a sexual level. There are no possibilities left for negotiation, exchange of pleasure and reversibility of roles in sexual relationships or in politics.

It is obvious that most of all, the joke stresses the political conflicts of the past, some of which are still relevant. The confluence of body and culture in the word "jazik" is used in order to emphasise the dominance of politics over culture and body. Without an understanding of the political context of the region, the joke loses its meaning. The graphic but culturally and politically informed humour underlines the possibility/impossibility of translation of gender issues in the over-politicised Balkans. The issue of gender and sexual difference is overpowered by the realm of the political. In addition, the joke makes fun of the communists' belief from the more recent past: that the political mission always needs to come first, before private life and personal affairs. This strict and inevitable rule was prescriptive for both genders. The complex implication of the joke is that even sexual pleasure in the Balkans may be hindered by a strict political mission - for example, the

mission of denying the legitimacy of the language spoken in another country. Undeniably, the cultural, political, and gender differences in the Balkans have an entangled co-existence, but they also fit into a hierarchy.

The fact that the joke is incomprehensible without a contextual explanation, ties in with the main aim of my thesis: to focus on cultural and political translation of gender difference. Not only is the cultural translation of Balkan gender issues difficult for those who are not native to the Balkans, translating the issues of gender difference from one Balkan culture to another is also not an easy task. To translate the subtle nuances, the little differences, is a challenge in its own right. As has been stressed before, the Balkans is not a homogenous region. The differences of idioms (there about 20 different Balkan languages), and cultural and political histories are all important. Moreover, contemporary borders do not necessarily match the differences between peoples. State borders, and with them political and cultural boundaries, have changed often and fluctuated throughout history. Even if people did not move they could easily find themselves in radically altered circumstances.

Some countries belonged to the Byzantine Empire, some were part of Rome, some countries lived under different periods during the Ottoman rule and more recently, some of them shared fifty years of communist rule (except Greece and Turkey). After the Second World War, during the communist period, some countries were closer to the Eastern bloc (Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania), while Yugoslavia was more independent. Hence, there are complex difficulties to attend to that render difficult the generalisation of the issue of representation and translation of gender difference in the Balkans. All of these circumstances shaped gender difference differently in each country. These contextual differences have not yet been sufficiently discussed (from a theoretical point of view) and are still mired in preconceived assumptions from the past, not so much different from the ones present in the joke.

Therefore, I argue that today it is inappropriate and problematic to deal with the issue of gender difference in the Balkans as if it is a kind of isolated discursive territory. Furthermore, the fact that the Balkan cultural and political context is different from the Western context does not undermine the urgency of this question for the Balkans. It is problematic to think of the recent gender studies in the Balkans as of something that has a bigger importance for Western theory than for the reality of the Balkans (as it has been argued by some of the local opponents to feminism).

In my thesis, I present both photographs and contemporary art works that resist these preconceptions. Although some of these photographs date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and were stored in the Balkans' archives, they are still surprising. When taking into account the series of photographs of women warriors from 1878 or the unveiled Albanian girl [c. 1908-1916], it becomes clear that patriarchal representation has never been as homogenous as often interpreted. Patriarchal representation has always already contained certain dissonances that were not easily translatable into different cultural, social, and political contexts. I consider the implications of these dissonances for the present, and for future representations of gender difference.

The correspondences between contemporary art projects and archival photographs inevitably point to the need to re-define the preconceived image of the Balkans, and to re-think the pre-existing gender relations in the region. The "illocutionary" power of the performativity of the images from the past is put side by side with the active agency produced by contemporary art video, installation, and performance projects. Through endless imaginary encounters, these different repertoires of images reciprocally "inform" each other, and enable research topics to be established, topics that perhaps would not initially be anticipated as existing in any of these materials if they were looked at separately from each other.

2. Methodological transversals

Instead of dealing with the issue of representation solely from the perspective of the past, I tried to re-think gender difference from the perspective of today. The complex contemporary cultural, social, and political situation in the Balkans is the context of my research and its outcomes. It was the position from which I could look both into the past and into the future. I put forward the archival images that emerged throughout my research, but I discussed them in the light of contemporary art projects. Thus, I drew an uneven rhizomatic structure made out of the associations between them, dealing with the conjunctions and disjunctions that proliferated as my research proceeded. Many cross-referential links emerged when going back and forth in time. Thus, additional reciprocal and retrospective interpretations of both archival and contemporary images were made possible.

One of the main issues that I have challenged throughout my thesis is the image of the Balkans as a cultural environment determined by patriarchal structures and regimes of representation. In order to underline the limitations of such a perception of Balkan culture, I employed various methodologies. The immensely heterogeneous background of the researched visual material prompted a transdisciplinary and transmethodological approach. Each of these methodologies proved helpful in various areas of my research, but only to a certain extent. Therefore, the combination of all these methodologies proved necessary in order to elucidate the complexity of the issue in theoretical and cultural terms.

a) *Orientalism and postcolonial theory*

Postcolonial theory seemed to be one of the most appropriate theoretical approaches for tackling the Balkan problem because most Balkan countries have had a long common past under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. In order to question whether the employment of certain aspects of postcolonial discourse is viable in a Balkan context I had to look at the intrinsic structure of Ottoman rule. I argue that its relation towards the subjugated peoples in the conquered provinces is very different from the relation towards subjugation in other Empires that has been used as starting models in postcolonial theory.

Maria Todorova, Milica Bakić-Hayden, and Vesna Goldsworthy dealt with Orientalism and made subtle distinctions between Orientalism and Balkanism. While describing the processes of imagining the Balkans from a Western perspective, Bakić-Hayden coined the expression 'nesting orientalisms'. These Balkanist scholars pointed out that there is still a certain dichotomy when attempting to understand the Balkans. On the one hand, the region is still seen as oriental because it spent nearly five centuries as part of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, it is indisputably part of the geography and culture of Europe. This dichotomy is stressed by one of the many similar obsolete names used for the Balkans: Turkey-in-Europe (there is no agreement whether Turkey is part of the Balkans). The inhabitants of the Balkans were mainly white and Christian, and in important contrast to the other regions analysed by Orientalists, the Balkans were never directly colonised by Western powers.

This is perhaps the main reason why it is difficult to apply the "master-slave" dichotomy to this context, at least not if it is paralleled to the West/East relation as proposed by Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory.

In fact, the absolute fear, the discipline and obedience, and all other conditions required for the fulfilment of the master/slave dialectics exist in the Balkans/Ottoman (East/East) relationship. The only difference is that in this relationship the power of self-consciousness that can change things, the *"absolute negativity"*, does not belong to the master or the slave. The need for mutual recognition had to take place from both sides, but it was affected by a third part – the West. What was once an East/East relationship became West/East/East three-part relationship wherein the Balkans were squeezed in the middle because of European dominance over the region by the end of the nineteenth century, and this finally led the Ottoman Empire to succumb.

Therefore Hegel's interpretation of the dialectical struggle for mutual recognition between the slave and the master can be employed, but the conclusion will differ significantly. It is because the struggle does not end up with the slave's realisation that he/she is independent.

In Hegel's 'master/slave' relation, the "slave" works positively with the objects, puts a specific form to them, so that while working on them, he/she becomes aware of the newly gained independence. In the case of the Balkans, this "independence" was facilitated by the "great powers" and therefore one can argue that self-awareness never really happened.

Although Orientalism and postcolonial theory in general have some theoretical tangents with my topic, the visual material I explored prevented me from employing many of the concepts crucial for these theories. Here I need to emphasise the fact that I mostly worked with images or art projects produced by local artists, originating in the Balkans. Therefore, the construction of the Balkans by a Western or Eastern (Ottoman) gaze was not an important aspect of my project. However, the relationship between the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire was important when I discussed the photographs of the Ottoman period.

An important issue that is related to this discussion and needs further research is that there is a certain specific dialectics already existing within the borders of the Balkans. It is the dialectics that results out of the hierarchy among different Balkan cultures. The unstable hierarchy established out of the differences between each of these cultures according to their degree of Westernisation or economic wealth often changed through history. In different periods, certain countries dominated the region, either because they skipped the Ottoman rule, or because they became independent earlier than their neighbours. The fact that Greece and Turkey did not undergo communist regimes had also impact in this hierarchy. Today, the hierarchy is changing from year to year with the

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enlargement of the European Union and with the shifting border between Europe and "non-Europe."

The delicate resonances that the postcolonial concept of *hybrid* has with racial hierarchies established through a cultural pecking order, were also an obvious reason for avoiding this term (Bhabha *The Location of Culture*). Particularly problematic would be its use in the context of the Balkans where such racial hierarchies have caused many conflicts in the recent past. The incomprehensible atrocities from the recent war conflicts that were qualified as genocide call for a very sensible approach towards the phenomenon of hybridisation.

It is obvious that there has never been a common "hybridised" Balkan culture. However, something is common to all cultures in the Balkans. It is an inner dissonance making these neighbouring cultures both friendly and hostile to each other. They all need each other in order to define themselves in relation to their neighbours, but that is exactly where rests their difference from the logic of hybridity. The points of connections are not dominated by one hegemonic centre of power that systematically rules the relations. It is a complex and asymmetric network of past and actual dominances. There are points of interference, and that is where the fight for the right to an origin (names, insignia, historic places, and events) begins.

Instead of employing the theoretical model of the *hybrid* or a new similar one, I prefer to refrain from defining any new, fixed term. Even though *the neither* sounds as a possible concept, it does not entail a single, steady definition. *The neither* is a conjunctive that disjoints. The outcome of its unstable structure is that it questions the old terms, but does not rest with any new term. Thus, the new subjectivities are produced, but this process is completely open and is not limited to *hybridization*. *The neither* should allow coexistence and *compossibility* of disjunctive parts without expecting them to merge and intertwine.

The hybrid is also an all too general concept to really offer a profound reflection on the particularity of gender difference. The specific relations between subjugated and ruler in the history of the Ottoman Empire make the application of *the hybrid* problematic in this context. The concept of *the neither*, that I propose in the first chapter, is more appropriate since it facilitates the avoidance of yet another "third" concept. It is not based on the dichotomous relation between self and other but it contains a multitude of different entities that coexist in multiple relations and define each other by comparison or contrast.

b) *Derrida's deconstruction and Deleuze's affirmation of differences*

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Deconstruction proved much more appropriate for the main aim of this research. The analysis of the images that were previously neglected because of their subversive power was possible by employing deconstruction, but not by understanding it as a kind of strict methodological procedure. I embarked upon this project thinking of deconstruction as an open strategy for re-articulating the visual materials that enabled me to question the dichotomous oppositions and tensions between representations of male and female subjects.

I am aware of certain methodological problems that rise when I try to relate Derridean deconstruction and Deleuzean philosophy of becoming. This is the case especially when I propose the concept of *becoming-gender-difference* where these two different directions of thought meet in my thesis. The *"Gender difference"* part of the expression lends its logic from Derrida's *différance; becoming* derives from Deleuze's *becoming-woman.*

Although I acknowledge the intrinsic tension and contradiction between these two different philosophical bodies of thought, for my project they are both equally important. I try to employ and to reconcile the seemingly big differences between their interests in difference. First, Derrida and Deleuze have both long investments in investigating the logic of difference. While Derrida defies any definition of *différance,* mostly employing a negative procedure of eliminating what it is not, Deleuze's project is mostly interested in an affirmation of difference.

However, Derrida's and Deleuze's work cannot be seen in a simple and symmetrical relation. Even though Derrida resists uttering a positive definition of *différance* since there is no "master-name" for it, he calls for a certain affirmation of *différance.* [1] Deleuze, though, distances himself from dialectical thinking because of its double negative procedures such as "negation of negation". He is interested in affirmation of "authentic difference", "temporalisation of difference" and its transformation. For Deleuze difference is what stays away from negation, contradiction and alterity. Difference relaying on negation such as Hegel's dialectical difference is "inauthentic" for Deleuze.

The distinction between Derrida's and Deleuzes' philosophy and their profoundly different understanding of difference, was relevant for my research. It served as a useful means for understanding and interpreting the contradictions at work in contemporary Balkan cultures. In fact, as in theology, both negative and positive methodological procedures were important in my research and work side by side.

The relation between negation of definition and affirmative play of differences in Derrida's writing at times resonates with the way in which *apophatic* and *kataphatic*

theology are linked and work in parallel. Although in the critiques of Derrida's philosophy there was a big emphasis given to the alleged similarity between his philosophy and negative theology, few writers focused on the affirmative aspects of Derrida's deconstruction. Positivity in Derrida's line of thought is found in parallel to negation. His denial of the relation between deconstruction and hyperousiology and negative theology is based on the affirmative interest in the apophatic within deconstructive procedures. John Caputo pointed to the fact that deconstruction is not something negative, it is a "deeply affirmative irruption," a desire for the impossible and for transgression. [2]

In Derrida's writing, positivity is interwoven within the performative procedure of addressing or praying to someone. As in mystic theology, the prayer is the supplement to negation of the name and it is an expectation of expression of certain effects. That is something that is disguised also in deconstruction. However Derrida insists on negating the presence in his *différance,* on its "differing and deferring substitutions," he affirms this ceaseless engagement.

c) *Feminist critique and psychoanalysis*

I do not see my project as a strictly feminist endeavour or a critique of feminism. Although it is informed and influenced by different feminist theorists and women writers, it looks at a larger array of questions. However, I try to re-elaborate certain assumptions of feminism and I combine them with the methodologies of other relevant disciplines. Inevitably, sometimes such interdisciplinary approaches result in contradictions or clashes between different passages (given that some of the other theories mentioned are not gender oriented).

Especially important was the feminist criticism of other contemporary theorists and philosophers to whose work I refer throughout my project, even though I did not always agree with all their arguments. For example, I could not neglect feminists' critiques of the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and of their concept of *becoming-woman.* However, most of this criticism was determined and limited by a certain dialectical understanding of the constitution of female subjectivity by overcoming and surpassing certain obstacles. That derives from the difference between negative theology, deconstruction, and the affirmation of difference in Deleuzean philosophy. This is not the same as saying that all feminist theorists tend towards deconstruction and criticise Deleuze. I found it particularly interesting when feminist theorists tried to reconcile this kind of dichotomous division

between different theories and turn them into a productive discourse of difference (Grosz, Olkowski, McNay).

I agree with the importance of stressing the potential of female agency and the production of female subjectivity defined as something different from the symbolic category of "lack". McNay, for example, argued that the concept of *lack* is a universal category that confines the theories of subjectification, preventing them from any account for change. (McNay *Gender and Agency*). Therefore, even though both *lack* and *the neither* work through certain negativity, they differ because *the neither* also means an invitation for newer and newer supplements to what was negated and lacking in the initial concept.

Certain similar problems surfaced in my psychoanalytical reading of the images of women warriors. When I employed psychoanalysis and the notion of "lack" in my interpretation of the photographs, I realised that psychoanalysis resists flexibility in interpretation because of its dependency on the firm structure of the assumed patriarchal order. Its assumptions are deeply grounded on the initial psychoanalytical scheme of relations and therefore when psychoanalytical methods are not employed throughout the whole research, some contradictions occur. The negative paradigm is dominant and strongly embedded in its methodology. However, for me it was a challenge to employ a psychoanalytical reading (Melanie Klein's and Jacques Lacan's theories of aggressivity) when deploying the photographs of women warriors and discussing the myth about Amazons, even though perhaps at times this reading sounded too literal for psychoanalytical experts.

The psychoanalytic theories on aggressivity and attribution of aggression can be challenged (Freud) or complemented (Lacan, Klein) by the recent findings of many sociologists, historians, and anthropologists (e.g. Goldstein). For example, Melanie Klein's views on aggression among children are still relevant to some of this research. Her claim that aggression among boys and girls is equally distributed can also be interpreted as important for the constructionist interpretation of gender distinctions as culturally determined. I am nevertheless aware that I would have needed a much larger space than I assigned to this problem here if the aim of my research was to reveal the inner contradictions of the long tradition of psychoanalytical writing.

Especially difficult was to reconcile psychoanalysis and contemporary feminist theories. Most feminist theorists of the "third wave" criticised psychoanalysis, but they still use it extensively (Grosz, Cornell). Hence, the constant tensions and contradictions between these two theoretical approaches do not come as a surprise.

Recently, by studying different forms of over-crossing gender boundaries and ambiguities, like transsexuality and transvestitism, some feminist theorists questioned the old division of gender studies in two sexes and genders. The fact that in many cultures there are phenomena such as tomboys, "sworn virgins", "hijras", "xanith" and "jotas" complicates the studying of gender identity and subjectivity. The question that comes clearly through such research is whether femininity and masculinity are symmetrical and only possible cultural expressions of biologically given characteristics.

The rare phenomenon of "sworn virgins" is one of the most radical examples of some ancient Balkan practices of over-stepping the gender distinctions. Using *the neither* may prove extremely useful in discussing this phenomenon, perhaps more so than the *hybrid*. This phenomenon, when a woman dresses and behaves like a man, is a purely cultural phenomenon known in certain Balkan countries and regions (Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro). Although visually the photographs of "sworn virgins" look familiar today, this phenomenon has nothing in common with biological differentiations, or with phenomena such as transvestitism or trans-genderism, as known in the West. It derived from the need of patriarchal societies to overcome unsustainable hierarchies and to negotiate between genders when necessary (when the main male in the family has been killed during the war, or when the woman wants to avoid marrying as part of an arranged marriage).

This phenomenon, sometimes called a "third sex" or "third gender", is actually a practice that does not anchor in any prescriptive category or gender. It emphasises the fact that even though the hierarchisation of gender difference is at the root of any social organization, a pure patriarchy never existed. Even during the periods that we counted as strictly patriarchal, or in places that we count as underdeveloped (such as the Balkans), genders are not strictly fixed and un-negotiable.

Furthermore, it was also questioned whether feminism is not over-privileging the heterosexual orientation by its discussions of gender difference. Especially relevant for this debate is Drucilla Cornell's "ethical feminism". She argued that feminine is wrongly elaborated and reduced to only what is not man and that feminists mostly criticise the constraints of gender hierarchies within heterosexuality. She questions feminisms that discuss gender as separable from the questions of race, class, nationality, and sexual orientation. Psychoanalysis is an important analytic and referential frame for "ethical feminism" since it can help to reveal the ways in which social reality is influenced by the symbolic order. [3]

3. The Balkans: singularity and specificity

At this moment the countries in the Balkans are troubled both by their past and by their future. Such a precarious condition is an outcome of many persistent and as yet unresolved past conflicts. The issues that are still at stake here concern the territorial borders, the origins of different nations and nation-states, languages, insignia, to name but a few. This uncertainty will probably remain in the near future, mostly as a direct result of the uneven pace of the inclusion of the Balkan states within new European "borders".

Also, it should not be forgotten that besides the common Ottoman past, most of the countries in the Balkans (except for Greece and Turkey) share fifty years of communist rule that makes this integration even more difficult. This period has had enormous social and political implications for gender relations and for the understanding of gender difference in the Balkans. The communist programmatic changes of gender relations affected mostly the economic realm. [4] Not only were women encouraged to work but they were also paid the same as men. These and other societal differences will affect the pace of integration of these countries within the framework of the cultural policies of the new Europe.

In my project, I did not embark on a deeper analysis of the problems of communist ideology. The complexity of this issue would require research entirely devoted to this particular political aspect of gender difference. On the one hand, the problem of gender difference during the communist period is not specific to the Balkans: it is highly relevant for the wider context of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, many countries that accepted the communist system have different historical and cultural background than the countries in the Balkans. That is why I confined my research to the connections between the contemporary period and the Ottoman past of the Balkans.

Also, as I mentioned before, not all of the Balkans shared the communist past – Greece and Turkey had never accepted this ideology on state level, and Yugoslavia had a revised communist system in contrast to Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania who followed more or less a system closer to the Russian one. In addition, it is also important to emphasise the fact that the communist period was much shorter than the Ottoman rule.

During the fifty years that this different political system was in place, a certain difference between the Balkan countries occurred in terms of gender relations and representation of gender difference. Communist ideology announced very loudly the equality between men and women and introduced many laws in order to proceed with this

important task. Certain legal regulations really changed during this period, at an official level, and women were encouraged to enter the social, economic, and political realm of living (for example, in contrast to the West, women were paid the same as men). Therefore, the visibility of women and the representational politics of the imagery of women gradually changed.

However, because of the strict dichotomy between private and public life that was retained throughout the communist period, the official public image of woman differed and moreover was in contrast to her image in the private sphere. That is why some remnants of the old regime of representation could return easily during the transitional period, both in the public and in the private sphere. This was most of all reinforced by new regulations on the economic and political level that was a result of the requirements imposed by European Union as a part of the formal procedures for its membership. These specific changes and complex differences in the field of visual representation between different Balkan countries made impossible any attempt to provide a relevant account of this problematic within the context of this research.

Once the dissolution of Yugoslavia began in 1991, some borders between newly established states were not yet defined. There is the possibility that yet new states will emerge. Now only Greece and Slovenia belong to the European Union; all other countries aspire to entry in near future. Until this happens, the process of integration in Europe is conditioned by many strict requirements to be fulfilled. Therefore, the question of continuous change remains highly relevant

In such conditions of constant uncertainty and flux, especially with regard to political and ethnic borders, and the need to constantly re-define and "translate" cultural identities, the discussion of gender difference becomes even more urgent and complicated. It becomes especially important to discuss the ways in which the specificity of gender issues in the Balkans can be culturally translated and interwoven within the new European narratives without losing the general, universal weight of the problem. On the other hand, the problem that can arise when women are identified with sexual and gender difference, as if they do not have an identity of their own, can be subverted by emphasising the singular differences among women that are not necessarily based on their different cultural identities.

Therefore, a method similar to Deleuze's concept of *'becoming minor'* is needed. *Becoming-minor* is different from everything that *is*, from *being* itself. *Becoming,* understood in this way, leads to the dismantling of the very concepts of fixed, self-

conscious identities. *Becoming-minor*, a double procedure through which certain subjects are first isolated from the majority and secondly through which they need to be elevated from minority, seems to be the most appropriate way to present the content and concept of my archive. [5] For example, if the majority of the researched archival images consisted of typical patriarchal representations - group family photographs, the photographs of singular women made a "minority" group of representations that differed among themselves and invited a further quest for distinctions.

In this context, when groups are no longer tightly territorialized and homogenous, it is not an accident that a new space for the *specific* and the *singular* has been made. This observation is highly influenced by the concept of *deterritorialisation* that I referred to in my dissertation. [6] The fundamental changes of the *ethnoscapes* and the constant disentanglement of the links between people, wealth, and territories transforms the basis of cultural reproductions.[7]

I share some of the hesitations of Arjun Appadurai regarding the phenomenon of "globalisation of culture". His warning that globalisation often involves indirect use of a "variety of instruments of homogenisation" is especially relevant for the Balkans. [8] The imposed homogenisation is gradually absorbed into local political and cultural economies. What is important for the context of the discussion about the hybridisation of cultures in the Balkans is the fact that homogenisation or 'mutual cannibalisation' of different cultures takes place precisely through globalisation. [9] For example, the development of different local ethnic cultures and their relationships are neglected in favour of the constant insistence towards internationalisation and globalisation.

Nevertheless, one should make a distinction between a simple criticism of globalisation as the impact of political power from outside, and a more complex critique of the relations between local and international power. Recently, the eagerness of local governments and non-governmental cultural organisations to meet the requirements for entering the European Union became an example of such a relation. This collaboration between local and international powers often involves adjustments of the cultural laws and policies that do not always comply with local cultural interests and traditions. Sometimes new policies that support certain cultural and art practices at the expense of others can result in the extinction of some unique cultural and art phenomena, specific to this area. For example, when foreign foundations administrate large funds without proper research, besides benefiting the local cultural and art producers they can also create a huge turbulence and imbalance in the local cultural environment.

4. Gender difference, cultural production, and future implications

The concept of gender difference that I propose is a constant movement of flux from the outset. In cases when we deal with subjects that constantly need to redefine their roots and future moves at the same time, it becomes more complicated to grasp the possible ways in which gender difference can be negotiated. To define the national and political stands towards one's own past needs to be placed in parallel with the re-definition of one's own actions in future. Hence, it is absurd that the Balkan nations, that until recently fought about delineation of borders, will soon become a part of a much broader territorial entirety – Europe. The announced prospect of European enlargement and integration opens up new questions. The issue at stake here is whether the new political situation automatically invites new perspectives for gender difference.

From this perspective, it becomes inevitable to note the paradox hidden in the attempt to connect the cultural and the territorial within one single concept. A clear distinction should be made between cultural identity and identity based on geographical and regional belonging. Spatiality and historicity are usually, though not only in the Balkans, in a very strong oppositional relationship. While time and historicity have a special place in critical, social, and cultural theories, space, and spatiality remain extricated from any comprehensive research and interpretation. [10] The fact that the "life-stories" have also a geography and that *'historical imagination is never spaceless'* is what is in the heart of Edward Soja's critique of what he calls the *'silenced spatiality of historicism.'* [11] Spatiality should be defined not only as a physical space, but also as a space of human geography and culture; it is socially reproduced and this continuing reproduction, specific to capitalism, is the very source of the on-going crisis of representation.

Here I want to expand Soja's view on the relation between social life and spatiality and the relation between culture and spatiality. Due to its historicised structure, the cultural realm is in a seemingly oppositional relation towards the geographical and the territorial. That is not the same as saying that this opposition is irreversibly carved in history, especially if taking into account the political impact the nation-state had over both the cultural and the spatial throughout history. On the contrary, it means that the relation between the cultural and the spatial is a manifold relation that constantly changes. If it is clear that culture is a product of spatiality, it should be also noted that culture produces spatiality. I cannot think of a better example of cultural production of spatiality than the

project *The Bridge "Rosa Plaveva and Nakie Bajrami"* that was mentioned in the chapter three (Hristina Ivanoska's proposal for naming a bridge after the forgotten women protestors). In this kind of "spatio-temporal" dialectic the regional specificity plays an important role. [12] However, one should be aware of the hidden impact that global or local politics have over the *'innocent spatiality'* of regional and the local. [13]

There is something very safe about the application of culture as a synecdoche: when the meaning of culture is stretched and applied as an all-inclusive metaphor. Culture is often wrongly expected to be an order of things that is expandable to all other orders. The assumption that culture can encompass all other 'territories' under the same roof (the social, economic, or political aspects of living) is especially present within hegemonic cultures. Furthermore, the overestimation of the importance of local cultural practices reflects a certain assumption that when talking about the local, the universal inevitably pops up.

However, besides all these reservations concerning the ability of culture to have universal meaning and power, culture has certain potentialities for subverting the political order. There are important means available only to the artists and cultural workers and we still need to learn how to recognise and support them.

One of the questions that is still open, (and could not be thoroughly answered during this research) is how to proceed in future with the exploration of the relationship between the issue of gender difference, local politics and subversive cultural productions in the Balkans. Future research can opt for several directions in order to circumvent the confines within which previous discussions of the contemporary culture of the region took place. The attempt to elude underestimation or overestimation of the contextual specificity of the Balkans would be especially relevant. The question whether *culturally specific* and *singular* can be appropriate grounds on which theory may develop successfully is still a difficult one to answer.

The problem with specificity lies in the danger from mistaking the specified for the specific. [14] The notions of specific and singular and their mutual relations are important for the discussion of art projects that deal with cultural issues. I see a danger that comes from what Peter Hallward dubs "over-contextualisation": it is the tendency towards reduction of the significance and complexity of a specific situation to a function of one particular element of this situation. The "bigger picture" thus can get lost by over-estimating the importance of the specified examples.

On the one hand, it is clear that overlooking certain specificities relating to local heterogeneous ethnic and cultural environments with long and conflict-ridden pasts can

result in sweeping statements about emerging new nomadic subjectivities. On the other hand, clinging to particular spectres from the past can limit and obstruct future perspectives on gender difference and can prevent changes taking place in the contemporary Balkans.

What can one learn from contemporary art projects and the cultural production of women artists in the Balkans? One possible answer to this open question is the innovative ways of producing new questions and unique ways of dealing with old problems of representation. I find the question asked by Etienne Balibar, whether a kind of cross-cultural circulation will not soon be made more accessible to women than to men to be of particular importance. [15] One can actually recognise such phenomena in cultural and art channels. The art produced by women carries complex cultural and political tropes that in many unique ways break with the pre-established laws of representation.

The Bulgarian filmmaker Adela Peeva (b. 1948, Razgrad, Bulgaria) sets a good example in her documentary film *Whose Is This Song?* (2003, 70 min. Adela Film Company and TV Productions Ltd.). Her film project is about a song known in all countries of the Balkans, from Istanbul to Sarajevo. The documentary is obviously not imagined as a scientific documentary. It is neither ethno-musicologist nor anthropological, although it contains certain elements of the two disciplines. It is a rather unique film archive. Peeva's archive consists of amateur performances of different variations of one song, and an extensive collection of recorded interviews. Mostly, the contradicting interpretations of the song's origin are given by randomly selected people of different ethnic background, with the exclusion of one musicologist.

The story begins during a dinner at a restaurant in Istanbul where the filmmaker Peeva sits with a group of friends: a Turk, a Greek, a Macedonian, and a Serb. A song starts playing and everyone starts singing along. Everyone sings in his or her own language, using different words and they all insist that the song originates from each other's own country. Peeva then decides to make a documentary about her attempt to discover the background of the song. She embarks on a journey to Turkey, Greece, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, and Serbia. Along her way, she interviews different people in taverns and in private parties. [Fig. 60] In each place, she manages to persuade someone to evoke and perform his or her own version of the song. In the course of her adventurous journey, one can hear the same song performed as a love song, a prayer to Allah, a battle song, or a patriotic hymn.

The melody is easily recognisable despite the fact that it is always performed in different tempos, instruments, and lyrics. Peeva finds that each country has a different story about the provenance of the song. In Greece, it is a song about beautiful girls; in

Macedonia, it is a dialogue between the lover and his beloved; in Bosnia, it's an Islamist chant; in Turkey, it is called *Uskudar* according to one Istanbul neighbourhood (there is even a Herbie Mann's jazz version of it).

The tune is probably neither Bulgarian, nor Macedonian, nor Greek, nor Serbian... It is most likely Ottoman, or perhaps even older than that (perhaps Egyptian?), but the film is not really only about the song. It indirectly invokes the ethnic conflicts inherited from the distant past or still going on today. By the end of her film, Peeva shows the confusion that was provoked when she mentioned the Bosnian version of the song in a Serbian pub. At first, it sounded strange that she would provoke anger by just playing different versions. Soon it became clear that the Bosnian version has a kind of Islamist militant connotation, and Serbians felt insulted because they are Orthodox Christians. It actually awakes hatreds from a decade of war in ex-Yugoslavia. During the last minutes of the documentary, the filmmaker returns to her home country. When she mentions to some young Bulgarians the possibility that the song might be Turkish, she again faces animosity. The song brings forward the long-held hatred towards the Turks (the hatred towards the Ottomans is usually transferred towards contemporary Turks).

Nevertheless, leaving aside all the disputes, the film is also abundant with humour and laughter. Thus it puts all cultural and political disputes aside. It is striking to see how a documentary allows a female filmmaker an easy access and the possibility to cross-over so many barriers: cultural, political, and most importantly, barriers between different genders. She enters pubs and taverns filled mostly with men; she travels from one country to another even though the borders are not safe; she communicates in languages that are similar to her own, but yet not the same. She actually manages to ask the delicate questions of the "origin" in front of the ultimate witness – the camera, without pretending to get to some final truth.

Some new aspects of gender difference emerge when one realises that this woman (the filmmaker herself) is somehow allowed in the men's world of entertainment, politics, and state order. The easy access given to Peeva in "men's clubs" mainly has to do with her special status as a woman film director. Indeed, at times, she is forced to deal with sexual insinuations that remind the viewer that this story is taking place in a particularly sexist cultural environment. Yet, the successful use of the field of art as a platform to provoke serious discussions about social, cultural, and political implications of ethnicity illustrates the tolerance of the society for this kind of action. This can lead to the plausible conclusion that the society and the structures of state power can be cut across not only through

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revolutionary conflicts, but also through art and cultural practices, by crossing pre-established rules and territorial or cultural borders.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

When in 2000 the artist Tanja Ostojić illegally crossed the border between Slovenia and Austria she broke the state rules in a much more direct and dangerous way. As part of her performance *Illegal Border Crossing* (that started her long-term project *Looking for a Husband with an EU Passport*) she illegally crossed the border twice, in both directions. [Fig. 61] At the time it was the border of the European Union where approximately eight to nine illegal immigrants were captured per day. Now that Slovenia is part of the European Union, such "illegal border crossings" "moved" towards the south, and now take place between Croatia and Slovenia.

According to the artist the crossing was possible because her Austrian friends were courageous enough to pick her up in Slovenia and guided her through tiny mountain roads towards Austrian territory. Equipped with detailed maps, the artist and her friends (also artists) passed the border taking the huge risk of being captured and imprisoned or even murdered.

The performance actually is an act of miming of similar desperate actions undertaken by many illegal immigrants who try to cross borders every day to reach the European Union. As in the case of her "arranged" marriage project, the artist stretches the "borders" of the legal system and explores its efficacy and ability to recognise different "languages". The art language she uses does not differ substantially from the language of "arranged" marriages (the project that followed this one, see chapter four) or the "real crossings" of borders. The only difference is the motivation, and that it is very difficult to prove if it comes to a legal trial.

In both projects, artists do not take the established cultural or political rules seriously and subvert them through their art. Although Peeva deals with less dangerous issues, and Ostojić enters a more adventurous game, both of them have in common a similar curiosity and "hubris". They refuse to rest with expected behaviour, and drawn borderlines between different cultural or political territories. However, while Peeva was searching for the source of the song and was dealing with the past and its spectres, Ostojić deals with the present and tries to look into the future. She tries to imagine and even invent a moment when everyone will be able to travel as a tourist wherever he/she wants. In one

photograph, while she crosses the border, she smiles to the camera wearing a sun hat with her arms widely spread, as she waits ready to embrace this future.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

I use these art projects at the end of my conclusion as metaphors for crossing-over of the "territorial" borders between different realms and orders. They are witnesses and proof that such movements are not only possible within the imaginary order of art projects, but they can also come through and subvert the real and the symbolic order.

Art works and theories that delineate gender and cultural difference in the Balkans without taking into account the political predicament will always encounter certain limitations. This was one of the main reasons that for my research I selected some projects that did not always deal directly with the problem of gender difference, but somehow they implied important questions that shaped gender difference indirectly. Such questions as the national and cultural identity, state power, political borders, surveillance, seemed very important because within this unstable framework of relations *becoming-gender-difference* constantly changes and, simultaneously, changes these relations.

The political implications of any cultural space and representational order are mostly hidden. The artistic and the cultural can be means that can help to reveal these implications in the imaginary realm. Once these hidden political aspects and tropes of our cultural space and the regimes of representation are unravelled in the realm of the imaginary, then we can expect that gender difference in the symbolic and the real order can also be seen transformed in different directions.

NOTES

[1] Derrida, *Margins* 27.

[2] Caputo 27.

[3] Cornell 76-77.

[4] Pejić 325-339.

[5] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 291.

[6] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 24.

[7] Appadurai 49.

[8] Appadurai 42.

[9] Appadurai 43.

[10] Soja 31-42.

[11] Soja 14.

[12] Soja 129.

[13] Soja 13-16.

[14] Hallward 28.

[15] Balibar 198,

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Fig. 5

Third Sex
Third Gender

Beyond
Sexual Dimorphism
in Culture
and History

Gilbert Herdt

ZONE BOOKS
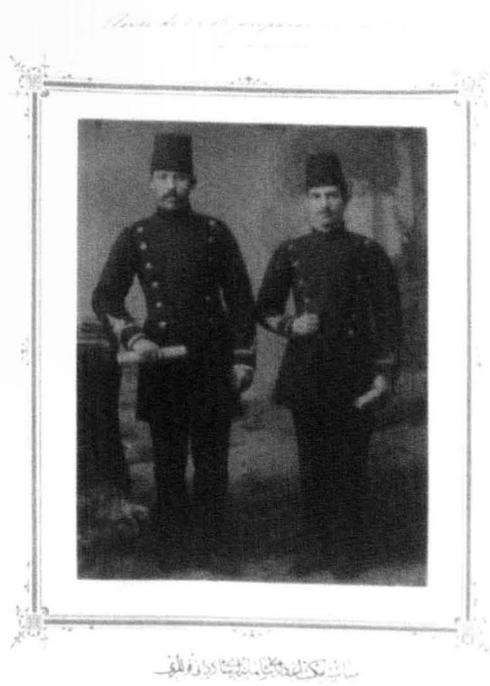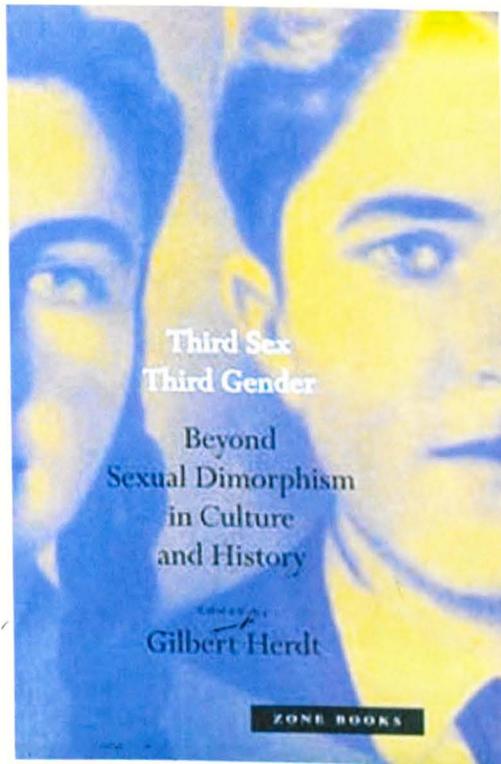
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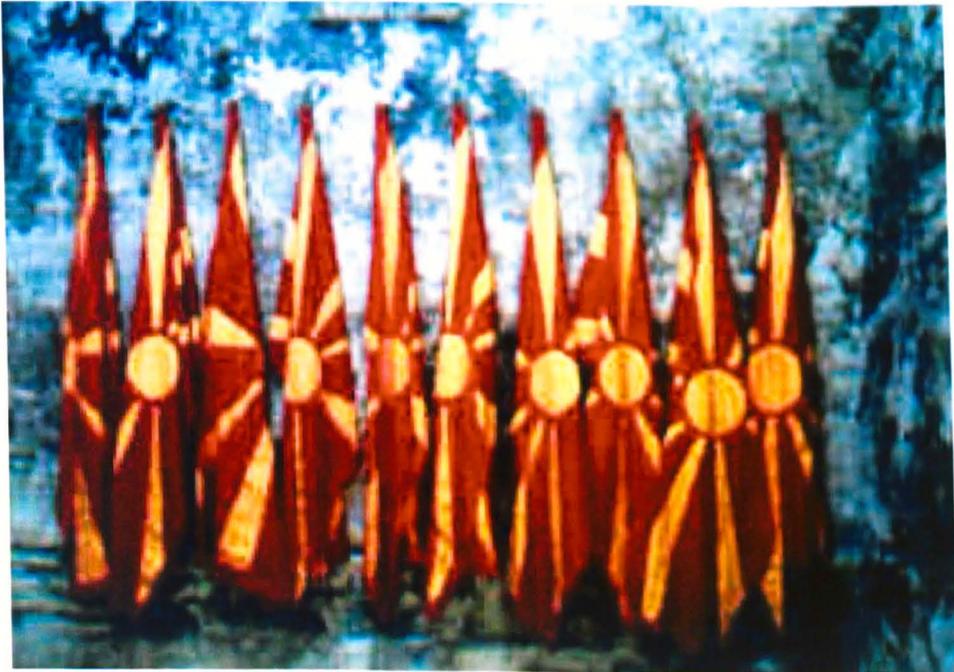
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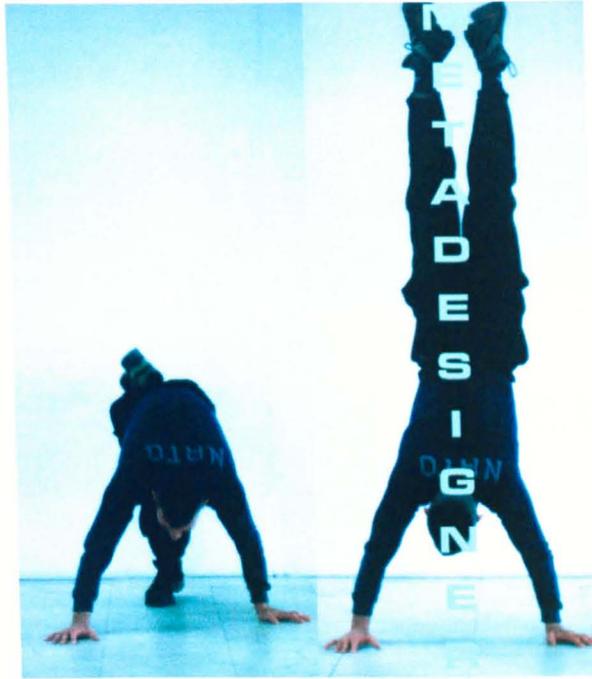
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Reem Riyashi poses with her son Obedia, three, not long before she killed herself and four Israelis Photograph: Hamas/AP

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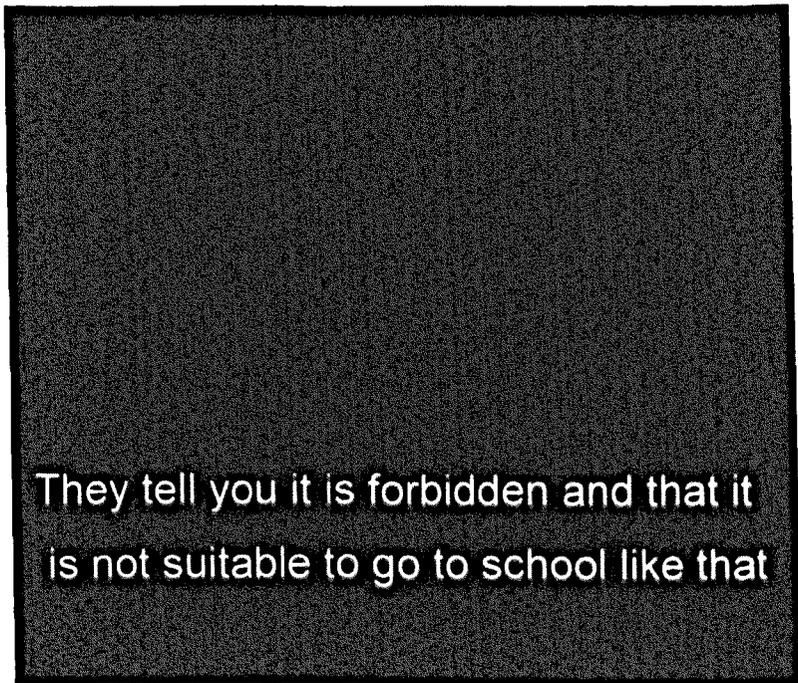
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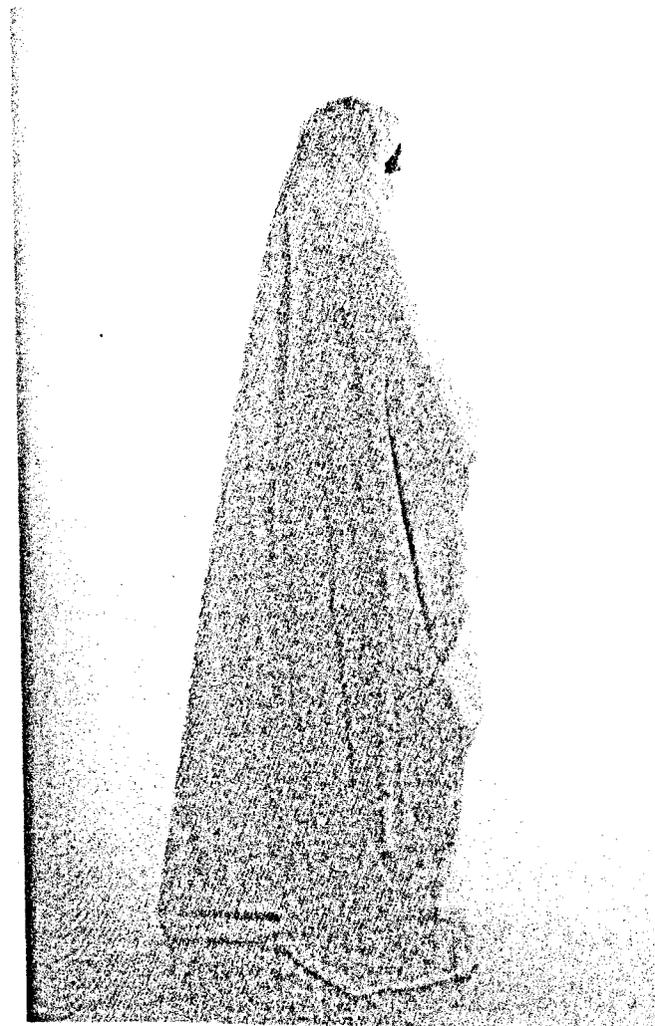
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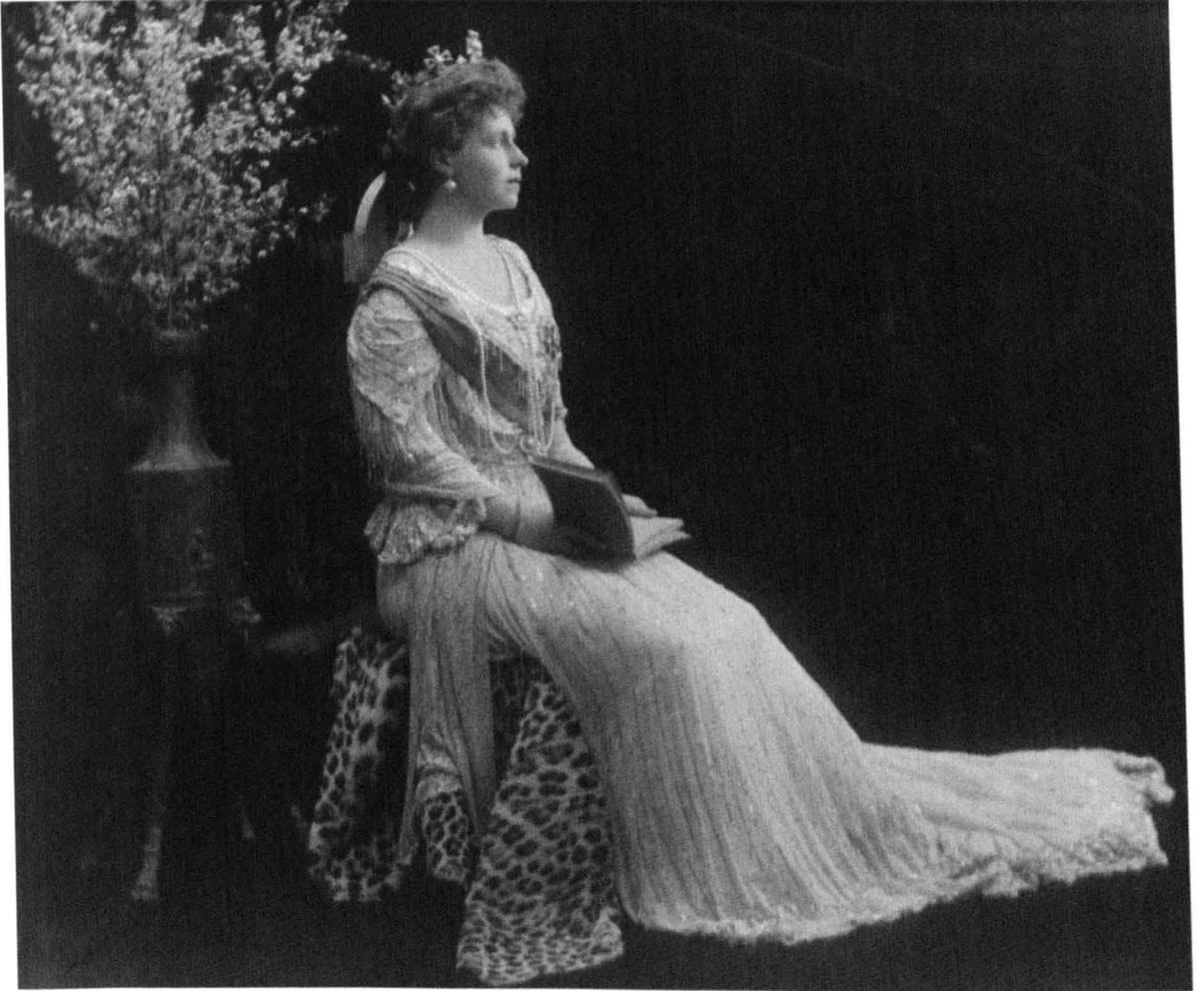
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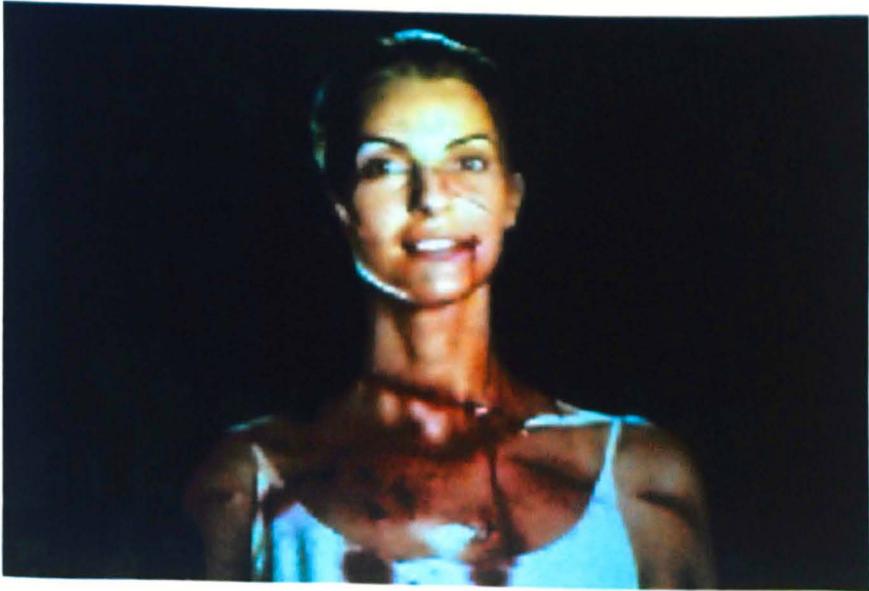
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