

*Ai posti che hanno lasciato il segno,
A coloro che mi hanno accompagnata nelle discese e nelle risalite,
Ai miei cari perduti,
Ai miei angeli custodi,
A mia madre.*

Index

Introduction	5
1. A Twentieth-century Icon	9
1.1. An Introduction to Rebecca West.....	9
1.2. A Woman Traveller in Yugoslavia.....	18
1.3. The Birth of <i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon</i>	21
1.4. Between Autobiography and Travel Writing	23
2. A Long and Crowded Journey	29
2.1. The Structure of <i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon</i>	31
2.2. The protagonists of <i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon</i>	66
3. The Myth of the Balkans	75
3.1. Balkans? Which Balkans?	77
3.2. Discovering and Inventing the Balkans: the Fantasy of the Enlightenment and Romanticism	84
3.3. A Journey through Violence.....	88
Appendix: a Journey through Yugoslavia in Yugoslavia.....	111
Table 1	112
Table 2	114
Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: ripensare i Balcani	119
Bibliography.....	129
Sitography	141

Introduction

I koliko takvih pokrajina ima na ovom
bozjem svetu? Koliko divljih reka bez mosta
i gaza?¹

(Ivo Andrić)

Speaking of Rebecca West, someone wondered why a wealthy Englishwoman about forty years old should be interested in going around the Balkans, lands which had a very poor reputation in Great Britain – her motherland – as well as in the Western world in general. Reading the result of her “Balkan tour,” the travelogue *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia*, one would probably understand why she was so fascinated by those remote lands. The reportage is so accurate and intimate at the same time, that it is impossible not to sympathise with Rebecca the traveller, as it is impossible not to feel curiosity for the places she described. Though *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* be very long and hard to analyse, it offers to a wide range of commentaries, because it is very rich in contents, with its many subjects, going from art to politics, history and geography. The scholars who have shown interest in it have given very opposite opinions on it and its author. In most of the cases they were positive opinions, sometimes they were negative ones. Anyway, it is consolidated the idea that Rebecca had been a sort of Sybil in forecasting in her travel reportage World War II, as it is consolidated that this work is Rebecca’s masterpiece too. One can see that it has started changing the shared idea on the Balkans and to have conquered a place in the list of the best English travel writings.

Given all these premises, which put curiosity in the author of this work, the latter wants to be a study on Rebecca West’s travelogue *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia*. The study is divided into four chapters and it aims to show how innovative Rebecca West’s reportage is, without refusing *in toto* the tradition both of travel writing and of Balkan writing. In order to get to that, the study describes Dame Rebecca West’s life and work and the travelogue’s structure, contents, and protagonists.

The first chapter, *A Twentieth-Century Icon*, aims to introduce Rebecca West and her travel reportage, which is the object of this study. It is divided into four subchapters. Rebecca West is first presented from a biographical point of view, so that the first pages of the chapter are devoted to the most meaningful events of her life and career (including her troubled sentimental life, her relationship with her son and her engagement in political and social issues).

¹ How many of suchlike regions are there in this God’s world? How many wild rivers without bridges nor fords?
[E. P.]

This first part goes under the title of *An Introduction to Rebecca West*. Afterwards, the chapter analyses the reasons of her journey through Yugoslavia, focussing on the stages of her discovery of the Balkans. She went there first for professional reasons and eventually she fell in love with Yugoslavia, to the point of feeling the necessity to go back there. This second part is called *A Woman Traveller in Yugoslavia*. What follows is an explanation of the inception of the idea of recollecting and publishing her travel experience, in the section called *The Birth of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. The very last part of the first chapter is called *Between Autobiography and Travel Writing* and is an analysis of the travel reportage *per se*, with the purpose of highlighting how autobiographical and travel writing aspects are mixed in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

The second chapter, *A Long and Crowded Journey*, aims to show the structure of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, paying attention to its subdivision into chapters and to its protagonists, as well. It comprises two subchapters. The first of them, *The Structure of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, focusses on all the sections of the travel reportage, corresponding to the many places visited by Rebecca West. The second subchapter is entitled *The Protagonists of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* and it highlights the figures and roles of the most important characters of the travelogue, basically: Constantine the poet – the guide; Constantine’s wife – Gerda; and Rebecca’s husband – Mr. Andrews.

The third chapter, *The Myth of the Balkans* aims to develop the topic of the discovery and, consequently, the invention of the Balkans by Western societies. It also aims to find a position for Rebecca West and her work in the history of this myth, the Balkanism. The chapter is divided into three subsections. The first of them, *Balkans? Which Balkans?*, underlines the difficulty to politically identify the Balkans. The second of them, *Discovering and Inventing the Balkans*, explains the origins of the myth of the Balkans, focussing on the two main stages of this process of “invention:” Enlightenment and Romanticism. The third and last section, *A Journey through Violence* lists the most shared stereotypes on the Balkan people – they are violent, undefined, Balkans they are like bridges between civility and barbarism, Balkan people are lazy, ugly, backward people, whose only passions are dancing and drinking coffee, they are the living legacy of the Ottoman empire – finding traces of these stereotypes in works of previous Western travellers. In this section there is space to show how those stereotypes work in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. The third chapter concludes with a reflection on how Rebecca started to change Western perspective on the Balkans, being, at the same time, the first English and woman to look at them with new eyes. The title of this work, that is *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: Figuring the Balkans Anew* attempts to show how Rebecca’s contribute mattered in the common Balkan imaginary. All the study leads to this core argument:

pinpointing how Rebecca West was able to be so innovative in her personal considerations on the Balkans, and so influencing in passing down her new ideas to others, after her.

The appendix aims to put in evidence the reception of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia*, in what Rebecca referred to as Yugoslavia: nowadays Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. With the help of the COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services/*Kooperativni online bibliografski sistem i servisi*) catalogues and the digitalised archive of Croatian National Library (*Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica u Zagrebu*, shorten in NSK) it was possible to report the records of Rebecca West's masterpiece in the countries there described, in two tables, one referring to the English versions, the other referring to the translations. The reception results to be quite poor, for, according to the detected records, there are only two translations, which are still printed in Serbian, entitled *Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju* (by Nikola Kolević and Ana Selić), plus the *Macedonian* translation of *Macedonia, Crno jagne i siv sokol: Makedonija*, by Vladimir Cvetkovski. At the same time, is clear that the interest in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* has been revived some years after the collapse of the Communism, from the 1990s. Indeed, the book had been forbidden under Tito, so that it could only recently start being appreciated by the public there. Nowadays *Crno jagnje i sivi soko* is a well known *putopis* in ex-Yugoslavia, as the latest editions by Vulkan, one of the largest publishing house of the area, and the increasing number of critical studies on it can prove.

The readers of this study are invited to note that its author does not speak Serbo-Croatian, though having some notions of the language, thanks to her studies (as a linguist, and a Slavonic student, in particular) and to some Serbo-Croatian lessons she had. This is the reason why the bibliography is poor of texts in that language. Generally, French, English, Russian or Portuguese translations have been preferred, when existing, apart from a few exceptions in the cases of a few articles. Nonetheless, having the travelogue raised interest for this area and having it been written in English, this was the language chosen to work on the topic.

Another note must be made on the choice of reporting the names and the toponyms in the original language (apart from the names of countries, which are reported in the usual English translation). This choice has been made because, as Rebecca said, "the spelling of Yugoslavian names presents a serious problem," so she spelt them in a personal way, different from the standard one. In order to avoid confusion, the titles of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* chapters are reported in Rebecca's way, while in all the other cases the original spelling is preferred. When necessary, names have been transliterated from Cyrillic into Latin script, according to the transliteration system ISO 9.

The idea of studying *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia*, with a special regard to its implications on the Western shared view of the area, was born exactly on the bases of one of the stereotypes that are analysed in this work: the Balkans are a bridge between East and West. Precisely, in this case, I saw them as a bridge between Western Europe (Great Britain, since Rebecca West is British) and Russia. This bridge seemed to be perfect to supply a missing link between those two sides of the world, which are otherwise so far away. My journey through Yugoslavia, like Rebecca West's, started under under some Western prejudices, but soon after, I found myself submerged in the complexities of these lands. While discovering the places, the history and culture of the Balkan peninsula, thanks to Rebecca West's travelogue, my fascination for the area grew. I found myself always a bit less victim of the prejudice and a bit more interested in discovering how such a mixed literary genre – travel writing – had the power to create a radicalised apparatus of ideas and images on the Balkans. My interest in Rebecca West's life and work has proportionally increased, as well as the interest in the genre of travel writing.

Finally, it seemed worth considering how the countries protagonists of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* received the book, at least in terms of editions and translations. Indeed, the question of how a book written *here* on those lands has been received *there*, leads to another question, which is how the Eastern people learnt to imagine the West, a West than has proved unable to see them, listen to them, and so invented them. This kind of approach inspired and triggered the major research project supervised by Alex Drace-Francis and Wendy Bracewell, *East Looks West: East European Travel Writing on European Identities and Divisions, 1550-2000*, where the opposite perspective is examined: how the Occident looked like *Under Eastern Eyes*, through the study of an enormous corpus of travel accounts, written in over twenty languages, and published over a period of four and a half centuries. Although this question is here left open, the issue of how the foreign gaze is direct to a certain part of the world, remains of the highest concern. Even more so, when literature allows to analyse the reciprocity of this look, as in the case of the Balkans-West relation.

1. A Twentieth-century Icon

1.1. An Introduction to Rebecca West

I was never able to lead the life of a writer because of these two over-riding factors, my sexual life, or rather death, and my politics.¹

Rebecca West is not really the name of the writer the work focusses on. Hers was Cicely Isabel Fairfield, she chose this pseudonym when she was thirty. It is related to a character in Ibsen's play *Rosmersholm*.² After that moment, she actually remained Cissie (Cicely) only for her family; for everyone else in both her professional and personal life she was transformed into Rebecca West.³

Cicely Isabel Fairfield was born in 1892 in a very cultivated family of Irish origin. Her two sisters Letitia (Lettie) and Winifred (Winnie) and she spent their childhood in the outskirts of London, surrounded by plenty of books, music, and animated talks about the arts, politics, and current events.⁴ Her environment was quite intellectual despite the lack of money. It is known for sure that Cissie was a precocious reader and art lover. As for the relationship among the sisters, Cissie, Lettie and Winnie grew up very close to each other. During her life, Rebecca was always in touch with them, exchanged letters with them, helped them and was helped by them.⁵

In 1901 her father, Charles Fairfield, left home to launch a pharmaceuticals factory in Sierra Leone and West Africa. His departure was eventually more definitive than a temporary job abroad might have suggested. Cissie felt the separation as a betrayal towards her mother, her sisters, and herself. So, she wrote two sad poems for the occasion "She"⁶ and "He"⁷ both of them about a betrayed love. One can assume that "she" is not about her mother, but about herself.⁸

¹ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987, p. 54.

² Henrik Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People; The Wild Duck; Rosmersholm*, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1999.

³ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 38.

⁴ Rebecca West, *The Fountain Overflows*, London: Macmillan, 1957. This is a fictional novel, full of autobiographical references. Through the description of the childhood of the three sisters, protagonists of the novel, one get to know these details about Rebecca and her sisters' childhood.

⁵ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., pp. 174-176.

⁶ Rebecca West, *She*, 1901.

⁷ Rebecca West, *He*, 1901.

⁸ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., pp. 22-23.

In 1907, Charles Fairfield died, when Cissie was 14. She would write “I had a glorious father. I had no father at all.”⁹ This is her way to express how she felt about her father taking his distance from the family: she never forgave him for being absent in her life, yet she saw the importance of what he did. After his death the financial situation of the family got worse. This caused problems, of course, in her life (money, food, and clothes became her emotional currency) but at the same time, it was fundamental in forging her independence and free spirit, as she herself affirmed later on in her life.¹⁰

The family later moved to Edinburgh and lived there two years. The city is recalled in the letters the sisters exchanged as provincial and relatively small. Rebecca left it with no tear and went happily back to London. It was 1911 when she started working for *The Freewoman*, a feminist weekly.¹¹ This kind of feminist writing occupied the first part of Rebecca’s production. Despite being referred to as a feminist heroine, this review occupied her life until 1913.¹² She has even been responsible of the re-establishment of *The Freewoman* as *The New Freewoman*, inaugurated in 1913, as a humanist and individualist review.¹³ In spite of her central role in the review – she was by then assistant editor – Rebecca West started distancing herself from the feminist cause: it was not an exclusive concern any more.¹⁴ Eventually, after losing completely her interest, she resigned: among the reasons of her decision one must say that there was also a very complicated private life.

Rebecca is known for having been the mistress of the very famous writer H.G. Wells. They met because she reviewed his work.¹⁵ He was already married when they met the first time, and he never stopped having multiple parallel stories. The two had a long relationship, which gave birth to an illegitimate son, Anthony Panther. Their love story was long and passionate as the letters they exchanged prove.¹⁶ The story affected for ever Rebecca West’s life, work and her relation with her son as well.

She and Wells, in the early months, were happy lovers. He called her Panther, she called him Jaguar, and they quickly evolved a private mythology in which Panther and Jaguar played in a secret erotic world.¹⁷

⁹ *Idem*, p. 40.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 25.

¹¹ Dora Marsden, *The Freewoman: A Weekly Feminist Review*, London: Stephen Swift and Co. Ltd., 1911-11-23 / 1912-10-10.

¹² Jenny Stringer, *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Literature in English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 711

¹³ Dora Marsden, *The New Freewoman: An Individualist Review*, London: The New Freewoman Ltd., 1913-06-15 / 1913-12-15.

¹⁴ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 41.

¹⁵ Jenny Stringer (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Literature in English*, cit., p. 711.

¹⁶ Gordon Ray, *H. G. Wells and Rebecca West*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

¹⁷ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 54.

Yet, when the child came on 4 August 1914, the unmarried mother and her child were occasions of shame and embarrassment in the public mind. Also, Wells urged secrecy on her, so Rebecca found herself isolated, confined with almost no one outside her family. Wells made it clear: he did not want a family routine with Rebecca. He already had a domestic life he was sufficiently devoted to, so he was not interested in having a second one. Partly due to the environment in which Rebecca became a mother, she was never sentimental about maternity. She wrote in old age “I cannot see that childbirth is creative at all. One is just an instrument, and it’s none the worse for that.”¹⁸

Her maternity did not prevent her career. She was to become a famous writer. Rebecca West’s first novel is *The Return of the Soldier*, published in 1918.¹⁹ It turns entirely on the partial amnesia of a shell-shocked officer.

In *The Routledge History of Literature in English* the book is described as the “first major description in literature of what it meant to come home from the war, shell-shocked and effectively destroyed as a man. Although it is an early work, it is remarkably powerful in evoking what was to become, both realistically and symbolically, an image of how the First World War affected the generation which survived it.”²⁰

The novel was successful; the Century Company of New York bought the rights to publish it. Lately, she also sold the dramatic and film rights.²¹ When this happened, the war was still on; it was the right moment to publish war novels. H.G. Wells had also published in the genre of war literature; following him, she also became known in the field. For example, Claire Buck mentioned her in her essay *British Women’s Writing of the Great War*.²²

After the war ended, in 1919, Rebecca had a physical collapse due to some health problems: mainly lungs inflammation, and a fall in an open cistern, which caused her a “disturbance of perception.”²³ Something strange happened as a matter of fact: unable to sleep, she found herself “incapable of eliminating irrelevant impressions and coordinating those which remained.”²⁴

Rebecca continued to believe that she had this undesired access to the paranormal. During the Second World War, she seemed to sense when there were going to be air raids on

¹⁸ Lorna Gibb, *West's World: The Extraordinary Life of Dame Rebecca West*, London: Macmillan, 2014, p. 60.

¹⁹ Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*, New York: The Century Company, 1918.

²⁰ Ronald Carter, John McRae, *The Routledge History of Literature in English*, New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 401.

²¹ Peter Wolfe, *Rebecca West: Artist and Thinker*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1971, p. 34.

²² Claire Buck, “British Women’s Writing of the Great War,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 100-112.

²³ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 70.

²⁴ *Idem*, p. 72.

London with such accuracy, she said, that people observing her movements thought she must be a German spy.²⁵

As far as Victoria Glendinning, her official biographer, reports, Rebecca's developed sixth sense let her forecast when bombs would explode. This was to many incredible. For this reason, people started to think that it was not a case at all: they almost accused her for being a spy.

Her fall also had another consequence: while she was recovering, Wells met a woman and became involved with her. Thus, the crisis exploded in the couple. Divergent ideas about their son's education made the situation worse. They started having a very unstable relationship, getting closer during their meetings and distancing from each other after the departure. Nonetheless, Rebecca started working to her second novel. *The Judge*²⁶ came out in 1922, during the summer she was spending in Porlock with Anthony. Meanwhile, her relationship with Wells went on collapsing: not only in recriminations and reproaches, but also in public disliking of their works.²⁷ However, they still could not break in a definitive way.

Rebecca in the 1920s was, as an American paper declared, "the personification of all the vitality, the courage, and the independence of the modern woman," but her girlhood had been Edwardian and her parents had been Victorians. The word "mistress" aroused expectations which her life with Wells had not answered.²⁸

Rebecca West and H.G. Wells definitely broke up in 1923, after the last summer they had spent together. So a new phase started in Rebecca's life. She went to America and she loved it. However, her first visit there taught her that it was not a place where she and Anthony could build a new life. She met many people she liked, such as Charlie Chaplin, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Alexander Woolcott, Beatrice and Bruce Gould, Emanie Sachs, John Gunter, William Randolph Hearst, but she also met some conservative women very keen to judge her for her "irregular private life," and some progressive feminists, critiquing her for having accepted financial support from her child's father.²⁹

A remarkable meeting in her life was that with Emma Goldman, the anarchist and feminist. Their friendship was very long. The last time that Rebecca was involved with Emma was on film. In 1981 the movie *Reds* was released. The film was about John Reed, the American communist who was in Pietrograd with his lover, during the Russian Revolution. Emma, as a friend of Reed, played a prominent part in the film. Rebecca also appeared in the film, but just as a witness from the past.

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 73.

²⁶ Rebecca West, *The Judge*, London: Hutchinson, 1922.

²⁷ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 86.

²⁸ *Idem*, p. 90.

²⁹ *Idem*, p. 105.

Her sentimental life kept on with some casual lovers – usually problematic ones – one for all, John Gunther, a university student who was to become a famous political journalist; The relationship with Anthony, was increasingly nervous too. He was always reproaching her mistakes and she could not understand him. A sense of isolation pervaded Rebecca. As one can imagine, her troubled personal life created delays in her work and even periods of unproductiveness.³⁰

Rebecca's capacity to enjoy her friends and the good things of life was at least as developed as her capacity for unhappiness. She gave pleasure a very high value. But her unhappiness is easier to document, because it outraged and frightened her, as she recorded it. As she wrote, "the bad is more easily perceived than the good. A fresh lobster does not give such pleasure to the consumer as a stale one will give him pain."³¹

That is why, in the end she decided to be psychoanalysed, which was quite an unusual choice to take in the 1920s. The analysis is present in the new novel she started writing, *Sunflower*.³² With the traces of the analysis there are also references to her new relationship with Aitken, William Maxwell, Lord Beaverbrook, the millionaire son of a Scotch Presbyterian minister who had immigrated to Canada.³³

Quite recovered, in the autumn of 1927, Rebecca moved to a new flat and made a new start, in London. The next summer her extended essay *The Strange Necessity*³⁴ was published along with a selection of *Herald Tribune* reviews. In the reviews she analysed works of art, among them, Joyce's works. Joyce was irritated by the manners of her essay on *Ulysses*.³⁵ Despite Joyce's irritation, Rebecca would continue writing on him. If the *Herald Tribune* reviews got her in trouble with Joyce, *The Strange Necessity* got her into trouble with Wells: he could find explicit critiques on his work in the essay.

In autumn 1929, Rebecca's novel *Harriet Hume*³⁶ was published. The novel was written during a phase of hopefulness and new insight.³⁷ It reflects happiness and positive views for the future. By then Rebecca was a well-known writer and a famous woman. As the professor of History Larry Wolff stated:

³⁰ *Idem*, p. 116.

³¹ *Idem*, p. 117.

³² Rebecca West, *Sunflower*, London: Virago, 1987.

³³ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 119.

³⁴ Rebecca West, *The Strange Necessity*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1928.

³⁵ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1922.

³⁶ Rebecca West, *Harriet Hume*, London: Hutchinson, 1929.

³⁷ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 135.

In the 1930's Rebecca West was already celebrated in Britain and America for her fiction and criticism; she was "the incomparable Rebecca" to Alexander Woollcott, who also commented on her extraordinary beauty.³⁸

A very meaningful event in Rebecca's life was her marriage. She got married on 1st November 1930, completely unexpectedly. "Sorry darling but am becoming Mrs Henry Maxwell Andrews" she would write in a telegram to Fannie Hurst and other friends.³⁹ No one could expect this, due to her implications with Wells. Actually Rebecca West had met her husband-to-be in 1928 in London. She always felt that he, like herself, was a displaced person:

The grim fact is that he was not a gentleman, what does that mean, except that owing to historical accident and his forebears' lack of prudence he did not fit into any class, and had to move among people who did not understand him and whom he could not understand; of necessity errors abounded. There was a bewilderment through which he blundered. Mine was much the same predicament, it is a misfortune which evokes no sympathy, only derision.⁴⁰

She recalls the first five years of the marriage as the happiest of her life, implying that the subsequent ones had been less happy. He got on her nerves, she complained about him a lot. The great problem was that despite being a devout husband, he stopped making love to her in the 1930s. She would never accept this form of repudiation.⁴¹ They never had children. She was once pregnant, but it was an ectopic pregnancy, so she had therapeutic abortion and, afterwards, a hysterectomy. In the meantime, Anthony showed some problems with her mother's new life, something which concerned Wells too.⁴²

By the 1930s Rebecca had been writing articles about books and authors for over twenty years. She was always the happiest to meet actors and actresses, as well as writers and intellectuals. The first book by Mrs Andrews was a short life of the early Church Father St. Augustine, *St. Augustine*,⁴³ which came out in February 1933. In the same year Rebecca contributed to the Hogarth letters by Leonard and Virginia Woolf: "These were personal statements in pamphlet form about art, literature, religion, or politics, by leading authors." Anyhow, Rebecca did not join the Bloomsbury group; she found the whole group "physically peculiar."⁴⁴

³⁸ Larry Wolff, "Rebecca West: This Time Let's Listen," *The New York Times Book Review*, February, 1991, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/09/10/specials/west-wolff.html>, last consulted, 14.01.2019; 15:50.

³⁹ Telegram quoted in Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 136.

⁴⁰ *Idem*, p. 140.

⁴¹ *Idem*, pp. 141-149.

⁴² *Idem*, p. 150.

⁴³ Rebecca West, *St. Augustine*, London: Peter Davies, 1933.

⁴⁴ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, pp. 54-55.

In 1936 *The Thinking Reed*⁴⁵ came out. This was to be her last novel for two decades. Indeed, she would later specialise mostly in non-fiction. Also, she would be politically very active, devoting less time to produce novels. Rebecca's political views were always clear, nor was she ever a pacifist: "she was violently opposed to the policy of appeasement of Germany, and against the Peace pledge Union."⁴⁶

In 1936 Rebecca went to Yugoslavia for the first time, as will be broadly discussed in the next section of this chapter.⁴⁷ She was very fascinated by the people, the culture, and the Balkans as a whole; she even tried, though unsuccessfully, to learn Serbian. For Rebecca, Yugoslavia was able to reproduce what is inside every human: the fight between the passion for life and the inclination to death. She was to visit the country twice again.⁴⁸ So, Yugoslavia would become the protagonist of her masterpiece *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia*.⁴⁹ The book was first published in 1941. It turned out to be much more than a mere travel reportage; a book on herself and her love for Yugoslavia. Also, scholars thought that it was a book, forecasting World War II.⁵⁰ As will be more extensively explained in the following chapter, Rebecca has been said to have forecast the arrival of the second world conflict. This has been affirmed considering the comments she left on Yugoslavian politics in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, and the attention she paid to the internal instability and a certain ferment of the area. This kind of approach to the book make it obvious for it to be considered much more than a mere travel reportage.

Briefly:

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon survives as a classic among travel books, a monument not only to its author's love of Yugoslavia but to the protean virtuosity of her writing talent as well.⁵¹

Rebecca never freed herself from Yugoslavia. When the political conflict over it got worse after World War II, Rebecca took very definite positions in the article on politics she wrote;⁵² the consequences followed her for the rest of her life. She was labelled a reactionary. Only in extreme old age, did she detach herself from Yugoslav affairs.⁵³

⁴⁵ Rebecca West, *The Thinking Reed*, London: Hutchinson, 1936.

⁴⁶ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, 162.

⁴⁷ See *infra*, Chap.1.2., pp. 18-23.

⁴⁸ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., pp. 170-172.

⁴⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia*, Macmillan, 1941.

⁵⁰ Claire Buck, "British Women's Writing of the Great War," cit., p. 107.

⁵¹ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, London: Pan Macmillan, 1993, p. 5.

⁵² To learn more on Rebecca's ideas on politics and the way she changed her mind on the topic, see Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., pp. 140-161, where the biographer deals with Rebecca's publications in journals and periodicals.

⁵³ Hubert Butler, *Rebecca West in Yugoslavia*, Irish Pages Press: 1977, p. 65.

In 1941, after operations for a tumour on her breast, she became a grandmother. All the family moved to Ibstone (Wycombe district in Buckinghamshire, England). Anthony's mental health seemed to be definitively restored, when Rebecca discovered that he wanted to divorce his wife in order to marry a girl he had met at the BBC. This was just a few months after the marriage. Rebecca took care of the situation. She reported her involvement with her son's life as a kind of torture.

I don't hate Anthony, I wish I could, but I do see the awful hell of his egotism, and I know that all our lives long there will be awful crises... and never, never, never any way of making Anthony happy and never any freedom from the desire to make him happy.⁵⁴

Rebecca would never understand Anthony, and Anthony would always blame his mother for that. His paranoia fed off hers, and hers fed off his.⁵⁵ To make the situation worse, in 1948 H.G. Wells died. Rebecca and Anthony both attended Wells' cremation service.

I do not want to exaggerate the part I played in his life and I would think a great part of the pleasure he seemed to derive from seeing me in his last days was that I went back further in time than almost anybody he knew.⁵⁶

To go back to Rebecca's involvement in politics, in 1946 she applied for permission to attend the closing sessions of the Nuremberg trials. She approved of what was done there, but she was against capital punishment in general. When she reported of war criminals and traitors in what would become *The Meaning of Treason*,⁵⁷ her attitude towards punishment was made evident: not even in this case could she accept the idea of death penalty. The book came out in 1947.

The Meaning of Treason was to be the book that consolidates her reputation, and the one that most people still associate with her name. Like *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, it was and has remained controversial. The tone of her writing about traitors distressed some people.⁵⁸

Due to her not-revenging approach regarding the war criminals, she received negative critiques on her work. Partly because of this, she decided to go to the United States, where she met some old friends. In the United States she started writing for *The Evening Standard*.

In 1956, *The Fountain Overflows* came out. It is the most famous of Rebecca's novels. Yet, more than a fiction it looks like well-structured family stories, which are strongly autobiographical. In each character in the book, it is possible to detect connections to a member

⁵⁴ Letter to Winnie, quoted in Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 185.

⁵⁵ *Idem*, p. 187.

⁵⁶ Rebecca's speech for the funeral, quoted in Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 190.

⁵⁷ Rebecca West, *The Meaning of Treason*, New York: Viking Press, 1947.

⁵⁸ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 232.

of her family. This is made evident by the fact that her sister Winnie got angry at Rebecca, after reading the book: she found an unmistakable description of herself that she did not like at all.⁵⁹

In 1959 Rebecca West went to Buckingham Palace to receive the crowning honour of her professional life: “Mrs. Henry Andrews emerged as Dame Cicely Andrews, better known to the world as Dame Rebeca West.”⁶⁰ In the spring of 1960 Rebecca travelled in South Africa, in order to write some articles for the *Sunday Times*. She enjoyed it and considered her tour as a “rest.”⁶¹

Her last novel, *The Birds Fall Down*⁶² came out in 1966. It is linked to *The Meaning of Treason*. So, again it shows her political point of view on Europe, and in general, too.

On 3 November 1968 Henry died. He left no money to Anthony, driving Rebecca to rethink her whole marriage. She was almost seventy-six and she was sure she was to follow him soon. Very worried for her son, she had to face relational and economic difficulties for him.⁶³ Despite her personal life’s troubles, in 1971 she resolved to write her own memories, whose working title was *Parental Memoirs*. This book has never been published. The rest of her life she filled notebooks with stories and unfinished novels, drafts of letters, words in foreign languages, review and recipes. There are even arithmetic exercises, since she found it relaxing and satisfactory to resolve them.⁶⁴

It is interesting to consider that all the dearest people in her life were not famous or literary, but those for whom she needed to put up no performance, just like Margaret Hodges, her wartime secretary. She used to have many friends, and in the friendship, she got very close to people. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same, as for her maternal life. Year by year her relationship with Anthony got worse; they barely talked to each other in the end.⁶⁵

Used to fight in her life, Rebecca never gave up, not even with death. A housekeeper said of her that even during her last years “her life, even now, is black and white and crimson and purple and wild.”⁶⁶ Her death, like her life, was a battle. She had been an abandoned child, a progressive feminist, a writer of fiction and non-fiction, a traveller, a passionate lover and a sad mistress, a problematic mother, a happy wife, a desperate wife. She lived almost a century,

⁵⁹ *Idem*, p. 256.

⁶⁰ *Idem*, 234.

⁶¹ *Idem*, p. 237.

⁶² Rebecca West, *The Birds Fall Down*, London: Macmillan, 1966.

⁶³ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., pp. 250-255.

⁶⁴ *Idem*, p. 78; p. 260.

⁶⁵ Samuel Hynes, *Rebecca West: A Celebration*, cit., pp. 70-77.

⁶⁶ Deposition reported in Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 262.

and she became iconic of its complexities. She died on the morning of 15 March 1983, at the age of 91. *Sunflower* and her correspondence have been published posthumously.

1.2. A Woman Traveller in Yugoslavia

Nothing in my life had affected me more deeply than this journey through Yugoslavia⁶⁷

Why would a 44-year-old woman, quite well known in the literary world, with a troubled sentimental and maternal life go to Yugoslavia and fall in love with it?⁶⁸ For sure, she was not planning a *Grand Tour* in the original sense of the experience.⁶⁹ One can find the answer to this question in the prologue and the epilogue that Rebecca put in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Prologue and epilogue provide a sort of autobiographical framework to the travel reportage. They contain Rebecca's indication on the reasons, the modalities and the aims of her work. As Rebecca herself repeated many times in her life, and stated plainly in the prologue, travelling through Yugoslavia she came to better know herself, her society, and people's behaviour in general. It was a place where she felt the necessity to go.⁷⁰

She understood women did not historically go abroad as much as men, but in an attempt to break from domesticity and ignorance she went and she drew her own conclusions. West demonstrated that she could understand the necessity, politically and aesthetically, of reconsidering the female traveller. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* engages with the journey of a foreign female "other" through the histories, symbolisms and instances of a conglomeration of cultures attempting to unify themselves as a single entity in between two great wars.

In the reportage there are accounts concerning Bosnia, Croatia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Old Serbia, and Serbia. It is impossible to know exactly when she visited each country, but this is not of primary importance, since Rebecca herself did not follow any chronological order in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, which is written as if it were the result of one extended visit to the country. Despite the fact that *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* seems based on a single extended visit in Yugoslavia, it is the result of three different

⁶⁷ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, p. 1088.

⁶⁸ As Clifton Fadiman puts it: "Why should this highly cultivated Englishwoman make pilgrimage after pilgrimage to these dark lands and these violent and often primitive peoples?" Clifton Fadiman, "Magnum Opus," *The New Yorker*, October 1941, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1941/10/18>, last consulted 15.01.2019; 12:30. Indeed, this was the question raised by the general negative ideas shared on the Balkan peninsula. Those ideas will be studied in chapter three of this work. See *infra*, Ch. 3, pp. 77-113.

⁶⁹ The *Grand Tour* had educational purposes. It was the *voyage* that adolescents (British above all) made in order to see from a closer perspective the variety of the world. For more on the topic see Attilio Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte: il romanzo del Grand Tour*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995, pp. 18-25.

⁷⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 23.

trips. The first time (1936), Rebecca was asked by the British Council to give some lectures in Greece, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.⁷¹ At that time she was completely unaware of South Slavs culture: “violence was, indeed, all I knew of Balkans: all I knew of the South Slavs.”⁷² She just accepted the charge of the lectures and she left. However, the second time (1937), going there was entirely her choice; she had become infatuated with the country and its people: “I must go back to Yugoslavia, this time next year, in the spring, for Easter,”⁷³ she told her husband, Henry Andrews. He was with her during the second and third trip. The two travelled together, even if their marriage was not perfect anymore. Her anxiety about their relationship is made evident by her peculiar constant citing of “my husband.”⁷⁴ Sometimes, however, the husband in the book is just the excuse to show a different point of view, like all the times that they discuss on Germans.⁷⁵ Besides, to “My husband” are very often ascribed the most brilliant comments, almost as giving him importance by this.⁷⁶

The third time she went to Yugoslavia in the summer 1938 to complete the journey she had started previously. Yugoslavia was by the mid-1930s a constitutional monarchy under the regency of Prince Paul Karađorđević (1893-1976).⁷⁷ More than a unified country, it was rather a federation of different peoples, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, plus diverse minorities.⁷⁸ Rebecca learnt to know all of them, the peculiar kinds of national pride and the differences among them. She had a guide there, Stanislav Vinaver, a writer and a scholar, named Constantine in her book.⁷⁹ He was almost always with her. In fact, even if Rebecca was travelling alone, she was never really alone; she had guides and friends

⁷¹ *Idem*, p. 22.

⁷² *Idem*, p. 21.

⁷³ *Idem*, p. 23.

⁷⁴ Lesley Chamberlain remarks that there is a certain anxiety in the frequency with which Rebecca writes “my husband,” in “Rebecca West in Yugoslavia,” *Contemporary Review* 248.1444, pp. 262-266, 1986, p. 264.

⁷⁵ Rebecca made no secret of her dislike for Germans. In the book, the German character *par excellence* is Gerda, the wife of Stanislav Vinaver, the Serbo-Jewish guide of Rebecca. Frequently, Gerda is described with negative connotations. However, Rebecca seems to be more sensitive to her “bad behaviour” than her husband. To give an example, in Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., pp. 662-663, after meeting some gipsies in Macedonia, Gerda expressed her disgust for them so Rebecca said to her husband “I cannot bear this,” and he answered “No, you must cheer up, someday she will do this to somebody who will hit her, and hit her hard.”

⁷⁶ Lesley Chamberlain, “Rebecca West in Yugoslavia,” cit., p. 265.

⁷⁷ Basically, Prince Paul Karađorđević took the regency of Yugoslavia, in 1934, after his first cousin King Alexander I of Yugoslavia (Karađorđević) had been assassinated by a Bulgarian nationalist. By Kingdom of Yugoslavia one is actually referring to what was previously called Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. For a detailed history of the kings’ succession and the various steps leading to the creation of the then Yugoslavia (including the falling down of the empires existing before it) see Robert William Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*, London: Constable & Co. LTD., 1911; *Idem*, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, London: Westview Press, 1982, first published, 1945; Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, Torino: Einaudi, 2005.

⁷⁸ Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1995, p. 125.

⁷⁹ Richard Tillinast, “Rebecca West and the Tragedy of Yugoslavia,” *The New Criterion* 10.10, 17-18, 1992, pp.17-18. In this article Richard Tillinast tries to demonstrate that, in the reportage, Rebecca has the highest regard for Serbs. See also *infra*, Ch. 2., pp. 69-75 where more details on Stanislav Vinaver’s life are given and his links to Rebecca West are made clearer.

showing her around. In this way she thought she would better understand the locals. She faced numerous language obstacles: “I have never got further than to be able to speak to peasants with a dictionary open on my lap.”⁸⁰ Rebecca could speak fluent French, she was very passionate for foreign languages and keen to learn them. Yet, she considered Serb too difficult to learn.

Surely Rebecca’s open-mindedness invited her to explore vast subjects and countries.⁸¹ This led her to discover that “she the daughter of an Empire, was in truth a friend of indigenous national cultures, a promoter of individuality and of infinite difference amongst small groups of men.”⁸²

She found in Yugoslavia the land where East met West and nationality met Empire, as she explains in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Basically, the same geographical position of the country seemed to put it in the middle between Eastern and Western realities and she could feel the two kinds of influence in the local culture.⁸³ As for the idea that nationality meets Empire in Yugoslavia, this is explained by the fact that Yugoslavia resulted by then composed by a variety of nationalities (Serb, Croat, Macedonian, Bosnian, Kosovar, Montenegrin, Herzegovinian, Dalmatian) still trying to solve the internal rivalries. Rebecca remarked that all these nationalities were conglomerated in a single state though having not been part of the same Empire, and having not shared the same history.⁸⁴ In a way, discovering Yugoslavia meant as well discovering her place and role in the world. West’s need for clarity and understanding led her to explore the region for herself on a colossal quest to discover if such cohesion was possible, how national identities are forged, and where women fall into those constructions.

Somehow, in the South-Slav lands Rebecca understood that “all our western thought is founded on this repulsive pretence that pain is the proper price of any good thing”⁸⁵ and that this was a radicalised mistake in her opinion. So, one can state that Rebecca came into contact with the Balkans, especially with Yugoslavia, by chance, but in the end, she was so charmed that she decided to devote to it a huge travel reportage, still considered modern and useful. Rebecca’s masterpiece rekindled the interest for Yugoslavia and launched a new school of thought in Balkans’ interpretation. For example some decided to follow (partly) her footsteps: “*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* drew me to Yugoslavia”⁸⁶ wrote Robert Kaplan. The

⁸⁰ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 177.

⁸¹ Lesley Chamberlain, “Rebecca West in Yugoslavia,” cit., p. 264.

⁸² *Idem*, p. 262.

⁸³ This will become clearer further in this work, with the analysis of the structure of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. In the study are stressed the passages where Rebecca West identifies traces of East and West in Yugoslavia. See *infra*, Ch. 2.1., pp. 33-68.

⁸⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., pp. 5-13.

⁸⁵ Richard Tillinast, “Rebecca West and the Tragedy of Yugoslavia,” cit., p. 21.

⁸⁶ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, cit., p. 13.

reasons of Kaplan's statement are many, but for sure he decided to quote her book instead of another, because it was recognised as pivotal in the history of Balkan travel writing.

As a matter of fact, the experience of Yugoslavia involved her so much that she kept involved with Yugoslavian politics in articles, essays,⁸⁷ and she helped Stanislav Vinaver, when he needed her help during the civil war.⁸⁸

1.3. The Birth of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

To my friends in Yugoslavia, who are now all dead or enslaved⁸⁹

This is the dedication Rebecca wrote in her book. She herself would explain in the epilogue who the people she refers to are:

Within these pages a prime minister falls dead, crying out his belief that he has been killed by order of a king who is shortly after to fall dead, crying out in his belief that he has been killed by order of that same prime minister; whereas they had both been killed by order of a body composed of two parties of man who could not guess at each other's motives, so much opposed where they in character.⁹⁰

The dedication is followed by the Greek sentence: “Καὶ τὴν ποθεινὴν πατρίδα παράσχου αὐτοῖς, Παραδείσου πάλιν ποιῶν πολίτας αὐτούς,” translated as “Grant them the Fatherland of their desire, and make them again citizens of Paradise,” that is a prayer belonging to the Byzantine funeral liturgy. So within the first two pages, before the account starts, the reader faces twice strong references to the death.

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon was published in two volumes in 1941, just when Great Britain was fighting alone for its survival against Germany. As a whole book it was first published in 1942 in Great Britain by Macmillan, London. *The New Yorker* stated it was “as astounding as it was brilliant,”⁹¹ “one of the great books of spiritual revolt against the twentieth century.”⁹² *The New York Times Book Review* praised it as “a monumental chronicle,”⁹³ the apotheosis of the travel book. *The San Francisco Chronicle* commented it as “a treasury of all

⁸⁷ Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 180.

⁸⁸ The eclectic Vinaver, to whom is devoted the second part of the next chapter, needed Rebecca to help him, when he found himself in trouble with Yugoslavia new regime of Communism, because of his past as a Serbian nationalist.

⁸⁹ Dedication in Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit.

⁹⁰ *Idem*, cit., p. 1082.

⁹¹ In Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: A Life*, cit., p. 193.

⁹² *Idem*.

⁹³ *Idem*.

that is worth treasuring in humanity and a self-portrait of one of the richest minds of our modern world.”⁹⁴ *The Times* stated that “West is full of digressions which are extraordinary, but never boring.”⁹⁵ Then, naturally, it became an iconic travel book. About the reasons why Rebecca decided to publish her work, she wrote that:

I said to myself quite often, as I wrestled with the material of this book, that now what was well would at last happen. For the old Turkey had gone and its successor had no interest in Empire, and Russia was a Union of Soviet Republics, and the Habsburgs were fallen; and the treaties of Versailles and Trianon and st. Germain ecstasy. That I knew to be true, for I had seen it with my own eyes. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, they were like young men stretching in the early morning after long sleep. To eat in a public space in these countries, to walk in their public gardens, was to fill the nostrils with the smell of happiness. Nothing so far has happened in all history as this liberation of peoples who, during centuries of oppression, had never forgotten their own souls, and by long brooding on their national lives had changed them from transitory experience to lasting and inspiring works of art.⁹⁶

And she is probably right when stating that the case of South Slavs is extraordinary, and for this worth reporting. Another of the reasons why Rebecca decides to write this travel book is that she hopes that by travelling through Yugoslavia, she would be able to unravel and understand the complexities that had triggered a new world war.⁹⁷ Her text draws on deep analysis and poetical portrayals of the mythology, history and contemporary conditions of the Balkans. West hopes that her report on the Balkans can provide connections and understanding between the people of Britain and those of the Balkans, to help preventing a future world war. Part of this intent is lost in her writing, yet it is true that the historical digressions always try to establish a link with the present, aiming to explain it and forecast possible future situations.

Moreover, a few words are needed on the title of the travel book, since it is not a standard one, but rather it is ripe with mythological and religious references: the black lamb is a symbol which refers to a Muslim tradition of sacrifice as one can learn from the reportage itself. According to the ritual, on St George’s Eve, the young animal is offered as a sacrifice by a Gypsy woman in order to gain fertility. Rebecca West personally witnessed this sacrifice and was very shocked, as a result.

The grey falcon instead refers to a traditional folk song of Kosovo:⁹⁸ “*Poletio soko titsa siva, Od svetinye, od Yerusalema, I on nosi titsu lastavitsu.*”⁹⁹ (There flies a grey bird, a

⁹⁴ *Idem.*

⁹⁵ *Idem.*

⁹⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1100.

⁹⁷ Carl Rollyson, *Rebecca West: a Modern Sybil*, Bloomington (USA): iUniverse, 2017.

⁹⁸ Kosovo is included in *Old Serbia* in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

⁹⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 909.

falcon, From Jerusalem the holy, And in his beak he bears a swallow).¹⁰⁰ The folk song deals with the Battle of Kosovo (1389).¹⁰¹ The grey falcon is the epic bird which gives *knez* (prince) Lazar Hrebeljanović the choice between the heavenly kingdom and the earthly kingdom. After the Kosovo Polje defeat Serbian people suffered the Ottoman subjection: this is why it is recalled as such a crucial moment.

Through this double symbolism, West provides an understanding of the historical strengths forging the Balkan lands and souls. On the one hand, sacrifice, fertility, and superstition (the black lamb) on the other hand, power, pride, and religion (the grey falcon). Thanks to this title, Rebecca conveys a sense of mysticism and opposition to her readers, from the very first moment, even before starting reading the account. This sense can only be amplified by the full text Besides, the second part of the title *a Journey through Yugoslavia*, is meaningful, for Rebecca proves able to see the countries she visited as a whole, despite their fragmentation.

1.4. Between Autobiography and Travel Writing

There is no foreign land. it is only the traveller that is foreign¹⁰²

I explained that I was a writer wholly unsuitable for her purpose: that the bulk of my writing was scattered through American and English periodicals; that I had never used my writing to make a continuous disclosure of my own personality to others, but to discover for my own edification what I knew about various subjects which I found to be important to me.

¹⁰³

This is an auto definition of her own writing that Rebecca left to the readers in the epilogue of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. There is a reason if she put it there: maybe she wanted to justify, giving some explanation on the autobiographical component of her travelogue. Critics have long struggled to find a suitable category for travelogues, because the travel narrative borrows elements from various genres. As Peter Hume and Tim Youngs put it in the introduction to *The*

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*. The translation is given by Constantine the poet, Rebecca's guide in Yugoslavia, and reported in the book by Rebecca West.

¹⁰¹ Battle of Kosovo was a very determining combat fought in the so called Kosovo polje, which literary means the "plain of blackbirds." Ottoman Turks led by sultan Murad II fought against the ruler of Moravian Serbia, Prince Lazar's own troops, together with a contingent sent from Serbia and a contingent sent from Bosnia. After a first phase of Serbian victory, the Ottoman Turks won the battle: prince Lazar was killed and the Turk domination started. To learn more on the importance of Kosovo polje battle see: Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni*, cit., p. 71; Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit., pp. 73-74.

¹⁰² Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters*, in *The Amateur Emigrant*, vol. XVIII of *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Tusitala Edition, London: William Heinemann, 1924, p. 190.

¹⁰³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1084.

Oxford Companion to Travel Writing, travelling and writing have always been linked since the very ancient times:

Writing and travel have always been intimately connected. The traveller's tale is old as fiction itself: one of the very earliest extant stories, composed in Egypt a thousand years before the *Odyssey*, tells of a shipwrecked sailor alone on a marvellous island.¹⁰⁴

To prove this one can also consider the fact that in every language with written tradition it is possible to find travel accounts.¹⁰⁵ One should also consider that “travelling is something that we all do, on different scales, in one form, or another. We all have stories of travel and they are of more than personal consequence.”¹⁰⁶ Ricciarda Ricorda adds that if it is true that writing is a natural consequence of travelling, it is also true that travel is a current metaphor for narration (the reader is often compared to a traveller, so that the book becomes the travel).¹⁰⁷ In general, travel writing has been defined as a hybrid genre, but as Guillaume Thouroude wrote, travel narrative should rather be viewed as a “generic category,” whose most characterising feature is mixture.¹⁰⁸ Scholars such as Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan defined travel literature as “refractory to definition;”¹⁰⁹ Michael Kowaleski referred that it “borrows freely from the *memoir*, journalism, letters, guidebooks, confessional narrative, and most important, fiction;”¹¹⁰ Barbara Korte for her part believed that “the travelogue is a genre not easily demarcated.”¹¹¹ Actually what makes travel writing different from travel works of non-fiction is precisely its borrowing from other genres. For Korte, the “particular attraction of travel writing lies in its very heterogeneity in matters of form and contents,”¹¹² thus as Youngs refers:

It is that quality, along with travel writing's long history, that has contributed to the problems of definition. The genres from which travel narratives borrow, or of which they

¹⁰⁴ Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ Giorgio Raimondo Cardona, *I viaggi e le scoperte*, in *Letteratura Italiana*, Alberto Asor Rosa, Vol. V, *Le Questioni*, Torino: Einaudi, 1986, pp. 687-716.

¹⁰⁶ Tim Youngs (ed.), *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Ricciarda Ricorda, *La letteratura di viaggio in Italia: dal Settecento a oggi*, Brescia: Lascuola, 2012, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Tim Youngs (ed.), *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, cit., p. 6; Guillaume Thouroude, “Towards Generic Autonomy: The *Récit de Voyage* as Mode, Genre and Form,” in *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13.4, 2009, pp. 381-390, p. 383.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998, pp.10-11.

¹¹⁰ Michael Kowaleski, *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009, p. 58.

¹¹¹ Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, translated by Catherine Mthias, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000, p. 1.

¹¹² *Idem*, p. 8.

are composed, stand in their own right: the scientific report, the diary, autobiography, correspondence, the novel, journalism, and so on.¹¹³

What is most difficult to find is the connection between the fact of travelling itself, and the action of writing about the travel. In the epilogue Rebecca states:

So I resolved to put on paper what a typical Englishwoman felt and thought in the late nineteen-thirties, when already convinced of the inevitability of the second Anglo-German war, she had been able to follow the dark waters of that event back to its source. I was obliged to write a long and complicated history, and to swell that with an account of myself and the people who went with me on my travels, since it was my aim to show the past side by side with the present it created.¹¹⁴

Her words again give an idea of how the border between autobiographical account and travel writing is blurred in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*,

Car il est presque impossible à l'homme qui va par le monde de ne pas mêler son imagination à la vision des réalités. On accuse les voyageurs de mentir et de tromper ceux qui les lisent. Non ils mentent pas, mais ils voient avec leur pensée bien plus qu'avec leur regard.¹¹⁵

First of all, being Rebecca both writer and traveller, her account is written in the first person. This means that there is a filter between the subject who sees and the subject who writes: Rebecca is at the same time the writer who describes the experience and the character who made the experience. Every writer who is in her position has to agree to a compromise: if they want the focus to be on the character (so on themselves) their travel book will lose in objectiveness.¹¹⁶ The prologue and the epilogue, for example, are purely autobiographical: rather than impersonally introducing her work, Rebecca explained in her words what pushed her to Yugoslavia, why she felt the necessity to go there, how she liked it, why she came back there and, finally, why she decided to write *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Reading on the text, it is made of personal experiences, ideas and impressions. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, is built exclusively on Rebecca's life in the Balkans and on her knowledge of them. She made no secret of the fact that this reportage along with the travel itself was for her a way to get to know herself better.¹¹⁷ At intervals, her work can be compared to a diary.

¹¹³ Tim Youngs (ed.), *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, cit., p. 6.

¹¹⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1089.

¹¹⁵ Guy de Maupassant, "Venise," in *Gil Blas*, 1885.

¹¹⁶ Ricciarda Ricorda, *La letteratura di viaggio in Italia: dal Settecento a oggi*, cit., pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁷ Lesley Chamberlain, "Rebecca West in Yugoslavia," cit., p. 261.

A text that generically proffers itself as true, as a representation of unaltered reality, makes a perfect test case for analytical work that tries to posit or explain the fundamental fictionality of all representation.¹¹⁸

But *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* does not proffer itself as true: every chapter of it is permeated with descriptions which are intentionally and declaredly never objective. She makes full use of expression such as “beautiful,” “I disliked it,” “town of no interest,” giving the idea of what she liked and disliked, rather than the idea of how a place looked like. She did not even try to make her writing objective: it was out of her interest to give an impartial account on Yugoslavia. We see the people that Rebecca meets through her eyes; she shows her sympathies. For example, she did not like Gerda, the German wife of her Serbian guide. Being German, she is described in such hateful manners, that it is impossible to feel sympathy for her:

To these now Gerda began to distribute eggs from a bowl that was near her. This was the moment that we all fear when we are little, the moment when some breach of decorum would put an event into a shape so disgusting that nobody who saw it could bear to go on living.¹¹⁹

This is just an example, but the attitude does not change throughout the book. Equally, readers see the places through Rebecca’s eyes, meaning that if she really likes some places the account is long, detailed and full of enthusiastic descriptions. On the other hand, when she dislikes a place, she only writes a short account, with a few negative impressions, there is not enough information to form any precise idea of that place. As an example, in the section *Dalmatia*, it is plain to see how she loved the small village of Trogir to the point of devoting to it more than ten pages. To Split she devoted three chapters. On Dubrovnik she spent just fifteen pages lacking of remarkable considerations nor meaningful descriptions.

Frequently in the book what Rebecca sees is just an excuse to express her opinion on the most diverse topics (history, culture, arts, society...) or the pretext to say something about herself. About her way of looking at the world she wrote:

I am never sure of what I see, if I have seen it only once; I know that until it has firmly established its objective existence by impressing my senses and my memory, I am capable of conscripting it into the service of a private dream.¹²⁰

This is something which goes definitely over the boundaries of travel writing, because reading her reportage, we get to know her, her life, her ideas, her way of thinking.

¹¹⁸ Mary Baine Campbell, *Travel Writing and its Theory*, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p. 263. On the same topic see also Ricciarda Ricorda, *La letteratura di viaggio in Italia: dal Settecento a oggi*, cit., pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 722.

¹²⁰ *Idem*, p. 23.

Also, the story of her friendship with Constantine *alias* Stanislav Vinaver is crossing the border between autobiography and travel writing. Indeed, Constantine could seem a fictional character, but actually he was a real friend. Talking of Constantine, one is talking of an existing person, of a friend for Rebecca. So, when writing of Constantine, is Rebecca referring to the character of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, or rather to the real man?

Moreover, as the authors of *The Cambridge Companion to the Travel Writing* remarked, again, during Modernism, “Travel writers became increasingly aware that they were describing fragmented, hybridised cultures, the shabby remnants of the tapestry of otherness their predecessors had woven”.¹²¹

The impetus given to travel writing by Modernism was profound and is still awaiting comprehensive assessment. Many prominent modernist writers, better known for their other prose works or for their poetry, produced travel texts. Their number (in the Anglophone tradition alone) includes W.H. Auden, E.E. Cummings, D.H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, John Steinbeck, Evelyn Waugh, and Rebecca West.¹²²

Rebecca is very keen to establish how Slavs are, behave, and think comparing them to Western people, more specifically to British people and even to herself sometimes:

I said, ‘Well, there is everything there, except what we have. But that seems very little.’ ‘Do you mean that the English have very little,’ he asked, ‘or the whole of the West?’ ‘The whole of the West,’ I said, ‘here too.’ [...] To look at them you would think they had nothing. [...] I saw the blue lake of Ochrid, the mosques of Sarajevo, the walled town of Korchula, and it appeared possible that I was unable to find words for what I wanted to say because it was not true.¹²³

After all, autobiography is as connected to writing as travel is. Though the autobiographical as a literary genre was officially born during the Enlightenment, the will to tell one’s own life is almost instinctive.¹²⁴ In the case of a travel reportage such as *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, where the focus is on the writer-traveller, obviously the writing has autobiographical components. There are books in which the two genres are interpolated tending more to one or the other.¹²⁵ *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is one of them.

Besides, the two genres share the same problem with fiction: where does reality end? Where does it become fiction? Where does imagination replace truth in a travel or life

¹²¹ Helen Carr, *Modernism and Travel*, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, p.82.

¹²² Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, cit. p. 71.

¹²³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 23.

¹²⁴ Franco d’Intino, *L’autobiografia moderna: storia, forme, problemi*, Roma: Bulzoni, 1998, pp. 67-85. Saying that autobiography as a literary genre was officially born during the Enlightenment, the reference is to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, which is conventionally considered as the first autobiographical book.

¹²⁵ As an example in Giacomo Casanova, *Mémoires de J. Casanova écrits par lui-même*, Paris: Garnier Frères, 1789, which clearly is an autobiography there are many travel accounts putting the text on the border from one genre to the other.

account? In both cases what matters is the so called “personal meaning” which might not be objectively true, but is true for the author-hero.¹²⁶ From this perspective, anachronism, mistakes or not coinciding data do have a value as they are. As Philippe Lejeune explains in *Le Pacte Autobiographique*, a genre such as the autobiography is entirely built on a “pacte de lecture” (reading pact) between the reader and the writer. Without this pact, autobiography could not exist.¹²⁷ One can add that travel writing could not exist either, for the same reasons. As Maria di Battista and Emily Wittman wrote in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography*:

Even as fiction turned inward for its dramatic subjects, usurping some of autobiography’s initial domain, autobiography turned outward toward history and the social and political realities that inexorably define the self.¹²⁸

This study is not seeking to establish where the travel account gives way to the autobiographical one in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, because this is an unsolvable problem. The study is rather trying to show why the two are so bound to each other in this book, which might not be objective (and no text truly is), but looks plain and sincere.

My next chapter will provide an in depth analysis of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*’s structure, lingering on some of the issues Rebecca West highlighted. The chapter will also continue to clarify how different genres – primarily autobiography and travel writing – are mixed in this travelogue, by means of extracts from the text, exemplifying the cases where the presences of those genres are obvious. Eventually, the chapter will move to a reflection on the protagonists of the travel reportage, Rebecca’s companions during her journey, and their role in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

¹²⁶ Franco d’Intino, *L’autobiografia moderna: storia, forme, problemi*, cit., p. 244.

¹²⁷ To know more on the subject, see Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte Autobiographique*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1975.

¹²⁸ Maria di Batista, Emily Wittman (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 16.

2. A Long and Crowded Journey

I felt a sudden abatement of my infatuation for Yugoslavia. I had been enchanted on my first visit with a lovely nature and artifice of Bosnia, and I had recognised in Macedonia a uniquely beautiful life of the people.¹

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia is made of 1150 pages. West herself feared that “hardly anyone will read it by reason of its length.”² As Attilio Brilli wrote in the preface to his book *Quando viaggiare era un’arte*:

Oggi siamo portati a considerare il viaggio come un celere spostamento da un luogo all’altro del pianeta. Un tempo il viaggio era un’esperienza che esigeva una paziente preparazione e grandi abilità organizzative.³

If the travel was such a time-demanding experience, the travel writing could not be a short one. The long *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is composed of ten parts, including a prologue and an epilogue. The other eight parts deal with Croatia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Old Serbia, Montenegro.⁴ In this study, all these parts will be analysed, focussing less on the historical and political passages, and more on the ideological and sociological ones, in order to find for Rebecca West a position in the debate on Slav and Balkans culture, and on the role of South-Slavs in the world, more precisely in Europe. Follows a map of Yugoslavia, to help visualising the stages of Rebecca’s journey.

¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia*, cit., p. 482.

² Gloria Fromm, “Rebecca West: the Fictions of Fact and the Facts of Fiction,” *The new Criterion* 9.5, 1991, 44-51, p. 51.

³ Attilio Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un’arte: il romanzo del Grand Tour*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995, p. 8. Today we are led to consider a travel as a fast movement from somewhere to somewhere else in the world. Once, the travel was an experience demanding a patient preparation and a great planning skills. [E.P.]

⁴ This is the order given to the chapters in Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit.

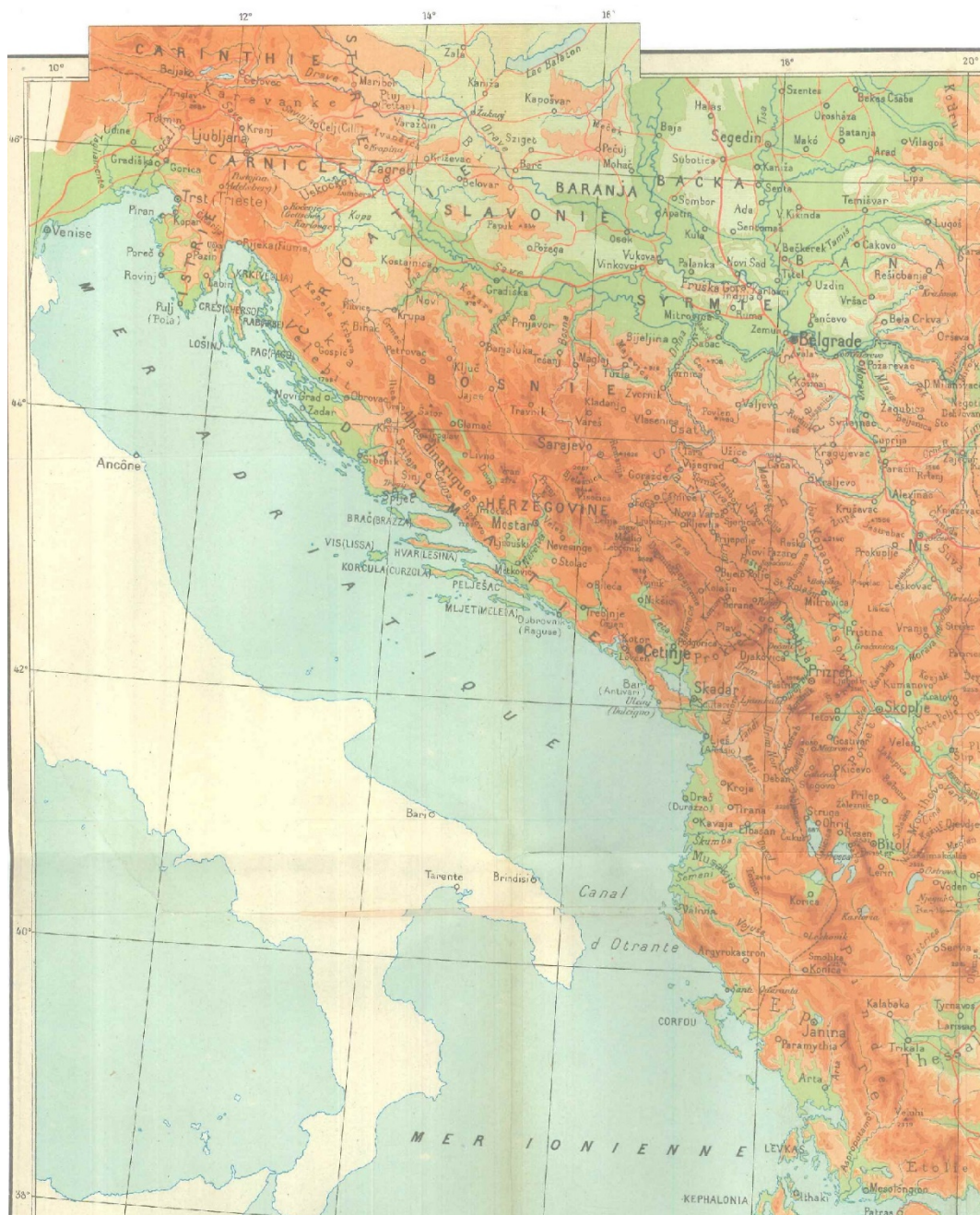


Figure 1: Geographical map of the Balkans, taken from Jovan Cvijić, *La péninsule Balkanique: Géographie Humaine*, Paris: Colin, 1918.

2.1. The Structure of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

Note on Pronunciation

Rebecca West's travelogue opens with a note on the spelling of South-Slavonic languages.

The spelling of Yugoslavia names presents a serious problem. The Serbo-Croatian language is spoken in all parts of Yugoslavia described in this book; but to write it the Serbs use the Cyrillic alphabet (which is much the same as the Russian, but simpler)¹ and the Croats use the Latin alphabet. Most foreign writers on Yugoslavia follow the Croatian spelling, but this is not satisfactory. [...] I have found that in practice the casual English reader is baffled by this unfamiliar use of what looks familiar and is apt to pass over names without grasping them clearly.²

Rebecca's solution to this problem was the creation of a sort of new transliteration, whose criteria were established by the necessity of conveying Slavonic sounds to English ears. Therefore:

I have therefore done my best to transliterate all Yugoslavian names into forms most likely to convey the sound of them to English ears. Cetinje is written here as Tsetinye, Jajce as Yaitse, Pec as Petch, Sestinje as Shestinye. Kosovo I have written Kossovo, though the Serbo-Croat languages uses no double consonants, because we take them as a sign that the preceding vowel is short.³

In spite of her efforts, she herself had to admit that "this is a rough and ready method, and at certain points it has broken down." So when she happened to be unable to find a more suitable transliteration, she adopted the Croatian fashion. As for the case of Sarajevo and Skopje. She gave up any attempt to transliterate them. This is why in the present work the titles of chapters are written in Rebecca's "personal" transliteration, while place names and proper names follow the standard transliteration.

¹ When Rebecca said "simpler" she was probably referring to the idea that laid at the basis of the Serbian Cyrillic reformation of the nineteenth century. Vuk Karadžić, the Serbian linguist who reformed the alphabet thought that the fundamental rule for a working alphabet must be: *Piši kao što govoriš i čitaj kako je napisan* which means "write as you speak and read as it is written." As a result, he removed letters representing iotified vowels, introducing ⟨J⟩ from the Latin alphabet instead, and he added several consonant letters for sounds specific to Serbian phonology.

² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. IX.

³ *Idem*.

Prologue

I could not have gone on justifying my certainty that this train was taking us to a land where everything was comprehensible, where the mode of life was so honest that it put an end to perplexity. I lay back in the darkness and marvelled that I should be feeling about Yugoslavia as if it were my mother country, for this was 1937, and I had never seen the place till 1936. Indeed, I could remember the first time I have ever spoke the name 'Yugoslavia' and that was only two and a half years before, on October the ninth, 1934.⁴

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon begins with a prologue. It serves the purpose of explaining how Rebecca first came to the idea of visiting Yugoslavia, and when: she was asked to go there to give some lectures in 1936. The prologue immediately catches the reader's attention to its autobiographical connotation. In these diary-like pages, Rebecca tells the readers what she knew about Yugoslavia before her travels. She seemed to have been completely unaware of the South Slavs culture, as well as of Yugoslavia as a nation itself. All her knowledge on the subject was made of stereotypes:

I could form no opinion, for I knew nothing about the South Slavs, nor had I come across anybody who was acquainted with them. I was only aware that they formed part of the Balkan people, who had played a curious role in the history of British benevolence before the war and for some time after it.⁵

Rebecca's vision of the Balkans was not pristine: as the Slovenian anthropologist Božidar Jezernik remarked in *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, for the whole nineteenth century the Balkans had been the land where Western inquiring travellers hoped to find violent oddities, such as decapitation or impalement. Rebecca herself wrote that "violence was, indeed, all I knew of Balkans: all I knew of the South Slavs."⁶ Though being so close to Europe, the Balkans were viewed as somewhere where barbarous habits were still on.⁷ Both Austen Layard and Mary Edith Durham – writers and travellers of the first half of the 20th century – reported in their works that South Slavs were shockingly primitive and savage at that time.⁸

Rebecca's original attitude towards the Yugoslavian world is important to see the evolution of her ideas on it, the growth of her knowledge, the enlargement of her perspective on its culture and the process of "getting used" to it, to the point of feeling it familiar. Town

⁴ *Idem*, p. 1.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 21.

⁶ *Idem*.

⁷ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, London: Saqi Books, 2004, pp. 147-160.

⁸ See Austen Henry Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, London: John Murray, 1903, p. 128, and Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkans Tangle*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928, p. 26.

after town she distanced herself from the stereotypes, moving to a more genuine discovery of the place.

Afterwards, in the prologue, she lists the stages of the journey. Rebecca travelled through Yugoslavia three times: the first time in 1936, the second one in 1937 when she felt the of necessity to go back there (“I must go back to Yugoslavia, this time next year, in the spring, for Easter”),⁹ the third time in 1938, to complete the visit of the country.

From the very beginning, her journey through Yugoslavia had some connotations of fatalism: “it was only two or three days distant, yet I had never troubled to go that short journey which might explain to me how I shall die, and why.”¹⁰ Fatalism is, indeed, a right reading key for this journey, which Rebecca refers to as life-changing. The prologue puts the reader into the right mood for reading this book, which is not just a travel account, but also the record of a life experience, and as Rebecca said “the fatal revelation of a necessity.”¹¹ In step with this attitude towards Yugoslavia, Rebecca tried not to look at the places and people she met in a sceptic way. She looked at them inquiring to know more. She wanted to become aware of what was behind them, of what made them so different from, and, at the same time, so close to her. In this resides the newness of her perspective. She tried to catch the inner soul of Yugoslavs, looking at where and how they lived, at their past and at their personality. Of course, this means that she wrote her judgments which, of course, are personal, not objective, as well as her perspective is not: this is not a merely descriptive travel book that one could expect.

Journey

In this part nothing remarkable is described; readers follow Rebecca as she started her journey in Salzburg, where she waited for some hours for her train to Zagreb. The journey began with delays, crowded carriages and suspicious attitudes towards German passengers. This attitude will be a *leitmotiv* of the reportage. When she finally got to Zagreb, the first thing she said was: “I was among people I could understand.”¹² This statement puts Rebecca in a very new position in comparison to her predecessors and even to her contemporaries: she felt that the “wild Balkans” were closer than a country of West Europe to her. Not all the reasons for this can be explained: some of them will be analysed in the next chapter,¹³ others are entirely personal. For example, that fact that – as she said – Yugoslavia was the land she had always imagined in her half sleep: “the country I have always seen between sleeping and waking; from my childhood,

⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 23.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 18.

¹¹ *Idem*, p. 20.

¹² *Idem*, p. 41.

¹³ See *infra*, Ch. 3, pp. 90-111.

when I was weary of the place where I was, I wished it would turn into a town like Yaitse or Mostar, Bitolj or Ochrid.”¹⁴

Croatia

The Croatian account is subdivided into nine parts. Seven of them are about *Zagreb*. The spare two ones are *Shestine* and *Two Castles*.

Zagreb I introduces the reader to the other protagonists of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*: Rebecca’s husband and Constantine the poet. There are other two people in this chapter, their names are Valetta and Gregorievitch. Among them, Constantine is of primary importance. He was a Serb and a Jew, but he married a German woman, whose name was Gerda. Actually Constantine was a pseudonym which stays for Stanislav Vinaver (1891-1955), a Serbian writer and Rebecca’s guide during her travels, who shall be the focus of another section of this chapter.¹⁵

Zagreb II, instead, gives an impressionistic description of the city, followed by an *excursus* of Croatian history. *Zagreb* is described in few lines. The city is seen through Rebecca’s eyes and it is looked at from her inner perspective:

But the morning showed us that Zagreb was not a strange city at all. It has the warm and comfortable appearance of a town that has been well aired. People have been living there in physical, though not political, comfort for a thousand years. Moreover, it is full of those vast toast-coloured buildings, barracks and law courts and municipal offices, which are an invariable sign of past occupancy by the Austro-Hungarian Empire; and that always means enthusiastic ingestion combined with lack of exercise in pleasant surroundings, the happy consumption of coffee and whipped cream and sweet cakes at little tables under chestnut trees. But it has its own quality. It has no grand river; it is built up to no climax; the hill the old town stands on is what the eighteenth century used to call ‘a moderate elevation.’ It has few very fine buildings except the Gothic Cathedral, and that has been forced to wear an ugly nineteenth-century overcoat. But Zagreb makes from its featureless handsomeness something that pleases like Schubert song, a delight that begins quietly and never definitely ends.¹⁶

The chapter ends with some considerations on the effects of the past on the present. Rebecca is strongly persuaded that the present behaviour of Croats directly depends on their past.¹⁷ She seems to look into the eyes of her Croatian contemporaries and to see in them the traces of that past, as the following lines show:

¹⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1088.

¹⁵ See *infra*, Ch. 2.2., pp. 68-75.

¹⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 55.

¹⁷ Indulging in Croatian history, Rebecca pays special attention to the instability of the regencies which Croats were subject to, and the subsequent frequent changing of “alien” rulers. Quoting her words:

Many of us think that monarchy is more stable than a republican form of government, and that there is a special whimsicality about modern democracies. We forget that stable monarchies are the signs of an order at least as rare in government as in literature, or music, or of stable history. Monarchy without these conditions

Well, what did all this story mean to the people in Croatia, the people I was looking at, the people who had been selling me things? I had come to Yugoslavia because I knew that the past has made the present, and I wanted to see how the process works. [...] Were I to go down into the market-place, armed with the power of witchcraft, and take a peasant by the shoulders and whisper to him, 'In your lifetime, have you known peace?' wait for his answer, shake his shoulders and transform him into his father, I would never hear the word 'Yes' if I carried my questioning of the dead back for a thousand years. I would always hear 'No, there was fear, there were our enemies without, our rulers within, there was prison, there was torture, there was violent death.'¹⁸

Zagreb III is mainly about the visit to the Old Town, especially to the Cathedral Square. The church gives rise to some artistic-architectural considerations, over than religious ones. It is already known that Rebecca had interest for the arts in general. She used to write reviews on work of arts,¹⁹ so it is not a surprise, that also in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* she found some space for expressing her opinion on the arts.²⁰

Shestine "is a very delightful place"²¹ we read in the first line of this chapter. The town soon becomes theatre of comparison among England, Austria and Croatia. Comparisons between East and West, and especially between England and Yugoslavia are frequent in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*: underlining the differences is a strategy Rebecca uses to get in the quickest way to show how the others – in this case Yugoslavians – are.²² Putting in contact the unknown to the known is also a way to guarantee the truthfulness of the account. It is said to be the model underlying the travel writing.²³ What follows is a description of the landscape and of the people. Rebecca West dwells on the description of some women going to the church, and

is whimsical to the point of mania. [...] It is not comfortable to be an inhabitant of this globe. It never has been, except for brief periods. The Croats have been peculiarly uncomfortable. Louis the Great was a Frenchman, one of the house of the Anjou; he married Elisabeth, a Slav, the daughter of a Bosnian king. When Louis died [...] certain Croatian and Hungarian barons called to the thrones King Charles of Naples. King Charles was crowned King of Hungary and Croatia, and four years afterwards was assassinated by the widow Elisabeth. He was succeeded by his son Ladislas, a fantastical adventurer. [...] Ladislas sold Dalmatia to the Republic of Venice [...] From the South-East the Turks pressed on and on. In 1453 they took Constantinople. In 1468 they were threatening the Dalmatian coast. [...] Now Croatia was quite alone. It had to fall back on Austria, which was by then governed by Ferdinand of Habsburg. [...] The eighteenth century went by with the Croats enslaved by Hungary, and their passion for Austria idiotically stable. The increasing incapacity of the Habsburgs led to the crisis of 1848.

This is Rebecca's view of Croatian history, expressed in *Idem*, p. 49-52. To get a general idea on Croatia's history see Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, cit. For an in-depth on the topic of Habsburg domination on Croatia see Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, Torino: Einaudi, 2005; Robert William Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*, London: Constabel & co. LTD., 1911. On Venetian domination instead see Alvise Zorzi, *La Repubblica del Leone: storia di Venezia*, Milano: Bompiani, 2005; Frederic Lane, *Venice: a Maritime Republic*, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

¹⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 54.

¹⁹ See *supra* Ch. 1.1., pp. 9-18.

²⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 59.

²¹ *Idem*, p. 63.

²² This idea is developed in Ivona Grgurinović, "Constructing the Other in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*," *Etnološka istraživanja*, 12-13, pp. 159-169, 2008.

²³ Ricciarda Ricorda, *La letteratura di viaggio in Italia: dal Settecento a oggi*, cit., p. 18. See also Daniel Henri Pageaux, *La dimension étrangère comme axe d'étude en littérature comparée*, Paris: Colin, 1994.

in general she dwells on the clothes people are wearing. As Constantine explained, they are a symbol of Croat patriotism,²⁴ thus, clothes are also another way to affirm identity. In this short section, a meeting with gipsies is also remarkable:

I looked back at the gipsies, who were now breasting the hill, huddled under the harsh wind that combed its crest. Life had become infinitely poorer since we left the church. The richness of the service had been consonant with an order of society in which peasants and gipsies were an equal footing and there was therefore no sense of deprivation and need; but here was the threat of a world where everybody was needy, since the moneyed people had no art and the people with art had no money. Something alien and murderous had intruded here into the Slav pattern, and its virtue had gone out of it.²⁵

Gipsies do not escape Rebecca's notice; she spends some words on them in every chapter in which they are mentioned.

Two castles is the account of a tour to the countryside. The guide for this tour was Gregorevitch. Rebecca explicitly catches the attention of the readers on this man, described as a "typical Slav:"

There, as often before and after, Gregorevitch proved that the essential quality of Slavs is not, as might be thought, imagination. He is characteristically, and in an endearing way, a Slav, but he has no imagination at all. He cannot see that the factual elements in an experience combine into more than themselves. He would not for example, let us go to the theatre at Zagreb.²⁶

Indeed, it is through the descriptions of the types of Slavs that she herself met, that Rebecca tries to give a general description of Slav behaviour and thought. This is a concrete way of describing South Slavs. Doing so, Rebecca avoids stereotypes linked to more abstract descriptions, which had been current in the past. About this, one may want to know that there were so many tales and legends on Slav people, that Western travellers were sure of finding tailed men in Balkan woods.²⁷

Zagreb IV is almost entirely about an argument between Constantine the Serb and Valetta the Croat. "They had quarrelled all through lunch."²⁸ The discussion was about politics, especially about the importance given to Austria by the respective countries. Thanks to this, Rebecca shows something which is going to be recurrent throughout her travel reportage: the rivalry among the South Slavs. It is the first time we face it, but it is a motif in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.²⁹

²⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 61.

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 67.

²⁶ *Idem*, p. 68.

²⁷ This subject will be thoroughly developed in chapter three of this study. See *infra*, Ch. 3, pp. 85-89.

²⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 83.

²⁹ Being the issue of South Slavs identities too difficult and delicate it is not developed in this study. However, through the help of Hoesch's work *Storia dei paesi balcanici*, here is provided a hinted explication of the roots of the problem. As Hoesch points out (cit., pp. 6-19) "La sconcertante struttura etnica del Sudest europeo è il risultato

Zagreb V deals with the same topic for a certain extent:

The rest of the afternoon was to prove to us that Constantine was right to some extent, and that the Croat is weakened by Austrian influence as by a profound malady. We look at the disparity from the point of view of Constantine.³⁰

Later, the narration moves on, “we must see the treasury of the cathedral and then we must go to the dancer who had promised to dance for us in her apartment.”³¹ However, the dancer resulted to be just another pretext to develop the question of the Austrian influence on Croats. Indeed, the dancer is described as an atypical Slav dancer, since she was “committing offence against Slav convention.”³² To repeat Constantine’s words:

She [Rebecca] knows that with us a woman must not dance like this. A woman must not spring about like a man to show how strong she is and she must not laugh like a man to show how happy she is. [...] It is something you cannot understand, but for us it is right.³³

Dance, accompanied by music in coffee shops, was strictly linked to the Balkans tradition in the common opinion. It is recurrent to find in Western travellers and in Rebecca West, as well, descriptions of *dance du ventre* scenes. Usually, Occidental tourists used to be shocked by the exhibitions, but fascinated at the same time. However, what is meaningful here is that something which is supposed to be a classic feature becomes the very sign of a foreign influence. All the more so, if compared to other dance descriptions, one for all the *Sarajevo II* one.³⁴

di un processo di assimilazione tra elementi autoctoni e stranieri durato per secoli.” The bewildering ethnic structure of South-Eastern Europe is the product of a century-old assimilation process involving local and foreign elements. [E. P.] At the basis of this assimilation process lays the intrinsic nature of Balkans:

La particolare struttura del territorio, che favoriva creazioni statali di piccolo estensione, e le alterne vicende storiche di una tipica regione di transito, hanno impedito che il Sud-est europeo potesse svilupparsi nei secoli in senso unitario, trovando forme di organizzazione politica durature tra le etnie locali. Una più stabile unificazione che comprendesse ogni zona periferica non ha mai avuto lunga durata. Questo variopinto guazzabuglio di popoli trovatosi a convivere a così stretto contatto, era costantemente esposto a forti influssi esterni e prendeva parte in modo immediato alle vicende storiche dei popoli circostanti.

Basically: because the Balkan territory promoted the creation of small countries, and because of the Balkan history as an area of passage, it was impossible for the South-East to develop long-lasting forms of political organisations. It never took place a stable unification, including all the peripheral zones. This very diverse group of people was continuously exposed to external influences, taking part in the history of their neighbours. [E.P.] So he keeps on explaining how the cohabitation of so many different substrates and new influences ended up in a sort of very complicated synthesis:

L’incisivo potere d’irradiazione di questi influssi culturali di diverso tipo sugli abitanti spiega come mai, al di là di tutte le differenze etniche o culturali-religiose, si siano sviluppati i tratti comuni permanenti di una sintesi culturale balcanica e i confini tra popoli e stirpi diversi non coincidano con quelli delle zone culturali.

Despite all the ethnic and religious differences, in the area developed permanent shared features of Balkan synthesis and the borders between different peoples do not coincide with those ones of the cultural zones. [E. P.]

³⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 89.

³¹ *Idem*.

³² *Idem*, p. 91.

³³ *Idem*, p. 93.

³⁴ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 308 and see *infra* p. 46.

Zagreb VI is occupied by the visit to the hill of St. Mark's Church. To quote Constantine: "Zagreb is the heart of Croatia, and St. Mark's Square is the heart of Zagreb, and I think that only once it did fall, and then to the Tartars, to whom all fell."³⁵ In this part Valetta re-joined Rebecca West and her husband. The meeting with him and the dialogue that follows leads Rebecca to an important consideration about Valetta and the Austrian influence:

I learned now that it might follow, because an empire passed, that a world full of strong men and women and rich food and heady wine might nevertheless seem like a shadow-show: that a man of every excellence might sit by a fire warming his hands in the vain hope of casting out a chill that lived not in the flesh. Here, however, there is none, and therefore Valetta seems a little ghostly as he sits by our hearth; and I wonder if Zagreb is not a city without substance, no more solid than the snow-flakes I shall see next time Valetta strolls to the windows and pulls the curtain, driving down from the darkness into the light of the street lamps. This is what the consequences of Austrian rule mean to individual Croats.³⁶

Rebecca said so as a consequence to Valetta's general and complete discouragement. His personality is opposite to Constantine's. According to Rebecca, the latter is pervaded by a joy of life which is the characteristic connected to the typical Slav.³⁷

Zagreb VII is the last chapter devoted to the Croatian capital. It is mainly about goodbyes and conclusions on politics (above all the opposition between nationality and empire) on which Rebecca would discuss more accurately later in the travel reportage.³⁸ In the last lines we find Rebecca and her husband at the railway station, ready to get on the train to Dalmatia.

Dalmatia

This section is composed of ten chapters. Three of them are on *Split*, two on *Korchula*, one on *Dubrovnik*. The spare ones are about *Sushak*, *Senj*, *Rab*, *Trogir* and *Salomae*.

Sushak is the first stage in Dalmatia. Here one can read a very interesting description of how north Dalmatian landscape looks like to Rebecca West's eyes:

No weather can make the Northern Dalmatian coast look anything but drear. The dreariness is so extreme that it astounds like luxuriance, it gluts the mind with excess of deprivation. The hills are naked. That exclusion of everything but rock that we English see only in a quarry face is here general. It is the landscape. Tracks lead over this naked rock, but it is hard to believe that they lead anywhere; it seems probable that that they are traced by desperate men fleeing from barrenness, and doomed to die in barrenness. And indeed these bald hills mean a great desperation. The peasants collect what soil they can from the base

³⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 95.

³⁶ *Idem*, p. 103.

³⁷ For more on this joy of life see *infra* Ch. 2.2, p. 71.

³⁸ To learn more on the correlation between Empire and nationalism in the Balkans, see the studies of Marco Dogo: Marco Dogo, (a cura di) *Schegge d'impero, pezzi d'Europa: Balcani e Turchia fra continuità e mutamento 1804-1923*, Pordenone: Tipografia Sartor, 2006; Marco Dogo, *Storie balcaniche: popoli e stati nella transizione alla modernità*, Gorizia: libreria editrice Goriziana, 1999; Marco Dogo e Guido Franzinetti, *Disrupting and reshaping: early Stages on Nation-Building in the Balkans*, Ravenna: Longo editore, 2002.

of the hills and carry it up again and pack it in terraces; but there is not enough soil and terraces are often swept away by the torrents.³⁹

Afterwards the description moves to the castle Rebecca West visited in *Sushak*. Then Rebecca left *Sushak* to go to *Senj*:

A town that has the quality of a dream, a bad headachy dream. Its original character is rotund and sunburnt and solid, like any sountous southern port, but it has been hacked by treaties into a surrealist form.⁴⁰

Senj is a place where the magical features that Rebecca ascribed to Yugoslavia are evident, to her.⁴¹ There, Rebecca West starts thinking of the Italian influence on Dalmatia which was under the Venetian domination until the eighteenth century.⁴²

Rab is a very small island, “one can see it all at once, as if it were a single building; and that sight gives a unique pleasure.”⁴³ *Rab* is described as “Venetian in spirit,”⁴⁴ having been part of the Venetian republic for centuries. For the first time, by now, in this chapter is found a consideration about the fragmented linguistic situation of Yugoslavia. Rebecca noted that while in the country the people spoke Serbo-Croat, in the city they could only speak some Italian. After having known how small the island is, the detail is even more surprising to her. The linguistic debate was, and has been also later, very vibrant. The various dominations and the World War I provoked a linguistic fragmentation that would have left traces until the present day. In *Rab* the division in the use of language reproduces the big gap between the rich and the poor class that Rebecca underlined in this chapter.

Split I, the first chapter dedicated to *Split*, begins with a description of the city, linking it to Naples, rather than to Venice:

Split, alone of all cities in Dalmatia, has a Neapolitan air. Except for a few courtyards in its private houses, it does not exhibit the spirit of Venice, which is at once so stately and so materialist, like a proud ghost that has come back to remind men that he failed for a million. It recalls Naples, because it also is a tragic and architecturally magnificent sausage-machine, where a hurried people of mixed race have been forced by history to run for centuries through the walls and cellars and sewers of ruined palaces, and have now been evicted by a turn of events into the open day, neat and slick and uniform, taking to modern clothes and manners with the adaptability of oil, though at the same time they are set apart

³⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 115.

⁴⁰ *Idem*, p. 123.

⁴¹ Throughout the travel reportage Rebecca writes of mystical and supernatural features in Yugoslavia. In this study these passages will be always underlined, as they are considered partly responsible for the newness of Rebecca's idea on the Balkans. See *infra*, Ch. 2.1., pp. 58; 59; 64; Ch. 3.3., pp. 108-111.

⁴² For a complete history of the Venetian domination in Croatia, see Charles Diehl, *La Repubblica di Venezia*, Roma: Newton & Compton editori, 2004; Alvise Zorzi, *La Repubblica del Leone: storia di Venezia*, Milano: Bompiani, 2005; Frederic Lane, *Venice: a Maritime Republic*, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

⁴³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 129.

⁴⁴ *Idem*, p. 130.

for ever from the rest of the world by the arcana of language and thoughts they learnt to share while they scurried for generations close-pressed through the darkness.⁴⁵

Then, Rebecca focussed on the traces of Roman architecture in Split, such as the Diocletian Palace. From the architecture the thoughts moved towards the history. Rebecca gives to the reader some explanations about the Romans in Dalmatia. Especially, she gives the detailed account of Diocletian reign and of his *opera* in Split. She ends the section with her personal idea on Diocletian's domination which is again a way to express her opinion against the Empire.

Split II keeps on the description of Diocletian's mausoleum for the first part of the chapter. The second part of the chapter deals with the dinner that Rebecca had with some Croats. The dinner is just a pretext to show something more of these folks. Indeed, she reports all the topics of the conversation, so that one gets to know them better. Rebecca's reportage is built on her meetings. Through the comparison or the opposition, or the simple talk to them, she draws their personality and hers, as well.⁴⁶ Then, the account moves to the visit to the church built in honour of Virgin Mary.

Salonae is about the remains of the Roman city of Salonae:

It should be one of the prettiest sights in the whole world, it was nothing of the sort. Its pillars and steps and sarcophagi lie among rich grass and many islands, the very spot which Horace would have liked to visit with a footman carrying a lunch basket behind him.⁴⁷

Here Rebecca met a group of young students guided by nuns, whom she talked to for a while. The subject was education. Even if this episode may not be strictly related to the travel accounts, it is considered important in this work, because it is her way to tell her opinion on education. By this, it is made obvious once again the fact that for Rebecca her travel reportage is also a way to express herself. One can assume that the book is so successful and current precisely for these inserts. The point is that "*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* takes up two subjects: the first is Yugoslavia, and the second is everything else."⁴⁸

The next step is *Trogir*.

Since Trogir created such beauty and achieved such courage under Venice, the visitors tempted to believe that foreign dominance was good for Dalmatia. But to think that it is to be as superficial as a visitor to an orphanage, who at sight of children with washed faces doing neat handwork forget the inevitable wrongs of institutional life.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 138.

⁴⁶ Ivona Grgurinović, "Constructing the Other in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*," cit. pp. 160-165.

⁴⁷ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 163.

⁴⁸ Geoff Dyer, introduction to Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., pp. 13-22.

⁴⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 175.

After reflecting on the negative consequences of a foreign dominance, which is again related to Rebecca's dislike for empires, the chapter moves towards the topic of religion. Rebecca here focusses, above all, on the differences between the Manichaeism and Orthodox Christianity. Then she comments on the way those religions spread in the countries where they are professed. Actually, the Balkans are rich not only in languages, but in religions as well. This is another product of the diverse long dominances they were subject to.⁵⁰

In *Split III* the issue is the poverty of Yugoslavia. The situation is analysed through the eyes of a friend of Costantine and Gerda. He lived in Belgrade and said that "this country is fantastically poor. You would not believe how poor the poor people in our city are, how poor nearly all the people in the country outside are."⁵¹ This leads directly to the rivalry between Croatia and Serbia, because one of the causes of the poverty is reported to be the bad distribution and management of taxes in Yugoslavia.⁵² It is hard to say whether Rebecca took a position in this rivalry or not. This work is keen to assume that due to her love for Yugoslavian fragmentation and her hate for empires and dominance she was just fascinated by the inner rivalries. She had no interest in having a propensity for one side or the other.⁵³

Korchula is the next step in Dalmatia.

It is that quality of visibility that makes the Balkans so specially enchanting, and it was in Korchula that I had the first intimations of it. So naturally I am alarmed lest I find the town not so beautiful as I had supposed and life in the Balkans precisely the same as everywhere else.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ One can just point out that the Byzantine, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires left traces of their dominance in Yugoslavia also in the religious field, as a consequence of their long dominations. Though not finding it appropriate to discuss this issue here, it is instead found useful to point that such diversities in the confessions have surely shaped the cultural – and sometimes the political – situation of the area. As Hoesch wrote "L'ingarbugliato quadro della struttura etnica del Sudest europeo viene ulteriormente complicato dalla molteplice varietà dell'elemento confessionale." The muddled situation of South-Eastern Europe ethnic structure is complicated by the variety of the religious component. [E.P.] It is interesting to note how confession borders never transformed into political borders:

Ma che il confine confessionale non si sia consolidato fino a divenire un confine culturale in senso proprio, si deve al fatto che esso era in gran parte limitato al campo dell'alta cultura. La cultura popolare e la vita delle classi inferiori seguirono nel corso dei secoli altre leggi, e furono appena toccate dalle varie fluttuazioni, dall'alternanza tra isolamento e conformismo, che a dispetto delle differenze sul piano confessionale hanno fatto scaturire nei costumi, nelle usanze, nel folklore e nello stile di vita stratificazioni e strutture d'insieme "balcaniche."

What Hoesch states is that the religious borders are not so consolidated as cultural borders, because they concerned the high culture only. The popular culture and the low classes' life followed other laws. They were barely touched by the alternation between isolation and conformism, leading to the formation of Balkan structures in habits and lifestyle. [E.P.] In Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit. p. 17.

To know more on confessions and religions of the Balkan peninsula see *Idem*, pp. 17-19.

⁵¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 192.

⁵² As Robert William Seton-Watson explains in his book *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit., p. 226, the Croats accused the Serbs of exploiting them. The taxation, for example was higher in Croatia than in Serbia.

⁵³ This issue is developed in the next subchapter. See *infra*, Ch. 2.2. pp. 68-72.

⁵⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 203.

It is described as “so Slav.”⁵⁵ There are two chapters devoted to it. While the first one is mainly about impressions, the second one gives a detailed description of the city structure.

Afterwards Rebecca West went to *Dubrovnik (Ragusa) I*.⁵⁶ However, she did not like this city at all, she could not bear it, because the signs of what she interpreted as a foreign influence were too obvious there. When her husband told that “Dubrovnik is exquisite, perhaps the most exquisite town I have ever seen,”⁵⁷ she replied that all the same she did not like it: “I find it a unique experiment on the part of the Slav, unique in its nature and unique in its success, and I do not like it. It reminds me of the worst of England.”⁵⁸ So, she gives an account of the history of the city, without remarkable considerations nor meaningful descriptions, aiming attention at the Venetian artistic influence there, and then at the autochthone art too. On the second one, she wrote:

It should be visited for the first time when the twilight is about to fall, when it is already dusk under the tall trees that make an avenue to city walls, though the day is only blanched in the open spaces, on the bridge that runs across the moat to the gate. There [...] over the gate is a bas-relief by Mestrovitch,⁵⁹ a figure of a king on a horse, which is a memorial representation of King Peter of Serbia, the father of the assassinated King Alexander.⁶⁰

This is clearly an implication of the autobiographical traits of Rebecca’s travel reportage: she was not interested in giving an objective account of a country describing a city which was still very important. For her, it was preferable to transmit what she personally liked or liked not.

Herzegovina

“Then we finally move to Herzegovina.”⁶¹ Rebecca West here stopped only in two places: *Trebinye* and *Mostar*. The trip started in *Trebinye*.

Trebinye is just over the border from Dalmatia to Herzegovina. It looked like:

A fertile valley, that lay voluptuously under the guard of a closed circle of mountains, the plump grey-green body of a substantial river running its whole length between poplars and birches.⁶²

⁵⁵ *Idem*.

⁵⁶ Rebecca cares of putting the Italian version of the city name. She does it for Dubrovnik only.

⁵⁷ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 231.

⁵⁸ *Idem*.

⁵⁹ Ivan Mestrovic (1883-1962), modern Croatian sculptor, is one of the greatest Yugoslavian artists. His most famous work surely is *Pobednik* (Belgrade), on which this work focusses in the *Belgrade I* section. However, Mestrovic did not sculpt statues only; for example, in this case, Rebecca refers to a bas-relief.

⁶⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 231.

⁶¹ *Idem*, p. 271.

⁶² *Idem*, p. 274.

What is important in Trebinje, to her, is the market; people from outside the borders went shopping there every week. Interesting in this chapter is again Rebecca's consideration on empires. Here she makes it clear once for all that:

'I hate the corpse of empires; they stink as nothing else. They stink so badly that I cannot believe that even in life they were healthy.' 'I do not think that you can convince mankind that there is not a certain magnificence about a great empire in being.' 'Of course there is,' I admitted, 'but the hideousness outweighs the beauty. You are not, I hope, going to tell me that they impose law on lawless people. Empires live by the violation of the law.'⁶³

Of course this statement carries some thoughts on the recent events and the present situation. Franz Ferdinand and his wife had been recently murdered, leading to the War and so to the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

So, still minding this, she moved to *Mostar*.

"Here in Mostar the really adventurous part of our journey began."⁶⁴ Here Rebecca's attention was originally caught by the Muslim population of the town. She saw many veiled women and this made her think about their condition. Her feminist activity is very well known to the reader by now, and even if it concerned just the first period of her production, she kept some feminist and progressive ideas during the rest of her life. In this passage of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* they are recalled.⁶⁵ Apart from that, Mostar is a town of great importance in the history of Western travellers; it has been often seen as the true symbol of the Balkans, thanks to its famous bridge, "one of the most wonderful bridges in the world."⁶⁶ The thing is that at the time, the Balkans were referred to as a bridge between East and West, between civility and barbarism.⁶⁷ Rebecca West was conscious of these interpretations and wrestled with them as she travelled. She refused to cast Yugoslavia as a missing link between civilization and barbarism.

Anyway, Mostar bridge became a Yugoslavian symbol, chosen to represent the whole country. It was of Roman origins, then it was destroyed during the World War, and

⁶³ *Idem*, p. 280.

⁶⁴ *Idem*, p. 287.

⁶⁵ The reference here is to Rebecca's collaboration to *The Freewoman* and *The New Freewoman*. Also one must remember her friendship with Emma Goldstone. Eventually, Rebecca's life itself has been acknowledged as an example of feminism. She affirmed herself a feminist heroine, thanks to her non conformism in sentimental matters and her attention to her career.

⁶⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia*, cit., p. 288.

⁶⁷ For the representation of the Balkans as a bridge see Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., pp. 254-276, and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 123.

finally rebuilt. On the cover of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (Edinburg: Canongate) is represented a picture of Mostar.⁶⁸

Bosnia

The pages about Bosnia are subdivided into eight chapters on *Sarajevo*, three chapters on *Yaitze*, a chapter on *Ilidzhe*, one on *Treboviche*, one on *Yezero* and one on *Travnik*.

On the road from Herzegovina to Bosnia:

But soon the country softened, and the mountains were tamed and bridled by their woodlands and posed as background to waterfalls, fruit trees, and green lawns. [...] We drove up an avenue of bronze and gold budding ash trees and lovely children dashed out of a school and saluted us as a sign and wonder. [...] 'We are quite near Sarajevo,' I said; 'it is at the end of this valley.'⁶⁹

Sarajevo is the first stage in Bosnia. In *Sarajevo I*, the focus goes above all on the cohabitation of different cultures and religions that one could find there (Muslims, Christian, Jews, Westerners and Easterners). This was very unexpected to Rebecca:

We noted then, and were to note it again and again as we went about the city, that such sights gave it a special appearance. The costumes which we regard as the distinguishing badge of an Oriental race, proof positive that the European frontier has been crossed, are

⁶⁸ It might also be interesting to take into consideration that not only Mostar bridge, but bridges in general became a symbol for the Balkans. Full of deep rivers this area is as full of bridges. The point is that bridges are not only architectural structures: bridges are the linking structure *par excellence*. In the centuries alternatively battle camps or meeting points, bridges in the Balkans carry the traces of history and past dominations. They join and obstacle the meeting of different cultures: they result to be a micro representation of the Balkans as a whole. Probably for this reason they became central in the literary career of Ivo Andrić, the Yugoslav Nobel laureate (1961) – one remembers that his most famous work is entitled *The Bridge on the Drina* and one of his short stories is entitled *The Bridge on the Žepa*. He himself has been defined as “the author of the bridges;” the title of Celia Hawkesworth’s study on him is *Ivo Andrić: a Bridge between East and West* (London: the Athlone Press, 1984). From the latter is extrapolated a passage of Andrić’s speech of acceptance of the Nobel Prize, in 1961:

My homeland is truly a ‘small country between worlds’ as one of our writers has put it, and it is a country which is trying in all fields, including culture, at the price of great sacrifices and exceptional energy to compensate rapidly for all that its unusually stormy and difficult past has denied it.

This passage from his speech can be related to a passage from Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Žepa* translated from Serbo-croatian by Umberto Urbani, Milano: Officine grafiche Antonio Saita, 1937, p. 19.

Ma la regione non assimilò il ponte, né il ponte assimilò la regione. Guardato di traverso il suo arco bianco si staccava nettamente isolato, stando lo stupore del viandante come un’idea, non comune, fermata nel suo volo errabondo sulle rocce del luogo selvaggio.

However, the region never assimilated the bridge, as well as the bridge never assimilated the region. The bridge’s white arch was clearly isolated, rousing the amazement of the wayfarers, just as an uncommon idea, stopped in her flight by some wild place’s rocks. [E.P.] The bridge on the Žepa, that despite all the efforts never harmonised with the natural background, metaphorically illustrates how difficult can be for the white stone to find its right place in a woody mountain. It ends in the highest paradox of a bridge which is detached from the surrounding. Indeed, “the stone bridge represents a silent link between man’s incomprehension in the face of life and his apprehension of a harmony which could give his life meaning.” In Celia Hawkeswoth, *Ivo Andrić: a Bridge between East and West*, cit., p. 9.

⁶⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia* cit., pp. 295-296.

worn by people far less Oriental is aspect than, say, Latins; and this makes Sarajevo look like a fancy-dress ball.⁷⁰

As usual, Rebecca lingers in a historical *excursus* that is able to explain, at least in part, the actual mix composing the city population. Of the historical passage, here is underlined that Sarajevo was the example of the fact that “the Slav is never subject, not even to himself.”⁷¹ In Sarajevo they have never accepted completely any dominance. This led to the creation of the present *melange* of cultures. For example: “With unappeasable hunger the Turk longed throughout the centuries to make the Slav subject to him, but it did not work.”⁷²

Sarajevo II mainly deals with Constantine re-joining Rebecca and her husband. Constantine was accompanied by a belly-dancer. This woman gave a performance of her dance:

A stout woman clad in sequined pink muslin trousers and brassière was standing on a platform revolving her stomach in time to the music of a piano and violin, and as we entered she changed her subject matter and began to revolve her large firm breasts in opposite directions. This gave an effect of hard, mechanical magic; it was as if two cannon-balls were rolling away from each other but were for ever kept contingent by some invisible power of attraction.⁷³

This dance description is very different from the *Zagreb V* one. First of all because this dancer is not described as atypical, thanks to the details that Rebecca puts in evidence (her dress, her breasts) and the comparison she uses.⁷⁴

Sarajevo III is about the present condition of Muslims in Bosnia. They are described in decadent terms, as if they were the instance of the fall of the Ottoman Empire. For once, Rebecca is in line with the tradition of her predecessors and contemporaries. As Jezernik demonstrated, the Muslim population of the Balkans was described as lazy and uninterested in active life. The Occidental tourist, considering his society undoubtedly more active, used to judge them negatively, as will be later discussed in this work.⁷⁵

In *Sarajevo IV* Rebecca writes about her visit to a mosque, then she talks of the Jews community and of the synagogue. In this way Rebecca reiterates the image of cohabitation of multiple cultures in Sarajevo.

⁷⁰ *Idem*, p. 297. One may note that Rebecca was born and brought up in a strong nation-state, where religion had been intrinsically linked to the national identity. Thus, for her it might look crazy that in a single state live together so many different religions and traditions. Actually, it must be said that this was the norm, given the history of dominations on the area.

⁷¹ *Idem*, p. 306.

⁷² *Idem*.

⁷³ *Idem*, p. 308.

⁷⁴ See *infra* Ch. 2.1., p. 38.

⁷⁵ See *infra*, Ch. 3.3., pp. 96-97; See Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 34; Robert Jun Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, London: John Murray 1849, p. 244; Will Gordon, *A Woman in the Balkans*, New York: Mead & Company, 1916, p. 246; Blair Jaekel, *The Land of the Tamed Turks or the Balkan States Today*, Boston: L.C. Page and Company, 1910, p.155.

In this chapter, one can find a beautiful description of a typical Bosnian woman too. Her name was Bulbul:

In her beauty she resembled the Persian ladies of the miniatures, whose lustre I had till then thought an artistic convention but could now recognise in her great shining eyes, her wet red lips, her black hair with its white reflections, her dazzling skin. This brightness was like a hard, transparent veil varnished on her, wholly protective.⁷⁶

In the description it is easy to recognise some oriental features, as Bulbul is compared to a Persian miniature, for example.

As for *Sarajevo V*, the longest section devoted to Sarajevo, Rebecca tells about her visit to the council chamber. Going to the balcony, she felt like Franz Ferdinand:

Under Franz Ferdinand's eye, the scene must have looked its most enchanting blend of town and country, for though it was June there had been heavy restoring rains. But it is not right to assume that the sight gave him pleasure. He was essentially a Hapsburg, that is to say, his blood made him turn always from the natural to the artificial, even when this was more terrifying than anything primitive could be; and this landscape showed him on its heights nature unsubdued and on its slopes nature accepted and extolled.⁷⁷

This was just the starting point for a detailed summary on the Habsburgs dynasty, on Franz Ferdinand, and on the *attentat* in Sarajevo. "I shall never be able to understand how it happened,"⁷⁸ said Rebecca about the murder of the emperor and his wife. So she spends the next pages analysing every detail she knew about it. She will do this again in the following chapters on Sarajevo.

In *Sarajevo VI* Rebecca still talks about the *attentat* and its main consequence, that is World War I for the common mind.

There was an exquisite appropriateness in this common fate which fell on all those connected with the events of that St. Vitus day; for those who are victims of what is known as St. Vitus's disease suffer an uncontrollable disposition to involuntary motions.⁷⁹

Fate is like the overwhelming power acting in Yugoslavia. Rebecca links such an important event as Franz Ferdinand's murder to it, already in the prologue did she refer to fate and mysticism.⁸⁰ She was also persuaded of possessing a particular sixth sense, which made her capable of perceiving connections in the events and of forecasting the future.⁸¹ The same Rebecca compared herself to a Roman woman who had "some years before the sack of Rome,

⁷⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia* cit., p. 329.

⁷⁷ *Idem*, p. 333.

⁷⁸ *Idem*, p. 350.

⁷⁹ *Idem*, p. 370.

⁸⁰ See *supra*, Ch. 2.1., p. 33.

⁸¹ See *supra*, Ch. 1.1., p. 12.

realised why it was going to be sacked.”⁸² She had somehow predicted World War II with its motives. As Claire Buck wrote:

As a survivor of the Great War Britain believed herself, with others of the interwar years, responsible for preventing a future war. The men and women who reinterpreted English and European history in fiction, memoir, and political history during the 1930s, did so under the growing certainty that another war impended. [...] West’s travelogue about Yugoslavia, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) reframes English history within the apparently marginal history of the Balkans, deliberately stitching together individual and collective memory.⁸³

Sarajevo VII is about the imprisonment of the two possible murders of the king and the following trial. Rebecca lingers again in the details of the *attentat*, because she was firmly persuaded that one could track down the origins of the upcoming world conflict, starting from the analysis of the causes of the previous one. It has already been remarked that Rebecca had this idea of the history as a flow bringing the consequences of the past to the present. In this chapter of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* she practically tries to link the World War I to a World War II that she forecasted.⁸⁴

Ilidzhe is about Rebecca’s daytrip to a small village outside Sarajevo, where Franz Ferdinand spent his last night. By saying “now, why has a village the sort of soul that it has?”⁸⁵ Rebecca seems to be able to find some residues of what happened there, condensed in the air.

The focus moves to love and to the different ways Slavs and Western people have to imagine it. The debate on love is a way of showing the difference between the “two worlds” and a way to affirm the proper identity, via the opposition to the other one. This is a technique Rebecca has already used. However, it is also a way to introduce the very sensitive part of the Balkans, a part that Rebecca, differently from the traditional Western traveller, could see.

Treboviche follows. This is the account of a daytrip too. *Treboviche* is “the mountain which rises too near the town and too steeply to be seen from it.”⁸⁶ Here, Rebecca met the gypsies, already considered above.⁸⁷

In *Travnik* (or Grassy-Town as Rebecca explains) Rebecca exclaimed: “I want to stay here, I do not want to go on.”⁸⁸ *Travnik* is a village covered with every kind of mosques. Here, Rebecca was invited to luncheon with the father and the mother of Bulbul, the beautiful

⁸² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia* cit., p. 1089.

⁸³ Claire Buck, *British Women’s Writing of the Great War*, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the World War I*, cit., p. 107.

⁸⁴ Richard Tillinghast, “Rebecca West and the Tragedy of Yugoslavia,” cit., pp. 18-20.

⁸⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 383.

⁸⁶ *Idem*, p. 391.

⁸⁷ See *supra*, Ch. 2.1. p. 37.

⁸⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 396.

Bosnian woman she had met in *Sarajevo IV*. As noted before, dinners and meetings are the means through which Rebecca showed the essence of the peoples she met.⁸⁹

Yaitze is another small village nearby *Sarajevo*. What is interesting here is Rebecca's underground walk in the catacombs of Bogomils:

We found ourselves walking through black corridors and halls, cold with the wet breath of the living rock. Black vaults soared above us, in hard mystery. From a black throne a sacrifice had been decreed, on a black altar it had been offered, in a black sepulchre it had been laid by; and throne and altar and sepulchre were marked with black crescent moon and stars.⁹⁰

The passage exemplifies once more Rebecca interest for the supernatural and the mysticism.

Yaitse II deals with the second day spent in the village. During a dinner Rebecca met a dentist whose brother was one of the two possible killers of Franz Ferdinand. So she asked the man to tell her what happened to him and his mother after the *attentat*. Thus, we hear the story of this fifteen-year-old boy and his mother, a woman completely unaware of politics. Their life was suddenly turned upside down: a member of the family was arrested for one of the most serious crimes, the father was arrested as well, and they had to escape or they might have been killed. The dentist said about his mother: "Then suddenly this happened! Her eldest child tried to kill the archduke and his wife -- apart from anything else, she felt it was too grand for us, it could not happen."⁹¹

It is remarkable that Rebecca decided to put this anecdote in the chapter, because it is presented from an inner perspective, with no judgmental nor punitive intent.

Yezero I:

That morning we followed the river of the waterfall some miles towards the source. It filled the through of a broad and handsome valley, and interrupted itself every half-mile or so with swallow cascades, handsomely laid out in bays and scallops, and shaded by willow-gardens. In the lower reaches of the valley there are strung across these cascades lines of four or five mills, little wooden huts on piles, with a contraption working underneath which is a primitive form of the turbine. "it is here, among my people," said Constantine in his fat, contented voice, 'that the principle of the turbine was invented, hundreds of years ago.'⁹²

Constantine, then, told the legendary story of *Yaitse*. A story about brave and collaboration: the story of a war, during which Turks and Franciscan monks defended the town.

⁸⁹ For an example, see *supra*, Ch. 2.1., p. 10, and see *infra*, Ch. 2.1., p. 18.

⁹⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 406.

⁹¹ *Idem*, p. 431.

⁹² *Idem*, cit., p. 433.

The Bosnia section ends with *Sarajevo VIII*. The account here begins with a party in Bulbul's house and goes on with Bulbul singing a Bosnian song. This very touching moment in Rebecca's words was "beautiful beyond anything."⁹³ The scene matches with the music and dance scenes seen until now, in Sarajevo, and before, in Zagreb. It is part of the music and dance component of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*:

Bulbul took up her *gusla* and, in a voice exquisitely and deliberately moderate, she sang many Bosnian songs. It was as if she were repeating in a garden what she had heard the wild Slavs wailing outside the walls. Mishievously she sang a love-song with her eyes fixed on my husband's face, because it is the custom of the country to sing such songs looking steadfastly into the beloved's face. Everybody laughed, because it was understood that an Englishman would find this embarrassing, but he acquitted himself gallantly, and they clapped him on the back and told him they thought him a good fellow.⁹⁴

In line with those who travelled through the Balkans before her, West recounted of many performances of dance and music related to the folk tradition. In the passage quoted above, there is also a reference to the *gusla*, the typical musical instruments of Balkan area.⁹⁵

Serbia

To Serbia are devoted 13 chapters: nine are on *Belgrade*, one chapter is on *Topola*, one on *Franzstal*, and a last one on *Frushka Gora*.

Belgrade I opens with a discussion among Gerda, Rebecca and her husband. The topic was Constantine's approach to friendship. This topic is just an excuse to show the difference between Gerda's perspective on the one side and the others' perspective, on the other side. As a matter of fact, Gerda is the voice of the opposition: Rebecca did whatever possible to make the German woman result unpleasant.⁹⁶ After the discussion, Rebecca focusses on *Pobednik*, the statue by Ivan Mestrović in Kalemegdan.⁹⁷ She seems very impressed by the beauty of the statue.

⁹³ *Idem*, p. 442.

⁹⁴ *Idem*, p. 440.

⁹⁵ There will be more space for this topic in the next chapter of this work. See *infra*, Ch. 3.3., pp. 101-104.

⁹⁶ For the role of Gerda in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* see *infra* Ch. 2.2., pp. 71-73.

⁹⁷ *Pobednik* (1928), which stands for the English The Victor, is a monument in the Upper Town of the Belgrade Fortress. It has been erected to commemorate Serbia's liberation (1918), as a consequence of the Macedonian Front, also known as the Salonica Front (*Solunska fronta* in Serbian).

The bronze statue represents a naked male figure with a falcon in the left hand and a sword in the right (as symbols of peace and war). It was conceived as a personification of victory. It looks forward the confluence of the Sava and the Danube. It became one of the most popular symbol of Belgrade. Being the man naked, the statue created a certain scandal. Indeed, it was originally supposed to be placed in Terazije or what then was the Square of Crown Prince Alexander. But after the opposition of some women association and a general public disapproval of it, it was decided to put the statue where it actually is, and where Rebecca saw it.

It is the war memorial of Yugoslavia itself, the glorious naked figure. [...] it can be seen only imperfectly, it stands on the very top of a column, at the prow of a promontory, high up above the waters, which it faces; on the park it turns its back, and that is all the observer can see.⁹⁸

Belgrade II is mainly about Rebecca's personal considerations on South Slavs and Serbs, especially their customs:

That was to say, in fact, that the Serbs had not mastered the technique of bringing up children in town, which indeed is hard enough to learn so far as winter is concerned. For in the country a peasant's child must go out into the cold, whatever the day be like, to help with the crops or the livestock.⁹⁹

She also focusses on the economics of the area:

The extent of the damage that is done to the state by these financial and industrial adventurers is not easy to compute. I do not believe that it is nearly so much in terms of money as the Yugoslavs outside Belgrade allege. The great fortunes in Yugoslavia come from shipping and timber, and are as legitimate as such riches are in England or America.¹⁰⁰

Eventually, West concludes that:

Belgrade, I thought, had made the same error. It had till recently been a Balkan village. That has its character, of resistance, of determined survival, of martyred penury. This was a very sacred Balkan village; the promontory on which it stood had been sanctified by the blood of men who had died making the simple demand that, since their kind had been created, it might have leave to live. Modern Belgrade has striped that promontory with streets that had already been built elsewhere much better.¹⁰¹

In this case, there is again a reference to the Western influence ("streets that had already been built elsewhere much better"), and again this influence is described in negative terms, which is quite new. Indeed, according to the tradition, Westerners saw themselves as the heralds of civility in a primitive world. As Chapter three will explain, in the process of "inventing" the Balkans, they were seen as a mirror, working by contrast: they were able to show how the Occident was civil and progressive, thanks to the alleged backwardness of the Balkans.¹⁰²

After *Belgrade* it is *Topola*'s turn. It is just a passing stop along the route from *Belgrade* to *Frushka Gora*. Nothing special is described in this section, apart from the concept of *zadruga*: the basis of the Slav social system. Rebecca writes on this concept, because it is

⁹⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 470.

⁹⁹ *Idem*, p. 475.

¹⁰⁰ *Idem*, p. 477.

¹⁰¹ *Idem*, p. 482.

¹⁰² See *infra*, Ch. 3.2., pp. 84-88.

fundamental in Serb society. It is difficult to translate this word. Basically, *Zadruga* a corporate family group that originally worked the land under the direction of family elders.¹⁰³

As for *Frazstal*, it is described as a place where there is nothing remarkable. Rebecca did not even understand why they had stopped there. Later on in the chapter the reader can find out that “the village is quite German.” This explains why Rebecca showed to dislike it that much: because it carried the signs of German influence. Persuaded that “The Germans have always hated the Slavs. More than that, they have always acted hatefully towards them,”¹⁰⁴ so, sympathising with Slavs, she hates Germans in return. This is how Rebecca West herself expresses her tastes and opinions on Germans.

Frushka Gora is about Sremski Karlovci, the principal political and cultural centre for Serbs during eighteenth century, until Belgrade liberation (beginning of nineteenth century), Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević,¹⁰⁵ and about *Frushka Gora* itself. In the famous Patriarchate at Sremski Karlovci, Rebecca said:

There is a passion, which is the root of our love for beauty, and therefore of our effort for art; the passion for beautiful substances, for coloured gems, for shining stones, for silver, and gold, and crystal.¹⁰⁶

This totally personal statement helps the readers to understand more about the writer of the reportage. It explains what is art for her: a product of the love for beauty. This is again an example of the blurred border between autobiography and travel writing: she uses something she saw during her trip to express a personal point of view.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ The concept of *zadruga* is essential to understand Yugoslav society. There is no exact translation for it. It is a sort of cooperative, extended family. Reporting the definition given in *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/>, last consulted 14.01.2019.

Zadruga, obiteljska, naziv za određeni oblik proširene obitelji kakva je, uz nuklearnu obitelj, postojala i u hrvatskim selima, posebice u područjima nekadašnje. Obiteljska zadruga sastojala se od više oženjene braće s roditeljima i djecom (unučadi). [...] Suvremena su istraživanja, međutim, pokazala da je zadružni oblik proširene obitelji bio u ranijim povijesnim razdobljima poznat diljem Europe, gdje je tijekom vremena nestao, a najdulje se zadržao, pa stoga bio i posebno opisan, kod Južnih Slavena i Albanaca.

In Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/search?query=zadruga>, last consulted 14.01.2019; 18:50) *zadruga* is described in the following way:

A distinctive feature is the *zadruga*, a corporate family group of 100 or more individuals that originally worked the land under the direction of family elders. The *zadruga* functioned as a rural tradition well into the communist era. The advent of modern public services, however, took a toll on this system. Even as elders lived increasingly longer, younger adults educated in an expanding school system chafed at patriarchal authority. By the 1970s the *zadruga* system had evolved into a less-onerous system of cooperative extended family groups. Nevertheless, family loyalties continue to play a major role in Serbia, where nepotism in the workplace is a recurring phenomenon.

As one can remark this is a fundamental concept in Balkan society.

¹⁰⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 51.

¹⁰⁵ Arsenije III Čarnojević (1633-1706) is remembered for having guided a migration of Serbian people from within the borders of the Ottoman Empire to the Habsburg monarchy. The migration is recalled as the Great Migration (*Velika seoba*). See Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit.

¹⁰⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 505.

¹⁰⁷ See *supra*, Ch. 1.4., pp. 24-29.

Afterwards they moved to the actual *Frushka Gora*,

That is to say the Frankish hills, which are called by that name for a historical reason incapable of interesting anybody, lie to the south of the Danube; and we had to drive across the range to find the monasteries founded by the seventeenth-century [sic] migrants, for they lie scattered on the southern slopes, looking back towards to Siberia.¹⁰⁸

The first Monastery they visited (Krušedol) had been rebuilt in Austrian fashion. King of Serbia Milan Obrenović I (1854- 1901) had been buried there in 1901. The second monastery they visited, Vrdnik was larger and more illuminated than the others: “It seems to reject the Byzantine prescription that magic must be made in darkness.”¹⁰⁹

Belgrade III starts with an impressionistic consideration on the city:

What has made modern Belgrade, though no one could guess it by looking at the town, is a conscious attempt to restore the glories of the medieval Serbian Empire. The nostalgic frescoes of Oplenats truly reveal the dominating fantasy not only of the Karageorgevitches but of the Serbian people.¹¹⁰

This consideration triggers an account of Serbian history, especially about Karađorđe Petrović (1768-1817), who is recalled as a revolutionary who tried to free Serbia from Ottoman domination,¹¹¹ and prince of Serbia Miloš Obrenović (1780-1860).¹¹²

Belgrade IV is a chapter mainly about Serbian history related to prince of Serbia Alexander Karađorđević (1806-1885) and Karađorđević dynasty.¹¹³

Belgrade V is again a chapter on Serbian history, this time mostly on Milan IV Obrenović (1854-1878).

Belgrade VI

¹⁰⁸Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 506.

¹⁰⁹ *Idem*, p. 516.

¹¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 519.

¹¹¹ He is considered the founder of the Karađorđević dynasty, which ruled Serbia in several intervals during the nineteenth and 20th centuries. He is recalled as a revolutionary who tried to free Serbia from Ottoman domination, getting himself to the throne. He had been assassinated by Miloš Obrenović's men. see Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, cit., which provides a short history of the Balkans. See also Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit.; Robert William Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*, cit.; and *Idem*, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit.

¹¹² Because they were rivals in the path to get Serbian crown, Miloš killed him, becoming the only ruler of Serbia. See Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit. and Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, cit.

¹¹³ As above mentioned, Karađorđević dynasty ruled Serbia in several intervals during the nineteenth and 20th centuries. Alexander was the first official Karađorđević ruler. To know more on the Serbian dynasties, and the wars of succession, see Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, cit., which provides a short history of the Balkans. See also Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit.; Robert William Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*, cit.; and *Idem*, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit.

By now the Serbians were deeply unhappy. They were a people who had lived by a tradition that had never failed them for five hundred years, that had never let them forget how much fairer than all the conquering might of Islam their Christian knightliness had been.¹¹⁴

The chapter is still about historical implications. This time Rebecca, focussing on 20th century, tells the readers about the rioters of May 1903 and the consequences that their revolt had on the regency of the country.¹¹⁵

Belgrade VII is another chapter on the *attentat*, the regicides and the war that came from it.

There has been no fighting in our time that has had the romantic quality of the Balkan wars in 1912. The Serbians rode southwards radiant as lovers. The whole West thought them barbarous swash-bucklers, and fools at that, advancing on an enemy who had never been defeated, and had found some magic prescription for undeserved survival.¹¹⁶

Afterwards, there are some pages devoted to the stages of the war, from the beginning till the end.

They announced, in fact, that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was destroyed and that out of its ruins they were making a kingdom of the South Slavs, such as had inherited the glory of Byzantium eight hundred years before.¹¹⁷

Belgrade VIII is mainly about what happened immediately after the end of World War I: the alliance games and the people's reaction to it.

Belgrade IX is the last chapter on Belgrade: it was time for Rebecca to leave. In this section Rebecca met Constantine and Gerda again. They moved together towards Old Serbia and Macedonia.

Macedonia

“Macedonia makes one doubt many things that one has previously believed, and in nothing it is more unsettling than in its numbers of immensely aged people,”¹¹⁸ wrote Rebecca. *Macedonia* is subdivided into twenty parts. Four of them are about *Skoplje*. Then there is one on *Matka*, one on *Bardovtsi*, one on *Neresi*, five on *Ochrid*, one on *Struga*, one on *Sveti Naum*, two on *Bitolj*, one on *Kaimakshalam*, two on *St. George's eve*.

¹¹⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 546.

¹¹⁵ The May Coup of 1903 (In Serbo-Croatian *Majski prevrat*) was a *coup d'état* in which Serbian King Alexander I Obrenović and his wife, queen Draga, were assassinated inside the Royal Palace in Belgrade. This act resulted in the extinction of the House of Obrenović: the House of Karađorđević retook the Serbian throne with the coronation of Peter Karađorđević (1844-1971).

¹¹⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 576.

¹¹⁷ *Idem*, p. 587.

¹¹⁸ *Idem*, p. 726.

Skoplje I is a chapter about Easter day in *Skoplje*. Rebecca, her husband and Constantine went to the Mass. A description of the church and the ritual follows. The religious ritual gave birth to some thoughts on the two different kinds of influence visible in it, one coming from Byzantine and the other from the Turkish tradition.

Skoplje II is again about religious differences. “Here in Skoplje we saw what the Oriental himself does with Oriental themes.”¹¹⁹ Rebecca dwells on the traces of Muslim-Turk tradition and Catholic-Western tradition in Macedonia. As already stated, she was very interested in finding the traces of the past dominances on the Balkans. If before she could find either the occidental or the Ottoman one, here she can find both: this is way *Skoplje* is such an extraordinary city, she dedicated so many pages to.

Skoplje III closes the thoughts on these internal differences:

But it is precisely because there are so many different peoples that Yugoslavia is so interesting. So many of those peoples have remarkable qualities, and it is fascinating to see whether they can be organised into an orderly state.¹²⁰

This is just an example of what Rebecca thought of the Yugoslavian fragmented and multi-composed reality.¹²¹ Quoting Larry Wolff:

The Yugoslavia created after World War I was a union of lands with dramatically different cultural and political histories: of the Ottoman, Hapsburg or Venetian empires, of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Muslim religions. Royal authority in Belgrade met resistance to centralized administration throughout the interwar period, and after World War II Communist Yugoslavia assumed its contemporary form as a union of federated republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rebecca West in 1937 was politically committed to one unified Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but the literary structure of her travel narrative recognized the historically diverse lands as she journeyed from Croatia and Dalmatia to Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia.¹²²

Matka is a brief chapter about the little monastery near *Skoplje*. *Matka* means mother in Serb. One cannot find anything more interesting than this in the *Matka* chapter.

On their way to *Matka* the company stopped in *Skoplje*'s Black mountain and in a convent somewhere below the *Skopska Tserna Gora*. *Skoplje*'s Black mountain was a ruined mosque. The convent is depicted as miraculous: “it is said that many have been cured of madness by drinking of the spring in the orchard of the convent.”¹²³ This reference to the

¹¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 652.

¹²⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 662.

¹²¹ For more on this topic, see *infra* Ch. 2.2., p. 33.

¹²² Larry Wolff, “Rebecca West: This Time Let’s Listen,” cit.

¹²³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 689.

supernatural component of Yugoslavia can be linked to all the previous references to the same supernatural power. All of them give an idea of how Rebecca saw this country.¹²⁴

Bardovtsi is only about the pasha of *Bardovtsi* and his palace.

Neresi is another monastery in the same area:

When we came to *Neresi* it was as I had remembered it, a rustic monastery, as homely as a Byzantine church can possibly be, a thing that might be a farmhouse, as it stands in a paddock, had it not been that there appear in its domes that are plainly bubbles blown by the breath of God.¹²⁵

Ochrid I is a chapter about the old town of Ochrid. Apart from describing the town itself, Rebecca gives the readers some elucidations on the historical and philological importance of it.

But the most exiting aspect of Ochrid relates to its more recent past, to events divided from us by a mere eleven hundred years. As the Slav tribes fell under the influence of Byzantium a considerable number of them were baptised but they were first converted to Christianity in mass by the Greek brothers Cyril and Methodius, who translated part of the gospels into Slavonic languages about the year 870; and their mission was carried to Ochrid by their followers, Clement and Gorazd and Naum.¹²⁶

Ochrid II is about the visit to the church of Sveti Yovan.

Ochrid III deals with the meeting of the bishop Nikolai. As the scholar Felicity Rosslyn remarked in her contribute to John Allcock and Antonia Young's book *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, bishop Nicolai is of central importance:

Macedonia is her [Rebecca's] Paradise, where poverty is fullness and the lust for destruction exposed and overcome. Bishop Nikolai in particular is central to her beliefs: the possessor of great natural power, whose force is all turned to creativity – a kind of private prayer of her own, as a woman of enormous natural power with great scope for destruction.¹²⁷

Ochrid IV is about the speech of the bishop. This leads to pay attention to the “typical mysticism of South Slavs.”¹²⁸

Bishop Nikolai's magic is a sublime version of the Macedonian embroiders which dilate on the process of existence with such authority. But what they achieve in the sphere of

¹²⁴ For the other references to the supernatural see *supra* Ch. 1.1., pp. 11-13; Ch. 2.1., p. 49; *infra*, Ch. 2.1., p. 58; Ch. 3.3., pp. 106-109.

¹²⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 687.

¹²⁶ *Idem*, p. 710.

¹²⁷ Felicity Rosslyn, “Rebecca West, Gerda and the Sense of Process,” in John Allcock and Antonia Young, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, cit., p. 123.

¹²⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 729.

matter, he achieves in time and space: the continual meaning of resurrection, which means the annihilation of death through love.¹²⁹

Struga is a chapter about one afternoon only. In here Rebecca and Constantine talk about literature, whether they prefer Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. Then, they walk around in the town, remarking the great number of gipsies sitting outside the church. As already said, gipsies never pass without notice to Rebecca West.

Sveti Naum is the name of a monastery close to *Ochrid*. Sveti Naum (Saint Naum) was the successor of Sveti Kliment, the first Christian missionary sent by Cyril and Methodius into these parts of the world.

The road to the monastery runs between steep meadows and becomes an avenue of tall poplars on the landward side and stout willows on the lake ward side, growing from smooth and springy turf. There is water on both sides of this avenue. The lake is always near at hand on the right, shining between the trees, and at the end of the avenue we crossed a bridge over a river which flows from a lake on the left, a small and more light-minded lake, prettily reflecting an island hung with willows. When one first comes to Sveti Naum one simply thinks, "Why, there is water everywhere."¹³⁰

What follows is a detailed description of the outside and the inside of the monastery. It is interesting that in Rebecca's words "here in Sveti Naum magic can be worked."¹³¹ It is described as a symbolic and mystic place. Sveti Naum is another place that one must add to the list of Yugoslav places, where the supernatural is reproduced.¹³²

Ochrid V deals with the meeting of an American woman. She revealed herself a woman full of prejudices, just as Gerda was.

Bitolj I

It lies at the valley mouth and spills out into wide plains, shading itself with poplar groves; and till full summer there are snow peaks to be seen beyond the plains. It is one of those cities which prove to our amazement that we Westerners have never ever begun to understand what town-planning means.¹³³

The rest of the chapter is about Rebecca arguing with Gerda. It is not even important the topic of their argument, the real core of the chapter is the opposition Rebecca-Gerda. Gerda's role in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is to contrast Rebecca.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Felicity Rosslyn, "Rebecca West, Gerda and the Sense of Process," cit., p. 121.

¹³⁰ *Idem*, p. 734.

¹³¹ *Idem*, p. 746.

¹³² See *supra* Ch. 1.1., pp. 11-13; Ch. 2.1., p. 40; 49; *infra*, Ch. 3.3., pp. 106-109.

¹³³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 760.

¹³⁴ More on this topic, see *infra*, Ch. 2.2., pp. 71-73.

Kaimakshalan is “where my people saved civilization” said Constantine.¹³⁵ It is a mountain where Alexander I of Yugoslavia (1888-1934) won an important battle against Bulgaria during World War I.

Bitolj II is about the main Macedonian dilemma: did Macedonians belong to Serbia or to Bulgaria?¹³⁶

Sometimes a country will for days keep its secrets from a traveller, showing him nothing but its surfaces, its grass, its trees, the outside of its houses. Then suddenly it will throw him a key and tell him to go where he likes and see what he can. That afternoon and evening Macedonia passed into such a confidential mood regarding her Serbs and Bulgars.¹³⁷

The inextricable question on national identity remains central in Rebecca’s reportage. However, she does not take any position on it. For this reason, this work restricts itself to point when she describes the unsolvable internal Balkan rivalries.

Skoplje is a chapter about Gerda, the difficulties of understanding her point of view. Being in *Skoplje* was also the occasion for meeting Militsa and Mehmed, a couple of Macedonians and for going around with them, talking to them and discovering their ideas. The couple represents just one more meeting, which makes the reportage more concrete and involving at the same time.

St George’s Eve I deals with the festivity and the way Macedonians celebrate the day.

St. George, who is the very same that is the patron saint of England, is a mysterious and beneficent figure who is trusted to confer fertility for reasons that are now completely hidden.¹³⁸

People used to celebrate this day with rituals of Greek tradition, that Rebecca lingers in describing. Also, Rebecca matches the Macedonian patron to the English one. She has already used this strategy of comparing Yugoslavia to England in order to define it.¹³⁹ This time she uses it even in a religious field.

¹³⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 767.

¹³⁶ Seton-Watson reflected on this point in his book, where he wrote that:

The real Macedonian Problem is the problem of Yugoslav Macedonia. Here neither Serbian nor Bulgarian rule has benefited the people. The people of Yugoslav Macedonia are in fact neither Serbs nor Bulgarians, and they have had reason to dislike almost equally the dictatorial nationalist centralism of Belgrade and the dictatorial centralist nationalism of Sofia.

To learn more on his opinion on the topic see Robert William Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit. pp. 318-320. See also Jovan Cvijić, *La peninsule Balkanique: Geographie Humaine*, cit., pp. 9-11.

¹³⁷ *Idem*, p. 786.

¹³⁸ *Idem*, p. 810.

¹³⁹ See Ivona Grgurinović, *Constructing the Other in Rebecca West’s Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 161-162, and see *supra* Ch. 2.1., p. 40.

St George's Eve II is crucial because it is about the sacrifice of the black lamb. Because the whole book is named after this sacrifice, it is a symbolic passage, essential to understand the meaning of the reportage. Moreover, Rebecca came out from the rite in a state of shock, and began a long rumination over society and the role of religion in it:

A part of us is enamoured of the rock and tells us that we should not reject it, that it is solemn and mystical and only the shallow denies the value of sacrifice. Because here a perfect myth had been found for a fundamental but foul disposition of the mind, we were all on equality with the haggard and grimy peasant, his neckerchief loose about goitre, who now slouched to the rock, the very man to attend a nocturnal rite late the next morning, and held up a twitching lamb to the fezed executioner, who was scrambling consequentially to the squalid summit.¹⁴⁰

There is a sort of power of attraction in the sacrifice: it is described as repellent but it is fascinating at the same time.

*Old Serbia*¹⁴¹

This section is composed of eight chapters. Two chapters are on the *Plain of Kosovo*, one on *Grachanitsa*, one on *Prishtina*, two on *Kossovaska Mitrovitsa*, two on *Petch*.

The Plain of Kosovo I opens with a landscape description:

Here light lived. Its rays, brassy because it was nearly the summer, mild because it had been a bad spring, travelled slowly, high and low, discovering terraces of snow beyond the cradling hills on peaks of unseen mountains, the white blocks of a new settlement in a fold of falling fields, and the passage over downlands of a flock of sheep, cream-coloured and nigger-brown and slow-footed as stupidity. [...]

Kosovo, more than any other historical site I know, arouses that desolation. It spreads peacefully into its vast, gentle distances, slow winds polishing it like a cloth passing over a mirror, turning the heads of the standing grain to the light. It has a look of innocence which is the extreme of guilt.¹⁴²

Then it goes on with historical hints, with special concern to the defeat inflicted in Kosovo by the Turks. Turkish domination is depicted as an obstacle for the land to blossom. This is linked to the current idea that foreigners had on Turkish domination and Turkish behaviour in general. A part of Chapter 3 will focus precisely on the Ottoman legacy in the

¹⁴⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 831.

¹⁴¹ Rebecca's choice to call this section of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, *Old Serbia* catches the reader's attention: indeed Old Serbia (*Stara Srbija*) historically includes the regions of Raška, Kosovo and Metohija. This comes from the fourteenth century, when Serbian rulers moved Southern, towards Kosovo, enriching the area with monasteries, were Serbian culture blossomed. The term "Old Serbia" started being used to counterpose New Serbia. New Serbia, instead, refers to the present Vojvodina, and it was born after the Great Serb Migrations, of which the first one was guided by Patriarch Arsenije III, mentioned above.

¹⁴² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 845.

Balkans, stressing how the negative idea on Turks ended up creating and spreading negative ideas on what are considered their descendants in Europe, Balkan people.¹⁴³

In *Grachanitsa I* Rebecca tried to analyse the causes leading to the civil war that followed the death of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin, known as King Milutin (1253-1321), in Kosovo.¹⁴⁴ In order to do so, she goes back in time to the twelfth century. She also resorts to a comparison to the Tudors, aiming to help her readers to understand the political situation.

“When the dynasty [Nemanjić dynasty] had been under way about a hundred and fifty years Milutin came to the throne, and in himself and his royal functions his likeness to Henry VIII was very strong.¹⁴⁵

Then she described the interior of the *Grachanitsa Monastery*, the marbles, the frescos. All of them reporting the traces of Byzantium and the Turks, alternatively. Rebecca dwells with considerations on art, since as it is known by now, she was not new at that. She even used to do that for work.¹⁴⁶

Prishtina had been one of the capitals of the Serbian monarchy. Part of the chapter is about its importance in history, another part is about what Rebecca did in the city; she wrote of a lunch she had there. Eventually, the chapter moves to the history of Stephen Dušan (1308-1355), King of Serbia (1331-46) and then “Emperor of the Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians” (1346-55)¹⁴⁷ and John Cantacuzenus, the general of the Byzantine Emperor.¹⁴⁸ The two, indeed, used to meet in Priština, Stefan Dušan’s royal estate: for this reason, Rebecca decided to recall their history, while staying there.

Plain of Kosovo II tries to look back at the causes of the collapse of medieval Serbian kingdom under Ottoman rule. It is a very important chapter, because it contains the

¹⁴³ See *infra*, Ch. 3.3., pp. 95-97.

¹⁴⁴ There will not be space here to discuss the Kosovo war with its causes in detail. To learn something more on it see Egidio Ivetic, *Le guerre balcaniche*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2006, and Robert William Seton-Watson *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit.

¹⁴⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 849.

¹⁴⁶ This has been already said for the chapter *Zagreb III*. See *supra*, Ch. 2.1., p. 36.

¹⁴⁷ Stefan Uroš IV, better known as Stefan Dušan was one of the most prominent rulers of medieval Serbia. He proclaimed himself Emperor (*car*) and he gave his people a new code of laws, known as Dušan’s Code (*Dušanov zakonik*). See Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, cit., which provides a short history of the Balkans. See also Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dale origini ai giorni nostri*, cit.; Robert William Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*, cit.; and *Idem*, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit.

¹⁴⁸ With the death of Andronicus III in 1341, the Byzantine Empire fell prey to family quarrels and civil war. Dušan allied with John Cantacuzenus. Their alliance broke up in 1343, when they became enemies. See Jože Pirjevec, *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*, cit., which provides a short history of the Balkans. See also Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dale origini ai giorni nostri*, cit.; Robert William Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*, cit.; and *Idem*, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit.

reference to the folksong of the grey falcon which gave the name to the reportage.¹⁴⁹ Dragutin (another guide) sings and Constantine translates it as follows:

There flies a grey bird, a falcon,
From Jerusalem the holy,
And in his beak he bears a swallow.

Poletio soko tica siva
Od svetinje - od Jerusalima,
I on nosi ticu lastavicu.

¹⁴⁹ The title of the song is *Propast carstva srpskog*. It is listed as number 45 in the collection first published by Vuk Karadžić in 1814, *Srpske narodne pjesme*.

The first Western traveller who reported the scene of a folksong performance (with a translation) in the Balkans was the abbot Alberto Fortis in *Travels into Dalmatia: Containing General Observations on the Natural History of that Country and the Neighbouring islands; the Natural Productions, Arts, Manners, and Customs of the Inhabitants*, London: 1778 (Italian ed. 1774). He started the tradition. After him, there was no travelogue in the Balkans without the performance of a folk song. The song's title was *Hasanaginica*, that is Hasan Aga's wife. The lyricism of the sad ballad made the song become so famous that it was translated in many languages and studied too as a symbol of the Balkan popular poetry (object of great interest in pre-Romanticism and then Romanticism). Indeed, the whole book by Fortis is remembered above all for the chapter on Morlachs – people living in the Dalmatian hinterland – where he describes customs and traditions and reported *Hasanaginica*. As Cristiano Diddi writes:

[...] L'*Hasanaginica* [divenne] uno dei fenomeni letterari dell'epoca, anche da sola capace di destare l'interesse per i tesori fino ad allora negletti dell'epoca popolare 'illirica.' La lacrimosa ballata della sposa di Hasan Aga commosse con il suo lirismo quanti erano in cerca di soggetti a tinte forti. In area tedesca, è ben noto l'entusiasmo del giovane Goethe, che già nel 1775 (siamo in pieno *Sturm und Drang*) tradusse il carme registrato dal Fortis, e di Herder che quasi contemporaneamente lo inserì nei suoi *Volkslieder* (1778-79), mentre intanto, sull'esempio di Ossian, si moltiplicavano commenti e versioni nelle diverse letterature europee (da Nodier a Scott, da Mallarmé a Puškin a Tommaseo) e comparivano i primi studi specialistici firmati da filologi e comparatisti della statura di J. Grimm, a quel tempo in corrispondenza con i più eminenti studiosi slavi nel campo della linguistica, della filologia e del folklore fra i quali, accanto ad altri, si ricordano i nomi di Šafarik, Kopitar, Karadžić, Pogodin, Buslaev, Sreznevskij, Miller.

Hasanaginica became one of the literary cases of the time. It was able to catch the interest of the reader with the forgotten treasures of Illirian popular epic. In German area, the enthusiasm of Goethe is well known: already in 1775 he translated the song reported by Fortis. Herder put it in his *Volkslieder* (1778-79). Comments and versions increased in various European literatures (by Nadier, Scott, Mallarmé, Puškin and Tommaseo), as well as the first studies by philologists such as J. Grimm, who had correspondences with the most eminent Slav linguists, philologists and folklore students (Šafarik, Kopitar, Karadžić, Pogodin, Buslaev, Sreznevskij, Miller). [E.P.] Cristiano Diddi, "Note a margine dello *Sguardo in Bosnia* di Matja Mažuranić," Lecce: Argo, 2003, p. 15. Here is reported the first stanza of the song, in original and in English translation.

Šta se b'jeli u gori zelenoj?
Al' je snijeg, al' su labudovi?
Da je snijeg, već bi okopnio,
labudovi već bi poletjeli.
Nit' je snijeg nit' su labudovi,
Nego šator age Hasan-age;
on boluje od ljutih rana.
Oblazi ga mati i sestrica,
a ljubovca od stida ne mogla.

What's so white upon yon verdant forest?
Snow perhaps it is or swans assembled?
Snow would surely long ago have melted.
And a flight of swans would have departed.
No! not swans, not snow it is you see there,
'Tis the tent of Aga, Hasan Aga;
On his couch he lies, severely wounded.
And his mother seeks him, and his sister,
But for very shame his wife is absent.

That is no falcon, no grey bird,
But it is the Saint Elijah.
He carries no swallow,
But a book from the Mother of God.
He comes to the Tsar at Kossovo,
He lays the book on the Tsar's knees.
This book without like told the Tsar:

“Tsar Lazar, of honourable stock,
Of what kind will you have your kingdom?
Do you want a heavenly kingdom?
Do you want an earthly kingdom?
If you want an earthly kingdom,
Saddle your horses, tighten your horses’
girths,
Gird on your swords,
Then put an end to the Turkish attacks,
And drive out every Turkish soldier.
But if you want a heavenly kingdom
Build you a church on Kossovo;
Build it not with a floor of marble
But lay down silk and scarlet on the ground,
Give the Eucharist and battle orders to your
soldiers,
For all your soldiers shall be destroyed,
And you, prince, you shall be destroyed with
them.”

When the Tsar read the words,
The Tsar pondered, and he pondered thus:

“Dear God, where are these things, and how
are they!
What kingdom shall I choose?
Shall I choose a heavenly kingdom?
Shall I choose an earthly kingdom?
If I choose an earthly kingdom,
An earthly kingdom lasts only a little time,
But a heavenly kingdom will last for eternity
and its centuries.”

The Tsar chose a heavenly kingdom,
And not an earthly kingdom,
He built a church on Kossovo.
He built it not with floor of marble
But laid down silk and scarlet on the ground.
There he summoned the Serbian Patriarch
And twelve great bishops.
Then he gave his soldiers the Eucharist and
their battle orders.
In the same hour as the Prince gave orders to
his soldiers

To ne bio soko tica siva,
Veće bio svetitelj Ilija;
On ne nosi tice lastavice,
Veće knjigu od Bogorodice, -
Odnese je caru na Kosovo,
Spušta knjigu caru na koleno,
Sama knjiga caru besedila:

"Care Lazo, čestito koleno,
Kome ćeš se privoleti carstvu?
Ili voliš carstvu nebeskome?
Ili voliš carstvu zemaljskome?
Ako voliš carstvu zemaljskome,
Sedlaj konje, priteži kolane!
Vitezovi, sablje pripasujte,
Pa u Turke juriš učinite:
Sva će turska izginuti vojska!
Ako l' voliš carstvu nebeskome,
A ti sakroj na Kosovu crkvu,
Ne vodi joj temelj od mermera,
Već od čiste svile i skerleta,
Pa pričesti i naredi vojsku:
Sva će tvoja izginuti vojska,
Ti ćeš, kneže, s njome
poginuti!"

A kad care saslušao reči,
Misli care misli svakojake:

"Mili bože, što ću i kako ću?
Kome ću se privoleti carstvu?
Da ili ću carstvu nebeskome?
Da ili ću carstvu zemaljskome?
Ako ću se privoleti carstvu,
Privoleti carstvu zemaljskome,
Zemaljsko je za maleno carstvo,
A nebesko uvek i doveka."

Car volede carstvu nebeskome
A nego li carstvu zemaljskome,
Pa sakroji na Kosovu crkvu, -
Ne vodi joj temelj od mermera,
Već od čiste svile i skerleta,
Pa doziva srpskog patrijara
I dvanaest veliki vladika,
Te pričesti i naredi vojsku.
Istom kneže naredio vojsku,
Na Kosovo udariše Turci.

The Turks attacked Kosovo.

[...]

Then the Turks overwhelmed Lazar,
And the Tsar Lazar was destroyed,
And his army was destroyed with him,
Of seven and seventy thousand soldiers.

All was holy, all was honourable
And the goodness of God was fulfilled.¹⁵⁰

[...]

Tada Lazu nadvladaše Turci,
I pogibe srpski knez Lazare,
I njegova sva izgibe vojska,
Sedamdeset i sedam iljada!

Sve je sveto i čestito bilo,
I milome bogu pristupačno.

As already stated, linking the sacrifice of the black lamb to the flight of the grey falcon, Rebecca drew the conclusion that the two together are the perfect symbol for Yugoslavia.¹⁵¹

Kosovska Mitrovitsa I is a town near Kosovo plain. The most important event of the chapter is the meeting between Rebecca and a doctor. The two shared impressions on the war. It is well known that Rebecca West also wrote some war literature. First of all, *The Return of the Soldier*.¹⁵² She was very interested in post-war traumas, so the presence of this doctor in the book is also a way to show her point of view on the war. Apart from that, it is also interesting to note the way Rebecca compared this town to the West, to Somerset especially. Once again, one can consider how these traces of the autobiographical substrate are at the same time means for defining the other.¹⁵³

Kosovska Mitrovitsa II is about the second day Rebecca and her husband spent in town. They met the doctor again and they also met miners (because there are mines in *Kosovska Mitrovitsa*). Rebecca remarked about Kosovars that:

Destiny is another name for humanity's half-hearted yet persistent search for death. Again and again peoples have had the chance to live and show what would happen if human life were irrigated by continual happiness; and they have preferred to blow up the canals and perish of drought. They listen to the evil counsel of the grey falcon. They let their throats be cut as if they were black lambs. The mystery of Kosovo was behind this hill. It is behind all our lives.¹⁵⁴

Destiny and mysticism are once again the keywords for Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 910.

¹⁵¹ See *supra*, Ch. 1.3., pp. 22-24.

¹⁵² Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*, cit.

¹⁵³ See *supra*, Ch. 2.1. p. 40, and Ivona Grgurinović, "Constructing the Other in Rebecca West's Black Lamb and Grey Falcon," cit., pp. 160-165.

¹⁵⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 948.

¹⁵⁵ See *supra* Ch. 2.1., p. 40.

Petch I is a town on the border from Old Serbia to Montenegro. The core of this chapter is Rebecca talking to some women. Nothing more relevant is found in this chapter.

Petch II focusses on differences between West and Yugoslavia:

If the West had failed to provide Yugoslavia with a formula for happiness, it could not be pretended that the failure of new things did not matter, because there were old things here which were all the country needed. In parts of the country these old things are as valuable as they ever were, as they have ever been.¹⁵⁶

The originality of this statement is that Rebecca is not the comparison between the East and the West, as if the East lacked something the West had; she is doing precisely the opposite, thus Rebecca West finds an original position in this debate. Her predecessors used to find in Yugoslavia a land where the West was missed. As will be analysed in the next chapter, they had never thought that actually the West needed to learn something from the Balkans.¹⁵⁷

Montenegro

The part on Montenegro is composed of one chapter on *Kolashin*, one on *Podgoritsa*, one on *lake Scutari*, two on *Tsetinye*, and one on *Budva*.

Kolashin is the first stage in Montenegro.

Save for a peppering of graves by the roadside, this might have been a better Lake District, a lovelier Coniston. About four in the afternoon we came on the town, which was of the prim and stony Montenegrin pattern, lying on a plain surrounded by shapely hills feathered with delicate woodland, and which greeted us with an inn terrible in its cleanliness, and awe-inspiring in its landlady.¹⁵⁸

The comparison to the West, in this case to the Lake District, is once more the means Rebecca chooses to describe the place she visited. There is an innovative approach in this: she was feeling such familiarity to these places that she could match them with her native country. The Balkans were no longer the far, foreign, and wild place that until then Western tourists had described.¹⁵⁹

Podgoritsa still resembled a “sensuous version of the Lake District”¹⁶⁰ in Rebecca’s opinion. This comparison to England is followed by the explanation on how she liked the city. What she liked most was the river *Moracha* running through *Podgoritsa*: because of it, the city was built on terraces and bridges, creating such a nice atmosphere.

¹⁵⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 997.

¹⁵⁷ See Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., pp. 1-35, and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., pp. 89-115.

¹⁵⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1014.

¹⁵⁹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., pp. 89-115.

¹⁶⁰ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1024.

Lake Scutari is described as: “The rocky world that framed the lake was hewn into triangles, great and small. The higher peaks lifted acute apices, the low hills and islands lay squat under obtuser apices.”¹⁶¹ Here Rebecca happened to meet a little boy, and then a little girl. They had a conversation with Constantine. For the first time Constantine decided not to translate what they were saying, so that Rebecca could just imagine. This is important because for the one and only time in the whole reportage Constantine’s speech is not reported. In this occasion only it is not given great importance to his opinion.

Tsetinye I “This is a ruined town; all is falling into decay, we are all poor as dogs.”¹⁶² The town is said to be “very strange.” After that, the usual historical account follows.

In *Tsetinye II* “in the morning Tsetinye seemed even stranger than it had the night before.”¹⁶³ The reason why it looked so strange is that there was no dry land but just “water all around.”¹⁶⁴ Apart from this, the most attractive sightseeing in *Tsetinye* was a monastery, followed by Zorka’s palace. Rebecca visited both.

Budva is “a walled town on a round peninsula, a little while tortoise against the blue sea.”¹⁶⁵ It was a small town, and in Rebecca’s opinion it was the example of how Turks had ruined the Balkans: she reiterates the concept that no domination left so many bad traces as the Ottoman one.¹⁶⁶

Epilogue

The travel reportage ends with an epilogue. In the epilogue Rebecca said goodbye to Constantine and Gerda, aware that:

We were English, Constantine was a Slav Jew with a German wife. But we had grown up in a world which told us that to transcend such differences and to insist that intercourse should depend on the recognition of individuality was the mark of a civilised person.¹⁶⁷

On their way back, her husband and she still stopped in *Dubrovnik* and *Plitvitse Lakes*. Rebecca enumerates all the stages of her return journey to England. What is relevant in the epilogue is the part where Rebecca sums up her experience in the Balkans. She confesses

¹⁶¹ *Idem*, p. 1032.

¹⁶² *Idem*, p. 1036.

¹⁶³ *Idem*, p. 1045.

¹⁶⁴ *Idem*.

¹⁶⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1066.

¹⁶⁶ See *infra*, Ch.3.3., pp. 95-97.

¹⁶⁷ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1074.

that Yugoslavia affected her like nothing else in her life, because it had the forms and colours of her imagination.

This return meant, for me, going into retreat. Nothing in my life had affected me more deeply than this journey through Yugoslavia. This was in part because there is a coincidence between the natural forms and colours of the Western and southern parts of Yugoslavia and the innate forms and colours of my imagination. [...] But my journey moved me also because it was like picking up a strand of wool that would lead me out of a labyrinth in which, to my surprise, I had found myself immured. It might be that when I followed the thread to this labyrinth was my sole portion on this earth. But at least I now knew its twists and turns, and what corridor led me into what vaulted chamber, and nothing in my life before I went to Yugoslavia had even made plain these mysteries.¹⁶⁸

Without doubt it was her “duty” to keep a record of it.¹⁶⁹

In the *Epilogue* Rebecca clarifies her opinion on empires too.

I became newly doubtful on empires. Since childhood I had been consciously and unconsciously debating their value, because I was born a citizen of one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen, and grew up as its exasperated critic. [...] The theory of the British Empire that it existed to bring order into the disordered parts of the earth was more than half humbug, but it inspired to action those in whose love of action there was nothing humbugging [...] But I saw in British imperialism room for roguery and stupidity as well as magnificence. A conquered people is a helpless people; and if they are of different physical type and another culture from their conquerors they cannot avail themselves of anything like the protection which would otherwise be given them by the current conceptions of justice and humanity.¹⁷⁰

Rebecca’s aversion for Empires is remarkable if one thinks of the country she came from. In fact, Great Britain did not conquer any of the Balkan nations, but the British travellers before her showed some kind of colonialist approach anyway. As Melina Rokai stressed:

Historiography on the Balkans argues for the existence of a type of colonialism by the British (later Anglo-American) if colonialism viewed as a manifestation of imperial ideology through a broader economic and political hegemony that does not necessarily include actual military conquest and institutional governing, but can instead be seen as cultural hegemony.¹⁷¹

Rebecca, instead, seemed to look at the whole thing from the opposite point of view, from an anti-colonialist point of view, which is quite innovative and original, for her time.

The structure of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* would not be the same without the presence of all the people Rebecca reported to have met during her travels. That is way the next

¹⁶⁸ *Idem*, p. 1088.

¹⁶⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁷⁰ *Idem*, pp. 1089-1091.

¹⁷¹ Melina Rokai, *The British and Balkan Woman: British Perceptions of Balkan Women and their Femininity in the Long Nineteenth Century (1789-1914)*, Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2017, p. 422.

section of the chapter will focus on them, in particular on three of them, which clearly are, together with Rebecca, the protagonists of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.

2.2. The protagonists of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

As already seen, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is built on meetings between Rebecca and locals or, less often, other travellers. Though crossing many people in the pages of this travel reportage, Rebecca's adventures in Yugoslavia would not have been the same without her three companions: her husband, her guide Constantine, and his wife, Gerda. This section focusses on them, with the purpose of clarifying the relevance of each of them in the book. The focus will be mainly on Constantine, because his role is considered of primary importance, as he is the voice accompanying Rebecca in all the stages of her travel.

Rebecca's husband, the banker Henry Andrews was with her only during the last two travels in Yugoslavia. "I know you did not really want to come to Yugoslavia at all, but when you get there you will see why it was so important that we should make this journey,"¹⁷² said Rebecca. As Wolff noted:

This injunction was directed at the reader as well, about to embark upon a work of more than a thousand pages, bafflingly resistant to classification by genre: travel memoir, historical meditation, philosophical encyclopaedia, political prophecy.¹⁷³

In every chapter Rebecca takes care of giving space to her husband. He is always addressed as "my husband." In the first chapter there is already an explanation of never calling Andrews by his name. In this chapter, instead, the focus will be on his role as a character of the reportage. As Fadiman noted, Rebecca seems to have "generously" put the "profoundest remarks" in Henry Andrews' mouth.¹⁷⁴ One can agree with this point of view, but it is also true that Andrews had a background very similar to Rebecca's. As she herself said, their personalities looked like.¹⁷⁵ This is, at the same time, the reason why all the smartest remarks have been attributed to him, and the reason why he is not in complete opposition to Rebecca, in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. He serves the purpose of finding pretexts for debating: reading the travelogue, we expect him to say something when there is a group of people talking.

Constantine the poet, as Rebecca refers to him throughout the travel book, is her guide during two out of the three travels. He is not the only guide she had, since it is known

¹⁷² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 28.

¹⁷³ Larry Wolff, "Rebecca West: This Time Let's Listen," cit.

¹⁷⁴ Clifton Fadiman, "Magnum Opus," *The New Yorker*, October 1941, cit.

¹⁷⁵ See *supra* Ch. 1.1., pp. 14-15.

from the book itself that there were also other two men who accompanied her during some visits: Valetta, a professor of mathematics at the University of Zagreb, and Marko Gregoriević, a Croatian journalist. When they occupy some pages of the book, it is mainly due to their arguments with Constantine, while Constantine has an importance that the others have not. He is the very responsible for the intimacy of Rebecca's journey.

Originally, scholars thought that Costantine was merely a fictitious character, but it turned out that there was a "real Constantine," who was a living Serbian poet. His name was Stanislav Vinaver. His parents were Jews from Poland. He was born in the small village of Šabac. He was married to a pro-Nazi German woman, whose name is Gerda in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Some words must be spent on Vinaver and his career as a writer, in the first place, and as a politician, in the second place. The two careers interpolate: as Marija and Bojan Mitrović write in *Storia della cultura e della letteratura Serba* he had the greatest influence on his successors, chiefly in renewing poetry, but, for the most part he has been marginalised from Serbian literature, because of his politics standpoints. He was absolutely against any form of mercantilistic patriotism. He was a genuine patriot: during the first Balkan war (1912) he gave up his Maths studies to enrol as a volunteer in Serbian army. Afterwards, he took part in the Kolubara battle (1914) from the side of the 1300 caporals. He was subject to the "Albanian Calvary," which brought him together with the Serbian army, to Italy, France, and United Kingdom. In the interwar period he came back to the motherland, where he worked as a journalist, a critic and an employee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Vinaver's fate during World War II is unfortunate: as he held the rank of officer in the Yugoslav royal army and the Germans treated Jewish officers as prisoners of war, he was detained in a prison camp near Osnabrück and thus survived. His mother, however, was killed in a Nazi concentration camp. Concerning his writing career, he is primarily remembered for the *Manifest ekspresionisticke škole* (1921), the Serbian expressionism manifest. Apart from his adhesion to the avant-garde, he is also well known for the numerous essays on literature that he published.¹⁷⁶ On him Radovan Vucković wrote:

I testi di Vinaver di solito contengono elementi di una qualche favola cosmologica o mitologica, sono permeati dal verso, ma il pathos della matrice mitologica viene sempre distrutto dallo scherno e dalle risate, ottenendo così dei bisticci e dei fantastici *collage* narrative.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ For the list of those essays see Marija Mitrović and Bojan Mitrović, *Storia della cultura e della letteratura Serba*, Lecce: Argo, 2005, p. 116

¹⁷⁷ Vinaver's works usually have elements belonging to cosmological or mythological fables. They are permeated by the verse, but the *pathos* is always destroyed by laughs, so attaining puns and narrative collages. [E. P.] Radovan Vucković, *Modena srpska proza*, Beograd, 1990, p. 473.

After the war, Vinaver returned to writing, but his works dealt with translations, mainly.¹⁷⁸ Though temporally forgotten by the same people that he defended, Stanislav Vinaver was an eclectic writer and artist. As Arturo Cronia wrote in the Serbo-Croatian literature anthology he edited, Vinaver was the *enfant terrible* of 20th century Serbian literature. He is described as genial and eclectic, interested not only in literature, but in music, linguistics, translation, and even mathematics.¹⁷⁹ He gives added value to the reportage. However, quoting Guido Snel:

The irony of Vinaver's life may very well be that his most celebrated role, the one for which he will be remembered also outside the Serbian and the Yugoslav realm, was as a guide of Rebecca West in her celebrated fictionalized travelogue *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon* (1941), where he appears as the quintessentially Balkan character Konstantin. No text matches that of West in terms of the influence it exerted, and perhaps still exerts, on the image of the Balkan cultures in Europe. But Europe does not get to know Vinaver, it gets to know Konstantin, and has no clue about the drama of modernity in which he acted.¹⁸⁰

Stanislav Vinaver, given the political reasons above mentioned, became completely forgotten after his death, so it is nowadays hard to find full translations of his works.

Rebecca first described Constantine as she and her husband are getting off the train in Zagreb: "Constantine, the poet, a Serb, that is to say a Slav member of the Orthodox Church from Serbia." She wrote that he had:

A head like the best-known satyr in the Louvre, and an air of vine leaves about the brow, though he drinks little. He is perpetually drunk on what comes out of his mouth, not what goes into it. He talks incessantly. In the morning he comes out of his bedroom in the middle of a sentence, and at night he backs into it, so that he can just finish one more sentence. Automatically he makes silencing gestures while he speaks, just in case somebody should take it into his head to interrupt.¹⁸¹

As West began to take a deeper interest in him, she explained:

Nearly all his talk is good, and sometimes it runs along in a coloured shadow show, like Heine's Florentine Nights, and sometimes it crystallizes into a little story the essence of hope or love or regret, like a Heine lyric. Of all human beings I have ever met he is the most like Heine: and since Heine was the most Jewish of writers it follows that Constantine is Jew as well as Serb.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Snezana Samardžija, *A Short History of Serbian Literature*, Belgrade: Serbia PEN, 2011 dedicated some pages to Vinaver in her book on Serbian literature, as well as Marija Mitrović and Bojan Mitrović, *Storia della cultura e della letteratura Serba*, cit. In those pages one can read of Vinaver's contribution as a translator from European languages (French above all). His most famous translation surely is the translation of *La vie de Gargantua et Pantagruel* by Rabelais. See François Rabelais, *Gargantua i Pantagruel* (Гаргантюа и Пантагруел), translated from French by Stanislav Vinaver, Beograd: Prosveta, 1967.

¹⁷⁹ Arturo Cronia, *Le più belle pagine della letteratura Serbo-croata*, Milano: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1963, p. 281.

¹⁸⁰ Guido Snel, "Three Forsaken Poets: Significant Absences in Balkan Modernism," *Slavonica*, 21.1-2, pp.1-15, 2016.

¹⁸¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 42.

¹⁸² *Idem*, p. 43.

As one can learn from the book, the first place where they spent some time together is Sarajevo where the mingling of the various cultures of Yugoslavia was most vivid. Afterwards they have been almost always together, during Rebecca's Travel. This friendship, which is itself on the border between autobiography and travel writing is known for having been long-lasting, not only in the book, but in real life too.¹⁸³ It appears that, during World War II, Vinaver was a prisoner of war in a German camp. Rebecca West sent him food packages through the Red Cross, as Srđan Koljević reports.¹⁸⁴

Stojan Pribičević was the first who pointed out that Constantine was indeed Vinaver.¹⁸⁵ Pribičević remarked that exactly during the years of Rebecca's travels, Vinaver was the press bureau chief (employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) for the Yugoslav government under Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović. Vinaver was charged of escorting famous Rebecca West, since he himself was by then highly reputed for his erudition.¹⁸⁶ Pribičević finds that choosing a Serb as a *Cicerone*, Rebecca ended up to be influenced by him, accepting the Serbian supremacy.

The Serbs have monopolized all Miss West's love—and they well deserve it. But with the zeal of the enamored, Miss West turns on anybody who may reasonably or unreasonably disagree with the Serbs. The Croats, for instance, she dislikes wholesale, from beginning to end. The Slovenes...she mentions on three out of the 1,150 pages. There is something odd about English women: when they become interested in the Balkans, they are more partisan than the Balkanites themselves. And just as Miss Edith Durham was a violent hater of Serbs, Miss Rebecca West is a merciless critic of non-Serbs.

However, one can judge this idea as completely untrue. More than once, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* proves that what Rebecca liked most of Yugoslavia was the diversity of the country. She said: "It's precisely because there are so many different peoples that Yugoslavia is so interesting."¹⁸⁷ Rebecca had never believed in empires, "they stink" and are pointless, in her opinion.¹⁸⁸ In the book she attacks the idea of empire, preferring small nations. She is clearly against the supremacy of one country over others. This leads to think that she was

¹⁸³ The character of Constantine/Vinaver stays exactly on the border between reality and literary fiction. The reader of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* cannot understand if his character in the book is an accurate reproduction of the real Stanislav Vinaver. The facts of Rebecca's and Stanislav's life mix with the fiction, folding to the narration, but one cannot know how much. So Constantine is, at the same time, a friend mentioned in an autobiography, a guide for a travel writing and a good friend in real life. This gives an idea of the number of layers one can find in West's travelogue.

¹⁸⁴ Srđan Koljević, *Treatment for the TV Series and Film Rebecca West – Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 8.

¹⁸⁵ Stojan Pribičević, "Rebecca West in Yugoslavia" rev. of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, *Nation*, November 1941, pp. 457-58.

¹⁸⁶ Marija Mitrović and Bojan Mitrović, *Storia della cultura e della letteratura Serba*, cit., pp. 115-116.

¹⁸⁷ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 662.

¹⁸⁸ See *supra*, Ch. 2.1., pp. 66-67.

not keen to choose any Yugoslavian country over the others. National individuality is what the West lacks, in her opinion. Paradoxically, being a sort of mosaic of nationalities, Yugoslavia provided what the West lacked, and that is why Rebecca could not imagine Europe without it. Yugoslavia was needed for its fragmentation. Her idea on Yugoslavian – and more generally Balkan – fragmentation is directly related to her dislike for empires. She sees in the Balkan mosaic on the one side an alternative to the empire, on the other side a consequence of them (since, as one shall better remember, Balkans had been subject to three long empire dominances: Byzantium, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires). Furthermore, Rebecca seems to find in this fragmented situation an alternative to the national states Europe was used to. Differently from others who had some kinds of experience through the Balkans before her, she saw in this alternative something really enriching.¹⁸⁹

She had come to Yugoslavia, in a decade of deepening political nightmare, believing that civilization was at stake in Europe (and it was), seeking to enlarge her understanding of that civilization. When “Black Lamb and Grey Falcon” was published in 1941, Hitler had made himself the master of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia had been bombed and abolished, and Rebecca West found that she had been a visitor to a now lost world. At that moment in history, Rebecca West's book challenged Britain and America to cherish an image of Europe in its full moral and political dimensions, to recognize unequivocally that Eastern Europe was a necessary part of Europe.¹⁹⁰

This point of view is very innovative, since the disjointedness of the Balkans had always been a cause of disorientation and perplexity for Western travellers. Despite her being an Englishwoman, she does not show a colonialist thought, which used to be prevailing for her predecessors and contemporaries.¹⁹¹

Clare Colquitt stated that Constantine embodied also the Slavic joy of life that Rebecca West celebrated, as well as the compulsion to suicide she decries. In him Rebecca found what she deems the two basic components of Yugoslavia as a whole, death drive and passion for life. So, being the “perfect Slav,” he results to be even more important in the reportage.

One could even find a thread in the story of Constantine in the book. There is a sort of *Bildungsroman* of his character, as Fadiman remarked:

As the book progresses, he gradually wilts and softens under the hammer blows of his fiendish wife, Gerda, a pure Nazi type, though she is not aware of it herself. The disintegration of Constantine may be said to be the ‘plot’ of the book.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ To know more on this topic, see *infra*, Ch. 3.3., pp. 97-100.

¹⁹⁰ Larry Wolff, “Rebecca West: This Time Let’s Listen,” cit.

¹⁹¹ The history of how the Balkans were actually “invented” by the general colonialist mind during the Enlightenment and later on is object of study in Chapter 3. See *infra*, Ch. 3, pp. 75-109.

¹⁹² Clifton Fadiman, “Magnum Opus,” cit.

Constantine is not at all a silent guide. One understands it immediately reading *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. His words and striking comments are reported so accurately, that one could find it hard to imagine that West could have remembered so much of what he said. This detail also helps to understand the importance of Vinaver for Rebecca, and of Constantine for the book.

As for Gerda, Constantine's German wife, Rebecca West depicts her as a forerunner to Hitler, making very clear her intolerance for her. Larry Wolff remarked that Rebecca hated Gerda from the first sight, when she described her eyes as blind-looking.¹⁹³ From the moment Gerda joined the group, there would always be space to show contempt against her, and her ideas, which are completely opposite to Rebecca's ones. Moreover, the couple Constantine-Gerda is perfect to describe the eve of World War II.

Politically speaking, "Gerda is here" in the sense of the German presence in the centre of Europe; and this was equivalent of saying "the Turks are her" because the empire Gerda threatened to establish had all the hallmarks of the Turkish one, not least in marrying rapacity with the inability to generate its own wealth.¹⁹⁴

If Vinaver is described as the one who brings joy to the group, Gerda is often described as the killjoy: "after ruining the Macedonian tour, Gerda finally left."¹⁹⁵ She is described as "bourgeoise and town-bred" by Rebecca:

Gerda is *bourgeoise* and town-bred. She is proud because her family are all professional men; it is of importance to her that she cannot bake a loaf, she likes to buy her cakes in a shop. Her theory of her own social value depends on her being able to put down money and buy results of processes without being concerned in the processes themselves. And she is enormously afraid that she will not be able to go on doing this.¹⁹⁶

But it must be taken into account that she is a pretext to express comments on various topics. Through her constant opposition to Rebecca, she gives the reader the opportunity to better understand the same Rebecca. Thus, in this work her presence is not judged as killjoy; she is considered essential to the full development of the thread of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* and the journey. For example, the fact that Gerda despised Yugoslavia is the means for Rebecca, the writer, that she cherished it. To say it in Rosslyn's words:

Gerda is like a child born deaf, surrounded by movements of lips she cannot interpret: her frustration rises to a crescendo of tantrums and violence, in the effort to snatch what she

¹⁹³ Larry Wolff, "Rebecca West: This Time Let's Listen," cit.

¹⁹⁴ Felicity Rosslyn, "Rebecca West, Gerda and the Sense of Process," in John Allcock and Antonia Young, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, cit., p. 116.

¹⁹⁵ Michael Nicklanović, *Constantine the Poet*, in *Serb World USA*, 15.4, pp. 1-9, 1999, p. 8.

¹⁹⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 802.

cannot otherwise obtain. The mystery she has not fathomed is really the mystery of creativity.¹⁹⁷

In this travelogue there is a perfect equilibrium of descriptions, analysis and introspections. Showing its newness since the first pages, it carries it until the last ones. It proves to be traditional in the way it presents itself, but innovative both in the contents and in the type of accounts. The protagonists have their role, not only as real human beings, but also as parts of a narrative building. Summing all of these features up, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* stays as reference point in the genre of travel writing, and in the history of literature on the Balkans too.

Now that the structure of the reportage is clear and the protagonists are presented this work would like to leave space to some consideration on how Dame Rebecca West influenced the common thought, changing the shared ideas on the Balkans and Yugoslavia. The means of diffusion of ideas on other countries is and it has always been in the first place travel writing. This is why the study of Balkan travel writing has recently acquired such an importance in the reflection on Balkans and Balkan representation in the gaze of Western travellers: it is the driving force behind the diffusion of images, information and stereotypes. As a consequence, it is appropriate for now to wonder what is the history of Balkan travel writing; of what it consists.

Any number of European and North American travellers published accounts of their 'Balkan' journeys. The precise countries may vary – the boundaries of the Balkans are notoriously ill-defined – but the use of the generic label nonetheless implies a sense that the region is a unified and cohesive entity. The travellers' titles and subtitles sum up the characteristics that they associate with the region as whole: 'Land of Discord;' 'Savage Europe;' 'The Burning Balkans' as well as 'The Melting Pot;' 'Eternal Epic;' 'Through the Iron-laced Curtain;' 'The Other Europe;' 'Prejudice and Plum Brandy;' 'The Embers of Chaos.'¹⁹⁸

Labelled as responsible of the greatest events in European History, but also looked at as irrelevant, troublesome appendixes, the Balkans seem to cover an ill-defined area of the world,

¹⁹⁷ Felicity Rosslyn, "Rebecca West, Gerda and the Sense of Process," in John Allcock and Antonia Young, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcon: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, cit., p 118.

¹⁹⁸ The subtitles reported in Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis, *Balkan Departures: Travel Writing from Southeastern Europe*, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, p. 1, refer to Aleksander Valentinovič Amfiteatrov, *Strana razdora*, Saint-Peterburg: Balkanskiia vpečatelnija, 1903; Harry De Windt, *Through Savage Europe: Being a Narrative of a Journey through the Balkan States and European Russia*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907; Philips Price, *Through the Iron-laced Curtain: a Record of a Journey through the Balkans in 1946*, London: Sampson Low, 1949; Robert Bassett, *Balkan Hours: Travels in the Other Europe*, London: Trafalgar square Publishing, 1990; Alec Russell, *Prejudice and Plum Brandy: Tales of a Balkan Stringer*, London: Michael Joseph, 1993; Dervla Murphy, *Through the Embers of Chaos: Balkan Journeys*, London: John Murray Pubs Ltd 2003.

A Long and Crowded Journey

with defined habits, culture and (un)civilities. But defined by who? Have those lands ever been seen for what they actually are?

3. The Myth of the Balkans

The Balkans are a mythical territory [...] Just as the Mediterranean can be described as the cradle of human history, this is true of the Balkans.¹

Between Germany and Russia live a hundred million people. A few hundred miles separate them from the shores of Britain, but to the British people, which is aware of the existence of Zulus and Malay, Maoris and Afrids, they are unknown. They have unpronounceable names, and live in plains and forests, by rivers which might be in another world.²

When one uses the expression “Balkanism” or “myth of the Balkans,” the reference is to a system of ideas that have been accumulating over centuries of travels and discoveries by Western travellers, starting with eighteenth-century explorations. The Balkanism as a field of study is modelled on a concept developed by the American-Palestinian professor Edward Said: Orientalism. The Orientalism is the study of how and when Western societies created and invented a representation of the Orient (including the Balkans), people are still tied to.³ The passage from Orientalism to Balkanism has been made by the Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova, who narrowed it down the discourse from the Orient in general to the Balkans, underlining the distinction existing between the two areas.⁴ The ideas related to the myth of the Balkans are partly made of a series of stereotypes due to the socio-political background of the travellers and the purposes of their travels. The ideas can look somehow very far from reality. They are charged with a mythical *allure*, distancing them even more from the truth. Still, as John Allcock – one of the author of *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans* – affirmed, prejudice is just the first strand of the story. “We need to find another

¹ Christopher Montague Woodhouse, *The Philhellens*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969, p. 23.

² Robert William Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit. p. XV.

³ On this in Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London: Peregrine Books, 1985, p. 15, Said wrote that:

The kind of political questions raised by Orientalism, then, are as follows: What other sorts of intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and cultural energies went into the making of an imperialist tradition like the Orientalist one? How did philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel-writing, and lyric poetry come to the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialist view of the world? What changes, modulations, refinements, even revolutions take place within Orientalism? What is the meaning of originality, of continuity, of individuality, in this context? How does Orientalism transmit or reproduce itself from one epoch to another? In fine, how can we treat the cultural, historical phenomenon of Orientalism as a kind of willed human work-not of mere unconditioned ratiocination-in all its historical complexity, detail, and worth without at the same time losing sight of the alliance between cultural work, political tendencies, the state, and the specific realities of domination?

The same type of questions is raised by the studies on Balkanism.

⁴ To know more on Balkanism and Orientalism and their connection, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit.; Edward Said, *Orientalism*, cit.

strand, and one which takes up the account of how these images accumulate over the time, how they develop their organised character, and how they became rooted in society,”⁵ he stated.

The problem of how and why an image of the Balkan region has come to be constructed in the English-speaking world is an interesting one. The area does have the capacity to grip the imagination and engage the affection of the outsiders in a remarkable way, and to an extent which might appear to be out of all proportion to its real historical or cultural importance.⁶

The collective representation of the Balkans that has been developed in Western societies starting from eighteenth century – or the myth of the Balkans, or Balkanism – deserves to be analysed in terms of “construction,” where construction means the process of building in one society a precise idea of another society, by means of compilation of typical representations of that one. Some of them might even be trustful, that is pertinent to reality. “The idea of construction is as interesting as it is ambiguous. It seems to refer to both something going on in the head of the observer, and something which actually happens to the people who are being observed,” writes the same Allcock.⁷ This imagery of the Balkans, the work focusses on, has been constructed, just as the Orient’s one had been constructed before.⁸

The history of this imagery has been a story of ambiguity and even contradiction, in which a braid of partly complementary and partly incompatible and contradictable ideas about the region and its peoples has been plaited together. The resulting ambivalence and the sense of mystery is not a sign of the lack of any form or coherence in the image: it is one of its essential characteristics.⁹

Before beginning the argument on the Balkan myth itself, it is appropriate to wonder “what are the Balkans?” It is difficult to answer this question. To begin with, the Balkans are Europe, but not totally. They are not fully Occident, nor Orient yet. It is even harder to define a national, linguistic and cultural common background, in the Balkans, since they are very diverse.¹⁰ Many scholars have tried to get to some conclusions upon the Balkans, their identity, and their cultural borders. Yet, the question is open and the debate is on. The aim of this chapter is to find Rebecca’s position in this debate, in order to show how far she shares or shares not the common

⁵ John Allcock, “Constructing the Balkans,” in John B. Allcock, Antonia Young. *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, cit., pp. 218-219.

⁶ *Idem*.

⁷ *Idem*, p. 220.

⁸ To learn more on *Orientalism*, see Edward Said, *Orientalism*, cit.

⁹ John Allcock, “Constructing the Balkans,” in John B. Allcock, Antonia Young. *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, cit., p. 239.

¹⁰ For an in depth examination on the topic, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit.; Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit.; and Egidio Ivetic, *I Balcani dopo i Balcani: Eredità e Identità*, Roma: Salerno editrice, 2015.

system of ideas concerning the Balkans. Rebecca was not very keen to pay attention to prejudices; indeed, as Antoni Maćzak affirmed, she was rather of the idea that:

La norma per compiere un viaggio all'estero è prendere con se il proprio buon senso e lasciare i pregiudizi. Scopo del viaggiatore è vedere e imparare; ma tale è l'impazienza della nostra ignoranza e tale la gelosia del nostro amor proprio che generalmente ci creiamo in partenza un certo preconceito (per autodifesa oppure come barriera contro le lezioni dell'esperienza) e ci stupiamo e combattiamo contro tutto ciò che non sia conforme ad esso.¹¹

Anyhow, Rebecca's cultural and political background influenced her in some measure, as one will see reading on this chapter. In spite of this, one will also see that she found a new position for herself in the history of the myth of Balkans. She figured them with new eyes and new ideas, starting a new trend on them, by means of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. In order to present this new trend, in this chapter will be analysed the meanings given to the word "Balkans," from a geographical and socio-cultural point of view, with the purpose of making it plain to which area is the study referring to; the main causes leading to the creation of the so-called myth of the Balkans, highlighting the two fundamental stages of its invention; the most radicalised stereotypes belonging to the myth of the Balkans, and eventually, Rebecca's approach to them.

3.1. Balkans? Which Balkans?

Why are the Balkans called so? From a geographical point of view, the Balkan peninsula took the name from a part of the mountains chain of the Carpathians. Those ones occupy in their extremities the peninsular area. The expression "Balkan peninsula" was officially created in 1808 by the German geographer August Zeune, who mentioned it in his work *Goea*.¹² The first collective use of the term Balkan as a description of the whole peninsula by a British traveller was by Walsh in 1827.¹³

In fact, the word "Balkan" was already of use among Turkish speakers. The word is connected with the mountains: etymologically, "Balkan" is composed of two Turkish words, meaning in combination "wooden mountain." As a matter of fact, nowadays it is still used in

¹¹ William Hazlitt, *Notes on a Journey through France and Italy*, London: Hunt and Clarke, 1826, p. 89 quoted in Antoni Maćzak, *Viaggi e viaggiatori nell'Europa moderna*, Bari: Laterza, 2009, p. 30. The general meaning of the sentence can be resumed as follows: the norm to travel abroad is to keep our good sense with us, leaving the prejudices. The traveller's aim is to see and to learn. However, our ignorance and our self-love's jealousy are so impatient, that we generally leave with a preconception. This might be self-defence, as well as a boundary against experience's lessons. We are amazed; we fight against whatever is not compliant with the preconception. [E. P.]

¹² August Zeune, *Goea: Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung*, Berlin: Wittich, 1808.

¹³ This information can be found in Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., pp. 48-51. The reference is to Robert Walsh, *Narrative of a Journey from Constantinople to England*, London: F. Westl and A.H. Davies, 1828.

North-East Turkey with the meaning of rocks, rocky.¹⁴ The Turkish origins of the word let one affirm with no doubt that the term Balkan entered the peninsula with the arrival of the Ottoman Turks. According to Maria Todorova, the history of the attribution of this nomenclature had already started in 1794, when John Morritt, a fresh laureate at Cambridge university, started his journey through the Levant.¹⁵ Going from England to Constantinople he crossed the Balkans at the Šipka pass. Of these mountains, he wrote “though now debased by the name of Bal.Kan, is no less a personage than the ancient Haemus.”¹⁶ Todorova reports that Morritt had been one of the first Anglophones using the word “Balkan” referring to this mountain chain. Indeed, before him (and sometimes even after) they still used to call it Haemus, with the Greek name. During the eighteenth century they kept on using both the nomenclatures, until when only Balkan remained of use. Jovan Cvijić in his work *La péninsule Balkanique: Géographie Humaine* explains that already in Balkan toponymy it is possible to find two mistakes, which evidence how Westerners overlooked the Balkan peninsula, starting from its geographical structure and its boundaries.¹⁷

¹⁴ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 53.

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 46.

¹⁶ John Morritt of Rokeby, *A Grand Tour: Letters and Journeys 1794-96*, edited by G. E. Mandarin, London: Century, 1985, p. 65.

¹⁷ Jovan Cvijić gives an explanation of the traditional nomenclature of the Balkan peninsula, focussing on the reiterate mistakes laying behind it. It is of great interest to see how the mistake in naming the area may have led to a mistaken concept on the area:

C'est de cette conception erronée de chaîne centrale qui provient le nom actuel de Péninsule des Balkans. La partie Orientale de cette chaîne portait le nom d'Haemus. Ce nom, appliqué à des montagnes peu éloignées de Constantinople, souvent mentionnées par les écrivains classiques et byzantins, était plus connu que ceux qu'on donnait aux autres sections. Les explorateurs du commencement du XIX siècle apprirent que l'Haemus classique s'appelle actuellement Balkan. En s'inspirant de la conception fautive de la chaîne centrale, le géographe A. Zeune donna, en 1808, à la Péninsule le nom de Péninsule des Balkans.

What he states here, is that the actual name of the Balkan Peninsula comes from a wrong idea of what is the central mountain chain. Its Eastern part went under the name of Haemus. Since this name was applied to some mountains not far from Constantinople, many humanists and byzantinists mentioned it. For this reason, the name became more known than the names applied to other areas of the same mountain chain. Nineteenth-century explorators learnt the Haemus was then called Balkan. For the same reason (the mistaken conception of of the central chain) Zeune, in 1808, called the peninsula Balkan Peninsula. [E. P.] Then Cvijić adds that even the name Balkan is not a right choice:

Le nom de Balkan, au lieu d'Haemus, n'est pas tout à fait exact. Ce nom signifie en turc *montagne*. La population turque de la partie orientale de la Péninsule appelle Balkan la partie orientale de l'ancien Haemus, la plus basse et la plus insignifiante.

In this passage he states that not even the word Balkan, instead of Haemus, is right. The word means *mountain* in Turkish. Turkish people from the East side of the peninsula call Balkan the eastern part of Haemus. [E. P.] So, he concludes that the two mistakes are very old and deeply-rooted, so that now they became part of the Balkan charm:

Les deux erreurs dont il [le nom Péninsule des Balkans] provient ont leur origine dans l'antiquité et la période turque. Ces erreurs nous mettent en contact avec l'histoire mouvementée de la Péninsule; elles donnent à son nom un intérêt particulier.

The meaning of this latter passage is that the two mistakes about the nomenclature of the Balkan Peninsula were originated in ancient times and Turkish age. These mistakes put us in touch with the troubled history of the peninsula, providing its name with a special interest. [E. P.] In Jovan Cvijić, *La péninsule Balkanique: Géographie Humaine*, cit., p. 33.

The peninsula does not have clear boundaries, apart from those ones with the sea. By the way, to which political countries is one referring to, by saying “Balkans?” As Stefano Petroungaro questions, is one referring to Southern Europe, or rather to Eastern Europe, or rather to South-Eastern Europe?¹⁸ Basically “I ‘Balceni’, come ogni mappa mentale, sono una rappresentazione collettiva dello spazio, soggetta a ininterrotti mutamenti, a influssi politici e culturali.”¹⁹ As Alexander Kiossev puts it, “the label ‘The Balkans’ shares with other clichés a kind of automatic essentialism – it is a geographic metonym that presupposes the existence of a nongeographical referent.”²⁰ Because Balkans borders are not clear cut, the perception of them changed by the time, accordingly to political and cultural factors. Robert William Seton-Watson, for example, wrote that:

The Balkan peninsula may be considered [...] as bounded in the North-West by the Alps, in the North by the Sava and lower Danube and on all other sides by the sea. The only point left doubtful by this definition is the Dobrudja which, although on the Balkan side of the Danube, belongs rather to the Danubian Basin than to the peninsula.²¹

Attilio Brilli instead wrote that:

Certo i Balceni non sono un’isola della storia, anche in quest’ottica sono davvero una penisola, cioè saldamente ancorata al suo contesto, che è innanzitutto danubiano-mediterraneo, quindi europeo e mondiale. Ciò vale sia per i secoli asburgico-ottomani che per il Novecento, quando a un certo punto buona parte dei Balceni rientrò in un’ulteriore regione storica, l’Europa centro-Orientale, condividendo alcune esperienze con altri paesi satelliti dell’Urss.²²

The professor Egidio Ivetic affirms that the Balkans are composed by the countries of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo (only partially accepted), plus Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania. Slovenia is out, though having been part of Yugoslavia. He also says that, according to German classification, Hungary and Slovakia belong to the Balkans too.

What Rebecca considers Balkans in association with Yugoslavia, for example, excludes Greece, Rumania, and Hungary, though keeping in all the other countries that both

¹⁸ Stefano Petroungaro, *Balceni: una storia di violenza?*, cit., pp. 10-11.

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 10. The sentence states that the Balkans are a mental map, more than a real geographical entity. Being so, they are subject to continuous changes, due to the changes in cultural and political spheres. [E. P.]

²⁰ Alexander Kiossev, “The Dark Intimacy: Maps, Identities, Acts of Identification,” in Dušan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*, cit., p. 165.

²¹ Robert William Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit. p. 4.

²² For sure the Balkans are not completely isolated in history. Even from this point of view they have always been like a peninsula: they are linked to their context, which is Danube-Mediterranean, but also European and global. Balkans have been in this half-isolated position under the Habsburgs and the during the 20th century. [E.P.] Attilio Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un’arte: il romanzo del Grand Tour*, cit., p. 163.

Ivetic and Seton-Watson kept in. However, as Edgar Hoesch states, the attention of scholars moved from what he called *latu sensu* Eastern Europe to the Balkans *stricto sensu* in:

A seconda della nazione e della disciplina cui appartengono, sussistono ancora tra i singoli ricercatori notevoli differenze di opinione, specie per quanto riguarda la delimitazione spaziale della regione storica del Sudest europeo. [...] Per la sua posizione marginale e al tempo stesso per la sua funzione di ponte tra l'Europa e l'Asia, il Sudest europeo offre nel corso dei secoli un ricco materiale didattico per un inventario storico che intenda prendere in considerazione costellazioni spaziali variabili. È la storia di uno spazio multiformemente articolato privo di compattezza interna e che, per la sua fatale posizione intermedia, è stato ripetutamente soggetto alle invasioni di conquistatori stranieri e alle mire espansionistiche di potenti stati limitrofi.²³

What is plain, after all these considerations, is that by means of the name given to this peninsula, when referring to Balkans one chiefly thinks of the mountains, rather than of water, which is very present, as well:

Al passaggio tra Otto e Novecento si cristallizza in Europa una rappresentazione dei Balcani che non guarda all'acqua che li lambisce o che li attraversa, bensì alla selva che ricopre i loro monti. Nella tensione fra montagna e fiume, tra terra e acqua, vince la terra. La penisola balcanica tendenzialmente non viene associata al Danubio o alle isole greche, ma alle sue montagne, portando con se tutto un corredo di "stereotipi" negativi, che articolano un intero "discorso" detto "balcanismo". I Balcani nel segno dell'acqua vengono inghiottiti dai Balcani nel segno della terra, una terra sfortunata, in qualche modo destinata a dare frutti impazziti.²⁴

Robert William Seton-Watson himself remarked that once the area is delimited as he suggested, it results to be mostly mountainous. The same borders are shaped on the mountains or on the rivers. In general, the region does not stand out for fertility:

This region is mostly of mountainous character. In the West the coastal strip of Dalmatia is cut off from the interior by a wall of bare mountains, behind which are the less inhabitable lands of Croatia and Bosnia. Western Croatia and Slovenia are hilly and plentifully wooded. Bosnia is a land of hills, woods, and valleys, with small area of cultivable lands. It has high mountains in the South-West. [...] Hercegovina is even wilder than Bosnia. Its Southern part forms with Montenegro the end of the Dalmatian coastal barrier. It is indescribably desolate country, a shapeless wilderness of rock, without peaks, valleys, trees or water, interrupted by unexpected hollows, sometimes several miles across, covered with grass and containing villages or small towns. [...] They are called "polje" [...] Montenegro

²³ There are big differences of opinion about Balkan borders among scholars. It depends on their provenience and also on their field of study. Due to its marginal position and to its linking role – a sort of bridge between Europe and Asia – South-Eastern Europe has offered a rich didactic material for a historical inventory, aiming to consider mutable place constellation. It is the history of a many-sided area, where there is not internal cohesion. Because of its fatal halfway position, the area has been repeatedly subject to foreign invasions and to expansionist ambitions. [E.P.] Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit. pp. 3-4.

²⁴ In the Europe of the transition from nineteenth to 20th century the shared representation of the Balkans did not present links to the water flowing there, but just to the woods and the mountains. The water won the battle between the mountain and the river, or more generally between the soil and the water. The Balkan peninsula is rather associated to the mountains than to the Danube or Greek islands. This attitude carried a series of negative stereotypes linked to the so-called Balkanism. [E. P.] Stefano Petrungraro, *Balcani: una storia di violenza?*, cit., p. 17.

is a desperate poor country. Its Southern part has the same alternation of rocky desert and green hollows as Hercegovina, falling steeply to the sea. [...] In the North high mountains rise, part of the range which runs through Western Macedonia. Serbia proper has fertile land by the Danube and in the lower Sava and Morava valleys.²⁵

Yet, in the chapter *Tsetinye II* of the section *Montenegro* in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Rebecca shows a totally different kind of looking at the natural components of the area: she reports of having been very surprised in realising that there was no dryland all around her.²⁶

Anyway, as already stated, the fact is that the word “Balkan” itself is linked to the mountain. One should better consider that in the past, nature was not seen as something to contemplate for its beauty: a nature like the Balkan nature was currently seen as a danger, an obstacle. A new kind of approach to nature came only later, with Romanticism when the high mountains and the deep rivers of the area started being appreciated.²⁷ With Romanticism this area was charged with the charm of isolation too, since it was a cast away place. It was primitive and wilder than civilised Europe.²⁸ Western Europeans used to think of Balkan people as people somehow isolated in their mounts – instead of joyful sea people – before the diffusion of the innovative romantic idea on nature.²⁹

On the other hand, squeezed between Turkey and Austria-Ungheria, the mountains of Montenegro constituted an insurmountable obstacle to the advance of civilisation. So the country was cut off from Europe, ‘from Western education and arts, no less than from Western ills, weakness of spirit and body: here syphilis is unknown.’³⁰

The idea of the preserved backwardness and wildness of these lands represents the first kind of stereotypes that Western societies bore about the peninsula, as will be later illustrated.³¹

Concerning the actual nomenclature, Jovan Cvijić wrote:

²⁵ Robert William Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit., pp. 5-7.

²⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1045.

²⁷ *River Deep, Mountain High* is the title of a chapter in Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe. The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit.

²⁸ To know more on the approaches of European travellers in the Balkans before and during Romanticism, see Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe. The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., Benedetto Ramberti, *Libri delle Tre Cose dei Turchi*, Vinegia: Casa de figlioli di Aldo, 1539, p. 52; Edward Browne, *A Brief Account of Some Travels in Hungaria, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Friuli*, London: Benjamin Tooke, 1673, p. 71; Quiclet, *Les Voyages de M. Quiclet a Constantinopole par Terre*, Paris: Pierre Promé, 1664, pp. 65-66; Philippe de Fresne-Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant*, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1897, p. 30.

²⁹ Stefano Petrungaro, *Balcani: una Storia di Violenza?*, cit., pp. 9-11.

³⁰ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., pp. 103-104; Egor Petrovič Kovalevskij, *Cetyre Mesjaca v Cernagorii*, Saint-Petersburg: A. A. Pliusar, 1841, p. 124.

³¹ See *infra*, Ch. 3, pp. 86-109.

La péninsule des Balkans a change plusieurs fois de nom; plus souvent qu'aucune des grandes unités géographiques de l'Europe. Ces noms ont été empruntés aux civilisations différentes qui s'y sont développées et aux grands empires qui s'y sont succédés.³²

Indeed, Balkans have been called “European Turkey,” “Turkey-in-Europe,” “European Ottoman Empire,” “European Levant,” “Oriental Peninsula,” “Greek Peninsula,” “Slavo-Greek peninsula,” “South-Slavic Peninsula,” and so on.³³ Anyway, even if nowadays it is preferred the nomenclature South-East Europe, “Balkans” and “Balkan peninsula” stay as ways of referring to this area (above all in England, Italy and France). “It is unfortunate that no single expression exists which satisfactorily describes the area in question.”³⁴ Actually, as Egidio Ivetic states:

Più che altro, i Balcani sono compresi concettualmente e fisicamente, territorialmente nell'Europa sud Orientale. I Balcani ne sono il cuore, il centro, ma non bastano. Non bastano più come spazio di identità. [...] Non più Occidente, non ancora Oriente. Di certo un meridione, ma in gran parte a sé rispetto al Mediterraneo.³⁵

The Balkans are clearly made of a *melange* of features, but as a whole they do not belong to any side of the world in particular. For this reason, they have always ended up for being outskirts. Originally, they were the outskirts of the Byzantine Empire, then they became the outskirts of the Ottoman Empire. They have always been in the position of linking two political dimensions, never fully in any of them.³⁶

In fact, this is a simultaneous process: at the same time that “Balkan” was being accepted and widely used as geographic signifier, it was already becoming saturated with a social and cultural meaning that expanded its signified far beyond its immediate and concrete meaning.³⁷

It is also hard to find some shared national characters in the Balkans, as it is hard to feel a sense of belonging to one state, when you are the *homo balkanicus*. The idea of what is Balkan has been all the more unstable due to the area's shifting borders. All the more so because the political components repeatedly changed. Considering how the Balkans are linked to Europe,

³² The Balkan peninsula has changed name many times: at least more times than any of the biggest European geographical areas. Those names were taken from the string of civilisation and Empires growing there. [E. P.] Jovan Cvijić, *La penisule Balkanique: Géographie Humaine*, cit., p. 31.

³³ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 54; Desim Darkot, “Balkan,” *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Istanbul: Maarif Maatbasi, 1943.

³⁴ Robert William Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit. p. XVI.

³⁵ Balkans are conceptually, physically, and geographically included in South-Eastern Europe. The Balkans are the heart of South-Eastern Europe, but this is not enough to establish their identity. They are not Occident any more. They are not Orient, yet. They are in Southern Europe, for sure. However, they are very different from the Mediterranean world. [E.P.] Egidio Ivetic, *I Balcani dopo i Balcani: eredità e identità*, cit., p. 9.

³⁶ *Idem*, pp. 7-17.

³⁷ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 21.

for example, in the small town of Aleko a popular dictum states: “We are Europeans but not quite.”³⁸ Focussing on the relationship with Europe:

From a historical point of view, of course, the changes in reality are hardly slow: after all, the provenance of this reality, in which the Balkans have been integrated as the periphery of a West European core, its economic and social laggards, is hardly more than two centuries old. This is not the same as saying that the relative backwardness of the Balkans began only two centuries ago but that the technological gap between the regions of Europe became meaningful only in the framework of new structural relations with the creation of what Wallerstein has designated as a world-economy. More importantly, this is a continuing reality.³⁹

Seton-Watson affirmed that Eastern Europe cannot be separated from the rest of the continent, “for the problems of the part are indissolubly connected with those of the whole.”⁴⁰ He adds that the local factors must not be forgotten, neither, when one tries to clarify the position of Eastern Europe in the world. These reflections explain why the issue of Eastern Europe is so delicate: there is always the danger either of putting it apart, or of overlooking its intrinsic components.

Moving to the consideration on Balkan links with the Orient, the situation is not less complicated. The Balkan peninsula has been subjected to the so called Ottoman *yoke* for centuries, so that the Ottoman legacy is very strong. However, a conflictual relation exists with this latter: either there is a tendency to deny the presence of Ottoman influence, or there is another tendency to consider it in a very negative way. In Hoesch’s words:

Gli stati balcanici sono oppressi dal peso di un passato allo stesso tempo splendido e funesto, che anche le violente ricomposizioni territoriali del dopoguerra non hanno permesso di cancellare. Spesso questo passato “accumulato” è stato semplicemente trapiantato in creazioni artificiali, la cui politica interna è aggravata in modo notevole da problemi di integrazione del tipo più svariato.⁴¹

As a matter of fact, the Ottoman Empire distanced the Balkans from Europe, approaching them to the Eastern side of the world, instead. The next section of the chapter will further analyse the cultural consequences of this legacy, with reference to how it has been included in the myth of the Balkans.⁴²

³⁸ *Idem*, 75.

³⁹ *Idem*, p. 78, Imanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, III vol., New York: Academic, 1974-1989.

⁴⁰ Robert William Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*, cit. p. XVII.

⁴¹ Balkan countries are burdened by the weight of a past, which is together great, sorrowful and indelible. This “amassed” past, has been very often transplanted into artificial creations, whose internal policy is seriously exacerbated by various integration problems. [E.P.] Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit., p. 7.

⁴² See *infra*, Ch. 3.3., pp. 97-101.

3.2. Discovering and Inventing the Balkans: the Fantasy of the Enlightenment and Romanticism

“If it is so hard to define the Balkans, because their borders changed, as the dominations on the area, how is it that there is a very clear idea of some Balkan cultural and social characteristics?” Wondered many scholars when starting their studies on the area.⁴³ As a matter of fact, the Balkans as a cultural entity were discovered, or rather invented by European travellers from the eighteenth century.

Inventing Eastern Europe was a project of philosophical and geographical synthesis carried out by the men and women of the Enlightenment. Obviously, the lands of Eastern Europe were not in themselves invented or fictitious; those lands and the people who lived in them were always quite real, and did indeed lie relatively to the East of other lands that lay relatively to the West. [...] The work of invention lay in synthetic association of lands, which drew upon both fact and fiction, to produce the general rubric of Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

The concept of *civilisation* was born during the Enlightenment. This neologism proved to be essential in the intellectual work of inventing the East by contraposition to the West: briefly, if the West meant civilisation, the East must mean un-civilisation. The *philosophes* took part in a sort of re-writing of Europe, in which the true dichotomy was no longer North-South, but rather East-West.⁴⁵

The opening towards the European part of the Ottoman empire meant a new manner of looking at the Balkans: not as an attachment any more, but as a *per se* world. In this way, exchanges with Europe increased and, with them, the knowledge of the Balkan area.⁴⁶

Eastern Europe appeared as a sea where shifting borders moved with rising and ebbing tides. These were lands that ultimately evaded the competing claims of Europe and the Orient, lands that neither encyclopaedists nor geographers could locate with fixed certainty.⁴⁷

The Enlightenment and Romanticism helped to make two important steps towards the Balkans, because Balkans started to be explored by Western travellers and consequently discussed. With the Enlightenment the figure of Turks changed. It was probably due to political reasons, but as a matter of fact, there was an approach between Europe (France above all) and the Balkans.

⁴³ This question is posed in different forms in the preambles to the works of: Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit.; Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit.; Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, cit.; Stefano Petrungaro, *Balcani: una storia di violenza?*, cit.; Dušan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*, cit.

⁴⁴ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, cit., p. 356.

⁴⁵ Stefano Petrungaro, “L’est europeo, o all’est dell’Europa,” in *900: Fare memoria, costruire identità*, 10, 2004, pp. 77-86.

⁴⁶ For an in depth examination of the topic, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., pp. 109-151.

⁴⁷ Larry Wolff. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, cit., p. 185.

Getting closer was of course ambivalent: on the one hand there was a true alliance against the Habsburgs, on the other hand there were religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims, pushing the two parties apart.⁴⁸ This ambivalence is proved by the accounts of the travellers of the time.

Louis Gédoyne, “le Turc,” was first secretary to the French embassy in Constantinople between 1605 and 1609 and served as French consul in Aleppo in 1623–1625, where he witnessed the conspiracy of Charles Gonsague, Duc de Nevers, a French nobleman of Greek descent, who had enlisted the support of the pope, the Holy Roman emperor, Spain, Poland, and even the Druze in Syria in a holy Christian league against the Ottomans, and who had sent emissaries to Serbia and Bosnia. In a letter from Belgrade in January 1624, Gédoyne exclaimed: “God grant that all this can be achieved and that this first attempt succeeds in awaking the Christians, who today are asleep.” Only a month later, this time from Sofia, he concluded: “The Levantine Christians are awakening everywhere and long for the support of Christian princes.”⁴⁹

Larry Wolff, for example, states that it was precisely during the Enlightenment that the concept of the backwardness of Eastern Europe was invented:

Eastern Europe was invented in the sense that an intellectual association of very different lands and peoples was formulated, a linkage of asserted similarities that bound together Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Ottoman Europe. In emphasising similarities within this presumed domain of Eastern Europe, the philosophers were governed by a philosophical presumption of strict subordination, in which the Western part of Europe was judged the superior part, according to the newly evolving notion of civilisation.⁵⁰

Wolff also reported that the Italian abbot Alberto Fortis in 1770s, felt that he was leaving “the polite parts of Europe” in crossing the Adriatic to Dalmatia.⁵¹ Balzac applied the same formula more broadly: “The inhabitants of the Ukraine, Russia, the plains of the Danube, in short, the Slav peoples, are a link between Europe and Asia, between civilization and barbarism.”⁵² This is confirmed by the Croat abbot Ruđer Josip Bošković, who travelled from Constantinople to

⁴⁸ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 129.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, p. 129; See also, Auguste Boppe, *Journal et correspondance de Gédoyne “le Turc,” consul de France à Alep (1623–1625)*, Paris: s.n., 1909, 47,53.

⁵⁰ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, cit., p. 320.

⁵¹ Alberto Fortis, the Venetian abbot, has been already mentioned in chapter 2, concerning the folk song tradition in the Western travel books on the Balkans. (see *supra*, Ch. 2.1, pp. 62-63) In this chapter he is quoted in relation to the construction of the myth of the Balkans. Though professing his love for Dalmatia, he depicted the country as backward and wild. He also contributed to shaping some Balkan features that were to become objects of study for Balkanism, such as the role of folksong, and traditional customs. From his travel book onwards, in each travel book on the Balkans there is a typical picture of a man in his traditional clothes, playing gusla, preferably accompanied by a woman in her traditional clothes, dancing in the local fashion. To learn more on this, see Alberto Fortis, *Travels into Dalmatia: Containing General Observations on the Natural History of that Country and the Neighbouring islands; the Natural Productions, Arts, Manners, and Customs of the Inhabitants*, London: 1778. Of highest importance, in this sense, is the chapter on the Christian community of Morlachs, that he described in Alberto Fortis, *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, Venezia: Marsilio editori, 1987, pp. 36-66.

⁵² Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, cit., p. 321.

Poland, passing through the Balkans. Many times in his reportage he wrote of the barbarism he met in those mountainous areas. On him Wolff wrote that:

The ignorance of Western Europe about Eastern Europe assumed the backwardness of the latter, and Boscovich recognised as an ambition of the Enlightenment the compilation of a “more complete work” of knowledge on those barbarous regions. If his was not such an *opera*, it was at least, as Boscovich stated in the preface, an *operetta*.⁵³

If the Enlightenment had provided an interest for what was unknown, Romanticism provided a new interest for what was outcast and isolated, because this meant preservation of wildness. Preservation of wildness was a synonym for *Volksgeist*, a central idea in Romanticism. The attention was entirely on the folklore and on the language, considered as the core of civility. Johann Gottfried Herder, who provoked a revolution in sociology was of the opinion that the legitimacy of a society resides in its tradition and in its language.⁵⁴ The popular opinion on “European Turkey” and the Turks, in Great Britain, for example, changed drastically during the nineteenth century: thanks to the affirmation of travel writing as a literary genre, travel accounts of journeys in the Balkans increased, renewing the perception of what was Balkan. Finally, the focus was on the landscape:

Condizionati dalla sensibilità descrittiva romantica nei confronti della quale il paesaggio è simile a una creatura che entra in sintonia con gli umori dell’osservatore - pittore, scrittore o semplice viandante che sia - resteremmo stupiti, se non fosse per quei principi estetici e morali già descritti, dalla singolare reticenza del viaggiatore settecentesco nei confronti dello scenario naturale.⁵⁵

However, to quote William Ewart Gladstone, in his preface to *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* by the two English travellers Georgina Mackenzie and Adeline Irby, “very nearly all, whether freely or reluctantly, now confess that in treating the question of the Ottoman Empire we cannot refuse to look at the condition of the subject races.”⁵⁶ This means that while the perspective on nature changed, the perspective on Balkan peoples did not; they are referred to as “subject races.”

⁵³ *Idem*, p. 174, and Ruđer Josip Bošković, *Giornale di un viaggio da Costantinopoli in Polonia dell’abate Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich*, Milano: Giordano Editore, 1966, p. 8.

⁵⁴ In his studies on nationality, Herder insisted that each culture should preserve its incommensurable distinctiveness. This constitutes a shifting point in the universal thought about the value of every single nation. To learn more on Herder’s theories, see Frederick Barnard, *Herder’s Social and Political Thought from the Enlightenment to Nationalism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

⁵⁵ What Attilio Brilli highlights here is that the contemporary reader would be startled by the unique reticence of eighteenth-century travellers to care of the natural scenery. This is due to the fact that the contemporary reader is influenced by the descriptive sensibilities proper of the Romantic age, when the landscape became a sort of creature capable of sympathising with the observer. [E. P.] Attilio Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un’arte: Il romanzo del Grand Tour*, cit., p. 42.

⁵⁶ Georgina Muir Mackenzie, Adeline Paulina Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, London: Daldy, Ibster and co, 1878.

Throughout nineteenth and 20th centuries, Western visitors went through the Balkans, but it cannot be said that they really got to know them. As Jezernik remarked:

The land and its people merely served as a kind of mirror in which they saw themselves and noticed, first and foremost, how advanced and civilised they were. In this respect, we can argue that there can be no Europe without the Balkans. Europeans had for centuries differentiated between members of ‘civilised society’ on the one hand and ‘primitives,’ ‘barbarians,’ and ‘savages’ on the other, in order to define themselves as civilised people. For this they needed their opposite, their Other, and the Balkan people served this purpose excellently. [...] In other words, they represented what Europeans had been but were no longer allowed to be.⁵⁷

The fact is that for the European colonialist mind, it was essential to create a stereotype of savagery: Europeans considered themselves as civil, thus there must have been savages in the land they went to explore. Some travellers invented that they met tailed people, like satyrs, in the Balkan forest.⁵⁸ This attitude did not change during 20th century, neither. Jezernik wrote:

Those zealous enough were even able to find men with tails. We have the most detailed account of them in a book written by Philip Thornton who travelled to the Balkans a number of times in the 1930s, visiting several countries on each occasion. On his travels, he encountered many interesting people and customs, then known in the West only from books. His more or less bizarre adventures on his Balkan travels included a close encounter with a man with a tail.⁵⁹

Then he reported the traveller Philip Thornton’s description of this meeting:

“Wait - I have seen him.” I looked at Hassanović, he just shook his head mutely. He had no idea what it was all about. The Doctor reappeared in the doorway and beckoned us to follow him into the kitchen. “Here is a man with a tail,” said the Doctor triumphantly [...] That I was to see one such man seemed too fantastic and I laughed at the Doctor’s apparent joke. But it was not a joke. “Do you mean to tell me that this man has a tail – a real tail like a cat or a dog?” “Not only have I seen and examined this man’s tail but I shall ask him if he will permit you to feel it beneath his clothes,” retorted the doctor with considerable heat.⁶⁰

Of course, if one is realistic enough not to believe in the existence of such beings, one will understand that this invention was just an attempt of Western society to approach the *homo*

⁵⁷ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 29; The same idea is expressed by Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 201.

⁵⁸ One for all, the British traveller Philip Thornton, *Ikons and Oxen*, London: Collins, 1939.

⁵⁹ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 77.

⁶⁰ Philip Thornton, *Ikons and Oxen*, cit., pp. 274-275, in Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., pp. 77-78.

balkanicus to animals. After all, this technique had already been frequently used in colonialism.⁶¹

3.3. A Journey through Violence

Impaling and beheading

Once the answer to “what are the Balkans?” is ready, though unavoidably, intrinsically confused, one can move on analysing the answer to another question that is “how do we know what we know about the Balkans?” The first of the European beliefs on the Balkans is that Balkans are wild, as much as Balkan people are primitive and violent. As Stefano Petrungraro remarks in his *Balcani: una storia di violenza*,⁶² of Ivo Andrić’s masterpiece *The Bridge on the Drina*⁶³ only one chapter is largely known and quoted, the third one. The third chapter is about the practice of the impalement.⁶⁴

Perché del bel romanzo di Ivo Andrić, *Il ponte sulla Drina*, si cita sempre il terzo capitolo? L’opera è ampia e articolata, copre diversi secoli di storia bosniaca, narra le vicende di una comunità, quella di Višegrad, stretta attorno al suo ponte cittadino. Sotto di lui l’acqua scorre inesausta, sopra di lui la gente cammina e a volte è costretta a correre, mentre al suo centro, dove si trova il divano, siede e discorre. Attraverso quei movimenti, quelle parole, spingendo lo sguardo attraverso le undici arcate del ponte, fluisce una storia densa, quella di un romanzo storico [*sic*] di successo, che portò il suo autore a vincere anche il premio Nobel. Soprattutto, attraverso le pagine si fanno largo la narrazione e i suoi molteplici messaggi, che ci parlano di amori, di credenze religiose, della convivenza e delle sue difficoltà, delle varie stagioni della storia bosniaca.

⁶¹ To learn more on the exploitation of this type of image in the history of colonialism, see Božidar Jezernik, *Non cogito ergo sum: archeologija neke sale*, Ljubljana: Društvo za preučevanje zgodovine, literature in antropologije, 1994; Georges Louis Buffon, *The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, Minerals etc.*, I, London: T. Bell, 1775; Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia*, Bononiae, Nicolai Tebaldini, 1642; L. du Couret, *Voyage au Pays des Niams-Niams ou les hommes à queue, avec le portrait d’un Niam-Niam, et une notice biographique sur l’auteur par Alexandre Dumas, par Hadji-Abd-el-Hamid-Bej*, Paris: Martinon 1854; George Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa: Three Years Travels and Adventures in the Unexplored Regions of Central Africa. From 1868 to 1871*, London: Sampson Low, 1873.

⁶² Stefano Petrungraro, *Balcani: una Storia di Violenza?*, cit., p. 47.

⁶³ Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina*, Translated from Serbo-Croatian by Lovett Edwards, London: George Allen & Unwin L to, Ch. 3, pp. 28-52.

⁶⁴ To give a sample of Ivo Andrić’s description of impalement:

Merdjan now saw that close to the right shoulder muscles the skin was stretched and swollen. He went forward quickly and cut the swollen place with two crossed cuts. Pale blood flowed out, at first slowly then faster and faster. Two or three more blows, light and careful. and the iron-shod point of the stake began to break through at the place where he had cut. He struck a few more times until the point of the stake reached level with the right ear. The man was impaled on the stake as a lamb on the spit, only that the tip did not come through the mouth but in the back and had not seriously damaged the intestines, the heart or the lungs.

In Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina*, cit. p. 49. This is just a paragraph of those pages where a detailed account of the practice is given.

Ma il riferimento più frequente a quest'opera non riguarda la sua ricchezza di contenuti, bensì mette a fuoco un suo capitolo, il capitolo terzo. Perché? Perché lì si parla dell'impalamento.⁶⁵

Evidently, violence is too easily associated with the Balkans. Of course, there has been violence in those lands. However, Petrunaro asks whether it is right to report this violence as “Balkan violence.” Yes, it took place in the Balkans, but obviously it is not enough to declare it as Balkan violence. What Petrunaro is trying to demonstrate is that the concept of Balkan violence was an invention of the Western world. It is a way to belittle South-Eastern Europe.⁶⁶

Ma i Balcani hanno forse un'esclusiva sull'orrore? Lo hanno forse praticato maggiormente di altri? Bisogna aver scordato molta molta storia, per poterlo affermare. [...] No, la crudeltà non viene da est. E non è nemmeno un relitto del passato.⁶⁷

Ježernik shows how often the descriptions of violence were part of an Occidental technique, aiming to give a negative image of the “horrible Turks.” This image was to be used in Occident to build opposition against the Muslim religion. For example, the British traveller, artist and writer Mary Edith Durham, who explored the Balkans in the early 20th century, wrote of a certain Balkan ethics of killing.⁶⁸ According to her, only when Muslims killed Christians the news got to Europe. In all the other cases – when Muslims killed Muslims, when Christians killed Christians or when Christian killed Muslims – the news did not spread.⁶⁹ However, she also reported, in the form of an anecdote, a conversation that she had with autochthones.

‘Hast thou a father?’
‘No.’
‘Did the Turks kill him?’
‘No.’
This caused surprise.
‘Hast thou brothers?’
‘Yes.’
‘Glory be to God! How many Turks have they killed?’⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Stefano Petrunaro here questions why of Ivo Andrić's masterpiece is only quoted the third chapter. He explains that the work is ample and articulated. It covers centuries of Bosnia history, dealing with the events of Višegrad's community, who lives closely around the town bridge. Andrić is able to explain the history through the metaphor of the water flowing under that bridge. The novel was such a success that its author was awarded the Nobel prize. The pages deploy the narration with all its messages: love stories, religious beliefs, cohabitation and its difficulties in Bosnia. Anyway, the most frequent reference to this book is not about its contents: it focusses instead on one chapter only. Why? Because it is about impalement. [E. P.] Stefano Petrunaro, *Balcani: una storia di violenza?*, cit., p. 47.

⁶⁶ *Idem*, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁷ The question this time is: Do Balkans have exclusive rights on violence? Have they been more violent than others? One must have forgotten a big piece of History to affirm such a thing. Because brutality does not come from East. And no, it is not past legacy. [E.P.] *Idem*, p. 164.

⁶⁸ Božidar Ježernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 28.

⁶⁹ Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkans Tangle*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928, p. 96.

⁷⁰ Mary Edith Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serbs*, London: E. Arnold, 1904, p. 186.

She seems to be delighted in evoking their alien mentality. There is even humour in this story.

Ježernik writes about another supposedly Balkan practice which fascinated Western European travellers: decapitation. The issue is introduced with the help of Mrs. Durham's⁷¹ and the German historian and publicist Gustav Hertzberg's testimony:

In the nineteenth century the Balkans became a promised land for hunters of bizarre phenomena like severed heads. Western travellers homed in on this custom, treating the existence of such trophies in the Balkans as symbolic of a clear-cut division between civilised and barbarian lifestyles, evidence 'of the naivety of the Homeric age'⁷² or proof that in the Balkans 'but a century ago much of the population was as wild as the Red Indians of the same date.'⁷³

More than a real practice of punishment, decapitation was seen as an attraction: Western travellers wanted to see that. They might have been even disappointed not seeing any decapitation during their travels. Sir Austen Henry Layard, the man who was to discover Nineveh, was among those who gave detailed descriptions of decapitation, seen during his stay in Cetinje during the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ Also Edmondo de Amicis said that the Turks were nice people, when not beheading people.⁷⁵ The Englishman Harry de Windt described his journey through the Balkans (and Russia) as a trip "through savage Europe."⁷⁶ Two other British authors reported that "oppression and an entire lack of education have joined forces and evolved a crafty disposition and a natural tendency towards savagery."⁷⁷ Such a practice should not be new to us, Western Europeans. In Europe decapitation had been current, of course. While crossing London Bridge in London, for example, it was perfectly normal to see the heads of criminals exposed to public view. It became an attraction that people used to pay for.⁷⁸ In general, decapitation is a practice as old as war itself. But, as it is well known, the Occident has short-term memory.⁷⁹

One should pay attention to the fact that while impalement and decapitation were described with a sort of disgusting fascination, there is a crime that Europe never forgave to the Balkans: the murder of Franz Ferdinand. The crime committed by Gavrilo Princip was the

⁷¹ It is believed appropriate to spend some words on Mrs. Edith Durham. "Durham was a Balkan traveller and writer, intensively observing local life and customs" wrote the professor of Anthropology Joel Martin Halpern in the foreword to Ježernik's *Wild Europe*, cit., p. 18. She travelled during the early 20th century. Nowadays, she is recalled as one of the first women explorers of the East, and as an anthropologist. (*Idem*)

⁷² Gustav Hertzberg, *Montenegro und sein Freiheitskampf*, Halle: Schroedel & Simon, 1853, p. 19.

⁷³ Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkans Tangle*, cit., p. 26.

⁷⁴ Austen Henry Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, London: John Murray, 1903, p. 128.

⁷⁵ "I turchi sono di natura mite, quando non tagliano via le teste." Edmondo de Amicis, *Costantinopoli*, London: Sampson Low; 1878, p. 314.

⁷⁶ Harry de Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Anthony Goff, Hugh Fawcett, *Macedonia: A Plea for the Primitive*, London: John Lane, 1921, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Antoni Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*, cit., p. 223.

⁷⁹ For a detailed account on decapitation and mutilation in the Balkans, see Božidar Ježernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., pp. 147-188.

starting point for a new wave of negative feeling towards the whole peninsula. Balkans were blamed as guilty for World War I. Of course, there were people keener to identify the responsibility of the war in more than one person. The American diplomat Charles Vopicka, for instance, wrote that “The World War began in the Balkans, yet its origin was in the hearts of the unscrupulous autocrats whose ruthless ambition knew neither justice nor limit.”⁸⁰ But the dominant point of view was against Balkan people. Mrs Durham was among those who considered Yugoslavia the only responsible for the World War.⁸¹

The prevailing spirit of the time, however, blamed the war on the Balkans in general, and on the Serbs in particular. Mary Edith Durham, confident she would be taken as seriously as she took herself, returned the order of St. Sava to King Peter with an accompanying letter saying she “considered him and his people guilty of the greatest crime in history.” Serbia was a “hornet’s nest” and the nation, both in Montenegro and Serbia, knew only how to love or hate; there was no medium.⁸²

To sum up, in Wolff words:

The idea of Eastern Europe as the continent’s backward half was invented in Western Europe to illuminate by contrast the greater glory of ‘Western’ civilization. Rebecca West was a journalist on the trail of that dishonest, self-serving appropriation of Eastern Europe, seeking to invert a tradition of condescension and to redefine the mapping of civilization in Europe.⁸³

Rebecca does not describe violent scenes in her reportage, not even once. She just tells the story of some wars and of one act of violence: precisely the murder of Franz Ferdinand. However, she did not tell it to show how Balkan people can be violent: she lingers in reporting the *attentat* in order to understand the reasons of the first World conflict. This means that she attributes some responsibility for the war to the *attentat*. However, the way she reports all the facts is very sensitive. If one just considers the chapter entitled *Yaitse II*, where the meeting of the brother and the mother of the murderer takes place, one understands that Rebecca is not judging him. The way Rebecca describes the mother, a woman completely unaware of politics, immediately takes a great part of responsibility off her. Furthermore, the fact of telling the story from the inner perspective of the murderer’s brother makes the readers focus on aspects other than the simple political crime. Hearing of their life turned upside down, one cannot help but sympathise a little with this family.⁸⁴ Obviously, Rebecca is not judging, nor is she reporting

⁸⁰ Charles Vopicka, *Secrets of the Balkans: Seven Years of a Diplomatist’s Life in the Storm Centre of Europe*, Chicago: Rand Mc Nally, 1921, p. 5.

⁸¹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., 120-122.

⁸² Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkans Tangle*, cit. pp. 39-42; 283; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., pp. 120-122.

⁸³ Larry Wolff. “Rebecca West: This Time Let’s Listen,” cit.

⁸⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 431.

these facts just to be in line with the shared idea that Balkans are violent. On the contrary, her position is completely new and it opens to a different way of looking at the archduke's murder, to the Balkan people and to the Balkans.

To be fair, Rebecca started her prologue by saying that all she knew about the Balkans was violence, but then she moved on, taking a distance from this point of view. This is astonishing if one thinks of all the other travelogues written about the same areas. Violence was the base, a *fil rouge*. On the contrary, Rebecca gets to the point of describing Balkan people as more sensitive than European. For example, if one considers a discussion on love in Europe and in Yugoslavia in *Idilidzhe*, one realises that the debate on love is based on the dialogue between Rebecca's husband and Constantine. After the first one asks "what is peculiar about this conception of love?" Constantine replies in a way which exhaustively gives an idea of how passionate is love for Balkan people:

It is a conception of love which demands that it should be sudden and secret and dangerous. You from the West have no such conception of love. It seems to you that love must be as slow as the growth of a plant: a man and a woman must come throughout many months to a full understanding of each other's natures and take serious vows to fulfil each other's needs. [...]

A man who performs the miracle of keeping a woman happy for forty years cannot bear it that on one night during those forty years another man should be necessary for her happiness; and a man who meets a woman once and makes that meeting as fabulous in her memory as a night spent in the moon cannot bear it that he should not be the father of the eleven children whose noses she wipes. [...]

It is a more marvellous conception of love, I think, than anything other nations know.⁸⁵

Basically the whole section on *Ilidzhe* deals with the topic of love. Great importance is given to this fundamental difference of opinion, highlighting that Balkan people are keener to love with all themselves than Western people.

No Identity

Another constant component of the travelogues of the eighteenth, nineteenth and even 20th centuries in the Balkans is the consideration on their "hybrid nature". The preoccupation with defining the Balkans as a geographical and cultural space eventually led to see this space as incomplete and backward. This can be considered a second stereotype.

For the Ottomans, as well as for Western colonial cultures, the Balkans formed the "bridge" between the East and the West, a metaphor naturalized by Ivo Andrić' in his Nobel Prize-winning novel, *The Bridge over the Drina*. That metaphor of the "bridge" induces endless

⁸⁵ *Idem*, pp. 383-386.

hermeneutical circles which transform a “bridge” into a “wall,” dividing rather than connecting.⁸⁶

This image of a bridge between East and West reveals the Balkan experience of in-betweenness. “In the critique of Balkanism, the Balkans gain specificity by virtue of this liminal status, of being neither here nor there, but in two places at the same time.”⁸⁷ Todorova puts it as follows:

What practically all descriptions of the Balkans offered as a central characteristic was their transitional status. The West and the Orient are usually presented as incompatible entities, antiworlds, but completed antiworlds. Said has described his own work as “based on the rethinking of what had for centuries been believed to be an unbridgeable chiasm separating East from West.” The Balkans, on the other hand, have always evoked the image of a bridge or a crossroads. The bridge as a metaphor for the region has been so closely linked to the literary oeuvre of Ivo Andrić, that one tends to forget that its use both in outside descriptions, as well as in each of the Balkan literatures and everyday speech, borders on the banal. The Balkans have been compared to a bridge between East and West, between Europe and Asia.⁸⁸

In a way, the Balkans result as the depository of a “fault line,” predetermining their fate of land of passage.⁸⁹ In the various western travel books on the Balkans mentioned in this chapter – going from the eighteenth to the 20th centuries – there are some references to the motherland, because this was essential to render the account more realistic and because the mind works via the association of the unknown to the known. But one should easily remark that the explicit and implicit references to the Orient are much more. Above all, one should remark that the travellers found their degree of Orient and Occident in those lands, as if the Balkans behave as a shifting bridge/crossroad, and not a stable one, establishing a clear passage from West to East. The question is still debated.

Such debates about the differences and congruities between the Orient and Europe, about the location and legitimacy of those borders that marked off distinct cultural and geographical enclaves, provided an important context within which travellers endeavoured to define Balkans.⁹⁰

As the Ukranian-Hebrew author Marcus Ehrenpreis stated, probably to solve this problem of identity, it was necessary to realise that:

This is not the way to visit the Orient! If you would win something of the soul of the East do not approach it as you would a strange country but as if you were returning home – to

⁸⁶ Dušan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*, cit., pp. 15-16.

⁸⁷ *Idem*, p. 6.

⁸⁸ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., pp. 15-16.

⁸⁹ Vesna Goldsworthy, “Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization,” in Dušan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*, cit., pp. 25-26. On the topic of the “fault line” see also Simon Winchester, *The Fracture Zone: A Return to the Balkans*, London: Viking, 1999.

⁹⁰ James Duncan, Derek Gregory, *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 168.

yourself. [...] Do not go condescending as a bringer of civilization, but as a disciple, humbly and receptively.⁹¹

For example, in her account, Rebecca West compares Yugoslavia to the West (Italy and Austria for the past dominations), especially to Britain, even though a real British domination on the area never existed. This means that she could apparently find some similarities or oppositions to the Western reality. There are also few cases in which she compared or matched Yugoslavia and the Orient. One case is when she described the beautiful dancer, Bulbul, as Persian looking, for example:

In her beauty she resembled the Persian ladies of the miniatures, whose lustre I had till then thought an artistic convention but could now recognise in her great shining eyes, her wet red lips, her black hair with its white reflections, her dazzling skin. This brightness was like a hard, transparent veil varnished on her, wholly protective.⁹²

Then, there are numerous cases in which she refers to the Ottoman legacy in Yugoslavia. However, generally speaking, reading her travelogue, one would not think that she could see a prevailing Oriental influence in the Balkans. On the opposite, she wrote of Western influence and she depicted it as negative. To quote an example, it is enough to consider the fact that she disliked Dubrovnik just because she could see the Western influence on it. Also, one remembers the dance of the first dance performance, where she highlighted how the dancer was not good enough, precisely because in her dance was clear the Austrian influence. At the same time, she is very careful in showing the “Balkan essence” in the same Balkans, not always trying to find the provenience of their habits and customs. Differently from Durham, as Todorova reported:

Some of Durham’s statements read like the introspective diary of a modern anthropologist: she wrote about the dilemma of not being able to see the Balkans with Eastern eyes; yet, at the same time “you never again see it with Western ones.” She lamented that even after you learn to eat, drink, and sleep with the natives, indeed, live as they do, and just as you think you are beginning to understand them, something happens and you realize “you were as far as ever from seeing things from their point of view. To do this you must leap across the centuries, wipe the West and all its ideas from out of you, let lose all that there is in you of primitive man, and learn six languages, all quite useless in other parts of the world.” In about a decade, Durham had realized the Balkans were too complex to fathom as a whole.⁹³

⁹¹ Marcus Ehrenpreis, *The Soul of the East: Experience and Reflections*, New York: Viking Press, 1927, pp. 208-209.

⁹² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia* cit., p. 329.

⁹³ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 121 and Mary Edith, Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, London: Edward Arnold, 1905.

The Turks' Descendants

The references to the Ottoman legacy could be considered part of another stereotype, related to the Turkish domination. As it is very well known, the Ottoman domination in the Balkans was continuous and complex and it lasted from the thirteenth until the 20th century. For this reason, in Maria Todorova's opinion, it is actually "preposterous to look for an Ottoman legacy in the Balkans. The Balkans are the Ottoman legacy."⁹⁴

Rebecca West's attitude towards the Turks and the Ottoman Empire is the only point of view she shares with the other travellers and scholars that have been quoted in this work by now. "The Turks had ruined the Balkans, with a ruin so great that it has not yet been repaired and may prove irreparable,"⁹⁵ she wrote in the chapter on Bosnia. As a matter of fact, she recognises in the Turkish manner some incapability of moving on, and a certain negative laziness towards life. In her words, they stay immobile, with no possibility of changing. In this sort of consideration, she perfectly agrees with the British journalist Henri Noel Bailsford, who crossed the Balkans on his way to Russia at the beginning of 20th century. The *incipit* of *Macedonia* by Bailsford was:

That nothing changes in the East is a commonplace which threatens to become tyrannical. Assuredly there is something in the spirit of the East which is singularly kindly to survivals and anachronisms. The centuries do not follow one another. They coexist. There is no lopping of withered customs, no burial of dead ideas. Nor is it the Turks alone who betray this genial conservatism. The typical Slav village, isolated without teacher or priest in some narrow and lofty glen, leads its own imperturbable life, guided by the piety of traditions which date from pagan times.⁹⁶

Comparing this to what Rebecca wrote in *Sarajevo III* the parallels are obvious. She wrote that Bosnian Muslims were the instance of the Ottoman Empire fall. In line with the tradition of her predecessors and contemporaries,⁹⁷ she talks of them as lazy and uninterested in active life, concluding that:

We had seen the end of a story that had taken five hundred years to tell. We had seen the final collapse of the old Ottoman Empire. Under our eyes it had heeled over and fallen to the ground like a lay figure slipping off a chair. But that tragedy was already accomplished. The Ottoman Empire had ceased to suffer long ago.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Maria Todorova, *The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans*, in Carl Brown, *Imperial Legacy: the Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 46.

⁹⁵ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1066.

⁹⁶ Henri Noel Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, London: Methuen, 1906, p. 1.

⁹⁷ See Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 34; Robert Jun Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, London: John Murray 1849, p. 244; Will Gordon, *A Woman in the Balkans*, New York: Mead & Company, 1916, p. 246; Blair Jaecckel, *The Land of the Tamed Turks or the Balkan States Today*, Boston: L.C. Page and Company, 1910, p.155.

⁹⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 308;

According to the British journalist Grace Ellison, “i veneziani e i romani hanno lasciato monumenti di straordinaria bellezza, l’Austria le ferrovie, i Turchi solo distruzione e moschee.”⁹⁹ However, as the professor Carl Brown wrote in the introduction to his work *Imperial Legacy*:

What if community leaders throughout the Fertile Crescent or for that matter disintegrating Yugoslavia, choose to remember the Ottoman period as one that provided religious, linguistic, and ethnic autonomy within a political framework strong enough to protect life and limb of those under its sovereignty? A quite different image of the Ottoman Empire would then emerge.¹⁰⁰

The opposition East-West is so old that it is almost impossible to find its roots: as Edward Said affirm in *Orientalism*, the two entities have been made by men. They consist in two opposite forces which are not really “there,” but have been put there:

I have begun with the assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely there, just as the Occident itself is not just there either. We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities—to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as “Orient” and “Occident” are man-made. Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.¹⁰¹

This leads to the consequence that:

Ironically, the West since time out of mind has insisted that the Ottomans were not “like us” even while imposing however unconsciously, a strictly Western ethnolinguistic rubric upon the Ottoman Empire, which was the very opposite of a nation-state.¹⁰²

A Mosaic of Nations

After having focussed on the hybrid climate that travellers reported to have found in the Balkans, it is time to move to the consequence of this hybridity: of course another stereotype. The hybrid feature of the Balkans seems to pour into intrinsic hybrid features, which serve as the basis of the difficulty in defining some internal borders in the Balkans.

Just why is there this dire inevitability about the Balkans being so fractious and unsettled a corner of the world, an inevitability that always seemed to exist? Just what was it that had

⁹⁹ Venetians and Latins left extraordinarily beautiful monuments, Austria left railways, Turks just destruction and mosques. [E. P.] Grace Ellison, *Yugoslavia: A New Country and Its People*, London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1933, p. 82.

¹⁰⁰ Carl Brown, *The Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, cit., p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, cit. pp. 4-5.

¹⁰² Carl Brown, *The Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, cit., p. 5.

marked out this particular peninsula, this particular gyre of mountains and plains, caves and streams, and made it a byword, quite literally, for hostility and hate?¹⁰³

Indeed, this complexity was frustrating for Western people used to the national states. For them, the mosaic of ethnic groups was just a synonym of disorder in society: a clear sign of backwardness. This reflects a little bit Gerda's point of view on the Yugoslavian fragmentation, that can be found in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*:

I do not understand you, you go on saying what a beautiful country this is, and you must know perfectly well that there is no order here, no culture, but only a mish-mash of different peoples who are all quite primitive and low.¹⁰⁴

The common opinion can be summarised in the Englishman Archibald Lyall's words, "everywhere East of the Adriatic there are at least ten sides to every question, and it is in my mind that one thing is as good as another."¹⁰⁵ The complex ethnic mixture was held responsible for the instability of the peninsula, which, according to Archibald Lyall, suffered from "the handicap of heterogeneity."¹⁰⁶

The point is that fragmentation cannot be treated as a choice that Balkan people keep on making in history:

Le aspirazioni espansionistiche dei potenti vicini hanno di volta in volta stroncato sul nascere i promettenti esordi di creazioni politiche indipendenti su più vasta scala, imponendo alla popolazione locale un ordinamento politico che le era estraneo. Così, il particolarismo, favorito dalla natura del territorio, è diventato uno dei tratti caratteristici della storia politica degli stati balcanici.¹⁰⁷

These regions have always been struggling against the shared opinion that they were the "dark Balkans." Given that the only way for those areas to free themselves from the stereotypes was to build their own nation, they tried precisely to do so.

The process of nation-building and self-determination has been carried out by the different national elites following the traditional models of Western nation-building (emancipation, political sovereignty and cultural authenticity, national right to participate in history, national dignity, and expectation of world recognition, etc.). However, being small and peripheral, these nations were trapped in the contradictory play between the normative and the factual: between the modern imperative (that the nation should be a heroic historical agency of its own emancipation) and their irrelevance in the struggles among the Great Powers. Internalizing both the emotional trauma of non-recognition (public and historical

¹⁰³ Simon Winchester, *The Fracture Zone: A Return to the Balkans*, London: Viking, 1999, p. 26.

¹⁰⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 662.

¹⁰⁵ Archibald Lyall, *The Balkan Road*, London: Methuen, 1930, p. 12, in Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 128.

¹⁰⁶ *Idem*.

¹⁰⁷ Powerful neighbours' expansionist ambitions tear to pieces the promising starts of independent political creations, subjugating the local population to an alien set of rules. In this way, the particularism, supported by the nature of the territory, became one of the characteristic features of Balkan political history. [E.P.] Edgar Hoesch, *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, cit. p. 19.

invisibility) and the moral one (failure to fulfill the supposed historical duty), the ideologies and high cultures of the South European nations have always harbored an obsessive concern. They tried to compensate for their geopolitical and geo-cultural irrelevance with certain ideological self-representations.¹⁰⁸

However, the effort for a national identity resulted in the fervent differentiation of all Balkan nations from one another. Nationalism fuelled the tensions and conflicts between them, so that, trying to distance themselves from the Western stereotypes, Balkans got even closer to them. Furthermore, one should better note that for the European prejudice it was essential to see the Balkan peninsula as a whole:

These efforts at differentiation and at producing distinct national politics of representation (institutional, political, and even military ones) clashed with the stubbornness of Western Balkanism, which was unwilling to see any differences and perceived the region from a macro-colonial perspective.¹⁰⁹

Quoting Michael Herzfeld, author of the introduction to a study on “Balkanism,”

A persistent paradox infuses most of the negative stereotypes entertained in the self-styled West: the Other is hopelessly diverse, fragmented, and internally divided—so much so that in the end all such peoples seem radically alike. Who can make sense of so much difference? It is easier to dismiss it as all the same. This is recognizably the other side of a familiar coin: the Western self-characterization in terms of individualistic genius. Whether celebrating the emergence of possessive individualism modelled on the ownership of material property or of transcendent intelligence metonymically reproduced in moral and intellectual properties, the politically and economically dominant nations of Europe (and, later, of North America) have had their cake and eaten it too. Nowhere is this clearer in the countries now subsumed under the redolent title of “the Balkans.” It is here that the picturesque individualism of the European Other becomes the atomistic fractiousness and insubordination of the Oriental within.¹¹⁰

Apparently, Rebecca absolutely disagrees with this trend holding the Balkan fragmented nature to be a handicap. On the contrary,

Yugoslavia offered her a vocabulary in which to express the limitations of Western nationalism, and expose its underground links with the will-to-die. Beyond the immediate political crisis, however, Yugoslavia offered her scope for the widest possible speculation about the interrelation of small cultures and empires, a subject that seems to have preoccupied her since her schooldays at George Watson’s Ladies College.¹¹¹

To Rebecca, heterogeneity is the best part of the Balkans. As she repeated many times throughout the book, this is the secret ingredient of the peninsula for being unique. This is why

¹⁰⁸ Dusan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*, cit., pp. 180-181.

¹⁰⁹ *Idem*.

¹¹⁰ Michael Herzfeld, Forward to Dušan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*, Cambridge: Mitt Press, 2002, p. 9.

¹¹¹ John B. Allcock, Antonia Young, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, cit., p. 115.

they have something that Europe is lacking of. “But it’s precisely because there are so many different peoples that Yugoslavia is so interesting.”¹¹² Yugoslavia is depicted as the place where there is everything except what the West has, and for this reason it is described as essential to Europe.¹¹³ In short:

By being geographically inextricable from Europe, yet culturally constructed as “the other” within, the Balkans have been able to absorb conveniently a number of externalized political, ideological, and cultural frustrations stemming from tensions and contradictions inherent to the regions and societies outside the Balkans.¹¹⁴

Ugly Women

While the stereotypes reported by now are related to the political and geographical situation, there are other stereotypes which are only related to a shared distorted perspective of reality. Of this kind is the idea that Balkan women could not be beautiful. This idea belongs to the belief that Beauty could only be a product of civilisation, thus very far away from the wild Balkans. Once again the way the West looks at the Other leads to a negative generalisation of what is the other:

A persistent paradox infuses most of the negative stereotypes entertained in the self-styled West: the Other is hopelessly diverse, fragmented, and internally divided—so much so that in the end all such peoples seem radically alike.¹¹⁵

As Jezernik points out, reporting the speech of the English traveller James George Cotton Minchin:

The women there were “very muscular and strong” and their beauty was usually soon exhausted by “laborious, and unfeminine, occupations.” Allegedly, those who were handsome in their younger years were, even at thirty, “very old and repulsive;” the terms “tender,” “beautiful” and “weaker” sex do not suit them.¹¹⁶

Moreover, in this latter description of women, one can reflect on the so-called “masculinity of the Balkans.” As Wendy Bracewell affirms:

Much modern Western travel writing presents Eastern Europe, and especially the Balkans, as a sort of mausoleum of masculinity: an area where men, whether revolutionaries, politicians or workers, are depicted as behaving in ways that are seen as almost exaggeratedly masculine according to the standards of the traveller. Physical toughness and violence, sexual conquest and the subordination of women, guns, strong drinks and

¹¹² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 662.

¹¹³ *Idem*, p. 23.

¹¹⁴ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 188.

¹¹⁵ Michael Herzfeld, Forward to Dušan Bjelić, Obrad Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor*, cit. p. IX.

¹¹⁶ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 112; James George Cotton Minchin, *The Growth of Freedom in the Balkan Peninsula*, p. 15.

moustache feature heavily. This is a region where men are men_ and sometimes so are women, whether ‘sworn virgins,’ living their lives as honorary men, heroic female partisans or in more derisive accounts, alarmingly muscular and hirsute athletes, stewardness and waitresses.¹¹⁷

Melina Rokai in *The British and Balkan Woman: British Perceptions of Balkan Women and their Femininity in the Long Nineteenth Century (1789-1914)* provides a historical analysis on the perception of Balkan beauty, seen as the beauty of the Other, pointing out that in the end the Balkan Women resulted defeminised. The aim of her work is to answer the question “why are females of a certain group viewed by the observers as an essential element of the geopolitics of culture?” In the introduction she writes that:

In fact, a woman stands as the gendered “other” to a man, regardless of the presence of colonial discourse. Although frequently used in the depiction of Oriental woman by male travellers, negative stereotypes, that include all probable vices habitually connected with the female, are present in all societies, and are equally applied to women of the cultural “other” as much as to those of the same culture.¹¹⁸

In her opinion, this explains why British travellers (men above all) were so interested in how women looked like there. They passed down a certain image of them:

The image of the Balkan woman was not only constructed through the genre of travel writing, but also through narratives of sojourn, periodicals, early ethnographical and anthropological studies, and sometimes even through the information that became part of larger contemporary, usually late-nineteenth century, histories on the region.¹¹⁹

The image that widespread in the Occident thanks to all these kinds of writing is surely part of the bigger process of Balkans invention: “the masculine feel of the Balkans, combined with the entirely manly aura of its inhabitants regardless of their actual sex, can be seen as an influential part of the process employed by the Romantics within their construction of the area.”¹²⁰ This led to the defeminisation of the Balkan peninsula and to the masculinisation of the Balkan woman. Rokai eventually argues that the Victorian idea of womanhood was a very significant element in the overall representation of Balkan women: “it was on the basis of the idealised,

¹¹⁷ Wendy Bracewell, “New Men, Old Europe: Being a Man in Balkan Travel Writing,” in Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis, *Balkan Departures: Travel Writing from SouthEastern Europe*, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, p. 137.

¹¹⁸ See Melina Rokai, *The British and Balkan Woman: British Perceptions of Balkan Women and their Femininity in the Long Nineteenth Century (1789-1914)*, Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2017, p. 13.

¹¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 15.

¹²⁰ *Idem*, p. 16.

domesticated, private life, the woman's life, and how it was led within the Balkan societies, that the image of Balkan women was constructed."¹²¹

And yet Rebecca, for her part, seemed to be very able to find typical Balkan beauty. If one thinks only of Bulbul's description, one will have no doubt of it.¹²² She never troubled for a presumed lack of beauty.

Gusla and Belly Dance

Another source of stereotype is the folk music accompanied by the dance in coffee houses. In every account of travel from the West through the Balkans, even in the oldest travelogues, there has always been space to tell about some dance (usually belly-dance) and music, as they are considered part of the *folklore* of the Balkans. For this reason, dance and music were appreciated and studied, above all, during Romanticism, when all kinds of folklore was considered as a key to get closer to the primitive essence of each society. In Rebecca West's travelogue there are descriptions of music-dance performances too. But music, dance, and coffee houses in general would not be a stereotype without the negative perception of them. Reading the reports of dance performances in eighteenth and nineteenth-century travelogues, one can find a very derogatory description of the dancers:

The female dancers were young women who belonged to a separate, despised section of the lower class, who intermarried only among themselves. [...] When dancing they would throw up their veils and leave them to float on their shoulders. Their custom consisted of a petticoat reaching scarcely below the knee, open behind and attached to a broad belt with two large buttons.¹²³

So stated Jezernik, adding that the dancers were taught to give other service together with the dance show.¹²⁴ The negative perception is partly due to the fact that dance and music are reported to be part of the Ottoman legacy. Actually, they are described as the components of this domination, the hardest to get rid of together with food and architecture: "in popular beliefs,

¹²¹ *Idem*, p. 420.

¹²² See *supra*, Ch. 2.1., p. 48.

¹²³ Wendy Bracewell, "New Men, Old Europe: Being a Man in Balkan Travel Writing," cit., p. 164.

¹²⁴ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 213. To know more on the history of Balkan dancers, see Corneille Bruyn, *A Voyage to the Levant: Travels in the Principal Parts of Asia minor, the Islands of Scio, Rhodes, Cyprus. With an Account of the Most Considerable Cities of Egypt, Syria and the Holy Land*, London: Jacob Tonson and Thomas Bennet, 1702; Francois de Tott, *Memoires du Baron de Tott on the Turks and the Tartars*, Dublin: White, Cash, and Marchbank, 1785; James Theodore Bent, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, London: Hakluyt Society, 1893.

customs, attitudes, and values, the efforts to de Ottomanise proved to be much more strenuous.”¹²⁵

At the same time, on the level of popular culture and everyday life, the Ottoman legacy proved much more persistent. One can look for it in authentic Ottoman elements (architecture and urban structure, food, music, the institution of the coffeehouse); follow it up through its influence via direct cultural contact (language, religious syncretism); finally, trace it in the reactive response and adaptation of indigenous institutions and cultural trends to the Ottoman system.¹²⁶

Be they part of the Ottoman legacy or not, the point is that since the beginnings of the history of explorations in the Balkans, these shows have been described with fascination. In a few cases, they are described as repellent at the same time, or even fascinating inasmuch repellent. Ever since Fortis' *Travels into Dalmatia* there are references to folk songs. In relation to an assembly, he wrote that:

A musician always attends these meetings, and sings the old *pisme* or songs, accompanying them with an instrument called *gusla*, which has but one string, composed of many horse hairs. The tune to which these heroic songs are sung, is extremely mournful, and monotonous, besides, they bring the sound a little through the nose, which agrees perfectly well with their instruments.¹²⁷

The *gusla* is for sure the Balkan instrument *par excellence*. In the travel accounts when there is a musical parenthesis, there is a *gusla*. Even in the figurative representation of Balkan people, they have a *gusla* in their hands, as one will see later in the chapter, in the reported image.¹²⁸ In *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*:

Bulbul took up her *gusla* and, in a voice exquisitely and deliberately moderate, she sang many Bosnian songs. [...] Presently the Bulbul put her *gusla* in her husband's hands and said 'Now you,' and with adoring eyes she turned to her guests and explained 'I sing, and sing well, but he not only sings, he has a voice.' It was true. He had a voice like drowsy thunder, forged by a God only half awake.¹²⁹

As Jezernik remarked quoting Henderson, "The coffee houses would hum with social, political and religious debate while hired musicians and dancers entertained the customers with music rather Eastern, rather melancholy"¹³⁰ Indeed, thanks to the many accounts, one is even able to know the kind of dress that the dancers used to wear. The dances were so common that Rebecca

¹²⁵ Maria Todorova, *The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans*, in Carl Brown, *Imperial Legacy*, cit., p. 59.

¹²⁶ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, cit., p. 180.

¹²⁷ Alberto Fortis, *Travels into Dalmatia: Containing General Observations on the Natural History of that Country and the Neighbouring islands; the Natural Productions, Arts, Manners, and Customs of the Inhabitants*, cit., in Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, cit., p. 324.

¹²⁸ See *infra*, Ch. 3.3., p. 108.

¹²⁹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 441.

¹³⁰ Percy Henderson, *A British Officer in the Balkans*, London: Seeley & co, 1909, p. 100 in Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 162.

stated that in each village in Macedonia one could find a cafeteria with music and dance, even in the small Skopje.

This work has already put in evidence the references to dance in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, focussing on the differences one can find in the various dance moments (whether they are typical or atypical etc.). Quoting again one of those scenes:

A stout woman clad in sequined pink muslin trousers and brassière was standing on a platform revolving her stomach in time to the music of a piano and violin, and as we entered she changed her subject matter and began to revolve her large firm breasts in opposite directions. This gave an effect of hard, mechanical magic; it was as if two cannon-balls were rolling away from each other but were for ever kept contingent by some invisible power of attraction.¹³¹

It is worth remarking that Rebecca was in line with her predecessors in reporting of dance and music performances, but once again she does it with some dose of newness. To begin with, she described one of dancers she met, Astra, as good and decent. Srđan Koljević, the son of the translator of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* into Serbo-Croatian, Nikola Koljević, described the meeting of Rebecca and Astra in the treatment of a possible film on *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. He wrote: “they talk, and Rebecca finds out that Astra is all decency and good sense.”¹³² These are important steps towards a new vision of the Balkans. Together with the fact that in *Sarajevo II* Rebecca herself tried to learn how to dance in Bosnian fashion, and the fact that she is so admired when looking at the musical and dance performances. Not admired, as attracted by something unknown and curious, attracted instead, to the point of wanting to learn how to do it.

Black Poison

The folksongs and the dances were played in a precise place: the *kafana* or coffe-house. Balkan coffee houses and the coffee itself are considered as symbols of the Balkans. Maria Rita Leto writes that the coffee in the Balkan area is much more than a traditional drink: it is a symbol of the past and a sign of belonging. As the following passage explains:

Nei Balcani in particolare, il caffè ha una forte valenza simbolica, in quanto mette a confronto Oriente e Occidente: nella terra di incontro tra l’Impero Asburgico e quello Ottomano, infatti, il caffè viennese o il caffè turco diventano marcatori metonimici delle due civiltà (Živković 2011: 47). Non è un caso quindi che il caffè sia metafora privilegiata di molti testi letterari dell’area: fare una mappatura delle rappresentazioni letterarie di questa pratica permette così di ricostruire la complessità della cultura balcanica in prospettiva tanto diacronica quanto sincronica. [...] Molte sono le testimonianze dei viaggiatori che, attraversando i Balcani, descrivono la disgustosa bevanda amara e nera,

¹³¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 308.

¹³² Srđan Koljević, *Treatment for the TV Series and Film Rebecca West – Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 2.

“diabolica, “infernale”, una sorta di veleno nazionale turco bevuto in luoghi, le caffetterie, che col tempo si fanno sempre più numerosi nella regione. La pratica del bere il caffè arriva nei Balcani accompagnata da un corredo di ritualità che trovano riflesso anche nella lingua. Intanto il luogo: la kavana o kafana.¹³³

Kafanas are always described in the travelogues, where the coffee is often defined as the heavenly infernal infuse you could drink while you were far away from home.¹³⁴ “Coffee conquered the mountains and hills of the Balkans long before it reached the rest of Europe. When travellers came across the beverage and its related social customs, it was regarded as an amusing Turkish vagary by many of them.”¹³⁵ Coffee found its place in Western culture only in the eighteenth century, while already in seventeenth century there are testimonies that it was commonly drunk in the Balkans: Poulet, a French traveller who had been in the Balkans in the second half of seventeenth century wrote that:

They are waiting to be served coffee, which is prepared from some small beans which grow in Egypt, roasted in an oven, ground into powder and cooked in water. Even someone generally highly adept would be in doubt as to which was worse in this hotchpotch – its blackness or the bitter taste.¹³⁶

Actually, it is known that already in the fifteenth century Ottoman soldiers used to drink the so called “national Turkish poison.”¹³⁷ According to Zagreb Lexicographical Institute Encyclopedia, the first Balkan cafeteria opened in Belgrade in 1522.¹³⁸ And for sure coffee quickly spread in the Balkans, at least in the richest areas. Even if coffee started being appreciated in Western society too, the point was that in the West coffee was seen as an energetic drink. In the Balkans, instead, coffee was, and still is, a pretext to rest in cafeterias, to meet friends and talk of politics with them. After all, “il caffè alla turca, non si può bere in fretta

¹³³ In the Balkans coffee has a strong symbolic value: it makes the Orient to face the Occident, Habsburgs to face the Ottomans. It is no coincidence that the coffee is used as a metaphor in many literary works of the area: it is possible to see the complexity of Balkan culture both from a diachronic and from a synchronic perspective, just mapping the literary representations of the practice of drinking coffee [...] Many travellers of the area gave descriptions of coffee as disgusting, black, infernal, a sort of Turkish national poison, that people used to drink in cafeterias. The practice of drinking coffee got to the Balkans together with a ritual, that finds its place in the language, as well. To begin with, the place: *kavana*, or *kafana*. [E.P.]

Maria Rita Leto, “Eppure bevavamo il caffè insieme: integrazione e disgregazione nella ex Jugoslavia,” in *Linee di confine Separazioni e processi di integrazione nello spazio culturale slavo*, a cura di Giovanna Moracci, Alberto Alberti, Firenze: University Press, 2013, p. 290; see also See also Marko Živković, *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milošević*, Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011.

¹³⁴ *Paradise was but a Sip of Hellish Brew Away* is the title of a chapter in Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit.

¹³⁵ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 147.

¹³⁶ *Idem*, p. 148, and Poulet, *Nouvelle Relations du Levant*, I, Paris: Louis Billaine, 1668, pp. 52-53.

¹³⁷ Vladislav Skarić, *Uticaj Turskog Vladanija na Društveni život*, II, Beograd: Balkanski Institut, 1937, p. 137.

¹³⁸ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 153.

al bancone, ma necessita un certo tempo di sedimentazione.”¹³⁹ Western people could not accept that:

Drinking coffee just for pleasure seemed more an abuse than a proper use of it. Western authors detested in particular the habit of frequenting coffee houses on a daily basis, which they saw as a sign of laziness or even hostility towards work. It was beyond their comprehension that people would rather live happily with a cup of coffee and a *chibouk* than work in order to have more.¹⁴⁰

And thus, the stereotype was born. Coffee started being associated with a typical laziness of Balkan people, as well as coffee houses became a place of indecent dances and pointless talks.

In Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* there is space left to coffee and coffee houses too. In *Treboviche* for example there is a typical “coffee moment:”

There we sat and drank black coffee and ate Turkish delight on toothpicks, while a gentle wind stirred the flowering trees that met above the table, and set the grasses waving round a prostrate pillar which had fallen by one of pashas' tombs.¹⁴¹

Another coffee time description can be found in *Prishtina*:

A waiter took our order. Because the Turks were in the Balkans, and where there Turks were, there were coffee-houses, the smallest town hereabouts is familiar with the waiter, who in Western countries is the sign of a sophisticated centre.¹⁴²

One could quote countless descriptions of “coffee times” in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Rebecca easily adapted to the habits, as it is understandable precisely from the number of times she stopped in cafeterias. In general, she reported that even the poorest and smallest villages in the Balkans were provided at least with one coffee-house. In giving so much importance to the heavenly black drink she fuelled in the stereotype. However, she does not describe coffee in bad terms, nor does she describe negatively the dances and other shows she could enjoy in cafeterias.

¹³⁹ It is not possible to quickly drink Turkish coffee, standing at the bar: it needs some sedimentation time. [E. P.] Maria Rita Leto, “Eppure bevavamo il caffè insieme”: integrazione e disgregazione nella ex Jugoslavia, cit., p. 291.

¹⁴⁰ Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit., p. 154.

¹⁴¹ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 402.

¹⁴² *Idem*, p. 871.

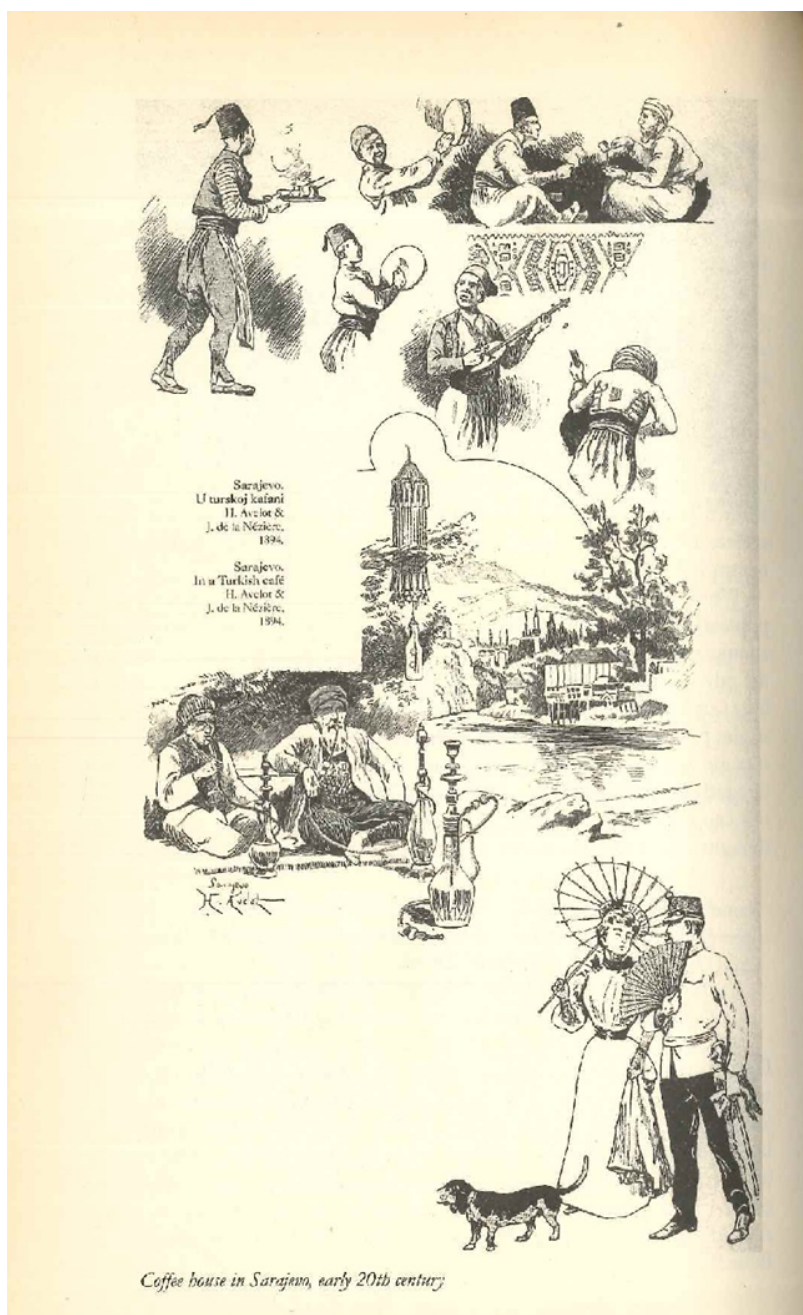


Figure 2: “Coffee house in Sarajevo,” taken from Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, cit.

Upon Rebecca West's Conclusions

The sinuous way in which Rebecca follows or does not follow the stereotypes mentioned by now helps to make of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* such a unique case in the history of English travel writing on the Balkans. Considering all the ideas belonging to the so-called myth of the Balkans discussed in this chapter until now, one can see that Rebecca is absolutely not joining them as a whole. Equally, she is not distancing herself from all of them in the same measure. There are some ideas she completely disagrees with (i.e. the violence of Balkans, their undefined position in the world, the ugliness of Balkan women); others she partly agrees with (i.e. the negative Ottoman legacy, the central role of coffee in the Balkans). Rebecca's merit is to have created a new trend in the way of looking at the Balkans, figuring them anew.

After her, some travellers started a journey through Yugoslavia, or in the Balkans on her footsteps and with the same attitude that she had towards those lands. First of all, Robert Kaplan did, at the end of 20th century. *Balkan Ghosts*,¹⁴³ the account of his journey through Yugoslavia puts it clear since the very beginning the influence that Rebecca West's work had, firstly on his idea of undertaking his adventure, secondly on the stages of the travel, eventually on the process of writing itself. Indeed, the *Prologue* starts with a quotation by Rebecca West: "I had come to Yugoslavia to see what history meant in flesh and blood."¹⁴⁴ When writing on Croatia, or other countries Rebecca had visited as well, Kaplan uses West's travelogue to compare his opinion to hers: she is a reference point, even if she had been there almost fifty years before. "*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* drew me to Yugoslavia."¹⁴⁵ It is true that the American writer Robert Kaplan had lot more than a "simple" reportage in mind, since he used to write on social and political issues also during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Moreover, he had prepared before starting his journey, reading other travelogues, as he himself stated in the preface to his book.¹⁴⁶ Sixty years passed since Rebecca West's journey, years during which the political situation of the area had radically changed. He obviously chose Rebecca West's reportage as a guideline, in order to justify his points of view: saying that he was following her footsteps both from a geographical and a conceptual perspective, (mis)quoting her, it would have been less probable that someone doubted his ideas. Indeed, she had already become an *auctoritas* in the field of the literature on the Balkans.

¹⁴³ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*, cit.

¹⁴⁴ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia*, cit., p. 19 in Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*, cit. p. 11.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*, cit., p. 13.

¹⁴⁶ *Idem*.

Then, also Tony White, the author of *Another Fool in the Balkans: In the Footsteps of Rebecca West*,¹⁴⁷ took inspiration from her. In this case, Rebecca's name appears since the title of the travel book, and as White himself conceded, the subtitle was superfluous since "any writer visiting the former Yugoslavia is following the footsteps of Rebecca West."¹⁴⁸ The same can be said of some of the accounts collected in *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*.¹⁴⁹ Many of the *Women Travellers in the Balkans* are previous or contemporary to Rebecca West (such as Mary Edith Durham, Louisa Rayner, Margaret Hasluck or Emily Balch) others went in the Balkans after her (Mercia MacDermott, for example). These women went there for different reasons, as were different their achievements. Not only as travellers but also in the fields of medical and military service, scholarship and education, journalism and literature, did these women contribute in very significant ways to the expansion of women's horizons and to the Balkan discovery. Among them, Rebecca surely emerges as a leading figure, as the reference to her Balkan discovery is obvious already from the title which is almost a quotation.

These works that have been just mentioned give an idea of how Rebecca West influenced the following travel writing on the Balkans. She promoted a new system for looking at the Balkans, which had the power to become a new trend. In this new trend there is space left to some features belonging to the old tradition of looking at the Balkans. However, in most cases these features are renewed, as in the case of the presumed Balkan violence, or the Balkan beauty, or the (un)importance of Balkans in Europe. Also, the old features combine with some new ones. Among them, the most important one is for sure the "Slavic mysticism." Rebecca is very keen to find it in the Balkans. Very susceptible to the paranormal, Rebecca found in Yugoslavia a sort of other dimension. As it was already mentioned, there are many passages in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, where Rebecca refers to the mystic dimension of the Balkans and their typical atmosphere of mystery. This is one of the reasons why she felt in love with them. This dimension has not been abandoned by her "followers."

This study is not trying to say that none before her was able to understand the real nature of the Balkans. In fact, there were hints of a real comprehension free from prejudices and stereotypes already before her. It is more like that she was capable of going beyond her background of Englishwoman and also beyond the old tradition of writing upon the Balkans, pushed by her genuine passion and love for those "lands of her imaginary." She was not looking for prejudices to be confirmed, nor was she trying to affirm the supremacy of the West. She

¹⁴⁷ Tony White, *Another Fool in the Balkans: in the Footsteps of Rebecca West*, Cadogan Guides, 2006.

¹⁴⁸ *Idem*, p. 49.

¹⁴⁹ John B. Allcock, Antonia Young. *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2000.

was exploring, travelling in a modern usage of the term.¹⁵⁰ Doing so, she has fallen in love and she has pulled out the potential of the country: “Rebecca West did not merely love Yugoslavia, she believed in it,”¹⁵¹ stated Felicity Rosslyn.

The anonymous author of a very interesting article published in *The Graphic* (1912) wondered how it was possible that such rough, wild, semi-civilised and more than a half Orientalised countries appealed so strongly to some of the astutest feminine intelligence.¹⁵² The answer is worth reporting:

It is not an attraction which the intellectual people reason about. The Balkans are the gateway of the East, through which one catches one's first glimpse of the languorous land [...] three quarters psychic, one quarter mystic, wholly sensuous [...] the East attracts women because it is feminine at the core, just as the West is masculine.¹⁵³

To conclude with Emil Cioran words: “And yet, if the Balkans were no more than horror, why is it, when we leave them and make for this part of the world, why is it we feel a kind of fall – an admirable one, it is true – into the abyss?”¹⁵⁴ This Rebecca did understand. Probably this is taken for granted by a contemporary reader, but one shall consider that it was not for her time. Thus, that is all her merit; thus, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* constitutes a turning point in the collective imaginary of the Balkans. The reasons for that are a few.

Firstly, Rebecca West's work is complete: she did not include in her travelogue only the most important cities, neither did she travelled in one country only. She actually travelled through the whole Yugoslavia, stopping in the capitals and in the smallest villages as well, as one can observe in chapter two.¹⁵⁵ Secondly, her work is not the product of a diplomat, a correspondent, or a whichever delegate: as she herself wrote in the prologue, she went there because she felt the necessity to. No one commissioned her reportage; she herself decided to write, so the work results to be free from obligations. She could express what she really wanted, showing a standpoint which is as genuine as every other standpoint can be. Yes, she declared a sort of exegetical intention of her writing, since she affirmed that she wanted to trace the stages of the burst of the two world conflicts. But it is a posthumous explanation, as she stated in the epilogue.¹⁵⁶ By reading her travel book, one understands that this intention is lost in the mass of information she gives, the amount of impressions she feels like to report and all the historical,

¹⁵⁰ Ricciarda Ricorda, *La letteratura di viaggio in Italia: dal Settecento a oggi*, cit. p. 12.

¹⁵¹ Felicity Rosslyn, “Rebecca West, Gerda and the Sense of Process,” in John B. Allcock, Antonia Young. *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*, Cit., p.116.

¹⁵² John Allcock, Antonia Youngs, preface to *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travelling in the Balkans*, cit., pp. 22-23.

¹⁵³ *The Graphic*, 26 October 1912.

¹⁵⁴ Emil Cioran, *History and Utopia*, New York: Seaver, 1987, p. 34.

¹⁵⁵ See *supra*, Ch. 2, pp. 30-88.

¹⁵⁶ See *supra*, Ch. 2.1., pp. 67-68.

cultural, artistic, and autobiographical digressions she does. Eventually, her profession was writing, that is why her reportage is well written: it is a piece of literature. She knew how to write a book, as her previous literary success confirms. Besides, the time when she published the book was influential too, as she herself stated in the *Epilogue*.¹⁵⁷

The overall outcome is a work that passes a simple message in a very elegant style of writing: the wealthy Englishwoman Rebecca West truly liked what she called Yugoslavia, in a way that surprised herself in the first place. She discovered many unknown realities during her journey, to the point that her prejudices fell down. She for one changed her mind and she decided to report her experience in a work which results enthusiastic and captivating. All this explains the relevance of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia* in the history of the literature on the Balkans.

¹⁵⁷ See *supra*, Ch. 2.1., pp. 67-68.

Appendix: a Journey through Yugoslavia in Yugoslavia

This appendix is dedicated to the study of the records of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia* (and of the translations of the book) in the lands that Rebecca referred to as Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. To better display the records, two tables have been created: *Table 1* is about the editions in English, while *Table 2* is about the translations. In the rows of the two tables are reported the records found in the catalogues, while in the columns refer to the countries mentioned above.

Table 1

<i>Records</i>	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	<i>Croatia</i>	<i>Kosovo^a</i>	<i>Montenegro</i>	<i>Republic of Macedonia</i>	<i>Serbia</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>
“Crno jagnje i sivi soko.” <i>Letopis matice srpske</i> , god. 162, kn. 438 sv ½, pp. 190-196, translated by Kovačević, Branislav, 1986. ^b						X	
<i>Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju</i> , translated from English by Koljević, Nikola. Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod; Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1989	X	X		X	X	X	X
<i>Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju</i> , translated from English by Koljević, Nikola. Beograd: BIGZ, 1990.				X		X	X
<i>Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju</i> , translated from English by Koljević, Nikola. Beograd: BIGZ, 1995.				X			
<i>Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju</i> , translated from English by Koljević, Nikola. Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod				X			
<i>Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju</i> , ^c translated from English by Selić, Ana. Beograd: Mono & Manjana, 2004 ¹ , 2008 ²				X		X	X

Appendix: a Journey through Yugoslavia in Yugoslavia

<i>Records</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Kosovo^d	Montenegro	Republic of Macedonia	Serbia	Slovenia
<i>Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju,</i> translated from English by Selić, Ana. Beograd: Vulkan štampanija, 2017.						X	
<i>Crno jagne i siv sokol: Makedonija,</i> translated from English by Cvetkovski, Vladimir. Skopje: Tri: Ars Lamina, 2013. ^e					X		

^a It has been unfortunately impossible to study the reception of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon in Kosovo, as the online catalogues are not available.

^b In 1986 a translated excerpt came out in the periodical *Letopis matice srpske*. The translator was Branislav Kovačević, who entitled the passage *Crno jagnje i sivi soko*. This is the very first record of translation in Serbo-Croatian that one can find. For this reason, it is of primary importance.

^c Ana Selić wrote the first Serbian translation (2004), that has been reprinted too. In particular, the Vulkan edition (2017) is considered remarkable, for the importance of the publishing house. However the print run of only 500 copies shows that probably, this was a try for launching the book to the large public.

^d It has been unfortunately impossible to study the reception of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon in Kosovo, as the online catalogues are not available.

^e This one is worth the attention, instead, because it is the first Macedonian translation, but it is only a partial translation, concerning the chapter *Macedonia* of Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. Before the publishing of that one, the only record of the book translated (and, moreover, in Serbo-Croatian) dated back to 1989.

Table 2

<i>Records</i>	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	<i>Croatia</i>	<i>Kosovo</i>	<i>Montenegro</i>	<i>Republic of Macedonia</i>	<i>Serbia</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> London: Macmillan, 1941				X			
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: the Viking Press, 1943 ¹ .	X					X	
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> London: Macmillan, 1944 ¹ .						X	X
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: the Viking Press, 1948.		X					
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: the Viking Press, 1956 ² , 1958 ³ .						X	
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> London: Macmillan, 1956 ² , 1964 ³ .		X				X	
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> London; Melbourne, Toronto: Macmillan, 1967.							X
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: Penguin Books, 1969.						X	

Appendix: a Journey through Yugoslavia in Yugoslavia

<i>Records</i>	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	<i>Croatia</i>	<i>Kosovo</i>	<i>Montenegro</i>	<i>Republic of Macedonia</i>	<i>Serbia</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: Penguin Books, 1982.		X					
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1993.		X					
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: Penguin Books, 1994.					X	X	X
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1997.						X	
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2001.							X
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2006.						X	X
<i>Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey Through Yugoslavia.</i> New York: Penguin Books, 2007.						X	X

Taking into account all these records, one may note that interest in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* was revived by the collapse of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. One can plainly see from the records that have been enlisted and collected in the tables, that actually the first extensive translation in Serbo-Croatian was published precisely in 1989.¹ This is not a coincidence: the book had been forbidden during Tito's Yugoslavia, probably due to Rebecca's

¹ Rebecca West, *Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju*, translated from English by Nikola Koljević, cit.

political views, or to her links with Yugoslavia.² From Srđan Koljević one can learn that when “Constantine was sent to a camp in Germany, Rebecca and Henry sent him parcels through the Red Cross,” as well as the fact that “during the War Rebecca and Henry supported the Yugoslav royal government in exile, and their home was a shelter for many Yugoslav refugees.”³ Defending and helping the “royalists” who had been exiled or chased off during the war and, especially after, with the beginning of Tito’s regime, was a clear standpoint. Carl Rollyson wrote:

Rebecca despised Tito precisely because he did not solve the problem of tensions between Croats, Muslims and Serbs. He simply repressed them. [...] But this strategy of denying or blurring distinctions, of reconciling, but not erasing differences, simply postponed the day of reckoning.⁴

Rebecca West was never reconciled to the postwar Yugoslav Government; she was unable to appreciate Tito's politics. “Rebecca West's passion for Yugoslavia conditioned her postwar anti-Communism, which, sadly, then alienated her from the Yugoslavia she loved; she never went back.”⁵

Furthermore, one may want to add to this another kind of reception: the idea of creating a cinematographic version of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. The project creator was Srđan Koljević, the son of Nikola Koljević, the first translator of the travelogue.⁶ The idea dates back to 1988, when the chief director of *Televizija Sarajevo* showed his interest in producing a film on the written reportage. This first project did not go far, but other two steps towards the realisation of the film have been made in the middle of the nineties, and then again in 2010. In 2010, Srđan wrote a treatment, which is a piece of prose, typically written before the first draft of a screenplay, as he himself explained in a footnote to the treatment.⁷ As Srđan himself wrote in the introductory paragraph of this:

The idea that *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, Rebecca West's voluminous travel (and not just travel) book, could provide an exciting starting point for a TV series, dates back to 1988/9, when some fragments from this book, translated by my father, Nikola Koljević, were published in the *Književne novine* review. The Chief Director of Televizija Sarajevo, Slobodan Terzić, was interested in initiating this project as a coproduction between JRT and BBC. The negotiations did not go far [...] In the middle of the nineties – when Rebecca West's book gained new, global, popularity – Terzić, now Head of Drama Programmes at

² One surely remembers that Rebecca never gave up taking part in Yugoslavian political debates. See *supra*, Ch. 1, pp. 15-21; Victoria Glendinning, *Rebecca West: a Life*, cit. pp. 173-189; and Larry Wolff, “Rebecca West: This Time Let’s Listen,” cit.

³

⁴ Carl Rollyson, *Rebecca West and the God that Failed*, Bloomington : iUniverse, 2005.

⁵ Larry Wolff, “Rebecca West: This Time Let’s Listen,” cit.

⁶ This study focusses on this project, because the evident link between its creator and the first translator of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* makes it particularly suitable and worth of attention.

⁷ Footnote in Srđan Koljević, *Treatment for the TV Series and Film Rebecca West – Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Belgrade: University Press, 2011.

Televizija Beograd, contacted me again, with a proposal to reinstate the co-production, but it nevertheless remained too ambitious for TV Beograd's logistic and other capacities. This treatment was written in 2010, in English, when the third, and so far the most resolute, initiative to realize this film was put forward. [...] For now, that's the end of the story about this project. Maybe some day the story will continue. In writing this treatment, I used, apart from the book *Black Lamb, Grey Falcon*, the excellent biography of Rebecca West, written by Victoria Glendinning, as well as diverse sources on Stanislav Vinaver (her guide Constantine in the book) and the Yugoslav literary, social and political scene of the time).⁸

In Koljević's treatment one can also find a confirmation of what has been previously stated: that Rebecca's work had been put apart for some decades – during Tito's regime - to find a new public in the late nineties – after Tito's death.

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon became the central book of Rebecca West's life. It was forbidden in Tito's Yugoslavia, and it wasn't translated and published until 1989. During the conflicts in the 1990s, it was an obligatory reading for all the Western diplomats sent to the region.⁹

As this film project and the new translations by Vladimir Cvetkovski in Macedonia, and Ana Selić in Serbia (published by such an important publishing house as Vulkan) evidence, the interest towards *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* has increased. Nowadays the book starts being acclaimed in what used to be Yugoslavia, where it has been published under the category of *putopis*, which is the Serbian word for travel writing. It is not only appreciated and recognised as an iconic piece of travel writing in English: it is very well known in the field of Balkan studies and it is quoted in many different kinds of works on the Balkan area, as the bibliography of this study can prove. Its success in Balkan area still needs confirmation, as the print run of the Vulkan edition (500 copies) and the number of Balkan critical works on Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* can prove, for example. Indeed, it is kept record of twenty-one works of critics on Rebecca West, in general. On *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, one can count fifteen works among them, which started being published in the end of 1950s and then in 1960s, and particularly from the second half of 1980s up to now.¹⁰ Then, in the case of critics too, one can then see that the attention to her work has grown and it is still growing. In hindsight, Rebecca West was right on many things about Slavs, South Slavs, Balkans and Yugoslavia, beginning with politics and their real identity. Her words, that sometimes might seem imprecise and even obscure, have been revalued with the passing of years and are currently a proper object

⁸ Srđan Koljević, *Treatment for the TV Series and Film Rebecca West – Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, cit., p. 1.

⁹ *Idem*, p. 5.

¹⁰ For the complete list of records of works of critics on Rebecca West, see COBISS catalogues, <http://www.vbs.rs/scripts/cobiss?id=1300110034798086>, last consulted 19. 01. 2019.

of studies for scholars and students. Her clairvoyance is now perceived as the proof of her profound understanding of Balkan realities.

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: ripensare i Balcani

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia (Agnello nero e falcone grigio: un viaggio attraverso la Jugoslavia [E.P.]) è il titolo del reportage di viaggio scritto da Rebecca West negli anni '30 del Novecento. Il libro è stato tradotto in italiano solo parzialmente, cosicché non si dispone di una versione integrale, ma solo *La Bosnia e l'Erzegovina: viaggio in Jugoslavia*, *La Croazia: viaggio in Jugoslavia* e *La Vecchia Serbia: Viaggio in Jugoslavia*.¹ Il titolo del reportage intero, invece, fornisce al lettore immediatamente due ordini di informazioni: il primo è che in esso viene data grande importanza alle tradizioni balcaniche, quali appunto quella legata al sacrificio religioso dell'agnello e quella storica legata alla sconfitta della battaglia di Kosovo *polje* (1389); il secondo è che il punto di vista dell'autrice del libro tende a vedere la Jugoslavia come un'unione, l'unione degli slavi del sud, appunto, nonostante la frammentazione interna e le diversità nazionali.

Il tipo di donna che fu Rebecca West è il primo punto che merita di essere trattato. Gli eventi della sua vita personale e le tappe della sua carriera letteraria permettono di inserire la scoperta dei Balcani da parte di Rebecca all'interno della sua storia di donna e viaggiatrice a cavallo delle due guerre mondiali. Dal suo viaggio provenne l'idea di un reportage, ossia *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, che rimane un libro multiforme dal genere ibrido per definizione, in quanto racconto di viaggio, in cui la componente autobiografica è facilmente rintracciabile e segna un confine labilissimo con il *travel writing*.

Rebecca West: un'icona del Ventesimo secolo

Rebecca West è lo pseudonimo sotto il quale Cicely Isabel Fairfield divenne famosa nel mondo della letteratura. Nacque nel 1892 vicino Londra, in una famiglia più colta che benestante di origini irlandesi. Durante l'infanzia visse a Londra con i suoi genitori e le due affezionatissime sorelle Letitia e Winifred. Un evento traumatico nella vita di Rebecca West fu la partenza di suo padre per l'Africa nel 1901: Rebecca la visse come un abbandono e un tradimento, nonostante le ragioni lavorative che in effetti la motivavano. Sei anni dopo essere partito, il

¹ Rebecca West, *La Bosnia e l'Erzegovina: viaggio in Jugoslavia*, trad. di Sarina Reina, Torino: EDT, 1994.
Idem, *La Croazia: viaggio in Jugoslavia*, trad. di Maria Teresa Bonotto, Torino: EDT, 1994.
Idem, *La Vecchia Serbia: viaggio in Jugoslavia*, trad. di Sarina Reina, Torino, EDT, 2000.

padre perse la vita, il che – oltre al dolore del lutto – comportò una serie di difficoltà finanziarie per Rebecca. Bisogna anche dire che Rebecca ricordò poi questa perdita non solo come il trauma dal quale iniziarono le sue difficoltà, ma anche come l'evento che forgiò la sua indipendenza. Dopo un'esperienza di due anni a Edinburgo, la famiglia si trasferì nuovamente a Londra. Fu allora che Rebecca cominciò ufficialmente la sua carriera di scrittrice, lavorando come giornalista per la rivista femminista *The Freewoman*. L'interesse per il femminismo accompagnò Rebecca sono nella prima fase della sua produzione; già nel 1913 smise di collaborare con la rivista.

Nel frattempo, la sua vita sentimentale cominciò a complicarsi, poiché conobbe il famoso scrittore H.G. Wells di cui divenne l'amante e da cui ebbe infine un figlio, Anthony. Nonostante la vita libera che Rebecca conduceva, il parto di un figlio illegittimo, la necessità di mantenere il segreto sulla paternità di Wells e l'impegno stesso della maternità resero la sua vita difficile, segnando per sempre il suo rapporto con Anthony. Cionondimeno, la sua carriera di scrittrice proseguì, tant'è che nel 1918 uscì il suo primo romanzo di successo, che la rese un'autrice conosciuta già al termine della Grande Guerra: *The Return of the Soldier*. Si ritrovò però a fronteggiare dei problemi fisici che culminarono in un crollo psicologico, il quale a sua volta ebbe come conseguenza – secondo Rebecca – lo sviluppo di un particolare sesto senso, una specie di suscettibilità al paranormale, e l'inizio della crisi con Wells. Il secondo romanzo di Rebecca West, *The Judge*, fu pubblicato nel 1922, mentre l'anno successivo la relazione con Wells finì definitivamente. Tale rottura è anche alla base della sua decisione di partire per l'America con il figlio. Nel 1927 ritornò a Londra e l'anno successivo uscì la sua raccolta di saggi su arte e letteratura *The Strange Necessity*. Nel 1929, poi, fu pubblicato il romanzo *Harriet Hume*. Nel 1930, destò scalpore la notizia trasmessa da Rebecca via telegramma, del suo matrimonio con il banchiere Henry Maxwell Andrews. Il primo libro che pubblicò da sposata fu *St. Augustine*, nel 1933. Nel 1936 uscì il romanzo *The Thinking Reed*.

Nel 1936 per la prima volta Rebecca West andò in Jugoslavia: a tal punto la affascinarono quei luoghi che decise per questo di ritornarci altre due volte con suo marito. La Jugoslavia è la protagonista del reportage di viaggio *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia*, del 1941, oggetto di questo studio. Il 1941 fu una data importante anche su un altro fronte: divenne nonna, ma cionondimeno, i suoi rapporti con Anthony rimasero tesi. Dalla partecipazione di Rebecca West nel 1946 al processo di Norimberga scaturì *The Meaning of Treason*, un lavoro molto criticato, a causa delle posizioni contro la pena di morte che vi sono espresse. Rebecca decise di ripartire per gli Stati Uniti, dove lavorò per il giornale *The*

Evening Standard. Nel 1956 venne pubblicato il più famoso tra i suoi romanzi, *The Fountain Overflows*. Nel 1959 le venne assegnato il titolo di *Dame*, grazie al suo operato letterario. *The Birds Fall Down*, l'ultimo romanzo di Rebecca West uscì nel 1966. Nel 1968 suo marito morì, lasciandola nuovamente in difficoltà finanziarie. Rebecca West morì nel 1973 all'età di novantun anni, ormai icona del secolo in cui aveva vissuto. Furono pubblicati postumi il romanzo *Sunflower* e le sue corrispondenze.

Per quanto riguarda la sua esperienza di viaggio in Jugoslavia, Rebecca stessa scrisse che fu tra le cose che maggiormente incisero nella sua vita, si innamorò dei Balcani. Ad avvicinarla alla Jugoslavia fu inizialmente una missione di lavoro, ma vi si riavvicinò in seguito per quella che descrisse come una sorta di necessità, un impulso a riviaggiare per quelle terre per conoscerle e capirle meglio. Nonostante fosse anomalo per una donna, per giunta appartenente a una classe sociale medio-alta, viaggiare in “terre oscure”, Rebecca ci tornò due volte. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* sembra il resoconto di un unico lungo viaggio, ma in realtà è il frutto di tre viaggi distinti. Come dimostra il suo lavoro, Rebecca West fu in grado di cogliere aspetti insoliti della Jugoslavia e di apprezzarne il carattere frammentario e mistico, cercando di non limitare queste regioni alle categorie di Est od Ovest, ma piuttosto di rintracciarvi la cifra balcanica. Il prodotto finale della sua scrittura è un testo ibrido, sicuramente un *travelogue*, con una componente autobiografica molto importante. D'altronde, il legame tra il viaggio e la scrittura che si verbalizza nell'odeporica è antichissimo ed è così naturale che è possibile trovare dei racconti di viaggio in ogni lingua che vanti una tradizione scritta. Per questo motivo, tracciare dei confini netti tra l'autobiografia e la scrittura di viaggio è impossibile, anche perché entrambi i generi condividono il problema del rapporto con la finzione letteraria: quanto c'è di reale e quanto di inventato in un racconto che per convenzione viene ritenuto aderente alla verità? Cercando di stabilire in che modo i due generi si fondano in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* bisogna tenere conto che lo scrittore e il protagonista del viaggio, sono la stessa persona, infatti il racconto è scritto in prima persona e contiene delle parti meramente autobiografiche, come il prologo, l'epilogo e dei commenti o parentesi riflessive ricorrenti nel testo. Il racconto è inoltre ricco di aneddoti personali e resoconti di esperienze vissute, al punto che il reportage a tratti potrebbe sembrare un diario; su tutto quello che viene descritto nel libro è calato il filtro della soggettività.

Messa in chiaro la realtà di Dame Rebecca West e preannunciato il carattere ibrido di *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, si riesce a scivolare verso l'interno di questo lungo e affollato racconto di viaggio in Jugoslavia, dando importanza ai vari posti visitati e alle considerazioni che scaturiscono da spostamenti e scoperte della viaggiatrice. Ogni luogo è pretesto per

riflettere sui temi più svariati, che vanno dalla storia della penisola balcanica, all'arte locale, alla riflessione sulla società e sulla politica – in special modo sul ruolo della Jugoslavia in Europa. Durante il reportage Rebecca incontra un'infinità di persone, che scandiscono le tappe della sua scoperta; ecco perché il suo viaggio è così *affollato*. Tuttavia, i veri protagonisti del viaggio sono pochi: la stessa Rebecca, suo marito Andrews, la guida Constantine il poeta e Gerda, sua moglie.

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: un viaggio lungo e affollato

Analizzando la struttura di *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, ci si ritrova a constatare la lunghezza e la completezza di questo reportage. Dopo un prologo in cui l'autrice dichiara le sue intenzioni e introduce la sua esperienza e le motivazioni del suo viaggio, il racconto di viaggio muove dalla Croazia, dove Rebecca si sofferma su Zagreb, Šestine, Two Castles, alla Dalmazia, in cui Rebecca tratta di Sušak, Senij, Rab, Split, Salonae, Korčula e Dubrovnik. Di lì Rebecca passa all'Herzegovina, di cui descrive Trebinje e Mostar, e alla Bosnia, in cui parla di Sarajevo, Jajce, Ilidža, Trebovice, Jezero e Travnik. A seguire la Serbia, dove Rebecca si ferma a Belgrado, Topola, Franzstal e infine Fruška Gora, e il viaggio in Macedonia, dove Rebecca si sofferma su Skopje, Matka, Bardovci, Neresi, Ochrid, Struga, Sveti Naum, Bitolj, Kaimaksalam, St. George's eve; a questo punto c'è Old Serbia, in cui si parla soprattutto di Plain of Kosovo, Gračanica, Priština, Kossovaska Mitrovica e Peć. Per quanto riguarda il capitolo successivo, sul Montenegro, vi si tratta di Kolašin, Podgorica, Lake Scutari, Cetinje and Budva. A chiusura è posto un epilogo, in cui Rebecca West trae le conclusioni circa il proprio viaggio, ponendo le basi per l'ampliamento di molte riflessioni, quali il ruolo degli imperi nella storia europea, il posto dei Balcani in Europa, le caratteristiche che l'avevano maggiormente colpita e le ragioni del reportage. I luoghi del racconto sono sempre descritti da un punto di vista paesaggistico e architettonico, ma in modo soggettivo: non è l'importanza della città in sé a stabilire l'accuratezza o la lunghezza delle descrizioni, bensì l'interesse personale di Rebecca. Inoltre, Rebecca arricchisce sempre il racconto di viaggio di spunti riflessivi sulla società balcanica e sulle società in generale, sulle vicende storiche dell'area, sull'arte, sull'importanza delle tradizioni e delle religioni in Jugoslavia.

Durante tutti questi spostamenti, Rebecca incontra un grande numero di persone, con cui interagisce in modo diverso. Queste persone popolano il reportage di voci differenti, sono fonti di opinioni, racconti e approfondimenti socio-culturali. Come detto sopra, tre sono i veri e propri personaggi onnipresenti, che contribuiscono alla trama e allo sviluppo del

racconto. Il marito di Rebecca West è il primo, egli ha spazio soprattutto per dare un fondamento agli scambi di opinione tra lui e gli altri personaggi. Il secondo è Constantine il poeta, che in realtà è il nome attribuito nel libro al poeta serbo Stanislav Vinaver, è la voce della Jugoslavia. Tutt'altro che una guida silenziosa, Constantine è descritto come un fiume di parole, uno slavo tipico e gioioso, un vero rappresentante della sua terra. Vinaver era stato inizialmente scelto per accompagnare la scrittrice inglese nel suo viaggio, in quanto intellettuale affermato e persona illustre nel regno oltre che conoscitore di lingue straniere, per poi rimanerle legato per lunghissimo tempo dopo, anche quando ebbe dei problemi con l'avvento del regime comunista di Tito e Rebecca lo aiutò. Infine Gerda, descritta solo negativamente, rappresenta la voce dell'opposizione al pensiero di Rebecca West. È tramite le discussioni tra le due che spesso le opinioni di Rebecca emergono in modo chiaro. Ponendo Gerda in cattiva luce, attribuendole un modo di pensare legato a visioni imperialiste, germanocentriche e rabbiosamente dispregiativo nei confronti delle realtà balcaniche, le idee contrarie alle sue assumono immediatamente un carattere più fresco, meno rancoroso, che diventa facilmente amabile per il lettore.

Una volta riportata e analizzata la struttura formale del reportage, le fasi e gli *step* del viaggio e i protagonisti di quest'avventura, resta da chiedersi in che modo quest'opera sia diventata innovativa e perché la sua autrice abbia conquistato un posto tanto importante per gli studiosi del Balcanismo, o mito dei Balcani.

Il mito dei Balcani in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

Il mito dei Balcani, o Balcanismo, è quell'insieme di idee e costruzioni mentali che almeno due secoli di viaggi in quelle "terre dell'Est" hanno formato nel pensiero occidentale. In effetti, sebbene i confini dei Balcani siano incerti e opportunamente ci si domandi dove inizino e finiscano poi questi Balcani, al tempo stesso il discorso su cosa sia balcanico e le idee su quest'area e le genti che le abitano sembrano più chiare. Questo ha spinto una serie di studiosi a interrogarsi sul perché si siano venuti a creare proprio certi concetti e visioni della Penisola balcanica. Prendendo spunto dallo studio di Edward Said, *Orientalismo*, volto a riflettere sull'apparato di idee connesse all'Oriente, sviluppatosi in Occidente, Maria Todorova, storica bulgara, ha ristretto il campo dello studio, concentrandosi sulla penisola balcanica. È principalmente dal suo saggio *Imagining the Balkans* e da quello dell'antropologo sloveno Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*, che parte la riflessione sulle tappe fondamentali della scoperta e dell'invenzione dei Balcani.

La posizione di Rebecca West nel dibattito sui Balcani, grazie alla sua originalità, è alla base del successo e dell'apprezzamento riscossi dal suo lavoro. Sicuramente il retroterra

socio-culturale dell'autrice ha influenzato il suo modo di osservare la Jugoslavia, ma rimane comunque una viaggiatrice all'avanguardia, in grado di giudicare la realtà circostante con meno pregiudizi e preconcetti rispetto ai suoi predecessori. Del resto, il dibattito sulla realtà balcanica è ancora aperto.

Già da un punto di vista toponomastico, il nome di Penisola Balcanica, o Balcani, deriva da una concezione geograficamente errata, ma ormai invalsa. La nomenclatura fu usata ufficialmente per la prima volta da August Zeune nel 1808. Etimologicamente essa proviene dal turco e significa montagna boscosa: era dunque utilizzata per indicare una parte della penisola, quella corrispondente al monte Haemus, e non il tutto. Nel momento in cui gradualmente questa parola viene a riferirsi alla penisola intera, inevitabilmente si comincia a connettere l'idea di Balcani alle montagne che li popolano, più che ai fiumi che li percorrono e le acque marine che li lambiscono. La montagna era ancora vista come un luogo avverso e inospitale, che rendeva, di riflesso, ostili e arretrate le civiltà che vi si erano sviluppate. Di fatto, la nomenclatura risulta piuttosto generica, al punto che a seconda del paese e dell'epoca in cui si vive, si tende ad avere un'idea diversa di quali nazioni vadano effettivamente sotto l'etichetta di penisola balcanica. Ad aggravare questa difficoltà di definizione subentrano le varie dominazioni che si sono susseguite nella penisola, ognuna della quali ha considerato la penisola sempre come la periferia dell'impero e mai il cuore. I Balcani si sono ritrovati a essere una terra di passaggio, una terra di confine e contemporaneamente il tratto di unione tra due mondi: nella dicotomia massima, l'Occidente e l'Oriente.

Furono l'Illuminismo e poi il Romanticismo a dare particolare slancio alla scoperta e successivamente all'invenzione dei Balcani. Durante l'Illuminismo ci fu un primo avvicinamento all'Est europeo, grazie a all'esotismo proprio del secolo dei Lumi e all'interesse per l'ignoto. Questo avvicinamento, testimoniato dai racconti di viaggio di quegli anni, aveva soprattutto lo scopo di mostrare che l'Occidente era migliore e più avanzato, tramite un confronto con l'Est, che risultava forzatamente selvaggio e arretrato. Con il Romanticismo, poi, l'interesse per l'ignoto si trasformò in interesse per quello che era isolato e primitivo. In questo senso i Balcani erano una terra promessa. È stato notato, tuttavia, che anche durante il Romanticismo i Balcani fungevano da specchio: era necessario per l'Occidente colonialista sviluppare uno stereotipo di barbarismo in questa penisola. Per quel che concerne i vari stereotipi legati ai Balcani e il modo in cui Rebecca vi si è rapportata, si trova al primo posto l'idea che i Balcani siano terre selvagge, popolate da uomini violenti, sempre pronti a decapitare e impalare. Nonostante i Balcani non avessero l'esclusiva dell'orrore e l'Occidente si fosse macchiato ben prima delle stesse colpe di guerre e violenze corporee, si finì per attribuire a determinate pratiche violente una specificità balcanica. Esse divennero un'attrattiva per il

viaggiatore occidentale, al punto che questi rimaneva deluso nel non vederle. Tuttavia, il vero crimine che l'Occidente non perdonò mai ai Balcani fu l'assassinio dell'arciduca Franz Ferdinand, cui – com'è noto – si fa risalire lo scoppio della Prima Guerra Mondiale. Rebecca si distacca da questo stereotipo di “violenza balcanica”, difatti non descrive scene di decapitazione, di impalamento, né di violenza in generale. Ovviamente si sofferma lungamente sull'omicidio dell'arciduca, ma non lo fa in termini recriminatori o giudicanti. Al contrario, cerca di rintracciarne le cause e tratta con grande sensibilità l'argomento, inserendo addirittura nel reportage un dialogo con il fratello del presunto assassino.

Il secondo stereotipo è dei Balcani come luoghi ibridi per natura e per questo privi di identità, ma definibili solo per accostamento ora all'Oriente, ora all'Occidente. Da ciò deriva l'immagine tradizionalmente associata ai Balcani, quella di instabili crocevia o ponti. In questo senso, Rebecca West non si è discostata enormemente dalla tradizione, poiché è ricorsa anche lei ricorre a paragoni con l'Oriente e l'Occidente. Di fatto, però, è riuscita a trovare un giusto equilibrio tra la diversità e la somiglianza dei Balcani rispetto alla sua terra di provenienza, puntando sempre l'attenzione sui tipi di influenza visibili nei posti che visitava, evitando in questo modo di accostare in maniera aprospettica i Balcani ad altre aree geografiche.

Rebecca West rimane molto legata alla tradizione, invece, nel sottolineare i retaggi turchi nei Balcani, evidenziando come i Turchi fossero stati la causa della maggior parte dei problemi allora esistenti in Jugoslavia, soprattutto per la loro incapacità di progredire e cambiare. I Turchi erano considerati responsabili anche della situazione politicamente frammentaria dei Balcani. Il mosaico di nazioni che popolava la penisola balcanica era fonte di incomprensione e shock per gli occidentali, adusi da tempo ormai agli stati-nazione. Non potevano fare a meno che considerarlo indice di arretratezza e causa di disordini interni. Rebecca West, invece, fu subito pronta ad amare questa peculiarità dei Balcani e a considerarla una ricchezza di cui l'Europa aveva bisogno.

Un altro stereotipo dal quale Rebecca si discosta completamente è quello secondo cui le donne balcaniche sarebbero state brutte, in quanto portatrici di inciviltà e grossolane. Rebecca descrive alcune donne jugoslave in termini estasiati per la loro bellezza e sembra non notare minimamente quello che i viaggiatori prima di lei avevano invece rimarcato: la loro mancanza di grazia e femminilità.

Ennesimo stereotipo è quello della gente balcanica che canta musica popolare, suonando la *gusla* e danzando, nei caffè. Nella tradizione, però, i performer – principalmente le ballerine – erano descritti in termini negativi e la loro esibizione era carica di un fascino grottesco. Rebecca invece sembra più attenta ad altri dettagli: la bellezza della ballerina, la bravura dei performer, l'originalità della loro esibizione. Legato a questo è l'ultimo

stereotipo analizzato, quello dell'importanza del caffè. L'idea stereotipata prevede che nei Balcani le persone bevano caffè prendendo delle lunghe pause e passando molte tempo nelle caffetterie. Quest'immagine delle genti balcaniche intente a chiacchierare oziosamente ore intere nei caffè, senza lavorare o occuparsi della loro vita, era sconvolgente per gli occidentali, che non erano abituati all'usanza e ritenevano il proprio modello di vita molto più dinamico e produttivo. Rebecca, che pure dà grande importanza al caffè e al tempo passato nelle caffetterie balcaniche durante i suoi viaggi (innumerevoli sono le descrizioni di questi momenti), si piega lei stessa all'usanza, senza criticarla.

Ponendo l'attenzione sui vari stereotipi legati all'invenzione dei Balcani e al modo e alla misura in cui Rebecca West se ne allontana o avvicina, ci si rende conto di come il suo lavoro sia originale senza essere sdradicato dalla tradizione. Ecco perché *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* è riuscito a dare inizio a un nuovo modo di pensare ai Balcani, un modo non necessariamente opposto a quello tradizionale, e che pure ne ha salvato alcuni concetti fondamentali. Esso riesce, ciononostante, ad acquisire autonomia rispetto all'opinione corrente e a dare spazio a una rappresentazione più realista e perciò meno negativa della penisola. Per dirla più semplicemente, Rebecca non si costrinse a vedere nei Balcani qualcosa che effettivamente non vedeva, tantomeno si avvicinò a queste terre come qualcuno proveniente da una cultura superiore: anzi ammise per prima con se stessa e poi con tutti i suoi lettori che se i Balcani facevano innamorare coloro che li visitavano dovevano sussistere delle ragioni per amarli. A lei erano piaciuti e voleva raccontarli, senza gli scopi degli inviati o degli ambasciatori e con un tocco letterario che le era proprio, in quanto scrittrice per professione.

Infine, dopo aver assegnato a *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* la posizione di valore che gli spetta, muoviamo allo studio della sua ricezione in area jugoslava, laddove esso è ambientato.

Appendice: la ricezione di *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* in Jugoslavia

La ricezione di *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* in Jugoslavia ebbe in tutte le nazioni che ne fecero parte (Croazia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Slovenia, Montenegro) una storia simile: i cataloghi delle biblioteche nazionali mostrano alcune copie di versioni inglesi a partire già dagli anni Quaranta del Novecento (anni immediatamente successivi alla prima pubblicazione) e poi per tutto il corso dei successivi decenni del Novecento, ma per la pubblicazione della prima traduzione estesa bisogna aspettare il 1989 (prima, nel 1986 era uscito solo un estratto tradotto). Il titolo di questa prima traduzione era *Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju*, il traduttore Nikola Koljević. Il 1989 non è anno casuale, poiché segna la caduta del regime dittatoriale comunista, durante il quale il libro di Rebecca West viene proibito in Jugoslavia. Le ragioni di questo divieto risiedono innanzitutto nell'impegno politico di Rebecca West e poi nella sua collaborazione e amicizia con Stanislav Vinaver, che pure era stato bandito dalla Jugoslavia. Una seconda (e ultima, finora) traduzione uscì nel 2004 ad opera di Ana Selić, sotto lo stesso titolo di *Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju*. Infine in Macedonia è conservata la traduzione *Crno jagne i siv sokol: Makedonija*, relativa al capitolo *Macedonia* di *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, eseguita da Vladimir Cvetkovski nel 2013.

A parte questo tipo di ricezione, si può anche menzionare un tentativo di trasposizione cinematografica del libro da parte del figlio di Nikola Koljević, in collaborazione con *Televizija Sarajevo*.

Lo studio di come un libro scritto al di qua di quel ponte immaginario tra Est e Ovest sia accolto al di là di esso, porta a interrogarsi su come l'Occidente risulti agli occhi dei Balcani. Questo è il quesito centrale, ad esempio, in *East looks West*, di Alex Drace-Francis. I Balcani sembrano iniziare sempre un po' più a Est di dove ci si trovi; sono stati definiti una mappa mentale dai confini mutevoli: conoscere la prospettiva di questo eterno altro è fondamentale. Il presente lavoro non sviluppa questo tema, ma cerca di dimostrare come un genere letterario quale il *travel writing*, già definito come ibrido, sia in grado di far pensare e ripensare a un luogo, creandone una costruzione mentale solida, per quanto risiedente nell'immaginario. Ne può stabilire o spostare i confini, ne può scegliere le abitudini tipiche da raccontare, trasmettendo ai lettori le immagini di una tradizione, ne può fornire descrizioni entusiaste di bellezza o orrore. Nei termini del tacito patto tra lettore e scrittore di autobiografie o racconti di viaggio, il lettore si affida alla verità che gli viene narrata. Secoli di racconti di

viaggio di occidentali nei Balcani, ce ne hanno fornito un'immagine, tutt'ora molto diffusa. Rebecca West ci lascia scorgere un nuovo tipo di Balcani, perché ci invita a scoprirli insieme a lei.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Editions and Translations of Black Lamb and Gray Falcon: a Journey through Yugoslavia

West, Rebecca. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia*. London: Macmillan, 1941¹, 1956², 1964³; Edinburgh: Canongate, 1993¹, 2001², 2006³; New York: The Viking Press, 1943¹, 1948², 1956³, 1958⁴; New York: Penguin Books, 1969¹, 1994², 1982³, 2007⁴; Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1984¹, 1986².

West, Rebecca. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: The Record of a Journey Through Yugoslavia in 1937*. London: Macmillan, 1944; London; Melbourne; Toronto: Macmillan, 1967.

West, Rebecca. "Crno jagnje i sivi soko." *Letopis matice srpske*, god. 162, kn. 438 sv ½, pp. 190-196, translated by Kovačević, Branislav, 1986.

West, Rebecca. *Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju*, translated from English by Koljević, Nikola. Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod; Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1989; Beograd: BIGZ, 1990¹, 1995².

West, Rebecca. *Crno jagne i siv sokol: Makedonija*, translated from English by Cvetkovski, Vladimir. Skopje: Tri: Ars Lamina, 2013.

West, Rebecca. *Crno jagnje i sivi soko: putovanje kroz Jugoslaviju*, translated from English by Selić, Ana. Beograd: Mono & Manjana, 2004¹, 2008²; Beograd: Vulkan štamparija, 2017.

West, Rebecca. *La Bosnia e l'Erzegovina: Viaggio in Iugoslavia*, trad. di Sarina Reina. Torino: EDT, 1994.

West, Rebecca. *La Croazia: Viaggio in Iugoslavia*, trad. di Maria Teresa Bonotto. Torino: EDT, 1994.

West, Rebecca. *La Vecchia Serbia: Viaggio in Iugoslavia*, trad. di Sarina Reina. Torino, EDT, 2000.

Other Works by Rebecca West

West, Rebecca. *The Return of the Soldier*. New York: The Century Company, 1918.

West, Rebecca. *The Judge*. London: Hutchinson, 1922.

West, Rebecca. *The Strange Necessity*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1928.

West, Rebecca. *Harriet Hume*. London: Hutchinson, 1929.

West, Rebecca. *The Thinking Reed*. London: Hutchinson, 1936.

West, Rebecca. *The Meaning of Treason*. New York: The Viking Press, 1947.

West, Rebecca. *The Fountain Overflows*. London: Macmillan, 1957.

West, Rebecca. *The Birds Fall Down*. London: Macmillan, 1966.

West, Rebecca. *Sunflower*. London: Virago, 1987.

Secondary sources

Adams, Percy. *Travelers and Travel Liars: 1660-1800*. Dover: Dover Publications Inc., 1980.

Aldrovandi, Ulisse. *Monstrorum Historia*. Bononiae: Nicolai Tebaldini, 1642.

Allcock, John, Young, Antonia. *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2000.

Amfiteatrov, Aleksander Valentinovič. *Strana razdora*. Saint-Peterburg: Balkanskija vpečatelnija, 1903.

Andrić, Ivo. *Il ponte sulla Žepa ed altre novella serbo-croato*. Translated from Serbo-croatian by Urbani, Umberto. Milano: Officine grafiche Antonio Saita, 1937.

Andrić, Ivo. *The Bridge on the Drina*, Translated from the Serbo-Croat by Lovett, Edwards. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959.

Andrić, Ivo. *Il Ponte sulla Drina*, translated by Bruno Meriggi. Milano Mondadori, 1967.

Barnard, Frederick. *Herder's Social and Political Thought from the Enlightenment to Nationalism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Bassett, Robert. *Balkan Hours: Travels in the Other Europe*. London: John Murray, 1990.

Bibliography

Bent, James Theodore Bent. *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1893.

Boppe, Auguste. *Journal et correspondance de Gédoyne "le Turc," consul de France à Alep (1623–1625)*, Paris: s.n., 1909.

Bracewell, Wendy. Drace-Francis, Alex. *Balkan Departures: Travel Writing from South-Eastern Europe*. New York, Oxford: Berghan Books, 2009.

Bruyn, Corneille. *A Voyage to the Levant: Travels in the Principal Parts of Asia minor, the Islands of Scio, Rhodes, Cyprus: with an Account of the Most Considerable Cities of Egypt, Syria and the Holy Land*. London: Jacob Tonson and Thomas Bennet, 1702.

Buffon, Georges Louis. *The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, Minerals etc.*, I, London: T. Bell, 1775.

Casanova, Giacomo. *Mémoires de J. Casanova écrits par lui-meme*. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1789

Du Couret, Louis. *Voyage au Pays des Niams-Niams ou les hommes à queue, avec le portrait d'un Niam-Niam, et une notice biographique sur l'auteur par Alexandre Dumas, par Hadji-Abd-el-Hamid-Bej*. Paris: Martinon 1854.

De Amicis, Edmondo. *Constantinople*. London: Sampson Low. 1878.

Bennett, Brian. "Zašto Amerikanci ne razumiju Hravtsku?" *Institut za Antropoloska Istrazivanja* 13.4, pp. 133-140. 1995.

Boose, Lynda. "Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, Serb Cultural Memory." *Signs* 28, pp. 71-96. 2002.

Boscovich, Ruggiero Giuseppe. *Giornale di un Viaggio da Costantinopoli in Polonia dell'Abate Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich*. Milano: Giordano Editore, 1966.

Brailsford, Henri Noel. *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*. London: Methuen, 1906.

Brilli, Attilio. *Quando Viaggiare Era un'Arte: Il Romanzo del Grand Tour*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995.

Brown, Carl. *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Browne, Edward. *A Brief Account of Some Travels in Hungaria, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Friuli*. London: Benjamin Tooke, 1673.

Burton, Stacy. *Travel Narrative and the Ends of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Butler, Hubert. *Rebecca West in Yugoslavia*. Belfast: Irish Pages Press, 1977.

Butler, Hubert. *Balkan Essayes*. Belfast: Irish Pages Press, 2016.

Cardona, Giorgio Raimondo. "I viaggi e le scoperte," *Letteratura Italiana*, Alberto Asor Rosa, Vol. 5, *Le Questioni*. Torino: Einaudi, 1986.

Carter, Ronald. McRae, John. *The Routledge History of English Literature: Britain and Ireland*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Chamberlain, Lesley. "Rebecca West in Yugoslavia." *Contemporary Review* 248.1444, pp. 262-266. 1986.

Cioran, Emil. *History and Utopia*. Trad. Richard Howard. New York: Seaver, 1987.

Cronia, Arturo. *Le più belle pagine della letteratura serbo-croata*. Milano: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1963.

Curzon, Jun. *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*. London: John Murray 1849.

Cvijić, Jovan. *La peninsule Balkanique: Geographie Humaine*. Beograd: Narodna Biblioteka Srbije Beograd. First edition, Paris: Colin, 1918.

Darkot, Desim. "Balkan." *Islam Ansiklopedisi*. Istanbul: Maarif Maatbasi, 1943.

Dervla, Murphy. *Through the Embers of Chaos: Balkan Journeys*, London: John Murray, 2003.

Djokić, Dejan. "Hubert Butler and Yugoslavia." *Croatian Political Science Review* 54.4, pp. 207-216. 2017.

Diehl, Charles. *La Repubblica di Venezia*. Roma: Newton & Compton Editori, 2004.

D'Intino, Franco. *L'Autobiografia moderna: storia, forme, problemi*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1998.

Bibliography

Dogo, Marco. *Storie balcaniche: popoli e stati nella transizione alla modernità*. Gorizia: LEG, 1999.

Dogo, Marco. Franzinetti, Guido. *Disrupting and reshaping: early Stages on Nation-Building in the Balkans*. Ravenna: Longo editore, 2002.

Dogo, Marco. "Tenere insieme l'impero: declino ottomano e province di frontiera nei Balcani." *Rivista storica italiana*, 2003.

Dogo, Marco. *Schegge d'impero, pezzi d'Europa: Balcani e Turchia fra continuità e mutamento 1804-1923*. Pordenone: Tipografia Sartor. 2006.

Drace-Francis, Alex; Bracewell, Wendy. *East looks West, Under Eastern Eyes: a Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*. New York: Central European University press, 2008.

Duilio, Franco. *Dizionario serbo-italiano-croato*. Bologna: G. Malipiero, 1966.

Duncan, James. Gregory, Derek. *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Durham, Mary Edith. *Through the Lands of the Serbs*. London: E. Arnold, 1904.

Durham, Mary Edith. *The Burden of the Balkans*. London: Edward Arnold, 1905.

Durham, Mary Edith. *Twenty Years of Balkans Tangle*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928.

Dušan, Bjelić. *Balkans as a Metaphor: Between Globalisation and Fragmentation*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

Dyer, Geoff. Introduction to Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006.

Ehrenpreis, Marcus. *The Soul of the East: Experience and Reflections*. New York: Viking Press, 1927.

Ellison, Grace. *Yugoslavia: A New Country and Its People*. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1933.

Ellman, Mary. "The Russians of Rebecca West." *The Atlantic* 218.6, pp. 68- 71. 1966.

Fortis, Alberto. *Travels into Dalmatia: Containing General Observations on the Natural History of that Country and the Neighbouring islands; the Natural Productions, Arts, Manners, and Customs of the Inhabitants*. London: 1778.

De Fresne-Canaye, Philippe. *Le Voyage du Levant*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1897.

Fromm, Gloria. "Rebecca West: The Fictions of Fact and the Facts of Fiction." *The new Criterion* 9.5, pp. 44-49. 1991.

Gladstone, William Ewert. *Montenegro*, in Edward Burlingame. *Current Discussion*, I. New York: Burlingame Press, 1878.

Glendinning, Victoria. *Rebecca West: A Life*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987.

Goff, Anthony. Fawcett Hugh. *Macedonia: A Plea for the Primitive*. London: John Lane, 1921.

Gombač, Boris. *Atlante storico dell'Adriatico orientale*. Pontedera: Banecchi& Vivaldi, 2007.

Gordon, Ray. *H. G. Wells and Rebecca West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Gordon, Will. *A Woman in the Balkans*. New York: Mead & Company, 1916.

Grgurinović, Ivona. "Constructing the Other in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*." *Etnološka istraživanja* 12.13, pp. 159-169. 2008.

Hawkesworth, Celia. *Ivo Andrič: Bridge between East and West*. London: Athlone Press, 1984.

Hazlitt, William. *Notes on a Journey through France and Italy*. London: Hunt and Clarke, 1826.

Henderson, Percy. *A British Officer in the Balkans*. London: Seeley & co, 1909.

Hertzberg, Gustav. *Montenegro und sein Freiheitskampf*. Halle: Schroedel & Simon, 1853.

Hodge, Carole. *Britain and the Balkans: 1991 until Present*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Hoesch, Edgar. *Storia dei paesi balcanici: dalle origini ai giorni nostri*. Torino: Einaudi, 2005.

Holland, Patrick and Huggan, Graham. *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. Ann Harbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.

Hulme, Peter. Youngs, Tim. *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Bibliography

Hynes, Samuel. *Rebecca West: A Celebration*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

Ibsen, Henrik. *An Enemy of the People; The Wild Duck; Rosmersholm*. Translated by McFarlane, James. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Ivetic, Egidio. *Le Guerre Balcaniche*. Bologna: il Mulino, 2006.

Ivetic, Egidio. *I Balcani dopo i Balcani*. Roma: Salerno editrice, 2015.

Jaeckel, Blair. *The Land of the Tamed Turks or the Balkan States Today*. Boston: L.C. Page and Company, 1910.

Jezernik, Božidar. *Non Cogito Ergo Sum: archeologija neke sale*. Ljubljana: Društvo za preučevanje zgodovine, literature in antropologije, 1994.

Jezernik, Božidar. *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers*. London: Saqi Books, 2004.

Joyce, Kelley. "Excursions into Modernism: Women Writers, Travel, and the Body." *Modernism/modernity* 23.4, pp. 924-926, 2016.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1922.

Karacić, Vuk. *Srpske narodne pjesme*, vol II, *U kojoj su pjesme junacke najstarije*. Beograd: Nolit, 1969.

Kaplan, Robert. *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*. London: Pan Macmillan, 1993.

Koljević, Srđan. *Treatment for the TV Series and Film Rebecca West – Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. Beograd: University Press, 2011.

Korte, Barbara. *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

Kovalevski, Egor Petrovič. *Cetyre mesjaca v Cernagorii*. Saint-Petersburg: A. A. Pliuser, 1841.

Kowaleski, Michael. *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009.

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.

- Krivokapic, Marija. *The Balkans in Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Scholars Publishing, 2015.
- Lane, Frederic. *Venice: a Maritime Republic*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Layard, Austen Henry. *Autobiography and Letters*. London: John Murray, 1903.
- Leed, Eric. *The Mind of the Traveller: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *Le Pacte Autobiographique*. Paris: Le Seuil, 1975.
- Leto, Maria Rita. "Eppure bevavamo il caffè insieme: integrazione e disgregazione nella ex Jugoslavia." in *Linee di confine Separazioni e processi di integrazione nello spazio culturale slavo*, a cura di Giovanna Moracci Alberto Alberti. Firenze: University Press, 2013.
- Lorna, Gibb. *West's World: The Extraordinary Life of Dame Rebecca West*. London: Macmillan, 2014.
- Lyall, Archibald. *The Balkan Road*. London: Methuen, 1930.
- Mackenzie, Georgina Muir. Irby, Adeline, Paulina. *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*. London: Daldy, Ibster and co, 1877.
- Maćzak, Antoni. *Viaggi e Viaggiatori nell'Europa Moderna*. Bari: Laterza, 2009.
- Magris, Claudio. *Danubio*. Milano: Garzanti, 2015.
- Marsden, Dora. *The Freewoman: A Weekly Feminist Review*, London: Stephen Swift and Co. Ltd., 1911-11-23 / 1912-10-10.
- Marsden, Dora. *The New Freewoman: An Individualist Review*. London: The New Freewoman, Ltd., 1913-06-15 / 1913-12-15.
- Mažuranić, Matija. *Sguardo in Bosnia: breve itinerario in quella regione compiuto nell'anno 1839-1840 da un patriota*, edited by Cristiano Diddi. Lecce: Argo, 2003.
- De Maupassant, Guy. "Venise." *Gil Blas*. 1885.
- Meriggi, Bruno. *Le Letterature della Jugoslavia*. Milano: Sansoni, 1970.

Bibliography

Minchin, James George Cotton. *The Growth of Freedom in the Balkan Peninsula*. London: John Murray, 1886.

Mitrović, Marija and Mitrović, Bojan. *Storia della cultura e della letteratura Serba*. Lecce: Argo, 2005.

Momčilović, Branko. "Dugi rat Rebeke Vest: iz pisama Rebeke Vest." *Letopis Matice Srpske* 479.3, pp. 324-344. 2007.

Morritt, John of Rokeby. *A Grand Tour: Letters and Journeys 1794-96*, edited by G.E. Mandarin. London: Century, 1985.

Nerozzi, Bellman Patrizia. Matera, Vincenzo. *Il viaggio e la scrittura*. Napoli: L'Ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001.

Nicklanović, Michael. "Constantine the Poet." *Serb World USA* 15.4, pp. 1-9. 1999.

Pageaux, Daniel-Henri. *La Dimension Etrangère comme axe d'étude en littérature comparée*. Paris: Colin, 1994.

Petrungaro, Stefano. "L'est europeo, o all'est dell'Europa." *900: Fare memoria, costruire identità* 10, pp. 77-86. 2004.

Petrungaro, Stefano. *Balcani: una storia di violenza?* Roma: Carocci Editore, 2012.

Pirjevec, Jože. *Serbi, Croati, Sloveni: storia di tre nazioni*. Bologna: il Mulino, 1995.

Pouillet, *Nouvelles Relations du Levant*. Paris: Louis Billaine, 1668.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Pribičević, Stojan, "Rebecca West in Yugoslavia" rev. of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. *Nation* 8.11. 1941.

Price, Philip. *Through the Iron-laced Curtain: a Record of a Journey through the Balkans in 1946*. London: 1949.

Pykett, Lyn. "Rebecca West Today: Contemporary Critical Approaches by Bernard Schweizer." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 26.2, pp. 353- 357. 2007.

Quiclet. *Les Voyages de M. Quiclet a Constantinopole par Terre*. Paris: Pierre Promé, 1664.

Rabelais, François. *Gargantua i Pantagruel* (Гаргантюа и Пантагрюел), translated from French by Vinaver, Stanislav. Beograd: Prosveta, 1950.

Rabelais, François. *La vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel*. Paris: 1532.

Ramberti, Benedetto. *Libri delle tre cose dei Turchi*. Vinegia: Casa de figlioli di Aldo, 1539.

Ramet, Sabrina. *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosević*. 2002.

Ricorda, Ricciarda. *La letteratura di viaggio in Italia: dal Settecento a oggi*. Brescia: Lascuola, 2012.

Rokai, Melina. *The British and Balkan Woman: British Perceptions of Balkan Women and their Femininity in the Long Nineteenth Century (1789-1914)*. Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2017.

Rollyson, Carl. *The Literary Legacy of Rebecca West*. Bethesda, MD: International Scholars, 1998.

Rollyson, Carl. *Rebecca West and the God that Failed*. Bloomington: iUniverse, 2005.

Rollyson, Carl. *Rebecca West: A Modern Sybill*. Independently published, 2017.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Les Confessions*. Paris: Lebigres Frères Libraires, 1836. (First edition 1782)

Russell, Alec. *Prejudice and Plum Brandy: Tales of a Balkan Stringer*. London: Michael Joseph, Wrights Lane, 1993.

Said, Edward, "East isn't East." *Times Literary Supplement* 2, pp. 3-6. 1995.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997. (First ed. 1971)

Sanguin, André-Louis. "Montenegro in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*: the Literature of Travellers as a Source for Political Geography." *Pregledni rad* 497.16, pp. 251-260. Paris: Université de la Sorbonne: 2011.

Schweinfurth, George. *The Heart of Africa: Three Years of Travels and Adventures in the Unexplored Regions of Central Africa. From 1868 to 1871*. London: Sampson Low, 1873.

Bibliography

Schweizer, Bernard. *Rebecca West Today: Contemporary Critical Approaches*. Newark: Delaware UP, 2006.

Semjakin, Afanasij Leont'evič, *Russkie o Serbii i Serbakh*. Saint-Petersburg: Aleteija, 2006.

Seton-Watson, Robert William. *The Southern Slav Questions and the Habsburg Monarchy*. London: Constabel & co. LTD., 1911.

Seton-Watson, Robert William. *Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941*. London: Westview Press, 1982, first published, 1945.

Samardžija, Snezana. *A Short History of Serbian Literature*. Belgrade: Serbia PEN, 2011.

Sherry, Vincent. *The Cambridge Companion to Literature of the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Skarić, Vladislav. *Uticao Turskog Vladanija na Drustveni zivot*, II. Beograd: Balkanski Institut, 1937.

Snel, Guido. "Three Forsaken Poets: Significant Absences in Balkan Modernism," *Slavonica* 21, pp. 1–15. 2016.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Silverado Squatters*, in *The Amateur Emigrant*, etc., vol. 15 of *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*. London: William Heinemann, 1924.

Stringer, Jenny. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Literature in English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Thornton, Philip. *Ikons and Oxen*. London: Collins, 1939.

Thouroude, Guillaume. "Towards Generic Autonomy: The *Récit de Voyage* as Mode, Genre and Form." *Studies in Travel Writing* 13.4, pp. 381-390. 2009.

Tillinast, Richard. "Rebecca West and the Tragedy of Yugoslavia." *The new Criterion* 10.10, pp. 12-23. 1992.

Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

De Tott, François. *Memoires du Baron de Tott on the Turks and the Tartars*. Dublin: White, Cash, and Marchbank, 1785.

Tomašić, Dinko. *Personality and Culture in Eastern Politics*. New York: George Stewart pub., 1948.

Velimirać, Ivana. “Sur Stanislav Vinaver, traducteur de Rabelais ou comment Gargantua et Pantagruel se mirent à parler serbe.” *Le Verger*, 2012.

Vopicka, Charles. *Secrets of the Balkans: Seven Years of a Diplomatist's Life in the Storm Centre of Europe*. Chicago: Rand Mc Nally, 1921.

Vucković, Radovan. *Moderna srpska proza*. Beograd: Prosveta, 1990.

Wallerstein, Imanuel. *The Modern World System*. New York: Academic, 1974-1989.

Walsh, Robert. *Narrative of a Journey from Constantinople to England*. London: F. Westl and A.H. Davies, 1828.

Wachtel, Andrew Baruch. *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wandycz, Piotr Stefan. *Il Prezzo della libertà: storia dell'Europa Centro-orientale dal Medioevo a oggi*. Bologna: il Mulino, 2001.

White, Tony. *Another Fool in the Balkans: in the Footsteps of Rebecca West*. Cadogan Guides, 2006.

De Windt, Harry. *Through Savage Europe: Being a Narrative of a Journey through the Balkan States and European Russia*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907.

Winchester, Simon. *The Fracture Zone: A Return to the Balkans*. London: Viking, 1999.

De Windt, Harry. *Through Savage Europe: Being a Narrative of a Journey through the Balkan States and European Russia*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907.

Wolfe, Peter. *Rebecca West: Artist and Thinker*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1971.

Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Woodhouse, Christopher Montague. *The Philhellens*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969.

Bibliography

Youngs, Tim. *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Zeune, August. *Goea: Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung*. Berlin: Wittich, 1808.

Živković, Marko. *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milošević*. Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011.

Zorzi, Alvise. *La Repubblica del Leone: storia di Venezia*. Milano: Bompiani, 2005.

Sitography

Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/search?query=zadruga>, last consulted 14.01.2019.

COBISS catalogues, <http://www.vbs.rs/scripts/cobiss?id=1300110034798086>, last consulted 19. 01. 2019.

Fadiman, Clifton. "Magnum Opus." *The New Yorker*, October 1941. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1941/10/18>, last consulted 15.01.2019.

Hrvatska Enciklopedija. <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/> last consulted 15.01.2019.

Wolff, Larry. "Rebecca West: This Time Let's Listen." *The New York Times Book Review*. February, 1991. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/09/10/specials/west-wolff.html>, last consulted 15.01.2019.