WORLD LITERATURE AND THE POSTCOLONIAL: HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE LITERATURE AND CINEMA OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study that engages with four major fields of study, as they are currently constituted: World Literature, Eastern European Literature, Postcolonial Studies, and World Cinema. More specifically, it is concerned with the Southeastern European historical novel about the Ottoman Empire and film narratives of the post-1989 period. I argue that historical narratives continue to play a central role in shaping contemporary nationalisms. Analyzing the role of the Ottoman Empire in the region's socio-political and religious makeup, my dissertation develops new analyses of frontier narratives of Southeastern Europe as texts that narrate the nation vis-à-vis imperial conflicts. This dissertation adopts a periphery-centered approach to literary and film studies and shows that historical focus on imperial centers has allowed for little consideration of frontier narratives. I broaden the scope of World Literature, World Cinema, and Postcolonial Studies by shifting the direction of analysis to imperial frontiers, which have been relegated to the margins of history and of literary and cinematic canons. By critically examining the Ottoman Empire as a colonial force, my research adds breadth to postcolonial studies and advances the discipline into non-traditional lines of inquiry. This dissertation is inherently focused on ethnic and transnational literatures and film that are underrepresented and under-distributed. By taking the case of Southeastern European literature and film, I argue that we need to rethink what constitutes regional and transnational literature and film by confronting the limitations of World Literature and Cinema, and of Postcolonial Studies.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Lirim and Shqiponja Lameborshi

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IMPORTANT DATES AND HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1389	The Battle of Kosovo
1453	Ottoman conquest of Constantinople
1463	Ottoman conquest of Bosnia
1683	Unsuccessful Ottoman assault on Vienna
1699	Treaty of Carlowitz
1736-1739	Russo/Austrian-Turkish War
1768-1774	Russo-Turkish War
1787-1792	Russo/Austrian-Turkish War
1804	First Serbian Uprising
1815	Second Serbian Uprising
1830	Greek Independence
1877-1878	Russo-Turkish War
1878	Treaty of San Stefano, which is superseded by the Treaty of Berlin
1908	Bosnian crisis
1912	First Balkan War
1912	Albanian Independence
1913	Second Balkan War
1414-1918	First World War
1918	Yugoslavia established

1923	Republic of Turkey proclaimed
1980	Josip Broz Tito dies
1985	Enver Hoxha dies
1989	Fall of Berlin Wall and communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe
1990-1991	Slovenian and Croatian Independence Wars
1992-1995	Bosnian War and Siege of Sarajevo
1999	Kosovo War
2008	Kosovo Independence

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For so many years he had seen how they had always been concerning themselves with the bridge; they had cleaned it, embellished it, repaired it down to its foundations, taken the water supply across it, lit it with electricity and then one day blown it all into the skies as if it had been some stone in a mountain quarry and not a thing of beauty and value, a bequest.

--Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina* (229)

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the domino effect it had on Eastern European governments, was a signal event that ruptured Winston Churchill's iron curtain, and ushered in an era of a more connected and globalized world. Academically, this rupture was fruitful, at least for a time, but as the main zones of current global conflict are largely removed from Eastern Europe, academic work on Eastern Europe is a somewhat devalued currency. This should not be the case, since Eastern European studies provide fertile ground where academics can examine socio-historical and geo-political developments that have contemporary relevancy for our understanding of religious and ethnic conflicts that still persist.

Eastern Europe is a large and diverse region culturally, linguistically, ethnically, and religiously. It is comprised of sub-regions that share histories and are socially, politically, and economically inter-connected. One of these areas is Southeastern Europe, which is commonly referred to as the Balkans. Balkan in Turkish means wooded area/mountain and is indicative of the lasting legacy of the Ottoman occupation. In this study, I will use Southeastern Europe as the label for the region whose borders I will delineate later in this introduction. The reasons for this choice are as follows: First,

Balkans is a Turkish word and it over-determines the region from the moment of its utterance. Since a large part of the present project is to recuperate Southeastern Europe from its prescribed utilitarian function as the bridge between the Occident and Orient, avoiding the label Balkans re-claims the region from Ottoman discursive control, which is a latent postcolonial gesture. Second, the term Balkans is tethered to a long history of western travel writing that depicted the region as a backward and violent land that was haunted by endemic hatreds. Travel writing held and still holds discursive power, and it fixed Southeastern Europe in a place of in-betweenness that foreclosed the ability for the fledgling nations of Southeastern Europe to self-define and self-determine an identity that was neither chained to Ottoman history, nor to a western vision of the area. Third, the label Balkans is associated with the concept of Balkanization, a term which describes a fragmented group of societies involved in perpetual hostility with one another. Balkanization is a label that disguises the persistence of western gaze's over-determination of the region. Instead, I will use Southeastern Europe as a label that distances the nations of the area from previous orientalist attitudes and pre-conceptions. The study that follows is concerned with the literatures and cinemas of Southeastern Europe, and the way in which writers and filmmakers resist and reconstruct the image of the peoples inhabiting the region, as they negotiate the Ottoman past, and the ever watchful western presence, in an expanding, globalized world.

On 16 December 2012, Kosovar newspaper *Jeta nga* Kosova (JNK)[1] published a statement by the Turkish ambassador in Kosovo,[2] Songül Ozan titled "Turkish

[1] *Life in Kosova*

[2] Kosovars refer to their country as Kosova, a spelling that is consistent with the Albanian

Ambassador's Advice on Kosovo's History."[3] Her advice was given in response to JNK's inquiry about the request the Turkish Republic had made to the ministry of education in Kosovo about revising and correcting the history of the Ottoman Empire in school textbooks, grades five through thirteen. In it, Ozan writes that while she respects independent and research-focused historical accounts, she also urges scholars and researchers to acknowledge that historical events have multiple interpretations, and that given the complex ethnic, cultural, and religious makeup of the region, it is important to understand that "there are many problems of the past that still exist in contemporary politics" ("Këshillat").[4] Ozan emphasizes that textbooks teach new generations attitudes toward history, depending on the language and stance of the historian, and it is therefore important for Kosovar, Turkish, Serbian, and Albanian historians to collaborate in order to present *their* versions of history supplemented by other viewpoints. Ozan calls for an amicable review of the historical record in the interest of maintaining excellent relations between the two countries.

Another online Kosovar news source, *Telegrafi*, published a report on 16 December 2012, describing some of the proposed changes for the textbooks. The report highlights that the Committee for Review and Presentation of History, Geography, and

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[2] Kosovars refer to their country as Kosova, a spelling that is consistent with the Albanian language dialect spoken in the country. By contrast, Kosovo is the Serbian spelling for the country. A third alternative used by scholars is Kosov@, which seeks to avoid Kosovar and Serb bias. Given the context of this study, *I have chosen to use the more internationalized version* of the country's name: Kosovo. However, it is crucial to note that the international name for Kosova is one that is determined by another country who does not view Kosova as a legitimate nation. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge the dispute on the name and the power that is inadvertently enacted by invoking one version over the other.

[3] "Këshillat e Ambasadores së Turqisë për Historinë e Kosovës"

[4] "Ekzistojnë një mori problemesh të ndryshme që burojnë nga e kaluara dhe vazhdojnë të ekzistojnë edhe në politikën bashkëkohore"

Turkish and Ottoman Culture, is comprised of specialists from both countries, but the authors of the textbooks are not represented. Suggested revisions maintain that "the Ottoman Empire over the centuries of occupation of the regions inhabited by Albanians, has not murdered, has not committed violence, and neither was its exercised power oppressive. Rather, according to the recommended corrections, the sultans, their administration, and army, ruled, imprisoned, and enacted military incursions" ("Ndryshimi").[5] Among the most notable changes, *Telegrafi* highlights the following: the words "violence" (dhunë) and "murder" (vrasje) are replaced with descriptions like: "…taking away property, taxing, and assimilation of certain segments of local societies…" ("Ndryshimi").[6] Elsewhere in the fifth grade history book "the barbaric Ottoman dominion" is replaced with "Ottoman occupation,"[7] and sections of the eighth grade textbook that dealt with disadvantages non-Muslims faced during Ottoman rule have been replaced with: "In practice, all inhabitants of the regions occupied by the Ottoman Empire in every day life were equal before the law. Certainly, there were those circumstances when local clerks abused their position during the Ottoman Tanzimat[8] reforms" ("Ndryshimi").[9] The committee argues that these changes are in the best

[5] "Perandoria Osmane përgjatë shekujve të pushtimit të viseve të banuara me shqiptarë, nuk ka vrarë, ushtruar dhunë apo se ishte e ashpër. Në vend të këtyre shprehjeve, sipas korrigjimeve, sulltanët me ushtrinë e administratën e tyre, sunduan, burgosën dhe ushtruan ndërhyrje ushtarake."

[6] "…marrja e pronave, vendosja e taksave si dhe depërtimi I një pjese të populates vendase"

[7] "sundimi i egër osman" "pushtimi osman"

[8] Tanzimat was the Ottoman reform during 1839-1876 that sought to centralize Ottoman power, and reorganize Ottoman rule in order to yield larger tax revenues to fund the wars that the Ottoman Empire was fighting on many fronts.

[9] "Në praktikë të gjithë shtetasit në viset e tyre të pushtuara nga Perandoria Osmane, në jetën e përditshme ishin të barabartë para ligjit. Natyrisht ndonjëherë shfaqeshin keqpërdorimet e nënpunësve lokal osmanë në kuadrin e reformave të tanzimatit."

interest of a healthy relationship between Turkey and Kosovo since they emphasize the positive aspects of the Albanian-Turkish relationship of the past ("Ndryshimi").[10]

While Kosovo implemented many of the suggested changes, the committee's work was widely criticized by journalists and influential writers like Ismail Kadare[11] who signed a petition against revisionist approaches to Ottoman History in Kosovo, stating that historical review is "a cultural aggression that hits the foundation of the nation…[which] has repercussions for the future and for our identity" ("Reagimet").[12] Another intellectual, co-author of one of the textbooks, and a professor of history, Isa Bicaj emphatically rejected the revisions: "Even if you cut off my hand, I would not use the word 'arrival' to describe the Ottomans. They were occupiers" ("Ndryshimi").[13] As the example discussed thus far illustrates, the Ottoman Empire and its legacy in Southeastern Europe haunts present realities. As nations in the region solidified their post-communist identities, and as economic and cultural relations increased in the post-1989 period, the question of historical review was inevitable.

At the turn of the twentieth century the Ottomans were depicted as regressive hordes that disfigured the Balkan Peninsula in the national imagination of most Southeastern European nations. Omer Dinçer, Turkish Minister of Education stated

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[10] Similar sentiments were expressed by then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who in November 2010 visited Kosovo for the first time. Erdoğan and Kosovo's Prime Minister, Hashim Thaçi held the Friday Muslim prayer (namaz jumu'ah) together in Prizren, one of the main cities in Kosovo. Upon observing the many Muslim objects and buildings in the city, Erdoğan stated: "These mosques symbolize the brotherhood between Kosovo and Turkey" ("Ndryshimi").

[11] Kadare will be discussed in depth in chapter three.

[12] "një aggression kulturor që godet shtyllën kurrizore të kombit…dhe me pasoja per të ardhmen dhe identitetin tonë."

[13] "Ma këput dorën, e termin 'ardhje' për osmanët nuk e përdor. Ata kanë qenë pushtues."

upon one of his visits to Kosovo: "Turkey does not like that Kosovars learn a history interpreted by Josip Broz Tito[14] or Enver Hoxha[15]" ("Ndryshimi").[16] Although the process of nation building requires a target against which nations define themselves, scapegoating, disavowing, and rejecting the Ottoman legacy in Southeastern Europe only delayed the reevaluation of Ottoman influence and the permanence of its presence in the area. Negotiations such as the ones between Kosovo and Turkey are crucial indicators of the hauntings of history. Itself a nation that is struggling for recognition, Kosovo is compelled to accommodate the Turkish request not only because the latter is an important ally and economic force in Kosovo, but also because the legacy of the Ottomans is undeniable in its culture, language, and religion. Similarly, the rest of Southeastern European nations experience historical hauntings that are first observable in the heterogeneity of the region, and second in dedicated research focused on cultural, linguistic, and religious legacies of the centuries during which the Ottoman Empire maintained control of the area.

The repeated Turkish request for a revision of historical narratives in education indicates a discomfort with the past and its interpretation. Turkey has struggled with its own Ottoman past in the face of the dominant Kemalist ideology, but in recent decades, and especially under Erdoğan's leadership, there has been a neo-Ottomanist trend in Turkish culture labeled Ottomania. "Thanks to Erdoğan's economic policies, Turkey has

[14] Josip Broz Tito was the Prime Minister, and then President for Life of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which Kosovo was part of.
[15] Enver Hoxha was the Albanian ruler from post-WWII until his death in 1985.
[16] "Turqisë nuk i pëlqen që kosovarët të mësojne historinë e interpretuar nga Josip Broz Tito apo Enver Hoxha."

a thriving television industry," writes Elif Batuman when she discusses *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (*The Magnificent Century* 2011-2014), one of the most successful television shows that depicts the life and deeds of Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. The show is a celebration of the achievements of the Ottoman Empire and the breadth of its influence beyond the Turkish borders, which is realized in the vein of historical films about British and French rulers. It is a gesture of re-acquiring and celebrating the narrative of the Ottoman Empire, and the show "has accomplished one of Erdoğan's main goals: making a powerful, non-secularist, globally involved version of Turkey seem both plausible and appealing," even though Erdoğan himself does not have a positive view of the show's historical representation (Batuman). Regardless of his stance on television narratives, Erdoğan has increased his efforts to befriend nations that were once under Ottoman rule, as previously discussed negotiations with Kosovo show.

It is no surprise that Erdoğan's foreign policy has not remained unnoticed. On 2 April 2013 Michael Birnbaum wrote a report titled: "Turkey Brings a Gentle Version of the Ottoman Empire Back to the Balkans." His remarks focus primarily on Bosnia and the "two Turkish-run universities," which have brought to Sarajevo a large number of Turkish students, who also bring with them Turkish culture in the capital of a country that is still predominantly Muslim (Birnbaum). While the Bosnian Muslim community welcomes the enlarged cultural and economic field of influence of Turkey, Serbs and Croats regard it with trepidation since those populations opposed the Ottoman Empire in their struggle for building their respective nation-states. Another recent report from *The Economist* titled "Turkey's Religious Diplomacy: Mosqued Objectives," describes

Turkish influence in Albania, where Turkey has sponsored the building of the largest mosque in Southeastern Europe. Although Albanian Muslims are mostly secular, especially compared to Turkish Islam, the majority accept the project since "post-communist governments allowed Catholic and Orthodox Christians to build cathedrals in Tirana," but Muslim worshippers did not receive the same treatment ("Turkey's").

Economic growth is not the only aim that Turkey has in the region. *The Economist* reports that the Diyanet, Turkey's directorate of religious affairs, has helped build "over 100 mosques and schools in 25 countries" ("Turkey's"). Equally important is another Diyanet official's statement regarding mosque building, which Mr. Oktem views as "claiming new territory" with the purpose that "Turkey should be the leader of the whole Muslim world" ("Turkey's"). Additionally, according to the Turkish universities' officials in Sarajevo and other journalists Birnbaum interviewed, Turkish influence in Bosnia will create a strong relationship between the two countries, which may help Turkey's European Union bid in the future. "Hayruddin Somun, a former Bosnian ambassador to Turkey" regards Bosnia as a stepping stone in Turkey's larger goals (Birnbaum). "The Balkans" he states, "was always their [the Ottoman's] path to conquering Europe. They had to come through here [Bosnia]" (Birnbaum). If Birnbaum's and *The Economist'*s reports sound alarmist it is for a reason. Turkey's growing economy and its investments in Bosnia, Albania, Serbia, and even Croatia pose important questions for central and western Europe. These concerns not only echo the former European discomfort with the Ottoman Empire, but they also solidify the

conceptualization of Bosnia and Albania, and by extension, Southeastern Europe, merely as a bridge that connects Turkey to Europe, and a bridge that connects East and West.

Therefore, Southeastern European identity is largely defined by nations that are circumscribed in the region, who proudly proclaim their resistance against the Ottomans, which is historicized as the frontlines of protection of Europe and European values. By fighting the Ottomans, Southeastern European nations display not only national resistance and national self-determination, but they align themselves with western Europe and its civilization. As it will be evident throughout this study, such geopolitical alignments have their root in Southeastern Europe's ambivalent position. While it is described as a cultural and historical bridge between East and West, the region cannot claim an identity of its own except one that is in-between; neither this nor that; always incomplete and always oriented on the East-West axis. Southeastern Europe remains suspended between these two civilizations: a bridge with no other function than to allow these powerful actors access to one another. As Ivo Andrić's words at the start of this introduction signal, defining Southeastern Europe as a bridge between civilizations entails a destructive future, and prescribes a subservient function of the region in service of more powerful actors. By looking at the literatures and cinema of Southeastern Europe, it is the goal of this project to deconstruct the image of the bridge, arguing that Southeastern Europe does not exist as a mere utility, but is a region rich in history, culture, and ethnicity. Its relationship with both East and West is central to its current configuration, but it does not fundamentally define who Southeastern Europe is and its place in the world. Further, the present project decenters both East and West and retains,

as much as possible, a Southeastern European vantage point in its analysis of literary and cinematic texts.

Before I delve into chapter introductions, it is critical to clarify the geographical, historical, and theoretical contours of this project. As indicated earlier, even though this dissertation is concerned with Eastern Europe as a whole, that geographical space has many different areas the study of which would be beyond the scope of this project. Eastern Europe will refer to "those countries that were absorbed into or became otherwise aligned with the Soviet orbit of power…in direct consequence of the outcome of World War II, and were dominated by communist regimes until the late…1990s" (Segel 1). Even though the way I am using the term Eastern Europe is geopolitical, there are areas of study within Eastern Europe that will be excluded: first, East Germany; second, the former republics of the Soviet Union – Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia, etc. – because of their full integration "into the political, economic, cultural, and social fabric of the Soviet system," which caused a lack of the patterns of resistance against Soviet rule that we see in other nations of the Eastern block (Segel 1); and third, Greece, which is its own special case given its discursive construction by Western Europe as the cradle of Western Civilization. Further, although the project is concerned with Eastern Europe in general, the textual analysis will focus on primary texts from and about Southeastern Europe as the central site of contact with the Ottoman Empire.

In researching Southeastern Europe, one becomes acutely aware of the divisive nature of discourse on the region. Its proximity to Europe but also the Orient, and its 500

years under Ottoman rule make any sweeping generalizations about the region easy to critique. It is the discursively constructed, unstable, and ambivalent nature of Southeastern European identity that invites such generalizations. Even though the region is geographically (and politically, with a few exceptions) a part of Europe, Southeastern Europe is labeled as Europe but with a difference, which is crucial in defining the perceptions of the West about the region, and the region's attitudes about self. Given its geopolitical position, Southeastern Europe has been described as a bridge between the East and West, as Europe's backyard, and as the Oriental Europe, among many other labels. A quick survey of the peninsula, however, will show that the region is so heterogeneous that most labels are reductive and insufficient signifiers. My aim here is to propose an alternate method for studying Southeastern Europe and its literary production, a method that respects the region's heterogeneity, its distinct ethnicities, its imbricated cultural identities, and its tempestuous relationship with both East and West.

It should be no surprise that the labels designated to describe Eastern Europe have been topics of contention. For instance, because of the connotations of the label 'Eastern Europe,' – mainly because of its communist legacy, and, for a good number of countries in the region, their existence as part of the Soviet Union – certain central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia) did not want to be represented by it. Instead, they preferred the Central European label. In addition, Eastern Europe includes Southeastern Europe, comprised of countries that are vastly different than Central Europe. The discussion here will proceed by acknowledging the serious limitations of these classificatory terms and emphasizing the heterogeneity of the regions

they broadly describe; however, for the purposes of my argument, the term Southeastern Europe will be used under the provision that if the argument demands it, more specific terms will be selected; the same principle applies to the terms East and West, the latter of which will primarily refer to western Europe.

Further, the terms Ottoman and Turk need to be distinguished. Ottoman will refer to members of the Ottoman Empire who were of "the Muslim Turco-Arabo-Persian culture of the elite class of Ottomans [and] those who served the state and religion, and knew the Ottoman way" (Itzkowitz 31). The term Turk is more problematic, because within the Ottoman Empire it "was used by members of the Ottoman group [described above] to refer to peasants and country bumpkins, not to themselves. Europeans, on the other hand, referred to people on the other side of the Islamic curtain as Turks, regardless of their status as Ottomans or non-Ottomans" (Itzkowitz 31). Europeans came into contact with Turks from the Ottoman group, but they did not make the distinction and thus regarded "Ottoman and Turk…the same" (Itzkowitz 31). I will use the term Ottoman for members of the Ottoman Empire, unless the reference comes from a European perspective, in which case I will use the term Turk.

As for the theoretical terms: colonialism will be used to refer to the recurrent and widespread practice of conquering and "[controlling] other people's land and goods" (Loomba 8), a definition that acknowledges many empires and not just western empires starting in the sixteenth century onward. We need to acknowledge, however, that pre-modern empires and their colonial practices functioned differently than modern, western empires, which developed colonial practices alongside the rise of capitalism. Loomba

writes: “Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods, and wealth from the countries that it conquered – it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries” (9). These flows aided economic development in Western Europe and for Loomba, modern colonialism was “the midwife that assisted at the birth of European capitalism” (10), a coupling that complicates the definition of the term, because modern, western capitalism, aided by colonial practices is often referred to as imperialism. Like colonialism, imperialism, too, extends beyond a pre-modern history, but in modern history, imperialism happened as a result of surplus capital in the west, which sought labour and human resources in the colonies. Thus, given this leftist, Leninist definition of imperialism, one would be prompted to say that imperialism is the highest stage of colonialism: “In the modern world, then, we can distinguish between colonization as the takeover of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and cultural structures of another territory or nation, and imperialism as a global system” (11). Both these definitions will need to be adjusted to the case they seek to describe, however, and we will need to, in every case, determine the economic and political connotations of the word for the specific colonial and imperial encounter.

The term postcolonial is even more murky and difficult to precisely define. For the purposes of this project, however, I will use the term postcolonial to mean the transfer of power from the imperial center to the hands of the independent nation-states, acknowledging the long historical processes of decolonization, the way in which the

prefix ‘post’ signals a preference for presentism, and the way a nation can be both postcolonial and experience neo-imperialism through its economic system and trade practices with centers of power. Because the case under question deals with a heterogeneous region – Southeastern Europe – the Ottoman Empire and more loosely with the Habsburg Empire – we need to adjust the definitions of these concepts as the cases demand. For instance, the Habsburg Empire “based on the dual principles of settlement and economic exploitation, was the only one [of the two] that was explicitly colonial from its inception” (Göçek 95), and the Ottoman Empire, while straddling the pre-modern and modern era, controlled its territories “through compromise and administrative and ideological flexibility…often maintaining the local practices of the newly incorporated territories” (95). The theoretical terms discussed thus far will be recalibrated as the need arises to reflect the specific historical, political, economic, and social processes and the relationships they describe.

Southeastern European literature and cinema are tightly connected to World Literature and Cinema not only because of their inter-literary and inter-cinematic connections, but because they narrate worlds that are part of larger imperial histories. Instead of a singular World Literature or World Cinema, I argue for a network of *Worlds* Literature and *Worlds* Cinema, which aim to negotiate the scale between the local and the global. In other words, we ought to look at a World Literature and Cinema as cultural productions that are punctuated by regionality, which constitutes worlds within worlds. World literature here is conceptualized as layered just as we move from the local to the world literary output. Periodization and signal historical events serve to tether these

regional layers of World Literature and Cinema to a larger network of literary and cinematic production. Southeastern European literature and film, narrate intersecting geopolitical spaces and areas that have had a rich history of border crossings, especially because of their location on important trade routes. Therefore, it is critical to determine what worlds do Southeastern European literature and film re-construct, and how these worlds connect to the disciplines of World Literature and Cinema as currently constituted.

Eastern European literature is an important piece of what today we think of as World Literature. Its texts vary linguistically and culturally, and they are all linked by historical events that shaped the region at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. "The remapping of Eastern Europe after the breakup of colonial empires of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Ottoman Turkey" (Segel 114) consists of a series of important events that irrevocably changed the face of Eastern Europe and the larger Mediterranean world. Authors from the region, too, are daunted by the substantial geographical changes after the two world wars. Often narratives are necessarily tethered to the history of the wars and how "most of the modern states of Eastern Europe owe their existence to the defeat of the Central Powers" (Segel 114). The region's complexity makes it difficult for any one critic to offer an exhaustive survey and analysis of the literary production in the area, and therefore a productive approach to Eastern European texts is to examine them through important historical junctures. Harold B. Segel takes this approach in his impressive survey of Eastern European literature.

Segel's study is tempered by the material's organization where texts are grouped around historical events rather than around their national belonging. In so doing, Segel argues that Eastern European writing is transnational and that the historical links are crucial in understanding the narratives' themes and their formal elements. Further, Segel's organization suggests the primacy of identifying the role empires played in shaping Eastern Europe, and how, in turn, literature itself speaks about experiences of warfare and of colonial existence. Texts written during WWII and shortly after the war consist of stories that are, understandably, about the heroism of national resistance fighters, and often, stories about the expulsion of Jews from Eastern European nations. The latter occupy a large part of Eastern European literature.

Another crucial historical period is what Segel calls in his second chapter: "Postwar Colonialism, Communist Style." Here, Segel overviews a sample of writings that seek to either conform to socialist realism, or to unveil the tragedy and degradation that communism brought upon the literary cultures of Eastern Europe. Other important historical junctures are about emigration and exile, dissident writers, postmodern tendencies in Eastern European literature, and a postcolonial literary scene in Eastern Europe since 1991. Within postwar writing of Eastern European authors, we can also examine narratives that access deep historical time in order to speak about the present through allegory, and as an attempt to evade communist censors. Segel writes: "As a way around [the authors'] inability to deal honestly with issues of contemporary relevance, and in the face at times of severe cultural repression, Eastern European writers often pursued a variety of stratagems" (114). These stratagems relied on

historical fiction, which, even though it was "practiced in a variety of forms…[it presented an] escapist literature [which] could also make claim to relevance by insinuating parallels between events in the past and contemporary reality. This historical fiction had certain definite chronological foci" (114). But there is another function that historical fiction has served particularly among Southeastern European writers.

The distant past has been used as a blank canvas upon which authors have valorized the Southeastern European struggle against Ottoman occupation. Macedonian historical fiction and poetry has at its thematic center "the national struggle against the centuries of Turkish oppression" (115). Slavko Janevski is a central Macedonian literary figure who has written extensively on these themes. Bulgarian writer Dimitur Mantov is another prolific writer of historical fiction, as is Vera Mutafchieva, who is one of the few Southeastern European writers to have "demonstrated positive aspects of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria" (116). Croatian novelist Ivan Aralica, too, has engaged in historical fiction, but his works focus primarily on chronicles of "Franciscan friars and travelers' diaries to paint a vivid picture of a Dalmatia caught in the crossfire of Ottoman Turkish and Venetian conflict during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries" (120). Polish writer Andrzej Kuśniewicz, a prominent figure of Polish literature is recognized primarily for his novel *The King of Two Sicilies*, which is the only English translated novel of his. The narrative is set in "the twilight years of the Habsburg Empire and World War I," and Kuśniewicz depicts a "multiethnic Habsburg military" along with the empire's dwindling power. Meša Selimović is central figure of Bosnian literature. His novels *Death and the Dervish* (*Dervis I Smrt*, 1966) and *The Fortress* (*Trvava*, 1970) depict

Bosnian towns under Turkish rule, and whereas the other prominent Bosnia-born writer Ivo Andrić is concerned with a microhistory within macrohistory, Selimović's narratives focus on individuals caught in the political and religious conflicts in Bosnia while the Ottoman Empire is in its last years of rule (118-9). Andrić, whose works will be studied in depth in chapter two, takes a more transnational approach as his narratives amplify the fluidity of borders, the flux before WWI, and the transnational character of Southeastern Europe as observed from small, Bosnian towns. Andrić constructs a Worlds Literature that is just as much regional as it is of a World forged at the intersections of various imperial paths and interests. Albanian writer, Ismail Kadare, too is concerned with narratives of history and how these conjure worlds that affect national belonging and national identity. It is evident, then, that Eastern European writers in Southeastern Europe consider the past, the imperial histories, and the fates of peoples under imperial control important material to reconsider and reconstruct in an attempt to understand how inscriptions of the past are etched into the present. Andrić and Kadare are the two central authors whose works will be closely examined. They are not selected because they alone represent World Literature writers from Southeastern Europe, but because their works spotlight central questions about the region's literary output. The same premise guides the selection of filmography that will be analyzed in chapter four.

Eastern Europe is overdetermined by the west insofar as western discourse has constructed the former as either inconsequential to historical developments starting with the Enlightenment, or as a civilizing project in the post-communist era. Western attitudes toward the region continue this thought tradition, and the first chapter will illuminate the

manner in which Eastern Europe's discursive construction also serves to culturally and economically disempower the nations under this label. Focusing on World Literature and Postcolonial Studies, I reframe the conversation surrounding both fields by arguing that World Literature risks to assume a totalizing gaze on literary production. A postcolonial intervention that interrogates canon formation, production, distribution, and translation practices in world literary production constitutes a central analytic in the chapter. Arguing for a Worlds Literature approach, I use Southeastern Europe as a case study where transnational and ethnic literatures are analyzed not only as works from underrepresented nations within canons of literature constructed in western academic discourse, but as literatures that constitute worlds of geopolitical and cultural consequence. A serious engagement with the worlds that Southeastern European literatures narrate confronts some of the central conceptual problems World Literature conversations face, and challenge the limited regionalist rubric under which the former are often classified. Additionally, the first chapter argues that World Literature is world-legible precisely because the common threads that hold it together are the shared imperial experiences between former colonies. Only through a focus on imperialism as fundamental to colonialism and postcolonialism can we launch a sustained and corrective critique toward World Literature discussions, and even re-orient these to apprehend what is *Worlds* Literature.

In the second chapter I demonstrate how Ivo Andrić's major novels constitute a Worlds Literature that is rooted at the crossroads of imperial interests. Although Andrić's narratives are Bosnian, and the extraterritorial space around Bosnia is not

presented, the rising power of European Empires, the dwindling power of the Ottoman Empire, and the threat from the Russian Empire, are all present in the text. Andrić's novels present world historical events as seen from a very local setting, and I argue that this narrative choice demonstrates how local events have global and imperial scope. Further, Andric's problematic position as a writer in the post-Yugoslavian context illuminates a significant dilemma in postcolonial studies. His critics point to his representation of Bosnian Muslims as fuel for anti-Muslim sentiment that drove the 1990s ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. I use Andrić's precarious position to argue for postcolonial studies that affirm colonial resistance while at the same time alluding to troubled futures for all entities caught in the empire's path. The central questions that arise when reading Andrić's novels are: what does anticolonial resistance look like in an inter-ethnic and multi-cultural setting? What are some limitations of this resistance? And finally, how do we account for sedimentations of colonial pasts that surface again and in their revival pose a new set of problems and contradictions?

In the third chapter I focus on Ismail Kadare's historical fiction about the Ottoman Empire. In addressing religion and how it defines a nation and its identity, I argue that Ismail Kadare's work *The Siege* and its revision by the author in the post-1989 years, highlights the lingering Ottoman legacy and early-twentieth-century imperial rivalries between western Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia. These rivalries have crashed upon Southeastern Europe as if onto a reef, letting the silt of their waves settle through the years. More broadly, the chapter argues for a reading of Kadare's novel and its post-9/11 revision as a manifestation of sedimented colonialisms being reborn in the

face of western European neo-colonialism in the form pressures imposed for EU inclusion.

The fourth and final chapter analyzes post-1989 film in Southeastern Europe. Filmmakers, I argue, return to narratives about belonging and home, and their narratives are largely concerned with the conflicts still present in the region. The films under analysis display identities still in flux, conflicts whose origins the characters cannot locate, but whose genesis can be located in the sedimented colonialisms in Southeastern Europe. Much like the literature in Southeast Europe, its cinema seeks to understand the historical etchings on the face of nations and how they darkly illuminate the past in order to understand the present. Because of the post-national nature of film production and its distribution practices that essentially place geopolitical borders under erasure, and because the post-1989 moment is believed to be the signal event of high, worldwide globalization, post-1989 Southeastern European cinema is able to narrate an Southeastern Europe as it struggles with its pasts and its presents. These narratives are rooted in stories about bodies in movement across geopolitical borders, beyond nation-states, and beyond religious and ethnic belonging. Contemporary Southeastern European cinema presents us with the possibility to bridge the long space between the global and the local through every border crossing narrative. The return of the pasts and their coexistence with Southeastern European presents is more fluid, as if history in its cinematic narrative is not bound by modern geopolitical borders or chronological time. Contemporary Southeastern European cinema allows us to consider the long histories of individual nations, their relationships to one another, and their relationship to the

empires that rose and fell. What remains are the stuff of movies, but also the stuff of present Southeastern European realities.

In summation, this project broadens the field of World Literature arguing that regional literatures are themselves Worlds Literature, an assertion that ultimately argues for World Literature as a network of worlds, not isolated nations. Imperial relations forged economic, political, social, and cultural pathways, which attached to individual ethnicities and entities, and placed them within a larger transnational network of relations. Understanding these relations is urgent in light of an ever-globalized world whose imperial pasts returns and maintain power structures that sustain economic and cultural oppression. In addition, I widen the field of postcolonial studies arguing that analysis of the Ottoman Empire would reorient postcolonial studies toward a thorough engagement with imperialism as a fundamental operative of colonialism. And lastly, as any individual who has had the good fortune of traveling and studying Southeastern Europe will attest, the land and the people, although caught in the middle of imperial conflicts that abused both, possess the capacity for forgiveness and endurance. The present study is an attempt to honor the beautiful spirit of the people and the stories they have brought forth.

CHAPTER II

WORLD LITERATURE, POSTCOLONIAL THEORY, THE HISTORICAL NOVEL, AND THE LITERATURES OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

This chapter constructs a methodology for a literary criticism of Southeastern European literature by making use of postcolonial studies and theories of World Literature. While Eastern Europe as a larger geopolitical area is the more general focus, the methodology discussed here will be more directly related to Southeastern European literature and its engagement with the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. This chapter addresses World Literature, postcolonial theory, the historical novel, and possible parameters for using postcolonial tools for the study of non-western, non-modern, and non-settlement empires. Studying the Ottoman Empire as a colonial force contributes to postcolonial theory in three main ways: first, the study lifts the limitations of postcolonial studies that deal with western imperial configurations, allowing for a broader understanding of power relations between imperial centers and the territories they occupy. Second, this approach decenters western European empires as the only colonial forces of consequence by establishing a much-needed heterogeneity in postcolonial studies. Postcolonial scholarship should not only be concerned with the formation of independent nation-states after the disintegration of western empires in the twentieth-century, but it should also offer a broader understanding of how power, politics, and economics interact and produce the conditions for empires to expand and recede even outside of western European imperial contexts. Third, reconfiguring

postcolonial studies through a broadly conceived empire-path approach will allow for a reconceptualization of what a postcolonial setting is. Viewing imperial conquest as an area-wide phenomenon presents scholars with the possibility of avoiding the facile center-periphery conception of the imperial encounter. Rather, the center and periphery are irrelevant when we investigate the spaces in-between that make an imperial relationship possible through trade routes, mutual economic and political influence, and reciprocal cultural exchange.

As the literatures and cinemas of Southeastern Europe show, the postcolonial setting is a space where the past and the present coexist in ways that 'post' cannot contain, and their postcolonialism is comprised by engagement with various imperial encounters. Further, World Literature and Cinema requires an engagement with artistic production that is neither purely national nor fully universal, but seeks to examine the long space between the world and the national by tracing imperial paths through the different regions they travel. This approach seeks to shorten the distance between the local and the global by constructing regional connections in the current critical chasm. The nestlings of regional experiences with empire are crucial links in understanding colonial legacies and their postcolonial hauntings. Southeastern European literary and cinematic cultures ought to be understood through a lens of imbricated colonialisms that examine the Southeastern European text, in particular, through three different historical, colonial, and neo-colonial junctures: the Ottoman and Habsburg[17] imperial experiences,

[17] The Habsburg Empire, much like the Ottoman Empire, has been omitted from postcolonial discourse. Its presence, however, is crucial in the Southeastern Europe and it presents a field ripe for research. The Habsburg Empire "based on the dual principles of settlement and economic

the communist legacy and the Russian scepter, and the western European neo-imperial engagement with the region.

World Literature has risen as a response to the crisis of the discipline of comparative literature, which had its roots in philology and linguistic comparison. Ultimately, the origins of comparative literature are rooted in a postcolonial world and a Eurocentric envisioning of the world of letters. As a result, the emergence of World Literature seeks to reconceptualize the discipline, distancing it from its colonial roots, and seeking to ground it in modes of literary circulation, translation, and reception. The increase of World Literature anthologies in the American textbook market owes its success to this endeavor. Such changes in literary scholarship would not have been possible had it not been for the sustained postcolonial critique of imperial and neo-imperial practices in various cultural fields. The connection between World Literature discussions and postcolonial theory is a crucial one, because it fostered, and it continues to encourage, a fundamental change in comparative literature approaches.

Second, these changes are visible insofar as we can observe an increase in literary representation of non-European literatures, but also in the proliferation of the studies of other literary traditions within American universities' World Literature courses. Even these advances, however, fall short of encouraging significant

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exploitation, was the only one [between it and the Ottoman Empire] that was explicitly colonial from its inception" (Göçek 95), and the Ottoman Empire, while straddling the pre-modern and modern era, controlled its territories "through compromise and administrative and ideological flexibility…often maintaining the local practices of the newly incorporated territories" (95). Although the question of the Habsburg Empire is beyond the scope of the present project, I have already begun preliminary research on the Habsburgs' colonial presence and legacy in the Southeastern Europe.

modification to World Literature as an approach to literary studies that is truly *of the world*, because it is not enough to include writers of postcolonial origin or non-European in the study of World Literature. We need a renewed approach to formal literary study that examines non-European narrative traditions. Rather than including non-European texts in World Literature for representation's sake, and as artifacts of different cultures in the name of diversity and inclusivity, these texts ought to *do* things to the study of literature; they need to change the way in which we analyze world literary texts. As Gayatri Spivak writes in *Death of a Discipline*, World Literature "should be world embracing…[and its]…hallmark [should remain] a care for language and idiom" (4). Spivak advocates for a kind of comparative literature that is not merely politicized, but that seeks to study literature in a way that "gives us entry to the performativity of cultures as instantiated in narrative" (12). Narrative, then, is central to literary traditions, and crucial in defining borders and geo-political positions of national entities in relation to former and present imperial and neo-imperial actors.

In our poststructural, postcolonial, postmodern, and postsocialist moment, it is not possible for literary analysis to avoid socio-political contexts of literature, and the material avenues through which texts – visual and literary – circulate. Contextualization often leads to a tension between formal literary analysis and a socio-historical one, which is reflected in the tension between the neoliberal desire of World Literature to include diverse world texts, and the postcolonial concerns about representation, misappropriation, cooptation, and even assimilation through the erasure of voices from smaller literary centers. This is not to say that World Literature and postcolonial theory

are at odds with one another, because postcolonial inquiry midwifed the emergence of World Literature out of a 'dying' comparative literature, as Spivak has observed in *Death of a Discipline*, but we ought to pursue literary analysis that fuses already existing historical methods of literary study with new formal literary elements that are drawn from a sustained investigation of literary territories of a non-European tradition. Such literary harvests are not possible if we ground formal literary analysis only in socio-historical contexts, as is the case with Southeastern Europe literature. Following Spivak's arguments World Literature scholars should not only respond to "unexamined culturalism[s]," but ought to shape literary tools of inquiry around the knowledge that "we are witnessing in the postcolonial and globalizing world…a return of the demographic, rather than territorial, frontiers that predate and are larger than capitalism" (14). Narrative and language predates the drawing of maps. By recuperating linguistic and narrative traditions that could have vanished with the birth of nation-states, we can truly begin to envision literatures of the world not merely as representatives, but as constitutive of the discourse of World Literature. Finally, the discussion will shift from general considerations of World Literature and postcolonial theory, to the specific case of the historical novel in the Southeastern Europe that engages the Ottoman history and legacy in the region.

In 1986, A. Owen Aldridge observed a tendency within the discipline of comparative literature to engage with texts outside of the European literary canon. Comparative literature has historically favored knowledge of the languages in which texts were written. Aldridge's discussion in *The Reemergence of World Literature*

highlights the movement of comparative literature to "discover parallels in various writings from Eastern and Western hemispheres" (9). He encourages this movement of the discipline: "How can [comparative literature] hope to derive universal standards if it fails to seek and attain universal coverage" (10)? Universal standards, of course, remain elusive in their nature, but Aldridge observes that they emerge as comparative literature joins "aesthetic criticism with history" (9). Further, he recommends that texts in translation be "accepted as a tool" anytime they are "necessary" (11). Even though Aldridge's work is still rooted in comparatism, and although the very notion of comparing literary texts based on linguistic expertise is problematic, his announcement that World Literature is reemerging signals the ways in which comparative literature as a discipline is swallowed by what has come to be World Literature. Rather than a re-emergence of World Literature, however, Aldridge's title announces and anticipates World Literature becoming a self-conscious discourse, self-correcting and politicized in an ever-increasing multi-culturalist environment.

Unlike the discipline of comparative literature, whose central approach to texts is language expertise, World Literature is an analysis of world literary production that is driven by the desire of literary scholars to construct teaching methodologies for foreign texts in western universities. Aldridge's claim that World Literature is reemerging alludes to another signal moment in western literary history: it was Goethe in the nineteenth century who suggested to an European audience the notion of *Weltliteratur*, seeking to articulate the ways in which nineteenth century society was responding to the increase in trade and the political reforms in western Europe. Goethe saw these changes

reflected in the literary imprint of his own culture. He declared that the era of national literatures was over and that in its place *Weltliteratur* would rise: a global literary market that would reflect the ever-approaching globalization that we observe today. Most World Literature conversations start with Goethe as though he was the father that ushered upon the world of letters this era of expansion and literary growth. Of course, Goethe was not the father of the world of letters today; he was foundational to the European literary landscape, but he was also a mere observer. This is not to take away from his crucial position in World Literature, but it is to say that he did not invent World Literature, because World Literature existed before the nineteenth century, and well before European literary representatives saw beyond their horizons and recognized the existence of literary traditions other than their own. The world in World Literature was not born with Goethe's *Weltliteratur*; it was there all along. That it became recognizable so late – in the nineteenth century – is an important line of inquiry. For our purposes here, however, we will try to understand this late dawn of World Literature for the European literary tradition as an effect of European myopia and inability to recognize other traditions – literary and political – as legitimate.

While many literary scholars of the last two decades have emphasized the need for inclusion of lesser-studied languages in World Literature, others have shifted the conversation to examine the world literary field as a network of circulation and exchange between the metropolis and the peripheral centers that have historical, political, and social ties because of a shared colonial past. One prominent scholar that promoted the approach to World Literature as a mode of circulation is David Damrosch in his book

What is World Literature? (2003). A work can achieve World Literature status, according to Damrosch, if its national context does not prevent it from gaining ground in a global context. Thus, one of the first conditions for a work to be included under the World Literature rubric is that it must circulate beyond their country of origin "either in translation or in their original language" (4). Damrosch advocates what he calls "a phenomenology" rather than an ontology of the work of art, because the work of art "*manifests* differently abroad than it does at home" (6). Conceptualizing literary texts as phenomena that rely on contextualization for meaning production, demands a closer investigation of the forces at play: who is invested in the text outside of its national context and why? What interests drive the translation? In what ways does the translation cater to the audience's expectations? How does the writer or the literary text choose to accommodate or reject editorial demands placed on her from literary market pressures? Why is the particular text well-received? How is it read abroad? How is it read at home? These and many other questions are made possible if we look at World Literature texts as artistic sites that allow the critic to move beyond the existence of the text in one specific location.

Localized texts and the world of crossing borders is central to Franco Moretti's "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000). While Damrosch's main concern centers on the ability of world texts to travel and how such traveling is possible through translation and distribution, Moretti focuses on the questions: What is World Literature and do how literary scholars approach it. For Moretti, the question is not the existence of *Weltliteratur;* World Literature exists because "the literature around us is now

unmistakably a planetary system" (Moretti 54), he states. The more pressing question is how to "do" World Literature. Moretti assumes that literary production fosters itself into the 'world' mode, and that, because the nature of literature has changed, our methods for its study ought to change as well. World Literature becomes an approach, a "new 'science' [that] emerges where a new problem is pursued by a new method" (55). In other words, for Moretti, the problem of World Literature is a pedagogical one. Moretti claims, "no one has ever found a method by just reading more texts…[because theories]…need a leap, a wager – a hypothesis, to get started" (55). Moretti's leap is, actually, a loan from world-systems theory of economic history. The international economic landscape is divided into national economies, and yet, it is a whole, with the national economies fully integrated into the international market. And much like the world of international economics, World Literature, too is "One, and unequal" (56). Existing in the space of national self and international recognition, cultural production from the periphery is often ignored by the center, and as such, in order to cover most ground in our study of World Literature, Moretti argues that we must engage in what he calls distant reading.

Further, Moretti contends that there is a need for close reading, but that local scholars who know more intimately the socio-historical and geo-political circumstances wherefrom a text is birthed must perform it. The work of the world literary scholar is to collect these authoritative, local studies, and to establish patterns and tendencies in World Literature, which would constitute a form of distant reading. Thus, Moretti still maintains the literary center through which all local, close-readings must circulate. For

Moretti, the heart of what Pascale Casanova in *The World Republic of Letters* (2004) would call literary capital is the critic of the metropole who is able to collect already-produced knowledge from local scholars. In turn, the critic will orchestrate an opus of World Literature, which is the kind of work that no local critic could perform. It follows, then, that World Literature and its study is the domain of the critic and her curatorial process, not the texts themselves, because "if between the very small and the very large, the text itself disappears, well, it is one of those cases when one can justifiably say, Less is more" (57). In other words, distant reading is concerned with large synthesis, with the structure of the system as a "condition of knowledge" (57), and with harnessing even the "poverty" of the concepts that the texts communicate, because this is what makes World Literature known, according to Moretti.

Casanova, too, views the critic as only present in literary capitals, and political power imbalances are not of import in literary circulation because literary capitals are established as a result of cultivated art. Literary peripheries, according to Casanova, have no choice but to rely on the cultural power of the capitals in order to be translated and circulated, but even beyond distribution, to be critically relevant, because the relationship between the critic and the text has complicated the ways in which we evaluate a text's World Literariness. Because most influential critics will be located in large literary centers, the latter function as magnets for smaller centers of literature, which hope to only travel through their piazzas and perhaps be noticed by critical voices with clout. However, if postcolonial critique has taught us anything, scholars should question the very centrality of the literary capital. Casanova's vision of the world literary

map denies that it is precisely the political and economic power of a nation that dictates its place in the world republic of letters, and that imperial conquest and the resulting neo-imperial relations often dictate economic, political, and by extension, literary power.

Contrary to Casanova, Walter Mignolo argues for a diversification of the loci of enunciation; of course, his project deals with the Spanish conquest of Meso-America and Casanova's work examines the rise of literary cultures in Europe, but what aligns these two studies is the opposition of the centers of study. To clarify, while Casanova fortifies the European position within the world of letters, arguing that there was not a world of letters prior to the rise of European powers, Mignolo argues that it is unproductive to look at the spread of European culture uncritically and by remaining blind to the cultural wealth of the regions conquered by European empires (Mignolo viii). Paris may be the literary center for Casanova, but it is a center because of its refusal to acknowledge the existence of culture outside of the European tradition and prior to the rise of European empires, which is a critical position that Mignolo and other postcolonial scholars criticize. That the avenues, borders, and regions of the world republic of letters were developed at all was a direct result of European imperialism, but Casanova's observation that "the birth of literature grew out of the early political history of nation-states" (35) over-extends its reach and uncritically asserts the inexistence of literary traditions prior to the nation-state, which is, of course, a position that has been contested by critics in various disciplines of the humanities.

My critique of Moretti's "Conjectures" and Casanova's *World* is heavily influenced by Spivak's brief discussion on Moretti's "Conjectures" in *Death of a*

Discipline. Spivak questions the thinness of the encyclopedic approach to literary traditions when the literary critic only considers the isolated literary analysis of a few national critics. She writes: "Should our only ambition be to create authoritative totalizing patterns depending on untested statements by small groups of people treated as native informants" (Spivak, *Death* 107-8)? The word 'totalizing' is essential in Spivak's critique. It is a suspect concept that institutes a hierarchy of knowledge: the national critic digests national literatures and passes internal knowledge on to the world critic, who often belongs to western academia, who has the last word on the worth of the texts, and who approves what is included and excluded from the World Literature rubric. Moretti re-instates a top-down, center-periphery approach in his essay. Part of the issue with his approach is his over-reliance on Goethe, Marx, and Weber "as justification for choosing world systems theory to establish a law of evolution in literature," and this approach is "disingenuous," because "Marx and Engels were celebrating the in-itself-dubious achievements of the bourgeoisie and the world market" (Spivak, *Death* 107). Imperialism was served by these developments in western Europe and it was the main avenue through which the novel as a literary form traveled outside of Europe. Spivak asks: "Is the novel form identical with 'literature'" (107)? Spivak's objection relies on the kind of globalism that is nothing more than veiled nationalism. In seeking to totalize World Literature approaches by relying on close readings from the periphery, Moretti's model says: "The others provide the information while we know the whole world" (107). As a model for literary criticism of World Literature, it is entrenched in European ideology of domination and knowledge-production. World Literature becomes nothing

more than a curatorial project in the name of neoliberal inclusivity, denying the literary world itself to be birthed and developed away from the gravitational pull of European literary legacy.

Jonathan Arac, too, has developed a sustained critique of Moretti's distant reading model in "Anglo-Globalism?" (2002). Arac draws attention to the way in which Moretti uses models from both Weber and Wallerstein to construct a modified copy for reading World Literature where the "intellectual labour" is divided between the "single-language scholar," who has linguistic specialty of the text in the original, and who "does not read the scholars of other languages," and the comparatist scholar who "reads all the scholars" and is able to synthesize and construct a large-picture understanding of World Literature (39). Moretti's silence on the role English language plays in this new method for World Literature is puzzling, because it does not acknowledge the ways in which the knowledge he seeks to produce is mediated by English, the language of production, circulation, and globalization. In erasing any consideration of English as the language of the new comparatist, Moretti's theory reproduces a core-periphery model in the literary world, with the English-speaking critic at the top of the knowledge pyramid, and what Arac aptly describes as "the unavowed imperialism of English" (44). Arac points to the effects of globalization on various cultural fields and attempts to caution against a cultural neo-imperialism that follows capitalist market practices. His critique provides a valuable contribution in reconfiguring World Literature today by keeping in mind postcolonial questions of representation.

Regardless of these discussed shortcomings, Moretti's work is useful in linking the local and the global, which is a central critical endeavor of World Literature. In other words, while Spivak and Arac's critiques may, at first glance, appear to reject Moretti's proposition, they are not. Instead, as World Literature conversations develop, the dialectic between World Literature and postcolonial scholars is essential for areas of study like Southeastern Europe, where transnational relations press against the national and vice versa. Historically, Southeastern Europe has been grounded within a transnational network of imperial relations, which have shaped the region and have been shaped by it. Therefore, maintaining the dialectical tension of the critical positions that Spivak, Moretti, and Arac hold, we may also recover points of agreement that are useful for the study at hand, especially when we look at another of Moretti's works: *Graphs Maps Trees*, where he extends his initial remarks in "Conjectures."

Upon observing the large amount of literary production worldwide, Moretti writes: "It's not even a matter of time, but of method: a field this large cannot be understood by stitching together separate bits of knowledge about individual cases, because it isn't a sum of individual cases: it's a collective system, that should be grasped as such, as a whole" (*Graphs* 4). It is a Worlds Literature rather than World Literature, where the word "Worlds" connotes the complexity of the collective system that is studied and is also connected to other collective systems. Moretti suggests that the study of genre or form as it transforms itself from place to place is a comparative approach that takes "itself seriously as world literature" (90). For the Southeastern European case, a Worlds Literature approach is pertinent since it generates a space for literary scholars to

emphasize varied responses to the same moment in time. Moretti would call this a tree that has two axis: the vertical and the horizontal, "the diachronic succession and synchronic drifting apart" (91). Moreover, a Worlds Literature as opposed to World Literature follows Moretti's lead in establishing a new literary study that accounts for forward and sideways movement, or as Moretti puts it "like Shklovsky's great metaphor for art, the knight's move at chess" (91). Worlds Literature of Southeastern Europe emphasizes a continuity between the local and global, by way of its vertical and lateral movement, and by the literature's insistence that the scholar look at the same time at the passing of time and the morphing of space. Only then would the World Literature scholar submit an adept analysis of Southeastern European literature that would chronicle the colonial layers and how the latter morphed the historical novel locally and globally through processes of adaptation and translation.

As a form of linguistic representation, translation is a type of cultural adaptation whose function and methods of operation speak to the geo-political and historical relationship between audience and place of literary production. The dilemmas of translation, however, are many and are a result of a "complex dynamics of transmission, often involving vexed relations between the originating" (Damrosch 147-8) and the host culture. How much cultural specificity is important in translation? Can cultural specificity overpower the text in a foreign context? How much of translation is a form of interpretation? Damrosch writes: "Translation theorists…have called for 'foreignizing' translations, versions that resist assimilation and point up the work's difference" (168), which is a view that contradicts proponents of 'universal values' of World Literature.

The tension between the universal and the local is central to this project, and its role in translation theories is crucial when we consider literatures from Eastern Europe. For now, suffice it to say that "even a reader with universalist principles" needs to reject a wholesale assimilation into American values of a foreign text through translation. Some 'foreignizing' ought to remain if we want World Literature to be truly of the world.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, World Literature scholars of the past two decades have defined the discipline as a system of production, translation, and circulation whose borders are determined by those three practices. Texts in translation gain new lives in new contexts and cultures that have been oppressed and even presumed-dead by colonial practices of the past. Such texts can and often enjoy new lives because of translation. Translation allows World Literature scholars to engage with literary traditions outside of their own and even understand more broadly the landscape of world literary production. These are all positivist attitudes toward an ever-growing field of study, but there are still concerns that ought to be dealt with critically and materially – especially in the way literary criticism is conducted. First, World Literature as it has been delineated thus far runs the risk of granting a non-specialist approach, which contributes to the thinning of literary criticism in the absence of linguistic and cultural context on the part of the non-specialist critic. It is the tension between the specialist and the generalist and the relationship between the two that ought to be one of the main concerns of World Literature debates. A Worlds Literature approach conceives a space where the specialist and generalist can construct complex literary models of local, regional, and global literature.

Second, World Literature approaches that shed the specialist-knowledge requirement, tend to grow into knowledges that are filtered through the scholar's own culture. The scholar, critic, and academic is promoted as a curator of sorts, and World Literature runs the risk of developing into nothing more than a collection of curiosities from around the world; a center of knowledge production that is deeply affected by the context of the curator. Third, by museumizing World Literature texts, the critic reinstates hierarchical evaluations of literatures, and practices a politics of inclusion and diversity, which can be affected by special interest groups, lobbies, etc. Postcolonial theory can intervene and provide World Literature with the necessary tools to produce new methodologies. There is a tendency for World Literature conversations to replicate center-periphery, top-down, and literary-evolution approaches, which are all products of and caught up in the rise of European empires and neo-imperialism. As Arac's critique of Moretti cautions, World Literature needs to account for the forces of globalization and how they propagate economic and political inequality, which is reflected in cultural production and its circulation around the globe.

The discussion that follows will center on two critics' recent works on World Literature: Emily Apter and Pheng Cheah. First, Apter's *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatablity* (2013) proposes that activating "untranslatability as a theoretical fulcrum" that has a bearing upon World Literature would be essential to the field itself as it would prevent the "bulimic drive to anthologize and curricularize the world's cultural resources" (3). The gold rush of World Literature creates the conditions for a thin literary study of literary traditions. Apter argues that rather than quieting and

suppressing textual spaces of untranslatability, scholars of World Literature ought to "invoke untranslatability as a deflationary gesture toward the expansionism and gargantuan scale of world-literary endeavors" (3). While Apter congratulates World Literature's desire to decanonize the discipline, opening up the possibility for inclusion of literary tradition that have traditionally not been part of 'the canon,' she is careful to point out how such a project of inclusivity can become merely a project of diversity, another box checked in the rubric of World Literature, and one more peripheral literary tradition added to the collection. By invoking the notion of untranslatability, Apter seeks to make World Literature scholars aware of the benefits that augmentation of untranslatable textual sites could open up World Literature conversations that are not necessarily bound up by sociological and economic models – via Wallerstein and Weber. Obviously, her approach is quite the opposite of Moretti's, because Apter insists on recognizing the unknowable spaces that cultural distance produces. She writes:

> I conjecture that one reason why literary studies falls short as anti-capitalist critique is because it insufficiently questions what it means to 'have' a literature or to lay claim to aesthetic property. Literary communities are gated: according to Western law and international statute, authors *have* texts, publishers *have* universal right to translate…and nations *own* literary patrimony as cultural inheritance. Translation, seen as authorized plagiarism, emerges as a form of creative property that belongs fully to no one. As a model of deowned literature, it stands against the swell of corporate privatization in the arts, with its

> award given to individual genius…A translational author…is the natural complement, in my view, to World Literature understood as an experiment in national sublation that signs itself as collective, terrestrial property. (15)

If World Literature can allow for a "process of translating untranslatability" (18), it signals that the world it is trying to include in its womb is not readily knowable, legible, and translatable, but it is precisely in these untranslatable spaces – linguistic or cultural – that World Literature can truly be of the world. Allowing for untranslatables to be part of the World Literature map, introduces a literary map that is neither fully owned by the discipline of World Literature nor by national literary traditions. Unknowables, untranslatables, faithful infidelities in translation, etc., are all approaches to deterritorialize World Literature.[18]

Such deterritorialization through maintaining what Damrosch calls "foreignizing" (168) of the text, and what Apter calls untranslatables, establishes a platform that is not entirely dependent on time as a unit of organization; instead of over-reliance on periodicity, which "privilege[s] the works of canonical authors as peaks in a world-literary landscape" (Apter 57), foreignizing translations and maintaining what resists translation as effective in and of itself, creates the possibility for orienting World

[18] One example of an untranslatable is Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, which gained the status of a world novel through its opening in French. Additionally, Tolstoy included non-translated passages in German, Russian-inflected French, and other passages that were unreliably translated. According to Richard Pevear who was a co-translator of the novel's 2007 edition, the untranslatables in Tolstoy, in addition to granting it a world novel status, also perform a "metafunction in the novel" in order to demonstrate clearly the aristocratic society inhabiting the novel's pages and how obscuring meaning was a practice (Apter 17).

Literature studies not just along a temporal axis that favors narratives of literary evolution and progression – an implicit critique of Moretti's evolutionary model of the novel and literary production. The differentiation between "literature" and "folklore," for instance is a direct result of temporal conceptualizations of the world literary space, with non-European literatures often being labeled as folklore because there are issues of "readability" from an European viewpoint (58). A world text outside of European literary tradition may never be legible to European and western literary critics; this does not mean that it is folklore rather than World Literature. It is the example of an untranslatable that, according to Apter, should not be resisted, but allowed to exist as a site of unknowing, and yet, a crucial juncture of World Literature.

Untranslatability challenges World Literature as elaborated by Moretti and Casanova in that it does not foreclose the possibility for the scholar to claim knowledge of a literary field that resists translation. In other words, it exposes the idea of 'disengagement' as one that, according to Vilashini Coopan, recognizes other cultures and even valorizes them, which is a gesture that locks up other literary sites in "some temporal anteriority or spatial exteriority" in order to "rehabilitate" a "privileged narrative of the west" (36). What is problematic with distant, disengaged readings and core-periphery constructions of World Literature is that they seek to collect literary traditions broken off from their place of origin. Apter argues that when national or local literature is severed from place – and consequentially from historical, geopolitical, and social context – and "thrown into the maw of the global culture industry or survey course, and subject to pedagogical transmission by instructors with low levels of cultural

literacy and nonexistent knowledge of a translated work's original language," the local literary "relinquishes its defining self-properties once it is exported and trafficked like an artifact" (326). Coopan, Apter, and Cheah – the latter will be discussed below – insist on a thorough engagement with texts; they resist the thinness that characterizes World Literature methods, which only produce anthologies woefully lacking in their content, and ones that resemble no more than museums showcasing oddities from around the world, oddities which have been preserved, recovered, and displayed by the curators and guardians of World Literature.

At the heart of this critique rests the inability of World Literature scholars to articulate what 'world' is and the link between the materiality of literary production and its immateriality. What constitutes World Literature cannot possibly be only the material circulation of literary texts facilitated by publishing houses, translators, critics, agents, and authors.

At this point, it is helpful to turn to Cheah who examines World Literature debates of the past two decades. Cheah probes into the arguments of World Literature as only a mode of "spatial circulation" that mimics and mirrors the "global capitalist market exchange" ("World" 304). Cheah claims that recent theorizations of World Literature strip the temporal away and,

> where literary history is broached, time is viewed in similarly spatial terms. Accordingly as a form of intercourse, world literature is now restricted to a purely spatial dimension. It is the exchange of circulation of an object between subjects, the object's movement

> across flat spatial distance in time conceived spatially. It no longer opens up the temporal horizon that Auerbach calls 'the inner history of mankind.' (307)

Instead of limiting literature's scope and contribution into a mere replication of global movement of capital[19], Cheah returns to a close reading of two foundational figures of World Literature: Goethe and Auerbach. In both thinkers, Cheah identifies two aspects of World Literature that have been lost in the mode-of-circulation model. First, for both Auerbach and Goethe, *Weltliteratur* "presupposed the idea of humanity as its rational kernel…achieved through intercourse across the existential plurality and diversity of human traditions and cultures whose individuality must be maintained and whose unique historical development must be respected" ("World" 305). Cheah argues for a more central role for World Literature, especially as literary critics in Western academia find it more difficult to justify the study of Literature. If, Cheah asks, World Literature is unquestionably tethered to and defined by its refraction and reflection of the "stronger primary social forces operative within it and to which its form corresponds via a natural symbolic relation" (316), then literary critics need to justify their existence and the primacy of the literary endeavor itself. Cheah locates the problem in the inability of World Literature as defined thus far in two questions that ought to be asked: first, "is [world] a normative or merely descriptive category?" And second, is there a causal relation between literature and the world? (316-7).

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[19] This does not mean that seeking patterns in the global movement of capital is unfruitful; rather, Cheah seeks to recover a rhetoric of humanism, which demands an ethical response to globalization processes and the cultural effects they have on cultural production. Cheah's response here is accented by postcolonial critique.

In order to answer these questions Cheah turns to a close reading of Goethe, Auerbach, and Heiddeger, while criticizing the limitations of the Marxist model for World Literature that Moretti, Casanova, and, more loosely, Damrosch subscribe to. Cheah identifies a gap in contemporary writing on World Literature: on the one hand there is the humanist view of the world as a "normative phenomenon" that fosters sophisticated intellectual communities' searches for humanity's progress, and that is characterized by a "spiritual world" with a "temporal-historical dimension" (318). On the other hand, there is the world as a collection of entities positioned in relation to one another because of market forces and pressures. The world in Goethe's conception is a "spiritual formation that transcends the material connections," and therefore what defines the world is the movement of its making through relational exchange.[20] The Marxist materialism after which scholars of World Literature model their theories "dismisse[s] the effectivity of…nonmaterial processes [of the world] by characterizing them as superstructural, whereas they have a fundamental reality of their own that is constitutive of the material world of production" (324). How do material, economic activities happen if not for inter-subject relations that are defined by "speech and action" (324)? Cheah proposes a robust view of World Literature that accounts for the participating subjects and their relations in the literary market. His approach is inflected by a humanist ethos that is reminiscent of Edward Said and other postcolonial theorists, which is much needed in studies of World Literature, lest it become hollow and

[20] This view echoes Damrosch's position on World Literature as a mode of circulation discussed earlier in the chapter, whose force field is determined between two centers (foci) of influence: the local/national market and the foreign/host market that receives the literary text through translation.

representative of the most surface-level worldliness of the world literary space. Apter cautions against this tendency of World Literature discussions:

> Homogenizing difference, flattening forms, and minimizing cultural untranslatability, these are familiar critiques leveled at World Literature. They constitute a significant aspect of what makes its 'upscaling of the humanities at a global level" problematic…[because] World Literature, like the world-class museum or art collection, affirms a psychopolitical structure of possessive collectivism normally associated with smaller-scaled collectivities like the nation or some other politically affirmed form of community…scaled up to the proportions of World, possessive collectivism resembles 'possessive individualism,' with its self-regarding notion of personhood…and happy fit with neoliberalism. (328-9)

World Literature can only be of the world if there are no proprietary claims[21] on its texts and by encouraging the reading of the world as a place that resists cartography, and a moment in time that demands a temporal-historical treatment. Calling for a historically-specific study of texts does not also mean that literature ought to be bound by temporality, because if the breaking up of literary study into time periods has taught us

[21] Both Apter and Spivak speak of deritorrializing the text as a gesture of an unbound literary. Spivak's discussion of planetarity in *Death of a Discipline*, proposes to replace our concept of 'the world' with 'the planet,' which is concrete and inhabited and represents wholeness rather than geopolitical fragmentation. Apter, in *Against World Literature,* argues that literary organization into the World Literature category suffers from its boundedness to the process of literary production and circulation, where texts become national real estate, owned by publishers, translators, etc., and where ownership signifies value. Democratizing the text; setting it free from ownership restraints would also allow for its untranslatables to remain as such, and in their very untranslatability they would signal their belonging and unbelonging.

anything is that it does not work, and that it impedes a thorough engagement with the text, which may be speaking to other texts across time and space. To criticize the limitations of periodicity does not deflate the utility of a socio-historical context in which to ground literary study. In fact, a fruitful collaboration between World Literature conversations and postcolonial theory produces a literary critical space where literatures are tethered *and* detached from their nationalisms. Postcolonial critique of history can be a crucial site of World Literature debates. Through a postcolonial vision of time and space we can re-envision World Literature as a network of circulation and distribution whose avenues of circulation are shaped by historical factors of imperial expansion, which can be examined by a sustained postcolonial critique.

Debates on postcolonial theory and its shortcomings have focused on the immateriality of the theories produced, on postcolonial theory's over-reliance on the very philosophical foundations it criticizes, and on the exclusivity of Western colonial expansion as the object of study. Scholars in the humanities have argued that opening up the field of postcolonial studies to a study of colonialism as a phenomenon not exclusive to Western imperial expansion would yield better tools for understanding the ways in which imperial encounters operate. The critique of World Literature and postcolonial theory from within the disciplines is essential because it points to issues that the two disciplines share. Speaking of World Literature debates, Monika Albrecht contends: "the Western concept of the literary is suspected of putting non-Western texts at a disadvantage–in that applying criteria of Western literary criticism…would make non-Western literature appear 'derivative or subsidiary' (53). Instituting implicit universalist

"claims of European literary ciriticism" (53) was the reason that motivated the avoidance of the issue. We find ourselves, however, at a juncture where this avoidance is no longer possible, because while World Literature grows in popularity and application in western universities, so does the need to critically examine what is left out, why, and how.

Postcolonial studies suffer from a similar malaise. Waïl Hassan and Rebecca Saunders write that "'postcolonial studies focuses on a singular global historical phenomenon', not on colonialism as such, as one would expect, but rather on 'the development and spread of *European* colonialism'"(qtd. Albrecht 55). Focusing solely on European expansion, postcolonial studies leave out imperial adventures in Asia, India, Africa, and, more closely to our purposes, Eastern Europe. The Ottoman Empire was one of the largest empires starting from the fifteenth century, and ignoring its waves of influence throughout the Mediterranean territories indicates a "double standard prevailing in large parts of postcolonial criticism" (Albrecht 55). Acknowledging the universality of imperialism and colonialism does not also argue for a universal imperial and colonial experience; rather, it creates an opportunity to consider colonial and postcolonial experiences that are not temporally or spatially confined, and it leads to comparative postcolonialisms rather than a singular Eurocentric one. Postcolonial theory, like World Literature, has the potential to expand its scope while developing methodologies for local inquiries into specific forms of the literary *and* the postcolonial.

What I am suggesting is a growth of breadth *and* depth where the study of empire and colonialism is not bound spatially or temporally; a study where specific socio-historical junctures are examined in depth; and a study of World Literature that is not

only bound by the literary, but which examines literary texts in their specific locations and binds them to a World Literature stitched together by the history of empires and the waves they have made through history. Postcolonial theory's shortcomings are that it solely focuses in the post independence period and the forming of nation-states. This is not a new objection to the field, but it is one that prompts us to think of postcoloniality as a condition of existing in the moment between two states, as legacies unaddressed but which have a bearing upon the present. The Southeastern European case are valuable sites where we can think of ways in which postcoloniality and World Literature intersect.

Another problem with the term postcolonial is that it limits its applicability to various regions that may not have experienced "true" colonialism, but which have experienced and have been shaped by their relationship with imperial power(s). Speaking on this issue, as early as 1992 when postcolonial theory was at the forefront of scholarly research in American universities, Anne McClintock writes:

> I wish to question the orientation of the emerging discipline [postcolonialism] and its concomitant theories and curricula changes around a singular, monolithic term, organized around a binary axis of time rather than power, and which, in its premature celebration of the pastness of colonialism, runs the risk of obscuring the continuities and discontinuities of colonial and imperial power. (88)

McClintock suggests that instead of orienting postcolonial studies along a linear time axis of past and present – which only allows thinking of historical development in terms

of progress – to think of postcolonial studies in terms of power and power relations. Reorienting postcolonial studies in this manner allows for studying other geographical areas through their relations with imperial power; it extends an inclusion to otherwise overlooked postcolonial entities, such as Southeastern Europe; and it allows for a more thorough analysis of power relations between the actors of colonial encounters. Because, McClintock states: "orienting theory around the temporal axis colonial/postcolonial makes it easier *not* to see, and therefore harder to theorize, the continuities in international imbalances in *imperial* power" (89). In addition, the term postcolonial with its prefix 'post' signals a point of passing, of looking back, and in the process, "it ignores problems of 'neocolonialism' – held in place by transnational corporations and the international division of labour, linking first-world capital to third-world labour markets" (Gandhi 175). Limiting the scope of postcolonial inquiry to European colonialism forecloses the possibility of seeing colonial enterprise not as exclusive to European imperial expansion. It is precisely this exclusivity that postcolonial scholars critique because it tethers postcolonial studies to the European colonial experience.

Postcolonial critiques have driven the field to change in unexpected, and often, productive ways. In reconsidering postcolonial theory, David Scott argues that the field would be better serviced by what he calls a "tragic vision of postcolonial time," which better represents the disillusionment experienced by nations in the post-independence and postcolonial moment. He writes: "…the tragic is especially useful in a historical conjuncture in which the triumphalist narratives of national liberation, anti-imperialism, and socialism have become exhausted, if not extinct" (799). Approaching postcolonial

time through a tragic vision creates a critical space where positivist and progressivist accounts of postcolonial moments are allowed to gain lucidity in the face of harsh postcolonial realities, and decolonization "might well be thought of as a disorienting, inconclusive moment of rupture especially conducive to tragic consciousness" (801). It is this very inclusivity that breathes new life in postcolonial discourse since it implies that the postcolonial project is not yet complete, and as a result, it is ripe for new harvests.

Scott is not the only postcolonial literary scholar concerned with the state of the discourse. The year 2015 was ripe with re-considerations of postcoloniality. *PMLA*'s 130th volume, issue two of March 2015 contained a special cluster of essays in its "Theories and Methodologies" section titled "Reframing Postcolonial and Global Studies in the *Longer* Durée." The contributors discuss at great length approaches to studies of empire and globalization that rely less on periodization, and more on cross-periodization and trans-imperial studies. The aim is to develop "fresh analytic models for global and postcolonial studies" (Amer 331). In so doing the contributors provide literary critics with new methods that compel us to rethink "literary-cultural history in light of these longer genealogies" (332). The questions that the articles raise are crucial to understanding the long imperial histories and their effects on the territories they conquered. These questions also prompt literary critics to think how literary texts and their study change under this broader historical scope. The danger, of course, is the depoliticization of literary texts in favor of their historicity, but awareness of this

shortcoming in *long durée* literary-historical studies should provide enough tension to avoid this mistake.

Reframing postcolonial studies around longer histories of empire and interacting imperialisms counteracts the impulse to focus postcolonial literary criticism on national texts that limit their vision of empire on individual imperial experiences. In fact, literary critics have long called for "an overhaul of the national literature model…in favor of a model based on literature's movement beyond national borders" (Levy 92). Positioning postcolonial theory in such a narrow historical segment adheres to an "ideology of colonialism" that defines " 'modernity' as a fact of history" (Ingham, "Introduction" 2). Rather, the aim should be to create possibilities for a dialogue between the pre-modern/modern pasts and the present so that postcolonial studies are not blocked by the "nationalist and historicist exclusions" inherent in postcolonial modernities (Ingham, "Introduction" 2). Modernity depends on the archaic for its existence, which legitimizes the modern-archaic, modern-primitive, and modern-medieval dichotomies, and is fully in service of a European modernity and historicity that used the modernizing mission as an essential component of European colonial ideology. Given postcolonial theory's awareness of historical context and the way it connects colonialism, postcolonialism, and neo-colonialism – the latter is observable in globalization patterns – postcolonial scholars ought to see the past as unexamined territory and to look toward the unexamined "longer histories" (Loomba 227) as sites where to reevaluate methods and assumptions that drive postcolonial theory. A refusal to engage with premodern, colonial histories "risks continuing to obscure the cultural accomplishments of the premodern

colonized, thereby promoting an invisibility" for the minor cultures of Europe whose existence has been "trivialized in standard accounts of Europe's move into the 'modern era'" (Ingham, "Contrapuntal" 48). Moreover, engaging pre-modern histories in postcolonial and World Literature critiques, solicits an active awareness of overlapping historical segments.

In *Culture and Imperialism* Edward Said uses a musical metaphor, "contrapuntal" histories, to speak of the relational character of socio-historical contexts, and Walter Mignolo in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* calls intertwined histories a "pluritopic hermeneutics" that is a "comparative study of temporalities and geographies" (Ingham, "Contrapuntal" 48). Southeastern Europe is comprised of such overlapping geographies and intertwined histories that are contrapuntal in that they do not consolidate a stable European center. They are distinct histories that engage with European, Ottoman, and Russian incursions into the region, and these histories contest official narratives by way of imbricated colonial experiences that cannot be isolated from one another, but which work in concert in actively defining a distinct geopolitical and socio-historical setting.

Postcolonial studies that examine pre-modern and modern historical contexts promote a thorough engagement with crucial historical junctures, like the consolidation of European nation-states and "the role of the Ottoman Empire" (Fuchs 74) in these developments. Rather than focusing only on the overseas expansion of European empires, looking into the internal changes of the continent itself under other imperial pressures – the Ottoman Empire – adds a corrective to the limited scope of postcolonial

studies by "productively complicating the general correlation between postcolonial approaches and non-European, or at least, non-canonical, cultural objects" and cultures (Fuchs 76). More specifically, Southeastern Europe creases and folds geographically and historically as imperial force fields thrust against regional, internal pressures, while the play between internal and external forces produces specific cultural responses in Southeastern European literature and cinema. These responses accent permanence in Southeastern Europe even as they record site-specific, historically-varied, and geopolitically-shifting events in the wake of imperial waves of rise and decline.

Inviting postcolonial analysis to studies of the Ottoman Empire would not only open up new directions for postcolonial studies, but would also deploy postcolonial methodologies of decentering and deconstruction to interrogate the theory's own borders. The term postcolonial in the Southeastern European context is murky and difficult to precisely define. I will use the term postcolonial to mean the transfer of power from the imperial center to the hands of the independent nation-states, acknowledging the unfinished, long historical processes of decolonization, the way in which the prefix 'post' signals a preference for presentism, and the way a nation can be both postcolonial and experience neo-imperialism through its economic system and trade practices with centers of power. Because the case under question deals with a heterogeneous region – Southeastern Europe – and two different empires – the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires – we need to adjust the definitions of these concepts as the cases demand. For instance, the Habsburg Empire "based [its rule] on the dual principles of settlement and economic exploitation and was the only one [of the two] that

was explicitly colonial from its inception" (Göçek 95). The Ottoman Empire, while straddling the pre-modern and modern era, controlled its territories "through compromise and administrative and ideological flexibility…often maintaining the local practices of the newly incorporated territories" (95).

Göçek writes:

> Temporally, the Ottoman Empire existed from the thirteenth to the twentieth century thereby covering the pre-Enlightenment, Enlightenment, and post-Enlightenment periods. Spatially Ottoman rule extended from the Middle East to Southeastern Europe and Eastern Europe in the west, to the Caucasus in the East, to the Crimea in the North and the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa in the south. (78)

The Ottoman Empire is often dismissed from postcolonial analyses because its existence ceased with the rise of the Turkish state and the rise of Western empires. Such a correlation - the 'demise' of Ottoman Empire to the rise of western imperial powers, makes the Ottoman Empire a convenient tool for explaining world events at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century.

Addressing the lack of Ottoman analysis in postcolonial discourse, Derek Bryce's "The Absence of Ottoman, Islamic Europe in Edward W. Said's *Orientalism"* establishes essential factors to explain and do away with the Ottoman absence in postcolonial discourse. Bryce contends that the very material presence of the Ottoman Empire throughout Southeastern Europe and Anatolia, suggests an enduring presence of "cultural agency" while most scholars – and in this case Said included – focus on

"unidirectional narratives of western encroachment" (99). For Bryce: "…the history of western representation of the Ottoman Empire constitutes a pre-Orientalist discourse, whose dual, perennial purpose is to make pragmatic accommodation for an Ottoman Oriental material presence *in* Europe yet never to fully acknowledge its discursive presence as being of Europe" (99). According to Bryce, omitting postcolonial Ottoman analysis is an attempt for European subjectivity to "convince itself of the radical 'otherness' of the Orient," which is, essentially, a pre-Orientalist (in the Saidian sense) gesture (101). A glaring difference between the Ottoman Empire and western empires is religion. The Ottoman Empire was, like the Mughal empire, predicated on Islam, which creates an opportunity to examine the ways in which religion destabilizes, constructs, and deconstructs ethnic and cultural identities.

A second approach is the development of a postcolonial reading of the Ottoman Empire that encourages scholars to adopt another vantage point – looking from the position of the Ottoman Empire out. An even more localized approach would be to position studies in areas where we can observe the movement of armies and the construction of imperial paths. The Southeastern Europe is an ideal location from where we can think about the Ottoman Empire and its relations with western European empires and Russian empire. Göçek writes: "…the first step in developing…an alternate approach is to analyze non-Christian empires in general and Islamic empires in particular through their own archives and processes of local knowledge production such as songs, poetry, literature, and oral traditions" (84). In brief, a sustained study of Southeastern European literary and cinematic production about the Ottoman (and

Habsburg) Empire will produce subject-specific knowledge that is also location-specific *and* context-specific. Location and context specific studies are also world-affecting, especially when the specific locations are at the crossroads of empires, as Southeastern Europe has been historically.

Most western literary criticism of the literatures of Eastern Europe and Southeastern Europe tends to focus, understandably, on the Cold War period. Novels are interpreted as allegories of repressive communist regimes, treating fiction of the region as a native-informant that offers insights into an impenetrable and unknowable terrain. In researching Southeastern Europe, one becomes aware of the divisive nature of discourse on the region. Its proximity to Europe but also the Orient, and its history under Ottoman rule make any sweeping generalizations about the region easy to critique. It is the very unstable and ambivalent nature of Southeastern European identity that invites such generalizations. Even though the region is geographically (and politically, with a few exceptions) a part of Europe, Southeastern Europe is labeled as Europe but with a difference, which is crucial in defining the perceptions of the West about Southeastern Europe, and Southeastern Europe's attitudes about self. Given its geopolitical position, Southeastern Europe has been often described as a bridge between East and West, as Europe's backyard, and as the Oriental Europe, among many other labels. A quick survey of the peninsula, however, will show that the region is so heterogeneous, that the name Eastern Europe or Southeastern Europe are reductive and insufficient signifiers. My aim here is to propose an alternative way for studying Southeastern Europe and its literary production, a method that respects Southeastern Europe's heterogeneity, its

distinct ethnicities, its imbricated cultural identities, and its tempestuous relationship with both East and West.

The relationship between Eastern and Western Europe is defined by the Cold War during which the 'backward' Eastern Europe was under the specter of communism. "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent," were Winston Churchill's words in 1946, words that resounded profoundly with the Western imagination. The metaphor of the 'iron curtain' defined the relations and perceptions between Western and Eastern Europe until the Berlin wall fell in 1989. This metaphor came to represent a whole host of nations under the labels of communism, totalitarian control, backwardness, etc. For Churchill and by extension, Western Europe and America, the line that divided the continent of Europe held in its shadow "the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia…lie" in what Churchill called "the Soviet sphere" (Churchill). Churchill includes these great cities within a narrative of a common past that is being destroyed by the Soviet influence. No longer, then, are the Ottoman hordes the shadow that has come upon Eastern Europe and threatens Western civilization itself; the Soviet Union has taken its place. The target of imperial orientalism has shifted from the Ottoman Empire to the Soviet Union. The continuity here is perceptible and it is situated not only in Churchill's precise rhetoric, but it evokes the way in which the 'iron curtain' was always there, beginning with the Southeastern European occupation by the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century. This is the reason for the metaphor's resonance and its ability to represent Eastern Europe.

Two fundamental issues can be observed in the case of Southeastern European literature: first, there is the presence of western Europe as represented by literary critics, as well as modes of circulation and distribution of Southeastern Europe texts in the west; and second, the undeniable Ottoman and Habsburg legacy in Southeastern European literary production. Both empires have been largely overlooked and under-theorized. Southeastern European fiction about the Ottoman Empire is postcolonial writing insofar as it is fiction that emerges from varied cultures and nations who have had dealings with analogous powerful actors, imperial presences, and structures of domination in the past, which have shaped substantially current cultures. Southeastern European fiction on the Ottoman Empire constitutes a "localized idiom while under the ideological shadow of the dominant [political] discursive structures" (Erickson ix), but this idiom points to a problem in three parts. First, Southeastern European literature is a response to Ottoman and Habsburg occupation and, at times, a form of resistance writing. Second, it is a response to the rise of western empires and the beginnings of the European Union shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. And third, Southeastern European fiction about the Ottoman and Habsburg imperial experiences communicates ambivalence about the Soviet Union, which is often viewed as an extension of the Ottoman and Habsburg imperial scepter in Southeastern Europe. In between western discourse about Eastern Europe and Ottoman and Habsburg legacies, lies the Cold War that serves as a bridge of the predominant Ottoman past and the divided European present. The Cold War is an extension of the difference between the two Europes, a division that was established long before the Cold War.

Speaking on this same issue in the aftermath of the 1989 Eastern European revolutions that overthrew communist regimes, Larry Wolff writes that the shadow of the darker Eastern Europe persists in the post-Cold War setting of Europe because "the idea of Eastern Europe remains, even without the iron curtain. This is not only because the intellectual structures of half a century are slow to efface themselves, but above all because that idea of Eastern Europe is much older than the Cold War" (3). Wolff is referring to attitudes about Eastern Europe established in the age of Enlightenment by western European thinkers who determined Eastern Europe as its complement "in shadowed lands of backwardness, [and] even barbarism" (4). Inventing Eastern Europe happened as a result of reconceptualizing European divisions: rather than a north-south divide as observed during the Renaissance, to a new European division of the east-west orientation, just as new centers of culture and commerce rose into prominence: Paris, London, and Amsterdam – this coincides with the emergence of the first prototype for nation states in Europe after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

Thus, both Eastern and western Europe were invented at the same time by the Enlightenment thinkers. Eastern Europe, and especially Southeastern Europe – because of their direct engagement with the Ottoman Empire – were easily subsumed, categorized, and coded as the other of Europe. It is the lingering of such attitudes well into our contemporary times that warrant a postcolonial re-evaluation of Eastern Europe more generally, and the Southeastern Europe more specifically. In addition, "The 'iron curtain' seamlessly fit the earlier tracing," Wolff writes, "[a past that] was almost forgotten, or neglected, or suppressed, that an older epoch in the history of ideas first

divided the continent, creating the disunion of Western Europe and Eastern Europe" (4). Wolff contends that such a construction was necessary because in creating the "complementary concept" of Eastern Europe, western Europe could define itself by "opposition and adjacency" (5). Further, aside from Eastern Europe being Orientalized in the Saidian sense, "scientific cartography…contradict[ed] such fanciful construction…[because] [t]he geographical border between Europe and Asia was not unanimously fixed in the eighteenth century," and the border shifted sometimes "at the Don," and sometimes even "farther east at the Volga;" other times it was located, as it is today "at the Urals" (7).

As for Western Europe itself, if viewed in direct opposition to Eastern Europe, and as the more progressive, civilized half, what we can see from historical records is that it was only after the Thirty Years' War that the balance of power system was invented. The year 1648 marks the Treaty of Westphalia, which is "acclaimed by international relations specialists as the origin of modern state sovereignty, [and] could equally be regarded as blazoning the prototype of the territorial state consumed with maintaining its borders and flaunting its uniqueness" (Taras 15). The first nation-state prototypes, then, were England, France, and Holland. Étienne Balibar locates Europe's origins not in 1648, but a little later when two different conceptions of political systems clashed: the hegemonic conception of the French monarchy and the republican conception of the English and the Dutch. "It was then, in the propagandistic writings commissioned by William of Orange," Balibar writes, "that the term Europe replaced Christendom in diplomatic language" (Balibar 6). Further, Turk pressure on the Pope

and the Catholic Hapsburgs "provided an element of balance" of power in the yet to be formed Europe (Inalcik 21). The Ottomans played a crucial "role in [the] emerging European states system," because they provided an outside source of power that exerted pressure on the more dominant European political factions (Inalcik 22).

Given the constructedness of both Europes, it is surprising to see the persistence of the dichotomy. Even more striking is the way the dichotomy casts a shadow on Eastern Europe, despite the fact that the West envisioned and executed border formation as an ideal way of maintaining balanced political power, which it tried to export into Eastern Europe resulting in questionable nation-state formations. Extending Wolff's claim, Milica Bakić-Hayden argues for and develops the concept of 'nesting orientalisms,' which is "The gradation of 'Orients…[as] a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism [as defined by Said] is premised" (918). In other words, within Eastern Europe regional orientalism is reproduced by designating Southeastern Europe as easternmost and therefore a more starkly 'other' by contrast; the same construction of hierarchies is observed in the Southeastern European nations' perceptions of self and their neighbors. However, oriental gradation is not determined by geography, i.e. a nation-state's proximity to the East. For example, "a Serb is an 'easterner' to a Slovene, but a Bosnian would be an 'easterner' to the Serb…[whereas] Albanians are perceived as easternmost by the rest of the Southeastern European nations" (Todorova, *Imagining* 58).

Bakić-Hayden argues that the terms used to support "such a dichotomous model [of nesting orientalisms] eventually establish conditions for its own contradiction"

(Bakić-Hayden 918). Her careful analysis of nesting orientalisms within the Former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) is an effective illustration of the concept; however, the focus of her analysis is to show how these local hierarchies, which are modeled after (and within) larger orientalist networks – Europe/Asia, Europe/Southeastern Europe, Christian/Muslim – are "ultimately motivated by political power" (Bakić-Hayden 930), and a desire to destabilize the 'essences' attributed to Southeastern European nations by the West. Bakić-Hayden establishes as one of the reasons for nesting orientalisms the role Europe has as "a symbolic power...[representing] the 'civilized,' 'enlightened,' or 'progressive'…[as] a standard against which peripheral European countries could judge their multiple selves in competition against each other" (Bakić-Hayden 930). She does not seek to analyze the reasons why orientalism reproduces locally, but to argue that such hierarchies within the FYR were "cultural [and political] constructions [that had force] in directing human action" (Bakić-Hayden 930); they constituted a neutralizing framework, the destruction of which has caused "the revalorization of these categories…[and] the destruction of the living communities that had transcended them" (Bakić-Hayden 931).

Obviously, Bakić-Hayden's perception of the FYR is romanticized in viewing its very permanence as a sign of harmonious co-existence despite ethnic conflicts. Her claim is that only after the dissolution of the republic did these 'ancient Southeastern European hatreds' (itself a western-produced and rhetorically loaded expression) resurface. Consequently, the homogeneity of the FYR neutralized Western Oriental discourse in Southeastern Europe. This is an argument that moves beyond the scope of

the present project, but it is important to note that the FYR functioned as a multi-cultural entity and that prior to the mid-1980s and 1990s – despite ethnic and religious prejudices – the different ethnic and religious groups coexisted. Placing all the blame on the West's doorstep, however, indicates a lack of self-reflexivity and soberness. The question remains: If Western rhetoric about Southeastern Europe exacerbated the tenuous relations between the different ethnicities, why did it have such power over their self-conception? Why did it so easily antagonize these categories-as-oppositions that resulted in the 1990s Southeastern European wars?

This question is one among many that Maria Todorova addresses in *Imagining the Balkans*. Todorova identifies the effect Western discourse has on Southeastern Europe-as-other as "a negative self-perception [that] hovers over [itself]" (*Imagining* 38). Todorova examines the self-internalization of negative perceptions that characterizes Southeastern European identities, resulting in self-stigmatization. Todorova differs from both Wolff and Bakić-Hayden in that she regards Balkanism (Southeastern European identity vis-à-vis Western discourse): "…not merely [as] a subspecies of orientalism," and the argument she advances "purports to be more than a mere 'orientalist variation on a Balkan theme" (*Imagining* 8). "My aim," Todorova continues, "is to position myself vis-à-vis the orientalist discourse and elaborate on a seemingly identical, but actually only similar phenomenon" (*Imagining* 11). Todorova delineates the following reasons for the difference between orientalism and Balkanism: the geographical and historical concreteness of Southeastern Europe and its non-elusive nature – "the Orient has been…relational, depending on the normative value set and the

observation point" (*Imagining* 12) – gave Southeastern Europe an un-imaginary place in the Western mind, unlike the Orient which was imagined as "a refuge from the alienation of a rapidly industrializing West" (*Imagining* 13). Finally, Southeastern Europe has always been described as transitionary, as a crossroads or a bridge, whereas the Orient has been depicted as the opposite of the West and therefore incompatible. These reasons lead Todorova to define Balkanism as different from orientalism, because even though orientalist discourse may seem appealing as a model for the Southeastern European case: "It is not only a predisposition to historical specificity" that makes her "resistant to the conflation of historically defined, time-specific, and finite categories like colonialism and imperialism with broadly conceived and not historically circumscribed notions like power and subordination" (*Imagining* 16), but also the formal difference is crucial in explaining why Southeastern Europe has not been included in orientalist and postcolonial discourse.

Todorova's resistance to a postcolonial reading of Southeastern Europe indicates a reluctance to be enveloped within a homogeneous discourse that itself constructs, centers, and marginalizes ('real' post-colonial as more urgent than semi-colonial), while it attempts to decenter the West as a colonial power. By defining Balkanism as a field of study outside of the postcolonial umbrella, Todorova situates Balkanism itself as central rather than subscribe it as a margin in postcolonial studies. Such decentering is crucial, because it deploys postcolonialist methods to exclude the self from being overdetermined by the discourse itself; however, its articulative force is impeded by Todorova's subsequent definition of Southeastern Europe not as an "incomplete

other…but as incomplete self" vis-à-vis the West (*Imagining* 18). "Although…for the past several centuries [Southeastern Europe has been Europe's] provincial part or periphery" Todorova writes, they are Europe (*Imagining* 17). While admiringly gesturing toward Southeastern Europe as a center independent from discourses that may circumscribe it, Todorova allows for the West to define Southeastern Europe as unfinished, lacking, and insufficient. Thus, for Todorova, Southeastern Europe remains overdetermined by Western discourse; it pauses, geographically fixed and ideologically locked between the opposition of Occident and Orient, a malleable fabric, a womb that receives and transports 'others' and 'selves,' but one that cannot be self-determined.

Todorova's analysis is valuable in that it gestures toward a centrality of Southeastern Europe as a distinct geo-politico-historical site that needs to be studied through methods tailored to account for its history, and for its political, social, cultural, and religious makeup, the imbrications of which create a heterogeneous region. My critique has centered on the ways in which she forecloses the possibility of a Southeastern European identity to speak for and about itself, while remaining aware of how its positionality and its relations with centers of power affect self-identification. As the site of repeated imperial violence (Ottoman, Soviet, and Western), the Southeastern European subject cannot be anything else but mute. Despite this, Southeastern European knowledges ought not be unrecoverable, at least partially. By treating Balkanism as "the differences within one type" (*Imagining* 19), Todorova thwarts the possibilities of theorizing a Southeastern European identity that is not *only* split between East and West; in fact, this in-betweenness – although unaware of its effect – is just as essentializing as

the East and West labels it tries to mediate. Instead of describing the ways in which Western discourse has defined Southeastern Europe vis-à-vis the West, Balkanism ought to be a project of identity negotiation between two opposites, *and* a process that systematically recovers Southeastern European knowledges, which are independent from and insurmountable by Eastern or Western knowledges.

Acknowledging the risk of sounding prescriptive, the first step is to uncouple Southeastern European identity from European identity. Thus, Southeastern Europe is not an incomplete self, but merely a self that has foundational ties with both East and West. This poses a risk in subscribing to the same kind of essentialism redefined Balkanism is trying to undo, because Southeastern European subject is absent. Recovery is only possible on the level of knowledge and ideology, which are the very things that render the subject mute. Such uncoupling would allow us to think of Southeastern European identity as outside of Europe and make Dipesh Chakrabarty's project of 'provincializing Europe' possible. Todorova argues that 'provincializing Europe' in the context of Southeastern Europe is an impossibility, because she defines Southeastern Europe as part of Europe (*Imagining* 17), and one cannot possibly provincialize the self. Given her admission that Southeastern Europe has been constructed as the "provincial part or periphery" of Europe (*Imagining* 17), provincializing Europe would be a strategy to decenter the power of European knowledges in relation to Southeastern European ones. Such a project would be similar to Chakrabarty's, even though the geographies under question differ, because: "…provincializing Europe is not a project of rejecting or discarding European thought...[because] European thought is at once both indispensable

and inadequate…provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought…may be renewed from and for the margins" (Chakrabarty 16). In other words, to provincialize Europe in relation to Southeastern Europe is to

> …ask for a history that makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices…This is a history that will attempt the impossible: to look toward its own death by tracing that which resists and escapes the best human effort at translation across cultural and other semiotic systems, so that the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous. (Chakrabarty 45-6)

The project Chakrabarty proposes is a historiographic one, but its principles of visibility and repression, resistance and translation, and homogeneity and heterogeneity are ones that can be applied across disciplines. In fact, historicity is but one form of knowledge that orients narratives toward a linear, Eurocentric time, which is the main reason why it cannot be mapped on to the colonies. The West and the colonies have different temporalities, which need to be translated across cultural systems. Translation is but one way in which heterogeneity can be established, and this is not an empty, politically oriented attempt at confirming cultural relativism; instead, the process of translation suggested in Chakrabarty gestures toward an acknowledgment of the shortcomings of any theoretical approach that tries to institute universal knowledge.

Southeastern Europe is a heterogeneous geopolitical area and any representation that seeks to universalize its experience and cultures will be met with resistance, as the dissolution of FYR showed. Their position in relation to western Europe has always

been fraught with ambivalence. Both the 500-year Ottoman occupation and Southeastern Europe's existence under the Soviet Union's influence has given enough credence to Western discourse in order to mark Southeastern Europe as "the divisive Other within," or as the "emerging Europe of the east" (Taras 37). But how does the Southeastern Europe divide and what is it emerging from? Taras locates these expressions as applicable to Eastern Europe in general and as concerns voiced right at the fall of Communism, but expressions such as the ones above are effective because they reference a history between Eastern and Western Europe that has had time to be internalized. Such expressions rely on recognition as the tool that deploys Western hegemony over Eastern Europe. The fall of the iron curtain caused an identity crisis for western Europe, because ultimately, what the relations between Eastern and western Europe reveal is that identities are ambivalent and unstable, and that "notions of interiority and exteriority which form the basis of the representation of the border…[can go under] a veritable earthquake" (Balibar 5). What is at stake for Western Europe when we talk about borders, inclusions, and exclusions is the crystallization of "politico-economic power and the symbolic stakes at work in the collective imagination: relations of force and material interest on one side, representations of identity on the other" (Balibar 3). In the end, the drawing up of borders according to nation-states was a European project, "a way *to divide up the earth*…[and] organize the world's exploitation and to export the 'border form' to the periphery, in an attempt to transform the whole universe into an extension of Europe" (Balibar 7). While this process continued until decolonization, "it was never completely achieved" (Balibar 7). The great European

project failed for many reasons one of which is that the nation-state model is not "universalizable, and that...'united nations' is a contradiction in terms" (Balibar 7). Another obstacle is that representation of the border and territory "have become the object of an irreversible historical 'forcing,'" which is complicated by minority questions, mobile and overlapping zones, "rather than…juxtapositions of monolithic entities" (Balibar 5). This is clearly evident in Southeastern Europe, although these realities are not confined to that region alone.

Western Europe itself, as a result of increased immigration and migration, is comprised by multiple ethnicities, religious and cultural communities, which are not monolithic, but whose identities, like the entities in Eastern Europe and Southeastern Europe, are imbricated. It is unclear whether or not the European Union (EU) project will continue to successfully unite the nations that slip under its umbrella, but this ought to be a question of urgency given the economic and cultural upheavals the EU is currently experiencing. What we see emerging in western Europe is religious and ethnic xenophobia that destabilizes its image as a progressive and civilized center. At a moment when Southeastern Europe and most of Eastern Europe are experiencing peace and tentative harmony, Western Europe has to deal with its own demons, the main of which is the desire for a homogeneous culture that shares religious and cultural values. Whether this desire will constitute its unionist failure, is yet to be seen. As for Eastern Europe and Southeastern Europe in particular, the situation is hopeful because polyvocality and heterogeneity of religious culture and ethnicity is accepted as a reality that is preferable to the divisive and homogeneous past.

As the chapters that follow will show, Southeastern European fiction engages with both the Ottoman Empire and with the neo-colonial western European presence. Using the historical novel as a literary genre, Southeastern European authors offer counternarratives that are populated by multiple voices within their communities, thereby seeking to recuperate histories lost to time, and narratives that history books have omitted. As a region that has experienced imperial hegemony throughout its history preoccupations with history are central to the historical novel of Southeastern Europe. History, however, is not represented as a simple, linear narrative that glorifies the nation-state. Southeastern European authors narrate their nations' histories through Southeastern European narrative tradition, which engages with folklore, polyvocality, permanence, and instability of narratives. More current Southeastern European novels also speak to the instability of the national character in the face of immigration, migration, and exile, which are themes that Southeastern European cinema, too, seeks to narrate. In the next chapter, we will look more closely at the historical novel and Ivo Andric's historical narratives in an attempt to understand how the narrative structure itself reflects the long, imbricated, imperial histories in Southeastern Europe.

CHAPTER III

IVO ANDRIĆ'S OTTOMAN HISTORICAL FICTION: SITUATING SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE WITHIN IMPERIAL NETWORKS

"…fiction is the repressed other of historical discourse."

-- Michel de Certau, "History and Science," *Heterologies* (219)

"Here in your back yard, not far from this Byzantine splendor and wealth, which has been hauled in here from the whole empire, your own brothers live like beggars. But we belong to no one, we're always on some frontier, always someone's dowry. Is it then surprising that we're poor? For centuries we've been trying to find, trying to recognize ourselves. Soon we won't even know who we are, we're already forgetting that we've been striving for anything. Others do us the honor of letting us march under their banners, since we have none of our own. They entice us when they need us, and reject us when we're no longer any use to them. The saddest land in the world, the most unhappy people in the world. We're losing our identity, but we cannot assume another, foreign one. We've been severed from our roots, but haven't become part of anything else; foreign to everyone, both to those who are our kin and those who won't take us in and adopt us as their own. We live at a crossroads of worlds, a border between peoples, in everyone's way. And someone always thinks we're to blame for something. The waves of history crash against us, as against a reef. We're fed up with those in power and we've made a virtue out of distress: we've become noble-minded out of spite. You're ruthless on a whim. So who's backward?"

-- Meša Selimović, *Death and the Dervish* (*Derviš i Smrt*, 1966, 330)

Chapter one proposed a theoretical framework that intersected discussions on World Literature and postcolonial theory, and laid the groundwork for a postcolonial reading of the Ottoman Empire in Southeastern Europe. That chapter identified ways in which the Ottoman Empire and its legacy in Southeastern Europe is crucial to the historical literary narratives of the region, and argued that a postcolonial reading of these texts would benefit postcolonial studies by heterogenizing the field and untethering it from a linear chronology and an adherence to a strictly western European modernity.

The discussion that follows is concerned with the works of Ivo Andrić and his narratives of Bosnian experience under the Ottoman Empire and the rising Austro-Hungarian Empire. Andrić conducted archival research for his literary works, and many of the circumstances depicted in his novels are based upon his findings. His novels attempt to recuperate the large tapestry of historical circumstances, and they depict a Bosnian identity that is buried underneath layers of imperial histories that are intertwined and often forgotten. By staging stories of the Ottoman imperial presence in remote Bosnian towns that appear to have no worldly significance, Andrić's historical novels insist on the crucial role of peripheral territories of empire as hybrid cultural locations. The Bosnian towns in Andrić's works are neither eastern nor western. Through their representation of empire from the periphery, Andrić's historical novels – published in the 1940s – reveal the power that decentered narratives have on historicity. His texts argue that the fullness of historical events can only be found in their narrativization.

Before delving into an analysis of the texts a few preliminary notes, which concern Andrić and his position in relation to Southeastern European and World Literature, are in order. Andrić was the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1961. The Nobel Prize committee cited "the epic force with which" Andrić "traced themes and depicted human destinies from [his] country's history" (Nobel). That country was Yugoslavia and Andrić was honored as "a worthy representative of a linguistic area which, up to [then had] not appeared on the list of laureates" (Nobel). Two components stand out in the prize's rationale: first, as noted above, the country awarded was Yugoslavia, and second Andrić became the representative of Yugoslav letters and

linguistic tradition. As an institute of literary prestige the Nobel Prize baptized Andrić's oeuvre into the World Literature canon, but only as a linguistic representative in the context of the homogenized nation-state. Inclusion into such a transnational canon of literary works is a denationalizing gesture of the literature under question. However, the committee could not have foreseen the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991; nor could have they foreseen the Balkan conflicts of the early 1990s that culminated in the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia and Kosova. The Nobel committee valued Andrić's work for its literary merit, but Andrić's work is not only concerned with literary innovation; it is also a narrative of Yugoslavia as a nation-state comprised of multiple identities, which are represented in Andrić's works linguistically and from a narrative standpoint. Just as his novels were internationalized with the Nobel award, they were once more nationalized in the post-Yugoslav context, gaining political and ideological significance that varied depending on where Andrić's works were discussed. In the post-Yugoslav moment, the question that became central was: which national literary tradition did Andrić's works belong to: Serb, Croat, or Bosnian?[22] It is not useful, then, to think of Andrić's works as monolithic representations of a Yugoslav culture. His texts are national *and* post-national, and it is crucial to examine his literary output through three different methodologies: close reading of his historical novels, book history, and translation practices. The majority of the chapter to follow will focus on close reading of Andrić's

[22] For more on Andrić's reception in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia respectively, see Kim Sang Hun's article "Andrić as an Object of Hate: Reception of Ivo Andrić's Works in the Post-Yugoslav Context."

historical novels, though there is much more work to be done in studying the translation, circulation, and distribution of his texts around the world.

Andrić was born in Travnik, a Bosnian town, and his Catholic family subsequently moved to Višegrad where he received his initial education. He furthered his education in Sarajevo, Zagreb, Graz, and Cracow. He worked as a diplomat in Berlin, a career that ended on the eve of WWII, and eventually moved to Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, until his death in 1975. His decision to move to the Serbian capital had major significance even though Yugoslavia had allegedly united the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, Andrić's status as a writer became precarious. While his place in World Literature makes him a figure recognized throughout the former nations of Yugoslavia, there are factions within the various ethnicities that criticize and even disavow Andrić and his role in defining Serbian, Croat, and Bosnian identity. Celia Hawkesworth provides a lengthy review of these differing perspectives on Andrić. While former Yugoslav nations are compelled to claim him as their own because of his world literary prestige, it is inevitable to view Andrić's work as mainly concerned with Bosnia, its development, and its identity: "what concerned and interested him above all in his creative work was the experience of Bosnia as a border land, where East and West were intertwined, together with the experience of belonging to a Christian community that had been for centuries subject to an administration based on Islam" (Hawkesworth 204). In fact, his move to Belgrade, a "semi-oriental Balkan backwater" (203), from Zagreb – "the most European of cultural centers" (203) – was as a result of the different cultures that had taken root in each. As a

Bosnian, Andrić recognized the cultural affinity of Bosnia under Ottoman rule with Belgrade, as compared to the more Habsburg-influenced Zagreb. Andrić was interested in the oral tradition of the folktales and myths of the Balkans, which was a basis for the development of Serbian literature and Bosnian letters.

Within Bosnia itself Andrić is a divisive figure. In 1992, at the start of the Bosnian war, Murat Šabanović, a Muslim man, "destroyed the statute of Andrić that stood in Višegrad by shattering its head with a hammer and throwing it into the Drina" (Hawkesworth 205). In November 2013, Rusmir Mahmutćehajić published a scathing critique titled "Andrićsm: An Aesthetics for Genocide" where he claims that Andrić's works inspired the anti-Muslimism that fueled the Bosnian war. Mahmutćehajić claims that Andrić's representations of Bosnian Muslims as Turks and Turks as Bosnian Muslims, makes Bosnian Muslims a direct target for non-Muslim factions of society by virtue of associating them with the Turks, a people that occupied the region for more than five centuries. Many instances of the interchangeability between Bosnian and Turk can be found in Andrić's texts. For example, in *The Bridge on the Drina*, Andrić uses the following labels: "Both Turks and Christians" (35), which indicate Bosnians and Serbs, respectively. In another instance he writes: "As the struggle in Serbia grew, more and more was demanded from the Bosnian Turks" (82). Here, the author places both labels next to each other implying that the term 'Turk' is a necessary modifier for Bosnian, thereby tethering one to the other. In another instance, he writes: "but in the homes not only of the Turks but also of the Serbs, nothing was changed" (136). Andrić uses interchangeably the ethnic label with the religious one. Serbs are often referred to as

Christians, and Bosnians either as Muslims or Turks. The latter is especially important in light of the criticism launched at Andrić about the effect his attitudes on Islam had on genocidal ideologies surfaced in the 1990s in post-Yugoslav conflicts.

Addressing this problematic usage of labels, the translator for the 2015 edition of *Bosnian Chronicle* (former translated title *The Days of the Consuls*), Joseph Hitrec writes: "The Bosnian usage of the name 'Turk' to denote a Moslem of local origin and domicile has been retained in this translation. Thus 'Turk' may mean either a member of the ruling Osmanli race or a Bosnian Moslem, usually of Slavic origin, whose ancestors became converts to Islam" (viii). Using Turk for a converted Bosnian as well as for an Osmanli, positions both groups as equal culturally, ethnically, and religiously, which not only alienates Bosnian Muslims, but it equates them with the occupying Osmanli, the oppressors that must be defeated and overthrown. Discursively, these labels pernicious and warrant the criticism that is leveraged against Andrić in post-Yugoslav times.

As a result, critics argue that Andrić's narratives have been used by nationalist ideologies for their war against Bosnian Muslims, which led to the Siege of Sarajevo and Bosnian war of the 1990s (Mahmutćehajić 619). Another prominent Bosnian literary critic, Muhzin Rizvić, too, criticizes what he claims to be "Andrić's negative portrayal of Muslim characters in his work" (qtd. in Hawkesworth 205)[23]. Yet, Hawkesworth herself argues for a separation of the writer from his novelistic characters, who display beliefs about and attitudes toward being Bosnian, Serb, Turk, or European. She emphasizes that Andrić's writing does not reflect his beliefs, but merely his observations of human life in

[23] Muhzin Rizvić, *Bosanski Muslimani u Andrićevu svijetu*, Sarajevo, 1996.

Bosnia, a land between East and West. Being born into a Catholic family has positioned Andrić to view religious relations in a particular way, which may be perceived as inflammatory by the Muslim population, Hawkesworth argues. In her discussion of Rizvić whose book, *The Bosnian Muslims in Andrić's World* (1996), was a bestseller in the aftermath of the Bosnian war, Hawkesworth defends Andrić by asserting that he was not familiar with the ideology of Eurocentrism and that he did not advocate for ethnic cleansing. Rather, for Hawkesworth, the few Andrić letters that speak about the movement of Muslim populations from Serbia are in reference to ethnic Albanian Muslims rather than Bosnian ones, and that Andrić, then foreign affairs diplomat, made his recommendations "in the context of the fluidity of borders following the Balkan wars and First World War" (214)[24].

Another questionable area for Andrić as a divisive figure is his academic and diplomatic writing. For instance, in his essay on the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop, Petar II Petrović-Njegoš,[25] whose book *The Mountain Wreath* (1847) "may be seen as advocating the extermination of Montenegrin converts to Islam" (Hawkesworth 214). Andrić expressed admiration for Njegoš's poetry, which has been interpreted as an

[24] The following is beyond the scope of this project but it is crucial to point out that rather than identifying Kosova and Kosovars by their ethnic name, Hawkesworth labels them the "Albanian Muslim population of Southern Serbia" (213), a rhetorical gesture that strips away any national claim to legitimacy from the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, who have since declared independence from Serbia in 17 February 2008.

[25] He is referred to as Njegoš, and he was a prolific poet and philosopher whose work is central to Montenegrin and Serbian literature. During the years of his rule, his taxation policies were widely unpopular and were met with resistance, and his rule was troubled by continued struggle against the advancing Ottoman Empire and its influence in the region. He also believed in uniting the Serbian people under one banner with himself as the spiritual leader. His aims at unification are viewed as the seed of Yugoslavism and subsequent nationalism and patriotism witnessed at the waning of Ottoman power in Southeastern Europe.

affinity with Njegoš's discriminating religious attitude. Andrić's doctoral thesis poses a challenge when we look at his life and work. In it, Andrić seeks to outline the effects of Ottoman occupation in Bosnia. His study is rushed and Andrić did not pursue his doctoral studies to completion, but there are aspects of this work that bear mentioning for the purposes of understanding the author and his role in defining Bosnian Islam through fictional representation. One central observation Andrić makes on the Islamicization of Bosnia is that the Bosnian church, associated with the Patarins[26], resisted western influence with "stiff-necked refusal" and caused Bosnia to be "brought…under the yoke of the East" (Andrić, *Development* 13). Andrić claims that the "deep roots" of the Patarins in Bosnia were a result of the Bosnians' lack of deep connection with the Christian faith (12). Andrić argues that because the Patarins had already begun to build a wall between Bosnia and the western world, Bosnians became ripe for Islamicization (13). Elsewhere in his thesis, Andrić writes:

[26] The history of the Bosnian Church is murky and fraught with dead end theories. One such theory was that the Bosnian Church was an offshoot of the Bogomils, a Bulgarian heretical movement of the tenth century. Often this theory is used to explain the spread of Islam in Bosnia, but historical records do not support such a claim. Another name for the Bosnian Church is Patarins, which was used as a term in eleventh century in Milan to describe a puritanical sect. More commonly, Patarin referred to the Cathars of Northern Italy. There are a few thirteenth century documents that place Patarin heretics in Bosnia under the protection of Ban Kulin, but these are letters from non-Bosnian clergy reporting to the Pope. The term by which Bosnians called themselves was Christian – *krstjanin* in Serbo-Croat – and this name is used in Bosnian documents to refer to members of the Bosnian Church. Noel Malcolm argues that what the term *krsjanin* referred to a monastic church that allowed male monks and women to live together, wearing appropriate habits. Malcolm shows that records speak of a Bosnian Church that was monastic according to the rule of St. Basil and that it was closer to Eastern Orthodox practice (32-6). Andrić's claims in his doctoral thesis are inaccurate today in light of more recent historical research. For more on the Bosnian Church see Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History* (1994).

> Bosnia was conquered by an Asiatic military people whose social institutions and customs spelled the negation of any and all Christian culture and whose religion – begotten under other skies and social circumstances and quite incapable of adaptation – shackled the life of the spirit and the mind in Bosnia, disfiguring it and molding it into an exceptional case. (16)

Andrić's doctoral thesis depicts the Ottoman conquest as a tragedy that halted Bosnian development and further deepened its distance from fully belonging to western Europe. Contemporary Bosnian literary critics view his position as orientalist and Eurocentric.

For Andrić, Bosnia's geographic position "should have linked [it with] the lands along the Danube with the Adriatic Sea," but its islamicization foreclosed any possibility Bosnia had "to take part in the cultural development of Christian Europe to which ethnographically and geographically it belonged" (17). It is clear that Andrić harbored prejudices against the Ottoman legacy in Bosnia, and that he understood Bosnian socio-political struggles at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century as direct results of the Ottoman occupation. However, Andrić affirms that the remarks in his doctoral thesis discuss "the impact of Turkish rule" in Bosnia and that they "are not to be taken as criticism of Islamic culture as such but only of the consequences of its transfer into a country that was Christian and Slavic" (76). Obviously, Andrić, as a member of the Christian community in Bosnia, is interested in exploring what his community perceives as losses Bosnia experienced as a result of Ottoman occupation. If we adjust our view this way, we may begin to understand Andrić's project as one that

can qualify as resistance writing, where the author seeks to recover lost roots of a Christian Bosnia, an identity that is glorified, romanticized, and held up in contrast to post-Ottoman Bosnia.

Andrić's contemporary critique is contextualized in a post-1990s Southeastern Europe where national identities are further crystalized as the Ottoman history of Southeastern Europe is assimilated under post-communist, nationalist rhetoric. This is not to say that Andrić's position in relation to Islam in Bosnia is innocent, but we ought to be careful in our evaluation. Andrić viewed Islamic culture in Bosnia as non-native and imposed, and as a result, he understood the Ottoman occupation of Bosnia as a signal moment in the development of that country, which deviated the course it ought to have followed – Christian and western. As scholars of the twenty first century we can clearly see the orientalist and Islamophobic attitude in Andrić's ideology, but if we remind ourselves that the Ottoman Empire was an occupying force, Andrić's resistance to its legacy can be understood as a resistance to a form of colonialism in the pre-modern and pre-capitalist era. It is a distant form of anticolonialism that rejects Ottoman occupation and culture in order to assert itself and recuperate a lost Bosnian origin. What Andrić fails to acknowledge in his assessment of the Bosnian situation, however, is that Bosnian conversion to Islam happened in large numbers. By calling Bosnian Muslims, 'Turks' and even 'local Turks,'[27] Andrić places large portions of Bosnian population under the rubrics of 'other,' 'foreign,' 'occupier,' and 'oppressor,' thereby further

[27] I will observe specific examples where he uses these terms in his novels later in this chapter.

deepening the 'us' and 'them,' the east and west, and the Christian and Muslim binaries at the center of the conflict.

Clearly, World Literature and postcolonial scholars face a dilemma in Andrić's work. If his critique of Islam in Bosnia is fueled by the reality that Islam was the religion of an occupying force and was therefore imposed upon the Bosnian population, his critique is also anticolonial resistance. His resistance toward the transformative power of Ottoman rule in Bosnia in a pre-1989 critical milieu could be classified as anticolonial. In a post-1989, post-Yugoslav context, however, his stance is problematic. Herein we face the limitations of postcolonial studies as they are currently constituted. The reason for this is that the worlds Andrić's novels represent are complex and comprised of sedimented and imbricated colonial experiences. Why is it that Andrić's anticolonial stance loses its momentum? How does his anticolonial resistance become inverted to the point that it discredits his work for many former Yugoslav nations in a post-1989 moment? How can postcolonial studies reconcile this impasse? Perhaps one reason is that aside from Ottoman colonialism the nations who were part of the Former Yugoslav Republic experienced internal colonialisms, especially with Belgrade being the center of power, which marginalized other ethnicities within the federation. Serbian desire to maintain control of different former Yugoslav territories conflicted with the desire for independence for many nascent nation-states. Resistance against Serb control is a form of internal anticolonialism, which pressed the situation into ethnic and religious conflict.

Therefore, the discussion prompts us to examine the role that nation-states as exclusionary formations have in national identity construction in Southeastern Europe

post-1989. As the Yugoslav Republic disintegrated after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the small states that broke off from the federation sought independence from one another all the while "compet[ing] with each other over territorial enclaves…[and] to legitimate [these territorial] claims, religion became synonymous with ethnicity and nationality" (Napoleoni vii). Historical record exhibits the effects of internal anticolonial resistance weaponized by religious belonging. Hence, where once anticolonial resistance was located in the relationship between Southeast Europe and Ottoman rule, the location in post-1989 Southeastern Europe has demonstrably shifted. The focus is no longer Ottoman rule but religious and ethnic difference. No longer do Andrić's texts resist, but they affirm and inspire ethnic cleansing based upon religious difference. The effects of Ottoman imperial ventures experience a double return in the post-1989 presents. First, they are disavowed by Southeastern European segments who maintained their Christian religious traditions, which is a continued anticolonial stance; second, they are used as a reason to marginalize and even commit violence toward those Southeastern European segments who converted to Islam and assimilated into an Ottoman-controlled culture. Internal and external colonizations like the ones we observe in Southeastern Europe, present a quandary for postcolonial scholars, and prompt studies that account for sedimented and imbricated forms of colonialism and anticolonial resistance.

As an author belonging to the canon of World Literature, Andrić's fiction serves as a reference point. It is impossible to imagine Bosnia without Andrić's work. He narrates Bosnian towns with fondness and as Hawkesworth points out, he lived and worked at a time where "the whole question of 'Eurocentricity'" had not been examined

(Hawkesworth 212). This may be true, and we must extend a contextual framework to the Andrić question, but we must also identify places where Eurocentric worldviews shaped fictionalized narratives into specific representations of Bosnian Muslims. These representations reflected attitudes toward a large number of Bosnians, and they highlight the precarious geographical and ideological position Bosnia occupies in relation to Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

Therefore, two axes emerge in the discussion of Andrić in relation to Bosnia. First, there is the presence of the Ottoman Empire as an occupying force and imperial presence, which in Balkan historiography is narrated as an entity that imposed itself upon the Balkan lands for five centuries. It follows, therefore, that writers of the area resist the legacy of the imperial culture and dramatize this resistance in fictional works. Although the Ottoman Empire was pre-modern and pre-capitalist, colonization of territories in Southeastern Europe had irrevocable effect upon the cultures of the region. Religious conversion is a central phenomenon of the Ottoman Empire's advancement in Southeastern Europe and one whose effect is still felt today in historiographical national identity debates. In a time when religious conflict between Islam and Christianity has reached its apex worldwide, Andrić's view of Islam in Bosnia bears particular significance since it highlights processes of conversion, acculturation, and even, in some cases cultural creolization.

Second, the Andrić question highlights the role western Europe had in the region vis-à-vis its religious ideology and through its imperial ventures throughout the world – this is discussed in more detail in chapter one. Andrić's resistance to the legacy of the

Ottoman Empire is coupled with his anxiety of expulsion from the bosom of Christian Europe. It is worth noting that travel narratives of western aristocrats and diplomats about Southeastern Europe shaped western attitudes about the region and the region's attitudes about self, its position in relation to the Ottoman Empire, and in relation to western Europe. Of course, western representations of Southeastern Europe were less than favorable and put in action an active disavowal of any orientalness on the part of Southeastern European nations who found themselves in the middle of an ideological war[28].

Hence, Andrić's academic and professional writing is directly concerned with this conflict that emerges from within Southeastern Europe, a region that has experienced Ottoman colonialism *and* western European "non-colonial patterns of power and discourse in the intra-European context" through non-settlement imperialism of "economic influence, military interventionism, [and] cultural hegemony" (Hammond, *Debated* 2). This is not to say that economic imperialism is better than cultural imperialism because the two cannot be fully separated. Southeastern Europe is influenced culturally and economically by both the Ottoman Empire and by the increased western European sphere of influence. My intention is to point out how the postcolonial dilemma that scholars face when working with Andrić's novels highlights not only a regional problem, but a trans-regional and transnational one. Caught between two ideologies traditionally defined as opposites, Southeastern Europe risks to be

[28] For more on Balkan representations in Great Britain and the US through travel writing during the nineteenth and twentieth century, see both Andrew Hammond's texts referenced in the bibliography. Also reference chapter one where this is discussed in more depth.

overdetermined by either one. If the Ottoman legacy is rejected, the rejection is often scrutinized as western orientalism and even Islamophobia. If the increasing western European influence is rejected, the rejection is regarded as symptomatic of Southeastern European backwardness and otherness. Discursively, Southeastern Europe occupies both sides of this ideological seesaw. The worlds that Andrić narrates in his novels represent this ideological and discursive impasse historically. His narratives are even confounded at the impossibility to sort through sedimentations of colonial encounters and their mutations in Southeastern Europe.

Perhaps this discursive strait is the reason why it is difficult to separate Andrić the man from his letters be they fictional or non-fictional, and we should not. In fact, it is crucial to temper the reading of the literary merits of his work with a sober view as to their representational power and effect. Speaking about western representations of the Balkans Hammond writes: "cross cultural representation is never innocent, and that when cultures are formed as objects of Western knowledge they are also formed as objects of Western control" (*Balkan* xvi). We can extend the same logic here: as Andrić seeks to represent a multicultural Bosnia struggling to find itself at the crossroads of empires, he does so from the only perspective he can, as a Yugoslav Catholic who sees the Ottoman occupation of Bosnia as a deadly gash in that culture and its development. However innocent it may have been, Andrić's project may have been coopted and used by Serbian nationalists to support the ideology of ethnic cleansing, which fueled the longest modern day siege: the Siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s.

The question that arises is central: What do we do with Andrić's oeuvre? So much of his writings concern Bosnia, its past, its present, and its future. Might we look at Andrić's work only based on its literary merit? I argue that we cannot. We must seek out the harvest that literary texts produce or inspire. We must examine the ways in which history is narrated in fiction. We must be attentive to the representational power of fiction and historiography, and as such, Andrić's work constitutes a ripe place where we can begin to think about the relationship between imperial history and fiction.

As a result, novelistic narrative emerges as the central site of our investigations – its force and direction, and its power to augment and mute and reshape histories. The novel possesses what Bakhtin calls the novelistic zone, which can be located at a significant distance or at close contact with contemporary reality. Readers can observe a close relationship between the fiction and the reality it tries to represent. Because the novel can intercept contemporary reality through its special "relationship with extraliterary genres," the novel can and does present the opportunity for the writer to engage with realities in the present. Bakhtin writes: "the novel makes wide and substantial use of letters, diaries, confessions, [and] the forms and methods of rhetoric" (Bakhtin 33). These extraliterary materials are the primary sources upon which an author often builds the fictional walls, and this is the case especially in the twentieth-century novel where the "literary-artistic consciousness…sensing itself on the border between two languages, one literary, the other extraliterary…also senses itself on the border of time" (Bakhtin 67). Bakhtin's analysis of the novel as a historical product insists that the changes in time within the literary text reflect the shifts in time of history itself, and that

periodization and sequential narratives do not entirely capture human experience. Language itself is sensitive to the pressure of the past on the present and vice versa, and the novel is a central tool for the reader to grasp the way in which the past visits the present recursively. Andrić's texts and their different receptions in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context are exemplary of the time's slippage in the historical novel, where the past not only haunts the present, but the present shapes the past by returning to pivotal historical junctures and narrating these anew.

Andrić's novels present world historical events as seen from Southeastern European settings that have been discursively lodged between East and West. Southeastern Europe has been defined as belonging to both and neither. It is this very in-betweenness that creates a state of ambivalence and an unstable, singular national identity, both of which are results of a colonial encounter with the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires. Southeastern Europe has experienced its own post-colonial moment through the formation of independent nations by the beginning of the twentieth century, and their neocolonial context in relation to western European powers. More specifically, Andrić's contribution rests on his ability to historicize from peripheral centers, a gesture that disavows the centers of power and 'others' them, just like "history is othered from [the peripheries]" (de Groot 19). In his works, characters are part of historical development and yet they remain detached from the events as though imperial encounters always have and will be temporary for the small Bosnian towns that Andrić narrates. Furthermore, Andrić's historical novel harbors implicit anti-colonialism that examines the Bosnian situation through multiple historical layers, the primary of which

is Ottoman imperialism, its relationship with Napoleonic excursions, and Austro-Hungarian interests in the region at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The texts central to our discussion in this chapter are *The Bridge on the Drina* (*Na Drini ćuprija*, 1945) and *Bosnian Chronicle,* (*Travnička Hronika*, 1945)[29].

In *The Bridge*, Andrić's narrator begins the story in the sixteenth century when the bridge – arguably, the central character of the novel – is yet to be built. The story ends in the twentieth century as the narrative depicts human lives in the midst of the events that lead to World War I and rising nationalisms in the Balkans. *Bosnian Chronicle* represents events at the end of the nineteenth century in Travnik, Bosnia and its focal point is not the local, Bosnian population, but the foreign diplomats who represent imperial interests in the area.

The Bridge is a chronicle of Višegrad, a small, provincial Bosnian town whose inhabitants witness major historical events. The latter are narrated through the townspeople's lives so that rather than presenting us with an empty chronicle of history, Andrić populates historical events with "a social center" (White, *The Content* 11). Approaching historical fiction in such a manner helps readers locate the events "with respect to one another," thereby "charg[ing] them with ethical or moral significance" (11). Narrativizing history serves a double function: first, Andrić's texts memorialize events by reconstructing them in a linear fashion and by populating them with actors

[29] The 1992 English translation by Celia Hawkesworth is titled *The Days of the Consuls.* The 2015 translation by Joseph Hitrec is titled *Bosnian Chronicle*. I will use the first translation because of its usage of Bosnian characters for spelling proper nouns and for its succinct language. If the argument demands that I use both editions, I will indicate which edition is being used in the parenthetical citations and footnote the reason for the choice.

whose lives have been absent from official histories. Second, this historiographical reconstruction gestures toward the existence of a subjectivity that seeks to order events according to a logic of the present. Not only do Andrić's texts display "a certain form, namely the narrative, but also a certain content, namely a politicosocial order" (11), whose function is to historicize the past for the present. Writing during WWII, Andrić's texts draw attention to the intricate histories of Southeastern Europe and the effect multiple imperial occupations had in the religious, social, political, and economic make up of the region.

In *The Bridge* the relationship between Muslims and Christians ebbs and flows. The bridge itself stands for much of the unity that is experienced by the religious communities in Višegrad. Muslim and Christian children play on and around the bridge that joins the two banks. The Drina was once as "impassable as the greatest of oceans" (Andrić, *Bridge* 23), and the bridge not only made passage safer, but it provided a gathering place, a public space shared and loved by all Višegrad residents. The bridge was commissioned by Mehmet Pasha Sokolli, "a general and statesman of world renown," (26) who once was a ten-year-old Christian boy taken from his Bosnian village of Sokolovići as a blood tribute for the Ottoman Empire. He was raised, trained, and educated in Istanbul, but the boy never forgot the "angry Drina" and how the "stabbing pain" always returned when he recalled the end of the road at the bank of the Drina (25). The pasha, no longer a Bosnian, commissioned the bridge over the dangerous waters in order to "join the two ends of the road…and thus link safely and forever Bosnia and the East, the place of his origin and the places of his life" (26). In narrating Mehmed Pasha's

yearning for the unification of his two halves, the narrator shifts from an omniscient third person point of view to a first person. As Pasha's successes under three sultans are recounted, we are also told how he had become a "new man" in a land "where we could not follow even in our thoughts" (26). Here, the narrative sits squarely on the Pasha's experience and his memory of the Drina crossing in Višegrad. It becomes a monophonic narrative of a boy's interrupted life, his split identity, and his desire and longing to bridge the life he knows with the one that he remembers only because of "that feeling of discomfort which had remained in him and had never completely disappeared" (26). Mehmet Pasha experienced this "black pain which cut into his breast with that special well-known childhood pang," which was different than all other pains in his life (26). His character is central insofar as he ostensibly shapes the fortunes and the life of Višegrad and its inhabitants.

Arguably, most people inhabiting the Ottoman territories lived in a pre-national moment, and they experienced their ethno-linguistic belonging as part of a larger entity that was multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious. Mehmed Pasha's impulse to build the bridge is based on the large chasm within himself as a result of the Devşirme system[30]. He is a character torn between his past and present, between his romanticized origins and his elevated status within the Ottoman court. Therefore, the bridge is not merely a place of passage or utilitarian in nature; instead, it is a place that joins the Pasha's worlds that have bled into each other. The implication is that in building a

[30] The Ottoman Devşirme is the practice of blood tribute. Yearly, Ottoman officials would take Christian boys from their territories, age 10-18 to be raised and trained in Istanbul in order to serve the empire. This practice waned in mid-seventeenth century.

bridge of great beauty, Mehmed Pasha has irrevocably joined the two banks and has accepted his hybridity.

Thus, the initial narrative of the bridge is shaped by a single story of deracination that fosters Mehmet Pasha's desire to construct a link between the unrecoverable past and his haunted present. His longing for a unified self determines the story of a whole town and it shapes the lives of the townspeople through the external pressures that the building of the bridge invites. Not only does Višegrad become a central trade route, but its inhabitants are exposed to external world conflicts, which before were only events that did not affect them. Mehmet Pasha's desire to recover the past begins the long history of Bosnia by linking it to the East and to the external forces that irrevocably change its identity. What started as Mehmet Pasha's individual vision of the "firm graceful silhouette of the great stone bridge…in a single moment behind closed eyelids," turned into years of bridge building, which made the town "exceptionally lively and important" (26). Mehmet Pasha's narrative, although a very short one, signals a personal journey into the past that fosters a collective narrative centering on the bridge. His solitary vision of the taming of the impassable Drina moves the narrative from a monophonic to a polyphonic one, because it is only through the bridge-building process and the events around it that we can hear the two banks of the river – one Christian and the other Muslim – speak to one other.

Mehmed Pasha represents the rule of the Ottoman Empire in Southeastern Europe, but he is also a transnational body in a pre-national world. As the power of the Ottoman Empire extended in Southeastern Europe and throughout the Mediterranean

world, Mehmed Pasha's rise within the Ottoman court bears witness to the multi-ethnic make up of the Ottoman Empire itself. In the absence of national borders, the lands the Ottoman Empire occupied and taxed were its frontiers. Southeastern Europe, in particular, was one such frontier as the Ottoman and Habsburg empires sought to control the territory. As the bridge's construction commences, Abidaga, the man in charge of the operations emerges as a violent leader that oppresses and demands quick results from the builders. The narrator tells us of the "incomprehensible disaster" that befell the town and the whole district (29). Not only was Abidaga a ruthless ruler, but building the bridge commenced a process of "felling the forests…excavations…[and] forced labour" (29).

However, soon both the Christian and Muslim populations were disillusioned with its scope and how much of their resources and energies the bridge demanded. The Muslim population had been "proud of the great bequest which the Vizier was to erect in their district. Then they had not realized, as they now saw with their own eyes, that these glorious buildings involved so much disorder and unrest, effort and expense" (31). Note the time slippage in the narrative where Višegrad residents "now" noticed the resource and labor expenditure the bridge demanded. Such slippage is important since the text's omniscient narrator is reconstructing a distant historical past that linguistically slips into the present and speaks for the present discontent of Bosnian existence between powerful imperial actors that use the territory as a pawn in their wars. Usage of "the present" in our discussion is also fraught with problems since the present itself is in a state of slippage: does it reference the present moment of the narrative? The present moment of the author writing? The present moment of reading? Regardless of which present, the

focal point of narrative and of its analysis is always fractured, or better yet, prismatic. Time slippage in the narrative functions as a prism that disperses and initiates different presents through which the story of the bridge is examined. If we view the novel as historiography, the present is always the moment of reading, which is always tethered to the present of the story, the narrative, and the present moment of writing. In essence, the narrator's use of "now" becomes a reflection upon centuries past and the avenues that produce or are constitutive of the present moment. "Now" is the same for the Christians and the Muslims that populate the story. "Now" is a signal word that positions history as recursive insofar as it conditions responses and reflections that shape the present moment of analysis.

Much like the Muslim population, the Christian rayah[31], too, was disillusioned with the bridge. First, they were being forced to labor in its construction without compensation; they were beaten and oppressed; and they were skeptical as to the bridge's function and its role in their existence under the Ottoman Empire. Their indignation is related to the perception of the Ottoman Empire as an occupying force that would force "even our children" to do "forced labour on the bridge" (35). Bridge building is associated with oppression since crossing the river by ferry is enough for the Christian rayah. They say: "A bridge is no good to the poor and the rayah, but only for the Turks; we can neither raise armies nor carry on trade" (35). In the narrative, it is therefore decided to spread rumors that a fairy dislikes the project and sabotages it by

[31] Rayah was the Arabic term for herd or flock, and was used to reference the Christian population in Ottoman territories. Although the Porte did not enforce mass conversion, its policies in relation to the Christian faith and its incentives toward Muslim conversion, motivated large numbers of Christians in Bosnia to convert to Islam.

night. The Christian community makes use of folklore to ideologically support the physical sabotage of the bridge. At first this approach works until Radisav, the Christian leader, is captured and ruthlessly executed. Bridge building demands human sacrifices, then, and Višegrad townspeople resume their efforts without much resistance, but it is hard to see the edifice for generations, and many in town forget that the construction is even happening. Children are born and raised by the bridge, Christian and Muslim, and the edifice dominates their lives. Once it is finished all are thankful but unaware of what the coming centuries have in store for Višegrad through "the unstable and unpredictable influence of faraway affairs" (72).

Here the narrator shifts our attention to another key character in the story: Alihodja, a local Muslim cleric who resists much of the ensuing changes and who becomes symbolic of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The first hint of the Ottoman Empire's crisis in the narrative is the fate of the caravanserai built on the bridge. Its existence was as a result of funds collected by Mehmed Pasha in Hungarian territory. Beginning with "the Turkish retreat from Hungary," the caravanserai could no longer be kept and it begins to fall apart as do many other frontiers of the empire. Following the loss of Hungarian territories, and into "the middle of the nineteenth century…the Turkish Empire was consumed by a slow fever" (94). The Serbian uprisings were symptoms of this fever which, "for the Turks…were the first waves of a sea of fire which…splashed against the mountains above town" (83). Alihodja witnesses the shift in power as the Austrians claim Višegrad by orders from the Porte. He is the one who reads the decree aloud to his people as he slowly realizes that "a foreign tsar

had put his hand on them and a foreign faith ruled" (122). It is in this moment where the bridge borne out of a desire for unifying Mehmed Pasha's past and present, becomes not a place of conjoining, but a rupture, a chasm, and a monument to Višegrad's split identity. Although lengthy, the entirety of the passage is crucial here since it echoes the break that young Mehmed Pasha felt as he was taken from his Bosnian home to Istanbul as a boy centuries ago. It is a time slippage, a deracination visited, and it speaks of the bridge as a remedy that did not work:

> Deep in his thoughts Alihodja slowly left the bridge…He walked slowly and it seemed to him that never again would he cross to the farther bank, that this bridge which was the pride of the town and ever since its creation had been so closely linked with it, on which he had grown up and beside which he had spent his life, was now suddenly broken in the middle, right there at the kapia[32]; that this white paper of the proclamation had cut it in half like a silent explosion and that there was now a great abyss; that individual piers still stood to right and to left of this break but there was no way across, for the bridge no longer linked the two banks and every man had to remain on that side where he happened to be at this moment. (123)

Here, again, the narrator's time slips by the use of "this moment." It certainly refers to the shift in imperial power, and part of Alihodja's disillusionment is tied to his mourning

[32] The center of the bridge on the Drina, which was wider than the rest and on which many weddings and ceremonies took place over the years; it was the joining place where Christians and Muslims traded, met, and lived among one another.

of waning Ottoman power, and consequentially his own. But even more than that, Alihodja's disillusionment is with the Ottoman Empire, who had only used Višegrad, and by extension its Southeastern European territories, as a pawn in imperial games. "At this moment" Alihodja embodies the Bosnian identity split of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century. It is a schism that becomes "this moment" once more in the twentieth century as we will see more closely in the fifth chapter on Southeastern European film.

Alihodja dies as he witnesses WWI: the shelling of Višegrad and the destruction of the bridge is the final page in his life. As he sees his town falling apart he wishes that perhaps there is some corner of the world that god still protects. "The Vizier's bridge had begun to crumble away like a necklace" he muses, but he hopes till he draws his last breath that there is a place for buildings and bridges built in god's name, and that these structures – men and buildings – could not be entirely eradicated lest all the love in the world ceases to exist (314). Here the reader is reminded of a refrain that is repeated in most chapter endings throughout the novel: it has to do with the permanence of the bridge as an ageless structure of great beauty and a monument to human potential. .

Earlier in the novel the narrator of *The Bridge* differentiates between the bridge on the Drina and the simple Rzav bridge, which is made of wood and had "no reason for its existence save to serve the townspeople and their animals as a crossing" (14). By contrast, the stone bridge, although nameless has much beauty, and unlike the Rzav bridge that is "without history," the bridge on the Drina was the "imperishable root" on which Višegrad grew (14). The narrator describes the bridge on the Drina thus: "For this

great stone bridge, a rare structure of unique beauty…was the one real and permanent crossing in the whole middle and upper course of the Drina and an indispensable link on the road between Bosnia and Serbia and further, beyond Serbia, with other parts of the Turkish Empire, all the way to Stambul" (14). Like the Rzav, the nameless bridge of great beauty is a place of passage as well, but what differentiates the two is that Rzav is without history, and thus impermanent. In contrast, the stone bridge contains within itself the heart of the town and the history that raised the structures and gave voice to folklore on each bank of the river the bridge joined.

Hence, the stone bridge was not merely a place of passage, like the Rzav, but it was elemental to Višegrad's very existence, and the narrator cannot determine whether the kapia had made the people of Višegrad, or whether the people had shaped the kapia into their meeting place and their heart. "There are no buildings that have been built by chance, remote from the human society where they have grown" the narrator muses, because "the life and existence of every great, beautiful, and useful building, as well as its relation to the place where it has been built, often bears within itself complex and mysterious drama and history" (21). Therefore, the narrator has no choice but to narrate the bridge in order to narrate Višegrad since "the story of the…bridge…is at the same time the story of the life of the town and of its people" (21). The bridge is the central character of the novel and as the centuries pass, its fate is inextricably linked with the fates of the people of Višegrad. The bridge stands as a monument of history, with the kapia symbolizing the significance of the structure: it is not merely a place of passage

that only has utility, but it has its own history as observed in the folklore that surrounds the turbulent waters of the Drina.

As the centuries pass, the bridge remains, and this is perhaps the refrain of the novel because the "bridge does not change with the years or with the centuries or with the most painful turns in human affairs" (101); the bridge "remained unchanged…under the 'new Emperor" (143); the bridge "still stood, the same as it had always been, with the eternal youth of a perfect conception…[which does] not share the fate of the transient things of this world" (214); the ancient bridge shone those July nights of 1913 "clean, young and unalterable, strong and lovely in its perfection" (234); and finally, the bridge "remained as if under sentence of death, but none the less still whole and untouched, between two warring sides" (307). Permanence throughout history makes the bridge memorable, nameless though it may be. Despite the human conflicts on either side of its banks the bridge withstands the great floodwaters of history and is essential to historical developments. From a localized focus, the bridge is the very essence of Southeastern European identity, witnessing human activity and war, but also encouraging co-existence through the crown, the kapia, and the heart of the town.

Bosnian Chronicle begins with this permanence. It is a story about imperial crossings in Bosnia that is set in the town of Travnik. Unlike *The Bridge* whose focus was the local Bosnian population and imperial relations as seen from Southeastern European perspective thereby developing local historiography, *Bosnian Chronicle* has a transnational focus in its depiction of diplomatic encounters in Southeastern Europe. *The* novel is concerned with the comings and goings in Travnik of foreign diplomats from

1807-1814, during the Napoleonic era. French and Austrian consuls settle in Travnik, and the local population is at once resentful but also certain that the consuls will eventually leave. The narrative starts in a coffee house in Travnik where beys and pashas are meeting to discuss the arrival of the French consul in 1806. Speculating, the beys fear that Austria will send its own consul – which it does – and that Russia would follow suit. One of the leaders, Hamdi Bey, tries to calm his townsmen saying:

> Maybe they'll come and maybe they won't. And even if they do, the Lašva won't start flowing backwards: it'll keep going the same old way. We're on our ground here, and anyone else who comes is a stranger and won't be able to hold out for long. Many people have come here intending to stay, but so far we've seen the back of all of them. It'll be the same with the consuls if they do come. (Andrić, *Days* 3)

Hamdi Bey's words echo the refrain of *The Bridge on the Drina* about the permanence of the structure, its people, and its history despite the historical waves. The consuls' arrival is perceived as encroachment and occupation, and the local Bosnian Muslims are distrustful of the diplomatic bodies representing empires that use Bosnia as their stepping stone and as their battlefield. The prologue establishes a resistance that is sustained throughout the narrative. Travnik, at the time of the narrative's beginning, is the seat of the Ottoman Vizier, a representative of an imperial entity that had controlled the region since the fourteenth century, and which has naturalized within Travnik's life. Hamdi Bey's words are most resonant for their implied resistance. Although he advocates a passive observation to the comings and goings of foreigners, he is also

convinced that they will leave. It is as though Travnik, and by extension, Bosnia and all of Southeastern Europe is an impassable space, impenetrable, unconquerable, and it is this implied resistance in Hamdi Bey's words that is confirmed even at the narrative's end. The story ends in the same coffeehouse with the same beys and pashas witnessing the diplomats leave their town.

Andrić's narrator describes Travnik from the perspective of a sympathizing observer-insider that knows the people and the region intimately. Travnik, although situated in a valley between two mountains, is lovingly described as "a half-open book, with gardens, alleyways, houses, fields, graveyards and mosques drawn on each page" (5). And yet, what is most striking about *The Days of the Consuls* is its awareness of the Bosnian lament, which is a result of being caught in the middle of imperial interests. The people of Travnik secretly desired to live "tranquil and carefree" in an insignificant location that did "not enter into the calculations of emperors or conflicts between states [and did] not bear the brunt of world events" (6). Hence, Andrić positions Southeastern European lands as bearing the brunt of war, as battlefields rather than as bridges, but these battlefields are also stigmatized and oppressed by the powers that seek to walk through them.

The Days places the reader in Southeastern Europe and presents a new vantage point from which to see the Ottoman Empire – a colonial force fighting to keep its political and economic power, and the rising French and Austrian empires, seeking to control and assimilate Southeastern European territories. The implications for such an aperture are many. Zooming out from the local experience and seeing the crossings and

knots of imperial paths, affords scholars an opportunity to consider regional histories as parts of a whole. The narratives focus on individual characters experiencing historically defining events, which, upon first observation, make these narratives strictly representing one experience. At the same time, however, the characters in these narratives are aware of world events and struggle with the movement of imperial armies and how will affect their existence. In weaving singular voices together through a collectively experienced historical trauma, Andrić moves from monophonic to polyphonic narratives, where the multiplicity of voices against the setting of imperial conquest depicts a tableau of historical trauma, resistance – physical or ideological – against occupation, and a better understanding of how unfolding world events have left layers of imperial legacies in Southeastern Europe.

The Days of the Consuls depicts external pressures as experienced by the Travnik locals. For instance, Bunaparta – the Travnik name for Napoleon Bonaparte – is a notorious figure in the novel, and is one that is directly blamed for the turbulent times at the end of the nineteenth-century in Bosnia. Andrić's narrator, in a sympathetic, explanatory tone reports that "[e]vents crowded in from all directions, colliding and rolling across Europe and the great Ottoman Empire and reaching even into this valley, to stop there, like floodwater or its silt" (7). Here Travnik, and by extension Bosnia-in-the-Balkans is literally and figuratively a valley into which the silt of floodwater of events settles. Situated between mountains, the inhabitants of Travnik are just as isolated as they are exposed, and ultimately affected significantly by the clash of external forces. The image of the silt stopping into the valley where Travnik is situated is profoundly

resonant given the aims of our discussion here. In chapter one, I argued that the Southeastern European experience with colonialism is one of imbricated colonialisms. The image of the silt settling and left over from the "floodwater of "events [crowding in] from every direction" presents an apt visual for considering the imperial encounters through the centuries in Bosnia and all of Southeastern Europe. The implication is that the 'silt' settles and stops "there." It is immovable and the effects of its settling are not specifically accounted for, but after years of settling and silt-accumulation, Travnik, Bosnia, Southeastern Europe and its people are inevitably and irrevocably changed, as the rest of the novel shows. Even though the epilogue of *The Days of the Consuls* depicts the same beys and agas discussing the departure of the consuls, as Travnik and its people seem unchanged, the external pressures and floodwaters have changed the landscape and its people as the budding Southeastern European nations approach the end of the nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth: its people are about to witness the rise of nationalism as nation-states in the area declare independence from the Ottoman Empire and consolidate their ethnic and national identity.

The image of a valley where silt gathers is echoed in a scene where the older French consul, Daville and his young consul, Des Fossés are having an argument about the region where they live and represent French interests. Daville, claims that Bosnia is wild and merely a desert of mud, an attitude to which Des Fossés responds with resistance, because, he explains how he has observed that there are graves upon graves upon graves and that graves are "proof of life and not of wilderness…" (105). Further,

Des Fossés narrates how as he was riding to a different town he observed in an eroded part of the road,

> …like geological layers, one on top of the other, the traces of former roads that had passed through this same valley [in Travnik]. At the bottom were heavy paving stones, the remains of a Roman road, six feet above them the remnants of a medieval cobbled way and, finally, the gravel surface of the Turkish road. So, in a chance cross-section, I was shown 2,000 years of human history, and in them three epochs, each of which buried the other. (105)

Daville's attitudes toward Bosnia illustrate a western European discursive position in relation to Southeastern Europe as backward and regressive, a stance that was discussed in more detail in chapter one by way of Todorova's concept: Balkanism.[33] Bosnia is positioned as other, as not French, and not European. Daville positions Bosnia and its peoples under erasure, which is a gesture of acquisition in the absence of European-defined civilization. On the contrary, where Daville administers absence, Des Fossés finds a historically layered presence, which thwarts Daville's civilizing mission and its discursive overdetermination of Bosnia.

Moreover, Des Fossés' historical curiosity argues that Bosnia is not just an ethnic entity, but a collection of worlds rendered invisible through long processes of history that have disempowered local historiography in favor of more powerful historical narratives, which Daville represents. Des Fossés represents an emancipated European

[33] See pages 64-67

subject who is also a prototype for an anticolonial administrator representing colonial authority, and as such, he is a conflicted character. Des Fossés' dilemma extends beyond the pages of the text and onto the reader who is compelled to evaluate the colonial enterprise disguised as diplomacy. Rhetorically, Des Fossés functions as a voice located within an oppressive entity and his careful analysis dismantles the ideological hold Daville's western European project have on Bosnian identity. Des Fossés' presence is narrativized as ideological resistance. He finds multiple historical, imperial 'silts' settled in the Travnik valley, much like geological layers, and he sees these layers as constitutive of Bosnian identity, and by extension of Southeastern European identity.

Earlier in the story the narrator attempts to explain Bosnian conflicts by situating its inhabitants within larger world-historical events. The narrator, somewhat didactically, explains the history of the previous century, and how the mass migration of Ottoman soldiers from the lands where they had settled in Hungary, had greatly affected attitudes toward Christians. The wars of the eighteenth century in which the Ottoman Empire was involved had "driven the Turks out of the neighboring Christian lands and back into Bosnia" (8). The effect was two sided: on the one hand Muslim Turks viewed Christians as a threat, and on the opposing side the expulsion of the Turks from Hungary "raised bold hopes among the Christian rayah, opening up previously unimagined prospects…toward their 'Imperial masters the Turks'" (8). The narrator highlights the expectations and resentments between the Christian rayahs and the Turks, since both sides' actions are explained as the result of competition for "their right to their way of life" (8). Exacerbating the problem is the presence of the wars that the Ottoman Empire

had fought and was still engaged in with Venice, Austria, and Russia, which "complicated and tied even tighter" the "intricate knot" of Bosnian Christian and Muslims' "opposing interests, beliefs, ambitions, and hopes" (8). Thus, Andrić's narrator locates the sources of conflict in the opposition between the Christians and the Muslims and their competition for maintaining power. The wars only served to accentuate these oppositions, and although there is internal conflict present between Christians and Bosnian Muslims, it is accelerated through Ottoman Empire's wars, which, like floodwater moved in and often stayed, like silt, never ameliorating the increasing religious animosity, but accelerating the deterioration of relations.

Such historical junctures are discussed in *The Bridge on the Drina* in more detail but there they are examined from a more local perspective. Further, there is a crucial difference between Višegrad and Travnik. While Višegrad's townspeople accept the bridge after a failed resistance, Travnik's townspeople are skeptical and sabotage the building of new roads more actively. Perhaps the difference lies in the fact that the bridge in Višegrad is built by an insider-outsider – Mehmed Pasha – in search of recovering the past and linking the parts of himself that the Drina divides. Pasha's project represents the Southeastern Europe-as-a-bridge trope, and its destruction at the start of WWI represents the rejection of this concept, despite being built by a once-insider.

To the contrary, French and Turkish forces –outsiders and occupiers – in order to develop the region's infrastructure for better access to trade routes, etc. build the roads around Travnik. The narrator demonstrates the road sabotage by making use of Des

Fossés, the young French consul, who is insistent upon learning the historical and cultural contexts of Bosnia. Daville, the older consul, is annoyed by what he considers to be Des Fossés' naiveté, but the narrative makes use of Des Fossés as an outsider-insider to somewhat didactically explain the conflict. During a heated exchange between Daville and Des Fossés, the latter recounts his conversation with Ivo, a parish priest in Travnik who confides to him:

> Sir, the worse the road, the rarer our Turkish visitors. What we would like most would be to put an impassable mountain between them and us…you should understand that as long as the Turks are in power in Travnik we don't need a better road. Just between the two of us, when the Turks repair it our people go out with the first rain or snow to dig and break it up. (Andrić, *Days* 62)

At this point Des Fossés adds that he is not surprised that Bosnians are resistant to building new roads, a resistance that Daville has called "perverse" and the opposite of "progress and prosperity" (61). "After all, Monsieur Daville," Des Fossés explains, "we French have swallowed half of Europe and we shouldn't be surprised that those countries we haven't yet occupied look with mistrust at the roads our armies construct on their borders" (62). Des Fossés is not only a voice of reason and enlightened reflection on the nature of conquering and oppression, but he also serves to highlight the space that Bosnia, and by extension, Southeastern Europe occupy in the great imperial games.

Bosnian resistance to occupation is not only oriented toward the Ottoman Empire, but to any newcomer in the area. Their resistance, even if it is only represented through diplomatic channels, is discursively coded as inherent backwardness of the Bosnians, an inability to be progressive and civilized – all these are attitudes that dominate a great deal of travel writing about Southeastern Europe by western travelers at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Rather, Des Fossés challenges such coding by offering a compassionate reading of the situation: the Bosnians do not trust the French and the Ottoman Empires, because of the long trails of conquest and oppression observable throughout Bosnia's history. Bosnia and Southeastern Europe may have been strategic military sites and important territories for trade routes, but they were also peopled, and the people resisted their imperially-prescribed function as only utilitarian sites along the path of conquest. Southeastern European locals, as we see in *The Days of the Consuls* resist their function as a bridge, which is one they never chose for themselves.

Des Fossés continues:

> …both the ill-will and the goodness of a people are the product of the circumstances in which they live and develop. It is not goodness that drives us to build roads, but the need and desire to extend profitable communications and our influence and many people regard that as 'ill-will' on our part. So our ill-will drives us to make roads while theirs drives them to hate and destroy them whenever they can" (62-3).

Des Fossés' understanding of the imperial encounter in Travnik is a result of his desire to and persistence in studying Bosnian culture with as little prejudice as possible. He is the only foreigner in the narrative who is genuinely interested in understanding his new environment rather than rejecting it as other. It is this acceptance-as-other and stigmatization-as-other that signals the difference between Des Fossés' brand of diplomacy and the rest of the consuls'. Diplomacy as a practice of peaceful collaboration is challenged in the face of power differentials the narrative depicts. In addition, diplomacy is depicted as conquest in disguise at a time when anticolonial sentiment increased in the area. Des Fossés is not more enlightened than Daville, but he is more aware of the growing anti-imperial sentiment among the peoples of Bosnia, and his presence in the text paves the way to understand the nascent anticolonial resistance prior to nation state formation in Southeastern Europe.

Des Fossés is an essential part of the narrative, not only because he is a foreigner who is functioning as a diplomat, but because through his understanding of Bosnian history and culture, he also articulates Bosnian resistance against the Ottomans *and* European empires. For our purposes here it is important for Des Fossés' words to be quoted in their entirety:

> I wonder what sort of sermons we should preach if we lived the way the Christians have been living here for the last three hundred years. Neither the earth nor the sky would have sufficient miracles for our religious arsenal in the struggle against the Turkish occupier. Believe me, when I look at these people and listen to them talking, I become more and more

> convinced of how wrong we are, as we conquer Europe country by country, to seek to introduce everywhere our own attitudes, our exclusively rational way of life and government. It seems to me more and more a senseless waste of effort. For it's pointless to want to remove all abuses and preconceptions if you haven't the strength or ability to remove what caused them. (63)

Des Fossés reflects on the empire he represents only when he sees the effect Ottoman occupation has had in Bosnia. He believes that the struggle between Bosnian Christians and Muslims is the result of inter-imperial negotiating that has no regard for local populations. Des Fossés understands that conquest comes with ideology and therein lays the true violence. In the above quoted passage, Des Fossés also confesses his self-doubt about imperial conquest as a representative of Napoleon's France: he sees how conquest and forced ideology and religion produce circumstances that condition people in the region to respond with distrust and even violent resistance. Des Fossés is that cultural translator in the novel, the one character that is concerned with the ethics of war, but more importantly the character who understands Bosnian resistance as such.

Andrić uses foreign narrators, intruding upon Southeastern European spaces, and having voices that either reject or explain the region. Des Fossés is an outsider who understands the resistance that characterizes Bosnian distrust of foreigners. From a postcolonial perspective, he is the critic that identifies Bosnian anticolonial resistance against the waning Ottoman Empire and rising western European empires. Des Fossés' subjectivity is constructed in a pre-1989 Southeastern Europe, and he serves as a

mediator between the text in its original, pre-1989 context and the readers of the text in post-1989 historical moment. Des Fossés confirms claims of anticolonial resistance against Ottoman rule and the rising western Empires. He places Bosnia within a long historiography of conquest, defining it as a space that is impassable because it never gave imperial armies permission to cross, and within his analysis of the imperial violence toward Bosnia Des Fossés deconstructs the imperial moral superiority of France, the nation he diplomatically represents. His imperial deconstruction is a double deflationary gesture of imperialism in the text itself, because his analysis of Bosnia as a site of imperial violence castigates both East – as represented by the Ottoman Empire – and West – as represented by France. Although his insight is gained through listening and understanding Bosnian life, he is also an outsider that gives voice to the voiceless. The Bosnian experience is filtered through Des Fossés, and it makes us wonder whether it is recuperated or recoverable at all. Are the silenced Bosnians in the novel – Muslim and Christian alike – the subalterns, those with no voices?

Des Fossés' self-critical attitude toward his role as a diplomat for the French empire serves as a rupture in a narrative solely dedicated to Daville, but while this rupture may seem inconsequential, it serves to indirectly highlight Bosnian resistance to yet another imperial force. While Bosnian voices are muted, their presence is felt through the resistance they exert against diplomatic persons. It is through doubt, fear, and distrust that the diplomats narrate Travnik locals and their attitudes toward empire. Although largely absent from the narrative, Bosnian voices sound through the dislocated, diplomatic narratives of Bosnia. Such internal pressure to the narrative becomes an

active force in shaping the story and the narrative structure. As a result, rather than being depicted as a passive place of passage that has only temporary utility, Travnik, and by extension, Bosnia and Southeastern Europe, are depicted as a site of resistance that exerts significant pressure that shapes world events.

Travnik in *The Days of the Consuls* and Višegrad in *The Bridge on the Drina* can be all virtual seas that halt imperial access and reach – they are active and alive rather than passively allowing empires passage. Southeastern Europe has been thought of as the bridge between the East and West, build over many long centuries, marked by wars, and violent histories; perhaps it is time to think of new ways to code the region. It is not a reading through an inquiring gaze attempting to articulate that wild region of wooded mountains. In academic discourse Southeastern Europe functions as a bridge, materially and ideologically, and the imprint of travelers upon its back is perceptible, but the central problem with the metaphor of the bridge is that Southeastern Europe is precluded from belonging to either bank they try to join. Southeastern European identity is discursively lodged between the West and East; by representing it as a self that is incomplete, Western discourse primarily *speaks for* and *about* the area. This only tightens the discursive chains that have constricted Southeastern European subjects under layers of imperial legacies, further allowing ideological opposites to constitute them. I am not arguing for a nostalgic recovery of the Southeastern European subject as such. However, I am arguing that Southeastern European identity should be dislodged from the two banks it joins, while still acknowledging the profound material and ideological inscriptions from both the Orient and Occident. Andrić's historical fictions

attempt to "represent historical processes occurring within a setting that is global or imperial in scope" (Dalley 145). The "extraterritorial" imperial space, although not "presented by the narrative is nonetheless embedded within it," (145) and it forces readers to see the national and the world, the local and the global, the specific and the general as intertwined and able to equally exert pressure on each other. Historical fiction in Southeastern Europe presents insights into the colonial legacy of Ottoman conquest of the area, it allows for the external imperial entities to be present even as they are absent in the narrative, and it depicts nations as integral parts of world histories.

Postcolonial approaches to these texts are useful insofar as they accentuate the varied cultural makeup of Southeastern Europe, whose past experiences under analogous dominant imperial presences actively shape the present by those same dominant powers, or other, external, neo-colonial structures of domination. I insist on marking Andrić's texts as World Literature not to negate their site-specific differences, but to suggest that by addressing us through different voices, these stories "have much to say to us about our own differences…for we are all located elsewhere with relation to others" (Erickson x). Andrić's texts are often counter-discursive in that they challenge notions of belonging, of homogeneity, of occupation and resistance. Embedded within the dominant literary heritage of World Literature, these narratives push against dominant historical framing of the region. Andrić's historical fiction refutes a totalized view of Southeastern Europe, and challenges universal and reductive systems of literature and of cultural representation. His fiction rebirths the region and with each revival it challenges its position at the fault line of two clashing civilizations: East and West. While the

metaphor of the bridge looms large in the works discussed here, Andrić does not position Southeastern Europe as a stepping stone in a Mediterranean pond, but codes the region as a heterogeneous site that resists the bridge trope, whose function is not merely utilitarian and in service imperial interests.

Deconstructing the bridge trope is driven by the desire to unburden Southeastern Europe from its past not by disavowing it, but because such tethering to the past will only allow for narratives that exhaust "dead end...emancipationist stories (nationalist ones, socialist ones) driven by longing for the total overcoming of the past" (Scott 806). Scott argues that examining postcolonial fiction through the lens of the tragic is useful insofar as postcolonial narratives adopt an elegiac tone that mourns that which is unrecoverable, thereby creating the possibility to deal with the postcolonial as a moment of building rather than recovery. Andrić's oeuvre is characterized by its insistence on a historical past that defines the present and harkens to a troubled future, but such a reading only emphasizes the drive "by longing for the total overcoming of the past" (806). Rather than envisioning the Ottoman past as the historical juncture that changed the course of Southeastern European development, Andrić's novels can be viewed as historiographies of prismatic presents: histories always already in "the present moment," and with pressing consequences. These novels are not "pessimistic or misanthropic," and they do not depict "inescapable postcolonial misery;" rather they invite the reader into "a fictive space of early postcoloniality…[in order to] curtail or suspend the teleological drive long enough to explore the implications of [Southeastern European's]…vulnerability to tragic collisions for revising…critical concerns about the

past in the present" (Scott 806-7). What these texts argue for is a state of postcoloniality in a pre-national moment, which is what ultimately nationalizes ethno-linguistic belonging. It is not only the rise of the nationalism at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century that constitutes Southeastern European nations; rather, the roots of the nation state in Southeastern Europe are observable as early as the Ottoman period. The nation-state develops as much as a response to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, as it is a response to the desire to escape the taxation and cultural hegemony of the Ottoman Empire. A central contribution of the historical novel of Southeastern Europe to World Literature is that it advances the genre of the historical novel: it does not merely represent historical events, but it invests the narratives with political import, which interrogates nation-building in Southeastern Europe.

CHAPTER IV

REVISING RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES IN ISMAIL KADARE'S HISTORICAL NOVELS

"Current events are their real beginning."

-- Michel de Certeau, From *The Writing of History* (11)

"'You like our country.' said a Balkan man to me the first time I met him, 'Will you do something for us? Explain us…to the new Consul. He does not understand us…but [you do]… We do not like him…Because he does not like us…and he does not understand…If Europe only understood,' he says (and it should be remarked that he rarely, if ever classes himself as European)…the golden dreams of his nation would be realized, and, as in the fairy-tales, there would be happiness ever afterwards. That Europe cares no jot for his hopes, fears, sorrows and aspirations so long as they are not likely to jolt that tittupy concern 'the Balance of Power' never seems to occur to him."

-- M. Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*

In the previous chapter I examined Ivo Andrić's historical novels *The Bridge on the Drina* and *The Days of the Consuls*[34] and showed how they map Southeastern European resistance toward imperial hegemony; I argued that the novels should be read as historiographic documents that represent attitudes of the present toward the past, and that in the Southeastern European context they narrate the effects Ottoman presence had on current nationalisms. In this chapter I will focus on the works of Ismail Kadare. He is Albania's most widely translated author, recipient of multiple international prizes such as the inaugural Man Booker International prize in 2006, was one of the central actors in

[34] The 2015 edition of this novel is also a new translation that is titled *Bosnian Chronicle*.

this debate. He is largely representative of Albanian letters, but also an active participant in public discussions that concern Albania's political and economic policies. He has been lauded abroad for his literary achievement while writing under one of the staunchest dictatorships in Eastern Europe; he has been criticized at home for what some critics argue to be his close relationship with the communist dictator, Enver Hoxha[35]. More important, however, is the role that he has played in shaping public opinion about many crucial socio-political issues that have faced his nation since the fall of communism in 1991. The focus of the chapter will be on Kadare's historical fiction about the Ottoman Empire as a counterpoint to Andrić, to the extent that the former's work often disavows the Ottoman legacy. In their disavowal, Kadare's historical narratives function not as historiographic but as, ideologically revisionist tools of Albanian religious identity, especially in a post-9/11 context, and as Albania began its negotiations to join the European Union. Below I briefly describe two separate events in Albania and Kosovo, respectively, that are indicative of the still-lingering effects of religious and ethnic difference in the region.

On September 21, 2014 Pope Francis began his European tour by visiting Albania, a mostly Muslim country that was self-proclaimed atheist during its 46 years of communist regime. Pope Francis' visit happened at a time when the Islamic State has gained power and ground in both Syria and Iraq, when religious radicalism has become a threat to healthy international politics and trade, and as countless lives are lost to extremist religious fervor, causing one of the largest migrations from the conflict areas

[35] For more on Kadare's relationship with Enver Hoxha and his life and work under the dictatorship see Peter Morgan's *Ismail Kadare: The Writer and the Dictatorship 1957-1990.*

into western nations. Pope Francis' visit was a nod of approval toward the ability of the main religions of Albania – Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox – to coexist peacefully. His presence was important to a country that seeks to join the EU, and the open-air mass Pope Francis held on Mother Teresa Square in Tirana was a gesture of approval and acquisition. The public's response toward this event is a crucial point of analysis, because it allows us to see the still-developing religious environment in the area, which is shaped to a large extent by EU aspirations. Perceiving a great chasm between Islam and Christianity, Albania, as other Muslim countries in the region – Turkey, Bosnia, and Kosovo included – understands the implications of its religious statistics. For instance, Albanian Muslim population percentage, which had been reported as 70% prior to the pope's visit, changed to 56% or 60%, depending on the news media reporting.

Another event of note was the erection of the Cathedral of Blessed Mother Teresa in Pristina, Kosovo, which was inaugurated on 5 September 2010 (Albertini). The Catholic population among Kosovars is barely 5%, with over 90% ("Conversion Rate") being nominally Muslim. The project stirred much resentment among Muslim Kosovars who often have to pray in the streets since the mosques are at maximum capacity. The Muslim population has no resentment toward their fellow Christian citizens, but they perceive the building of the cathedral as a discriminating act, especially because the local government in Pristina rejected requests from the Muslim community for the building of a mosque. Dissenting voices have been widespread throughout Kosovo, even among nationals with no religious affiliation. The Albanian national motto since the beginning of the twentieth century has been that Albanians' religion is Albanism, which

is a sentiment shared within Albania proper, and among ethnic Albanians living in Southeastern Europe.[36] However, "in the era of Milosevic, Islam was a way of resistance [for the Albanians of Kosovo]," according to Jahja Drancolli, professor of History at the University of Pristina (qtd. in Erebara). During the Yugoslav years, religion was enlisted as another marker of ethnic difference between Serbs and ethnic Albanians, and as such it became integral to Kosovar identity. On the day of the Cathedral's inauguration, the president of Kosovo insisted that the Cathedral was a symbol of religious tolerance, which was a pointed statement for a new nation that has experienced much violence as a result of the conflict between its ethnic Muslim Albanian population and the minority of Orthodox Serbs.

Furthermore, during the Ottoman era the Catholic faith in Kosovo have been suppressed. It had its final stand when Pjeter Bogdani, a Catholic Albanian archbishop fought and liberated Pristina from Ottoman control during the Turkish-Austrian war of 1664-1669. Later, when the Ottoman forces took back the city, the Ottoman soldiers exhumed Bogdani's body and fed it to the dogs. His death "represented the last time Kosovo's Catholicism was based in Pristina." For Kosovar Catholics, the Cathedral signals the return of Kosovo's Catholicism and it serves as a sign of Kosovo's aligning with western values. Such orientation is also evident in the Catholic conversion trends in Kosovo, which have increased because of the perceived economic incentives from western nations (Deliso).

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[36] This slogan was part of a poem by one of the intellectuals of the Albanian Renaissance (1878-1912) Vaso Pasha, and it was useful in unifying the population of Albania despite their religious differences.

Another narrative that has gained much traction – a narrative far too common in Southeastern European nationalist rhetoric – is that of forced conversion from Catholicism to Islam during the Ottoman Empire. Arguing that prior to Ottoman encroachment, Kosovars were Christians, proponents of contemporary Christian conversion justify the return to Catholicism as a return to Albanian roots of pre-Ottoman imperialism. The Roman Catholic Church has changed Kosovo's status to diocese from its former parish status. Building the Cathedral of Blessed Mother Teresa is also a gesture of acquisition from the Holy See, which is invested in increasing its influence in the region.

I start with these two events to illustrate that Southeastern European studies are relevant today more than ever, because, if the lasting ethnic and religious anxiety present in each case tells us anything, it is that the past haunts present realities, and that Southeastern Europe is a vantage point from where we can understand religious conflicts in a zone that has experienced numerous imperial conquests. One could argue that religion itself is *the* Ottoman legacy in Southeastern Europe, and that revisionist religious narratives are latent postcolonial responses to this legacy in light of the various external world actors – like the EU – that affect present day religious nationalisms in the region as evidenced by continuous debates on religious identity in Albania, which will serve as an illustrative example in this chapter.

Furthermore, the EU is a dominant external actor in Eastern European affairs, especially what has been labeled as its *eastern enlargement*. In a volume published by *Central Europe Review* in 2001 the writers deal extensively with the notion of

enlargement and what it entails for Eastern European nations. In their analysis, EU enlargement is a "process of augmentation, reducing a daunting amount of social, cultural, moral and administrative complexity, involving concerted, sustained action by some very powerful European states aiming to redraw the continent's geopolitical order, to a quasi-technical operation" (Böröcz 6). Böröcz et. al. read the term *eastern enlargement* as an "orientalizing tool when applied as the marker of the current re-division of Europe" (Böröcz 6). The reason for Böröcz's objections to the term Eastern is that it signals the inferiority of a non-Europe, which is an assertion that follows the works of scholars like Wolff and Todorova discussed in chapter one. The EU expanded eastward when it included within its borders East Germany and Austria, for instance. That the *Eastern* label was not deployed in those enlargement operations is suspect, because the process "is both falsely inclusive and falsely exclusive" (Böröcz 6). While EU expansion promises to extend the four European freedoms of labor, capital, goods, and services, "the hierarchy between the former imperial powers and the peripheral newcomers is unmistakable in patterns of governmentality" (Imre, *Eastern* 7). Post-socialist governments have incorporated tax policies in order to draw direct foreign investment, which means "EU-based corporations are the most prominent investors while Eastern companies have small investment portfolios" (7). European realities indicate that geopolitical power is still in the hands of powerful western countries, and that empire is still alive and well; it just wears new clothes.

Positioned between a haunting Ottoman legacy and a desire for European inclusion, nations in Southeastern Europe have to negotiate their identities in a way that

claims European belonging, while at the same time, they are kept geopolitically marginal vis-à-vis economic policies of the EU.

As a main actor in Albanian public discourse who favors Albania's narrative of Christian roots, Kadare's role in reclaiming the Christian narrative has met much opposition, especially from Rexhep Qosja, a prominent writer and intellectual in Kosovo. Throughout 2006 these two important intellectuals in Albania and Kosovo engaged in a heated, public debate and they were not conservative in throwing insults at each other. Their spirited debate is significant for Albania and Kosovo, but also for Southeastern Europe and its position vis-à-vis Islam and Christianity. I will discuss this debate at length later in this chapter, but for now I will offer a quick sketch to frame our discussion going forward. First, the debate launches a widespread inquiry among the Albanian public in Albania proper and Kosovo about the religious identity of Albanians. Second, it highlights the role of the intellectual in shaping public discourse. And third, it brings into focus the marginalized international position of Southeastern Europe in decisions that affected the fates of whole peoples in the region at the end of the nineteenth century going forward. Southeastern European history is central to this chapter because it highlights the complex ethnic and religious identities in the area: the Qosja-Kadare debate is only one example of these complexities. I start with this quick sketch of the debate in order to highlight the main tensions that surround critical thought on Kadare's work, and the main thrust of the analysis in this chapter.

However, while the distant historical past is a useful contextual canvas, another necessary historical juncture is the attack of the World Trade Center on September 11,

2001, and the subsequent events that have shaped much of the world today, including contemporary attitudes about Islam and Christianity, broadly speaking. Much of Kadare's non-literary writing on Albania's religious identity, Albania's European identity, and his disavowal of the Ottoman legacy in Albania, augment my discussion of his historical fiction about the Ottoman Empire in a post-9/11 context. Additionally, his fictional and journalistic writings require historical bookends. Southeastern European nations often narrate themselves as civilizations between a homogeneous East and a homogeneous West. Consequently, Kadare's literary and non-literary production is pressured by the historical inevitability of the Ottoman Empire as it materially pitted itself against an ostensibly Christian Europe, both of which comprised a material presence *and* an ideological one for Southeastern Europe. As frontier lands reconciling the material and ideological pressures of imperial powers, Southeastern European nations seek, even today, to stabilize their identities, which often have been self-canceling by virtue of serving as literal and ideological battle grounds for more powerful empires like the Ottoman, Hapsburg, and other western European powers.

A large part of the issue is that the history of Southeastern Europe during the Ottoman Empire is too complex; religious and ethnic lines, while clear from cultural and linguistic standpoints, were also porous, especially before the formation of nation states. Ethnic and religious wars were not a common occurrence in Southeastern Europe until the twentieth century, and more prominently during WWII. Addressing the ethnic and religious nature of the conflict in Kosovo during the 1990s, Noel Malcolm writes: "In the West, the popular view of the recent wars in Croatia and Bosnia was always that

these were ‘ethnic conflicts,’ created by the bubbling up of obscure but virulent ethnic hatreds among the local populations” (Malcolm, Kosovo xxvii). Although the conflict between ethnic Albanians and Serbs may, at first glance, appear to be an ethnic one, Malcolm argues that despite all the battles fought in Kosovo over the centuries, it was not “until the last 100 years or so” that they took an ‘ethnic’ character (xxix). Malcolm emphasizes the cooperation between Kosovars and Serbs during their fight against Ottoman rule: “modern historians have had great difficulty trying to distinguish between Serbs and Albanians when analyzing contemporary reports of” battle with Ottoman forces (xxix). Historical sources show that there was “ethnic-linguistic assimilation in both directions,” and that “what really turned the division between Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Albanians into a more general and systematic conflict was the politicization of the issue in the nineteenth century during the growth and expansion of the Slav Christian states in the Balkans” (xxix).

Herein we can locate the burgeoning Southeastern European nationalities, where local rulers began to mobilize against the centralizing tendencies of Ottoman power. Often, the revolts in these peripheral centers were motivated by economic concerns, but among the Christian populations of Southeastern Europe, dissatisfaction with economic conditions was coupled with a desire to throw “off Ottoman rule and [create] independent nation-states” (182). Revolts erupted throughout Southeastern Europe, like the Serbian revolt of 1804, and when the nascent, Southeastern European, Christian nation-states began to achieve autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, they often ejected “their Muslim subjects (not only the Turkish-speaking ones)” from their territory (182).

Expulsion of Muslim populations posed a direct threat to Albania and Bosnia whose populations – through conversion over the years of Ottoman rule – were primarily Muslim. Seeing the rise of nationalist waves among their Christian neighbors, caused Albania and Bosnia to desire the protection of "a still powerful empire as their only guarantee against being conquered and expelled themselves" (182). Ottoman power dwindled throughout the development of the nineteenth century as it dealt with the Balkan wars, the Russo-Turkish war, and western European pressures. The Ottomans fought wars on many fronts, and at the end of the nineteenth century, Russia and the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of San Stefano in March 1878, which allowed for a significant expansion of Bulgarian and Serbian territories. The Great Powers did not accept this treaty, and therefore, in "July 1878 a Treaty of Berlin was agreed [upon] which would determine the shape of the Ottoman possessions" (201) in Southeastern Europe until the final disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. In this new treaty, Montenegro was given Kosovar territories, and this served as a spark for igniting "a movement of resistance in Kosovo, first to the Treaty of Berlin and eventually to Ottoman rule itself" (201). Ultimately, this spark would also secure the complete downfall of the Ottoman Empire as it entered the twentieth century.

Beginning with the conquest of Kosovo by Serbia and Montenegro in 1877-8 and its reconquering in 1912, nationalist propaganda was set in motion, fueled by ethnic and religious distinctions. In particular, "policies imposed from above by the Serbian and Montenegrin governments…created systematic hostility" (xxx) among the populations, and especially among the Albanians, because of the mass expulsion of Muslim

Albanians from the area. Here we must pause to acknowledge the difficulty of speaking of a history of Kosovo and Albania apart from one another. While they are two separate countries, their nationalist aims at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century, were largely aligned in their desire for a unification of the territories inhabited by Albanians in Southeastern Europe. However, history bears witness to a diverging of experiences between Albania and Kosovo that is a direct result of peace treaties and negotiations between western powers, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the twentieth century. Therefore, I will speak of Albania and Kosovo as they begin to diverge first with Kosovo's conquest by Serbia and Montenegro, and second as Kosovo becomes part of the Yugoslav state and Albania becomes a communist country after WWII. Whereas Kosovo experiences Yugoslav rule as a form of colonization – much like other peoples colonized by European Christian powers – Albania becomes the first self-proclaimed atheist state under the rule of Enver Hoxha, and sinks deeper into a regime that keeps the country isolated for forty-six years. Religion in both the Albanian and Kosovar context has been suppressed, but in markedly different ways. Whereas Albanians of Kosovo have experienced marginalization because of their ethnicity *and* their religion, Albanians in Albania proper were prohibited from practicing any religion at all. With the fall of communism there has been a religious awakening as a result of missionary efforts of all religious creeds, but because generations of Albanians were raised with no faith, religious identity in the immediate post-1989 moment was not a central concern of the Albanian public. Historical circumstances have shaped both nations, and their responses to political and religious pressures can be understood only

through a historical approach. Kadare's post-communist revisions of his historical novels and the Kadare-Qosja debate are only intelligible in such a historical context.

Yet because of the complicated histories of Albania and Kosovo – histories pertinent to an analysis of Kadare's works – the answers to questions of religion, ethnicity, and the nation-state are not easily obtained. While it is beyond the scope of the present project to offer a comprehensive overview of Southeastern European history, it is important to address some key historical moments during the nineteenth century that shaped much of the region today. As the Ottoman Empire witnessed its military and economic decline during the reign of Sultan Mahmut II, the Ottomans proposed a series of reforms that sought to modernize their army, and, according to Malcolm, "much of the original impetus for reform came from observing how effective Western armies were in the Napoleonic period" (*Kosovo* 181). In order for the reforms to work, the Ottoman empire needed to centralize its power, which meant that the local lords who controlled much of Southeastern European territories of the Ottoman empire, would no longer be semi-autonomous. Even though centralization of power was a move toward a liberalization of the Ottoman state, those on the empire's peripheral centers viewed the reform ostensibly as "brutal oppression" (181).

Albanian history at this time is also tied to the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, since the national movements in the region awoke a dormant Albanian nationalism. Between 1878 and 1912 Albanian renaissance[37] became an important movement, which accelerated Albania's declaration of independence on November 1912 from the Ottoman Empire.

[37] Rilindja Kombëtare is literally translated as National Rebirth, but it is often referred to as the Albanian Renaissance.

1912 is also the year when Serbian and Montenegrin forces "invaded Kosovo" (217). Hence, Albania and Kosovo's experiences during these turbulent times were starkly different: on the one hand, populations in the Kosovar territories were struggling for their survival as part of a larger Albanian nation, and on the other, Albania was consolidating its recognition as a legitimate nation-state. Albania's independence is often narrated as a desire for independence from the Ottoman Empire. While this is true for the northern territories and Catholic populations of Albania during the late part of the nineteenth century, there were factions within Albania who were traditionalists and who religiously identified with the Ottoman Empire. Albanian Renaissance intellectuals, in fact, were torn between those who wanted independence from the Ottoman Empire and those who identified with it, and this schism was as much fueled by ideological differences as by religious ones.

Thus, as Albania neared its independence as a nation state, its leaders were ideologically split between those who believed in a progressive, western, and Christian tradition, and those who were Muslim traditionalists that favored close ties with the empire. Intellectuals like the three Frashëri brothers – Naim Frashëri, Sami Frashëri, and Abdyl Frashëri – were instrumental to the eventual outcome. The League of Prizren that met on 10 June 1878, sought to articulate a unified Albanian response to the Ottoman Empire and to the newly formed nation states in the region. Although the majority of the representatives that attended the League were Muslim, there was much cooperation between the attendants despite their differences. The initial consensus of the League was to preserve the territorial integrity of Albania, whose territories they feared would be

dispersed between its neighbors. Additionally, Abdyl Frashëri, one of the few southern Albanian representatives argued eloquently for the opening of Albanian schools, for the unification of Albanian populations under one vilayet, and ultimately for Albanian autonomy from the Porte.

The League operated as a *"de facto"* government, and reports from travelers and diplomats in the area show that there was much improvement in the lives of Albanians at the time, which is why the Porte decided to crush the League in 1881 by sending a force of 10,000 troops (226). The majority of those who participated in the League were captured the majority of those who participated in the League; Abdyl Frashëri was incarcerated in Prizren for years. Others were executed, and conditions in Albania worsened as a result. This period also marks a deterioration between Muslims and Christians in Kosovo as a result of mass expulsion "of Muslims from the lands taken over by Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro in 1877-8" (228). The League was instrumental in establishing Albanian nationalism, but it could not ensure a unified Albania that included within its internationally recognized borders all the territories inhabited by ethnic Albanians. Ultimately, as Kosovo was annexed by the Yugoslav state, the narrative in Kosovo has been one that considers itself as being torn apart from Albania proper. Such attitudes are reflected in much of Qosja's writings and they are central to his debate with Kadare.

As already discussed earlier in the chapter, religious identity tensions in Albania and Kosovo became especially heated when two of the most respected intellectual figures in both nations engaged in a public polemic regarding the religious identity of

Albanians. Like Kadare, Rexhep Qosja, is a central intellectual figure in Kosovo and Albania: he is a respected literary and political critic who was an influential participant in Kosovo's policy and peace talks in the 1990s. Qosja has been a proponent of closer ties between Albania and Kosovo arguing that Kosovo is Albania and its annexation by Yugoslavia in early twentieth century tore Kosovo away from mother Albania. Many nationalist intellectuals in Kosovo and Albania maintain this position and argue for a re-unification of a Greater Albania by joining all of the regions where there are still Albanian-speaking populations – most of them are in Kosovo and other ethnic Albanian communities can be found in Montenegro, Macedonia, and Northern Greece.

The debate between these two men of letters began in earnest when Qosja published *The Ideology of Disintegration* (2006)[38]. The thrust of this work was to draw attention to increasing tendencies within Albanian culture to favor one religion over the other two. Catholicism, for many who still favor it, was the main religion of the inhabitants of what today is Albania and Kosovo, and therefore it constitutes a place of origin to which Albanians should return. Qosja argues against such religious favoritism because disavowing Islam and the Orthodox faith disintegrates Albanian religious identity and by extension Albanian identity as such. As a Kosovar intellectual, his national thought has been shaped by the marginalization of Kosovar identity within Yugoslavia, which one could argue is postcolonial in nature. Qosja's position in the debate is prompted by the situation in Kosovo after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and he responds to intellectuals who propose a new standardized language for Kosovo that is

[38] *Ideologjia e Shpërbërjes*

apart from the Albanian standard, as well as a return to the original religious roots of their ancestors.

First, Qosja argues that creating another standardized Kosovar language will irreparably separate Kosovo from Albania.[39] Second, emphasizing any one religious identity will fracture Albanian identity, broadly speaking. He writes: "the political ideology of mimicry…seeks to fracture the identity of this great nation into smaller identities distinguished by dialect and sub-regional belonging, which over-emphasizes religious identity, favoring only one of them, [and this is] without doubt, an anachronistic ideology that makes us step backward" (Qosja, *Ideologjia* 11).[40] Qosja draws attention to unnamed institutions and individuals who "re-work previous writings, mainly novels, by adding whole sections or chapters that have religious content" (29)[41]. These additions, of course, favor Albania's original, Catholic roots, and Qosja is skeptical about the intentions behind these revisions. He criticizes the intellectual push to align Albania with western values through a blatant disavowal of the lingering Ottoman legacy. Instead, Qosja argues that Albanians belong to both civilizations, eastern and western, and that arguing only for belonging to an exclusionary western and Christian civilization alienates a majority of Albanians whose religious identity unquestionably

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[39] Albanian language has two main dialects: the Gheg, which is spoken in northern Albania and Kosovo, and the Tosk, which is spoken in southern Albania. During Enver Hoxha's rule, the southern dialect became the standardized language across Albania.

[40] "…ideologjia politike e mimikrisë…synon zbritjen e këtij identiteti të madh kombëtar në identitete të vogla krahinore e dialektale, që tejshquan, tejthekson, vetëdijen fetare, duke e favorizuar njërën prej tyre, është padyshim, ideologji anakronike dhe prapakthyese."

[41] Qosja is referring to Kadare's revision of *The Siege*. This novel and its revisions will be discussed later in this chapter.

links them to eastern civilization (31). Desiring integration into the European Union should not cause Albanians to reject a large part of their identity, Qosja asserts.

Kadare responded to Qosja's arguments with *Albanians' European Identity*[42]. Kadare rejects the proposition that Albanians belong to both eastern and western civilizations. If it were so, he asserts, it would mean that Albanian identity is split, and as a result the "nation is split"[43] (Kadare, *Identiteti* 16). Unlike Qosja, Kadare views Albania's integration into the European Union as a matter of primary urgency. He views historical developments like the Ottoman occupation, and post-WWII communism, as mistakes that separated Albania from greater Europe to which it geographically and culturally belonged (and belongs). Kadare seeks to close the distance between Europe and Albania in the post-communist moment, and this project can only be achieved by closing the historical chasm between the two as a result of the Ottoman and communist legacies. In *Identiteti*, Kadare rejects Ottomanism as an ideology that suppressed a true Albanian identity. He writes: "In its war to pale Albanian identity in order to replace it with Ottomanism…The Empire, just like everywhere in the Balkans, tried to create new traditions, styles, vices, architecture, ways of dress, music, and literature" (27).[44] Kadare relies on simplistic definitions of identity: geographical belonging, unchangeable identity despite occupations (51), and the notion that Albania was not invented, but that it always existed (58-9). His representations of empire are

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[42] *Identiteti Evropian i Shqiptarëve*
[43] "…një komb i ndarë."
[44] "Lufta për zbehjen e identitetit shqiptar dhe zëvendësimi me atë otoman…Perandoria, ashtu si kudo në Ballkan, u përpoq të krijonte të tjera zakone, stil, vese, arkitekturë, veshje, muzikë, dhe letërsi."

historically erroneous as Ottoman culture is labeled "contraband culture" (29), implying that it was not an original culture but one imposed through manipulation of the Albanian people. This sentiment is echoed in *The Siege* as well when one of the Ottoman soldiers states: "Slowly, year after year, they will lose their dress and traditions, just like an apple tree's flowers fall. They will get used to our customs: they will be so used to them, that, even if we leave, Allah forbid, they will part with us in a most painful way" (Kadare, *The Siege* 62, 2003).[45] Kadare's literary and non-literary writing are in direct conversation with one another as though the fiction of *The Siege* is the reality of his essays on Albanian identity. Such blurring of the fictional and non-fictional is central to the historiography his novels represent.

Additionally, Kadare considers the US and Europe as powers that govern the fates of nations and Albania and Kosovo, in particular. After Albania's independence from the Ottoman Empire, Kadare's position implies that Europe is the new master that holds in its hands the fates of Southeastern Europe (18). He even refers to Europe as "mother continent" (46), which communicates an anxiety of belonging, and a lamentation of sorts, as if Albania was plucked away from the bosom of Europe where it belonged. His understanding of the relationships between Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and Albania is defined by an East-West binary, and while his resistance to Ottoman legacy can be coded as a latent postcolonial response, it also has characteristics of

[45] "Dalëngadalë, vit pas viti, do të bjeren veshjet e doket e tyre, ashtu siç bien lulet e mollës. Ato do të mesohen me zakonet tona të reja: do të mësohen aq shumë, saqë, edhe sikur të ndodhë që ne të ikim këtej, Zoti mos e dhëntë, ato do të ndahen nga kujtimet tona me dhembje të madhe."

orientalism, which I argue is a borrowed form of European orientalism, a mimicry that signals to Europe that Albania, in fact, does not belong to the east.

Qosja responded to Kadare directly in his publication *The Disregarded Reality*,[46] where he draws attention to Kadare's oriental attitude calling it racism (Qosja, *Realiteti* 9). He emphasizes that religious favoritism of any of the three of Albania's religions is religious fundamentalism. Mother Teresa's portrait adorning the walls of Kosovo's official institutions is used as an example to illustrate his point. Qosja's position, too, is fomented in a post-9/11 moment where he observes the religious double standard between Islam and Christianity (24). While both writers are speaking about the context within Albania and Kosovo, their arguments engage world events vis-à-vis religious identification. The debate is fraught with issues of internal/external address. External pressures like Albania's EU integration is a central concern for Kadare. In addition there are internal pressures that condition the authors' response to each other. For Qosja, a central concern is the question of Kosovo's independence, an internal pressure that is shared by Kadare as well. Qosja, who is a trained academic, is eloquent in his rebuttal, and his most lucid moment is when he astutely observes that Kadare conflates European identity as such with European political identity, and that he equates European identity with Christianity (31). The fundamental conflict between these two writers is that Qosja does not believe in the "mother continent;" he does not seek to appease what he decodes as European paranoia about Muslim identity. Kadare, on the other hand understands

[46] *Realiteti i Shpërfillur*

Albania's relationship to Europe as one of trauma and separation, and that a return to Europe is only possible by joining the EU.

The debate sketched above is symptomatic of Southeastern Europe's ideologically ambivalent position and the resulting dilemmas. Each author's voice represents a good number of the Albanian population's views, which indicates a schism within Albanian culture itself. In discussing the debate here, my intention is not to assign blame, nor to determine who is right, but to highlight crucial questions. In its totality the debate between Qosja and Kadare raises questions facing Albania, Kosovo, and other Southeastern European nations. Ethnic, religious, and cultural fragmentations across the region are symptoms of imperial pasts that fractured even further ethnic identities. Kadare's position is problematic for many reasons, foremost of which is his adherence to orientalist narratives about the other, but viewed in the context of Ottoman history and the communist regime, we could also understand his position as a latent postcolonial response to Ottoman occupation; this is a resistance that was largely suppressed during the communist years. There is a time lag in Kadare's resistance to Ottoman legacy, however. Albania declared its independence from Ottoman rule in 1912, and yet, a postcolonial response to empire is not articulated in public discourse until the years after the fall of communism – the Albanian renaissance intellectuals being an exception. It is as though, for Kadare, communism was an extension of the oppressive nature of the Ottoman Empire, a stance that is quite explicit in his historical novels. Independence was not truly won until the fall of the communist regime, and in its aftermath, Kadare revisited his historical novels on the Ottoman Empire, and filled their pages with

passages that reflected a pure, original, Catholic peoples facing the dark horde of Ottoman soldiers.

Speaking about the conflation of Ottoman rule with the communist decades, in *Narrating Post/Communism* Nataša Kovaćević writes that often the post-communist period of Eastern European literature is still characterized by an Orientalizing attitude on the part of the critics who parallel their interpretations of the communist regime narratives to the Ottoman Empire. Kovaćević argues that these Eastern European attitudes are influenced by a long-standing western European project toward Eastern Europe. She writes that Eastern Europe was viewed as "a civilizing project (*task*) by the European Union (EU) and North America" (1). Kovačević reads EU enlargement starting in 2004, and consequentially the admission of select Eastern European countries, as an expression of western Europe's 'orientalizing' attitudes toward Eastern Europe, because the latter can only become European "by no longer being communist" (1). Kovačević points to the "impossibility of dialogue" because the conditions of inclusion and exclusion are set by the EU, whose civilization and progress has to be matched or approximated in order for inclusion. The need for "emancipation" because of "economic and cultural 'inferiority" is typically defined as "a colonial, or a proto-colonial relationship," and these are labels that most postcolonial theorists and critics are reluctant to use in the case of Eastern Europe (2). Kovačević's critique is concerned with the stigmatization of Eastern Europe by its western counterpart, especially in relation to its communist history. Post-communism is nothing more than another reincarnation of quasi-colonial attitudes about Eastern Europe, and Kovačević's critique is crucial in

identifying lingering attitudes and how they still shape literary texts and economic policy in the region. It is evident that Southeastern European literary production is developed through its internal and external forces. Kadare's work, especially, is pressurized by the inevitability of the Ottoman legacy as it presses itself against Albania's desire for European belonging. Kadare's active disavowal of Ottomanism speaks more to the strength of western attitudes toward a homogeneous East: if Albania recuperates a pre-Ottoman identity, not only does it resist the imperial conquest, but it also justifies its European Union belonging.

An overview of Kadare's oeuvre shows a recursive desire to understand the Ottoman Empire's role in Albanian identity coupled with resistance to Ottoman influence. Aside from *The Siege,* which is the central text under analysis, other Kadare novels set during the Ottoman Empire's occupation are *The Three-Arched Bridge* (*Ura me Tri Harqe,* 1978) and *The Palace of Dreams* (*Pallati i Ëndrrave*, 1981). Kadare wrote *The Siege* (*Kështjella*) in 1970 when Albania was still under the Hoxha regime. In a nation where literary production was combed in search of possibly dissenting voices, the distant Ottoman past provided ripe ground for storytelling. There were additional editions published after the 1970s, but what is most striking about this novel is Kadare's post-1989 revision. In its 2003 Albanian edition, the reader witnesses revised passages as well as added ones that are religious in nature. The justification for these additions is that during communism Kadare could not emphasize a religious identity for fear of censorship. His post-communist decision to emphasize a Catholic identity on the part of the resisting Albanian castle-dwellers, coupled with what some critics have rightfully

labeled orientalist attitudes of the text, urges our discussion to focus on the revisionist historical tendency that the novel propagates.

As a result, the rest of this chapter will have two aims. First, it will examine *The Siege*'s history through its revisions, arguing that orientalist attitudes are checked by a simultaneous existence of latent postcolonial resistance. And second, the chapter will attend to the novel's narrative that emphasizes fragmentation, which formally represents the dual nature of the historical novel in Southeastern Europe. Narratives are driven as much by the present's need to revisit the past, as by a literary criticism that cross-pollinates with other analytical theories like postcolonialism, empire studies, and Mediterranean studies. Unlike the Andrić texts that mimicked authoritative historical narratives, Kadare's historical texts reflect a postcolonial sensibility as they lend themselves to be critically examined both for their othering of the Ottoman Empire, and for their latent postcolonial resistance toward the same empire as a colonizing force. Therefore, I argue for a more nuanced reading of the novel that accounts for its overt disavowal of Ottoman legacy, which betrays an emergent 'orientalism' in the text, but such a reading ought to be Janus-faced. It also must seek to read the Ottoman Empire as an oppressive force and Kadare's text as resistance literature. Such an approach accomplishes two things simultaneously: first, it allows for a critical examination of already established scholarship on Ottoman fiction in Southeastern Europe; and second, it opens up new territory for postcolonial studies, which have, thus far, limited their scope to settlement colonialism of the modern era and of capitalist empires.

The Siege is the story of a siege by the Ottoman Empire of an Albanian fortress during the fifteenth century. The fortress is unidentified, but according to David Bellos' afterword in the 2009 English language edition of the novel, Kadare was inspired by Marlin Barleti's chronicle of the Siege of Shkodër of 1474. Barleti wrote the chronicle in 1504 and his writing was an inspiration to Kadare who mimicked Barleti by incorporating into the narrative inter-chapter sections, which are fragments of a narrative written within the fortress' walls (Bellos 325). Bellos also contextualizes the novel in a post-1968 eastern block after "Soviet tanks overwhelmed Czechoslovakia" and overthrew Alexander Dubček, its liberal leader (324). At the time, Albania was China's ally, but the "icy breath" of the Soviet incursion was felt "close to its borders" (324). During this time, Albania's dictator, Enver Hoxha decided to erect thousands of bunkers that dotted all corners of Albania's landscape. Many of these communist relics can be seen in Albania even today. Hoxha's paranoia inspired Kadare's imagining of a novel about a great siege, according to Bellos, and Kadare reached for a deep history that would serve as a great vessel within which he could speak about the present (324). Hence, the novel contains multiple layers of signification, and critics have most heavily focused on the novel serving as an allegory of communist paranoia. Most contemporary critiques focus on the text's explicit orientalist attitudes toward the Ottoman Empire, which were quite common during the communist years. Enis Sulstarova develops a sustained critique of the text's orientalist shortcomings in *Escape from the East: Albanian Orientalism from Naimi to Kadare* (2006).[47]

[47] *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi Shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja* (2006)

Sulstarova's work analyzes Kadare's ouvre in the context of socialist realism and communist orientalism. Marxism, for Sulstarova, is an ideology that enabled orientalist attitudes in writers from communist countries like Kadare. Marxist ideas of progress support a progressive western Europe as a society that has forged ahead economically and culturally. Sulstarova asserts that according to Marxism as understood in the Albanian context, oriental cultures could not achieve economic advances as western European nations because they "lacked the middle class, the autonomous city, political rights of the individual, and the revolutionary spirit" (111-2).[48] Sulstarova explains that Albanian Marxism was driven by a Eurocentric drive toward modernity that borrowed extensively from the Enlightenment, and the notion of westernization did not contradict the rejection of capitalism, because westernization for Albanian intellectuals of the 1920-1930s meant a detachment and overthrow of the backwardness of oriental cultures. The comunists rejected western bourgeoisie and its decadence, but envisioned a society where the driving social group was the working class led by the Communist Party (113).

Another source of orientalism within Enverism[49] was the legacy of Albanian Renaissance that depicted the 500 year Ottoman rule as the Albanian dark ages that stifled progress and modernity for Albania. Some history texts from the communist era even speak of the Ottoman influence as scaling Albanian progress back a few centuries, which is a position consistent with other Balkan nations (114). Such internal orientalism in the form of Enverism gave rise to discrimination to individuals who were clerics or

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[48] "klasa e mesme, qyteti autonom, të drejtat politike të qytetarëve, revolucionet." (111-2)
[49] Named after Albania's leader and dictator, Enver Hoxha, whose ideas adhered toward Stalinism, and who appropriated much of Marx and Lenin for the Albanian context. Enverism is the particular brand of orientalism practiced in communist Albania.

associated with an Ottoman legacy, and who were perceived to be Albanians no longer. Evidently, there is a connection between external and internal orientalism during the Albanian communist years, and Hoxha's stance borrowed from western European orientalism the process of othering the oriental, occupying empire, while rejecting western movement toward capitalism. Kadare is a product of this milieu, and his position regarding the Ottoman Empire is consistent with Enverism.

The 2003 edition of *The Siege* published by Onufri in Tirana, Albania, contained significant revisions from its former editions. This new edition was the basis for its new French translation, which is the version that David Bellos used for his translation of *The Siege* into English. The oldest edition of the novel that I will be working with is from a multi-volume anthology of Kadare published in 1981 by the Naim Frashëri publishing house in Tirana, Albania. The 2003 Albanian edition includes both omissions and additions. For our purposes here, I will focus on a few examples, emphasizing that there are other significant changes ripe for analysis. The novel is on a third person narrative that shifts its focus among different actors within the Ottoman camp. This narrative is often interrupted by what reads as a recovered chronicle from within the castle walls. This second narrative strand is written in the first person and it visually signals a separate narrative by use of italics for the whole section. There are many such inter-chapter interruptions, as we will see below, but the one between the first two chapters is important because of the post-1989 revisions. This inter-chapter section narrates negotiations between the Albanian leaders and representatives from the Ottoman army

prior to the siege. For our purposes here, I will include both passages in their entirety. Here is the 1981 passage:

> Everyone would be allowed to keep their own faith. Their only request was that we give them the keys to the castle, in order that from its highest peak they would remove the red and black flag with the black bird on it (that's what they call our double headed eagle), which, according to their reasoning, insults the sky, and instead, as Allah had ordained, they would raise the flag of Islam with its half moon. (Kadare, *Kështjella* 18, 1981)[50]

And here is the 2003, revised passage:

> The conditions were clear: they would not touch anyone, would allow us to leave the castle along with our weapons and go wherever we pleased. They only asked for the keys to the castle, in order to remove from its highest peak the flag with the black bird (that's what they called our eagle), which, according to their reasoning, did not fit well with the sky and, in its place they would raise the true daughter of the heavens: the half moon. This is what they have done everywhere lately: Their true intent for conquering is hidden behind a general idea. The religious issue was left for the end, assured that they would ultimately win. Pointing to the cross atop the castle, their leader said that as far as the torture device (that's what he called the sacred cross), if we wanted to

[50] "Secilit do t'i lejonin të mbante fenë që dëshironte. Kërkesa e tyre e vetme ishte t'u jepnim çelësat e kështjellës, në mënyrë që nga kulla e saj të hiqej flamuri me zogun e zi (kështu e quajnë ata shqiponjën tonë), që sipas tyre, fyen qiellin, dhe të ngrihej, ashtu siç e kishte urdhëruar allahu, flamuri me gjysmëhënë i Islamit." (Kadare, *Kështjella* 18, 1981)

> we could keep it, along with Christianity, of course. He added, that we would remove our religion ourselves later, for sure, because nobody could prefer Christian suffering compared to the peace of Islam. (Kadare, *Kështjella* 24, 2003)[51]

As we can observe from these passages, the 1981 version emphasizes that the Ottoman intent was to replace the eagle flag with the Islamic one. Such a replacement relies on the symbols in the flags themselves: the Albanian flag features the eagle and the Ottoman one the crescent moon of Islam. Thus, the 1981 passage sketches a difference between the two camps that does not religiously signify, at least not entirely. The eagle as a symbol of Albanian identity is under attack from the Ottoman army, and that eagle alone constitutes the identity of the people within the castle walls. The conflict appears to be more a national one rather than a religious one.

Conversely, the 2003 edition is heavily revised in order to include a second marker of difference: the cross and the Christian faith directly at odds with Ottoman Islam. In another section between chapters three and four, Kadare has added a passage that depicts the Albanians within the castle praying to "Christ the Lord and the

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[51] "Kushtet ishin te qarta: nuk do të preknin askënd, do të na lejonin të dilnim bashkë me armët dhe të iknim ku të donim. Kërkonim veç çelësat e kështjellës, në mënyrë që nga pirgu i saj të hiqej flamuri me shpendin e zi, (kështu e quanin ata shqiponjën tonë), që sipas tyre, nuk i shkonte qiellit dhe, në vend të tij të vihej bija e vërtetë e qiellnajës: gjysmë hëna. Kështu kanë bërë kohët e fundit kudo: qëllimin e vërtetë të pushtimit e kane fshehur pas një ideje të pëgjithshme. Çështjen e feë e kishin lënë për në fund, të sigurtë se me të do të fitonin. Duke treguar me dorë kombënoren, kryetari i tyre tha se sa për veglen e mundimeve, (kështu e quajti kryqin e shenjtë), po të donim mund ta mbanim, bashkë me fenë e krishterë, natyrisht. Ju atë do ta hiqni vetë më pas, me siguri, shtoi, sepse asnjë popull s'mund të parapëlqejë krusmën, përpara paqes islamike." (Kadare, *Kështjella* 24, 2003)

Madonna" (Kadare, *Kështjella* 66, 2003),[52] a section that does not figure in the 1981 edition. Not only does the Ottoman envoy demand the keys to the castle and the replacement of the eagle with the crescent moon, but he also requires the removal of the cross. The 2003 version ostensibly couples national identity – the eagle – with Christianity – the cross. The crescent moon is pitted against both, and therefore the eagle and the cross are inseparable. As symbols that represent ethnicity and religion, respectively, suturing ethnicity and religion in this manner establishes a national identity that is incomplete without religious belonging, and in so doing Kadare's text declares Christianity as the religion of Albanians. This is an essential rhetorical gesture for which Qosja criticizes Kadare's ideology and his revisions.

In addition, national identity as represented by the eagle is a given, even though the story of the siege is set during the fifteenth century Ottoman incursions into Southeastern European territories, a time when there were no nation-states, nor were there nascent nationalisms. The resistance Ottoman armies faced in Southeastern Europe was not a nationalist one; rather, the Ottomans were faced with various kingdoms and principalities that would collaborate in their military resistance against the occupying force of the empire. Therefore, Kadare's historiography in *The Siege* before and after its post-communist revisions is marked by an understanding of the historical past through a presentist lens. His texts depict the Ottoman Empire as occupying an already established nation state rather than a territory fractured into numerous principalities. In Kadare's text, the present grafts itself onto the distant historical past, shortening the temporal

[52] "Zotit Krisht e Zonjës Shën Mëri" (Kadare, *Kështjella* 66, 2003)

distance by way of a geo-political shortcut. The text assumes the burden of fleshing out history in order to explain the present moment of writing, and in so doing, Kadare's historical novels embody a quasi-mythical quality with enough historical references to lend them authority, but with even more narrative liberties that disregard the historical record. The latter are insignificant, however, in light of the successful revisionist tendencies the texts have in the Albanian imagination, and even outside of Albania. Kadare's depiction of the Ottoman occupation mirrors common narratives in Central-Eastern Europe about the Ottoman Empire, and as such, his texts are translatable and ideologically fluent for a western European audience.

Revisions are also present in the sections of the novel that depict the Ottoman camp. For instance, within the Ottoman army, soldiers of all ranks discuss the intricacies of the siege, its purpose, and ultimately the effect it will have on the people who will be conquered. Chapter three contains one such passage that has been considerably cut down in the 2003 edition. The passage concerns a conversation about the Christian women within the castle walls between Sadedin, the poet of the Ottoman army, and other soldiers in the camp. The 1981 version reads:

> We will remove the white, shameful clothes of their women and girls, and replace them with the black, noble, and blessed robe of our religion. We will cover their faces and their cunning eyes with black scarves, eyes, which, up until now have exchanged glances with men freely. We will make them forget the frenzy of love and make it so that they will marry men according to the sacred sharia laws. We will also lower their rebel

> heads under man's authority, just like our sacred Koran dictates. So, by separating them from their barbarous customs and by giving generously our majestic customs and morals, we will turn these women into honorable and virtuous ones and we will save their devilish souls. We will pour our blood in order for the light of Islam to shine into these wolf lairs. (Kadare, *Kështjella* 50, 1981)[53]

This passage is shortened considerably in the 2003 edition where Kadare omits the part of the passage that speaks about sharia law and the social transformations the veiling of Albanian women will bring about. The reasons for the omission are not clear, aside from Kadare cleaning up his prose and avoiding linguistic flourish.

More importantly, the passage is fractured by a movement between Sadedin's declarations and Tuz Okçan's – a janissary – thoughts about what he is hearing. The portions of the passage that are omitted are the ones that speak of sharia law and the Koran. Most importantly, however, is the fracturing of Sadedin's words in the 2003 edition. Whereas in the 1981 edition Tuz Okçan remains a silent listener who admires the oratory of the poet, in the 2003 edition, the reader can read his thoughts, which are disturbed by Sadedin's declarations. Often, Sadedin's descriptions of the shamelessness

[53] "Grave dhe vajzave tëtyre do t'iu heqim veshjet e bardha e të paturpshme dhe do t'u veshim rrobën e zezë e fisnike, të bekuar nga feja. Ne do d'ua mbulojmë me perç të zezë fytyrat dhe sytë e tyre dinakë, me të cilat ato, gjer tani, shikohen lirisht me meshkujt. Ne do të bëjmë që ato të harrojnë tërbimin e dashurisë dhe të martohen me meshkujt sipas ligjeve të shenjta të sheriatit. Ne do të bëjmë që ato të ulin kokat e tyre rebele nën pushtetin e burrit, ashtu siç thotë Kurani i shenjtë. Kështu, duke i ndarë nga zakonet e tyre barbare dhe duke u dhënë me bujari moralin dhe zakonet tona madhështore, ne do t'i bëjmë ato të ndershme e të virtytshme dhe do ti shpëtojëë shpirtrat e tyre të xhindosura. Ne do të derdhim gjakun tone që rita e Islamit të depërtojë gjer në këto strofka ujqish." (Kadare, *Kështjella* 50, 1981)

of the Christian women brought Tuz Okçan into a "burning lust,"[54] leading him to conclude that lust arose as a result of war (Kadare, *Kështjella* 61, 2003). Tuz Okçan's desire to weep upon hearing Sadedin's descriptions, however, is most curious, because while his sadness is prompted by lust, it also hints at something else. Tuz Okçan had never been privy to such open conversation about women and sexuality before in his life, and as he listens to Sadedin, he cannot understand why he wanted to weep (62). He cannot stop thinking about the women and their "black swallow" (62) between the legs. There are two ways we can understand Tuz Okçan's reaction: first, he is weeping for his loss of innocence as his lust arises in the heat of war; and second, he wants to mourn the Christian women's loss of freedom as a result of the occupation, which would imply that within the Ottoman camp itself there are those, like the janissary, who feel the oppression of Islam, but who are unable to resist the authority of their faith. Upon seeing his faith's potential to deprive conquered people their freedom, Tuz Okçan wants to weep without understanding why.

The 2003 edition, then, fractures the authority of Sadedin's proclamations by inserting doubt as dissent through Tuz Okçan's desire to weep. Unlike in the 1981 edition where the power of Sadedin's words was consolidated, the fracturing of his words in the 2003 edition is a signal flare to the post-1989 and post-9/11 reader on the inherent precariousness and weakness of Sadedin's ideology, since his interlocutor, an Ottoman janissary himself, cannot support and justify it, but can only listen at it with profound and unnamable sadness. Tuz Okçan's sadness at the prospect of veiling the

[54] "ashk aq djegës"

Albanian, Christian women disavows Ottoman Islam and thus dismantles its authority from within. Further, such dissent accentuates the religious difference between the Ottomans and Albanians, which is a central project of Kadare's literary and non-literary production.

In another passage of the 1981 edition that does not figure in the 2003 edition, the narrator relays the dialogue between Mevla Çelebi, the chronicler of the Ottoman army, and the Quartermaster General. In it, the Quartermaster, much too didactically, instructs Çelebi on the nature of war and the strategies of the Porte. He unveils to Çelebi that the Albanians have gotten in the way of the Empire's path toward conquering Europe and that they are the worst obstacle (Kadare, *Kështjella* 114, 1981). This passage is somewhat self-congratulatory and heavily nationalist, which is a position that aligned with communist narratives of the Ottoman Empire. It is omitted from the 2003 edition and replaced with lengthier passages that are more nuanced in their treatment of resistance against occupation. One of the most important additions to the 2003 edition is a section in the "chapter in the middle," which is chapter seven in the 1981 edition. As the Quartermaster explains how wars are waged and won he states: "One cannot declare a nation conquered unless one conquers its sky…because people place their most treasured possessions in the sky: their gods, their faith…We will conquer one day all their castles…But this is not all. At the end all castles are a collection of stones that they can take back again" (Kadare, *Kështjella* 140, 2003). *The Siege*'s 2003 edition deals more explicitly with religious conversion, which is allegedly the central project of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the 1981 passage above that claims Albanian centrality in the

conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Europe as forces pitted against each other where religion is not cited as the main factor, the 2003 revision makes religious difference central.

Kadare's post-1989 revision makes religious conquest and conversion a central aim of the Ottoman camp. Such a passage serves several purposes simultaneously. First, the narrative constructs Albania and the Albanians as already existing as a homogeneous national entity in a pre-nation state time in world history. What's more, its Christian character that is at direct odds with the Ottoman Empire's religion as constructed in the text, consolidates Albanian identity further. Telescoping religious opposition into the present, Kadare's text discursively resists Ottoman legacy in Albania. By emphasizing the narrative of religious conquest, Kadare's text ostensibly emphasizes the inherent difference between the Albanians within the castle and the Ottoman force. *The Siege* disregards historical records of volitional and semi-volitional Albanian conversion into Islam during Ottoman rule. Many of the conversions were economically motivated since converted individuals often were rewarded with land possessions. Another incentive for conversion into Islam among ethnic Albanians was the recruitment of janissaries. If a family converted to Islam, the Ottoman officials would not collect their male children to take to Istanbul to train for the Ottoman army. In fact, this latter practice is often used as justification for those who disavow the Ottoman Empire in order to explain the mass Albanian conversion into Islam.

Albanian intellectuals who share Kadare's disavowal of the Ottoman past, use the aforementioned conversion narrative to explain away the high number of Albanian

Muslims in Albania today, claiming that the conversions were enacted because of necessity and not because of religious conviction. The Quartermaster's claim that in order to conquer a people the empire must conquer their sky serves as a rallying cry for anti-Ottomanists who can point at Albania's existence as an independent nation state, and encourage embracing pre-Ottoman, Christian roots as a way to claim back the sky and revise the historical misfortune of Ottoman conquest.

It is clear, therefore, that Kadare's project in his post-1989 revisions supports a narrative of Christian origins, which aligns Albanian identity with western values and yokes the Albanian flag and the cross as symbols whose relationship and value preceded Albanian independence. Especially in light of the debate with Rexhep Qosja, these revisions are important, because they reflect much of Kadare's non-literary activity. When he states that Albanians' identity is ultimately a European one, he does so in the totality of his writing. Therefore, there is a unity of thought in Kadare's literary and extraliterary works the effects of which speak directly to a post-1989 and a post-9/11 moment. However, there is nuance in *The Siege*, which adheres to an overall orientalist stance, but which also depicts the Pasha, the military leader of the Ottoman army with much empathy. In fact, much of the novel is focalized through this tortured but also ruthless military leader. There is a melancholy that surrounds Pasha's expedition; whether it is the melancholy of the waning Ottoman Empire personified, or whether it is the melancholy of the knowledge of his coming death should he fail in his military excursion, or both, this is not clear. Regardless, Kadare narrative often obsessively

follows the Padishah as he plans his conquest, but also humanizes him through his struggles.

In the post-communist developments, the writer is free to emphasize religious belonging that might have been suppressed by the censors, but this belonging is doubly coded. On the one hand Kadare's revisions depict the effects of censorship on literary production, and on the other, they also communicate ideological fluency on the part of the writer who is aware of his country's position in world history. Additionally, writers like Kadare and Qosja are public intellectuals whose opinions on matters of national concern can sway the public's opinion; therefore, their stance in relation to the Ottoman Empire, its legacy in Albania and Kosovo, and Albanian religious identity, are decisive. The novels themselves, as cultural objects representative of Albania's linguistic and literary tradition, morph into objects of signification for external actors looking at Albania. As an author whose name has been repeatedly advocated as a contender for the Nobel Prize in Literature, Kadare's aims extend beyond literary intent. His novels become historiographic legacies that largely seek to change public perception of his small nation.

Kadare's project has been to give voice to an Albania that is lost to history, and he views his novels as an ideal place to recuperate and own the untold story of pre-Ottoman conquest. One of the most striking passages in *The Siege* is the description of the Ottoman army in one of the inter-chapter sections:

> Many of us were reminded of the tales of our ancestors about ogres, multi-headed dragons, witches with many faces, and about the scary,

> multiple and single horned men. All those mystical creatures seemed represented in this witch army that sometimes smiles and sometimes vomits smoke, and then darkens silently. One cannot trust its noise. Even more, one cannot trust its silence. (Kadare, *Kështjella* 110, 2003)[55]

For Kadare, the arrival of the Ottoman Empire marked a long historical halting and interruption of Albania's progress toward Europe. The passage above depicts the Ottoman army as a "horde," a "wizard army," not trustworthy, barbarous and dark, and a force of destruction, ready to swallow. Critics have rightly criticized passages like this one as a failure on Kadare's part to consider the complexities of Islam in Southeastern Europe, and the complex ways in which the Ottoman Empire left a legible mark in the region. However, I will, temporarily, shift the focus of the discussion from the Albanian chronicler to some central characters within the Ottoman army, who echo present concerns with fictive historiography and the narrative of history. These characters are the chronicler, Mevla Çelebi, and Sadedin, the army poet. Çelebi is a new chronicler who is sent along with the army to document the glorious conquering of the Albanian fortress as the Ottoman Empire seeks to extend its westward border. He is overwhelmed by his responsibility, especially as Turgut Pasha exclaims:

> Believe me…I've taken part in many sieges, but this, he waved towards the castle, is where the most fearful carnage of our times will take place. And you surely know as well as I do that great massacres

[55] "Shumëkush u kujtua për rrëfimet e të pareve tanë, peer bajloza, kulshedra shumëkrerëshe e shlliga me shumë fytyra, për brijanacin apo brivetmin e frikshëm. Të gjithat ato nuk ishin fort larg kësaj ushtrije-shtrigë që aty qesh e qan vjell tym, e aty nxin e hesht. S'mund t'u besosh zhurmave që nxjerr. E aq më pak heshtimit të saj." (Kadare, *Kështjella* 110, 2003)

> always give birth to great books…You really do have an opportunity to write a thundering chronicle redolent with pitch and blood, and it will be utterly different from the graceful whines composed at the fireside by squealers who never went to war. (Kadare, *Siege* 27, 2009)

Turgut Pasha's proclamations emphasize the centrality of the peripheral war in which the Ottoman Empire is engaged. In fact, if we keep in our sights the centrality of the present in Kadare's text, and especially the new, revised edition, the "fearful carnage of our times" alluded to in Pasha's words drips with recognition in a post-9/11 moment. The two forces pitted against each other belong to Abrahamic religions, yes, but their opposition is undeniable. Carnage will be the result as well as glorious books. Çelebi is charged with narrating the Sultan's war; he will be a first-hand witness to the glory of the Empire since every empire needs a good narrative of victory. His work is prescribed. His duties are clear, but as he witnesses the great carnage, he begins to doubt the glory of conquest. He observes the various defeats during the siege, the countless lives lost, the horror of death in a faraway land, and the unwieldy power of the army.

Çelebi finds it exceedingly difficult to glorify the war; he is, after all, a chronicler charged with narrating history, but it is a history that bewilders him. For instance, upon a failed Ottoman attack on the castle walls Çelebi wonders how "to find an image that would properly translate the sign of" the burning Ottoman soldiers (78). Interestingly, Çelebi understands historical narrative as an act of translation of images into words. The image he wrestles with most is that of a moth, but "'a moth' hardly seemed adequate to suggest the ardor and heroism of these fighters" (78). Eventually, he is satisfied with the

image of the moth when he "likens the fires of a holy war to the candle of Islam" as former chroniclers had done before him (78). He decides to call the dying soldiers "the moths of the Sacred Candle" (79), but only after he has contextualized their efforts within the ideology of holy war, and only after he has contextualized himself as a subject of history writing in the long tradition of past chroniclers. Hence, Çelebi's work is only possible relationally: his narrative can signify only in relation to past chronicles and to the religious logic of the Sultan's war.

Additionally, Çelebi is faced with counter-narratives of official Ottoman history when he speaks to the Quartermaster General, a specialist in alternative histories. During their conversation, the two men revisit Ottoman Empire's past by discussing the events that led to the Sultan's death during the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. In the official story, the Sultan died in battle, and the Quartermaster's unofficial story contests this by arguing that his sons murdered the Sultan in the chaos of battle. The encounter between the two establishes a duality in Çelebi's understanding of historical narrative altogether. So much is Çelebi affected by the Quartermaster's unofficial story that on the night when Skanderbeg, the leader of the Albanian rebellion attacks the Ottoman camp, Çelebi begins to reconstruct the historical narrative of Sultan Murat's death into cantos and counter-cantos, with a total of four. The first canto reiterates the story of Sultan Murad's death according to the official story, whereas the first counter-canto speaks of his murder like the Quartermaster speculated (241-3). As Çelebi hides from the Albanian rebels and as he revisits the official history of Sultan Murat, he constructs a counter-narrative for each part of the official story, which is quite significant given his role as the narrator of

Ottoman history. His doubt of history also casts doubt on his own function as a chronicler. While this self-doubt is used to great dramatic effect in the novel, it also functions as a counter-argument to Albania's official history, perhaps arguing that the novel itself, along with its resistance to the Ottoman legacy is a counter-canto, and a product of manipulation of historical facts and their analysis. While he is charged by the Pasha to write a great book, Çelebi emerges as a failed historiographer because his narrative is torn between cantos and counter-cantos. His chronicle can never be completed, nor can it be consolidated and authoritative, which determines the ways in which Ottoman history/legacy is under cut.

Çelebi's function in the Ottoman camp is contrasted with Sadedin who fulfills Çelebi's role better. The writing of history with which Çelebi is charged requires a blind loyalty to the Porte, and a blind trust in the effectiveness of conquest itself. Çelebi lacks both. On the other hand, Sadedin is astute in observing that once conquered the ruled will change their customs "bit by bit with the passing years…their traditions will wilt and fall like apple blossom" (60). Çelebi admires Sadedin's ability to narrate, taking liberties with his stylistic choices, because truths about war and conquest are still able to shine through the verses. Upon a drunken tour of the camp prior to the fighting, Sadedin describes his occupation thus: "I want to inflame our soldiers…On the one had there are poets who lisp tearful doggerel about pretty birds and paradise. On the other hand, I am a poet who seeks only to serve the great Padishah. my heaven is the hell of war" (58). Sadedin's work is starkly different than Çelebi's and yet, the latter envies the poet, because while a glorious chronicle of war should inflame soldiers into desiring to fight

to the death for the Padishah, Çelebi is unable to inflame, and his chronicle lacks the inspiration Sadedin spreads among the troops. Their fates, however, are quite different. While Çelebi hides during Skanderbeg's attack, Sadedin joins the very first attack on the castle walls and loses his sight as a result (96). Blindness does not stop Sadedin, however, and his words remain as powerful as ever in inspiring the soldiers listening to him. In fact, Sadedin's literal blindness mirrors his ideological blindness as well. In order for the poet to inspire passion and terror, he must be blind to the carnage and the existence of alternative histories. The poet, much like the chronicler must trust the narrative of history and must be blind to the destructive nature of the power of the Empire. Sadedin is transformed into a chronicler-poet only when his ideological blindness is matched by a physical blindness. His character embodies the fictive nature of the narrative of history and the historical reality that always dwells in fictional narratives. He passionately says:

> I hear the feet of military men! We advance at night. Nothing can stand in the way of night with the crescent moon in its middle. The barren earth trembles beneath our boots…Turkish blood will wet the dust of three continents…It is written that our blood should course through our soldiers' veins no more, but should spring from their wounds until the earth is drenched with it. (194)

The poet, then, is able to sing the glories of war because he believes in its justice. He does not regret his blindness; in fact, in a later passage, after another failed attempt at

taking the citadel, Sadedin claims that if he still had sight he would blind himself so as not to witness the shame of defeat (282).

The contrast between Sadedin and Çelebi is crucial in setting up a tension on the nature of narrative itself. It accentuates the difference between history as event(s) and history as narrative, along with the role that its narrators have in shaping it. Sadedin can sing the praises of battle because he believes in it, and it is precisely his conviction that justifies embellishments and flourishes. Çelebi lacks this conviction. The ever-torn chronicler of Turgut Pasha's army doubts and falters as he struggles with the story he is supposed to tell. His writing instrument fails to record, because he is not a poet and his narrative cannot embellish in order to inflame. Çelebi seeks to maintain a sense of reality in his narrative even if it is through constructing relationships between the images he sees and events of the past. Ultimately, his vision of history as comprised of cantos and counter-cantos speaks first to the instability of historical narrative itself, and to its poetic nature as well, which lends itself to embellishments, flourishes, and divergent interpretations.

The inter-chapter sections of the Albanian chronicle, on the other hand, are more authoritative and less fractured. The Albanian chronicler within the castle can and does narrate history as he witnesses it from the citadel. He has left behind short passages that take very little narrative space in the novel, but which are effective in representing the view from atop the castle ramparts. These inter-chapter sections function like counter-cantos in Çelebi's understanding of history, and they wedge themselves inside a consolidated narrative of the Ottoman conquest. These wedges destabilize and fracture

the third person narrative of the Ottoman army, and in so doing they complicate the reading of the novel itself. *The Siege* is not only a story of the Ottoman army conquering Southeastern Europe, but it is a story of Southeastern European resistance as well. The figure of the Albanian chronicler is the small, feeble voice of resistance in the story. He has no name and can only be heard because of the material trace of a manuscript parts of which the reader is privy to. He observes the Ottoman camp and reports the dilemmas and questions the besieged struggle with within the walls. He reports on the leaders' decision: "Our answer was short and firm: neither the eagle nor the cross would ever be removed from our firmament; they were the symbols and the fate we had elected, and we would remain faithful to them" (20). The point of view of the Albanian chronicler is the first-person plural "we," a collective consciousness acting in unison, which is very different from the heterogeneous Ottoman camp, where the narrative is focalized on the Pasha, Çelebi, Sadedin, the Quartermaster, etc. The Albanian chronicler also betrays orientalist attitudes when he states: "What we saw spread out beneath us was Asia in all its mysticism and barbarity, a dark grave ready to swallow us all" (63). Perhaps, passages such as these display the true nature of the counter-canto from the castle walls: it is the present that is at stake, and this present is the counter-narrative that resists the Ottoman legacy in a latent fashion. The collective "we" is also a clear demarcation of difference between them, and us where "them" are clearly other, clearly foreign, clearly not Christian, and clearly invaders encroaching upon what the novel marks as Albanian territory. The Ottoman forces, too, have an other, the foreigners locked up in their high castle, and the Christians whose religion stands in opposition to that of the Porte.

In the final pages of the Albanian chronicle, as the chronicler reports on the Ottoman army's retreat, the reader is aware of a closure that insists on being unfinished: "Somewhere in the heart of the Turkish camp the drums that speak of rain are beating. From up here we can see soldiers wrapping equipment in oilskins…O heavens! Do not let up too soon! I hear myself praying" (315). It is this last shift on the "I" that is curious. The chronicler has finally been able to unyoke himself from the collective history. Such uncoupling signals a recognition of the subjective individual that wields the pen, perhaps suggesting that the author, too knows that there is a subjective consciousness that underlines his text; that in the process of composing an a narrative that does not claim to be history, there is a recognition of being complicit in a retelling, a repositioning, an embellishment that responds to external social pressures. It is a wink in the text that unveils its existence at the very end. It is an existence that has been hinted at through Çelebi's self-doubt about his work and the narrative he ought to tell, but an existence that does not materialize until the very end.

Second, this "I" is unstable, because while it identifies the Albanian chronicler, the reader cannot help but identify with the "I" and it is the very instability of the pronoun that prompts the reader to see how the identity the pronoun is trying to describe resists, much like the narrative itself, being owned by an intruding reader. Thus, we have a formal and stylistic voice that mirrors the content of the text as a quasi-postcolonial text. At the same time, while the Albanians within the castle walls are the victims, not the aggressors, there is room to deconstruct the subject position that the Albanian chronicler inhabits. To the extent that his words are being used in the present as national

propaganda that alienates those segments of the population who identify with the Ottoman legacy, it is also pernicious. Çelebi's counter-cantos question the stability of the Ottoman position, exposing the will to power of the Ottomans, and the naïve nationalism of the official chronicler who experiences crisis from hearing an alternative point of view. The story's center is resistance, but it is a resistance that is activated on two different temporalities. The first temporality is that of the chronicler with which the reader identifies, and rightly so. The second temporality is the contemporary one that expresses a latent postcolonial resistance that is also Islamophobic. The difficulty lies in the instability between these two temporalities as they shift in and out of the narrative's center. And perhaps, this is why the novel is so compelling, because it demands that readers shift between temporalities, loyalties, and sympathies, and it is only in the chaos of such slippages that we can understand the complexity and nuance of Albania and Southeastern Europe.

Re-conceptualizing the Ottoman Empire as a pernicious colonial force allows us to theoretically intervene in postcolonial theory for a much-needed heterogeneization of the field, but also allows for alternative readings of Ottoman fiction texts that resurrect these novels for new audiences and new contexts. Postcolonial analysis of texts such as *The Siege* make it possible to consider power relations between different actors, despite the geographical or temporal configurations, and they aid in empire studies that are not solely centered on a Western perspective.

In the afterward to Kadare's *The Siege*, David Bellos, the translator of the novel from French of Yusuf Vrioni writes that the text was "partly rewritten for [a definitive

selected works] publication…[and] many references to Christian beliefs of the Albanians, cut by the censors in 1969, were restored" along with the removal of "some politically motivated passages" (Bellos 326). Bellos foregoes an examination of the social life of the discourse that informs such revisionist decisions, although he writes: "this exotic tale… from an obscure Balkan tongue [deals] with [a] far-off and largely forgotten past, [and] echoes on every page with the clashes and issues that burden us today" (328). Readers can surmise that the clashes that burden an English-speaking audience today have largely to do with a post-9/11 world that has accentuated the conflict between Islam and Christianity. In other words, we must look at the novel for its formal qualities but also for its ideological approach. In "Discourse on the Novel," M. M. Bakhtin writes that the novel has a "social tone" and a "social life," which, in Kadare's case, is clearly rooted in a desire for Albania to be included in the European Union. The "social life of discourse" is located outside "the artist's study," and it is "discourse in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities and villages, of social groups, generations and epochs" (259). We can extend Bhaktin's assertions to Kadare's case whose novels enjoy a social life in his non-literary writing, in his intellectual debates with other important figures like Qosja, and in even in his post-1989 revisions. Thus, in examining Kadare's Ottoman fiction, we ought to account for the kinds of socio-political discourses that pressure and shape the text and its formal elements. His post-1989 revisions are laden with oriental attitudes about the Ottoman Empire, but they also highlight the telescopic effect of imperial conquest, where the past is recursively visiting and shaping the present.

It is not surprising, then, to witness Pope Francis' reception among Albanians, a majority of whom desire to join the EU, which inadvertently affects religious identification and motivates an active Ottoman disavowal. Speaking on the novel's reflection of history into the present, Bellos writes that "Kadare's chronicle of ancient battle is not a historical novel...it is an anti-historical one" (328). The phrase "anti-historical" is curious, and I argue that it has the equivalent force of 'counternarrative,' where the fictive historiography in Kadare's texts does not claim to be historical, but it operates "in the vicinity of political problems" (de Certeau, *Writing* 8). *The Siege* as fictive historiography does not operate "in the place where political power is exercised" (8), but it is close enough to political power to assume a quasi-authoritative status. Speaking on the nature of historiography more broadly de Certeau writes: "the past is the fiction of the present. The same holds true for all veritable historiographical labors. The explication of the past endlessly marks distinctions between the analytical apparatus, which is present, and the materials analyzed, the documents concerning curiosities about the dead" (10). His analysis is productive in the context of Kadare's post-1989 revisions, because what readers witness in the corrected texts is characterized by the gap between analytical tools of the present that are forged in a post-9/11 moment, and the blurry history of Ottoman Empire, which only in the last few decades has become a broader field of inquiry among scholars in the humanities. Of course, *The Siege* does not claim to be a historical document and it is an imagined account of what might have happened, but we must not see it uncritically as ahistorical, because the kind of historiography it writes is affected by social realities and factors external to the text that shape it. The

novel builds the past as a "reconstruction of societies and human beings engaged in the network of human realities of today" (11). As much as orientalist and postcolonial critiques may not have been in the writer's scopic vision of Albania's reality, the presence of these critical tools demands from us as scholars to deploy them as in the present case, so that what is unearthed can close the gap between today's critical tools and yesterday's documented past.

CHAPTER V

HISTORY AND MEMORY IN POST-1989 SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN CINEMA

Professor: We noticed it one night, when we were just fooling around. We noticed a village, our cannon was staring at it. It was still in flames. And every night afterwards at the same time, villages were ablaze on the horizon. We were surrounded by a great circle of strange celebrations going on in all those places burning in front of us. And the flames just rose up and licked the clouds.
Velja: Pretty villages are pretty when they burn. Ugly ones stay ugly even when they burn.
Professor: We set a place on fire and don't even know its name. We're killing each other for a fistful of ashes.

--*Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*

Reading through numerous travel narratives about Southeastern Europe: Rebecca West's *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon* (1941), Edith Durham's *High Albania* (1909) and *The Burden of the Balkans* (1905), and Robert Carver's *The Accursed Mountains* (1998), to mention only a few, reveals the fascination and even fear the region engendered in western European imaginary.[56] Southeastern Europe's existence behind the iron curtain doubled its obscurity and backwardness, and narratives about the region are marked by an ambivalence that betrays western European discomfort with the other Europe. I discussed many of these discomforts in chapter one, but a more recent travel narrative emerged in the aftermath of the breakup of Yugoslavia: Robert D. Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, initially published in 1993. A widely acclaimed

[56] Although discussed more at length in Chapter 1, there is a long history of travel narratives about Southeastern Europe written from western travellers into the region. As referenced in that chapter, for more on Eastern European travel narratives and travelogues see Andrew Hammond's *The Debated Lands*.

book, *Balkan Ghosts* does not veer away from established representations of Southeastern Europe as a land of violence and backwardness. Kaplan defines the region as "the chaos at the beginning of time;" (4) choked by "ethnic hatred;" (15) and "full of savage hatreds, leavened by poverty and alcoholism" (22). Kaplan's book grips the reader in its prose and stories, but if viewed critically, the text becomes an echo of pre-determined notions of Southeastern Europe, which over-determine its narrative even after the Cold War. Kaplan's story is characterized by an ideology that seeks to construct a racialized other through negative stereotyping of the area (Hammond, "Danger" 143). The text represents a flattening of a diverse region. Furthermore, upon scanning western critical responses to *Balkan Ghosts*, we can deduce that the text was a crucial tool that translated the Southeastern Europe of the 1990s wars for western audiences.

The Washington Post Book World claimed that the text was "important." The *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote that Kaplan's book was a "timely field guide to the ethnic and religious passions of 'Europe's forgotten rear door.'" *The New York Times Book Review* asserted that "Mr. Kaplan spare[d] no individual and no nation."[57] Indeed he did not, and more importantly his representation of the wars relied heavily upon stereotypes about Southeastern Europe that have their origin in the Enlightenment when the Ottoman Empire held control of most of the territory.[58] The Ottoman legacy looms large in the west's imaginary about the region, but what is most problematic is its replication in more contemporary texts like Kaplan's. The stereotypes present in Kaplan's travelogue

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[57] These are excerpts of reviews included in the front mater page preceding the title page of Kaplan's book, 2008 edition.

[58] See Larry Wolff's *Inventing Eastern Europe* – Wolff's study is more extensively discussed in chapter one, pp. 60.

become informative historical observations that determine western audiences' attitudes toward Southeastern Europe and its culture, including literature and film. In the post-1989 moment these attitudes are crucial, particularly in connection to foreign aid and security assistance, and especially when we recall the large wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe crossing western European borders. Contemporary western xenophobia and protectionism have their roots in the representational power of texts like Kaplan's, which themselves have their historical roots in the rise of the nation-state.

The post-1989 years are important in mapping western discomfort and much has been written about this topic already. However, there is a lack of discussion of the post-socialist years and how the period enabled Southeastern European nations to speak back through cinematic narratives, and to venture into their own voyages of self-representation, thereby reconfiguring the coordinates of Southeastern Europe neither as the backyard of Europe, nor as a bridge with purely utilitarian function, but as identities that exist independently from western Europe, and which, in fact, have much to correct and narrate about self and self in relation to East and West. The rise in cinematic collaboration between Southeastern European and western European nations is encouraging and may suggest an erasure of differences and an exercise in post-nationalist posturing. These collaborations are praised for their inclusivity and acceptance; however, while these transnational productions reveal a desire to create conversation zones between nations, they can be co-opted by a multiculturalist discourse that has roots in a neoliberal agenda to erase difference in order to re-assert already existing hierarchies of power, recasting old structures in new molds that are endorsed

and supported by ideologies of domination, which often re-inscribe western Europe as central. Cinema has become a frontier of international collaboration and distribution and an important site of investigating the representational power of narratives. Therefore, while international collaboration signals a blurring of borders and erasure of differences, critics of Southeastern European film also insist on a location-specific reading of narratives, which avoids the perpetuation of Southeastern European stereotypes.

World Cinema is a "high-profile cultural industry, transferring images and their makers across borders and technological platforms" (Nagib xvii). Transnational cinema scholars, too, begin with an examination of porous borders, but they do not argue for a complete erasure of borders. Transnational discourse maintains that the nation-state is a persistent actor of transnational film production, but the nation-state is not central. In addition, the theory seeks to describe "relations of unevenness and mobility" between the national and the global (Durovičová 127). Durovičová argues that it is precisely such openness of transnational theory, which "gives this key term its dynamic force, and its utility" (139). In other words, transnational cinema is neither global, which is "bound up with the philosophical category of totality," nor is it international, which is a category "predicated on political systems in a latent relationship of parity" (127). Transnational theory of cinema acknowledges the scale between the local and the global, the tensions within this scale, and the way in which cinematic narratives are rooted in specific socio-historical contexts. All these attributes allow Southeastern European directors to distribute their regional films to transnational audiences.

Additionally, transnational theory elevates discussions of World Cinema by requiring the local-global scale to remain fluid, and where World Cinema is not merely a curated mosaic of national cinemas. The transnational approach is the most fitting for Southeastern European cinema of the post-1989 period, not only because the local film industries rely on international collaborations, but because, given the region's shared historical experiences, it is difficult to speak of a strictly national cinema. Thematically, Southeastern European cinema is transnational.

As will become evident in the discussion of a few selected films later in the chapter, foreign funding and production has been the only way for Southeastern European filmmakers to produce stories that are attended by audiences extending beyond the national. As government structures disintegrated throughout Eastern Europe, so did state funding and "East European film professionals had to learn to secure production funds, distribution networks, and audience favors on their own" (Imre, *East* 1). Transnational production of Southeastern European film enjoyed a re-birth in the post-1989 period and throughout the 1990s because of the continued conflicts in the area. Southeastern European filmmakers and international producers collaborated to bring to the big screen stories of a war-torn region, stories of friends and families torn apart from the carnage, and at times, narratives that over-emphasized the division and violence experienced during those turbulent times. As is to be expected, films from crisis areas garner much interest in the international film festivals, serving as immediate historical record, and dramatizing human stories caught in the conflict. It is no wonder, then, that films from crisis areas receive international attention because they shape and respond to

attitudes about the events they depict, and the case of post-1989 Southeastern European film is no exception. Films like *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (1996)*, No Man's Land* (2001)*, Witnesses* (2003)*, Before the Rain* (1994)*,* and *East West East* (2008)[59] are testimony to the cinema's transnational character textually and in terms of production and distribution. These films – save for the last two – center on the tumultuous post-1989 moment during the ensuing conflicts between Serbia and Bosnia and Serbia and Croatia. And while *Before the Rain* takes place in a Macedonian village during the Bosnian war, *East West East* is an exception in that it deals more broadly with the question of post-1989 Eastern European immigration into western Europe.

Given the urgency of Southeastern European conflicts of the 1990s, these films are widely circulated and have received much critical praise. *East West East* is an exception*,* because while the film received critical praise, it suffered limited distribution. This is not by chance: it is the only film of the cluster that does not narrate events of war in Southeastern Europe. *East West East* attempts to discursively recast Southeastern Europe not as a region of suffering from which characters escape, but as the object of rekindled desire for displaced national subjects. The film defies narrative expectations because it advocates for return and depicts fully aware Southeastern European subjects.

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[59] There are other films of note that are not discussed in this chapter because of space constraints. Corneliu Porumboiu's *12:08 East of Bucharest* (2006) and *Police, adjective* (2009) are two essential Romanian films that deal with a post-communist Romania, and also treat history and memory as contentious spaces. Emir Kusturica's *Underground* (1995) is one of the most written about Southeastern European films, which narrates the history of Yugoslavia starting from WWII. Theo Angelopoulos' *Ulysses Gaze* (1995), too, engages with the historical memory of the region as the protagonist embarks upon an Odyssey-like quest to recover old film reels that represent the first philosophical 'gaze' into the region. Much like *Underground*, *Ulysses' Gaze* has received considerable international attention.

The characters in *East West East* experience neither guilt nor shame for their national belonging, but more on this later. While the stories the selected films narrate are rooted in a specific, post-1989 historical context, they are also rooted in deep history, as will be made evident in the following discussion. That history, of course, is connected to the Ottoman legacy in the region; the films ostensibly betray their discomfort with the Ottoman legacy, which is represented through various ethnic conflicts that are tethered to religious identity.

Before moving on to discussing the post-1989 cinema of Southeastern Europe, I want to emphasize the theoretical viewpoint in which the analysis that follows is rooted. As stated earlier in the chapter, collaborative filmmaking in Southeastern Europe tends to categorize the cinema of the region as one that is transnational and therefore diverse. While a valid assessment, this argument also does not fully probe the formal analyses of production and distribution. Southeastern European films may be a collaboration between west and east filmmakers, but they are also representations that contain two purposes simultaneously: first, they are invested "in the twin ideas of good, liberatory nationalism and the moral integrity of the East European auteur" (Imre, *East* xii); and second, they seek to propagate a neoliberal western European agenda of inclusivity and multiculturalism. Unless transnational analyses are checked by postcolonial tools of decentralizing power and giving voice to the margins, we cannot have a "principled" transnational theory (Hjort 13), and transnational cinema will become yet another tool of multiculturalism – a concept that silences the margins by assimilating them into a

politics of inclusion – which does not allow for a self-presentation of the margins, by the margins, and for the margins.

Hence, in the analyses that follow, from postcolonial theory I will borrow the postcolonial critique of the presumed western objectivity; second, I suggest that the transnational needs to engage and understand the forms of representation in the western imagination, especially with regard to Southeastern Europe; and the third loan from postcolonial theory is the deconstructive mode of textual – and here film – analysis, i.e. an attempt to dismantle the representational structures from within Southeastern Europe rather than from a western vantage point.

Thus, the discussion below is lodged between a transnational approach to film criticism and a postcolonial critique of the ways in which transnationalism can constitute everything that is a collaboration in the filmic process, thereby rendering the term transnational transparent and void of any substantial contribution to film criticism. In addition, the films analyzed here interact because of a shared quasi-colonial history between the Southeastern European nations, the context of which has been previously discussed in this dissertation. Given the history of Ottoman conquest and the way it positioned Southeastern Europe in relation to western Europe, the rise of Soviet influence over the region, and the role western representations of Eastern Europe had on Southeastern European self-image, a principled analysis of these films allows for a revision of identity coordinates, and such remapping may also be extended to other local experiences, being careful to account for specificities within local histories. This process is marked first by the amplification of local detail, second, by the blurring of specific

localities in order to develop a general theory, and third, by a subsequent rediscovery of new localities through a slow focus, which is itself filtered through crucial historical components.

There have been a number of texts dedicated to Eastern European cinema in the post-1989 period, and among these, Dina Iordanova, Anikó Imre, and Ewa Mazierska have produced studies that engage with many of the questions on which this project is focused. Iordanova centers her study on the ways in which Southeastern European cinema serves as a register of "the dynamic interplay of perceptions and self-perceptions," and "to show why the continuity and the direction of cinematic mediation is of crucial importance" (5). Southeastern Europe, according to Iordanova, is more than just a geographical position; rather, it is a cultural identity "widely defined by shared Byzantine, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian legacies" (6). Iordanova argues that these imperial legacies position Southeastern Europe in the margins of Europe, and for this she relies on the theoretical work of Larry Wolff and Maria Todorova – both critics discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation. Ultimately, her study focuses on representation and image construction. Since Southeastern European films are realized through international co-funding and co-production, they are distributed and viewed only if they represent Southeastern Europe in the image that is already-constructed for the region in the western imaginary: that of the imbalanced and violent Southeastern European subject. "So much death and destruction hast been filmed," Iordanova writers, "and the footage of crippled children and desolate people is…abundant" (1). What becomes problematic in these stark and hopeless cinematic representations, however, is

that interpretations will vary from the regional to the international. Such is the case with *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*, a Sebian film about the Bosnian war that enjoyed good international reception, because "the propaganda message [of the film] was only legible to members of the ethnic groups involved in the conflict" (111-2). Regionally, Croatian and Bosnian critics criticized the film.[60] Keeping in mind these disparate receptions on the local-global scale, Iordanova grounds the film's textuality in a contextual study, "which takes into account a whole range of socio-political and cultural specifics" (9). Iordanova applies such an approach to a number of films, and her pioneering work on Southeastern Europe establishes a crucial cultural and socio-historical analysis, which becomes a good foundation for Southeastern European studies by Imre and Mazierska that are published later.

Anikó Imre has published two different edited collections of Eastern European Cinemas. The first collection was published in 2005, and its aim was to "reassess East European cinemas from post-Cold War perspectives" (*East*, xi). In it, Imre argues from the perspective of an Eastern Europe in transition that is yet to articulate the ravages of a centuries-long discursive marginalization from the west. The Eastern Europe of western imagination is always defined as unified as "films of the Sovietized Second World…continued to be represented in the West as self-contained and progressive, giving a unified voice to the homogeneous entity known as 'the people'" (xiii). In fact, even international interpretations of East European films, according to Imre, mirrored the "global binary divisions of the Cold War era" (xiii). Therefore, the aim in the 2005

[60] *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, where I will reference more specific regional criticisms and compare it with international critical reception.

edited collection was to recuperate these post-Cold War narratives, to distance them from the vacuum of critical reception, and to allow critics to engage with East European cinemas as artistic productions that warranted a wide theoretical evaluation. Imre writes:

> The single-minded attention to oppressive state politics versus dissident intellectual politics imagined film cultures as if they were in a temporal and theoretical vacuum: the auteur, larger than life and frozen in a romantic modernist gesture, functioned as a gatekeeper to guard against theoretical currents that were concurrently transforming the study of film elsewhere. (xiv)

Imre's study is a continuation of Iordanova's in that the former examines the representational practices of film from Eastern Europe, and argues for a more prominent role of these cinema cultures in World Cinema studies. Imre criticizes western scholars for not engaging with Eastern European cinemas theoretically, and the project that unfolds demonstrates how such a theoretical engagement can be done and how it has consequence for World Cinema at large. Ultimately, Imre's first collection objects the critical limitations imposed on East European cinema by scholars of World Cinema, and argues for a more transnational approach that does not museumize cinema cultures as representatives of a singular national cinema.

In her second collection, *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas* (2012), Imre focuses more on the transnational and global character of Eastern European cinema cultures. Imre draws attention to the role that European integration has had on media cultures, but also emphasizes: "European integration has further exposed Eastern Europe

to neoliberal deregulation, weakening the political and economic power of nation-states and reinforcing existing geopolitical inequalities within Europe" (*Companion* 5). Using the geo-political as a foundation for her analysis Imre questions the validity of grouping all cinemas of Eastern Europe under a label that denotes "the dividing ideological force of the Iron Curtain in the first place" (5). The goal of the collection is to "peek behind the metaphorical curtain," in order to understand which narratives it augmented and which ones "it left untold" (5).

Imre's approach in the collection is to revisit Eastern European cinemas and to examine the individual cultures from "vantage points that have thus far been obscured, selectively forgotten, or distorted by the Cold War dichotomy of 'us and them,' 'East and West,' 'before and after'" (5). Ultimately, Imre's goal is to argue for a transnational Eastern European film culture that pre-dated 1989, and that the binary between Eastern and western Europe is one that persists because it has its roots in a western European subjectivity that Imre, following Wolff, dates to the European Enlightenment. Intervening in World Cinema and global cinema discussions, Imre's collection seeks to de-nationalize Eastern European Cinema; it argues that post-1989 does not only apply to Eastern Europe but also its western counterpart; and finally, that Eastern European cinema is an integral cinema culture to Global Film studies (7-19). Like Iordanova, Imre attends to the local-regional-global scale, arguing for fluidity in transnational cinema, and slippage of the way in which it is currently theorized.

Unlike Iordanova and Imre who focus on the local-global scale, Mazierska's edited collection *Postcolonial Approaches to Eastern European Cinema* (2014)[61] centers on a regional analysis of Eastern European cinema cultures through a postcolonial perspective, as the title suggests. Primarily, the work is interested in the Soviet Union and its colonial sphere of influence on Eastern Europe. However, the contributors observe what they label as "reverse-cultural colonization" (Mazierska et. al. 9) of Russia by Eastern European nations. "*Mittel*-European capitals such as Budapest, Berlin and Prague" were perceived to be as prizes in Russia rather than "civilizing" burdens (9-10). In addition, Central European nations viewed the Soviets as "colonizing…Asiatics," and as orientals who could not possibly be true colonizers in "relation to apparently less Oriental people [like Central Europeans]" (10). Such a posture displays the discursive effects and ideological holds western European orientalism has on the region, but it also reflects the numerous mutations and regional appropriations of orientalism as an ideology of 'othering' that seeks to establish a discursive hierarchy of power.

Scholarship in Mazierska argues for a form of Eastern European colonization that does not necessarily follow racial divides, but which is characterized by cultural, economic, political, and military domination. The Soviet Union is one colonial entity as are the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Given the intricate imperial histories of Southeastern Europe, in particular, Mazierska notes that the postcolonial moment in the region is markedly different than in other areas of the world, because imperial histories affected not only the region's standing in relation to east and west, but also the relations

[61] Lars Kristensen and Eva Näripea, co-editors

between member states. For example, “Slovenians and Croats, were regarded as masters of the orientalist gaze in relation to Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Albanians” (12). Such attitudes have led to tensions between neighbors like the “killing, imprisoning, and forced expulsions of many thousands of the (mostly Muslim) Albanian population in 1918-21” (12). Mazierska also notes another wrinkle in the postcolonial situation of Southeastern Europe: Yugoslavia, whose centers and institutions of power were located in Belgrade, Serbia, which was regarded by “the other republics as a colonizer,” but an inferior one nonetheless (12).

Another dimension of note in the area is the case of Albania, which over the Cold War years broke off relations with all of its allies and became so isolated that Mazierska et. al. speak of its post-WWII history as “a history of decolonization” (12). All of these examples are instructive in that they highlight the variety of postcolonial settings, and that the postcolonial moment is one that is still-lived in regions like Southeastern Europe through cultural and economic domination “rather than direct political rule” (13). Such new forms of domination support the sovereignty of nations, and at the same time, in a slight of hand, they re-inscribe power imbalances by deploying already-powerful orientalist discourses of difference. Film is a central space where we can observe the still-powerful hold these narratives have on Southeastern European imaginary and the way in which they have affected the region’s self perception, the relationship between neighboring states, and a newly birthed neo-colonial resistance through cinematic narratives.

Pretty Village, Pretty Flame (1996), directed by Srđan Dragojević, is a film about the Bosnian War that lasted from 1992-1995. The narrative centers on two childhood friends: Milan, a Bosnian Serb, and Halil, a Bosnian Muslim, who are separated and fight on opposing sides in the war. The story takes place in a military hospital where Milan is wounded, and where he seeks revenge by plotting the murder of a Bosnian soldier housed in the same hospital wing. However, the story's present is fractured by flashbacks of Milan and his comrades, which attempt to establish character depth and explain characters' decisions during and in the aftermath of fighting. *Pretty Village* was produced by Cobra Films and Radio Televizija Srbije (RTS), the Serbian State Television.

No Man's Land (2001), directed by Bosnian filmmaker Danis Tanović, is one of the most internationally successful Southeastern European films. The film won numerous prestigious awards like the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 2001, and the European Film Academy Award for Best Screenplay. The story takes place during the Bosnian war as two Bosnian soldiers, Čiki and Cera, and one Serb, Nino, are trapped in a trench between Bosnian and Serbian frontlines. Cera is lying atop a "bouncing mine" and Čiki cannot leave the trench without his friend. Most of the story relies on dialogue between Čiki and Nino who question each other's claims about who started the war. Another important narrative strand is the presence of western journalists and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The latter has a humanitarian mission in the war, which the film condemns for its ineffectiveness in preventing and stopping the carnage of war.

No Man's Land was produced by a long list of production companies: Noé Productions (French), Man's Films (Belgian), Fabrica (Italian), Counihan Villiers Productions (Great Britain), Studio Maj (Slovenia), among many other international producers. Its production pedigree has facilitated its distribution and its screenings in central international film festivals. *No Man's Land* is a transnational production that narrates central regional events, but also indicts the symbolic and even damaging role peacekeeping missions had during the Bosnian War. As a result, the film's force and its worldwide distribution is established by artistic achievement, and by its insertion into a powerful transnational network of film production and distribution.

Witnesses (2003), an adaptation of *Alabaster Sheep* by Jurica Pavičić and directed by Croatian director Vinko Brešan, takes place during the Croatian War of Independence in 1992 in the small town of Karlovac, Croatia. Karlovac is a border town and the war creates intense pressures on the inhabitants. The presence of the armed conflict is evident in the number of Croatian soldiers in the town's streets, in the nightly bombings, and in the central conflict of the story: the accidental murder of Vasić, a Serb who has lived in the Karlovac community for all his life. Gojo, Barić, and Joško are three soldiers of the 109th unit who plan to bomb Vasić's home, believing that he is out of town on business. Vasić, we later learn, is a smuggler and merchant. Unfortunately, Vasić is in Karlovac, and the soldiers shoot him, but discover that his young granddaughter is in the home as well. They take and hide this witness. The story revolves around the investigation of the murder by the police inspector, Barbir, and in the process viewers themselves witness the role that the war plays in the justice system

of the town, and how war itself is a dehumanizing force even for small and tightly knit communities like Karlovac.

Witnesses was produced by Interfilm, a Croatian company, and its theatrical version was distributed by Stadtkino Verleih (Austria); Film Movement (USA) distributed the film's DVD. While widely distributed, *Witnesses* did not enjoy the festival circuit and award season acclaim of *No Man's Land* since its production pedigree is not as transnational as the latter's.

Before the Rain (1994), directed by Macedonian filmmaker Milcho Manchevski, takes place during the Bosnian War, but is removed from the war's location, taking place in a small village in Macedonia where ethnic and religious hatreds have increased between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. It is the story of Zamira, an Albanian, Muslim girl who is hiding from Macedonian villagers who believe she has killed one of their own. Zamira hides in a monastery where a monk who has taken a vow of silence, Kiril, helps her. The story is divided into three tales: Words, Faces, and Pictures. However, the tales do not follow chronology. Rather, Words is the last tale, Faces is the second, and Pictures is the first. Arguing for a circularity of time and a return of violent impulses, the film also centers on a Macedonian photographer, Aleksandar, who has just returned to his village after being on assignment in Bosnia, and who is also Kiril's uncle. Aleksandar leaves his fame and fortune in London in an attempt to return to his home and recuperate his fractured identity.

Before the Rain enjoyed the widespread distribution that *No Man's Land* did, and its distribution and film festival record attest to the power transnational productions hold

in world cinematic markets. The film was produced by AIM (USA), British Screen Productions, European Co-production Fund, Ministry of Culture for the Republic of Macedonia, Noé (French), PolyGram Audiovisuel (French), and Vardar Film (Macedonia). *Before the Rain* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, and it won the Golden Lion at the 51st Venice International Film Festival. It is one of the most widely distributed and higher earning Macedonian films. Its critical reception worldwide ensured its place in the Criterion Collection, which is a significant achievement for any film from Southeastern Europe.

East West East (2009), directed by Gjergj Xhuvani, is the story of an Albanian cycling team, lead by coach Ilo Zoto, which is traveling to represent Albania in an amateur race in France. The team's departure coincides with the great Albanian migration of 1990-1991 in the aftermath of the fall of the communist regime. The team is in Italy on the way to France when every method of travel to and from Albania is closed because of the immigrant crisis. The cyclists are not allowed to travel to France, and they cannot board a ship or a plane to travel back home. Hence, they are faced with a choice: stay in Italy and seek political asylum, or travel back to Albania by land, riding their bicycles via north Italy and Yugoslavia. They choose the second option, and the narrative follows the cycling team as they cross borders and roadblocks, as they are smuggled through Yugoslavia, and as they finally enter the northern Albanian border on foot.

East West East was produced by ISSTRA Creative Factory (Pristina, Kosovo), Albanian General Vision (Albania), and Fast Rewind (Italy). The film was the Albanian

entry for the Best Foreign Film category at the 83rd Academy Awards, but it did not make the short list. Xhuvani won the Best Director Award at the Tirana Film Festival, and the film enjoyed positive, but limited critical reception. Even its distribution was limited. For instance, there is no zone one DVD available for American markets. *East West East'*s production pedigree is not as stellar as *No Man's Land* or *Behind the Rain*. The companies that produced the films have limited, regional resources, which poses a challenge for the film's distribution worldwide. Further, thematically, the film does not cater to western audiences' demands for narratives that cast Southeastern Europe as a geo-political space of disavowal; instead, it argues for Albania, and by extension Southeastern Europe, as the object of desire for the characters in the narrative. Such a stance breaks with audiences' narrative expectations and it offers an alternative reading of Southeastern Europe that makes the region itself as central and western Europe as peripheral.

Given the films introduced thus far, there is a clear tension between regional filmography and transnational interest in these narratives by way of film production and international funding. As filmmakers in Southeastern Europe seek to fund their projects, they also have to balance international demand for specific narratives in order for their films to find adequate financial support. Production companies and the transnational networks into which they are inserted largely determine distribution. Therefore, analysis of Southeastern European cinema benefits from a two-pronged approach: first, noting the sources of funding allows critics to understand the transnational networks the film is able to 'travel;' and second, an analysis of narrative form highlights thematic content,

which can itself be analyzed keeping transnational production and distribution practices in sight.

Pretty Village, Pretty Flame is a relatively well-distributed film about the war in Bosnia. Its reception internationally was primarily one of praise, but the film has been challenged by some critics, who have argued: "*Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* provide[s] a Serbian perspective, a particular point of view on highly controversial issues" (Krstić). The problem with this perspective, Krstić argues, is that the viewer begins to "identify with the perspective of those who raped women, burned villages, and mass-executed Muslims and Croats in Bosnia and in Kosovo." Krstić's criticism centers on narrative focus, and it is true that the story unfolds from the perspective of Milan and other Serbian soldiers. Further, the narrative actively attempts to understand the moral dilemmas Serbian soldiers face, their sense of loss, and their suffering at the hands of Bosnian soldiers who have trapped Milan's group inside the dilapidated Brotherhood tunnel.

International opinion on the Bosnian War has condemned the heinous ethnic cleansing in which Serbian forces engaged, and the film narrates a different perspective, and perhaps one that is unacknowledged. Krstić, however, objects this approach arguing that it forces the viewer to identify with "the libidinal economy of the 'aggressors:" an identification with 'Balkanian drives;' excesses, addiction to violence and abuse of women, perversities and criminal behavior." Špela Zajec also agrees with Krstić's reading: "while Serbian crimes [in the film] were shown with ironic flair, the Bosniak atrocities were depicted with utter seriousness" (211). Aggressors do not need

representation, Krstić and Zajec seem to imply, because their representation is violence itself, even when both sides involved in the conflict dispense that violence.

Yet, other critics take a different perspective on the film. Zoran Samardzija interprets *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* as a story that highlights the way in which ethnic groups in a deteriorating federation found ethnicity to be "a more viable way for reconciling forms of belonging" (69). Characters' individual choices can only be explained through a total view of the economic and political forces beyond the characters' control. With the fall of communism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, people who formerly identified as Yugoslavs, had no choice but to embrace ethnic and religious identities in the vacuum of post-1989 (69-70).

Pretty Village, Pretty Flame does not follow a linear narrative. Rather, it rhythmically shifts temporalities. The pattern of these shifts is not always regular, but the film narrates the past and present as though they exist concurrently. Still, we can identify some central temporalities that frame the narrative and situate it between the present and the past. Anchoring the narrative, the present unfolds in fragments, and it is itself sustained by the historical past, the distant past, and the immediate past. In addition, the present invokes these pasts. On the surface it may seem as though the purpose of the recursive return is to merely understand the present. Such a reading rings partly true. However, invoking the past also changes the events, it colors them with the present moment, and the recalled memories never quite regain the same space in the individual and collective archive. In other words, the effect of the frequent and irregular cutting between scenes of the present, the distant past, and the immediate past creates the effect

that all temporalities exist at the same moment, and that Milan and Halil's actions are not easy to explain merely by way of the past. In addition, the chaotic invocation and recall of the past, its intrusion upon the present moment, and its urgency suggest that there are other forces that control the fates of both characters. Historical and political realities are those forces that press upon the individual will of the characters and urge them to enact narratives over which Milan and Halil have no control.

First, the present of the narrative, as indicated earlier in the chapter, is a military hospital in Belgrade where Milan is recovering with two of his still-alive comrades. Another temporal anchor for the film is the distant past: the picaresque return to Milan and Halil's childhood (and brotherhood). Yet another time ripe for return is the immediate past, which is comprised of flashbacks of the war, culminating with Milan and Halil confronting each other in front of the tunnel after the Serb soldiers are rescued by another unit. Lastly, historical past is invoked neither through flashbacks nor through historical exposition, but through the characters' understanding of self and other in relation to history.

Distant past is invoked to establish the deep bond verging on brotherhood between Milan and Halil. Although these memories are always narrated as Milan's flashbacks, the intention is to establish a common repository of memories of the distant past, which comprises the root of the friends' relationship and the difficult moral choices they have to make as adults. Especially poignant is the memory of the two boys looking at the entrance of the dilapidated Tunnel of Brotherhood and Unity and the light that emerges at its other end. They are afraid to enter the tunnel, because they believe that an

ogre is in it and that they should return when they have guns. Such a plan turns out to be prophetic because the dark, and no longer used Tunnel of Brotherhood is transformed into a central location for the representation of the ravages of war.

Moreover, the Tunnel of Brotherhood and Unity is transformed into a tunnel of division and hatred, the reasons for which are deeply personal for Halil and Milan. As the Serb soldiers are rescued, Halil and Milan confront each other at the tunnel's entrance:

> Halil: So you went into the tunnel.
> Milan: I did.
> Halil: Why'd you burn our garage?
> Milan: Why'd you slaughter my mother?
> Halil: I didn't slaughter anyone!
> Milan: I didn't set the garage on fire, either!
> Halil: Who did? That Ogre from the tunnel, maybe? Did the Ogre do it, Milan?

The scene is a poignant echo of the distant past where the boys look into the tunnel afraid of the ogre, but this time they have questions for each other. The Ogre is only an allusion to their lost innocence, which grounds the impossibility of resolution, because meeting as adversaries shatters the brotherhood Halil and Milan may have shared in the distant past.

Milan and Halil's confrontation is interrupted as the film cuts to the present where Milan crawls to the Bosnian soldier's bed and threatens him with a fork. Immediately, the film cuts back to the distant past where Milan and Halil fight about who will give up one of their childhood games: "One of us has to! You do it! No, you do it! You do it" and so on. It is unclear which one of the two friends is speaking, but the echo of their voices carries the story back to the immediate past where Halil is killed by

one of the Serbian soldiers, and the film cuts back again to the hospital room where Milan asks the Bosnian soldier: "You do it." echoing his childhood argument with Halil, which is a scene that expresses the deep and irreparable wounds the war has caused for both friends. Milan is unable to kill the wounded Bosnian soldier, and as he is dying he yells: "You Ogre, you're some hell of a whore!"

Fracturing the narrative mirrors the fractured identities of the two friends; it mirrors the fractured histories that brought them in front of the tunnel; and it fractures any single and authoritative interpretation of the film. Such an effect happens as a result of the rhythmic shifting between the present and the different pasts. Each memory is tethered to the present moment in such a way that the urgency of the present is also experienced in the memories the film narrates. The present, the film argues, is stitched together by a recursive return to the past, but each return is complicit in its desire to shape the past in the service of the present. For example, the relationship between Serbs and Bosniaks prior to the war is depicted as harmonious – this is also the case in *Before the Rain*, which depicts the pre-war relationship between Christian Macedonians and Muslim Albanians as harmonious. After the war erupts and the Serbian soldiers are trapped in the tunnel, the viewers observe the animosity between the two sides as represented by what Sloba, one of the soldiers, calls the Bosniaks: Turćin, which means Turk, which means occupier, outsider, usurper, and it invokes a history so distant that is almost forgotten. That singular word, turćin, is a linguistic return to the historical past that carries within it the aforementioned desire to morph the past in service of the present. There are no 'ancient hatreds' in *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*; instead, there are

present conflicts stirred up by geo-political and economic upheavals that use historical pasts to justify present positions.

Despite the recursive return from present to past and vice versa, *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* is still a narrative from Milan's point of view, which insists on a desire to consolidate the objectivity of the narrative. Milan, and as a result, the viewers, cannot know the story from Halil's perspective. Even the segments of the film that focus on the other Serbian soldiers' experience have a limited point of view. Therefore, the narrative silences the Bosnian subject; it is claustrophobic, it too being trapped within the dark tunnel, immobile and mute. As a result, rather than addressing the multiplicity of narratives of war, the film centers on one subjectivity: that of the Serbian soldier. In so doing, it inadvertently claims a total narrative, which is a position that is challenged in another post-1989 film: *Witnesses*.

Like *Pretty Village Pretty Flame, Witnesses* fractures the narrative and engages in recursive return to the events of the immediate past. *Witnesses* is more contained in the present since the fracturing of the narrative does not happen through a return to the past, although there are flashbacks that serve to explain characters' motivations; instead, the narrative here is fragmented by a limited view of events as seen from the perspective of different characters. At first, such an approach is disorienting, but it highlights the conflict between neighbors, the conflicting narratives that arise, the shared spaces as war zones, and how memory itself is fractured from its first moment of recording. The film intentionally alienates the viewer and it plunges her into a narrative that is fractured amongst all the characters that see a different story unfold. The differing visions are not

only visual, but emotional, too, because with every return to the crime scene, to the funeral, to the return of the war hero, we also understand the emotional space of the characters as if in layers, as though a painter adding new strokes to already dried oil paint. The film argues that all characters only have a limited view of the story, and Brešan's inquisitive camera returns again and again at the scene of the crime, but each time it is cloaked as a different character.

Viewers are also complicit in the unfolding of the story because we become witnesses to the inability of characters to see other perspectives unfold. In addition, viewers are privileged witnesses in that we are given multiple chances to return at the crime scene, each time as a different observer. Such an approach simultaneously highlights the impossibility of an objective narrative, and the possibility to construct one by stitching together different subjectivities. At times, the need for understanding different perspectives is altogether refused, as in the case of mayor Matić who is one of the soldiers' uncle, and who advises to eliminate all witnesses of the crime in the interest of protecting the soldiers fighting for Croatian freedom. In addition, Matić uses Barbir's (the police investigator) sick wife as a pawn in order to keep Barbir from charging the three soldiers with murder. Lidija, a journalist intent on finding the truth, and her partner Krešo who has just returned from the war and who is Joško's brother, are the only two characters that collect different perspectives on the murder and are able to collaborate and save Vasić's little granddaughter. *Witnesses* argues that everyone is a witness and that objective truth can only be recuperated when witnesses have a voice. It also indicts those witnesses of murder or war who chose to remain bystanders, because the more

witnesses Brešan's camera can follow, the more the viewers will approximate objective truth.

In contrast to *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* and *Witnesses*, *No Man's Land* situates its narrative squarely on the present and the majority of the action takes place in the trench where Nino, Čiki, and Cera are trapped. Cera is immobile, of course, and the dialogue and actions between the other two characters animate the story. The soldiers are caught between the front lines of the fight and have no way to notify their respective sides that they are alive, other than to undress to their underwear and emerge from the trench together waving white t-shirts in an attempt to have the situation resolved. As they wait for UNPROFOR to intervene, the following exchange establishes the complexity of the conflict, the absurdity of their situation, and the inability of both sides to successfully articulate why the war started in the first place:

> Čiki: I've seen it! I saw my village burn
> Nino: I don't know. I wasn't there.
> Čiki: I was!
> Nino: Haven't our villages burned too? Who killed our people?
> Čiki: Your side probably. They just shot at you too.
> Nino: They only shot at me because they didn't recognize me!
> Čiki: It's useless talking to you…What the hell made you ruin this beautiful country?
> Nino: Us?
> Čiki: Yes!
> Nino: You're crazy. You wanted to separate not us!
> Čiki: Because you started the war!
> Nino: What? Who started it?
> Čiki: You started the war!
> Nino: You started it!
> Čiki cocks the rifle and says: Who started the war?
> Nino: We did.

The situation is reversed when Nino gets a hold of his own rifle:

Nino: By the way, who started the war?
Čiki: We did…
Nino: You started the war.
Cera: Who cares who started it? We're all in the same shit now.

Cera is the sacrifice offered to the gods of war, and only after Nino and Čiki have both admitted – albeit under threat of being shot – that their side started the war that temporary peace is established in the trench. If the trench is symbolic for the ambivalent position of Southeastern Europe, Cera is the sacrifice to it. Cera is the unnamed soldier caught under the bouncing bomb, the civilian forced into fighting, and a symbol for the populations caught in the conflict.

No Man's Land does not define the conflict in terms of religious difference; instead, it insists that the war is a multi-headed beast, and that the reasons for its unfolding, while important, cannot be sorted out so long that the entities involved in the conflict look at each other through the barrel of a gun. While it may seem that the narrative is indifferent to the exploration of the reasons for the war, this is intentional. *No Man's Land,* as the title suggests is not interested in historical record because it is skeptical of history and memory, as the exchange between Čiki and Nino above highlights. No memories are invoked as an attempt to explain characters' choices, and when narratives of the past are deployed, they are quickly invalidated. For example, Čiki and Nino discover that they both know a woman from Banja Luka, Sanja, and this is a momentary connection that is replaced again by the distrust and animosity, and yet the story unfolding in the trench offers no discernable reasons for the animosity that would explain violence and aggression.

Only when the narrative focus shifts to the role of media and UNPROFOR does the audience get an exposition for the war itself. However, news of the war is starkly different than the intimate war between Čiki, Cera, and Nino in the trench. Nowhere in their dialogue has religion played a role, but then the film cuts to a televised speech by Radovan Karadžić, then president of the Serb Republic (Republika Srpska), who explicitly threatens Bosnian Muslims: "You are forcing Bosnia and Herzegovina to follow the same path of horror and suffering as Slovenia and Croatia. You'll lead Bosnia into hell and this may end up exterminating the Muslim people!" The film suggests that religious and ethnic animosity are convenient tools of political rhetoric, and it argues against the 'ancient Balkan hatreds' thesis often deployed to explain the 1990s Southeastern European conflicts. Such a position is consistent with *Before the Rain* as we will discuss later.

Rather than validating memory and historical record, the film is interested in the ambivalent position of the trench, which is symbolic for Southeastern Europe's position between east and west. Journalists and the media at large are indicted, especially when Čiki turns to the journalists chasing after a story and says: "And you vultures…does our misery pay well?" Čiki's words imply a lack of sincerity in documenting the war. He exposes the role journalists play in constructing a spectacle of violence in the news, and furthermore, his words condemn the long history of Southeast European stigmatization as a land of violence, backwardness, and regression. The journalists and the media that they represent are the contemporary versions of travel narratives that cast Southeastern Europe always-already in a marginalized position.

After Čiki and Nino steal UNPROFOR soldiers' pistols and shoot each other, the UNPROFOR official lies to the press saying that the bomb has been diffused and that Cera is on his way to get medical treatment. To the contrary, Cera has been abandoned in the trench, and his still and still-alive body is the last scene that viewers are left with. And as the journalists prepare to head back behind fighting lines the following exchange takes place between Jane Livingston, the main journalist in the story, and her cameraman: "Cameraman: You sure you don't want me to film the trench? Jane: No. A trench is a trench. They're all the same." If the trench stands for the no man's land that is Southeastern Europe, Jane's apathy speaks volumes about the indifference of outside actors who use the events for their own gain. The region is sensationalized, exoticized, and marginalized simultaneously, which shows a discursive continuity in western perceptions about Southeastern Europe.

Before the Rain engages more directly the newly formed republic of Macedonia and the religious and ethnic conflicts between Macedonian and Muslim Albanian peoples in a remote, modern-day Macedonian village. The film's aim is to offer up a narrative of Southeastern Europe and the impending sense of doom Manchevski felt upon returning to Macedonia after living in New York. His intentions were to examine the circle of violence, its roots, and its revival in the face of ethnic, religious, and linguistic difference through an increased desire for national belonging.

The story, in brief, centers around a Pulitzer-prize winning Serb Macedonian photographer, Aleksandar Kirkov who lives in London and is in love with Anna, a managing director of a photography studio in London. Aleksandar returns from

photographing the conflict in Bosnia and he declares that he no longer wants to photograph and that his camera is a weapon that kills. He decides to return home to Macedonia, a reverse exile gesturing toward an ideological corrective. The audience has seen this village in the first tale of the film titled "Words," where we meet the Albanian Muslim girl, Zamira and the Christian Orthodox monk Kiril. Kiril and Zamira, despite their inability to linguistically communicate develop a close connection that eventually leads to Kiril's leaving his church in a forced exile, in order to take Zamira away from the violence to his uncle, a photographer in London. They are both stopped by Zamira's family who disapprove of her socializing with a dirty Christian, and when Zamira runs toward Kiril, her brother shoots her and she dies in Kiril's arms.

Most of the literature on *Before the Rain* focuses on Manchevski's narrative, its discontinuities, parallelisms, circularity, and even ambiguity as often the future intrudes upon the present; at times future, present, and past coexist, much like they do in *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*. A major area of criticism of the film focuses on its modes of representation that rely on narratives of the Eastern European as other. Critics like Dina Iordanova, Vojislava Filipčević etc., assert that Manchevski, despite his desire to represent the conflict in a more complex manner and in direct opposition to western media representations, is ultimately unsuccessful because he rehearses western narratives about Southeastern Europe as frozen in a cycle of violence, an un-European entity, prone to violence and destruction (Filipčević 4).[62]

[62] They continue in the tradition of scholars like Maria Todorova, Milica Bakić-Hayden, and Larry Wolff, who developed theories on Balkanism that aimed to explain the fraught relationship

While Iordanova et. al.'s arguments are valid, they offer an easy reading of the film that centers on a general theoretical intervention on relations and attitudes of western Europe about its Eastern counterpart. This intervention is valuable in contributing to our understanding of west-east relations in Europe, but it also flattens history and allows no agency for Southeastern European filmmakers to engage in a form of self-representation that is not dependent on western European constructions of the Southeastern European subject. In other words, circumscribing Manchevski's film within the Balkanist discourse tendencies forecloses the possibility for the film to speak outside of the rehearsed narratives about Southeastern Europe as a monolithic, homogeneous entity. To the contrary, the film's engagement with the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious fabric of Macedonia resists the recycled image of a homogeneous, violent Southeastern Europe. Further, Manchevski's refusal to translate dialogue between characters signals a strategic engagement with untranslatability and silence as discursive tools. Untranslatability and deliberate silences engage a polyphonic ethnic and religious makeup contained within a contentious geography.

Linguistic barriers between characters, whether voluntary or involuntary, gesture toward untranslatability as a mode of communication, for language is a marker of difference and complicit in the violence that ensues. In other words, because multilingualism in the Balkan context signals ethnic and religious difference, it is always already filtered through a violent historical memory that is recursive and which distorts

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and attitudes between East and western Europe. These scholars were discussed in more detail in chapter one, pp. 60-67.

and mistranslates. Kiril and Zamira's closeness is established in the absence of language as neither one understands the other's tongue. Language emphasizes the ethnic and religious fissures in the film and Manchevski's refusal to translate communicates the complex makeup of the geographical site in the narrative.

Further, language has representational and positional force for the characters, which is a force that is challenged by Kiril and Zamira's non-verbal communication. Kiril is unable to communicate linguistically because he has taken a vow of silence. This is a barrier that does not bar communication. Kiril understands that Zamira is hiding from the Macedonian villagers and he gives her shelter and food. They are enveloped by the night; they look at each other in silence, but the audience can see that though their communication is obscured like the dark room they inhabit, there are small crevices through which light enters and makes them (and the viewers) see. What is not being said cannot be mistranslated and linguistic untranslatability constitutes communication between Kiril and Zamira. Their silence challenges the notion of the backward Southeastern European subject who resorts to violence in the absence of communication, because in the absence of language's representational force, there are neither Muslim whores nor dirty Christians.

In the presence of linguistic untranslatability, the film engages with other forms of communication: photography. Aleksandar is a conflicted character, not only because he believes himself to be complicit in the death of a young boy in Bosnia, but also because he views his medium as complicit in the violence. "My camera has killed" he says, which is an indictment of Western media representation of Southeastern European

violence – the same charge that Čiki launches at the journalists in Tanovic's *No Man's Land*. Viewers learn that while on assignment in Bosnia, Aleksandar had complained to a Serb militia man that there was not anything to photograph, at which point the soldier grabs a boy out of the line and tells Aleksandar to be ready to take the picture just as he shoots the boy. This is a moment that is crucial in the film's narrative: The militia soldier who violently kills the boy for Aleksandar's camera has internalized a narrative of violence and reenacts that violence for the camera to capture.

Aleksandar returns to his Macedonian village after his work in Bosnia, communicating disillusionment with photographic reporting and unease with war stories that indulge western perceptions of a violent Southeastern Europe. If we were not told the story of the photograph of the shooting of the young Bosnian boy, the war itself would have been a powerful testimony to blind ethnic and nationalist backwardness, but the audience learns the story behind the shot, which serves as a translation of the visual by linguistic means. The photograph's misreading and mistranslation, then, impede visual communication in the absence of narrative, and the inability of the images to communicate the complexity of the conflict. Like language, photography, too, is a means of representation that is shown to need contextualization.

Aleksandar's photographs are unintelligible in that while they capture the violence and suffering wars cause, they fail to communicate the realities of existing within the conflict. Aleksandar's photograph in Bosnia only communicates the "inhuman" violence in Southeastern Europe, which is a narrative that rehearses the construction of the backward and barbarian Southeastern European subject. The

Southeastern European zone constructed as military zone can only speak through violence. Unlike linguistic untranslatability between Kiril and Zamira, untranslatability in photography, and most importantly in the scene of the violent encounter between an Eastern European waiter and client in a posh London restaurant, renders untranslatability as mistranslation.

To clarify, while untranslatability establishes a polyphonic and complex geopolitical terrain in Macedonia, untranslatability in London, coupled with images of a violent Southeastern Europe is marked by mistranslation. The Londoners read the conflict between the waiter and the client, both Eastern Europeans, as an expected display of violence from people who need to keep their wars in their territory instead of bringing them among the genteel society of London. The restaurant-goers are not aware that the men speak a different dialect; they do not know the reasons for the fight; instead, the only explanation is the rehearsed perception of the backward, violent Eastern European subject. Instead of reading this scene as one that reinforces the constructed Eastern European subject as other, I suggest that we read it in light of untranslatability and mistranslation, the former being a refusal to translate, foreclosing the possibility of privileging a single language and depicting a polyphony of languages, and the latter constituting the remnants of Balkanist discourse and the way it fuels attitudes and relations between Eastern and Western Europe. As a Macedonian émigré who is at once an outsider and insider Aleksandar finds his country torn by hostilities that he does not recognize. Narrative fracturing mirrors the ethno-religious schism in the social fabric of the small village, but the film, much like *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* and *No Man's*

Land does not adhere to a 'ancient hatreds' narrative, even though critics of *Before the Rain* have found reason to interpret the film as such.

Aleksandar is testimony to the inaccuracy of the 'ancient hatreds' thesis as he naively says to the village's veterinary: "There is no reason to fight here." Ethno-religious divisions are depicted as recent developments. Crucial in establishing this position is the scene when Aleksandar visits Zekir – his love interest, Hana's father – who is a Muslim Albanian. Zekir and Aleksandar are amicable and adhere to neighborly customs of old that rely on honoring one's guest and neighbor. Zekir's grandson, Ali, who represents a new generation raised under new ethno-religious relations that have been stirred and polarized in the context of the war in Bosnia, says about Aleksandar: "He doesn't belong here…I'll slit his throat." Aleksandar's cousin, Mitre, who tries to help Aleksandar understand that the latter does not understand the new social relations of the village, has foreshadowed Ali's position. By juxtaposing the harmonious exchange between Zekir and Aleksandar with Ali's attitude, the film argues that the deterioration of relations did not take place until after Aleksandar left his homeland, prior to the 1990s conflicts. Therefore, Macedonia is unreadable and untranslatable for Aleksandar.

Nowhere is his alienation clearer as when Aleksandar tries to dissuade his cousins from seeking revenge from Zamira. He is met with resistance, hostility, and even rejection: "Zdrave [to Aleksandar]: Keep out of it. You're not from here. Mitre [as he hands Aleksandar a gun]: Take it. It's time to collect five centuries of our blood." Mitre's words are surprising and at first appear out of place until we contextualize them. As it was in *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* where Serbian soldiers referred to Bosnian

Muslims as "Turčin", here, too, Albanian Muslims are viewed as usurpers. Five centuries of uncollected blood refers to the Ottoman hold on Southeastern Europe. In order for the village community to be successful in its division into 'us' and 'them,' and into 'Christians' and 'Muslims,' the agitators need a historical grounding. The religious legacy of the Ottoman Empire on Southeastern Europe provides such grounds. Although that historical memory may have been resolved through the centuries, in the context of the disillusion of Yugoslavia and the need for Southeastern European populations to define themselves along ethno-religious lines, Ottoman history is a convenient story to invoke. Such invocation only happens in the vacuum of post-communism and post-Yugoslav realities where it is possible to manipulate history for political gain, as the village's veterinary observes: "You haven't seen anything yet," he says to Aleksandar after they witness the latter's cousins depart to hunt Zamira, "This is only the infantry. Politicians is what we need now." Herein the story ceases to search internally for the sources of conflict; instead, it casts the reader's vision toward broader political realities that use local divisions to gain political real estate. The populations, as the doctor astutely observes, are only the infantry.

"Words," "Faces," and "Pictures," the three tales of *Before the Rain* seek to impose a narrative logic to the film, while at the same time they re-organize the story arguing for a lack of temporal logic in the events that unfold. Past, present, and future could be the titles of the three tales, instead. Further, each tale intrudes upon the others and no tale has significance unless it is viewed along side the other two. *Before the Rain* insists on interconnected realities of the past and present, and just like in *Pretty Village,*

Pretty Flame, the past gains new signification every time it is visited or invoked by the present. Ultimately, however, returning to the past is also an empty gesture since the film remains skeptical of a truthful recuperation of the past. *Before the Rain* rejects the past as a foundation for present realities, because the past is only depicted as a distant haunting, a ghostly presence that can take any shape its readers give it, and as such, it becomes a dangerous tool of propaganda that justifies violence. The film rearranges the chronology of events as it insists on a reconfiguration of Southeastern Europe as a region that is radicalized as a result of political and media representation, rather than any inherent self-radicalization that had lain dormant over the Cold War years. And finally, Aleksandar Kirkov's return to his home marks a re-orientation of cardinal directions: rather than leaving Southeastern Europe for the west, Aleksandar journeys in the opposite direction, which is a return narrative that discursively casts Southeastern Europe as the object of desire.

Engaging in a similar geo-political re-orientation, East West East is a reconfiguration narrative, which retains a strictly Albanian voice and which, in fact, problematizes the role that western Europe has had in feeding the self-stigmatization of most countries in the Southeastern Europe. Despite its setting in different European countries, the film is arguably national. It is a story of crossing borders to arrive home, and this return is crucial, because while thousands of Albanians were fleeing their homes in search for a better future in the west, as most immediately post-1989 narratives go, the team of cyclists brave the hostile border patrols in order to return home.

East West East is a story of return in two ways: it is the return home for the characters, but in addition, it narrates the return of an Albanian self-representation and identity that does not suffer from disavowal. As such, East West East's narrative signals a shift in post-1989 cinematic production in Albania, a shift that marks the film as a national film, but one with transnational implications. Hamid Naficy would call this an exilic film that falls under the borders and border-crossing category. Border crossing has a double function. On one hand, there is the physical crossing of the Italian, Yugoslavian, and Albanian borders, but there is also a metaphorical border crossing, which Naficy calls "journeys of identity that displaced people inevitably undergo" (237). Even though the characters may experience identity crisis, their crisis is brief, resulting in desire to journey home. The internal journey here is that of the 40,000 Albanians who immigrated to Italy in 1991 wanting to forget whence they came. Because such journeys are directional, they also signal an ideological direction, which in this case gazes to Southeastern Europe as the site of the characters' desire.

How, then, can we speak of East West East as constituting transnational filmmaking? If what it depicts is an Albanian experience, how does it morph into a transnational narrative? First, aside from its international collaboration and distribution, the film also displays transnationality in content, particularly in its treatment of borders and the stories these strips of no-man's-lands tell about nation building, national identity, the imperial reach, and the exilic experience in thirdspace chronotopes. Second, East West East is a national film with crucial transnational implications through a systematic and insistent – to borrow Dipesh Chakrabarty's term –provicializing of the center.

Here, I need to clarify the manner in which I am using Chakrabarty's terminology. His project of provincializing Europe concerned histories of the British center and the Indian margin. He writes: "Provincializing Europe is not a project of rejecting or discarding European thought…European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping nations, and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought…may be renewed from and for the margins" (16). My loan, appropriates this term, arguing that European identity is at once indispensable to the construction of the Southeastern Europe, insofar as it is fundamental to the ideology of the nation-state, but that it is also insufficient and inadequate in helping nations on the margins recuperate the type of self-identification crucial to being part of a global world-system. In addition, this identity must be renewed by and for the margins, which is what the characters in East West East achieve by crossing the various borders in search for their home. With every border they cross, they deconstruct the narrative of desire for the west – their desire for the west is displaced with their desire for their Southeastern European home, and this is an ideologically charged spatial movement.

Their journey home inevitably and necessarily causes identity crisis as the team crosses the first border out of Italy. As the cyclists pass through the Italian border, the viewers can sense their tension, because the next border is Yugoslavia and they have no transit visa. Yugoslavian authorities of the border send them away and even threaten them by shooting their guns in the air. Thus, the team is caught between two borders in a no-man's-land, and here take place two of the most poignant moments in the film. Coach

Ilo says: "As në Itali, as në Jugosllavi, as në Shqipëri[63]." They are caught between borders on a neutral strip of land where the subject is not over-determined by national identity, and this juncture in the film is what transforms the narrative from one that is nationally-dominated to one which has crucial transnational implications. It calls into question the very nature of borders, be they porous or opaque. It forces us to think of the national body in relation to the borders that enclose it. What does it mean to be on a strip of neutral land? To be halted at a border patrol because of lacking a piece of paper? This latter question is further complicated when we consider the way the cyclists are received by a Yugoslavian family once they illegally cross the border.

The team is smuggled into Yugoslavia by a Yugoslavian couple; they sleep and eat under a Yugoslavian family's roof where one of the team members, Çeti, sleeps with the daughter. They purchase and wear Yugoslavian jerseys in order to travel through the region unquestioned. When they finally reach the last border crossing, Yugoslavian patrols confiscate their bikes and they enter the Albanian border on foot wearing Serbian jerseys. Transgression, smuggling, communication, deception, neighborly care, hospitality – all these traits are central to the journey home and they are traits that do not need a nationality, but they are shared by all characters. Further, these shared values and experiences signal what Hjort calls cosmopolitan transnationalism, which explores "issues relevant to particular communities situated in a number of different national or subnational locations" (20). The fluency with which the team navigates different national spaces registers a shared transnational experience of borders and contested

63 *This is not Italy, not Yugoslavia, and not Albania.*

nationalisms between different entities, which constructs a common database of communication between the different peoples in the region. Thus, East West East morphs from a strictly national to a transnational film, where the latter is the more dominant discourse. Such positioning is only possible if transnational discourse is in dialogue with postcolonial theory, which diachronically marks the narrative and establishes signal events (like the Yalta convention and the 1991 immigration) as crucial signifiers for constructing a principled transnational discourse.

As the team camps for the night, the head cyclist, Gimi, played by Helidon Fino finds a cow in this neutral territory and tries to milk it. It is a comical scene because Gimi talks to the cow, wondering whether it is Italian, Yugoslavian, or Albanian, but since the cow cannot speak, he names it Laramane (spotted one) in Albanian. As is typical in border crossing narratives of accented filmmaking, the transitional and transnational site of the neutral space between the borders constitutes the thirdspace chronotopes (time space), which are "distinguished by an 'all-inclusive simultaneity'…In this slipzone of simultaneity and intertextuality, original cultures are no longer fixed" (Haficy 212-13). It is neither Albania, nor Yugoslavia, nor Italy, but all of them; it is a neutral space where identity exists outside of borders and outside of time-space. As such, the film demands a diachronic reading, because it engages different historical junctures and national relations (especially the Yalta convention), all these being important elements that establish its dialogism and thematic transnationality. However, the film does not assimilate other experiences in order to consolidate the

Albanian one; history is recovered through the film's transgressive posturing toward identity and physical borders.

East West East exhibits the ambiguous nature of both transnationalism and nationalism. Given the quasi-postcolonial history of the region vis-à-vis the West, transnationalism in filmic productions in the area is mercurial, transforming into the national and back again. This is inevitable in regions that have a historical relationship with centers of power. The category of the postcolonial, although contested, ought to be "integral to any meaningful discussion of transnational cinemas for at least two reasons. Firstly, postcolonial discourses in film are concerned with challenging fixed, Eurocentric assumptions around cultural identity and the nation" (Higbee, "Locating" 51), which a critical reading of *East West East* facilitates. And secondly, the postcolonial context is one that deals with "the global circulation of peoples and cultural goods in a mediated and interconnected world" (52). As such, critical, academic discourse about transnational cinema needs to engage postcolonial tools in its theorization of filmic productions, especially in regions that are marked by relations with empire. Such an approach becomes particularly crucial in the post-socialist context in Southeastern Europe where prior to the Soviet specter, the region was under Ottoman rule. The sum of these two empires on the Balkans determines a range of western representations. By triangulating the Balkan experience under their long affair with the Soviet and Ottoman empires, and the insistent western gaze upon its body, we may be able to speak of a transnational space that is finally able – in a post-communist setting – to ideologically reorient, shift, and redirect its narratives toward home.

The films discussed in this chapter sustain the desire for a re-thinking and re-definition of Southeastern Europe in light of a long history of western representation of the region as regressive, uncivilized, and backward. Southeastern Europe is over-determined by western definitions, by its communist history during the Cold War, and by its long history during Ottoman rule. Films discussed here challenge these narratives, rejecting any thesis that over-relies on 'ancient hatreds' narrative. To the contrary, post-1989 Southeastern European film argues for a more sophisticated understanding of the Ottoman legacy in the region. Historical realities play a central role in the region's geo-political and social organization, but they are not the sole determinants of the Southeastern European subject.

Moreover, Southeastern Europe is consistently depicted as a place of diversity through narrative fragmentation, multiplicity of perspectives, and religious, ethnic, and linguistic difference. Southeastern European filmmakers like Xhuvani, Tanović, Manchevski, and Dragojević draw attention to and criticize the ambivalent position to which Southeastern Europe has been discursively relegated: a land between East and West that serves as a bridge between these dominant positions, and which forecloses the possibility for Southeastern Europe to be self-determined. The trench in *No Man's Land*, the tunnel of Brotherhood in *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame,* the no man's land between Italy and Yugoslavia in *East West East*, and Aleksandar Kirkov as a man torn between east and west in *Before the Rain*, serve a critical and symbolic function that unmasks the discursive over-determination of Southeastern Europe by both east and west. Films of the post-1989 period dismantle this over-determination; they seek to recuperate a

Southeastern Europe that has agency and whose object of desire is neither east nor west, but the self as it self-determines. Finally, these cinematic positionings fundamentally empower the viewers within Southeastern Europe, and they weaken the discursive hold of the region by both east and west.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I now understand that by furtively and gradually re-creating the same pictures for hundreds and hundreds of years, thousands of artists had cunningly depicted the gradual transformation of their world into another…We'd participated in a kind of melancholy elegy to the inspiration, talent and patience of all the masters who'd painted and illuminated in these lands over the years.

--Orhan Pamuk, *My Name is Red* (306)

Turkish novelist, and Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk is another Southeastern European writer who is concerned with relations between East and West. His works highlight the discursive chains that lock both regions in fixed positions. Because he is a Turkish citizen, Pamuk engages with Ottoman history and Turkey's reconciliation of its imperial past. As discussed in the introduction, Turkey's influence in Southeastern Europe is growing, especially in areas previously under Ottoman administration. However, its admission into the European Union appears to be indefinitely delayed. Attitudes about Turkey's inclusion vary throughout Europe, but what remains a constant is the stigmatization of the eastern subject, which is felt in Turkey and all throughout Southeastern Europe, albeit in different degrees. As Bakić-Hayden astutely observes, Southeastern Europe engages in nesting orientalisms[64] where easternness is not geographically determined, but discursively, and Turkey is the easternmost nation in the region geographically *and* discursively. Southeastern Europe is comprised of worlds within worlds, and the Ottoman legacy determines, in part, the worlds that are intelligible in its literature and cinema. The Ottoman past is the hum, the background,

[64] See chapter one, pp. 62-64.

and an undeniable part of Southeastern European foundations. While Southeastern European nations have flourished and solidified their national identities in the aftermath of Ottoman Empire's disintegration, the hum of that empire is a powerful constant that does not overwhelm, but which complements and adds depth to the cultures of the region. Southeastern European nations exist between legacies of the past and the shifts of the present. As such, their literatures and cinemas are also concerned with temporal fragmentation, history, and tradition.

The passage at the start of this conclusion highlights tradition and permanence, but also describes melancholia for a world that has passed and is only visible in preserved manuscripts. This world, of course, is the tradition of illumination of manuscripts by miniaturist Ottoman painters whose art was markedly different than western artists'. Pamuk investigates the tension between East and West in much of his work in order to explore areas of weakness in the way each entity is currently constituted. He is concerned with the relationship of Turkey and Europe and with the simultaneously diverging and converging cultures that each represents. It is for this reason that *My Name Is Red* is so compelling, because while it laments the passing of a traditional art form, it also argues for its permanence, insisting that cultural legacies never quite pass. They cannot be eradicated, but remain in the social and cultural fabric of a people.

In another important novel, *Snow*, Pamuk uses a story of the distant past to shed light on the expansive western influence on Turkish culture. The story comes from Firdevsi's *Shehname,* and it is the story of Rüstem and his son Suhrab, who had never

met except for in battle where the father kills the son. Ultimately Rüstem finds out that he killed his own son, and the story is narrated as a tragedy, much in the tradition of Oedipus. Pamuk's character narrating this distant story, Blue, is a political Islamist in hiding and he speaks to the protagonist, an exiled Turkish poet, Ka. Blue says: "But I didn't tell you this beautiful story to show you what it means to me or how I relate it to my life; I told it to point out that it's forgotten…Once upon a time, millions of people knew it by heart – from Tabriz to Istanbul…But now, because we've fallen under the spell of the West, we've forgotten our own stories"(Pamuk, *Snow* 77-8). Forgetting one's own stories is more tragic than Rüstem's tragedy. Forgetting one's owns stories connotes a death of sorts, a passing, and a profound cultural loss that strips away one's pride and identity. However, Pamuk's characters seem to argue that it is only in an archeology of the past where the present can be consolidated. From Ottoman miniature painting to long-forgotten epic stories, Pamuk's characters as a collective are involved in a process of cultural recuperation and ownership, while simultaneously witnessing the ravages of time on the Ottoman legacy.

Equally important are Pamuk's remarks on the East-West question in a talk he delivered in Frankfurt. Pamuk claims that there is no denying that there is an East-West question and he distills it down to a binary between tradition and modernity, but he also expresses another notion connected to the question: that of shame. "When we in Turkey discuss the East-West question," he writes, "or when we prevaricate over our country's relations with Europe the question of shame is always lurking…[and] my novels are made from these dark materials, from this shame, this pride, this anger, and this sense of

defeat" ("Kars" 231). That last word, "defeat" carries within it the same melancholia that Pamuk's characters embody. The presence of the Ottoman Empire haunts the novels and the speech. Lamenting its passing is an act of remembrance and re-acquisition. While Pamuk expresses the shame associated with Turkey "knocking on [Europe's] door" (234), he also expresses pride in the long history that culminated in the proclamation of the Turkish Republic out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

Pamuk does not address directly the centuries-old European orientalism toward the Ottoman Empire, but this knowledge, too lurks in the dark, and is part of the dark material that births his stories. Although Turkey arose as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated, it did so at the same time that its former colonies in Southeastern Europe also gave rise to their own nation-states. Thus, Pamuk's Turkish lament, has much in common with a Southeastern European lament in that they both share the experience of discursive, political, economic, and religious marginalization vis-à-vis western Europe. The difference is that Southeastern Europe is overdetermined both by western Europe and the Ottoman Empire, whereas Turkey floats on the edges of Europe, a powerful outsider whose history haunts its present.

Fundamentally, the issue that Pamuk highlights in his speech and his novels is that of history and tradition, and how both serve to consolidate national identity and marginalize a nation in the face of more powerful actors. A crucial example of the lingering East-West attitudes is when professor Horace Engdahl presented the Nobel Prize to Orhan Pamuk in 2006. Speaking about Pamuk's most political novel *Snow*, Engdahl writes that Ka, the main character, travels into a

> forgotten town on a remote Turkish border. This displacement, no less drastic than a journey from Earth to Moon, gives him the opportunity to take a geological core sample of all levels of Turkish society, from the loyal state establishment to disappointed leftist intellectuals, Islamic fundamentalists, Kurds and the mystically suicidal girls fighting for the right to wear veils. (Engdahl)

It is the journey from 'earth' to the 'moon' that is curious in Engdahl's description. Turkey is so remote, so different, so unlike Europe that it is described as the difference between earth and moon. Such a comparison betrays the way positionality affects the critic's understanding of Pamuk's text. In this case which is the earth and which is the moon? Which is the planet and which is the satellite? Which is the center and which is the periphery?

Even more telling, however, is Engdahl's statement about the effect Pamuk's work has in situating Istanbul as a literary center. He says: "You have made your native city an indispensable literary territory, equal to Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg, Joyce's Dublin or Proust's Paris – a place where readers from all corners of the world can live another life, just as credible as their own, filled by an alien feeling that they immediately recognize as their own" (Engdahl). Finally, a Turkish writer who has been consecrated by the academy, whose work is included in the canon, because the reader recognizes himself in the work, however 'alien' it may be. The only way in which Pamuk could be part of the museum of World Literature is if he fits the classificatory methods, the previous molds of categorization, the already-constructed archive of Nobel Prize

consecration. That he occupies a small shelf in it is certainly meaningful in a time where the European Union is experiencing some of its most significant upheavals since its conception, and at a time when the world is seeing the rise of an Islamic fundamentalism that is unrelentless, and that it reminds us of the bloody history of colonialism and holy wars. But how significant is that small shelf if it is behind closed doors, accessible only through the archivist, the sole bearer of the map of the archives? Therefore, rethinking World Literature as Worlds Literature represents more closely the worlds that Southeastern European novels (including Turkish ones) represent. The World is not one, just like there is not only one literary archive. The World is a network of literary relations sutured by shared histories, contemporary or distant though they may be. The World of World Literature cannot contain all the Worlds literary traditions embody. Therefore, a Worlds Literature answers more successfully the academic pursuit of the fullness of literary thought. World Cinema, on the other hand, because of its transnational networks of funding, production, and distribution, can access these Worlds within Worlds more easily. Still, it too, struggles with issues of representation and the ways in which audiences determine which stories circulate where.

It is here where I would like to focus my last remarks, on the 'hum' of the Ottoman legacy as a foundation for Turkey and Southeastern Europe and its lasting effects in the current geopolitical climate. In order to illustrate what I mean, I will turn to a prized musical tradition in Albania: the iso-polyphony. Inspired by the notion of lament (*vajtim* in Albanian), the iso-polyphonic song may contain two to three voices. The base of the iso-polyphony is the drone, which is sung in one syllable – usually 'e' –

by the chorus and is in the background throughout the whole song; it fills the spaces between the verses and gives the song a chilling effect. The first voice is called the taker where the singer follows a rhythm as he/she sings the verses; then there is the thrower, a second voice that sounds almost as an echo of the taker, and mediates between the latter and the drone. Southeastern European literature and film resembles the iso-polyphony in that it is layered. At the base, the Ottoman legacy hums much like the drone, lamenting its passing, celebrating its legacy, and lamenting the passing of cultures under its rule. At the top, contemporary literatures and films narrate and take center stage, much like the taker. In the middle, the echo of both Ottoman legacy and contemporary realities meet much like the thrower who sutures the other parts of the song into its unity.

Southeastern European literature and film consist a site ripe for investigation on how separate temporalities press upon and shift onto each other. In Andrić we observe these shifts as the novels' receptions change in the post-Yugoslav moment. While a desire for return to Albania's Christian roots is a latent form of postcolonial resistance fomented in a post-1989 and post-9/11 moment in a nation that was and is seeking to join the EU, Kadare's works cannot be read in a singular way. Moreover, Kadare's novel can be interpreted as anticolonial resistance, which makes use of orientalist tropes to resist, but at the same time in the current context, such positioning is also guilty of Islamophobia. The question that the writers and filmmakers discussed in this study raise is: how do we go forward rather than hold on to the past? The answer emerges through a careful analysis of the Worlds Southeastern European film and literature depict, and by accepting and harmoniously incorporating into national identities the hum and drone of

the hauntings of history, not as inconvenient truths, but as essential components of the polyphony of storytelling and historiography.

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