REPRESENTING THE SOUTH SLAVONIC PEASANTRY IN BRITISH POPULAR DISCOURSE, 1900-1918

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2015©

Abstract

This study explores the link between perceptions of British identity in the early twentieth century and representations of foreign cultures, focusing on the South Slavonic peasant communities of the Balkan territories which formed the first Yugoslavia in December 1918. Utilising a range of source materials, including archival documents, memoirs, press articles and scientific literature, it presents an original perspective on Anglo-Balkan engagement – in the specific historical context of Yugoslavia's creation as opposed to the region in general – from a social, rather than political, dimension. Furthermore, it challenges previous historical interpretations of this period as representing merely the conclusion of a 'long-nineteenth' or the beginning of a 'short-twentieth' century process of 'othering'. In doing so, it contributes to the study of Western engagement with southeastern Europe before the Second World War.

Despite Britain entering the twentieth century as the dominant world power, public discourse became imbued with distinct cultural pessimism, stemming from a range of social anxieties surrounding the future of British identity, which increasingly undermined nineteenth-century ideals of modernity and progress. By the 1910s, these latent anxieties had even permeated into elite, supposedly unrelated, debates on the contemporary Balkans, recalibrating the image of the South Slavonic peasantry as an allegory for Britain's perceived 'decline'. Reactions to regional violence signalled this shift, forging a metanarrative of peasant victimhood in the face of modernity's worst excesses yet also feeding into the emerging notion that Britain had a moral duty to resist such forces. The deployment of thousands of British military and civilian personnel in the Balkans, compounded by a vigorous domestic propaganda campaign, saw this process reach its apotheosis in the First World War: Yugoslavia's creation was legitimised as the solution to peasant victimisation and became integral to Britain's imagined revival as civilisation's moral arbiter.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Abbreviations

ASANU – Archive of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences *(Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti)*

BL – British Library

BSF – British Salonica Forces

FO – (British) Foreign Office

IWM – Imperial War Museum (Archive and Sound Archives)

JO – Yugoslav Committee *(Jugoslovenski odbor)*

MRF – Macedonian Relief Fund

RAI – Royal Anthropological Institute (of Great Britain and Ireland)

RAMC – Royal Army Medical Corps

SRF – Serbian Relief Fund

SSEES – School of Slavonic and East European Studies

SWH – Scottish Women's Hospitals (for Foreign Service)

VMRO – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation *(Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija)*

Nomenclature and Historical Exonyms

Before the 1890s, British writing on the South Slavonic Balkans typically adopted non-Slavonic (usually German, Greek, Italian, Latin or Turkish) variations of nomenclature and exonyms. Place names were the most obvious example such as *Servia* (Serbia) or important towns and cities including *Agram* (Zagreb), *Laibach* (Ljubljana), *Sara* (Sarajevo) and *Uskub* (Skopje). Conversely, authors who used the Slavonic equivalents would often anglicise them by substituting the native diacritics for phonetic approximations (e.g. Čedomilj Mijatović as 'Chedomille Mijatovich'). Nevertheless, by 1914, improvements in linguistic comprehension saw the adoption of Slavonic nomenclature in general British parlance while non-Slavonic variations were gradually discarded. More casual observers, however, often continued to use non-Slavonic exonyms when referring to important settlements along the Adriatic coast such as *Cattaro* (Kotor), *Monastir* (Bitola) and *Ragusa* (Dubrovnik). In the interests of brevity, this study uses the contemporary variations in all cases unless quoting or an established English equivalent, like Belgrade (*Beograd*), Croatia (*Hrvatska*), Montenegro (*Crna Gora*) or Yugoslavia (*Jugoslavija*), is available. For consistency, the author has also applied this rule to non-Slavonic Balkan place names, notably *Constantinople* (Istanbul) and *Salonica* (Thessaloniki).

Introduction

> The soil was fertile and the farming intensive – one realized the whole country was a land of peasants and small holders […] There are no Middle Class, no châteaux, no manor houses, only miles of peasantry.
>
> Frank Green.[1]

This passage, a British traveller's summation of society in the interwar kingdom of Yugoslavia, encapsulates common perceptions of this part of southeast Europe's Balkan Peninsula within Britain in the early twentieth century.[2] In particular, this depiction of the peasantry exemplifies Edward Said's 'imagined geography'; a spatial ordering of the world in which foreign lands are represented through exaggerated cultural embellishments, rather than objective falsehoods.[3] Yet, this vision of a classless, agrarian idyll did not reflect some entrenched historical perceptions of the region as a living ethnographic museum. Rather, its manifestation in the British geographical imagination was the culmination of a very recent shift in public perception. Rooted in the context of an apparent change in British society, this shift began in the early 1900s and reached its climax during the First World War.

Since the 1970s, scholarly interest in the West's relationship with the wider world has increasingly focused on how it has represented non-Western cultures. Post-colonialist critiques, such as Said's *Orientalism,* have inextricably linked representations to the imperialist societies that produced them by 'othering' foreign cultures through patronising or pejorative stereotypes.[4] An emphasis on representation or 'images' situates this approach in the academic field of 'imagology': the treatment of representations, particularly in literary works, as cultural, political, racial and social constructs.[5]

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[1] [Frank Green], *A Journey through Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia* (London: privately printed at the Chiswick Press, 1928), pp.4-5.

[2] Officially the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' before 1929. In the interest of brevity, the study will refer to it as Yugoslavia throughout.

[3] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003 [1978]), p.49.

[4] Ibid., p.12. See also Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: Frank Cass, 1978).

[5] William L. Chew (III), 'What's in a National Stereotype? An Introduction to Imagology at the Threshold of the 21st Century', *Language and Intercultural Communication*, Vol.6, No.3&4 (2006), pp.180-181; Joep Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and Method', in Manfred Beller & Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology: The Cultural*

Although the Western propensity for categorising southeastern Europe through cultural stereotyping has been a source of anthropological interest since the late 1970s, wider debate on its historical genesis was triggered by the collapse of Yugoslavia's socialist incarnation in the 1990s. What some perceived as an underlying cynicism towards the Balkans among Western observers, focused attention on how negative 'patterns of perception' had shaped the region's international image following its 'intellectual discovery' in the nineteenth century.[6] British travel literature, as the international 'standard' for the genre by 1900, was identified as a salient influence, perpetuating many of the negative Balkan motifs and archetypes alluded to in contemporary portrayals.[7] The former Yugoslavia is prominent in this Western geographical paradigm, signified by some as 'the heart of what constitutes the cultural sign of the Balkans': dysfunctional agrarianist societies whose 'European' veneer masks the potential for ethnic violence and political fragmentation.[8]

Since the late 2000s, a second wave of imagological historiography has begun to challenge the consensus that the Balkans is typically dismissed by the West 'as a

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Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters – A Critical Survey (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2007), p.16.

[6] See for example, John B. Allcock & Antonia Young (eds.), *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons: Women Travellers in the Balkans* (Bradford: Bradford University Press, 1991); Milica Bakić-Hayden & Robert M. Hayden, 'Orientalist Variations on the Theme "Balkans": Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics', *Slavic Review*, Vol.51, No.1 (1992), pp.1-15; Maria Todorova, 'The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention', *Slavic Review*, Vol.53, No.2 (1994), pp.453-482; eadem, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ludmilla Kostova, *Tales of the Periphery: The Balkans in Nineteenth-century British Writing* (Veliko Tŭrnovo: Universitetsko izd-vo Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodii, 1997); Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); David Norris, *In the Wake of the Balkan Myth: Questions of Identity and Modernity* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999); Slobodan G. Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia and the Balkans, 1903-1906* (Paris: Dialogue, 2000); Omer Hadžiselimović, *At the Gates of the East: British Travel Writers on Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Dušan I. Bjelić & Obrad Savić (eds.), *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Norman D. Naimark & Holly Case (eds.), *Yugoslavia and its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Andrew Hammond (ed.), *The Balkans and the West: Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers* (London: Saqi, 2004); Cristofer Scarboro, 'From Bath House to Parliament Building: The Ambivalence of Colonial Desire', *The Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol.6, No.1 (2005), pp.104-139; Andrew Hammond, *The Debated Lands: British and American Representations of the Balkans* (Cardiff: University of Cardiff Press, 2007). See also Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[7] Todorova, *Imagining*, p.88; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.x.

[8] Norris, *In the Wake*, p.14.

developmental, geographical, historical, religious, cultural and economic borderland'.[9] This approach has expanded the scope of analysis beyond travel writing in order to explore how the Balkans have been framed against foreign domestic contexts, notably Britain.

This study builds upon this trend by exploring the social angle through which the pre-Yugoslavian Balkans were defined in the British geographical imagination. Central to this was the shifting representation of the region's overwhelmingly peasant population as an allegory for widely-discussed domestic issues that had arisen to challenge Victorian assumptions surrounding British identity. By the early 1900s, the erosion of Britain's global position during the 'Long Depression' of 1873 to 1896, coupled with a growing awareness of the consequences of urban and rural poverty made apparent in the Second Boer War, saw many of these assumptions replaced by a range of social anxieties. In the public sphere, this manifested as a latent cultural pessimism and an internalised desire for a return to the 'normalcy' of an earlier, supposedly more stable, era. [10]

Guided by these latent anxieties, British writers increasingly imprinted notions of the South Slavonic peasantry as the embodiment of a pre-industrial and virtuous ideal into the public's geographical imagination. Violent episodes, such as the Balkan Wars of 1912 to 1913,

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[9] For example of this scholarly shift see Neval Berber, 'The Irish Paradigm in the 19th Century British Discourse on Bosnia-Herzegovina' in Steven G. Ellis & Lud'a Klusáková (eds.), *Imagining Frontiers, Contesting Identities* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2007), pp.319-338; Mika Petteri Suonpää, *British Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs: Professional and Popular Categorizations before 1914* (PhD Thesis, University of Hull, 2008); Florian Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege im zivilisierten Europa? Die Balkankriege und die öffentliche Meinung in Deutschland, England und Irland 1876-1913* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008); Neval Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina in British Travel Literature (1844-1912)*, (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2010); Eugene Michail, *The British and the Balkans: Forming Images of Foreign Lands 1900-1950* (London: Continuum, 2011); James Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe: The Balkans and Empire in early Twentieth-Century British Political Culture', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.58, No. 2 (June 2015), pp.565-587; idem, 'Peasants and Politics: Re-thinking the British Imaginative Geography of the Balkans at the Time of the First World War', *European History Quarterly*, Vol.47, No.1 (January 2017), pp.55-77.

[10] In his analysis of British Liberalism's decline before 1914, George Dangerfield described Britain as having been afflicted by a 'general crisis' that was only assuaged by the outbreak of the First World War. David Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis: Britain, 1901-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1996), pp.vii-viii, p.9; Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.189-192; Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.20-23. On 'decline' see also George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1935); Greta Jones, *Social Hygiene in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Richard A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); David Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics 1899-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); G.R. Searle, *A New England?: Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

cemented this idea, with peasants being increasingly perceived through pathos and the prism of victimhood, perpetuated by corrupt and insidious modern trends. This transition in the image of the peasant dovetailed into the emerging belief that Britons needed to redefine themselves as a moral force to overcome the nation's slide into stagnation, a belief that fully manifested itself during the First World War.[11] British nationals deployed to the region soon began to represent their mission through such ideals. In British propaganda, Yugoslavia became a conduit for asserting Britain's post-war moral hegemony by alleviating the peasantry's political repression. This study offers fresh historical insight by considering how this confluence of motifs evolved in tandem with the changing domestic social climate of early twentieth century Britain.

Focus of the Study and Theoretical Approach

The purpose of this study is to analyse and evaluate how social and domestic concerns prevalent in early twentieth-century British popular discourse impacted on evolving representations of the South Slavonic Balkan peasantry and culture up to the formation of the first Yugoslavian state in December 1918, in contrast to what occurred before and after this specific period. By considering these questions, it seeks to fill a lacuna in the current historiography of Balkans imagology through three interconnected analytical aims.

Firstly, the study explores how representations of South Slavonic peasant communities gradually developed allegorical links to domestic issues that dominated discourses in the British public sphere at the turn of the twentieth century. While such influences have gained increased scholarly recognition, imagological historiography remains predominantly concerned with direct forms of representation which mainly derived from the encounters and

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[11] Pamela J. Dorn Sezgin, 'Between Cross and Crescent: British Public Opinion towards the Ottoman Empire in Resolving the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913', in M. Hakan Yavuz & Isa Blumi (eds.), *War and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913, and their Sociopolitical Implications* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2013), p. 423. See also Glenda Sluga, 'Narrating Difference and Defining the Nation in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century "Western" Europe', *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, Vol.9, No.2 (2002), pp. 183-197.

perspectives of elites who engaged with the region in a political, commercial, touristic or 'expert' capacity.[12] Difficulties in assessing the attitudes of the general public before the introduction of opinion polling in the 1930s contributed to the informal consensus that the Balkans commanded little popular attention beyond episodes of the most extreme violence. However, this study contests that the formation of allegorical connections with the domestic landscape in early twentieth-century Britain revealed an alternative vision of the South Slavs as a symbolic motif in the reconceptualisation of British identity around moralistic ideals that achieved wider resonance with the general public over more direct forms of representation. Rather than representing a sudden break with the past, this process was cumulative, fluid and shaped by two historical contingencies: the rising excesses of a regional conflict, culminating in the First World War, and the narrative of peasant victimhood that came to underline British representations as a cultural response.

Secondly, the study considers how this contextualised shift in South Slavonic representations did not mark the period as one of transition, but distinguished it as a unique in the history of Anglo-Balkan engagement. Most imagological analyses have tended to chart the development of overarching themes or recurrent patterns of representation over the *longue durée*, adhering to variations of Eric Hobsbawm's 'long nineteenth' or 'short twentieth' centuries.[13] This analysis challenges this approach by considering how gradual subordination of Balkan representations to wider domestic or existential anxieties resulted in a synthesis of ideas unique to this period. For instance, while victimhood narratives centred on the image of the repressed Balkan peasant originated in the nineteenth century, it was only against the

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[12] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, pp.xv-xvi.

[13] See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962); *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* (1975); *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (1987); and idem, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994). While situating their analyses within broader chronological frameworks, Slobodan G. Markovich's *British Perceptions of Serbia* and James Evans's *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia: Negotiating Balkan Nationality and Identity* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2008), are rare exceptions which examine specific historical case studies. Although Eugene Michail's *The British and the Balkans* could be considered a more recent example, it also follows a similar *longue durée* structure encompassing the Edwardian and interwar periods, both world wars and the early years of the Cold War.

heightened backdrop of public anxieties in the early 1900s that resolving the issues behind it was tied into the perceived destiny of the British themselves. The allegorical depiction of the peasant changed to its greatest extent during the First World War through the deployment of thousands of British men and women in Slav-populated Macedonia and Serbia. Yet, the conflict's impact on these developments remains, surprisingly, neglected by imagological historiography which continues to characterise it as a break with previous traditions of engagement as opposed to a stage in an evolutionary process.[14]

Finally, the study aims to assess this representational shift in relation to British support for the Yugoslav project during and immediately after the First World War. Despite its pivotal role in imagological discourse, no comprehensive analysis has been undertaken as to how the creation of the South Slav state intersected with shifting perceptions of the region beyond political and intellectual circles.[15] In situating the first Yugoslavia's creation within a social, as opposed to political, context of British imaginative geography, it looks to advance historical understanding of the interplay between this evolving sense of a moral British identity, and attempts to validate its place in the wider world.

It is therefore important to emphasise that the study does not present an alternative analysis of British political involvement in Yugoslavia's creation and neither does it wish to imply that the country's formation was historically inevitable before 1918. While a pan-Balkan union had been a recurrent talking point among regional nationalists and their foreign supporters since the late nineteenth century, it is unlikely that the Yugoslav project would have gained political currency or credibility without the catalysing impact of the First World War.[16] Neither does the study claim to present an accurate historical picture of society in early twentieth-century Britain or the South Slavonic territories, depictions of both being far from

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[14] See for example Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.109-137.

[15] For the most recent examples of British involvement in Yugoslavia's creation see Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*; Vesna Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia: A Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[16] Dennison Rusinow, 'The Yugoslav Idea before Yugoslavia', in Dejan Djokić (ed.), *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), pp.12-14; Kosta St. Pavlowitch, 'The First World War and the Unification of Yugoslavia', in ibid., p.27.

impervious to exaggeration and hyperbole. Before considering these aims in relation to existing scholarly trends, however, it is necessary to define and theoretically contextualise key terminology and conceptual frameworks employed within this study.

The epithet 'South Slavonic' is the most politically problematic of the definitions in that its conventional sense denotes all ethnic speakers of the Slavonic Balkan languages. As well as Bosnian Muslims, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs, Slovenes, the term also includes Bulgarians despite Bulgaria having never been incorporated into either of the Yugoslav state entities.[17] Further complications arise in the regions' overlapping cultural and linguistic traditions and a history of asymmetrical geopolitical development that resulted in sizable minorities living in territories directly adjacent to their ostensive national 'homelands'.[18] As this study focuses on British portrayals of those Southern Slavs who inhabited only the geographical territories of the future Yugoslavia, discussion of non-Southern Slavs will be restricted to cases where comparison or context is deemed appropriate.

While the term 'peasantry' could easily be interpreted as denoting a traditional class of rural labourers or smallholders, its historical and cultural definition remains contested. As Alex Drace-Francis notes, scholars have yet to reach a consensus on whether peasants actually existed as coherent social groupings, or whether the label was simply used to 'ascribe certain values to certain ways of life'.[19] This raises deeper questions over how the categorisation of certain groups promotes othering within one's own society.[20] Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* alludes to this through the premise that France's nineteenth-century urban élites

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[17] The prospect of a union between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in a Balkan Federative Republic was only abandoned following the latter's expulsion from the Communist Information Bureau in 1948. See Leften Stavros Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation: A History of the Movement Toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964).

[18] On the politically contentious issue of language for example, see Robert D. Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and its Disintegration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Roumen Daskalov & Tchavdar Marinov (eds.), *Entangled Histories of the Balkans: National Ideologies and Language Policies* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013).

[19] Alex Drace-Francis, *The Traditions of Invention: Romanian Ethnic and Social Stereotypes in Historical Context* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013), p.11.

[20] David I.Kertzer, 'Representing Italy', in Susan Parman (ed.), *Europe in the Anthropological Imagination* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 1998), p.72; Michal Buchowski, 'The Specter of Orientalism in Europe: From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother', *Anthropology Quarterly*, Vol.79, No.3 (2006), pp.475-476.

viewed the city as a source of technological and social modernity, set against a rural 'land of savages'.[21] A similar hierarchical rural-urban divide traces a long line through the historiography of Yugoslavia, where violence and the destruction of heritage and cultural sites through war were recurrently depicted as 'rural attacks on urban values'.[22] Sabrina Ramet ascribes the violence of the 1990s to the 'idiocy' of a homogenous and insular (Serbian) rural population who rejected urban heterogeneity and plurality in favour of a reactionary nationalist chauvinism.[23] Similarly, Martin Coward observes that 'urbicide' a wartime targeting of cities and buildings corresponds to an attack on what are deemed bastions of civilised norms.[24]

Hailing from a nation where, by 1861, the city had surpassed the village as the centre of social and national life, Britons were inclined to espouse similar sentiments *vis-à-vis* rural backwardness.[25] However, as this study maintains, this was increasingly obscured by a cultural revival in British rural nostalgia stemming, in part, from anxieties surrounding the country's transition to an urban-based society. This occurred in tandem with a rise in the discursive prevalence of fears about crime, poverty, and physical and moral degeneration, perpetuated by a predominately middle-class intelligentsia.[26] While not necessarily articulating anti-urban impulses, after 1900, the South Slav peasant was increasingly depicted through an ideological paradigm that tied British strength and values to a, typically English, rural idyll.[27]

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[21] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1977), pp.3-7.

[22] Linda A. Bennett, 'A Forty Year Retrospective on the Anthropology of Former Yugoslavia', in Parman, *Europe in the Anthropological Imagination*, pp.118-124; András J. Riedlmayer, *Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992-1996: A Post-War Survey of Selected Municipalities* (MA Dissertation, Harvard University, 2002), pp.18-19; Anders Stefansson, 'Urban Exiles: Locals, Newcomers and the Cultural Transformation of Sarajevo' in Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms & Ger Duijzings (eds.), *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp63-64. For recent analyses on Balkan urban heritages and their link to regional state politics and nationalism see Maria Couroucli & Tchavdar Marinov (eds.), *Balkan Heritages: Negotiating History and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

[23] Sabrina P. Ramet, 'Nationalism and the "Idiocy" of the Countryside: The Case of Serbia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.18, No.1 (1996). Cited in Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction* (London: Routledge, 2009), p.51.

[24] Ibid., pp.49-50.

[25] Barbara Jelavich, 'The Abuses of Ottoman Administration in the Slavonic Provinces', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 33, No.81 (June 1955), pp.396-413.

[26] Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England' in Robert Colls & Philip Dodd, *Englishness, Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp.67-69. See also Pick, *Faces of Degeneration,* pp.176-222.

[27] Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.55-57.

Early twentieth-century representations applied the label 'peasant' in both a pejorative and positive sense. However, the confluence of societal change and rural nostalgia gradually situated the sociological concept of the peasantry between these categorical extremes. Accordingly, while imagery of the South Slavonic Balkans' own rural populace remained entrenched in semi-infantilised cultural primitiveness, the more negative nineteenth-century impressions of an amorphous, potentially hostile, rural mass immersed in archaic superstition, began to recede after 1900. By 1912, such communities inhabited a place in imaginative geography more akin to the 'noble savage' archetype: a prelapsarian figure often depicted in critical commentaries on Britain's urbanised societal norms. Implicit in this were late-Victorian social theories on the 'British masses', who were perceived to share similar traits to indigenous overseas cultures. Both were 'creatures of habit, unaccustomed to examination of their conditioned responses', but capable of the evolutionary potential to achieve the same social advancements which had recently benefited the middle-classes.[28] This underlying positivity had begun to fade by the early 1900s as even commentators from the middle and upper strata of the working class wrote in anxious tones of an 'urban underclass': a sub-group of urban poor who had abandoned Britain's declining agricultural sector but lacked the necessary qualities for achieving stable or legal employment.[29]

This process, by which the British conceived of the other as existing both internally and externally, offered a principal point of entry for the South Slavonic peasant to become a figurative motif in wider public discourse. Specific to this dynamic was the belief, originating in the 1880s that the urban poor's spiritual and physical wellbeing would be better served by returning to their agricultural origins.[30] This was rooted in the enduring cultural assumption that 'rural people were different'. Indeed, farming communities were viewed as moulding a

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[28] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, pp.95-96.
[29] Ibid., p.101. See for example, C.F.G. Masterman, *The Heart of the Empire: Discussions of Problems of Modern City Life in England* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901).
[30] Paul Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of Land, 1880-1914*, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008) pp.80-81.

healthier breed of individual, possessing a 'clarity of vision and purpose' entirely absent in impoverished city dwellers.[31]

Drawing allegorical links between Balkan peasants and Britain's domestic concerns was itself another representational trend originating in the nineteenth century.[32] Where early twentieth-century portrayals differed from earlier iterations, however, was in their foregrounding of the assertion that these rural communities existed apart from the urban trappings of the modern state structures which ruled over them. This shift in perception not only echoed the cultural exceptionalism and environmental determinism which permeated depictions of Britain's own agricultural class, but was evocative of social attitudes among South Slav intellectual elites. In the years immediately preceding the First World War, regional academic discourses, emphasised the village or familial *zadruga*[33] as the historical fulcrum around which their respective sense of nationhood had crystallised, or been preserved.[34] The reappearance of the victimhood narrative further accentuated these allegorical connections, assuaging many of the cultural ambiguities present in nineteenth-century imagery while promoting the peasant as a symbolic repository for the region's more positive qualities. Through their tangible association with rural economic activities and tradition, the South Slavonic peasantry's place in British imaginative geography was thus recalibrated to embody their respective territories' cultural and spiritual essence. To this end, British representations of the South Slavonic peasantry were less a coherent or direct depiction of the Western

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[31] Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt & Lynne Thompson (eds.), 'Conclusion', in *The English Countryside Between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline*? (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), p.239.

[32] A few earlier travellers in the region followed a similar interpretive process in depicting the beliefs, culture and lifestyles of the ruling elites. See for example, (Lady) Mary Wortley Montagu *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M--y W---y M----e: Written During Her Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa*, *Vol.1*, London: Printed for T.Becket and P.E. De Hondt, 1763. Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.38-41; Kostova, *Tales of the Periphery*, pp.199-200; Tomislav Z.Longinović, 'Vampires Like Us: Gothic Imagery and "the serbs"', in Bjelić & Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor*, pp.39-40.

[33] Extended patriarchal family communes or cooperatives common among rural South Slavonic communities outside of Slovenia before the Cold War. In remoter regions, many *zadruge* continued to practise subsistence farming, with basic commodities, agricultural implements and money being held in common, well into the twentieth century. See Robert F. Byrnes (ed.), *Communal Families in the Balkans: The Zadruga* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

[34] See Joel M. Halpern & E.A. Hammel, 'Observations on the Intellectual History of Ethnology and other Social Sciences in Yugoslavia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.11, No.1 (January 1969), pp.17-26; Natascha Vittorelli, 'An "Other" of One's Own: Pre-WW1 South Slavic Academic Discourses on the Zadruga', *Spaces of Identity*, Vol.2, No.3 (2002), pp.27-43.

Balkans' lower social classes and more a highly malleable leitmotif to be fashioned by observers and audiences against Britain's fluid domestic context.

These latent associations between a foreign people and questions of British cultural identity and social concerns leads into the final concept: 'popular discourse'. While it may simply refer to written and verbal communication, discourse has acquired multiple, complex meanings through the interdisciplinary practice of 'discourse analysis'. In linguistics, this commonly refers to what Michael Stubbs terms 'the study of naturally occurring language' such as the manner in which samples of spoken and written language are structured.[35] Such approaches have featured in imagological historiography: Vesna Goldsworthy, Andrew Hammond and Ludmilla Kostova devote considerable attention to identifying the Balkans' semiotic codification in British textual representations from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[36]

An alternative interpretation classifies discourse analysis as a form of historical and social theory. The theorist Antonio Gramsci and philosopher Louis Althusser maintained that representative discourses perpetuate and normalise political and cultural 'hegemony' that, in turn, reinforces hierarchies and other systems of power as accepted reality.[37]

Gramsci's and Althusser's ideas presaged those of Michel Foucault, who redefined the discursive concept in his historiographical treatises *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. For Foucault, discourse represents a process of structuring and presenting knowledge as a system of subconscious understanding linked to various forms of power. In this

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[35] Michael Stubbs, *Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1989), pp.1-10. On linguistic discourse analysis see for example, H.G. Widdowson, *Explorations in Applied Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Michael J. Toolan (ed.), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Critical Concepts in Linguistics* (London: Routledge, 2002); Joanna Thornborrow & Jennifer Coates (eds.), *The Sociolinguistics of Narrative* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005); Barbara Johnstone, *Discourse Analysis (Second Edition)* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp.1-2; H.G. Widdowson, *Discourse Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language (Second Edition)* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[36] Kostova, *Tales*, pp.9-14, 70-88; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.42-111; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.3-8, 170-196.
[37] Bethan Benwell & Elizabeth Stokoe, *Discourse and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.30. For an earlier study on the links between language and (political) power, see Harold D. Lasswell & Nathan Leites, *Language of Politics: Studies in Quantitative Semantics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1949).

reading, discourses determine social practice, identities and comprehension of reality, and conceptual boundaries of thought in any given historical period, what Foucault termed 'genealogy'.[38] Pivotal to this is the *episteme*: *a priori* knowledge that establishes the philosophical and intellectual conditions under which new discourses form. Central to this is the point at which one *episteme* gives way to another in an 'epistemological rupture'.[39] Modern practices did not evolve through linear, progressive trends, but as the outcome of such ruptures; the resultant restructuring of pre-existing knowledge saw pursuits such as medicine rearticulated as rational, 'dehumanised' scientific disciplines.[40] Foucault subsequently theorised that different knowledge power-systems can emerge under separate epistemai yet co-exist in the same era and often overlap.[41]

Since the 1970s, Foucault's ideas have influenced postmodernist approaches in the humanities and social sciences as well as the development of new analytical fields including imagology.[42] Maria Todorova's ontological theory of 'Balkanism', arguably the most significant analytical approach in first-wave historiography, draws extensively on genealogy and its influence over Said's Orientalism.[43] Nevertheless, Foucault's failure to offer a precise definition for power – ignoring social variables such as gender and listing 'institutions, political

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[38] Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), pp.9-14, 166-181; Sara Mills, *Discourse, Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.14-18. Foucault regarded this approach as building upon the ideas outlined in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887).

[39] The episteme and epistemological rupture were originally conceived by the philosopher Gaston Bachelard and developed by Althusser. Foucault's theory also mirrors that of Thomas Kuhn's 'paradigm shift' in which a set of scientific assumptions will suddenly displace another. Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p.168; idem, *L'archéologie du savoir*, pp.248-251. See also Gaston Bachelard, *La formation de l'esprit scientifique; contribution à une psychoanalyse de la connaisssance objective* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1938); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962); Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx* (Paris: François Maspero, 1965).

[40] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception,* trans. A.M. Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1973 [1963]), pp.xii-xix; Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, p.3. See also Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique – folie et déraison* (Paris: PUF, 1962); idem, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); idem, *Histoire de la sexualité, Vols. 1-3*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1976-1984).

[41] See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology,* ed. James D. Faubion (London: Penguin Books, 1994).

[42] Leerssen, 'History and Method', in *Imagology*, p.23.

[43] Todorova's pretext for rejecting direct links between her idea and Said's partly lies in the 'anti-Foucauldian' approach of the latter. Todorova, *Imagining*, p.3, 9; Said, *Orientalism,* pp.22-24. Studies by Kostova, Goldsworthy, Hammond, Norris, Jezernik and, more recently, Drapac demonstrate similar discursive frameworks (see above).

events, economic practices and processes' as non-discursive – has attracted an equal measure of criticism.[44] Researchers in anthropology, communication studies, education and psychology have challenged his framework by applying discourse to any form of 'meaningful symbolic behaviour' while linguistic studies have sought to establish links between communication, structure and agency.[45] Among historians, genealogy has been accused of lacking analytical rigour by disregarding empirical research in favour of generalisations, selective use of historical case-studies and the adoption of a convoluted taxonomy.[46] These reservations about 'Foucauldianism' are apparent in second-wave scholarship's claim that Todorova and her peers also show propensity for generalising complex historical processes, finding parallels with David Craig's and James Thompson's argument that *a posteriori* empiricism remains essential if 'the experience of modernisation' is 'to be fully captured'.[47]

Taking these shifting perspectives into account, this study bases its definition of discourse on an empirical and contextualised adaptation of the epistemological approach. However, in contrast to pre-existing literature, it concerns reactions in Britain towards domestic change, pivoting away from the perceived cultural certainties of the Victorians, rather than

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[44] Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir*, p.212; Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.32-33; Benwell & Stokoe. *Discourse and Identity*, pp.31-33.

[45] Jan Blommaert, *Discourse: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.2; Johnstone, *Discourse Analysis* (2008), pp.1-2. For examples of criticism and debate in epistemological and linguistic discourse analysis, see Dominique Lecourt, *Pour une critique de l'épistémologie: Bachelard, Canguilhem, Foucault* (Paris: François Maspero, 1972); Michel Pêcheux, *Language, Semantics and Ideology,* trans. Harbans Nagpal (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1982); Diane Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988); Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*; Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997); Christina Hendricks & Kelly Oliver (eds.), *Language and Liberation: Feminism, Philosophy, and Language* (Albany, NY: New York State University Press, 1999); Roy Harris, *The Semantics of Science* (London & New York: Continuum, 2005); David Howarth & Jacob Torfing (eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Norman Fairclough, *Language and Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2006); Anna de Fina, Deborah Schiffrin & Michael G.W. Bamburg (eds.), *Discourse and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Teun A. van Dijek, *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); idem, *Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Control Text and Talk* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2014); Laura E. Donaldson & Kwok Pui-Lan (eds.), *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Religious Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2015).

[46] Foucault's lack of a definitive interpretation of power is another notable point of criticism. Allan Megill, 'The Reception of Foucault by Historians', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol.48, No.1 (January-March 1987), pp.132-134; Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.23-26.

[47] Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.26-28; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.22-24; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.xii; David Craig & James Thompson, 'Introduction', in idem (eds.), *Languages of Politics in Nineteenth-century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.12.

perceptions of the South Slavonic Balkans. A sense of cultural pessimism, originating among elite intellectual circles in the 1880s and 1890s, gradually permeated the wider public sphere, signifying an epistemological rupture. Although the period 1900 to 1918 witnessed a continuation of this process, it was shaped more acutely by external historical contingencies, the First World War being foremost among them. By the 1910s, the theme or strategy around which this discourse crystallised, centred on efforts to reaffirm notions of inherent cultural superiority in British identity.[48] Rather than existing at the forefront of 'modernity' (popularly associated with industrialisation, modern institutions and scientific rationality), discourse reformed the idea of civilisation itself into, what Glenda Sluga terms, a 'moral hierarchy': a system of ranking societies through attributed cultural qualities deemed to ensure social stability.[49] This hierarchy manifested in British imaginative geography on southeastern Europe and provided a point of entry for the South Slavonic peasantry into this evolving discourse.

Determining what made this discourse 'popular' is more problematic. In contrast to how information on the modern Balkans was gathered and disseminated before and after 1900, imagological historiography has offered little consideration as to the scale on which it was consumed besides referencing 'middle-class' audiences, culture and sensibilities.[50] Recent approaches to this question have focused on the reception of Balkan representations in the British 'public sphere' and 'public opinion'.[51] Eugene Michail and James Perkins observe that despite the region's growing presence in the British press, wider public interest was elusive.[52] Information had become more accessible, but the ability to engage in any form of discourse was confined to elite circles of mostly middle-class personalities, what William Wallace

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[48] Foucault, *L'archéologie*, p.85.
[49] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', pp.186-188.
[50] Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.108-110; Kostova, *Tales*, pp.14-16; Hadžiselimović, *At the Gates of the East*, p.xxvii; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.163; eadem, 'The Balkans in Nineteenth-century British Travel Writing', in Tim Youngs (ed.), *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling in the Blank Spaces* (London: Anthem Press, 2006), pp.25-29; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.61-62; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.63; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.86, 99, 181, 196.
[51] See Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*; Sevtap Demirci, *British Public Opinion towards the Ottoman Empire during the Two Crises: Bosnia-Herzegovina (1908-1909), the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2006); Michail, *The British and the Balkans*; Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe'.
[52] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.6-7, 14-15; Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', pp.584-585.

judiciously labels as 'organised opinion'.[53] These, in turn, formed part of an 'informed public': a segment of society concentrated in academia, journalism, politics and publishing 'keen to be active in the way Britain established its knowledge and contacts with the outside world'.[54]

These difficulties resonate with wider debates on the conceptual nature of the public. Indeed, before the introduction of polling, no formal consensus existed in Britain as to who might qualify as a member.[55] Following the First World War, the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies claimed that public opinion held a similar function to religion in promoting social cohesion and stability.[56] The journalist Walter Lippmann refuted such theories, determining the majority of people to be too ignorant and solipsistic to grasp the socio-political complexities of the modern world.[57] In response to Lippmann, the psychologist John Dewey argued that the idea of the public acquires meaning as composite of 'many publics' called into being when a shared interest is perceived as being externally threated.[58]

Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere has served as a theoretical template in explaining links between civil society and public life. Post-medieval perceptions of the public as a private economic entity crystallised in eighteenth-century urban Britain into, what Habermas terms the 'bourgeois public sphere': a discursive bridge between private and public life where the emergent bourgeoisie debated cultural, economic and socio-political factors which filtered into general consciousness as expressions of public opinion.[59] This ideal was eroded by the advent of mass media and the monopolisation of the public sphere by experts,

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[53] William Wallace, *The Foreign Policy Process in Britain* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1977), p.107.
[54] Yet it was socially unrepresentative of the wider general public for whom places like the Balkans were, at best, remote cultural oddities. Michail, The *British and the Balkans*, p.15.
[55] James Thompson, *British Political Culture and the Idea of 'Public Opinion', 1867-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.245.
[56] See Ferdinand Tönnies, *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1922).
[57] See Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1922); idem, *The Phantom Public* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1925).
[58] See John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (New York: H. Holt & Company, 1927); John Narayan, *John Dewey: The Global Public and its Problems* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).
[59] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011 [1989]), pp.14-19, 31-38.

lobbyists, and other forms of 'organized interest', reducing public opinion to an object of domination, reflective of the situation outlined by Michail and Perkins.[60]

Like Foucault, Habermas's theories elicited mixed responses. Historians of media and communications research, for instance, have been receptive to his characterisation of the mass media as a distortive force in public debate.[61] Conversely, Habermas's critics contest his refusal to acknowledge the possibility of multiple public spheres.[62] Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge illustrate this in their exploration of the 'proletarian sphere': a reactionary space serving as 'the block of real life that goes against the valorization interest' of bourgeois capitalism.[63] This has been supplemented by the identification of discursive realms for women and marginalised or radical groups, including peasants.[64] More recent critiques have drawn attention to this approach's propensity for characterising historical developments as monolithic or perceiving them in static terms.[65]

The present study utilises Gerald Hauser's rhetorical model of public spheres to determine how this discourse became popular, emerging from 'the ongoing dialogue on public issues' rather than the identities of its members.[66] Audiences are active rather than passive, with membership not being restricted to a specific class or interest group. Multiple opinions are often present and notions of universal reason are discarded in favour of how well issues

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[60] Ibid., p.205, pp.237-244.

[61] See for example, Keith Tester, *Media, Culture and Morality* (London: Routledge, 1994); James Curran & Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain, Seventh Edition co*(London: Routledge, 2009). On press influence in modern British history see Aled Jones, *Power of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-century England* (London: Routledge, 1996); Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Adrian Bingham & Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Land Ltd., 2015).

[62] Gerald A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), p.47.

[63] Oscar Negt & Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Towards an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere,* trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel & Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1972), p.57.

[64] See Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism* (London: Verso, 1984); Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text*, No.25/26 (1990), pp.56-80; Geoff Eley, 'Politics, Culture and the Public Sphere', *Positions*, Vol.10, No.1 (2002), pp.219-236.

[65] See for example, Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[66] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, pp.57-64.

resonate with the personal experiences of audiences.[67] Also drawing also on Dewey's theory of general publics as multiplicities, popular discourse in early twentieth-century Britain was informed by the social prevalence of several rhetorical public spheres which formed around a number of often interconnected issues ranging from Irish Home Rule to urban poverty and labour unrest. That these questions appeared unresolved in 1914 ensured that the tone of popular discourse was generally negative, manifesting in anxieties which drove the perceptual shift in British identity from a modernising to a moral force.

Historical context was, here again, key with these rhetorical strands existing in a 'contested expansion of the imagined scope of the public'.[68] The Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 elicited a shift in rhetorical assumptions that the proverbial 'man in the street' now embodied Britain's 'social centre of gravity' with the public increasingly conceived of as consumers – allowing for the inclusion of women and the skilled working class.[69] Although still mostly associated with the urban middle class, this stereotype was perceived of as representing a wide cross-section of British society, becoming the cultural barometer against which popular rhetorical discourse was determined. The South Slavonic peasants' changing image in imaginative geography based on allegorical representations emphasising victimhood and, by 1918, Britain's place in civilisation's moral hierarchy, were outcomes of this process.

Historiography and Scholarly Literature

The role of peasants as actors in South Slavonic Balkan history remains surprisingly under-examined in Western scholarship. Ruth Trouton's *Peasant Renaissance in Yugoslavia 1900-1950* and Jozo Tomašević's *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* provide rare examinations of rural political and socio-economic agency before 1945; both conclude that, by virtue of demography, peasants determined Yugoslavia's fractious interwar political,

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[67] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, pp. 60-61, 79-80.
[68] Thompson, *British Political Culture*, p.35.
[69] Ibid., pp. 33-36, 83, 244-245.

economic and cultural milieu.[70] Doreen Warriner challenged this assessment, arguing that entrenched poverty and a widening rural-urban divide had rendered the peasantry moribund as a political and cultural force by the late 1930s; collectivisation and the post-war Socialist regime's industrial policies induced further decline.[71] Later publications deemphasised the peasantry's role considerably, often reducing it to one of several factors that had impeded the region's cultural and economic development.[72]

Besides travel writing, British representations of the South Slavonic peasantry were closely tied to social scientific research, particularly in the anthropological and geographical fields. As Henrika Kuklick notes, before the interwar period, many British anthropologists still operated outside the academic hierarchy, where their findings were often used to promote social agendas, as well as to educate British audiences. In southeastern Europe, such agendas were frequently expressed through a tendency to identify with various national causes, and to promote or condone British regional policies. By the 1880s, anthropology also reflected Britain's 'loss of self-confidence [that] it had once enjoyed as the first industrialized nation and economic leader of the world', often carrying sub-commentaries on domestic problems while emphasising British colonialism's 'civilising mission'.[73] These subtexts also served to link the habits and customs of the peoples they described to various hierarchies in the sphere of civilisation, contingent, again, on an author's preferences.

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[70] See Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics, and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1955); Ruth Trouton. *Peasant Renaissance in Yugoslavia 1900-1950* (London: Routledge, 1973 [1952]).

[71] Doreen Warriner, 'Urban Thinkers and Peasant Policy in Yugoslavia, 1918-1959', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol.38, No.90 (December 1959), pp.73-75. On Communist-peasant relations, see Melissa K. Bokovoy, *Peasants and Communists: Politics and Ideology in the Yugoslav Countryside, 1941-1953* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

[72] See for example, 'Chapter 5: Yugoslavia' in Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990 [1974]), pp.201-280; Barbara Jelavich & Charles Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977); John R. Lampe & Marvin R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550-1950: From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans Vol.1: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* [& *Vol.2: Twentieth Century*] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1996]); Michael R. Palairet, *The Balkan Economies c.1800-1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd., 2000); Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[73] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, p.5-6.

Concurrently, in the South Slavonic lands, through established national institutions such as Croatia-Slavonia and Serbia, social scientific research became linked to state-building by presenting rural customs and lifestyles as evidence of historical national identities. Rural forms of social organisation such as *zadruga*, were promoted in 'national myth-making discourses', regardless of whether they had ever historically existed in their ascribed form.[74] In the tradition of earlier '(proto)ethnographers', notably the Serb philologist Vuk Karadžić and geographer Jovan Cvijić, and the Croat sociologist Dinko Tomašić, these ideas served a dual historical purpose. Despite geographical and nationalist discrepancies, Cvijić and Tomašić both claimed that South Slav mentalities were embedded in rural life, where physical geography and familial or village communalism constituted the foundation of national consciousness.[75] These ethnological arguments were subsequently deployed to promote state claims to contested territory as exemplified by Cvijić's influential 1918 survey *La péninsule balkanique*, which advanced a rural-ethnological basis for Yugoslavia.[76] Thus depictions of the peasant in the region's own intellectual life, revealed the inconsistencies that surrounded historical conceptualisations of the South Slavonic peasantry in general: as both an essentialised socio-economic class and a malleable cultural entity that was instrumentalised by nationalist narratives.[77]

By contrast, non-imagological historiography fully acknowledged these peasant societies' cultural significance in forming historical impressions of the region. On the question of representation, Warriner identified two dominant schools of discursive philosophy: an 'economic approach', which defined peasants as measurable units of labour, and a 'romantic

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[74] Vittorelli, 'An "Other" of One's Own', p.37.

[75] Among Southern Slavs, Cvijić emphasised highland and mountaineer communities as the superior cultural 'type'. In contrast, Tomašić argued that lowland agriculturalists represented a more idyllic and stable form of society. Karl Kaser, 'Anthropology and the Balkanization of the Balkans: Jovan Cvijić and Dinko Tomašić', *Ethnologia Balkanica*, No.2 (1998), pp.91-95.

[76] Halpern & Hammel, 'Observations on the Intellectual History of Ethnology', pp.19-20. See also Jovan Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique: geographie humaine* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1918).

[77] For analysis of this process in other Balkan territories see for example, Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers & Bernd J.Fischer (eds.), *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2002); Theodore G.Zervas, *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity: Education, Nationalism, and the Teaching of a Greek National Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Drace-Francis, *The Traditions of Invention*.

approach, part literary, part political, for which he [the peasant] is an absolute social value, a bulwark against social change'.[78] This latter trend dominated discussion on the South Slavonic Balkans as British economic interests in the region were negligible compared to other European countries. While empirical analyses by South Slav scholars such as Rudolf Bićanić's *Kako živi narod* ('How the People Live'), had begun to challenge this ideological romanticism, accounts such as Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* only reinforced it in Britain.[79]

Although West and other British commentators criticised regional stereotyping and presumed ubiquitous 'ignorance' among the general public before 1945, research into how the Balkans had historically presented to western audiences did not appear until the 1950s.[80] In conjunction with growing empiricism in comparative literature, some western and émigré historians turned to earlier British writing on the Balkans in an effort to gain an insight into the region's earlier social history. For example, in 1955, Barbara Jelavich offered a preliminary consideration of British travel literature's potential to act as a vicarious guide to South Slavonic life under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.[81] Emmet Ford's examination of British perceptions of independent Montenegro before 1914 also maintained that 'English travellers' offered unique insights into the country's social and national life.[82] Stevan Pavlowitch provided a more focused offering in his 1962 review of Serbia in early nineteenth-century British texts, exemplifying a 'time-and place-specific approach'.[83] These earlier works also noted the latent influence of domestic context with Jelavich stressing that observations by 'representatives of

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[78] Warriner, 'Urban Thinkers and Peasant Policy', p.59.

[79] See Rudolf Bićanić, *Kako živi narod: život u pasivnim krajevima, Knj. 1* (Zagreb: Tisak Tipografija, 1936); Rudolf Bićanić & Željko Macan, *Kako živi narod. Knj. 2*, (Zagreb: Gospodarska sloga, 1939). It is unlikely that Bićanić's work received any attention in Britain during this period as an English translation did not appear until 1981. See Rudolf Bićanić, *How the People Live: Life in the Passive Regions,* trans. Joel Martin Halpern, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1981).

[80] Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: The Record of a Journey through Yugoslavia in 1937. Vol.1* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1941), p.3, 21; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.8.

[81] Following its conquest of the former Byzantine Empire, much of southeastern Europe came under the control of the Ottoman Empire. However, by the nineteenth century, Ottoman rule had entered a period of protracted decline. Barbara Jelavich, 'The Abuses of Ottoman Administration in the Slavonic Provinces', pp.396-413.

[82] See Emmet B. Ford (jr.), 'Montenegro in the Eyes of the English Traveller, 1840-1914', *Südost Forschungen*, Vol.18 (1959), pp.350-380; idem, *A Social History of Montenegro* (Washington D.C: Foreign Service Institute, 1959).

[83] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.xii. See Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Serbia, 1837-1839: The Mission of Colonel Hodges* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1961); idem, 'Early Nineteenth-century Serbia in the Eyes of British Travellers', *Slavic Review*, Vol.21, No.2 (June 1962), pp.322-329.

the most advanced of Western nations in the most backward European area' were unlikely to reflect cultural impartiality.[84]

These publications remained isolated examples in Cold War western scholarship, with the study of South Slavonic peasants becoming almost the preserve of social scientists; Vera St. Erlich's *Family in Transition* served as an interwar precedent.[85] This period also saw a methodological divergence between the cross-border surveys conducted by western or émigré anthropologists and the more traditional regional ethnology that lacked a comparative element. Notwithstanding the work of western anthropology in circumventing the conflation of rural and national culture, regional ethnologists accused it of promulgating hegemonic mentalities grounded in sweeping empiricism that ignored historical context.[86] Furthermore, the growing international censure surrounding a perceived western tendency to organise the world into 'margins' around a 'European core' elicited an imagological reassessment of the geographical biases and philosophical assumptions in the late 1970s.[87] Michael Herzfeld and Susan Parman observe that anthropologists of varying professional calibres have tended to conduct fieldwork on the basis of essentialising motifs.[88] Herzfeld equally stresses that the latent ideologies of those working in scientific fields had, in turn, shaped ideas surrounding their subject in its contemporary context.[89] An expression of this dynamic could be seen in interwar Yugoslavia where, prior to the establishment of King Aleksandar I Karađorđević's '6th January' Royal

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[84] Jelavich, 'The Abuses of Ottoman Administration in the Slavonic Provinces', p.397.

[85] Sanja Potkonjak, 'In Women's Arms: Croatian Ethnography between 1945 and 1990', in Aleksandar Bošković, & Chris Hann (eds.), *The Anthropological Field on the Margins of Europe, 1945-1991* (Zürich: Lit Verlag, 2013), p.239. See also Vera St. Erlich, *Family in Transition: A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).

[86] Ger Duijzings, 'Changes in the Social Roles of Western Anthropologists and Indigenous Ethnologists', *Xenopoliana (Iaşi)*, Vol.11, No.1-2 (2003), pp.11-12.

[87] Influenced in no small part by Foucault and other postmodernist modes of thought. Jill Dubisch, 'Europe through the Back Door: Doing Anthropology in Greece', in Parman, *Europe in the Anthropological Imagination*, p.35.

[88] Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology Through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnology in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.5-8; Parman, 'Introduction' in *Europe in the Anthropological Imagination*, pp.1-5; Raymond Corbey, 'Anthropology' in Beller & Leerssen, *Imagology*, pp.263-264. See also Hermine G. De Soto & Nora Dudwick (eds.), *Fieldwork Dilemmas: Anthropologists in Postsocialist States* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

[89] Herzfeld, *Anthropology Through the Looking-Glass*, p.10.

Dictatorship in 1929, parliamentary politics had been dominated by agrarian-nationalist parties who partly derived their ideologies from ethnographers.[90]

Parallel to this scholarly *volte-face* in anthropology, the late 1980s witnessed the revival of Anglo-Balkan imagological history, influenced by a wider interest in identity and stereotypes, and the 'cultural turn' in historical methodologies.[91] Expounding on Jelavich's earlier appraisal of British literary representations, Wendy Bracewell argues that, from the mid nineteenth century, published works became opinion pieces on British regional policy.[92] Mark Mazower expands upon this concept by describing western travel writing as the reflection of shifting power balances between Europe and the East. By the turn of the twentieth century the latter, as an aesthetic, cultural and geographical entity, appeared almost as likely to delight rather than repulse the sensibilities of authors. Indeed, as the number of foreigners journeying to the Balkans increased, their 'depictions, fantasies and beliefs' not only influenced their respective countries' perceptions, but served as an impetus for change in the region itself.[93]

The sudden outpouring of literature in the 1990s was itself a continuation of this imagological revival, precipitated by the international political attention garnered by Yugoslavia's collapse.[94] However, the idea of the Balkans as a western 'construction' had existed prior to these events. Writing in the closing stages of the Cold War, John Allcock suggested that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British travellers in the region were instrumental in developing its image as an extension of Said's 'Orient'. The fact that several of the more charismatic and accessible authors had been women served to spread and

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[90] Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, pp.264-269; Kaser 'Anthropology and the Balkanization of the Balkans: Jovan Cvijić and Dinko Tomašić', p.98; Potkonjak, 'In Women's Arms', in Bošković & Hann (eds.), *The Anthropological Field*, p.238.

[91] An approach predicated on the belief that political, social and cultural milieux form interconnected aspects of the historical experience. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Victoria E. Bonnell & Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[92] See Wendy Bracewell, 'Opinion-Makers: The Balkans in Popular Literature', in Petar Kačavenda (ed.), *Jugoslovensko-britanski odnosi/ British Yugoslav Relations, 1856-1876* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1988), pp.91-117.

[93] Mark Mazower, 'Travellers and the Oriental City, c.1840-1920', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol.12 (2002), p.60, pp.109-111

[94] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.7-8.

consolidate impressions among more general audiences.[95] Todorova's influential *Imagining the Balkans* admits 'numerous incidents' of it having 'coincided' with Allcock's initial analysis.[96]

This initial shift towards an imagological approach to Balkan history in the 1990s, also highlighted the influence of earlier depictions of the region in British texts, noted for having been used as historical aides by foreign governments.[97] Authors such as West were noted as having been, often selectively, cited by Western observers in order to provide historical validation as to why the end of the Cold War had seen the Balkans apparently diverge from 'the assumed European norm'.[98] Debate over whether the Balkans may be understood and analysed in a postcolonial sense, divides first-wave historiography into two theoretical positions, identified by Mika Suonpää as 'legalistic-geographical' and 'cultural-colonialist'.[99]

The former, advocated mainly by Todorova, has gained recognition by codifying methodological approaches towards western representations of southeastern Europe through pejorative discourses.[100] Rather than being subsumed into the wider Islamic Orient, southeastern Europe was construed as a space of cultural liminality, straddling East and West, but distinct from both. Moreover, having never experienced formal western colonial rule, Balkan history cannot be understood through the same paradigm as Africa or South Asia. However, regardless of geographical and historical differences, like Said's Orient, the Balkans

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[95] Although published in 1991, Allcock presented an 'earlier draft' of this important essay at a conference in Bulgaria in September 1989. John B. Allcock, 'Constructing the Balkans', in *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons*, pp.217, fn 223-229; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.68.

[96] Todorova, *Imagining*, p.192, fn 16.

[97] West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is cited as the most influential, having been consulted by, among others, the US President Bill Clinton during the Bosnian War. Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.ix-x, p.172.

[98] See for example, George F. Kenan, 'Introduction: The Balkan Crisis: 1913 and 1993', in *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993); Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

[99] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.21.

[100] Allcock, 'Constructing the Balkans', pp.223-224; Milica Bakić-Hayden, 'Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review* Vol. 54, No.4 (1995), pp.917-931.

signify 'a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the "European" and the "West" has been constructed'.[101]

Despite a widespread acceptance of Todorova's Balkanist theory, cultural-colonialist studies assert that, owing to its ubiquity, negative regional archetypes can only be understood through the language and mindset of imperialism. David Norris argues that, as with their empires, Western Europe expressed a 'cultural colonialism' in regarding 'small nations' as 'children with no right to exercise their own voice'.[102] Kostova and Goldsworthy assert that a lack of information prompted nineteenth-century British authors to implement a 'textual colonisation' of the Balkan Peninsula, populating it with fantastical 'British creations' like Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Simultaneously, coverage in the Western press accentuated violent incidents to reinforce negative stereotypes such as malefic blood-honour killings or militaristic proto-nationalism derived from obscure 'ethnic hatreds'.[103] In the case of Yugoslavia, this process of cultural othering has been observed as rupturing along imagined geographical fault lines, notably in Croatia and Slovenia's efforts to associate with the cultural milieu of Central Europe rather than the Balkans.[104] Other studies disavow references to geography entirely, maintaining that the West conceives of the Balkans as a metaphorical aperture, gazing onto a 'medieval' time saturated in 'the language of blood and rape'.[105]

Where these views overlap is in the shared assumption that in casting the Balkans on the periphery of Europe, the West seeks to maintain its representative status of cultural superiority. However, first-wave historiography remains overshadowed by the events of Yugoslavia's dramatic disintegration, leading to a consensus that has fixed the history of western engagement in the region into a set of teleological narratives.[106] While commending

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[101] Allcock defines this as 'in' the Orient, but not 'of' the Orient. Allcock, 'Constructing the Balkans', p.227; Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.15-19, 188.
[102] Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.27-28.
[103] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.x.
[104] Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.13-14.
[105] 'Foreword by Michael Herzfeld', in Bjelić & Savić, *Balkan as Metaphor*, p.xi.
[106] Todorova, *Imagining*, p.53; Suonpää, *British Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.21; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.xii.

the attention it drew to ingrained western biases, Katherine Fleming observes that Balkanism

risks replicating many of the epistemological faults now associated with Orientalism, including

a propensity to generalise.[107] Tony Judt was decidedly less equivocal:

> Between 'invention', 'imagination', 'representation', and the invocation of
> 'Otherness', the story of the West's failure to see Eastern Europe as it was
> and as it is runs the risk of sinking under the weight of overtheorized
> scholarly suspicion.[108]

The Balkanist approach in imagology has also been criticised for its tendency to inhibit

historical debate on non-imagological issues, notably the agency of local political actors or the

West's 'concrete connections' with the region.[109] Patrick Finney observes that a preoccupation

with 'outlining the lineaments of the discourse and exploring its crystallisation' obscures

tangible political realities that often contradicted it. Examining British diplomatic attitudes to

the Locarno Treaties of 1925, Finney observes that cultural perceptions, and a misplaced belief

in British moral suasion, reflected the government's inability to grasp the marginality of its

influence in southeastern Europe. While continuing to pursue their 'immoral' national interests,

Balkan states ignored London's demands for international collaboration in resolving regional

unrest.[110] Thomas Gallant demonstrates that imperialistic language often obfuscates historical

realities determined more by complex contingencies and the agency of local actors: a

'colonised' people could officially be presented as inferior and backward without necessarily

epitomising Frantz Fanon's polarity of hegemony and resistance.[111] This was evidenced in

Britain's protectorate of the Greek Ionian Islands from 1815 to 1864: efforts to impose

'superior' British standards rested mainly on the accommodation of pre-existing customs and

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[107] K.E. Fleming, 'Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 4 (October 2000), pp.1232-1233.

[108] Tony Judt, 'Freedom and Fredonia' [1998], in Tony Judt, *When the Facts Change: Essays 1995-2010* ed. & Jennifer Homans, (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), pp.87-88. See also Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[109] Fleming, 'Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography', pp.1232-1233; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.230.

[110] Patrick Finney, 'Raising Frankenstein: Great Britain, 'Balkanism' and the Search for a Balkanlocarno in the 1920s', *European History Quarterly*, Vol.33, No.3 (July 2003), p.318. See also Miklós Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe: Britain and the 'Lands Between', 1919-1925* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006); Ioannis Stefanidis, *Substitute for Power: Wartime Propaganda to the Balkans, 1939-1944* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

[111] See Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre*: *préface de Jean-Paul Sartre* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1961).

local interests.[112] Suonpää's investigation of British trade investment and enterprise in the region reveals a similar dynamic. Diplomats, often trained colonial administrators from aristocratic backgrounds, frequently accentuated or distorted evidence of bribery and corruption, presenting it as ubiquitous to the region, in contrast to the more nuanced realities outlined by those directly involved in economic engagement.[113]

Interest in British perceptions of foreigners has also seen similar challenges to historiographical assumptions about other regions and cultures. Richard Scully, for example, argues that Germany's supposedly negative image in twentieth-century Britain only arose in response to tensions in the 1910s and First World War propaganda. Scully observes that a latent sense of cultural kinship 'delayed' the emergence of widespread anti-German sentiment until the summer of 1914.[114] Jo Laycock also highlights the importance of historical contingencies in her examination of the 'Armenian question' before and after 1915. British 'observers' used events in Eastern Anatolia to formulate early 'atrocity narratives' and commentaries on colonialism's worsening excesses.[115] Perceptions of the other are thus revealed to be as susceptible to the socio-political climate that shape an observer's attitude as they are to recurrent patterns of latent prejudice.

Recent critiques of the Balkanist approach also attribute a tendency to underestimate the importance of historical contingency to its methodological fixation on British travel writing. Albert Meier observes that literary representations are, by their nature, inherently self-inhibiting due to a 'poetic function' that undercuts factual content while amplifying 'analogy, exaggeration and contrast'.[116] Hammond's work on Anglo-American literary representations of the Balkans exemplifies the dilemmas inherent in seeking to build a single imagological

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[112] Thomas W. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion: Culture, Identity, and Power in the British Mediterranean* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), pp.92-94; 106-115.
[113] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.185-188.
[114] Richard Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism & Ambivalence, 1860-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.4.
[115] Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2009), p.111.
[116] Albert Meier, 'Travel Writing', in Beller & Leerssen, *Imagology*, pp.446-447.

framework around a body of writing whose authors, subject matter and intended audiences were chiefly determined by personality or contemporary context.[117] Looking at British women in the wartime Balkans, for example, he summarises that no conclusions can be made. Individual opinions, motivations and the historical contingencies present in conflicts with which they were involved vary too greatly.[118]

Suonpää contests that a methodological focus on literature in first-wave scholarship on literature presents a danger of oversimplifying a British regional discourse which, by 1900, was as much informed by religious, military, commercial and satirical narratives and the domestic context that produced them.[119] James Perkins's consideration of the Balkans in British Liberal internationalist ideology corroborates this assessment.[120] By 1900, liberal British pundits perceived the region through a multiplicity of social, political and personal concerns, rather than just colonial biases. Indeed, much of this liberal opinion defined itself in direct opposition to late nineteenth-century imperialism and its purported injustices.[121]

Historical contingency has been noted as an under-considered factor in first-wave scholarship, particularly in relation to research that has presented recurrent biases as the root cause of developments interpreted as politically egregious.[122] Neval Berber and Suonpää note that the emphasis on British prejudice has not been matched by a comprehensive analysis of domestic factors. Goldsworthy and Todorova, for instance, have described Balkan representations as a medium for discussing social issues and matters of self-identity without addressing how this influenced representations beyond broad generalities, while basing their assumptions on a small number of texts written after 1918.[123] Hammond's evaluation grants domestic context greater consideration as a factor in shaping travellers' perceptions. This

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[117] See Hammond, *The Debated Lands*.
[118] Idem, *British Literature and the Balkans: Themes and Contexts* (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2010), p.171.
[119] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.2.
[120] Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', p.59.
[121] Ibid, pp. 60-62.
[122] UNESCO even launched a travelling exhibition on Balkanist representations and regional identities in September 2013. *http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/resources-services/host-facilities/special-events/imagining-the-balkans/*, accessed on 10th November 2015.
[123] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.23-24; Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina,* pp.xvii-xix.

includes some extrapolation upon British textual motifs as means of self-identity, based on observations by Bracewell and Allcock, with Hammond concluding that the Balkans evolved as 'a spectacle from the social margins against which people at the centre gain definition and become individualized'.[124] Nevertheless, his use of a Balkanist framework ultimately tempers these points of historical reference with an underlying sense of 'ambiguity', 'ambivalence' and contradiction, reinforcing the region's underlying sense of otherness.[125] Additionally, while scholarship in other fields has evaluated the Balkans' use as a, mostly pejorative, 'metaphor' for contemporary identity issues in the West, these focus on the post-Cold War era.[126]

This problem is more acute in the narrower range of studies concerning British engagement in the South Slavonic Balkans immediately preceding and during Yugoslavia's formation. Slobodan Marković maintains that the British government's decision to sever diplomatic ties with Serbia following the murders of King Aleksandar and Queen Draga Obrenović in 1903 was a reaction to the apparent affront the act presented to the 'British value system', represented as 'loyalty to the Crown, patriotism, self-restraint, a sense of duty and a God-fearing attitude'.[127] Marković offers little tangible evidence or discussion of how these values manifested in British society outside of press and government circles.[128] Vesna Drapac and James Evans claim similar forms of prejudice saw Western policy-makers consign Croats and other South Slavs to the repressive rule of a Serb-dominated Yugoslav state in 1918. Like Hammond, both authors pay lip-service to issues such as gender and self-perception, yet provide little clarification as to how these factors shaped opinions before or after 1914.[129]

As previously stated, this study builds upon recent historiographical trends by exploring how discursive influences emanating from the domestic sphere functioned in a context outside

[124] Bracwell, 'Opinion-Makers', pp.114-115; Allcock, 'Constructing the Balkans', in idem & Young, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons*, pp.234-238; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.138-169, p.252. See also idem, *British Literature and the Balkans*.
[125] Kostova, *Tales of the Periphery*, p.105; Todorova, *Imaging*, p.17; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.212.
[126] See Bjelić & Savić (eds.), *Balkan as Metaphor*.
[127] Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia* (2000), p.4, pp.170-172.
[128] Ibid., pp.202-205.
[129] Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.10-14, 34-45. See also Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*.

of Hobsbawm's chronology. In focusing on the South Slavonic Balkans and Yugoslavia's eventual manifestation in imaginative geography, it also seeks to challenge the enduring assumption that British representations of the Balkans collectively formed a single cultural space.[130] Furthermore, despite recent historiographical shifts, the question of symbolic associations between 'peripheral' regions and British anxieties informed by Thomas Carlyle's 'Condition of England Question' remains under-explored, especially in relation to the First World War.[131]

Source Base and Methodology

While the literary works of organised opinion represent an important source of information relative to the South Slavonic Balkans, the study's source base incorporates a diverse selection of primary materials that demonstrate their links to social and political ideas present during the period under study. These include pamphlets, newspapers, surveys on domestic affairs and journals such as *The Contemporary Review* and *The Nation* whose primary concern was often domestic rather than foreign affairs. Specialist publications that appeared during the First World War such as *New Europe*, were also significant in identifying attempts to integrate the Yugoslav idea into British wartime propaganda narratives.

Organised opinion's role in shaping and guiding the development of popular discourse, particularly from 1903 to 1918, necessitated an engagement with archival materials. Private diaries, unpublished memoirs, and correspondence produced by key personalities were also utilised in order to trace the imprint left by popular discourse. Among these, the anthropologist Edith Durham and the historian R.W. Seton-Watson were arguably the most influential, and examinations of their private records are incorporated into this study in order to trace the shifting positions of British experts in response to historical contextual influences. These

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[130] See for example, Michail, *The British and the Balkans*.
[131] Carlyle coined the term as a critique of emerging socio-economic divisions during the industrial revolution. See Thomas Carlyle, 'The Spirit of the Times' (1829), in Gertrude Himmelfarb (ed.), *The Spirit of the Age: Victorian Essays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), pp.31-49; Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism* (London: J. Fraser, 1840); idem, *Past and Present* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843).

records are currently held at the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) and University College London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) respectively. Collections held at the British Library (BL) and The National Archives (TNA) also served as important resources, particularly in presenting the private views of non-specialists such as the author Evelyn Wrench. Having thus far been restricted to political studies, their integration and analysis within a social study provides a more nuanced consideration of popular discourse's ability to permeate a cross-section of society.

This examination of Durham's and Seton-Watson's private papers is also indicative of the importance the study attaches to individual experience. Reviewing social aspects of an individual's background helps to discern how public representations and acts of engagement were often influenced, and even determined, by private factors. In this instance, the First World War is the most important development covered by the study. Between 1914 and 1918, over 400,000 British military and civilian personnel were believed to have served in Serbia and Macedonia, offering first-hand experience of personal encounters with peasants fleeing as refugees or conscripted as combatants.[132] The myriad private beliefs and motivations, notably those relating to gender and social alienation, were entrenched in issues pertinent to popular discourse.

Beyond a few high-profile personalities, the accounts of the Britons have received little attention despite the Imperial War Museum (IWM) archives housing a rich collection of unpublished papers, memoirs and even recorded interviews. They include the observations and opinions of large numbers of mainly female volunteers, a fact that quickly came into public focus following Serbia's victories over Austro-Hungarian forces in August and December 1914. The study may therefore also be considered a preliminary work on this neglected body of material and its role in the reshaping of British imaginative geography in the early twentieth century.

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[132] Monica Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women in Serbia during the First World War', in Allcock & Young, *Black Lambs*, p.77.

Contributions made by South Slavonic intellectuals also assisted in demonstrating the role that non-British elites played in attempting to influence popular perceptions. These included émigré publications such as the *South Slav Bulletin*, produced in wartime Britain by anti-Habsburg South Slav activists who campaigned for their homelands' succession from the Dual Monarchy. Access to some of these collections necessitated the author visiting archives in the former Yugoslavia, some of which also hold certain items pertaining to lesser-known British personalities. Overseas repositories included *Matica srpska* in Novi Sad, *Arhiv Srbije* and *Narodna biblioteka Srbije* in Belgrade.

From an analytical perspective, while acknowledging the logic and sound analytical value of earlier imagological publications, all of which the author utilises in conjunction with other secondary texts, this study seeks to shift discussion beyond unitary notions of pejorative discourses. To this end, recent works challenging the Balkanist approach, such as Suonpää's *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs* and Michail's *The British and the Balkans* provide a less prescriptive analytical basis from which to commence the investigation. In addition to second-wave historiography, the study employs a number of broader concepts, such as Said's imaginative geography or Sluga's moral hierarchy, alongside recent adaptations in Balkanist theory. Hammond's 'escape from decadence' motif is an important example for highlighting how British travellers romanticised the rural Balkans in order to convey their cultural disillusionment with western modernity.[133] Primary and secondary publications detailing the influence of domestic context on intercultural engagement, such as Kuklick's social history of British anthropology, *The Savage Within*, offer another important point of reference by outlining the interplay between British self-perceptions and those of the other.

In considering the study's structure, a chronological narrative is essential in order to trace how these representations evolved in conjunction with historical developments in Britain

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[133] Andrew Hammond, 'The Escape from Decadence: British Travel Literature on the Balkans 1900-45', in Michael St. John (ed.), *Romancing Decay: Ideas of Decadence in European Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1999), pp.142-143; idem, *British Literature and the Balkans*, pp.173-174.

utilising a 'time- and place-specific approach' centred on 1900 to 1918.[134] In contrast to the nineteenth century, this period saw an acute point of convergence between the concerns emphasised in popular discourse and notions of South Slavonic peasant victimhood. This trajectory was traceable in two intersecting stages: 1900 to 1912, where the cultural pessimism of the public sphere progressively permeated representations and discourse on the region; and 1912 to 1918 which saw these points of discussion eventually merge through the increased British presence in the region. This presence fused the relatively niche allegorical connections between peasant victimhood and social issues with the spreading ideals of Britain as a moral force. A chronological approach also allowed the author to isolate key questions that were contingent on particular historical episodes such as the adoption of peasant victimhood as a propaganda motif in 1915.

In terms of geographical scope, the study does not represent a comprehensive exploration of early twentieth-century British engagement and perceptions of the entire Balkan region. While the author acknowledges the identification of consistent similarities, which lent themselves to the notion of southeastern Europe as representing a single cultural milieu, such an analysis runs the earlier historiographical risk of recourse to many of the generalisations present in the early Balkanist consensus. Attempting to identify each national or ethnic territory's place in British imaginative geography would prove too complex and extensive for a single imagological survey, even across a period as short as 1900 to 1918. Moreover, as stated above, one of the study's primary aims is to consider how the British social climate legitimised a specific Balkan political vision in the minds of the British public rather than perceptions of the region as a whole.

Finally, it is important to note that the number of sources revealed through archival investigation was extensive. The IWM in particular regularly revises and updates its catalogue, while a large selection of personal papers and accounts remain in private or family

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[134] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.xi-xii.

ownership.[135] Time constraints or the requirement of third-party permission to access these collections regrettably left much of this material beyond the author's grasp. This was also the case for significant figures in organised opinion such as the Liberal MP Noel Buxton whose papers are currently held by McGill University Library in Canada.

Outline of Chapters

This study comprises six chapters. Placed together as a chronological analysis, they establish, trace and interpret the development of popular discourse based on a number of pre-existing trends. As the twentieth century progressed, these trends crystallised as a series of allegorical links with latent British anxieties. This study presents original insights by tracing the various manifestations of the South Slavonic peasantry as a motif in British popular discourse between 1900 and 1918. This period of heightened scholarly and political activity not only placed greater emphasis on the figure of the peasant, but frequently characterised their condition as allegorical, or even synonymous, with problems inherent in Britain's own changing social climate.

The first chapter briefly summarises the historical context and early portrayals of the South Slavonic peasantry which shaped developments after 1900. Key to this was the growing diversity in literary representations and new channels of engagement in the late-Victorian era. William Gladstone's popular campaign against Ottoman rule in the Slavonic Balkans during the Eastern Crisis of 1875 to 1878 was particularly important in articulating a vision of diplomatic intervention as integral to British moral integrity. Of equal historical significance, however, were changes in Britain's domestic climate in the 1880s and 1890s, precipitating a sense of cultural pessimism amid emerging concerns of British decline.

Chapter Two challenges the notion that negative representations of the Balkans continued from the Victorian era into Edwardian Britain by considering how they were

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[135] Alan Wakefield & Simon Moody, *Under the Devil's Eye: Britain's Forgotten Army at Salonika 1915-1918* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), pp.xii-xiv.

incrementally subverted as they increasingly reflected the domestic anxieties evident in popular discourse, particularly after the Second Boer War.[136] Patterns of representation grew progressively less pejorative as contemporary societal issues, such as suspected British racial decline through urbanisation, and the culture of popular rural nostalgia translated into greater idealisation of South Slavonic peasant social life. While negative associations remained, this intersection served to recalibrate motifs, such as adherence to 'organic' village traditions or limited industrialisation, as allegorical to Britain's own perceived 'crisis of civilisation' and debates over how British identity might be redefined, and reinvigorated, in this new century.

Chapter Three traces how these emerging links facilitated a return to the victimhood narrative as an allegorical theme in British discourse. A succession of violent occurrences from 1903 to 1913 intersected with growing British domestic unrest after 1908, resulting in the peasantry's place in imaginative geography transitioning from a backward other to a sympathetic victim of corrupted modernity. In contrast to the nineteenth century, this interpretation found deeper resonance in the wider discussion of British identity in the face of an apparent affliction spreading across the industrialised world. This manifested in a loose consensus of an innate secular morality at risk of being eroded by the excesses of the same forces responsible for South Slav peasant victimhood. Consequently, at the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912, this new representational paradigm gave credence to the belief that confronting the evils of modernity was necessary to reinvigorate the British moral character.

Chapter Four continues along this trajectory of victimhood and identity by examining the experiences of British humanitarian and military personnel deployed in Serbia and Macedonia during the First World War. Comprising mainly of women and working-class men, this wartime presence not only broke with previous waves of Anglo-Balkan engagement but ended the process of subsuming discussion of peasant victimhood into popular discourse. Unlike organised opinion, British wartime personnel brought with them a myriad of personal

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[136] Despite the reign of the periods titular Edward VII only lasting from 1901 to 1910, the study defines it as encompassing the whole of the twentieth century before the outbreak of the First World War.

beliefs which framed engagement with Serb peasant communities and soldiers. Their collective experiences engendered a further shift in the peasant's image from victim to cultural arbiter of national identity; Britain, as a force for civilisational morality, was now honour-bound to provide aid. Nevertheless, these changing perceptions continued to be articulated through earlier motifs, including the 'civilising mission'.

Chapter Five considers how discursive re-evaluations of the South Slav peasantry reached their apotheosis through their integration into Britain's wartime propaganda narrative. However, in contrast to the pre-war years, peasant victimhood now appeared as an analogy for the struggle between democratic 'freedom' and 'pan-German' modernity: a cathartic expression of the new British self-image as a moral force. This precipitated an outpouring of public solidarity and support for the humanitarian campaigns established to assist the plight of Serb refugees. This chapter also explores the role of pro-Yugoslav activists in attempting to direct narratives of 'peasant martyrdom' into a campaign for the creation of a 'peasant' Yugoslav state. It offers fresh insight into how peasant cultural traits were selectively developed as a propaganda tool to construe a post-war union as a guarantor of South Slavonic liberation from external predators.

The final chapter serves a similar function to the first as a contextual post-script that further illustrates the importance of historical contingency. Radical changes in the nature of popular discourse, another product of the war's impact on the public consciousness, saw the region disappear from the public sphere almost entirely. A modest revival of interest in the 1930s represented an expression of Yugoslavia's changing image as an 'alternative' destination for middle-class tourists offering a cultural and spiritual reprieve from the perceived dreariness of interwar Britain. By the outbreak of the Second World War, even this no longer appeared certain as observers increasingly theorised that the South Slavonic peasantry itself was fated to disappear in the face of socio-economic change.

The study concludes with a final assessment of its main analytical objectives. By tracing the evolution of the South Slavonic peasantry's complex allegorical role in British imaginative geography from 1900 to 1918, it considers how a discursive web of Edwardian social anxieties manifesting as a recalibration of British identity established the cultural rationale for the creation of the first Yugoslavia as an expression of national moral validation. This closing analysis also offers suggestions for future research within this evolving field of historical enquiry.

Chapter 1. Themes and Context before 1900

The period preceding the twentieth century has arguably merited the most scholarly attention in imagological historiography. Bracewell and other imagological scholars assert that British writing on the South Slavonic lands in the nineteenth century lacked a synchronised or cogent framework of representation until the late 1800s.[1] Kiril Petkov theorises this process as inexorably bound to the Ottoman conquests and introduction of Islam into the region in the fourteenth century, delineating it as a cultural counterpart to Western 'Christendom'. Its conceptualisation as a distinct cultural space began only 'in the middle of the sixteenth century when the first book in English on the Ottoman Empire appeared'.[2]

While it is generally agreed that later Balkan archetypes found precedent in these earlier periods, disagreement remains over the genesis of their imagological aspects. Jelavich infers this to have been a populist reaction to Britain's pro-Ottoman stance on the so-called 'Eastern Question' following the Crimean War.[3] Rising newspaper circulation after 1855 created a public appetite for information that was accessible and unambiguous; influenced by this social milieu, travellers began to imitate newspaper correspondents, focusing on 'news' that could be tied to British foreign policy issues. In the South Slavonic Balkans, this became synonymous with sensationalist vignettes on 'the wild beauty and grandeur of the landscape and the recurrent atrocities in the relations of the people dwelling therein'.[4] Bracewell disputes this view arguing that, by their own agency, authors deliberately construed images to fit individual preferences. Nevertheless, these portrayals themselves were generally predicated on ideals of progress, morality, and a culture considered absent in the region.[5]

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[1] Bracewell, 'Opinion-Makers', p.94; Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.62-88; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.17-46; Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.15-29; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.25-44.

[2] Kiril Petkov, 'England and the Balkan Slavs 1354-1583: An Outline of a Late Medieval and Renaissance Image', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol.76, No.1 (January 1997), pp.86-88.

[3] A series of geostrategic considerations between the European Great Powers concerning the regional vacuum created by the Ottoman Empire's economic and political fragmentation from the late eighteenth to early twentieth century.

[4] Barbara Jelavich, 'The British Traveller in the Balkans: The Abuses of Ottoman Administration in the Slavonic Provinces', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol.33, No.81 (1955), p.412.

[5] Bracewell, 'Opinion-Makers', p.96.

Later studies offer a more nuanced appraisal of these earlier periods. Božidar Jezernik asserts that most contemporary Balkan archetypes predate the nineteenth century, tracing their origins to early modern writers such as the seventeenth-century English nobleman Henry Blount.[6] Hammond, however, proposes 1850 as a discernible point of departure when the British 'fashioned Europe as an abiding geographical dichotomy' that bestowed the Balkan peoples with distinctive cultural identities.[7] Todorova, Goldsworthy and Kostova stress a more incremental process of differentiation beginning in the late eighteenth century and accelerating in the nineteenth as middle-class authors came to dominate the travel-writing genre. The outcome of this change was a move away from 'aristocratic' to 'bourgeois patterns of perception', devoting greater attention to the customs, habits, and tribulations of common people over observations on government and commerce or the lifestyles of ruling elites.[8]

While early nineteenth-century philhellenism[9] – notably Lord Byron's involvement in the Greek War of independence – solicited some interest in the so-called 'little lands' north of Greece, as Mazower notes, logistical practicalities prior to the 1840s restricted travel 'between Christian Europe and the Near East' to diplomats, commercial envoys and wealthy aristocrats.[10] Correspondingly, a limited and inconsistent flow of information prevented the formation of a contextual knowledge base before the advent of 'popular anthropology', and accounts focusing more on domestic and social life, often authored by female travellers, became more widely available to Britain's middle-class 'reading public'.[11] For much of this *longue durée*, South Slavonic peasants appeared often as little more than strains of 'exotic local colour' to be briefly commented upon when journeying between urban centres.[12] Centuries of

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[6] Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, p.27. See Henry Blount, *Voyage into the Levant* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1636).

[7] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.8.

[8] Todorova, 'The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention', pp.462-463.

[9] An intellectual vogue *among* liberal-minded middle- and upper-class Westerners that advocated Greek independence from Ottoman rule, partly in response to the political reactionism of post-Napoleonic Europe's ruling elites. It later evolved into a cultural and educational movement promoting Hellenic or Classical Studies.

[10] A geopolitical expression from the nineteenth century that was used to denote what is today known as the Middle East. Mazower, 'Travellers and the Oriental City', pp.59-60; Kostova, *Tales*, p.14.

[11] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, pp.11-13; Kostova, *Tales*, p.15.

[12] Kostova, *Tales*, pp.113-114.

non-Slav rule, 'base conservatism' and convoluted linguistic and cultural traditions fixed their place in imaginative geography as a semi-homogenised rural *Lumpenproletariat* or, as Friedrich Engels commented in 1849, 'These residual fragment of peoples [*Völkerabfälle*]'.[13] Even in the 1890s, the *London Evening Standard*'s former Near East correspondent, Ardern Hulme-Beaman, argued that such views remained justifiable. Foreigners could only try to gauge the national character by interacting with political and commercial élites: 'the specimens given to the critic for dissection'. The peasants, 'only known vaguely from statistics and by sight', were indistinguishable from other rural populaces:

> As regards to the peasants, there is very little difference between them and their
> like all over the East. The agriculturalist is generally (not always in Servia) sober,
> honest, hard-working, and hospitable, whether he was born a Turk, an Arab, a
> Roumanian, a Bulgarian, or a Serb.[14]

Nevertheless, Hulme-Beaman's contention indicated a latent shift in the interests of British audiences at the turn of the century. This chapter will briefly trace the origins of these developments such as early iterations of the victimhood narrative and the crystallisation of British imaginative geography in conjunction with the sense of cultural and social pessimism which characterised Britain's *fin de siècle* in the 1880s and 1890s.

Historical Context and Literary Sources before 1878

In 1900, most archetypes and motifs that came to be associated with the Balkans were only established as such in the nineteenth century.[15] A detailed bibliography published by the Serbian Royal Academy in 1909 recorded a mere 150 English-language titles before 1800. By contrast, the editor admitted that the total number published during the nineteenth century was likely to have been considerably higher than the 1,120 works he had managed to catalogue – the majority dating from the 1840s to the 1890s – despite Britain's comparatively minor

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[13] Friedrich Engels, 'The Magyar Struggle, 1849', in Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 8, 1848-9* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), p.235.

[14] Arden G. Hulme-Beaman, *Twenty Years in the Near East* (London: Methuen & Co., 1898), p.121.

[15] Ivana Živančević-Sekeruš, 'Balkans', in Beller & Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology*, pp.106-107.

diplomatic and economic presence.[16] As well as narrative travel accounts, British writers concerned themselves with archaeology, architecture, agriculture, economics, history, geography and natural science with specific topics tending to dominate discussions of certain territories. Macedonia, for example, was usually associated with Alexander the Great and the Hellenic past, while titles covering Dalmatia tended to focus on its architectural heritage.[17] This growing fascination coincided with the arrival of émigré intellectuals, such as the Romanian-Jewish linguist Moses Gaster in 1885, in whose work on the Balkans British anthropologists and folklore enthusiasts discovered 'a rich field of observations'.[18]

Nevertheless, the historiographical fixation on this modern period tends to downplay older traditions of British regional engagement. As noted by Petkov, although highly sporadic, information 'about the eastern limits of Christendom' had 'coalesced in England from earlier times' with a steady procession of missionaries, merchants, soldiers, pilgrims, travellers and 'adventurers' passing through the region from at least the eleventh century.[19] Disparate references to the early ancestors of the Southern Slavs also appeared in various medieval records including the Icelandic sagas, a ninth-century Saxon translation of Paulus Orosius (attributed to Alfred the Great), and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (c.1356), one of the first European texts promoted as travel literature.[20]

While it is unlikely that this information became widespread, these works nevertheless reveal some early awareness of the South Slavonic peoples through what Petkov describes as

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[16] Vojislav Mate Jovanović, *An English Bibliography on the Near Eastern Question, 1481-1906* (1909). Cited in Vesna Goldsworthy, 'The Balkans in Nineteenth-Century British Travel Writing' in Tim Youngs (ed.), *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling in the Blank Spaces* (London: Anthem Press, 2006), p.23.

[17] The architect Thomas Jackson's three-volume guide to Dalmatian architecture and history, for example, was still considered essential reading for British tourists visiting the eastern Adriatic in the 1930s. Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, pp.31-32; Sonia Wild-Bićanić, *British Travellers in Dalmatia 1757-1935*, Zagreb: Zaprešić Fraktura, 2006, pp.28-29. See also T.G. Jackson, *Dalmatia: The Quarnero and Istria* [Vols. 1-3] (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1887).

[18] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.139.

[19] A mountain range in the Eastern Alps that runs through northeast Italy and northern Slovenia. Petkov, 'England and the Balkan Slavs 1354-1583', p.92.

[20] One such example appeared in the *Itineraries* of the Anglo-Irish friar Symon Semeonis from 1322-1324 which described the Slavs he encountered as possessing significant political and economic leverage in the east Adriatic; speaking a language that conformed 'in great part to the Bohemians (Czechs)'; following 'the Greek rite (Eastern Orthodoxy)'; and being mainly 'rustics and common folk'. Eugene Hoade, *Western Pilgrims (1322-1392)* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1970 [1952]), pp.v-vi, 8-9.

a composite of legal, political, emotive and culturally-comparative standards that 'speak of pictures which, over long periods of time, converged and conveyed ideas from one genre to another'.[21] Cathie Carmichael further notes that despite a dearth in published works, subsequent commentaries and debates appearing in the private correspondence of many medieval and early modern travellers were paradigmatic of 'an intermediate stage between the private mind and the published word'.[22]

Following Elizabeth I's excommunication from Rome in 1570, late medieval animosity towards Islam was replaced with approbation as England entered into a series of anti-Catholic alliances as well as trade and cultural exchanges with the Ottomans.[23] This in turn aroused a brief period of interest in the Empire as a political and cultural space. Omer Hadžiselimović identifies several early modern English texts from the 1580s to 1620s, alongside Blount's *Voyage into the Levant* (1636), which reference the habits and customs of 'rustics' in Bosnia and Serbia.[24] As Berber observes however, these publications provided only 'nebulous testimonies' that are likely to be 'imprecise and full of inaccuracies'. Furthermore, this brief flowering of interest in the interior of the South Slavonic lands had faded by the mid-seventeenth century as travellers increasingly came to favour a 'gentler northern route' to Istanbul across the Pannonian Basin over Dalmatia's and Bosnia-Herzegovina's less dependable mountain trails.[25]

Eastern Europe and 'the Orient' rarely featured as destinations among the itineraries of 'the Grand Tour', conducted by wealthy male aristocrats from the 1660s until the advent of railway travel in the 1840s.[26] In 1700, an account by the Norwich physician Edward Browne

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[21] Petkov, 'England and the Balkan Slavs 1354-1583', pp.91-92.
[22] Catherine D. Carmichael, 'Two Gentleman Travellers in the Slovene Lands in 1737', *Slovene Studies*, Vol.13, No.1 (1991), p.21.
[23] See for example, Bernadette Andrea and Linda McJannet, (eds.), *Early Modern England and Islamic Worlds* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).
[24] Hadžiselimović, *At the Gates of the East*, pp.xvi-xix.
[25] The arresting of the Ottoman advance into Central Europe by a coalition of Christian countries at the siege of Vienna in 1683 and the Empire's subsequent loss of Croatia, Dalmatia, Hungary and Transylvania might have also played a role in this dissipation of interest. Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p.xiii.
[26] Mazower, 'Travellers and the Oriental City', p.62.

represented the nearest equivalent to an English-language travel guide still in circulation.[27] Nevertheless, tentative links did begin to appear as increasing awareness of Dalmatia's Venetian architectural and religious heritage attracted the attention of the Royal Society and other scientific institutions during the eighteenth century. Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of Diocletian* (1764) exemplified how eighteenth-century observers had begun to conceive of European culture around an axiom 'gazing from west to east, instead of from south to north'.[28] Adam's survey presents Split as an 'outpost of antiquity' in a province that had all but lost its identity; the current peasant populace had usurped both the land and an urban Venetian heritage which they were incapable of understanding or appreciating.[29] As with previous eras, the lack of information evident in these texts tended to demonstrate more 'the *mentalité* and the tastes of the literate upper classes than about what they were trying to describe' with the culture and society of non-elites usually receiving only cursory mention.[30]

Although this superficiality, or demonstrable lack of knowledge, was identified and gradually rectified with the influence of Romanticism before the late nineteenth century, British literary representations were comparatively slow in adopting new intellectual concepts appearing on the continent.[31] Even the term 'Balkan Peninsula', coined by the German geographer Johann August Zeune in 1808, only gained currency in British literary parlance in the 1870s when authors looked for a shorthand reference to replace the, by then, anachronistic 'Turkey-in-Europe'.[32]

Among upper-class elites, a more consistent body of knowledge was facilitated in the international context of Enlightenment theories on identity and human agency. Johann

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[27] Carmichael, 'Two Gentlemen Travellers', p.20. See Edward Browne (MD), *A Brief Account of Some Travels in Divers Parts of Europe*, (London: printed for Benjamin Tooke, 1685).
[28] Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, pp.5-7.
[29] Robert Adam, *Ruins of the Palace of Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (London: printed for the author, 1764), pp.2-3.
[30] Carmichael, 'Two Gentlemen Travellers', p.19.
[31] The Turkophile Frederik Calvert's *A Tour to the East, in the Years 1763 and 1764* (1767) for example, was lambasted by one reviewer for barely mentioning any of its titular 'Oriental Wit, Poetry and Wisdom' and exemplified how 'a man may travel without observation, and be an author without ideas'. Horace Walpole & Thomas Park, *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England, Scotland, and Ireland, Volume 5*, (London: John Scott, 1806), pp.278-279.
[32] Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.22-23.

Gottfried Herder, the most prestigious of the 'cultural nationalists', philosophised that a shared language, rather than a dichotomy of 'cultured' and 'uncultured' peoples, represented the pivotal determinant for nationhood. This conflation of language and national identity was subsequently applied to Europe's 'minor peoples'.[33] In his 1774 anthropological treatise *Viaggio in Dalmazia* ('Travels into Dalmatia') the Venetian naturalist Alberto Fortis, with generous financial assistance from various British Enlightenment figures, applied this theory to Venice's territories along the east Adriatic coast. Key among his observations were the pastoralist, Slavonic-speaking *Morlaci* inhabiting Dalmatia's hinterlands, whom Fortis claimed represented the only distinctive nation in the east Adriatic, based on what he presumed to be linguistic fidelity.[34] Although highly selective and based more on cursory observations, Fortis's work proved influential in drawing British interest to the region as an early example of anthropological research. Like Herder, his humanistic emphasis on contemporary society and culture proved essential to the underlying philosophies which were to frame British representations in the early twentieth century. Pertinently, this idea of language as reciprocal to homeland became particularly problematic in the context of the political ethno-favouritism that emerged after the 1870s. Shared linguistic traits among the peoples of the South Slavonic Balkans were themselves a founding justification for the first Yugoslav state.[35]

Following the French Revolution, British writing underwent a shift in tone as Romanticism gradually displaced Enlightenment rationalism, and instances of direct engagement increased. This occurred in piecemeal fashion, reliant on developments directly

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[33] Cathie Carmichael, 'A People Exists and that People has its Language', in Stephen Barbour & Cathie Carmichael (eds.), *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.286; F.M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), p.134.

[34] *Morlaci* was an exonym originally applied to a community of Romance-speaking peoples (Vlachs) whose communities were mainly centred in rural eastern Dalmatia. By the eighteenth century, they were largely assimilated with the Slavonic-speaking majority with the name coming to denote more a class of peasant than a specific people. As with the South Slavonic peasantry, whether the Morlaci actually existed as a discrete cultural nation, as Fortis claimed, remains a matter of academic debate. Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slav: The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p.13, pp.86-87, 126-127; Pavle Sekeruš, 'Serbs', in Beller & Leerssen, *Imagology*, pp.234-235. See also (Abbé) Alberto Fortis, *Travels into Dalmatia* (London: printed for J. Robson, 1778).

[35] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, pp.34-51.

linked to British interests or around which tangible associations could form. Thus, neither Montenegro's recognition as an independent Prince-Bishopric under the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty in 1789, nor Serbia's elevation to an autonomous Ottoman vassal in 1817 following a period of revolutions from 1804 to 1815, solicited much reaction from either the public sphere or government circles. Evidence for unrest was dismissed as 'essentially a local movement with little effect on the rest of the empire', the integrity of which was considered crucial to British interests in a post-Napoleonic Europe.[36] By contrast, the Greek War of Independence from 1821 to 1833 created a groundswell of popular anti-Turkish opinion in partial opposition to Britain's stance on the Eastern Question.[37] This episode represented the first incidence in which British public opinion – influenced by the pro-Christian Greek victimhood narrative of Byron and other Philhellenes – was invoked by politicians as grounds for intervention. Greece's revival as an independent, sovereign state was subsequently achieved in 1830, orchestrated, in part, by British, French and Russian naval intervention.[38]

This invocation of a popular victimhood narrative served to partially precipitate an, initially modest, intellectual curiosity in the region among middle-class British travellers. As with eighteenth-century antiquarian studies, information pertaining to local peoples was minimal, yet did not prevent inquisitive personalities from expressing interest, and even admiration, for the regional culture. Andrew Archibald Paton, Britain's consul to Serbia in the 1840s and Dubrovnik in the 1860s, recalled his delight in exploring the peasant communities in Serbia's 'back-woods', who lived without 'a trace of poverty, vice or misery'. Through 'the patriarchal simplicity of their manners, and the poetic originality of their language', this 'large

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[36] Despite coming under nominal Ottoman suzerainty during the late fifteenth century, the territory that became the embryonic Montenegrin state slowly developed as an autonomously-governed Orthodox Metropolitan (diocese) focused on the monastery at Cetinje, gaining *de facto* independence in the 1690s. See for example, Elizabeth Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain: A History of Montenegro* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007); Kenneth Morrison, *Montenegro: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008).

[37] The fighting formerly came to an end in September 1829. However, diplomatic negotiations and the transfer of political and religious sovereignty continued until 1833. L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), p.269. See also Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence 1821-1833* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

[38] Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp.66-74, 83-89.

assembly of peasants' formed a near-ideal society that was 'neither poor nor barbarous'.[39] Partially on this basis, Paton repeatedly portrayed Serbia and the wider Ottoman Balkans as members of 'the European family', albeit at its extreme periphery, as opposed to 'Arabia'.[40] Conversely, Alexander Kinglake's erudite travelogue *Eōthen* was unusual in its candid focus on the author's personal experience, rather than the places he visited, seeking to capture a deeper sense of 'intimacy' incidental to 'the realities of Eastern Travel'. Accordingly, Kinglake's narrative remained ambivalent towards anyone outside of local elites, town life, or his travelling companions.[41]

Paton's idealised rustic concord and Kinglake's apparent disregard for providing his audience with detailed information, both correspond to what Gary Kelly terms a 'middle-class cultural revolution'. In response to the social and cultural challenges presented by the French Revolution, the social stratum of the 'bourgeoisie' gradually supplanted the aristocracy as the drivers of Britain's 'cultural narrative'. One of the most salient aspects of this process had been rising numbers of female authors whose work engendered this narrative, a partial 'feminization'. Travel writing, traditionally the primary medium for disseminating information on foreign cultures (with a somewhat socially-restricted readership) was a principal recipient of this transitional process, reflected by a changing emphasis in subject matter. Earlier literary preoccupations with elite culture and the classical heritage of these territories receded as interest pivoted towards observations on culture and social conditions.[42]

The Great Eastern Crisis – a series of rural revolts against proposed tax increases in Ottoman-ruled Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria from 1875 to 1878 – brought the figure of the peasant to the fore of Balkan representations on a second wave of popular opinion

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[39] Andrew Archibald Paton (Esq.), *Servia, The Youngest Member of the European Family* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1845), pp.136-141. See also idem, *Researchers on the Danube and the Adriatic*, *Vol. 1* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1861).
[40] Ibid., p.3, 16.
[41] Alexander William Kinglake, *Eōthen, or, Traces of Travel, Brought Home from the East* (London: John Oliver, 1844), pp.v-ix.
[42] Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism*: *The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 2-4.

underpinned again by a liberationist victimhood narrative. Works by middle-class female travellers presented a notable departure from the male-dominated philhellenism of the 1820s, tending to cover communities in less documented locales while emphasising more qualitative subjects such as domesticity and linguistics.[43] Significant among these was *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* by the suffrage campaigners Adeline Paulina Irby and Georgina Muir Mackenzie, in conjunction with the archaeologist Arthur Evans's *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina* and *Illyrian Letters*.[44] Having, according to Todorova, 'discovered the South Slavs for the English Public', Irby and Mackenzie presented an early popular intervention over Britain's official stance on the Eastern Question emphasising abuse, neglect, and rumoured atrocities against the Slav Christian *rayahs* by their Ottoman rulers.[45]

Bracewell further notes that the late 1870s witnessed a refashioning of the Ottoman Balkans otherness into a politicised cultural dichotomy. Pro-Slav, typically liberal, authors denigrated Islam as both morally and physically harmful in its denial of a perceivably Christian peasantry the right to join European civilisation. Their counterparts in Britain's equally polemical, and often conservative-leaning, pro-Ottoman camp argued the opposite: European peace was preserved only because the Ottoman hegemony prevented the 'barbarian' Eastern Christians from descending into complete anarchy.[46] Evans's writings further strengthened the South Slavs' case by highlighting what he deemed to be their innately 'heroic' virtues, which found their antithesis in the 'Oriental' Ottomans. The peasant-mountaineer warriors of Montenegro (a principality since 1852) were particularly exalted as embodying a revival of

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[43] See for example, Mary Adelaide Walker, *Through Macedonia to the Albanian Lakes* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1864). For contemporary analyses on women in nineteenth-century British travel writing, or the genre in general, see Kostova, *Tales*; eadem, 'Meals in Foreign Parts: Food in Writing by Nineteenth-Century British Travellers to the Balkans', *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing*, Vol.4, No.1 (2003), pp.21-44; Goldsworthy, 'The Balkans in Nineteenth-Century British Travel Writing'; Marija Krivokapić (ed.), *The Balkans in Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

[44] See G. Muir MacKenzie & A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1866); Arthur J. Evans, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1876); idem, *Illyrian Letters: A Revised Selection of Correspondence* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1878).

[45] Members of the tax-paying lower classes in Ottoman society. Although Jews and Muslims also fell into this category, by the late nineteenth century the term had become synonymous with Christians. Jelavich, *The British Traveller*, p.413; Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.97-98.

[46] Bracewell, 'Opinion-Makers', pp.98-105.

'Homeric times' in their battle for Christian liberty.[47] Detractors dismissed, or ridiculed, independent Montenegro and Serbia (that had gained *de facto* independence in 1867) as farcical caricatures where peasants availed themselves of state trappings 'borrowed from civilised countries'.[48] When taken with their 'ignorant' fellows in Bosnia-Herzegovina, calls for an end to Ottoman rule made the prospect of a British withdrawal from Ireland seem 'harmonious and edifying' by comparison.[49]

Following the Ottoman suppression of the 1876 'April Uprising'[50] in Bulgaria, the revived victimhood narrative was elevated to a matter of universal morality by the widespread publicity afforded to violence against Christian Bulgarians in William Gladstone's polemical *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* .[51] Gladstone's inflammatory depictions of a Christian populace left to languish under a despotic and decaying Islamic Empire turned Britain's position on the Eastern Crisis into a fulcrum for his moralistic rhetoric, and eventual re-election as Prime Minister in 1880. It also directed the attentions of an outraged liberal public towards titles such as Irby's and Mackenzie's *Travels*, republished in 1877 with an introduction by Gladstone, whose pro-Slavonic orientation established the victimhood narrative as a potent tool for public engagement.[52]

In framing British involvement as an ethical and spiritual matter, the mid- to late 1870s recast how the South Slavonic Balkans were perceived. The growing assortment of imagery which developed in this period coalesced into a more coherent imaginative geography onto which British observers could project their own interests. Simultaneously, vitriolic public rhetoric employed during the Eastern Crisis provided the antecedent for the public campaigns

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[47] Evans, *Illyrian Letters*, p.189.
[48] James Creagh, *Over the Borders of Christendom and Eslamiah*, *Vol.II* (London: Samuel Tinsley, 1876), p.255.
[49] Ibid., pp.136-137.
[50] A series of violent measures employed by the Ottoman military in its efforts to subdue the uprising that broke out in Bulgaria in April 1876. These events were pivotal in mobilising British public opinion against the Conservative government of Benjamin Disraeli and its pro-Ottoman stance on the Eastern Question.
[51] See W.E. Gladstone (M.P.), *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (London: John Murray, 1876).
[52] Idem, 'Preface', in G. Muir Mackenzie & A.P Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, pp.vii-xiv.

of both the Edwardian period and the First World War; the elucidation of peasant society was now tentatively associated with issues of British moral quality as much as it was a question of enhancing public knowledge.[53]

Engagement and Cultural Pessimism after 1878

While the Eastern Crisis had served to cultivate a particular image of the Balkans in the popular imagination, it also represented its apogee as an object of focus in the nineteenth-century British public sphere. In spite of the public sympathy Gladstonian Liberal moralising attracted to the professed cause of Christian Slav liberation, it remained largely divorced from political realities. The 1878 Treaty of Berlin brought the Crisis to an end simply by redrawing the power balance in favour of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, allowing it to acquire administrative control of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandžak of Novi Pazar (although both remained under nominal Ottoman rule). Concurrently, Montenegrin and Serbian independence acquired full international recognition.[54] Yet, while the Empire's retaining of Macedonia and other Slav-inhabited territories provoked vehement protest from Evans and other sections of informed opinion, the energy of public outrage Gladstone had sought to harness in 1876 and 1877 dissipated, alongside general interest, after 1878.[55] Anti-Ottoman rhetoric and public sentiments belied the fact that, as with the decision to establish diplomatic ties with autonomous Serbia in 1837, maintaining a bulwark against Russian designs in the Eastern Mediterranean remained Britain's strategic *raison d'être* in the Balkans.[56]

Beyond narrow political objectives, Suonpää observes that efforts to promote financial or cultural ties often proved fruitless, owing to a propensity for Britons to construe erstwhile

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[53] Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', p.61.

[54] The Treaty of San Stefano between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in March 1878 offered similar terms but proposed a 'Greater Bulgaria' that included the entirety of Macedonia. The other Great Powers, regarding it as a means of extending Russian influence, rejected its terms, which were superseded by Berlin several months later.

[55] Cathy Gere, *Knossos and the Prophets of Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp.62-63.

[56] Pavlowitch, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Serbia*, p.160; David Steele, 'Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.50, No.1 (2014), pp.43-60.

regional partners as their cultural and moral opposites.[57] Serbs, and by extension Orthodox Christian communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Montenegro, became intrinsic to discussions of the relationship between Western modernity and those European territories historically 'lost' to the Orient.[58] These dialogues swung thematically between two strains of thought. While British pundits might have expressed admiration for what Evans termed 'Homeric' virtues and 'democratic' traditions of the Slav village – especially the prevalence of peasant land ownership in Serbia – this was counterbalanced by the latent consensus that potential regional instability required the presence of a European hegemon. At the end of the 1890s, Austria-Hungary had assumed this role, rectifying, according to one commentator, 'centuries of Turkish misrule'.[59] Modernisation within its 'modal colony' of Bosnia-Herzegovina was juxtaposed with socio-economic conditions in neighbouring Serbia, often dismissed as corrupt and dysfunctional. Some commentators even suggested that regional tensions might be resolved were Montenegro and Serbia to surrender sovereignty to a 'higher' power.[60]

The emergence of regional nationalisms also elicited suspicion of 'agitators' and 'conspirators' among British officialdom. Local grievances, if at all considered, were more likely to be looked upon as guises for extrinsic forces which, if indulged, would 'disorganise and impede' international stability.[61] This was most acutely felt in Ottoman Macedonia through the appearance of rival Bulgarian, Greek and Serb nationalist institutions and, subsequently, paramilitaries between the 1880s and 1900s. Founded by pro-Bulgarian Macedonian Slav revolutionaries in 1893, *Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija* became the largest and most actively militant of these groups, evolving into a vehicle for Greater Bulgarian

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[57] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.12.
[58] Bruno Naarden & Joep Leerssen, 'Russians', in Beller & Leerssen, *Imagology*, p.227; Sekeruš, 'Serbs', in ibid, p.235. See also in ibid, Ivana Živančević-Sekeruš, 'Balkans', pp.103-108; Gregory Paschalidis, 'Greeks', pp.166-171; Dennis Deletant, 'Romanians', pp.223-226; Naarden, 'Slavs', pp.237-242.
[59] William Miller, *Travel and Politics in the Near East* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p.118.
[60] Ibid., p.118; (Sir) Lepel Griffin, 'England and France in Asia', *The Monthly Review*, Vol.34, No.201 (July-December 1893), p.673.
[61] (Lieut.) G. Arbuthnot, *Herzegovina; Or Omer Pacha and the Christian Rebels* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1862), p.62.

irredentism by 1900. Its guerrilla activities became emblematic of the region's contemporary association with insurrectionary violence and the exploitation of a passive civil populace; a space 'where plans are hatched and schemes devised'.[62]

Notwithstanding her impressions of implied maliciousness, Goldsworthy justifiably asserts that late nineteenth-century imaginative geography was indelibly tied to the motifs of comedic or Gothic literature. Popular fiction such as Antony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* cast the Balkans as an exotic 'blank canvas' onto which authors could project fantastical narratives, unencumbered by problematic political subtexts.[63] Beyond the purely imaginative, middle-class British audiences found little of the 'seduction' that imbued Italy and the Mediterranean; the South Slavonic Balkans instead existed in a less edifying role of diplomatic and military arena; 'an overgrown wilderness' strewn with 'the ruins of forgotten medieval battles', faded Ottoman glories and dismissible attempts at mimicking Western urbanity.[64]

Nonetheless, the appearance of Montenegro and Serbia as independent polities fixed the South Slavonic lands as a, partially, distinctive geopolitical space in Britain's crystallising imaginative geography of the Balkans. Literary depictions also grew increasingly diffuse, representing a diversifying range of gendered, professional and ethnic perspectives among authors.[65] In the late 1890s, the once limited channels through which only elite British audiences could engage with the region had been transformed by the continued growth in communication and changes in social attitudes.[66] Factual information was no longer perceived as a purely rhetorical device for political and intellectual elites but a 'public cultural

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[62] Hulme-Beaman, *Twenty Years in the Near East*, p.91; Ipek K. Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp.27-31.
[63] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.42.
[64] Kostova, *Tales*, pp.113-114.
[65] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p.xv.
[66] Demirci, *British Public Opinion*, p.9.

commodity' through which Britain's aspiring middle-class public could pursue a range of topics augmenting 'the scope, audience and content' of publications.[67]

This changing social context became more apparent in regard to British historical and geographical understanding and awareness of the South Slavonic Balkans. The entry for Serbia in the ninth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1886, for example, covered 500 years of history, religion and culture for both the country and the territories adjacent to it.[68] The process of accumulating more contemporary information, however, was facilitated by more direct channels of communication – and the advent of organised opinion – appearing at the end of the century. In 1888, the Irish journalist James Bourchier arrived in the Balkans as a special correspondent for the *Times*, becoming its 'permanent' Balkans correspondent in 1892. A talent for language – and his status as the region's only dedicated British journalistic presence – gained Bourchier the favour of both the crowned heads of Bulgaria and Greece alongside access to contacts beyond the reach of most British diplomats.[69] Excluding Macedonia however, Bourchier's remit was principally focused on Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania, the South Slavonic lands officially being the preserve of his opposite number in Vienna, William Lavino.[70] His occasional coverage of Serbia (proclaimed a kingdom in 1882), was usually negative, focusing on royal scandals and the parlous state of the national finances.[71]

Nevertheless, his arrival marked a notable point of departure from previous forms of British engagement in his cultivation of an ingrained affinity for a Balkan nation (in Bourchier's case, Bulgaria). Michael Foley speculates that as an Anglo-Irish teacher, 'haunted by growing deafness and probably homosexual', this affinity was likely to have stemmed as much from personal impulses and social frustration.[72] As perceived outsiders, Irish journalists were generally obliged to adopt a far more objective and distanced approach in their reporting

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[67] Toni Weller, *The Victorians and Information* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2009), pp.157-158.
[68] Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*, p.29.
[69] See (Lady) E. Grogan, *The Life of J.D Bourchier* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1926).
[70] Ibid., pp.93-94.
[71] *The Times*, 22nd January 1996. Cited in Michael Foley, 'James David Bourchier: An Irish Journalist in the Balkans', *Irish Communication Review*, Vol.10, No.1 (2007), p.58.
[72] Ibid., p.62.

as a means of winning the British establishment's favour. The decision to identify with a foreign culture, particularly one considered to exist at the periphery of modern civilisation, can be interpreted as a clandestine act for personal emancipation, achieving greater status and respect as a correspondent abroad than in Britain.[73]

Questions of identity, individual or collective, would became an increasingly significant factor in connecting representations of the region and its peoples with popular discourse. Bourchier's unconscious associations between his speculative self-perception as a social outsider and his role as correspondent, illustrated the growing presence of analogies in imaginative geography. Berber observes that this previously under-considered propensity for analogous connections is particularly overt in the parallels between Austria-Hungary's occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and British rule in Ireland. Depictions in *Punch* and other publications deemed reflective of middle-class opinion, coupled with pseudo-scientific theorising of the Irish as an inherently inferior race, partially eliminated geographical proximity as a means of cultural othering; both rural Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina now occupied similar places in the hierarchy of civilisation as colonial 'peripheries' to the British 'centre'.[74] Suonpää interprets this through the allegory of rising middle-class concerns over crime and poverty in Britain's industrial centres. *Punch*'s cartoon personification of the Dual Monarchy assuming custodianship over the dirty and violent Arab street children 'Bozzy' and 'Herzy', provided intertextual commentary on its middle-class readership's more immediate concerns about juvenile delinquency as awareness of urban deprivation grew more acute in the 1870s and 1880s.[75] Berber concludes that allegorical connections were indicative of 'discursive strategies' through which these territories came to be understood as an inferior part of the

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[73] Ibid., p.63.
[74] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, pp.99-101.
[75] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.192-193.

'European cultural space', as opposed to the 'Oriental other' in British imaginative geography.[76]

Popular analogies born of domestic anxiety are prevalent in Keisinger's link between regional depictions and the increasingly fractious press debate over Irish Home Rule which dominated Gladstone's second and third terms in office from 1880 to 1886. The spectre of conflict and wider international unrest emanating from the Balkans appeared paradigmatic of the ambiguities in Irish politics, set against rising bellicosity among rival nationalist and unionist factions. This was given substance by the 'Land War' – a prolonged period of civil unrest in rural Ireland, including widespread violence, lasting into the 1890s.[77] Suonpää further notes the presence of domestic anxieties as holding direct 'concrete' influences in British regional engagement. Discussions on strengthening ties between the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches at the third and fourth Lambeth Conferences in 1888 and 1897 for instance, were dismissed by most religious commentators. That the rational and orderly Church of England would even consider a prospective 'reunion' with its 'stagnant', 'mysterious and illogical' Eastern counterparts simply appeared incongruous.[78] Yet, Anglo-Catholic traditionalists also observed the Eastern rites' 'unvarying characteristics', impervious to contemporary rationalism, as evidence of its theological purity, existing closer to the original 'undivided' Christian Church. Furthermore, during the Eastern Crisis, nonconformists, liberal Anglican clerics and radical supporters of Gladstone politicised the issue by presenting the Balkan Orthodox Churches as guardians of their congregations' cultural and national identities. Both these stances were themselves indicative of wider concerns over the moral and cultural condition of British identity and society.[79]

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[76] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p.107. Gallant identifies a similar paradigm emerging under the British administration of Ionia. Greeks islanders were presented as a hybrid of Western and Eastern cultural traits or 'Mediterranean Irish'. Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion*, pp.35-39.

[77] Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.35-38, p.142. See Philip Bull, *Land, Politics and Nationalism 1850-1938: A Study of the Irish Land Question* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Fergus Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[78] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.12.

[79] Ibid., p.85, pp.231-237.

A more pertinent, and urgent, expression of this emerging cultural pessimism lay in the increasingly public debates on British 'national efficiency' from the late 1880s to 1914. The crash of the Vienna stock-exchange in 1873 characterised the remainder of the nineteenth century, leading to economic stagnation, commercial competition from Imperial Germany and the United States, and depression in Britain's agricultural and industrial sectors. The social consequences of this depression were visible through rising rural depopulation and entrenched pockets of unemployment and poverty in Britain's cities. Philanthropic studies exposing widespread urban poverty and reports of surging nationalist agitation in India and Ireland exacerbated late-Victorian and, subsequently, Edwardian fears over Britain's future. By the 1890s, some commentators had begun to attribute Britain's state of perceived decline to physiological decline and loss of national vigour brought about by the 'degenerative' social impacts of urbanisation.[80] Perceptions of declining British vigour and assertiveness in the face of growing foreign economic competition are noted by Suonpää as prompting increased commercial interest in the Balkans coupled with the earlier belief in the region as a potentially profitable new market for expansion in the 1880s.[81] These evident cultural contingencies even informed textual representations by the late 1890s. Herbert Vivian's *Servia: The Poor Man's Paradise*, while reciprocating many established motifs and clichés, offered an uncharacteristically non-pejorative, albeit romanticised, portrayal of the country. For Vivian, Serbia's peasant society did not equate to primitiveness but the purest expression of nationhood, based on romantic ideals extrapolated from his interest in medieval chivalry. Limited industrial development and an urbanised working class were themselves indicative of a 'heroic' agrarian idyll that had long since vanished in Britain, echoing earlier sentiments

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[80] Ibid., p.123; Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, pp.36-38; Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration*, p.39. See (General) William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890); B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1901). On the links between colonial unrest and British domestic factors see for example, Ian Copland, *India 1885-1947: The Unmaking of an Empire* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001); Paul A. Townend, *The Road to Home Rule: Anti-imperialism and the Irish National Movement* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).
[81] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.185.

expressed by Paton.[82] To this end, British business was urged to rethink its disinclinations towards Serbia, as Vivian, seemingly unaware of those which still operated across the region, identified opportunities for British investment and proposed that young entrepreneurs be encouraged to settle in lands 'where they shall be happy and wealthy and wise'.[83] While demonstrating much of the bias evident in pejorative texts, Vivian's account presaged the positive revaluations through which twentieth century discourse began to reorient the South Slavonic peasantries' position in imaginative geography.

Conclusion

Ten years after his public intervention in the Eastern Crisis, Gladstone authored another pamphlet, *The Irish Question*. While not lacking in moral rhetoric, its discussion of the less electorally-popular question of Britain's duty to rectify its own legacy of misrule showed a discernible shift in the nature of socio-political debate. Indeed, from a historiographical perspective, Gladstone's *Irish Question* presaged the subtext of British attitudes towards the South Slavonic Balkans after 1900, more so than *Bulgarian Horrors*.[84]

As this chapter has illustrated, by the turn of the century most of the key tenets of popular discourse had been set while the conduits for more focused engagement and representation of the South Slavonic peasantry had been established through the cultural and technological changes of the nineteenth century. Although improvements in communications technology had done much to reduce geographical barriers, rising cultural pessimism and latent anxieties corroded earlier Victorian beliefs in modernity's promise of indefinite scientific and social progress to such a degree that the exclusively negative connotations associated with rural backwardness were beginning to be questioned. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s the cultural

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[82] Herbert Vivian, *Servia: The Poor Man's Paradise* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1897), pp.vii-ix; Radmila Pejić, 'Herbert Vivian: A Late Nineteenth-Century British Traveller in Serbia', *Balcanica*, Vol.44 (2013), pp.257-261.
[83] The cornerstone of Vivian's proposals included opening a British shipping line that would operate along the Danube linking Belgrade with the Black Sea ports. Vivian, *Servia: The Poor Man's Paradise*, p.147.
[84] See W.E. Gladstone, *The Irish Question* (London: John Murray, 1886).

movements surrounding 'the *fin de siècle* spirit' had precipitated a sense of pessimism, cynicism and ennui. Friedrich Nietzsche and other intellectual and literary scions of this movement found a growing following for their ideas in Britain through the 'widespread belief that civilization leads to decadence'.[85] As discussed above, rising uncertainty and cultural pessimism culminated in concerns that an age of spiritual and physical decline was as much prevalent in Britain's industrial inner cities as it was in the colonies. This only appeared to confirm the belief that the 'faces of degeneration' existed both at home and abroad.[86] From the perspective of Foucauldian epistemological discourse, this transition to a more cynical social climate marked the gradual end of the previous episteme.

As the new century approached in 1899, anxieties over the manner in which British society was changing asserted greater influence over how the peoples of South Slavonic lands were represented. While developments in the nineteenth century had been sporadic and inconsistent, they had established the social parameters for the more concerted reappraisal of pejorative representations and archetypes in the early twentieth century, informed less by contrast than by popular analogy.

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[85] Stjepan G. Meštrović, *The Coming Fin de Siecle: An Application of Durkheim's Sociology to Modernity and Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.2.
[86] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.38.

Chapter 2. Peasants as Allegories for 'Crisis' and 'Renewal' in Edwardian Popular Discourse

Within imagological historiography, a consensus has formed around Todorova's assertion that 'an image of the Balkans had already been shaped in European literature', gaining coherence across a thematic chronology that partially correlates with the long nineteenth century and its closing years of 1900 to 1914.[1] Similar trajectories were also in evidence in earlier writing, exemplified in Ford's discussion of 'English' conceptions of Montenegro developing from 1840 to 1914.[2] More recent research has tended to accentuate recurrent patterns of negative perceptions or the manifestation of specific themes across different periods. For example, Goldsworthy maintains that in the early twentieth century, an emphasis on violent instability in the British press and literature created 'a patchwork of crises which kept the peninsular in the public eye and reaffirmed the reputation of complexity and instability with which the term 'Balkan' had become associated'.[3] Berber identifies Britain's cultural 'unveiling' of Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, as a process that gradually conceived of it as a divisible part of the Orient. However, this had developed in conjunction with specific regional archetypes, arriving at a consequential 'peak' with the outbreak of the first Balkan War in 1912.[4] Norris assesses the twentieth century in similarly Hobsbawmian terms, attributing the change to British intervention on behalf of Serbia in the First World War.[5] From a Foucauldian angle, Evans and Hammond surmise that only 'specific engagement with Serbia' from 1914 onwards signalled the discursive 'rupture' between the Victorian and 'post-Edwardian' paradigms. Both concede however, that the pre-1914 period witnessed the appearance of a 'subordinate framework of

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[1] Todorova, *Imagining*, p.116.
[2] See Ford, 'Montenegro in the Eyes of the English Traveller'.
[3] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.42-43.
[4] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, pp.xvii.
[5] Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.32-38.

complementary representation', when British intellectual figures 'began to champion chosen nations'.[6]

Todorova and Michail are at variance with this stance, citing 1900 as a determinable point of departure; self-defined 'experts' began to compartmentalise accumulated knowledge into 'prearranged schemata', lending structure and thematic categorisation to the region's hitherto 'floating character'.[7] Between the Serbian regicides and a sudden escalation in Macedonian's violent unrest in 1903, and the conclusion of the Second Balkan War in 1913, previously vague motifs crystallised into fixed pejorative archetypes. Nevertheless, 'there was always a plurality of British sympathies in the East', with different groups or nations eliciting support in response to specific events as previously exemplified during the Eastern Crisis.[8]

Such efforts to impose forms of periodisation, or definite temporalities, onto patterns of Anglo-Balkan engagement have not only isolated discursive channels from their formative environment but also overlook the changing historical context not immediately evident within the discursive confines of diplomatic dispatches or middle-class travelogues. Discussion of the Edwardian era is also obstructed by a presumption, more pronounced in the cultural-colonialist approach, that Britons consistently perceived of themselves as unassailable global hegemons. According to Hammond, early twentieth-century travel writing continued to foster an 'imagined colonialism', construing the Balkans as a *de facto* colonial territory over which they held a 'natural right to explore, order, interpret, judge, deprecate, and control'.[9] This framework has also characterised first-wave interpretations of ingrained British hostility towards the Balkans' political independence after 1878. For Norris, the peninsula's status as 'the last opportunity for colonial expansion in Europe' saw this independence rendered into 'a product of the West's fears of the cultural Other', to cynically justify the worsening excesses which

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[6] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.109-113; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, pp.115-118.

[7] Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.116-117.

[8] Ibid., p.97; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.6-8.

[9] Closely akin to Goldsworthy's and Kostova's 'textual colonialism'. Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.77.

characterised European colonialism since the 1880s.[10] In applying Milica Bakić-Hayden's theory of 'nesting Orientalism' to Edwardian perceptions of Europe as a whole, Goldsworthy sees 'Balkanness' as merely 'the most exotic – yet paradoxically "typical" – instance' of a continent that is 'seen as a threatening Other' to a 'symbolically superior' sense of British identity.[11] Yet, as examined in the previous chapter, by 1900 the epistemological basis of this paradigm was already belied by perceived domestic, economic and consequently imperial vulnerability, fostering increased pessimism over Britain's future.

In an effort to retain the country's status at the fore of civilisation, Victorian notions that conflated cultural advancement with modern progress had been incrementally abandoned in favour of the 'moral hierarchy' and 'values' inherent to the 'civic', rather than 'ethnic', nation. Despite rejecting race theory, these moral values were deemed inherent to Western Europeans – specifically the British and French – whose cultures were regarded as being more stable in adapting to socio-political and economic change. Early industrialisation, for instance, demonstrated a natural talent for ingenuity and innovation while an affinity for democratic plurality made them more successful in integrating new movements and ideologies, such as Socialism. At the social level, a firmer grounding in Judeo-Christian heritage created more harmonious interpersonal relationships and a far lower risk of resorting to violent or deviant forms of behaviour in the pursuit of one's interests. [12]

While the idea of moral hierarchy set Britain against the East, including the South Slavonic Balkans, from a discursive perspective it did not necessarily preclude its inhabitants from occupying a place within it. In the context of rising geopolitical tensions, the moral hierarchy became more a vehicle to implicitly place Britain and Western Europe apart from the equally, if not more, industrialised German Empire in terms of a temporal adherence to

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[10] This Western narrative was later employed, according to Norris, as a means of deflecting blame for the outbreak of the First World War. Norris, *In the Wake*, p.11.

[11] Bakić-Hayden even suggests that each European country harbours prejudices that tend to characterise those to its south or east as inherently more backward and conservative. Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.9; Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 'Orientalist Variations', pp.4-5.

[12] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', pp.184-187, 190-192.

civilised values over modern advancements.[13] This redefining of civilisation's temporal parameters thus instilled doubt over the current trajectory of modernity: a new 'age of anxieties' emerged where the advent of international industrialisation eroded British power abroad while a configuration of unresolved political and social pressures weakened it at home. The projected outcome was a depreciation in Britain's ability to assert itself as a moral force on the world stage in the face of other Great Powers lacking the prerequisite fortitude. As this chapter will consider, by the early 1900s, popular discourse's continued reinforcement of the countryside as the accepted origins of British moral qualities was often interchangeable with an English identity; by this standard, the motifs identified in the organic rural culture and village traditions of the South Slavs increasingly appeared as a 'palliative for contemporary decadence'.[14]

This was expressed through a curious intersection between nineteenth-century literary archetypes and a growing unwillingness, born of 'concrete British-Balkan connections' and earlier analogous links, to simply dismiss the region as an esoteric tourist destination 'or raw material for horror stories'. The *Westminster Gazette*'s foreign correspondent Harry de Windt's travelogue, *Savage Europe*, demonstrated the region's now contested place in Edwardian imaginative geography. Despite its adoption of a more Western veneer since the 1870s, de Windt argued that swathes of the region remained 'hotbeds of outlawry and brigandage, where you must travel with a revolver in each pocket and your life in your hand'.[15] This chapter will explore how latent anxiety in Edwardian popular discourse continued to find allegorical meaning between representations of South Slavonic peasants and the existential debates surrounding the 'condition of England'.[16]

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[13] Ibid., p.191.

[14] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.93; Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', p.57. As Perkins observes however, Hammond's proclivity for periodisation leads him to associate this development with the interwar rather than Edwardian years.

[15] Harry de Windt, *Through Savage Europe* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), p.15.

[16] See C.F.G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909).

The New 'Age of Anxieties'

While scholars are now inclined to treat George Dangerfield's assertion that Britain faced a 'general crisis' in 1914 – characteristic of an entrenched mood of societal rebellion – with a degree of circumspection, few would challenge J.B. Priestley's later assessment that the 'long Edwardian summer' was an invention of 1920s post-war nostalgia.[17] As discussed in the previous chapters, since the epistemological rupture of the 1880s, entrenched middle- and upper-class domestic anxieties over urban poverty were repeatedly compounded by several sensationalised exposés which had made it even more visible in the public sphere. This occurred in conjunction with a series of highly-publicised events, such as the London unemployment riots of 1886 and 1887, and a growth in trade union membership among semi-skilled and unskilled workers, which recalibrated the image of the working class as a potential force for social disruption. In the early 1900s, these anxieties over poverty overlapped with other domestic issues including the Irish Question, growing momentum in the women's suffrage campaign and, in the aftermath of the Second Boer War, increasingly urgent debates on the question of 'national efficiency'.[18]

The turn of the century witnessed a continued evolution in the dissemination of information across Britain's social spectrum, facilitated by increasing newspaper circulation and the growth of cinema newsreels as a new form of mass media.[19] However, this widening access to information also permitted the cynicism of the *fin de siècle* to permeate into the public sphere, intermixing with the British press's propensity for sensationalism.[20] Social pessimism among educated elites and the wider populace was hardly unusual in British history, however.

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[17] Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p. 89; J.B. Priestley, *The Edwardians* (London: Heinemann, 1970), p.55.

[18] On social awareness and public anxiety towards urban poverty in the late Victorian period, see for example E.P. Hennock, 'Poverty and Social Theory in England: The Experience of the Eighteen-Eighties, *Social History*, Vol.1, No.1 (January 1976), pp.67-91. On national efficiency see G.R. Searle, 'The Politics of National Efficiency and of War', in Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A Companion to Early-Twentieth Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

[19] By 1914, Britain had between 3,500 and 4,000 'picture palaces', which were beginning to supplant music halls as Britain's most popular form of mass entertainment, besides spectator sports and information in the form of newsreels. Searle, *A New England?*, p.545.

[20] Alan Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1976), pp.52-54. See also Joel H. Wiener, *The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s-1914: Speed in the Age of Transatlantic Journalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Rising anxieties were now amplified by new discursive channels, particularly in reacting to developments that appeared conducive to a narrative of British decline. Although predating its early development by several decades, this evolution of Edwardian popular discourse exhibited traits comparable to the audience-centred 'Uses and Gratification' theory of mass communication, albeit in an era of more limited technological capacity. As earlier research by, among others, Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz demonstrates, modern audiences not only consumed but actively engaged with evolving forms of mass media as a means of reaffirming beliefs and identities, alongside education and entertainment. Media sources would subsequently respond by producing similar material that would gratify their audiences' expectations. Audience relationships with sources of information, or entertainment, thus proved cyclical in reinforcing one another's cultural perspectives.[21]

This dynamic and the notion of engaged audiences was characteristic of how popular discourse was perpetuated. As Hauser maintains, multiple spheres of rhetorical public opinion 'are neither exclusively formal structures nor exclusively confined within institutional structures'. In the absence of such an overview, the social rhetoric of Edwardian Britain was less a mechanism for building consensus or pluralistic debate, than a means of establishing 'a common reference world anchored in common meanings'.[22] Even before the Boer War, this sense of crisis and decline, or disillusionment with Victorian concepts of modernity, served as a point of reference in popular discourse.

This erosion of the nineteenth-century ideological status quo, in conjunction with the issue of national efficiency, was discernible in the changing presentation of science. This was evidenced by the decreasing amount of editorial space given over to science in newspapers and

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[21] On the formulation of 'Uses and Gratifications' theory and its central tenets see for example, J.G. Blumler & D. McQuail, *Television in Politics: Its Uses and Influence* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969); E. Katz, J.G. Blumler & M. Gurevitch, 'Uses and Gratifications Research', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol.37, No.4 (1973), pp.509-523; E. Katz, M. Gurevitch & H. Haas, 'On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things', *American Sociological Review*, Vol.38, No.2 (1973), pp.164-181; J.G. Blumler & E. Katz, *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1974).
[22] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, p.58, 70.

popular weeklies such as *Pearson's Magazine* between 1890 and 1914; discussion of science itself also reflected changing mentalities as Victorian technological prowess was gradually replaced by articles on racial degeneration and calls for society's return to a simpler, pre-industrial existence.[23]

As Kuklick demonstrates, increased access to information did not necessarily lead to a better-informed public when viewed against the rise of academic specialisation in the 1880s with science coming to be perceived as the domain of educated professionals, factually dull and inaccessible to the wider population. In the case of anthropology, this had, by 1900, resulted in 'hierarchies of knowledge', with the general public's understanding of scientific theory often lagging several years behind the most recent theoretical advancements.[24] Popular anthropological theory, meanwhile, was predetermined by non-specialists and 'armchair anthropologists' constructing parallels that confirmed world-views, turning literature on foreign cultures into an 'acceptable pornography', rather than a means of informing audiences of the latest research findings. J.G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), for example, attracted a cult following for its 'eternal images of dying kings and parched fields' which correlated with feelings of anxiety, or even despair, that only intensified after the First World War.[25] Evans, likewise, captured public interest with his excavations in Knossos, beginning in 1900, where his findings reinforced contemporary ideas of civilisational decline, analogous to the condition of British and, by extension, Western modernity.[26]

Sub-textual references to degeneration, declining national efficiency and, more pertinently, fears as to whether the British populace was physically capable of defending the country itself were brought to the discursive fore with the 1904 publication of an inter-departmental government report on 'physical deterioration', in response to military setbacks during the Boer War. A prevalence of poverty-related illnesses was cited as the root cause: the

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[23] See Peter Broks, 'Science, Media and Culture: British Magazines, 1890-1914', *Public Understanding of Science*, Vol.2, No.2 (1993), pp.123-139.
[24] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, pp.152-155.
[25] Ibid., pp.8-13.
[26] Gere, *Knossos*, pp.75-79.

declining health and stricken social backgrounds of working-class army recruits were indicative of a long-term deterioration in the national physiology resulting from decades of industrialisation.[27] Links between the contemporary state of public health and urban living conditions were seized upon by commentators, whose field reports juxtaposed descriptions of the Boers as a 'virile race' of hardy farmers and pastoralists with comments about the 'degraded' British working class.[28] In some quarters, speculation circulated that the declining 'national physique' marked a loss of historical British racial vitality, comparable to ancient Rome, encapsulated in the journalist J.L. Garvin's rhetorical question: 'Will Britain last the century?'[29] Although the debate on national efficiency had originated in the 1880s and reached its apogee with the Second Boer War's conclusion in 1902, it continued to inform popular anxieties that societal changes had negatively impacted 'the quality and quantity' of Britons in both a military and economic capacity.[30]

This discursive fixation on Britain's faltering imperial order, gripped by the accumulative effect of its drive to expand and modernise, increasingly informed more general social commentary. Writing in 1908, Rolfe Arnold Scott-James, one of the earliest commentators to use the term 'modernity', summarised this sense of insurmountable decline:

> …the idea is being pressed in upon us that the men of the last century have brought things to such a pass for us that the world as it is, is almost intolerable. We have come to disbelieve in the success of our science, our improvements, our institutions, our civilisation, and the literature and art which builds itself on all these […]. Some, again, seek a refuge from the tumultuous scene by turning to other atmospheres of distant times or distant places […], flying literally or in imagination to the peoples and cities of the Orient, or the wilds where primitive people and beasts still live in reverent terror of the unknown.[31]

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[27] Among the report's more shocking findings was the revelation that 37 per cent of all recruits were rejected outright on grounds of physical fitness while up to 60 per cent might have been unfit to serve. *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration: Vol.1 Report and Appendix* (London: printed for H.M. Stationery Office by Darling & Son, 1904), pp.23-41.

[28] Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England', pp.65-68; Searle, *A New England?*, p.283; Paul Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of Land, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), pp.73-74.

[29] Quoted in Readman, *Land and Nation*, p.302; Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, p.152. National alarm was further exacerbated by a string of highly-publicised rugby tours from 1905 to 1912 that saw visiting teams from New Zealand, Australia and South Africa inflict heavy defeats on their British counterparts. See Timothy J.L. Chandler, & John Nauright (eds.), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996).

[30] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.233.

[31] R.A. Scott-James, *Modernism and Romance* (London: John Lane, 1908), pp.31-32.

Alongside contributing to a landslide Liberal Party victory in the 1906 general election, the Boer War's aftermath shed uncomfortable light on a range of underlying social questions. These anxieties dovetailed into a myriad of international and domestic concerns, which also informed authors who travelled to or wrote on the South Slavonic Balkans. The founding of the Parliamentary Labour Party in 1900 and a spike in industrial unrest from 1910 to 1914 ignited fears of Socialism's potential as a disruptive political force.[32] The most alarming example occurred in the summer of 1911 when the Liverpool general transport strike culminated in a series of riots in which two striking workers were shot dead by soldiers. Industrial action consequently spread to other urban centres, inciting strikes as far away as Belgium and the Netherlands.[33]

That both of those killed in the 1911 riots were Irish Catholics conjoined fears of social unrest with the disquiet arising from the vexed question of Irish Home Rule. Even before the Boer War, these discursive influences were already perceptible in representations of the South Slavonic Balkans and their inhabitants. During a tour of southern Europe with his family in 1901, a young Evelyn Wrench lauded the Habsburg administration in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a working example of harmonious religious co-existence, using Ireland as an allegorical frame of reference. All major settlements appeared 'half Christian and half Mahommedan…it seems extraordinary how both sects live at peace with each other' – in contrast to the sectarian bellicosity deemed to have saturated the Irish Question.[34] Despite threads of discursive continuity with the late 1800s, his referencing of religious harmony, a subject previous visitors had rarely touched upon, presaged wider anxieties over perceived cracks in *Pax Britannica*'s imperial edifice.

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[32] Roy Church, 'Edwardian Labour Unrest and Coalfield Militancy', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.30, No.4 (December 1987), pp.842-844. See also Lewis H. Mates, *The Great Labour Unrest: Rank-and-File Movements and Political Change in the Durham Coalfield* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[33] Searle, *A New England?*, pp.441-443. See also Eric Taplin, *Near to Revolution: The Liverpool General Transport Strike of 1911* (Liverpool: Bluecoat Press, 1994).

[34] 'Diaries of John Evelyn Wrench, Vol 1. The Tour in 1901, 31 Aug.-2 Oct. 1901', *Wrench Papers. Vol. XVI*, BL Western Manuscripts: Add MS 59556, p.33, 40.

Direct parallels between underlying domestic anxieties were even linked to regional events, especially in cases depicted along narrative lines of victimhood. As Florian Keisinger argues in regards to the Irish Question, different interest groups rhetorically involved in popular discourse appropriated the region as an allegory to serve their specific interests, resulting in forms of representation that were not universally negative. By 1900, Belfast's and Dublin's Unionist and Nationalist presses presented the VMRO's activities in Macedonia as a possible model for resolving their own political objectives, identifying a need to embrace more proactive strategies to determine the island's future. During the Balkan Wars, much to London's disconcertion, insurrectionary violence and campaigns to induce intervention by the Great Powers were cited as prerequisites for achieving these goals.[35] Matters of colonial stability were another tangential point of interaction. Before and during the Balkan Wars, the India Office issued press warnings that violence against Macedonian Muslims had stoked anti-Raj sentiment across the subcontinent, with anti-European and anti-Christian chants becoming a feature of Muslim political rallies.[36] Following the Second Balkan War, the Conservative MP Charles Hunter warned that it had been 'peculiarly ill-judged' to sacrifice the loyalty of Indian Muslims by allowing sections of the press to continue publishing 'false reports' on Ottoman atrocities against Macedonian Christian peasants. Having toured war-torn rural Macedonia himself, Hunter claimed that the truth was quite the opposite.[37]

Organised opinion and those with a more direct interest in regional affairs also sought to capture this public appetite for affirmation and cultural titillation in representations of South Slavonic peasants. Framed in the language of decline and degeneration, the Ottomans were often unfavourably compared to the 'virile stock' of South Slavs, or the European progress encapsulated by Austria-Hungary.[38] As with regional ethnologists, environmental factors were regularly emphasised as determining many desirable psychological and physiological qualities

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[35] Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.159-171.
[36] 'Macedonian Atrocities', *The Times* (22nd February, 1913), p.5.
[37] Charles R. Hunter, 'Three Weeks in the Balkans', *The National Review* (December 1913), p.375.
[38] R.A. Scott-James, 'The Austrian Occupation of Macedonia', *The Fortnightly Review* (November 1905), pp.902-903.

now deemed to be lacking in urbanised Britons. Montenegrins in their 'mountain fastness' or rural communities in Dalmatia and Serbia were seen as being intrinsically moulded by remote cultural surroundings that naturally produced 'sterling stock'.[39]

Environmental and demographic factors provided a more concrete point of contrast: in 1901 'traditional' manual industries popularly regarded as vital to sustaining Britain's long-term racial and economic health, such as manufacturing and mining, accounted for only 40 per cent of national income. In 1905, Serbia's agricultural sector – another popular standard for national vitality – employed 88 per cent of its population while only 7 per cent of Britons earned their living from the land in 1901.[40]

Intellectual disquiet and a revival of 'degeneration theory' coincided with rising support for the new eugenics movement. In July 1912, less than three months before the outbreak of the First Balkan War, over 400 delegates, including Winston Churchill and Arthur Balfour, gathered at the 'First International Eugenics Congress' in London to discuss various strategies for averting civilisation's projected decline. These included programmes of enforced sterilisation, the 'elimination of feeble-mindedness' and schemes to promote selective breeding in order to 'raise the stock' of 'the lower social orders'.[41]

This trend was partly reciprocated among South Slavonic intellectuals, such as Cvijić and Tomašić, in their adoption of 'racial anthropology': the classification and stratification of human races or physical 'types'. This research contributed towards crystallising ideas of nationhood and 'our way of life' around rural lifestyles, traditions and cultural practices, equivocal to Western views of the 'noble primitive', and provided the patina of scientific

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[39] Reginald Wyon & Gerald Prance, *The Land of the Black Mountain: The Adventures of Two Englishmen in Montenegro* (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), p.50; (Lieut.-Col.) J.P. Barry, *At the Gates of the East: A Book of Travel among Historic Wonderlands* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1906), p.245; Roy Trevor, *Montenegro: A Land of Warriors* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1913), p.88; G.E. Mitton, *Austria-Hungary* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1914), pp.73-74.

[40] Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1914* (London: Methuen, 1969); Richard Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', *Journal of Contemporary History* (1982). Cited in Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.123.

[41] 'First International Eugenics Congress', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol.2 (August 1912), pp.253-255.

justification for political claims.[42] The Croatian archaeologist, and director of Sarajevo's *Landesmuseum* (National Museum), Ćiro Truhelka, was a particularly influential mediator of such ideas for visiting British authors and national ethnography. Applying eugenicist theories to nineteenth-century racialist dogmas, Truhelka classified Croats as a superior, non-Slav, 'Nordic-Aryan type'. By virtue of blood, Bosnian Muslims, the alleged descendants of medieval Croat nobles who had converted to Islam, represented 'the flower' of the nation. This was juxtaposed with Bosnia-Herzegovina's Armenians, Jewish, Romani and Orthodox Serbs – in actuality, paleo-Balkan Vlachs – who represented the 'inferior, parasitic and violent' racial antithesis of the Nordic-Aryan Croats. The Serbs' greater business acumen was also perceived negatively as representing an undesirable appetite for material gain.[43] As the custodian of one of Habsburg Sarajevo's signature attractions, Truhelka's influence was likely to have embellished aspects of British writing on Bosnia-Herzegovina. Echoing his critiques, Percy Henderson, a former Indian army major, dismissed any suggestions of a future Southern Slavonic union on ethnological and racial grounds. Beyond 'the Slav or Serbian tongue', and obscure tribal origins, Bosnia's Slav communities held nothing in common.[44]

Nevertheless, discursive efforts to alienate specific groups who deviated from a territory's societal norms found allegorical resonance with the intensification of cultural anti-Semitism in Britain, precipitated by an influx of Eastern European Jewish migrants fleeing pogroms in Tsarist Russia from 1903 to 1906. Rising discontent among the urban working class and the growing prevalence of slums were blamed, in part, on the new arrivals, invoking pejorative cultural caricatures of Jews as a corrupting alien presence.[45] Goldsworthy and Perkins have also noted this influence of cultural anti-Semitism in Balkan representations. Jews

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[42] Kaser, 'Anthropology and the Balkanization of the Balkans, pp.91-95; Duijzings, 'Changes in the Social Roles of Western Anthropologists and Indigenous Ethnologists', pp.9-10.

[43] Ćiro Truhelka, *Hrvatska Bosna (Mi i "oni tamo")* (Sarajevo: Tiskara Vogler, 1907), pp.24-29, 37-41; Nevenko Bartulin, *The Racial Idea in the Independent State of Croatia: Origins and Theory* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014), pp.52-55.

[44] Percy E. Henderson, *A British Officer in the Balkans* (London: Seeley & Co., 1909), pp.105-106.

[45] See Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

in Macedonia were regarded by organised opinion as an integral part of the Ottomans' corrupt rule over the Christian Slav peasants, comparable to the 'shadowy Jewish financier' of late Victorian and Edwardian popular literature.[46] Suonpää further notes that British diplomatic sentiments also 'fitted in with the wider European and American pattern of distrust, envy and prejudice towards Jewish businessmen'.[47]

Despite these analogous connections, South Slavonic ethno-nationalism itself was more likely to be presented with disdain by British commentators. Here again, the lingering issues associated with British rule in Ireland and India manifested as a continued preference for foreign policy interests in maintaining the region's status quo. Henderson's dismissal of a future Yugoslavia also rebuked Croat and Serb claims to Bosnia-Herzegovina's Muslims, whom he deemed to effectively constitute a different race.[48] In 1906, Cvijić, aware his country was being globally ostracised, attempted to bolster Serbia's claims in Ottoman Macedonia by suggesting that the Slav peasants constituted an ahistorical 'amorphous mass' that could be effectively assimilated into either the Serbian or Bulgarian national cultures.[49] This proposition of a malleable ethnicity was conducive to British debates on the potential for chaos if race, rather than morality and values, was perceived to be interchangeable with nationality.

The extent of this ethno-nationalistic 'chaos' was brought to wider public attention, reviving some popular interest in regional liberationism, in the aftermath of the Ilinden– Preobrazhenie uprising which broke out across Macedonia in August 1903, orchestrated by the VMRO following years of escalating political tensions.[50] 'Let me begin by correcting an almost universal fallacy,' Evans stated, following the defeat of the main insurgent forces. 'There are no Macedonians.' The territory instead represented a meeting-point of the Albanian, Bulgarian,

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[46] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.227; Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', p.65.
[47] Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.170-171.
[48] Henderson, *A British Officer*, p.106.
[49] Jovan Cvijić, *Nekolika promatranja o etnografiji makedonskih Slovena* (Belgrade: Štamparija "Dositije Obradović", 1906), p.5.
[50] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.7-8.

Greek, and Romanian nations with 'a large Spanish Jew population in Soloun [Thessaloniki]'.[51] The journalist George Abbott cast doubt on the assertion that ethnic lines were so easily divisible. In 'one and the same household', he noted that even individual family members identified as Bulgarian, Greek, Serb, Russian, or 'simply Christian'. Rather than resolve the question of identity, the imposition of modern nation-state ideas created:

> a true comedy of errors in which no one knows who is who, but everybody instinctively feels that everybody is somebody else […]. It may be described as a region peopled with new-born souls wandering in quest of a body, and losing themselves in the search.[52]

Ultimately, what sustained the age of anxieties narrative in Edwardian popular discourse were not concerns over a protracted decline, but uncertainties over the future of the current status quo. The Liberal M.P. Charles Masterman's *The Condition of England*, published in 1909 and running into seven editions by 1912, encapsulated this ambiguity: 'We are uncertain whether civilisation is about to blossom into flower or, wither in tangle [*sic*] of dead leaves and faded gold.'[53] However, Masterman arguably enflamed the anxieties of a middle-class reading public by including several negative references to the prevailing social conditions in British society. Central among these were industrialisation and urban migration with Masterman warning that the countryside was in danger of becoming 'one vast wilderness' in which stately homes sat isolated in a rural landscape littered with 'decaying villages', and that 'empty fields' represented the greatest threat to English spiritual and cultural life.[54] This anxiety, which the disappearance of rural British life and its social implications might engender, represented the most pertinent, and direct, point at which representations of the South Slavonic peasantry overlapped with popular discourse.

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[51] Although militia activity persisted until November, the Ottoman army had suppressed the principal revolts in north, east, and southeast Macedonia by the end of September. Moreover, the majority of Macedonia's populace proved apathetic or unwilling to support the revolt, despite the VMRO's use of propaganda and coercion. Arthur J. Evans, 'The Policy of Extermination in Macedonia', *The Times* (1st October, 1903), p.10. See also Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties*.

[52] G.F. Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), pp.80-81.

[53] Masterman, *The Condition of England*, p.304.

[54] Ibid., pp.190-193.

At the turn of the century, prevailing social anxieties or the British cultural shift towards a sense of impending crisis had not escaped the attentions of foreign observers, including representatives from the South Slavonic Balkans. '*Cela va sans dire* [That goes without saying]. We are a nation of peasants. We have scarcely any aristocracy,' Serbia's ambassador to London, Sima Lozanić, articulated in a 1901 interview for the *Humanitarian*. Nevertheless, this did not assure a life of complete misery and hardship for the Serb peasant; minimal industrial development also meant the absence of urban deprivation, 'submerged tenths', and 'proletarian discontent'.[55] There was 'no need of work houses or asylums', since poverty and mental health were the preserve of the *zadruga* or village commune.[56]

While British commentators did not necessarily subscribe to his political overtones, the sentiments Lozanić evoked increasingly informed the manner in which social and economic life in the South Slavonic Balkans was presented; authors were drawn to what they and their middle-class audiences presumed were moral virtues exclusive to village communities. As Victorian technological triumphalism receded, writing on the region between 1900 and 1914 increasingly referred to villages or rural districts as being integral to fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the territory under observation. The Scottish journalist John Foster Fraser, like Paton and Vivian, expressed his admiration for Serbia as 'the real peasant state of the Balkans'. The 'man who lives in London' might pity the peasantry for their material poverty, yet on encountering them would find a 'light-hearted and contented' race of people with little concern beyond acquiring the most basic necessities.[57] Visitors to the independent South Slavonic states expressed similar admiration, noting that the lack of industrial

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[55] The fraction of England's population that the Salvation Army's founder William Booth estimated to be living in 'permanent poverty' at the end of the nineteenth century. Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp.22-23.

[56] 'Servia – the Peasant Kingdom'. Interview with Simeon "Sima" Lozanić, *The Humanitarian*, Vol.XVIII, (June 1901), p.382.

[57] John Foster Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans* (London: Caswell & Co., 1906), p.60.

development also equated to an absence of driving urban poverty.[58] Though often emphasising customs, dress and agricultural practices, the accounts of British travellers occasionally provided space for self-reflection, including deconstructions of 'civilisation'. The sight of Christian peasants bargaining with Muslim shopkeepers in the northern Bosnian town of Maglaj convinced one photographer that an absence of industrialisation could assuage human suffering by impeding the creation of 'monied hierarchies' or social segregation. One had to go 'to the very lowest rung of the social ladder to come across the squalid pauper class so common in the large cities of the civilized countries of the West'.[59]

Even contrasts between farming conditions and practices could be allegorised through a prism of societal decline. One Irish author highlighted similarities between his countrymen and the 'stalwart shepherds and husbandmen' of Herzegovina, yet lamented the former's inability to match the latter's skill in producing superior quality potatoes.[60] Moreover, in keeping with the popular turn against urban living and technology, external interference by modernising state authorities or the legacy of the 'degenerate Orient' were presented as incongruous to the South Slavs' 'natural' agrarian social order.[61] Writing in 1904, Vivian argued that successive Belgrade governments had, thus far, avoided this problem by exercising minimal influence on rural Serbian life. This was correspondingly reflected during parliamentary elections at which the peasantry 'steadily' voted back into office candidates who promised only a continuation of the status quo.[62]

Touristic publications also demonstrated a propensity for romanticising the village community and rural aesthetics. As she travelled south through Habsburg-ruled Dalmatia, the

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[58] [William Le Queux] *An Observer in the Near East* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), pp.126-129; Agnes Ethel Conway, *A Ride through the Balkans. On Classic Ground with a Camera* (London: Robert Scott, 1917), p.171.

[59] Victor Goedorp, 'With a Camera in Bosnia', *The Wide World Magazine,* Vol.VIII (November 1901-April 1902), p.498.

[60] Barry, *At the Gates of the East*, pp.236-237.

[61] Noel Buxton, *Europe and the Turks* (London: John Murray, 1907), pp.60-61; T. Comyn-Platt, *The Turk in the Balkans* (London: Alston Rivers, 1904), pp.10-13; Geoffrey Drage, *Austria-Hungary* (London: J. Murray, 1909), pp.596-603; Henderson, *A British Officer*, pp.106-108.

[62] Herbert Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy with Some Impressions from Macedonia* (London: Grant Richards, 1904), p.236.

author Maude Holbach expressed dismay at the prevalence of Austrian fashions and 'un-Dalmatian' practices among the upper classes of Split and other cities, warning her readers that any remaining cultural authenticity could only be found in outlying villages. The 'crimson turbans', 'twisted waist scarves of many hues' and 'sleeveless jackets of crimson cloth adorned with silver buttons or embroidery' set the peasant apart from urban dwellers who had abandoned their cultural heritage for the 'prosaic twentieth century'.[63] The remoteness of the landscape and limited urbanisation presented a liberating experience for modern travellers; Gerald Brenan recalled having been initially cheered by the 'unbreathed purity of the air on mountaintops' as he passed through Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1912, following the 'stifling' atmosphere of Italy.[64]

Imagological scholarship interprets this romanticism as a further form of othering that distances these territories from civilised European metropoles, resigning them to the status of picturesque, but backward, peripheries.[65] Although valid in certain respects, this argument ignores a deeper conceptualisation of the rural environment in British, and notably English, culture that followed the advent of industrialisation. Before the 1870s, British travellers and commentators such as the Radical Liberal leader Richard Cobden extolled the benefits of continental agrarianism based on smallholdings instead of landed estates – as had been the case in Serbia since the 1830s.[66] By the Edwardian period, more cynical commentators, such as de Windt, found that despite its shortcomings as a modern state, in 'the Garden of the Balkans' (Serbia) even 'the untutored peasant can now make a living by antediluvian methods', which represented an overlooked business opportunity. The fact that Austrians and Germans appeared

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[63] Maude M. Holbach, *Dalmatia: The Land where East Meets West* (London: The Bodley Head, 1908 [1907]), pp.88-90.

[64] Gerald Brenan, *A Life of One's Own* (London: Johnathan Cape, 1962), p.161.

[65] See Todorova, *Imagining*; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*; Fleming, 'Balkan Historiography'; Norris, *In the Wake*; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*.

[66] See Anthony Howe & Simon Morgan (eds.), *The Letters of Richard Cobden: Volume IV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.596-597.

to be the only foreigners exploiting the fecundity of Serbian agriculture appeared all the more distressing.[67]

This propensity for British Romanticism had itself formed in opposition to Enlightenment rationalism and the Industrial Revolution's perceived social ills. In Scotland, James Macpherson, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and other Romantics cultivated a cultural paradigm based on a reverence for the old Highland clan system.[68] South of the border, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and other poets had encouraged the English to perceive themselves as being 'people with immemorial rural roots'.[69] Such nostalgia perpetuated the belief that folk culture and rural tradition were not merely distant cultural heritage, but formed the roots of the very identities and mentalities which had determined Britain's ascendency to the forefront of Western civilisation.[70] From the 1880s onwards, a plurality of conservative, liberal, and socialist cultural impulses attempted to revive, conserve, or invent folk traditions while promoting outdoor pursuits as more wholesome forms of recreation. In larger cities, progressive town planners designed 'cottage-style' dwellings, believing they would improve the working class's psychological well-being. At the very extreme of this 'new pastoralism', new-age humanists called for a 'return to the land' as a palliative for an urban society in danger of stagnation.[71] Besides indicating a departure from the historical context that had informed coverage of the Eastern Crisis, this cultural shift marked a recalibration of British identity towards more abstract notions of moral resilience – qualities almost entirely associated with Britain's rural social spheres.

Popular eulogising of an idealised agrarian past percolated into wider concerns about the sustainability of the urban society that had supplanted it in the mid-eighteenth century. In

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[67] de Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, pp.173-174.
[68] See for example, Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, & Janet Sorensen (eds.), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[69] Julian Moynahan, 'Pastoralism as Culture and Counter-Culture in English Fiction, 1800-1928: From a View to a Death', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol.6, No.1 (April 1972), p.20; Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England', p.63; Ward, *Britishness since 1870*, p.56.
[70] Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, p.202; Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, pp.101-105.
[71] Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.72-77, p.82.

this regard, the rise of the Radical Liberal 'land reform movement' arguably represented the most overt allegorical link between domestic politics and the South Slavonic peasantry, predating even the Eastern Crisis. In 1865, Cobden had proposed that Serbia's social model of peasant smallholders be championed as an alternative to the landed estates of Britain's hereditary nobility. Travel in the country, as confirmed by his associate Humphry Sandwith, was an illustration of contrasts 'between the sturdy Servian peasant with his self-respect, and our abject agricultural labourers!'[72] The perceived virtue of peasant proprietorship, presented as a form of secular democratic piety, was also present in the discussion of regional affairs. Prior to the Berlin treaty, Gladstone's parliamentary associate George Campbell had even proposed the 'conservative peasant-proprietor sort of democracy' of Serbia as the ideal model of free government and stability in the Ottoman's remaining Balkan territories.[73]

By 1909, the Radicals' vision of a countryside of smallholders – freed of aristocratic land monopolies and offering a social 'bulwark' to national decline and Socialism – moved 'out of the sphere of rhetorical politicking and into the realm of practical policymaking'.[74] A 'healthy, vigorous and bold peasantry' was itself perceived by some commentators as a quantifiable state asset for the cultural shift it might engender in British society.[75] Consequently, land reform permeated every political facet of the 1909 constitutional crisis and the general elections of 1910, achieving a modicum of cross-party consensus. Radical M.P.s fashioned electoral campaigns around it, advocating working-class resettlement as a panacea for both rural and urban degradation.[76] In a comparative survey of British and Belgian land tenure in 1911, Rowntree concluded that increasing the number of smallholdings represented

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[72] 'Letter to Potter, 18th March 1865' in Howe & Morgan (eds.), *The Letters of Richard Cobden*, p.596.
[73] George Campbell, 'The Resettlement of the Turkish Dominions', *Fortnightly Review*, Vol.23 (1878), p.550.
[74] Paul Readman, 'The Edwardian Land Question', in Matthew Cragoe & Paul Readman (eds.), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.185-187.
[75] Hugh Aronson, 'Rural Housing: A Lesson from Hertfordshire', *The Contemporary Review*, No.557 (May 1912), p.713.
[76] Ellis W. Davie, 'The Break-up of Landed Estates', *The Contemporary Review*, No.558 (June 1912), pp.4-6.

the only tangible solution for English farming.[77] In a second study on conditions in the English countryside, he further stated that agricultural labourers faced poverty on a scale that surpassed the urban workforce. This was exacerbated by the perception among labouring communities that much of the land on larger estates was being 'under-farmed'.[78] Durham echoed this popular zeal for reform in her description of how a group of Serb peasants, whom she encountered outside the Orthodox monastery at Gračanica in east Kosovo, reacted on being informed of the plight of their distant British counterparts. '[T]he idea of paying rent amazed and shocked them. They regarded working for another as, under any circumstances, *"veliki zalum"* (great tyranny).'[79] Reviving Britain's agriculturalist class was thus perceived as correcting historical injustices in Ireland, Scotland and Wales while restoring 'lost or threatened continuities in the English national *telos*'.[80]

Reversing the decline of Britain's rural communities became enmeshed in foreign and colonial questions accentuated by the Boer War. In 1903, mainstream liberalism joined with British socialists in denouncing further 'vainglorious colonial adventurism' in Africa as antithetical to the drive for national well-being. The combined costs of recent pacification campaigns 'would have settled no less than 5000 cultivators on the land', George Lambert M.P. repeatedly told the National Liberal Federation's annual conferences from 1905 to 1907.[81] Some commentators applied this theory to the general European context with a nod to the South Slav lands. Returning from a tour of Macedonia in 1905, Scott-James urged the Habsburg Monarchy to extend its occupation of Ottoman territory south for the sake of reinvigorating 'our almost sterile Western civilisation' with 'the new stock of vital force which the Balkans can offer.'[82] Such sympathies were conducive to a wider re-evaluation of South Slavonic rural

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[77] B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Land and Labour: Lessons from Belgium* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1911), pp.542-547. See also B. Seebohm Rowntree & May Kendall, *How the Labourer Lives: A Study of the Rural Labour Problem* (London: T. Nielson, 1913).
[78] Ibid., pp.302-307, 319-320.
[79] M.E. Durham, *High Albania* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), p.285.
[80] Readman, *Land and Nation*, p.137.
[81] National Liberal Federation, *Annual Reports*, card 27 (1905); card 29 (1907). Cited in ibid., p.82.
[82] Scott-James, 'The Austrian Occupation of Macedonia', pp.902-903.

identity as displaying many of the moral qualities deemed intrinsic to the civilised societal model increasingly idealised in popular discourse.

Peasants and Cities

Despite having lived intermittently in the 'Austrian Littoral'[83] (where speakers of South Slavonic languages formed the regional majority) from 1904 until 1915, the acclaimed Irish novelist James Joyce never had any interest in the province, outside the 'Italianised' city of Trieste. Earlier secondment as a language teacher in the Istrian port of Pula had provided little inspiration beyond an opportunity to refine his 'archaic' Italian. '[I] hate this Catholic country with its hundred races and thousand languages,' he complained in a letter to his aunt in December 1904. Pula's imperial trappings failed to disguise it as being 'a back-of-God-speed place – a naval Siberia'. According to Joyce's biographer, the cosmopolitan exoticism of Trieste that lent inspiration to *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Exiles* , found little resonance in Pula which he described as 'a long boring place wedged into the Adriatic peopled by ignorant Slavs who wear little red caps and colossal breeches'.[84]

Joyce's disparaging attitude would seem emblematic of the inherently urbanised cultural lens through which Edwardian Britons observed the South Slavonic Balkans. At the beginning of the twentieth century, both societies' social demography appeared almost as statistical inversions of one other. In 1911 for example, over 78 per cent of the population of England and Wales were reported to be living in towns, cities or urban conurbations.[85] By contrast, when Yugoslavia came into existence seven years later, less than a quarter of its twelve million citizens resided in urban areas, with an appreciable portion being cyclical

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[83] A Habsburg crown land located in the northern Adriatic and bordering Italy to the west. Under the Dual-Monarchy it comprised the city of Trieste, the Istrian peninsula, and the county of Gorizia and Gradisca. After 1918, it was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia with much of the region remaining heavily contested owing to its large Slovene-speaking population.
[84] John McCourt, *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste 1904-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp.8-13.
[85] *Census of England and Wales*, *1911* (London: H.M.S.O, 1915), p.11.

migrant workers from the countryside.[86] Moreover, while Britain's own agrarian past was a distant memory by 1900, urban growth in the South Slav lands remained low, even by early twentieth-century Balkan standards. Before 1918, Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb were the only regional cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants; the former's increase from 69,000 residents in 1900 to over 100,000 in 1914 still lagged far behind Athens, Bucharest, or Sofia.[87]

Imagological historiography has given relatively little attention to the question of the rural-urban divide. As noted by Norris and Mazower, while Britain's cities developed as centres of administration, culture, economics, and industry, those of the former Ottoman Balkans, upon which British writers invariably focused, 'evolved under a Turkish Ottoman role model'. Rather than operating through regional centres, the Ottoman Balkan urban sphere had been a tool for asserting control and securing the Empire's trade and transport routes. Moreover, since there was little to distinguish between the differing communities' neighbourhoods, earlier Western accounts had assumed that urban populations were completely Muslim.[88] Goldsworthy describes foreign visitors, convinced by a 'Romantic-inspired idea' that only the village offered 'genuine insight into the "real" culture of an area', expressing a preference for rural settings; cities were deemed pale imitations of their European equivalents.[89] Durham, for instance, wrote in 1903 that the Serbian capital appeared so prosperous and modern, foreigners were always shocked to discover the disorganised and impoverished state of the rest of the country upon travelling through its southern hinterland.[90] Writings on Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina conveyed similar sentiments, noting how cosmopolitan urban centres such as Sarajevo appeared utterly detached from the religiously

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[86] *Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1919-1929* (Belgrade: Central Press Bureau, 1930), p.3.

[87] Indeed, prior to the latter half of the nineteenth century, the populations of Belgrade and Sarajevo had actually declined since the late seventeenth century while Zagreb's only exceeded 10,000 in the early nineteenth century. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, pp.77-81, 86-87.

[88] Thessaloniki on Macedonia's Aegean coast was a salient example. Despite it being unique within the Empire for being 40 to 50 per cent Jewish since the seventeenth century, it was often described by Westerners as the quintessential Ottoman city. Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.89-90; Mazower, 'Oriental City', pp.65-66.

[89] According to Goldsworthy, Cetinje in Montenegro represented the only exception due to the apparent 'authenticity' of the inhabitants' adherence to national customs. Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.168.

[90] M.E. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb* (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), pp.143-144.

segregated villages where the majority of the populace resided.[91] According to Jezernik, this stemmed from a loss of Ottoman urban culture and heterogeneity, as the independent Balkan states strove to 'Europeanise' their towns and cities, imitating Parisian or Habsburg designs. By the mid-1800s, Western visitors could find 'nothing original about the Balkan towns, nothing individual. Everything was borrowed.' [92]

However, first-wave historiography's observance of these trends fails to account for historical contingency, as shown by Mary Sparks's study into Habsburg-administered Sarajevo's urban development from 1878-1918. Throughout this period, elites, rural immigrants and private citizens pursued active roles in redeveloping the Bosnian capital; rather than replicating designs from Vienna and Budapest in the urban landscape, an integrated 'Sarajevan' style appeared which often fused Islamic and Habsburg motifs in architecture and interior design, a point that was not lost to British observers.[93] The West might have 'won' in its battle for cultural dominance, commented Holbach, but when viewed from the surrounding hills, 'Austrian Sarajevo' and 'Turkish Sarajevo' had 'merged into one fair city'.[94] Her contemporaries were inclined to distinguish the former Islamic area as 'a town within a town', but nevertheless often exclaimed a preference for this integrated style.[95] 'I have seen many cities renowned for their beauty,' remarked a visiting anthropologist 'but none of them excited within me such admiration as Sarajevo.'[96] Recognition of this new style raises a salient question as to how British discourse perceived the relationship between South Slavonic cities and their hinterlands, particularly the latter's ability to influence the former.[97]

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[91] Abbot, *The Tale of a Tour*, p.135; Henderson, *A British Officer*, pp.93-107; Maude M. Holbach, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Some Wayside Wanderings* (London: The Bodley Head, 1910 [1909]), p.140.

[92] Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, p.227.

[93] Mary Sparks, *The Development of Austro-Hungarian Sarajevo, 1878-1918: An Urban History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), p.181.

[94] Holbach, *Some Wayside Wanderings*, pp.89-90.

[95] Roy Trevor, *My Balkan Tour: An Account of some Journeyings and Adventures in the Near East* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1911), pp.87-89.

[96] Robert Munro, *Rambles and Studies in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia, Second Edition* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1900 [1895]), p.16.

[97] On the social intersection between the urban and rural space in the South Slavonic Balkans before and after 1945, see Joel M. Halpern, 'Peasant Culture and Urbanization in Yugoslavia', *EKISTICS: Review of the Problems and Science of Human Settlements*, Vol.21, No.122 (January 1966), pp.21-23; Andrei Simić, *The Peasant Urbanites: A Study of Rural-Urban Mobility in Serbia* (New York: Seminar Press, 1973).

As the region's image continued to shift within the public sphere, discursive representations began to divine a general absence in the rigid rural-urban divide of the industrialised West, with South Slavonic cities retaining a socio-economic fluidity deemed to predate the Industrial Revolution. Romantic or less critical voices again presented the limited presence of industrialisation and urban capitalism as socially beneficial, praising the absence of urban poverty while ignoring or interpreting its presence in rural districts as evidence of an unambiguous adherence to organic cultural traditions.[98] Furthermore, narratives about the urban environment in territories with an overwhelmingly rural population base tended, in part, to be grounded in a social setting with which middle-class British audiences were likely to be more familiar. This was, often unconsciously, framed by the presupposition that the industrial metropolis represented the point of socio-political divergence between European and non-European civilisation. Neither rural nostalgia nor concerns about urban degeneration could diminish an implicit appreciation of the city as the space in which existed the generators of urbanity: industry, scientific innovation, artistic refinement and, more recently, social and political dynamism.[99] However, in keeping with the discursive turn away from modernity as a purely beneficial social development, minimal industrialisation and urban sprawl represented many of the positive connotations associated with the rural environment while limiting or removing distinctions.

Geographical features were often deemed key to this notion of a less defined rural-urban divide. The Greco-Roman heritage of the Adriatic's coastal towns, for example, might imply a past oriented towards the urban city-state rather than the village commune, but resource limitations impeded further development. The Venetian grandeur of Trogir or Zadar, several authors noted, belied a reliance on the rural economy and their relative isolation within the

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[98] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, pp.180-181.
[99] See Christopher J. Ferguson, *Inventing the Modern City: Urban Culture and Ideas in Britain, 1780-1880* (PhD Thesis, Indiana University, 2008).

Monarchy.[100] In the context of rising latent disillusionment with the urban centre as a progressive space however, this was not necessarily considered to be negative; Zadar's lack of a railway station, one passing visitor extrapolated, simply reflected its citizenry's desire 'to live out of the world' (rather than a symptom of Vienna's financial neglect as claimed by local nationalists).[101] In some circumstances, division appeared non-existent. Across most of western Istria, it was observed that adverse in-land conditions obliged peasants to live in the cities themselves, as was the case with Rovinj.[102] In the more exiguous coastal urban centres, a greater cultural 'closeness' to the past even saw a blurring in the distinction between peasants and town-dwellers. Holbach argued that the authorities' encouragement of lace-making and other forms of 'native-industry', or new ones more congenial to Dalmatia's traditional intermingling of rural and urban – such as the production of insect powder from wild chrysanthemums – would ameliorate economic problems without sacrificing the environment or local tradition.[103]

Cities in the north Croat lands, on the rare occasions they actually appeared in British descriptions, were also indelibly linked to their hinterlands, despite displaying more outwardly Central European facades. Expecting the 'narrow, dark and odoriferous streets' of coastal Dalmatia, Henderson's professed surprise at being 'back in Western civilization' was somewhat attenuated by the continued sight of peasants in national costume, appearing as a hybrid of Bosnia and Albanian dress, crowding Zagreb's city centre.[104] Against the Central European architectural grandeur and simulacra of 'the Croat dream', peasants became 'near-mythical figures that might have stepped out of a picture book', their colourful national costume speaking 'of another race'.[105] Nevertheless, British discourse was unable to divorce

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[100] Holbach, *Dalmatia*, p.31; F. Hamilton Jackson, *The Shores of the Adriatic, The Austrian Side* (London: John Murray, 1908), pp.138-139, 206-207; Mrs. E.I. Russell Barrington, *Through Greece and Dalmatia* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1912), pp.151-155, 202-204.
[101] Robert Hichens, *The Near East: Dalmatia, Greece and Constantinople* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913), p.8.
[102] Jackson, *The Shores of the Adriatic*, p.128.
[103] Holbach, *Dalmatia*, pp.23-25.
[104] Henderson, *A British Officer*, pp.293-294.
[105] Trevor, *My Balkan Tour*, pp.7-8.

these areas from the influences of their hinterlands, or neighbouring South Slavonic territories. Despite appearing as a 'fervently Catholic capital', another traveller described Zagreb's ambience as more similar to that of an Ottoman border town than a national capital. The 'blue haze of the mountains of Bosnia', visible from the elevation of the upper town on a clear day, reminded foreigners that although Croats aspired to be 'European', they could not escape their fate as the 'Fringe of the Orient'.[106] Reflecting on his recent journey in the other South Slav lands, Henderson also concluded that even the 'up-to-date civilisation' of Croatia-Slavonia did not exempt it from the socially integral agrarianism of Bosnia-Herzegovina 'as if transplanted from the Indian frontier'.[107]

This stylising of the region's urban spaces as gateways to an authentic rural cultural sphere was not a ubiquitous development. In territories which remained under Ottoman civil or military administration, a revival in liberal anti-Turkish sentiments increasingly characterised cities as outposts of conservative Islamic repression, perpetuating stagnation and degeneracy while stymying the rural Christian populace's latent potential.[108] In Macedonia, which had one of the highest rates of rural to urban migration in the region, the urban environment was construed as having precluded such progress and development; excluding Bitola and the port of Thessaloniki, most were dismissed as 'dusty Turkish towns', important only for their strategic value or as microcosms of the ethno-nationalist unrest produced by Ottoman corruption and incompetence.[109] Abbott described Veles, 55 km southeast of Skopje, as epitomising these tensions: despite being confined to a narrow river valley, the 'few weather-stained minarets stood in opposition to its more numerous church belfries', these being divided between 'Bulgarian' and 'Greek'.[110] Without necessarily offering direct parallels, Macedonia's social problems mirrored latent contemporary anxieties concerning rural depopulation and

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[106] Ibid., p.9.
[107] Henderson, *A British Officer*, p.294.
[108] Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, pp.207-209; Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', pp.65-66.
[109] Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour*, p.9; H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen & Co., 1906), p.29; Fraser, *Pictures*, p.156-157.
[110] Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour*, p.10.

urban impoverishment.[111] In 1902, a Serbian geographer contextualised this analogy through his warning that the growing urban population would only exacerbate instability. In Prilep, 45 km southwest of Veles, hundreds of young men who had fled the violence in the countryside 'sat idle' or joined 'political gangs', while 'the fertile Prilep fields weep for work-hands'.[112]

Conversely, a complete absence of a recognisable urban centre – thus providing no point of social reference – could also promote derision, with Montenegro serving as the principal example. Efforts to nurture industry in more readily accessible towns such as Kolašin, Nikšić and Ulcinj did little to modify Montenegro's image as 'a regal suburbia', as one correspondent sardonically remarked.[113] 'Neither is it hard to believe that Nikšić is the coming town,' concluded an early British guidebook in 1903, 'but progress makes sometimes wonderful strides.'[114] Furthermore, as initially noted by Ford, the 'bravery, frankness, honesty, hardihood' and other virtuous qualities attributed to the Montenegrin national character under the anti-Ottoman auspices of the Eastern Crisis, conflicted with the risible international image of its diminutive national capital, Cetinje.[115] For Durham, her first impressions of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty's seat of royal power in 1900 were of 'the ugliest, oddest toy-capital conceivable'. It could easily have passed for a colonial outpost 'at the end of the world or the other end of nowhere'.[116] Subsequent Edwardian comparisons to 'a South African township' or more euphemistic descriptions of it as being 'quaint in the extreme' implied the erosion of Montenegro's heroic reputation as some observers began to posit that its geographic inaccessibility, rather than its martial prowess, had allowed it to remain historically independent.[117] Nevertheless, Cetinje's reputation as 'a big village' (and contrast with the capitals of other South Slav territories) challenged post-agrarian British societal norms by

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Jovan Hadži-Vasiljević, *Prilep i njegova okolina:istorijsko-geografska izlaganja* (Belgrade: Štamp. P. Jockovića, 1902), p.44.
[113] (Col.) Lionel James, *Times of Stress* (London: John Murray, 1929), p.179.
[114] Wyon & Prance, *The Land of the Black Mountain*, pp.261-262.
[115] Ford, 'Montenegro in the Eyes of the Traveller', pp.355-356.
[116] M.E. Durham, 'Letter to Mother, 10th September 1900', *Durham*, RAI: MS 43.
[117] [Le Queux], *An Observer*, p.23; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.101.

presenting late-Victorian and Edwardian visitors with a societal model that blurred the received concept of a cultural rural-urban divide to the point of annulling it. The peasant mountaineers who congregated along its main streets were social chameleons in that they could potentially occupy multiple roles as soldiers, artisans, merchants, or even civil servants.[118]

This idea of the peasantry as the fulcrum in defining both urban and rural South Slavonic identity was encapsulated in the 'peasant democracy' Fraser observed while attending an open sitting of the Serbian *skupština* [National Assembly].[119] Contrasting with the prosaic Western suits worn by urban representatives, 'who could pass for parliamentary deputies in Vienna or Budapest', Belgrade's parliament teemed with men 'in brown homespun zouave jackets, beflowered shirts, tight-fitting brown homespun trousers and rough rural-made sandals'. Rural deputies also wore 'white trousers which look as though they have shrunk in the wash, and white shirts falling to their knees'.[120] For Fraser, the peasant not only 'had presence' in the metropolis but occupied its very centre: the seat of national politics. Even the parliament building's interior resembled 'the inside of a barn' with some deputies eschewing the formalities of the legislation chamber to debate outside in the shade of lime trees as though 'attending a village meeting'.[121] Rather than enforcing division, Serbia's urban sphere had amalgamated with its rural counterpart through village culture, to Fraser's and many of his contemporaries' professed approval, permeating every level of society and eroding the rural-urban divide.[122] This shift in attitudes was indeed a notable departure from the more discernibly polarised characterisations noted by Bracewell as having defined political discussion in the 1870s.[123]

Allegorising Remoteness

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[118] Trevor, *Montenegro*, p.21.
[119] This term is also used to denote the national parliament of Montenegro and the parliamentary bodies of Socialist Yugoslavia's former constituent republics.
[120] Fraser, *Pictures*, p.38.
[121] The current Serbian parliament building was only completed in 1936.
[122] Fraser, *Pictures*, pp.37-39; [Le Queux], *An Observer*, pp.21-28, p.101.
[123] Bracewell, 'Opinion-Makers', p.99.

Prior to Ilinden–Preobrazhenie, observations of peasants tended to follow in the late nineteenth-century touristic pattern of vague, semi-colonial or pseudo-scientific precepts. Durham's initial foray into the South Slavonic lands typified this continuity. Arriving on the Dalmatian coast in September 1900, her impressions were of a 'bright dazzling land…flowing with maraschino and insect-powder', populated by tall, dark peasants with 'aquiline features' who 'squat on their haunches just like savages'.[124] As imagological historiography has tended to argue, these tropes persisted even as authors acquired greater awareness of cultural nuance. Writing in 1908, the ex-Serbian diplomatic and Anglophile, Čedomilj Mijatović, admitted that international opprobrium towards Serbia was not entirely unfounded when an estimated '82 per cent of the population' were beholden to a myriad of archaic shibboleths.[125]

In 1900, thousands of kilometres of railway already connected most of the regional urban centres (excluding Montenegro) with Central Europe and Istanbul; however, the notion of rural communities seemingly untouched by modernity persisted. While similar motifs appeared in depictions of neighbouring territories, Hadžiselimović identifies Bosnia-Herzegovina as the primary exemplar of a ubiquitous 'east-meets-west' dichotomy that frequently underpinned such archetypes.[126] The *Times* war correspondent Lionel James described Sarajevo in 1909 as having been transformed from 'a ramshackle collection of wooden huts…almost submerging in the Marches of the East' into 'a military cantonment of the West, somewhat forbiddingly flaunting the virility of its Christian progress'. Yet, James did not have to venture far along the Miljacka River to discover 'as fascinating an intermingling of primitive Christian civilisation with the mystery and lassitude of diluted Moslemism as is to be found in all Eastern Europe'.[127]

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[124] M.E. Durham, 'Diary 10th September 1900', *Mary Edith Durham 'Collection'*, RAI: MS 42; eadem, 'Letter to Mother, 20th August 1900', *Durham*, RAI: MS 43.
[125] Chedo Mijatovich, *Servia and the Servians* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1908), p.236.
[126] Hadžiselimović, *At the Gates of the East*, p.xxvii.
[127] A Bosnian river that passes through Sarajevo. James, *Times of Stress*, pp.172-173.

An emphasis on distance in imaginative geography, first-wave imagological historians have argued, created an overarching impression of cultural remoteness and isolation.[128] This had been notable in the 1870s when both pro- and anti-Ottoman writers had made derogatory comparisons between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Muslim North Africa or Asia.[129] Even after 1900, some authors still described ostensibly European regions, such as Dalmatia, as lands of 'brigands, primitive travel and squalid fare'.[130] Finding a suitable analogy for this sense of cultural alienation in his crossing of the Habsburg-Montenegrin border, de Windt seized on a recurrent historical trope of depicting entry into a Balkan land as being as much a metaphysical experience. A six-hour climb from Habsburg-ruled Kotor to the Montenegrin border signalled his arrival to what might have been another worldly plain; the environment itself changed 'with the rapidity of a scene shift at a London theatre', exhibiting 'not a vestige of life or particle of verdure…more suggestive of a lunar than an earthly landscape'.[131] While better disposed towards foreign tourism, lowland coastal Dalmatia also retained a veneer of cultural obscurity, failing to attract the attention that Britain's burgeoning elite tourist market expended on Italy. The lack of any regular British presence reinforced perceptions of the region as extrinsic to the Anglosphere in general. In 1908, Dubrovnik, Trogir and other Dalmatian coastal towns were 'full of visitors speaking in German tongue', but devoid of native English-speakers including, 'the ever present American', observed one itinerant female artist.[132]

Nevertheless, rising public interest after 1903 also saw a measure of consensus begin to form in British representations, suggesting that intimate understanding could only be achieved through knowledge of native customs – or what commentators understood them to be. In this regard, particular traditions and practices were increasingly portrayed as an integral, albeit esoteric, aspect of South Slavonic culture, reflective of attitudes which had accompanied

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[128] Kostova, *Tales*, pp.10-12; Fleming, 'Balkan Historiography', p.12; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.112.
[129] Evans, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina*, p.89; Creagh. *Over the Borders of Christendom*, p.253.
[130] de Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, p.69.
[131] Ibid., pp.38-39.
[132] (Mrs.) E.R. Whitwell, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina with a Paint Brush* (Darlington: William Dresser & Sons, 1909), p.44.

the revival of interest in Britain's own agrarian past. The 'Balkan States Exhibition', held at Earl's Court in 1907, was illustrative of this trend. Organised, in part, through the collaboration of Bourchier, Buxton, Durham and Seton-Watson and other leading figures in Edwardian organised opinion, the exhibition, much to the chagrin of its regional co-organisers, included a replica of the 'typical Balkan village' as its centrepiece. Serb, Bulgarian and Montenegrin hopes of showcasing their countries' recent advances in the arts, economics, sciences and urban planning were eclipsed by the displays of 'quaint houses', 'gypsy dancers', and 'peasant costume and crafts' prioritised by their British hosts.[133]

The 1907 exhibition may have simply demonstrated a change in how British imaginative geography continued to essentialise the South Slavs, its emphasis on peasant communities rooted in the land and 'organic' rural customs serving to contextualise a more positive reimagining of formerly pejorative Victorian archetypes.[134] The popularity of the cultural event also gave momentum to a further wave of romantic and touristic literary interest in the region's aesthetic unfamiliarity and alien habits. The ubiquity of the 'Turkish fez' and 'embroidered sashes' worn by Bosnian peasant men, or 'the scarlet, gold-embroidered costumes' and 'small round hats' in Montenegro had already began to normalise peasants as envoys of the region's more positive cultural elements.[135]

Even before 1907, this focus on the aesthetic was stressed, legitimising a need for deeper consideration of South Slavonic society and more contemporary political matters through the region's role as an emerging, albeit still remote, branch of the European cultural sphere.[136] Organised opinion in particular, was keen to dispel any simulacra that might present

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[133] J. Steward, '"The Balkans in London": Political Culture and the Cultural Politics of Exhibitions at Earl's Court, 1906-1908', *Balkan Studies (Études Balkaniques)*, Vol.44, No.4 (2008), pp.77-82.

[134] A historical precedent had been set by the whimsical displays of embroidery and 'folklore traditions' in the Austrian pavilion at the 1900 Paris *Exposition Universelle*. Philippe Jullian, *The Triumph of Art Nouveau: Paris Exhibition, 1900* (London: Phaidon Press, 1974), pp.71-72.

[135] Believed to be of Byzantine origin, the fez was adopted by the Ottoman army in the 1820s, replacing the turban as, ironically, a Westernising measure. Despite becoming another Oriental cliché in Western imagery, by the 1870s it was perceived as a symbol of modernity in Islamic countries. Mitton, *Austria-Hungary*, p.192; Trevor, *Montenegro*, pp.22-23.

[136] Reginald Wyon, *The Balkans from Within* (London: James Finch & Co., 1904), p.ix; M.E. Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), p.3.

its preferred national groups as existing at the perceived margins of civilisation. Accentuating the Dalmatian Croats' reputation as 'one of the finest seafaring races of Europe', Seton-Watson pointed to a prevalence of spoken English among the peasants of the Pelješac peninsula and island of Korčula, many of whom had served on British merchant ships – a fact, he insisted, that made Dalmatian society more attuned to Western mores.[137] As further noted by Berber, by the 1890s, numerous analogous associations between the region and Ireland had been made; while these continued to assign the region peripheral status, it had, by 1912, been cast as a periphery that 'orbited within the European cultural space'.[138]

Not all commentators, including those aiming to present South Slavs in a more positive light, were as convinced of their latent orientation towards Europe, particularly those who still remained under Ottoman rule before 1912, or who inhabited the remotest areas, such as the Montenegrins. Durham, for instance, discerned awareness of the wider world among these rural communities as spasmodic, owing to the imbalanced nature of emigration patterns. The crowd that gathered during her visit to Gračanica, for example, had known of the United States from returning economic migrants but not Britain. When informed that it could not be reached by horse in less than three weeks, those still able to talk through their disbelief could only utter, 'My God!' A greater shock had been to discover that it was not only under the Ottomans 'that the people did not own the land they worked', on hearing of conditions among British agricultural labourers.[139]

Neither did a more positive reappraisal reduce the continued proliferation of sources emphasising the most visibly outlandish cultural qualities. Popular anthropology and the literary trend for pseudo-scientific positivism, prompted a tendency towards emphasising customs and beliefs deemed the most alien to middle-class sensibilities.[140] In his 1908 guide to

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[137] R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy* (London; Constable & Co. Ltd., 1911), p.5.

[138] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p.107.

[139] M.E. Durham, *My Balkan Notebook Vol.III: Albania*, [1940], *Durham*, RAI: MS 41/1, p.46; eadem, *High Albania* (1909), p.284.

[140] See Simon Rabinovitch, 'A Bridge to the East: Moses Gaster as a Romanian Folklorist', in *BÉROSE, Encyclopédie en ligne sur l'histoire des savoirs ethnographiques* (Paris: IIAC-LAHIC, 2015).

Serbia, Mijatović dedicated a considerable portion to national beliefs and the intermingling of Orthodoxy with pre-Christian pagan pastoralism. Concessions made by Christian missionaries in the sixth and seventh centuries meant that witches and nature spirits were still revered alongside saints in peasant folklore.[141] Neither was this confined to the former Ottoman lands. Village festivals and traditions in Istria and Dalmatia, for example, were hypothesised to predate the arrival of both the Slavs and Christianity in the region alongside a myriad of defensive rituals employed against supernatural threats.[142] Firing 'three grains of corn and the Paschal wax-candle at the lightning before the thunder sounds' for instance, was believed to kill witches while farmers were also inclined to throw 'salt and shredded garlic' at the sky, believing it would prevent hailstorms from damaging their vineyards.[143] Further inland, Eastern mysticism appeared to influence all such traditions observed in the hinterlands, regardless of their geographical position within Europe; peasants still used astrology to determine when to plant certain crops and make other crucial decisions, whilst 'amulets' were ubiquitous on both sides of the 'Turkish border' to ward off evil spirits.[144]

More mainstream channels of information were no less impervious to the widespread fascination for superstition or popular anthropological interest in esoteric traditions. An article appearing in the *Hull Daily Mail* in 1900 for instance, reported that in Serbia's most remote districts, state officials were resorting to threatening collective prison sentences in order to prevent peasant mobs from exhuming and mutilating corpses, believing them to be vampires.[145] Another article in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* from 1902 related how peasants in eastern Bosnia poured water into the opened grave of a man who had committed suicide, believing it

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[141] Mijatovich, *Servia and the Servians*, p.38.
[142] Barrington, *Through Greece and Dalmatia*, p.203.
[143] Jackson, *The Shores of the Adriatic*, pp.14-16
[144] Ibid., pp.17-18. The ostensibly less parochial Slovenes were no exception in this recourse to the supernatural. Well into the early twentieth century, travellers in Lower Styria noted that the services of 'counterwitches' – female mystics with the power to nullify witches' curses and predict the future – remained in high demand. Mirjam Mencej, 'Witchcraft in Eastern Slovenia and Western Macedonia – a Comparative Analysis', in Zmago Šmitek & Aneta Svetieva (eds.), *Post-Yugoslav Lifeworlds: Between Tradition and Modernity* (Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, 2005), p.45-46.
[145] 'Manacled by Superstition', *Hull Daily Mail* (29th August, 1900), p.4.

would alleviate drought.[146] Even the contemporary realm of state politics did not always appear immune from the influence of peasant superstition: three years after the regicide, Bourchier wrote of a groundswell of rural discontent regarding 'the curse of blood-guiltiness' that was now believed to afflict Serbia. Severe droughts in 1905, and the resultant shortage of basic staples, were interpreted as divine 'displeasure at the immunity accorded to the crime'.[147]

The irony of this preoccupation with folklore and the supernatural was not entirely lost on more astute observers, regarding the idiosyncrasies of their mostly middle-class readership. Durham discerned, with characteristic wryness, 'buried similarities' between Albanian and South Slavonic peasant customs, and the Edwardian vogue for spiritualism. Was the use of the 'breastbones of fowls to foretell the future' in Herzegovina and Macedonia so comparatively 'otherworldly' when, in 1908, 'palmistry and spiritualist societies' were flourishing in North London?[148]

Allusions to spiritualism and folklore were usually allied with considerations of the religious observances that permeated much of South Slavonic peasant society. Imagological debate on the significance of religion has itself tended to focus on it as a point of direct contrast or as one of the few denominators of national and cultural identity. Todorova and Norris assert that regional Catholicism, unburdened by the 'cumbersome "Slavic" quality' of Orthodoxy or Oriental Islam, made its mainly Croat and Slovene adherents historically closer to 'Western Civilization'.[149] Drapac challenges this view, arguing that Orthodoxy's inherent association with Protestant practices, anti-Papal Erastianism and the Balkan national liberation struggles placed Catholics at a consistent disadvantage within British representations.[150]

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[146] 'Superstition in Bosnia', *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* (18th August, 1902), p.7.
[147] J.D. Bourchier, 'The Situation in Servia', *The Times* (9th February, 1906), p.8.
[148] John Hodgson, 'Edith Durham: Traveller and Publicist', in Allcock & Young, *Black Lambs*, p.10. Mijatović had only come to press attention after it was revealed that he had been present at a clairvoyance ceremony where the Serbian regicide had allegedly been foretold. W.T. Stead (ed.), 'A Clairvoyant Vision of the Assassination at Belgrade', *Review of Reviews*, Vol.28 (July-December 1903), p.31.
[149] Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.38-40.
[150] Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.11-12, p.131; Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.12-13, 50-58.

As noted by Goldsworthy and others however, representations and concrete discussions of Balkan Christianity itself were generally ambiguous. Despite acknowledging differences in belief and ceremonial practice, perceptions of the immediate importance of doctrine had diminished since the late nineteenth century through the assumption that South Slav peasants lacked understanding of the higher purposes of religion anyway.[151] This presumption was even reinforced by regional elites, as shown by Mijatović's description of the Serb peasantry's religious sentiments as 'neither deep nor warm': expressions of strict devotion invariably fell away outside of Orthodox and family holidays.[152] From an allegorical perspective, these discursive representations of religion were conducive to a decline of religiosity in British politics and the public sphere. While the language of denominational religious fervour continued to proliferate in Edwardian popular discourse, featuring regularly in organised opinion's public campaigns, it was 'essentially figurative and metaphorical', a means of emotively framing secular issues.[153] This did not necessarily mean, however, that faith was branded as an irrelevance, particularly in regards to Christian devotion and its own cultural elevation in the discursive moral hierarchy.[154]

Until 1913, this was illustrated in attitudes towards Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. As with the late 1800s, Muslim Slavs remained an object of general opprobrium, perceived as a political (rather than cultural) vestige of the Ottoman conquests with their faith deemed culturally secular in nature. The legacy of the *millet* system – which categorised Istanbul's subjects by confession rather than ethnicity – compounded this by branding all Muslims as 'Turks'.[155] Muslim conservatism in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular, was often deemed to be impeding the much-needed Habsburg modernisation efforts.[156] Discussion of

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[151] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.75-76; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, p.73; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, pp.54-55.

[152] Mijatovich, *Servia and the Servians*, p.51.

[153] Simon Skinner, 'Religion', in Craig & Thompson (eds.), *Languages of Politics*, pp.112-113.

[154] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', p.186.

[155] [Charles Eliot] 'Odysseus', *Turkey in Europe* (London: Edward Arnold, 1900), pp.321-323.

[156] [Eliot], *Turkey in Europe*, p.158; Henderson, *A British Officer*, pp.99-101; Holbach, *Some Wayside Wanderings*, p.33.

motifs and practices offered little analysis of its cultural intricacies while its presumed otherness appeared evident in an apparent absence of any intermingling with pagan spiritualism.[157] This latent hostility was further accentuated by the continued presence of Muslim land-owning *beys* in these territories.[158] Despite representing a small social minority, their existence reinforced narratives of a cultural homogenous Christian peasantry repressed by an equally homogenous Muslim elite.[159]

Nevertheless, late Victorian and Edwardian representations could also demonstrate a better acquaintance with local history. By 1900, the medieval practice of Bogomilism, for example, was increasingly recognised as a historic precursor for some segments of the population gravitating towards the 'Eastern mysticism' of Islam.[160] This apparent contingency of history over dogmatic fidelity convinced Henderson that a network of state-run *madrasas* would sway temporal Muslim loyalties away from Istanbul towards Vienna. While incorporating Bosnian Islam into a European cultural framework, this would also neutralise the 'Mohammedan fanaticism' reported to be rampant in Macedonia.[161] In the aforementioned territory, however, this purportedly unambiguous relationship between cultural identity and faith was markedly absent in British representations. Islam, Fraser claimed, was rarely discussed beyond the privileged role enjoyed by Muslim peasants in matters of taxation.[162]

For the benighted Christian *rayah*, faith itself transcended liturgical practice as a euphemism for universal victimhood, a Gladstonian motif originating in the Eastern Crisis. The radical journalist, H.N. Brailsford, had, in the main, been responsible for its revival as head of the 'Macedonian Relief Fund' (MRF) – a humanitarian aid mission operating out of the southwestern Macedonian city of Bitola (with Durham heading a mission in the municipalities

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[157] Munro, *Rambles and Studies*, pp.22-23.
[158] A Turkish title originally used to denote a tribal chieftain. Under the Ottomans, it evolved into a formal term of address but Western observers tended to associate it with the landowning political and military elite.
[159] [Eliot], *Turkey in Europe*, pp.379-380.
[160] M.E. Durham, *My Balkan Notebook Vol.II: Montenegro* [1940], Mary Edith Durham 'Collection', RAI: MS 41/1, p.11; Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p.86.
[161] Henderson, *A British Officer*, pp.106-107.
[162] Fraser, *Pictures*, pp.259-260.

of Ohrid and Resen) following Ilinden–Preobrazhenie. In the villages surrounding the city, volunteers had reported that the Orthodox Church fulfilled a temporal as much as a spiritual role similar to that of Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Christian peasant's inexpedient 'fidelity to his Church' made his historic lot 'one of continuous martyrdom' for five centuries, a consequence he was willing to endure. Villagers even urged the MRF to channel its resources into reconstructing destroyed religious buildings. As 'the only free and communal life which the Turk permits', Brailsford remarked that the Church was the peasantry's only source of identity, making it 'more or less secularised' and 'essentially a national organisation':

> It reminds him of the greater past. It unites him to his fellow Christians throughout the [Ottoman] Empire, and in the free lands beyond the Empire. It is the one form of association and combination which is not treasonable. Its Bishops are the sole Christian aristocracy in Turkey, its synods and councils the only form of autonomy or representative self-government which the law allows.[163]

Discussions on Serbian Orthodoxy provided similar parallels. 'A Church should be the soul of the nation and is so most emphatically in Servia,' Vivian wrote in 1904. That the peasants, in an effort to preserve their identity, were willing to endure generations of impoverishment and humiliation under Ottoman rule in order to maintain a successive line of Serb patriarchs, offered 'convincing proof of the identity of Servia as a Church and a State, as well as of the noblest and loftiest patriotism'.[164] According to Mijatović, however, the peasantry's ingrained pragmatism, a legacy of Ottoman domination, had actually reconciled the Church's role to that of a vehicle for national cohesion rather than the conservator of Serbian spiritual well-being. Upon commenting on this, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, accompanying Mijatović on a tour of Serbia, was curtly informed by an Archimandrite that Serb peasants had prayed to God 'to deliver them from the Turks' for over four hundred years.

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[163] Brailsford, *Macedonia*, pp.60-62.
[164] The head of an autocephalous, or independent, Orthodox Church. Vivian also noted similar processes in Macedonia and Bulgaria whose Slavonic adherents 'until quite recently…were commonly supposed throughout Europe to be Greeks'. Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy*, pp.227-228.

What was needed was 'good education, good schools, good soldiers, good officers and good arms!'[165]

Along the Dalmatian coast, even the concerted efforts of the Holy See's missionaries had apparently failed to diffuse shared liturgical customs between Catholics and Orthodox. As in Serbia, where pagan idolatry was channelled towards saintly icons, Dalmatia's clergy were to be found leading rural congregations before numerous shrines, in the hope of alleviating drought and illness.[166] This degree of shared liturgical traditions and secular functions, performed at the behest of the peasants, led some commentators to conclude that religious denominations were merely hypothetical. Amid a large crowd of Montenegrins and 'Christians from Bosnia-Herzegovina', one British visitor to Montenegro's famous Ostrog Monastery in 1903, observed 'a cavalcade of Turks…just arrived from Sarajevo' to pay homage at the monastic shrine to 'St. Vasili'. In those lands, the author remarked, 'Moslems, Greek, Roman Catholics, even Protestants all journey to St. Vasili'.[167] The apparent contingent nature of religion in the South Slavonic lands also prompted political observers such as Seton-Watson to turn instead to Herder's theory of language as a central precondition for Yugoslav nationhood by 1914.[168]

Allusions to pre-Christian paganism, coupled with the Southern Slavs' ambiguous and contested historical origins, provoked comparisons with Britain's own 'Celtic peripherals', *scilicet* the Scottish Highlands or western Ireland. Even before 1900, British archaeology had already identified the South Slav lands as a *sine quâ non* in tracing the Celtic past; peasant clothing 'might pass muster among Scottish peasants', while the landscape brought to mind 'some of the more picturesque parts of our Scottish Highlands'.[169] Berber argues that despite

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[165] The head priest of an Orthodox monastery or collection of monasteries, similar to a Roman Catholic abbot. Another of Mijatović's friends was shocked to discover that Serbian religious education involved pupils debating the implausibility of biblical scriptures in favour of scientific rationalism. Mijatovich, *Servia and the Servians*, pp.51-52.
[166] Jackson, *The Shores of the Adriatic*, p.54; Holbach, *Dalmatia*, p.41.
[167] Wyon, *The Balkans from Within*, p.260.
[168] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, pp.36-42; Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.50-53.
[169] Munro, *Rambles and Studies,* p.vi, pp.45-49.

its distinction as part of the Orient, British visitors cast Bosnia-Herzegovina and its peasantry as having the same 'centre-periphery' relationship with Istanbul as Ireland did with the British mainland. Both territories were organised in cultural and racial hierarchies that marked the Southern Slavs as existing beneath the Irish in their apparent preparedness for political self-determination.[170]

Conversely, as discussed earlier, by the 1910s, commentators increasingly used the Slavonic communities in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia as a direct political, and occasional cultural, parallel to the contemporary Celtic fringe (notably Ireland), yet not all similarities were discursively positive.[171] 'I pay them a great but well-deserved compliment, at the same time hinting at the weaker points of their psychological constitution,' Mijatović remarked when summarising the mentality of his fellow countrymen, 'they are – Irish of the Balkans!'[172] This conflation of the South Slavonic Balkans and the 'Celtic peripherals' also implied vanished or faded past glories. The Montenegrin village of Njeguši, 'the cradle of the Petrović dynasty', was described as resembling 'some squalid hamlet in the far north of Scotland', where peasants lived in stone huts 'more like cattle-sheds than human habitations'.[173] Despite Ford's claim that positive impressions lasted until 1914, the 'lionising' of the mountain principality (declared a kingdom in 1910) was less overt after 1900; with the 'shattering' of its martial reputation in the 1890s, depictions of its wild desolation were as likely to be used as a means of clarifying the 'country's under-development' and the impoverished state of the general population.[174] On the approach to Cetinje, James commented that the royal capital still retained as 'much [of] the appearance of a Cornish village' in the 1900s as it had done in the 1840s. Amid 'the lazy and good-for-nothing Montenegrins, lounging in their doorways, with interminable cigarettes, shedding ash across the fronts of their

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[170] Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Hercegovina*, p.106.
[171] Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.143-144; Berber, *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina*, pp.93-95. See also Barry, *At the Gates of the East*.
[172] Mijatovich, *Servia and the Servians*, p.iv.
[173] de Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, p.40.
[174] Wyon & Prance, *The Land of the Black Mountain*, p.219; [Le Queux], *An Observer*, p.22.

gaudy jerkins', the grandiose embassies of the Great Powers appeared as oases of Western civility.[175]

Yet, by the early twentieth century, such discouraging comparisons proved less consensual, with the equating of remoteness with primitiveness as likely to be attacked or dismissed as evidence of public ignorance or the spread of misinformation. Henderson complained that while Montenegro's Crown Prince Nikola Petrović-Njegoš had successfully eliminated many egregious traditions, the press persisted in conflating the Black Mountaineers with Scottish 'caterans', a term synonymous with 'gangs of bandits, cattle-rustlers and other outlaws'.[176] The increasing plurality of opinion even witnessed discursive challenges to popular regional tropes such as violence. Early in her anthropological career, Durham scorned Victorian preconceptions of violence predicated on ancient grievances. The Montenegrin adherence to antediluvian codes of blood honour was dismissed as culturally picturesque but superficial. The principality exuded the qualities of 'a dream or cinematograph…safe as an Earl's Court show and many times more respectable'.[177] Further east, the 'clannish animosities' between Kosovo's Serbs and Albanians were 'common to the childhood of all races' which would fade with modernisation, as they had done in Scotland.[178] Neither was the presence of a cultural space akin to Britain's own rural peripheries deemed entirely detrimental in an age in which urban modernity and industrialisation were perceived as precipitating social crises. Scott-James insisted that remote communities were a necessary corrective to urban decline. Discussing the lake-dwellers of Lough Neagh, west of Belfast, he identified a 'primitive energy' contiguous with that of the Slavs whom he had encountered on the shores of Lake Ohrid in Macedonia. Through this association, he felt vindicated in categorising Ireland as 'part of the Orient', and believed that such energy was the key to rejuvenating British society and wider Western civilisation:

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[175] James, *Times of Stress*, pp.174-176.
[176] Henderson, *A British Officer*, p.56.
[177] Durham, 'Letter to Mother, 24th August 1900', *Durham*, RAI: MS 43.
[178] Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, p.8; 'Folk Tales from the Balkans' (unpublished, c.1908), pp.1-2, *Durham*, RAI: MS 45.

…with something of the unchanging Orient it has combined an element of fire, energy unspoilt, the means within its own spiritual sphere, of perpetual revivification.[179]

Conclusion

While continuities with the previous century remained in evidence, the heightening of late nineteenth-century anxieties and social unease following the Second Boer War inadvertently affected the South Slavonic peasant's image in imaginative geography. While firmly wedded to condescending motifs and an implacable sense of Britain's cultural superiority, by the 1910s, the positive connotations of an idealised rural simplicity imbued cultural caricatures like the South Slavonic peasants with an inherent moral virtue. An increasingly non-pejorative image afforded the peasant a presence in the moral hierarchy while serving to highlight the growing precariousness of Britain's own position within it; in contrast to the ascribed values of the Slavonic village community, discursive images of Britain's own physiological and spiritual degradation as a result of modernity and urbanisation raised questions as to how Britishness might retain its once presumed superiority. Conversely, the allegorical intersection between representation and existential concerns rehabilitated the South Slav peasantry only in a cultural sense. As demonstrated in the Balkan Wars, ethno-nationalistic violence reinforced the Montenegrin and Serb states' tarnished image as disruptive threats to the international status quo. For those seeking to promote more direct forms of engagement in the South Slavonic territories, success remained dependent on how well they subordinated their campaigns to this discursive recalibration of British identity as a moral concept.

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[179] R.A. Scott-James, *An Englishman in Ireland: Impressions of a Journey in a Canoe by River, Lough, and Canal* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1910), p.262.

Chapter 3. Violence, Civilisation and the New Victimhood Narrative before 1914

Despite a proliferation of archetypes and episodic spikes of public interest which challenged the 'front of ignorance' in British understanding of the region up to the 1870s, it was only in the early twentieth century that the South Slavonic Balkans assumed a more coherent form in imaginative geography as an accumulation of nineteenth-century trends.[1] Literature and travel narratives had proliferated, new channels of contact had been established and the evolution of the press as 'a forum for the free exchange of opinion' challenged the FO's and diplomatic corps' status as arbiters of Britain's intercultural relations.[2] Indeed, since the 1850s, *The Times* or *Reuters* were increasingly looked upon by the FO as being more reliable than the 'official sources' available to diplomats.[3] Following the events of 1903, growing public interest bolstered the profile of investigative journalists specialising in regional affairs such as Bourchier or those who were unconventional in their information gathering, *The Daily Telegraph*'s Russian correspondent E.J. Dillon being among the most innovative.[4]

Nevertheless, a nineteenth-century propensity to associate engagement with foreign cultures as an extension of British foreign policy inhibited the development of wider public interest, reflecting the elite mind-sets which continued to dominate at the FO. Diplomatic missions to Belgrade and Cetinje were deemed a necessity for monitoring potential Russian, and subsequently German, machinations while 'outlying' provinces such as Bosnia-

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[1] Kostova, *Tales*, pp.170-175; Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.62-64; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.4.
[2] Demirci, *British Public Opinion*, pp.7-8.
[3] Weller, *The Victorians and Information*, p.23.
[4] As well as speaking multiple languages, Dillon had few reservations about integrating himself into local cultures, often through the use of disguises, when covering events. These included first-hand reports on the Hamidian Massacres (1894-1896), the Greco-Turkish War (1897) and the Great Power's suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China (1899-1901). David Ayerst, *Garvin of the Observer* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p.36. On Dillon's life and career, see Joseph O. Baylen, 'Dillon, Emile Joseph (1854-1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2008). See also P.W. Johnson 'The Journalist as Diplomat: E.J. Dillon and the Portsmouth Peace Conference', *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol.53, No.4 (December 1976), pp.689–693; idem & Joseph O. Baylen, 'Dillon, Dr. Emile Joseph, 1854–1933', in Joseph L. Wieczynski & George V. Rhyne (eds.), *The Modern Encyclopaedia of Russian and Soviet History, Vol.9* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1994), p.106.

Herzegovina and Dalmatia were viewed as 'spill-over from the wider "Eastern Question"'.[5] In 1906 for example, the British Consul-General in Budapest broached the idea of a consulate in Zagreb: 'the capital of an autonomous country' and 'focus of South Slav aspirations'. This elicited no known response from the FO.[6] These tenuous diplomatic links were compounded by a paucity of economic interests, reinforcing preconceptions of the region as having already been 'claimed' as part of an Austro-German sphere of influence.[7]

Even the middle class's rise to political and cultural pre-eminence had failed to impact on the social composition of those who oversaw British foreign policy, further increasing the public's reliance on non-official perspectives for information. Compared to other Whitehall departments, the FO and diplomatic corps remained dominated by a closed network of aristocrats with private incomes and an innate mistrust of external opinion. As a consequence, British consulates and embassies were often critically understaffed (by 1900, the caricature of the overpaid but underworked diplomat was already a useful straw man for justifying budget cuts), offering little time for official 'fact-finding' missions to less economically developed rural areas.[8] As Michael Hughes observes in the case of Russia, diplomatic visits to the hinterlands of non-Western countries were likely to have been virtually non-existent. In the case of the South Slavonic Balkans, a lack of familiarity with Slavonic languages, reliance on government escorts, the mostly cursory impressions yielded from expeditions into rural areas

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[5] In 1862, a consulate was opened in Dubrovnik for the sole purpose of monitoring unrest along Montenegro's border with Herzegovina. It closed in 1885 following the Austria-Hungarian army's eventual pacification of the area, ironically in response to another peasant insurgency in Herzegovina in 1882. Robin Okey, 'British Impressions of the Serb-Croat Speaking Lands of the Habsburg Monarchy – Reports to the Foreign Office 1867-1908', in Robert Evans; Dušan Kováč & Edita Ivaničková (eds.), *Great Britain and Central Europe 1867-1914* (Brastislava: VEDA, 2002), p.62.

[6] Ibid., p.63.

[7] Until 1912, 12.25 per cent of Serbia's imports came from Britain but these never exceeded £110,000 per annum. By contrast, Romania accounted for more than half of Britain's trade in southeast Europe. Products originating in the Habsburg territories were marketed as Austrian or Hungarian, while Montenegrin goods were likely to be restricted to tourist purchases from peasant traders in Kotor and other coastal market towns. British demand for Macedonian commodities was also reduced following the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869. Chedomille Mijatovich, 'Servia', in *The New Volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 10th edn, Vol.32 (1902), pp.518-522. Cited in Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*, p.159; Palairet, *The Balkan Economies*, p.143; John R. Lampe & Marvin R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History*, pp.168-176, 280-288.

[8] Michael Hughes, *Inside the Enigma: British Officials in Russia, 1900-39* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), pp.31-32; Zara S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.17.

and accounts that conflicted with those produced by commercial interests, further diluted the official perspective's informative value.[9] This was indicative of a cultural aversion to Balkan postings; an aspiring diplomat, Durham, later wrote that any future envoy would 'find it wiser not to learn the local language, lest knowledge of it should cause him to be kept for a lengthy period in some intolerable hole'.[10]

Likewise, before 1903, travel writing had remained largely derivative in content. Authors often continued to lift anecdotes directly from the accounts of Evans, Irby and Mackenzie, which remained in circulation as guidebooks regardless of contextual change after 1878.[11] Besides a discerning minority, British commentators were equally deferential towards official narratives, specifically those championing Austria-Hungary's regional presence, while logistical or safety concerns often restricted access to certain areas, limiting the scope for formulating fuller regional impressions.[12]

In this context, the significance of organised opinion can be attributed to the vigorous regional engagement of its members, their networks of local contacts and, if necessary, their willingness to challenge official and popular opinion. This ascendency corresponded with a succession of crises and instances of political unrest which gripped the region from 1903 to 1913, leading to comprehensive, pseudo-scientific titles exploring links between culture, contemporary affairs and the more recent past. Salient among these were Durham's *Through the Lands of the Serb*, Brailsford's *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future,* and Seton-Watson's *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy.* Besides raising public awareness, the importance of these texts lay in their foregrounding of the peasantry as a

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[9] Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, p.34; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.187-188.

[10] Wrench noted in his 1901 diary that the British Consul in Sarajevo, Edward Freeman, had been in post since before 1878. *Wrench Papers*, BL: Add MS 59556, p.22; M.E. Durham, *The Serajevo Crime* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1925), p.11.

[11] Barrington, *Greece and Dalmatia*, p.v; Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, pp.31-32. For recurrent examples published after 1878, see T.G. Jackson, *Dalmatia: The Quarnero and Istria* [3 volumes] (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1887).

[12] During her secondment with the MRF, Durham wrote to a friend that Brailsford 'was not allowed to move without an officer and five cavalry', while the Fund's benefactress, Lady Thompson, had 'a major and twenty cavalry' whenever she travelled. M.E. Durham, 'Letter to Mrs Seymour, 7th January 1904', RAI: MS 43.

determining factor in South Slavonic cultural, social, and political structures. This, in turn, gradually imprinted the concept of the peasant into the geographical imagination – not as an archetype, but as the region's social fulcrum.

While pro-Balkan publicists' efforts at stimulating political interest were met by a recurrent 'pattern of indifference' in the public sphere, the allegorical resonance between British social anxieties and South Slavonic rural culture proved conducive to shifting popular perceptions.[13] Central to this was the gradual revival of the victimhood narrative which placed increasing emphasis on the plight of the region's peoples, particularly in the aftermath of Ilinden–Preobrazhenie.[14] This sense of victimhood proved equally important in bridging the cultural and geographical gap by appealing to new humanist ideas, which gained increasing traction at a popular level. This chapter considers how this narrative's intersection with Edwardian popular discourse reconfigured the peasantry's place in imaginative geography from benighted periphery-dwellers to perpetual victims of historical injustices, in conjunction with public reception of events – notably the Balkan Wars – and the reconceptualising of British identity.

Organised Opinion and the Revival of the Victimhood Narrative

While imagological scholarship endowed the figure of the late Victorian and Edwardian traveller and publicist with a particular significance in influencing the shape of the Balkans' contemporary image prior to the 1990s, more recent studies have focused attention on their role as part of Britain's informed public and (would-be) political actors.[15] Particular emphasis has been placed on the politicisation of regional knowledge in an effort to channel public interest

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[13] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.10-11, p.21.
[14] Idem, 'Peasants and Politics', p.69.
[15] See Hammond, *The Debated Lands*; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*; Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*; Larry Wolff, 'The Western Representation of Eastern Europe on the Eve of World War I: Mediated Encounters and Intellectual Expertise in Dalmatia, Albania and Macedonia', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.86, No.2 (June 2014), pp.381-407; Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe'. For a perspective predating the events of the 1990s, see Nicholas J. Miller, 'R.W. Seton-Watson and Serbia During the Reemergence of Yugoslavia, 1903-1914', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol.15, No.1-2 (1988), pp.59-69.

upwards as a form of indirect leverage over foreign policy-makers. Central to this were a series of increasingly vociferous press campaigns from 1903 to 1912 which attempted to direct public opinion away from the regional status quo to regional nationalism. At a popular level, however, the finer details of this political dimension were quickly submerged within sensationalist depictions of violent atrocities and repression.[16] This contemporary revival of the victimhood narrative found its genesis in the 'Hamidian Massacres', perpetuated through the Ottoman Empire's anti-Christian pogroms against its Armenian and Assyrian subjects from 1894 to 1896.[17] Detailed reports by Dillon and other foreign correspondents who managed to circumvent Istanbul's attempts at restricting the flow of information from eastern Anatolia, prompted a resurgence in British Turcophobia while also precipitating an intellectual revision of Armenian culture and history in imaginative geography. Any negative traits which earlier British travellers had assigned to the Armenian populace were omitted in order to accentuate their status as innocent victims under a 'villainous' Ottoman rule.[18]

While this narrative resonated with the increasingly desultory tone of popular discourse, the wider contemporary European context also drove developments after 1900. In July 1903, following pro-Macedonian campaigns in France, Buxton formally announced the formation of the 'Balkan Committee' which quickly became the nexus of organised opinion's anti-Ottoman and pro-Slav activism until 1913.[19] The Committee drew its membership from a broad spectrum of the informed public, yet Radical Liberal politicians with non-conformist Christian leanings (such as Buxton and his younger brother Charles) dominated its political work.[20] As

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[16] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.11-12.

[17] Named after Sultan Abdul Hamid II, whose reign from 1876 to 1909 is historically perceived as a period of accentuated Ottoman decline. Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, p.111; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, p.234.

[18] Seeking to excise previous anti-Semitic associations between Armenians and Jews, the Liberal MP James Bryce claimed that the former were a peasant rather than an urbanised merchant-based society despite population data suggesting that more Armenians lived in Istanbul and other Ottoman cities than in Armenia itself! Roy Douglas, 'Britain and the Armenian Question, 1894-7', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.19, No.1 (March 1976), pp.114-115.

[19] Robert Vogel, 'Noel Buxton: The "Trouble-Maker" and His Papers', *Fontanus*, Vol.3 (1990), pp.138-139; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.14; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, pp.234-235.

[20] These included several Anglican bishops, the editor of the radical *Daily News,* A.G. Gardiner, and its proprietor, the confectioner George Cadbury. The future leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, under whom Buxton later held a cabinet post in the 1920s, was also an affiliate. Vogel, 'The "Trouble-Maker" and His Papers', pp.136-138; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.11.

Perkins notes, the Committee's founding coincided with that of other liberal-humanitarian pressure groups, such as the Congo Reform Association, with Buxton and other leading members guided by a belief in a broader liberal-internationalist struggle against slavery and imperial misrule. Accordingly, its central political aim was to end Britain's official support for continued Ottoman rule in Macedonia and other Balkan territories, rectifying decades of perceived injustices committed by the Great Powers at Berlin.[21]

In spite of this, the shape and orientation of this narrative *vis-à-vis* the South Slavonic Balkans rested primarily on a small cadre comprising Bourchier, Brailsford, Buxton, Durham, and Seton-Watson. Their combined expertise has attracted closer scrutiny in recent scholarship, particularly for its influence over popular discourse through a prodigious literary output and for their establishment of contacts in press and political circles.[22] Their work demonstrated new applications of knowledge to advance political agendas through routine engagement in the public sphere.

This particular group's motivation for involvement in Balkan matters was ultimately determined by social views or tensions in their personal lives. As with Bourchier, Durham had originally travelled to southeast Europe for health reasons yet cultivated an imaginative connection to the region as a route to emancipation from a middle-class British society still entrenched in Victorian attitudes towards the role of women.[23] As she later related in 1900, 'the future stretched before me as endless years of grey monotony, and escape seemed hopeless'.[24] Her subsequent identification with the Montenegrin and then Albanian national causes has attracted a similar measure of criticism. '[O]ne senses at times,' observes

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[21] Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', p.568.
[22] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.7; Wolff, 'Mediated Encounters and Intellectual Expertise in Dalmatia, Albania and Macedonia', pp.381-383; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.33-38; Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', pp.568-569.
[23] On Durham and her legacy in Albanian national politics, see Hodgson, 'Edith Durham', in Allcock & Young, *Black Lambs*, pp.9-31; June Hill, 'Edith Durham as a Collector', in ibid., pp.32-37; Marcus Tanner, *Albania's Mountain Queen: Edith Durham and the Balkans* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).
[24] M.E. Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920), p.9.

Hammond, 'that Durham's love is less for the country [Montenegro and Albania] than what she can personally achieve there.'[25]

Similarly, biographies of Brailsford and Buxton stress their interest in Macedonia as an effective extension of their adherence to British Liberalism's Radical tradition that tied their liberationist Balkan agendas into a broader struggle against perceived socio-political injustice inherent in the Victorian domestic and international status quo.[26] As Brailsford's biographer has emphasised, this outlook often proved detrimental through its tendency to overlook the gulf between theories on liberation and political practicalities.[27] A revival in Gladstonian absolutism, which presented Ottoman rule and culture as inherently inferior to Europe, coupled with efforts to construe Macedonia as part of a Western moral crusade against Islamic despotism, was especially detrimental. Moralistic rhetoric by more radical voices within organised opinion even promoted population and territorial transfers with little consideration of the humanitarian repercussions for Muslims and non-Slavs inhabiting these disputed Balkan territories.[28]

Seton-Watson represented a notable exception in that his interests were focused to the north and west on the condition of South Slavonic communities of the Habsburg Monarchy, particularly its Hungarian portion.[29] This, in turn, was guided by a more conservative tradition which viewed ethnic self-determination as an extension of British foreign policy goals.[30] These activities have also focused scholarly criticism towards his role in fermenting anti-Habsburg sentiment in British discourse after 1914. Nicholas Miller derides him as a 'dilettante', naïve to the consequences of his objectives, while Péter Lásló deems his later advocacy for

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[25] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.96-97.
[26] On Buxton and Brailsford, and discussion of their political ideas, see Mosa Anderson, *Noel Buxton: A Life* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952); F.M. Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter: H.N. Brailsford and His World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).
[27] Ibid., pp.304-306.
[28] Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties*, pp.139-140.
[29] See Hugh Seton-Watson & Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (London: Methuen, 1981).
[30] Péter Láslo, 'R.W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power', in Evans; Kováč & Ivaničková, *Great Britain and Central Europe*, pp.98-100.

Yugoslavia as having contradicted his liberal principles on nativist self-determination.[31] Drapac and Evans view his stance as emblematic of British regional intervention in pursuit of foreign policy interests. The result, in Yugoslavia's case, was the aggrandisement of Serbian national ambitions at the expense of the other South Slavonic peoples.[32]

While the activities of Seton-Watson and his peers were instrumental in advancing contemporary understanding of the region after 1903, their rise to prominence as experts was reflective of a recent historical stratification of knowledge into learned hierarchies that promoted a culture of intellectual contrarianism; this gradual monopolisation of representative channels was equally dependant on its members possessing the independent means for regional travel, further accentuating this development's entrenched social dimension. Nevertheless, as Michail observes, a key measure of organised opinion's initial success was its members' ability to disseminate their opinions more widely, and appeal to a much broader audience, than their nineteenth-century predecessors. Durham, for instance, developed a reputation as a relatively popular travel writer whose earlier observations of South Slavonic peasant culture allowed her anthropological magnum opus, *High Albania,* to find favour with both general and academic audiences. In keeping with the Edwardian vogue for popular anthropology, a more informal style of writing – emphasising her role as a solitary female traveller exploring unfamiliar lands and cultures – proved successful in introducing non-specialist audiences to hitherto little-known areas such as Kosovo.[33] These seemingly novel approaches, often employed by personalities such as Evans, Irby and Makenzie, were assisted by extensive connections. By 1908, Seton-Watson had one of the most formidable network of contacts in British journalism

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[31] Miller, 'R.W. Seton-Watson and Serbia during the Reemergence of Yugoslavia', p.69; Láslo, 'R.W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question'; Kováč & Ivaničková, *Great Britain and Central Europe*, pp.101-102. See also Stjepan Matković, 'Ivo Pilar i Robert W. Seton-Watson (Dva pogleda na južnoslavensko pitanje)', *Pilar: časopis za društvene i humanističke studije*, Vol.1, No.1 (2006), pp.21-45.

[32] Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.11-12, p.19; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.184.

[33] Their initial engagements with the region had come through travel (Bourchier, Buxton and Durham had all journeyed there on medical advice), scholarly and work-related interests (as with Seton-Watson's role as a correspondent in Austria-Hungary), and even romantic convictions (in 1897, Brailsford volunteered to fight in the Greco-Turkish War). Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.30-32. See Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serbs*, pp.263-345. See also eadem, *The Burden of the Balkans*; eadem, *High Albania*.

including the internationally renowned *The Times* Vienna correspondent, Henry Wickham Steed, and leading figures among the Monarchy's various nationalist movements.[34] Elsewhere, Bourchier continued to cultivate a reputation as Britain's official 'voice' in the region, while Durham boasted of having gained the ear of Montenegro's Prince Nikola (who elevated himself to the position of King in 1910) before the outbreak of the First Balkan War.[35]

Nevertheless, the overt political agendas revealed in the Balkan Committee's formation were indicative of organised opinion's inherent shortcomings. Seton-Watson, for example, characterised the Habsburg Monarchy's South Slavonic question as one of political representation, ignoring the peasantry's largely economic concerns.[36] Correspondingly, Durham insisted that scientific objectivity be used in coverage of regional tensions, yet rarely applied this view to non-Albanians after 1908.[37] The Committee's own campaign work was itself conducted mostly by a circle of 'professional' members who were 'arguably pro-Bulgarian and passionately anti-Ottoman', with Macedonian issues, and Buxton's numerous preoccupations, dominating its work.[38]

These discrepancies were evidenced by organised opinion members' effectiveness in pursuing their over-arching foreign policy objectives before 1912. By virtue of their connections and social status as regional authorities, neither the government nor the public sphere could ignore them, especially during periods of regional crisis.[39] However, their political *raisons d'être* were more often impeded by the FO's ingrained aversion to specialists, with British officialdom as likely to question an expert's putative right 'to pronounce opinions on international affairs' by 1910 as it was to seek out their advice. The nebulousness of what actually constituted an expert, prior to the consolidation of educational attainment as the recognised standard after 1918, invariably brought substitute pejoratives such as 'crank',

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[34] Most notably the Czech philosopher Tomáš Masaryk. Miller, 'R.W. Seton-Watson and Serbia', p.59.
[35] M.E. Durham, 'Letter to Sister Ellen ('Nellie') Durham, 2nd April 1912', RAI: MS 43.
[36] Wolff, 'Mediated Encounters and Intellectual Expertise in Dalmatia, Albania and Macedonia', p.382.
[37] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.123-126.
[38] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, p.237; Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', p.577.
[39] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.41-45.

'faddist', or 'propagandist' to the fore when discussion gravitated towards Balkan matters.[40] This establishment antipathy was compounded by the struggle against organised opinion's *bête noire*: widespread indifference and disengagement. Despite continued fascination for foreign cultures, the twentieth century witnessed rising public apathy towards international matters in general.[41] In contrast to the emotive energy that galvanised the Congo Reform Association, dubious associations with violence deprived South Slavonic nationalism of any credible political *cause célèbre*. Moreover, developments after 1903 demonstrated the limits of its direct appeal and perceived inability to retain the attention of the semi-mythical man in the street. These included an underlying sense of social exclusivity as demonstrated by the platforms relied upon for political coverage, including broadsheets marketed to middle- and upper-class readerships such as *The Times*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The Daily News* or specialised periodicals with even more limited circulations such as *The Contemporary Review*. These titles were consistently outsold by the more genuinely popular tabloid press which carried articles that paid 'greater attention to crime, sexual violence, sport and gambling' than politics, and barely covered foreign affairs.[42]

That for the majority of Britons the Balkans were, at best, a marginal political oddity, was further exacerbated by organised opinion's protracted implosion into increasingly hermetic debates on national rights. Based on its members' rival ethnic preferences, these were too recondite to ever gain traction beyond the most esoteric corners of the public sphere.[43]

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[40] In 1912, Seton-Watson, having become aware of these increasingly popular derogatory stereotypes, rejected a Slovak contact's request for him to edit an English-language quarterly covering the political aspirations of 'small nations'. Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, pp.98-99; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.30.

[41] Lack of public interest was already in evidence before 1900. On receiving his correspondent's position in 1892, Bourchier's editor informed him that 'as a rule the British public only care for one thing at once and two things in the Balkans would be more than they could stand'. In 1912 he was still the only dedicated correspondent in the region. Quoted in Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*, pp.92-93.

[42] Based on, what was then, the Advertiser's Protection Society's estimates, by 1910 *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* were among the lowest of Britain's national dailies in terms of press circulation at only 45,000 and 40,000 respectively. Other broadsheets fared considerably better such as *The Daily Telegraph* (230,000 in 1910) and the *Daily News* (150,000 to 200,000), yet remained permanently dwarfed by the popular and mid-market publications, the *Daily Mail* (900,000) and the *Daily Mirror* (630,000 and the first British daily to reach a circulation of over 1 million in 1911). Figures cited in David & Gareth Butler, *British Political Facts*, 10th edn, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), p.573; John B. Thompson, *Ideology and Modern Culture*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007[1990]), p.178.

[43] Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', pp.583-584.

Furthermore, the Committee's core message of Macedonian Slav liberation as a moral mission was almost immediately undermined by regular reports in the British press identifying the VMRO and other paramilitary organisations as the cause of much of the violence against civilians.[44] *The Times*' foreign affairs editor, Valentine Chirol, articulated this sense of alienation in his correspondence with Britain's Russian ambassador:

> …in general, people are, I think, sick to death in this country of the Near Eastern
> Crisis, for few of them understand it and still fewer, of course, realise that behind
> it lies the much bigger question of the balance of power in Europe.[45]

In light of these limitations in representing the South Slavonic Balkans as a political or foreign policy issue, the revival of the peasant victimhood narrative provided a means for the subject to gain a foothold in the public sphere through a symbolic link to issues of national identity. This was facilitated by a near ideological obsession with positivism, encapsulated in the cultural impact of philanthropic surveys into urban poverty during the 1890s and early 1900s, with representations of the South Slavs and other foreign cultures requiring (pseudo)scientific verification via an 'evidence-based' narrative.[46] Regional contacts and direct interaction with local populations thus became a prerequisite for legitimising moralistic assertions while eyewitness accounts and experience became integral as campaigners sought to present a case predicated on 'authenticated' knowledge rather than preconceptions. Relief work presented one potential avenue; writing in 1906, Brailsford claimed that working among Macedonian peasants 'brought me into constant touch with people of every race…opportunities which rarely come to the European traveller for learning something of the realities of their daily life'.[47] Despite their limited accomplishments in instigating a sea-change in British foreign policy-making, at a popular level, organised opinion was instrumental in integrating discursive social factors into the South Slavonic peasantry's representational subtext, transforming it into

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[44] Robert B. McCormick, 'Noel Buxton, The Balkan Committee and Reform in Macedonia, 1903-1914', in Nicholas Charles Pappas (ed.), *Antiquity and Modernity: A Celebration of European History and Heritage in the Olympic Year 2004* (Athens: Institute for Education and Research, 2004), p.156.
[45] 'Chirol to Nicolson 19th January 1909', (Sir) Arthur Nicolson, *Miscellaneous Correspondence,* FO 800/342.
[46] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, pp.92-93.
[47] Brailsford, *Macedonia*, pp.xi.

an object of humanitarian sympathy rather than cultural derision. Like the Armenians, South Slavs also became a moral abstraction through which popular discourse could seek to recalibrate British moral identity and even confront its shortcomings.

The Moral Contingency of the 'Civilising Mission'

The South Slavonic peasantry's symbolic migration from Oriental primitive to victimised noble savage in the early 1900s did not, initially, signify a complete break with the pre-existing belief in modernisation's beneficial qualities as a civilising catalyst. In popular anthropological and colonial dialogue, progress itself was understood as a linear process where minor cultural changes allowed societies to evolve into more advanced states. For much of the mid and late nineteenth century, this theory had served as scientific justification for social and economic intervention in Britain's colonies, where administrators and businesses presented themselves as capable of improving peoples' lives by guiding them along this same process at a more accelerated rate: the so-called 'civilising mission'.[48] By the late 1900s however, its presentation in popular discourse had become interwoven with a need to sustain Britain's self-image as a moral presence. Colonialism was also to be perpetuated 'on new moral grounds' and the spread of Western values championed over the pursuit of narrow national or economic interests.[49] Unsurprisingly, Britain and France perceived themselves to be exemplars for these new standards, with Germany serving as their inversion by 1914. In imaginative geography, the European imperial powers were themselves now characterised by their position in this moral hierarchy of colonial and civilisational benevolence – itself a reflection of continental power relations. As presumed Oriental oppressors, the Ottomans were automatically excluded from this process of stratification. However, European states perceived to have fallen into the German orbit, specifically Austria-Hungary, also drew suspicion as to their capability of implementing the civilising

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[48] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, p.75, 93.
[49] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', pp.196-198.

mission in accordance with newly-defined moral standards. In this regard, the South Slavonic peasant's transition to victimhood was as much a reflection of the civilising mission's own changing meaning and an indication of how Britain was deemed to engage in this new moral colonial order.

As previously noted, at the turn of the century, representations of the South Slavonic peasantry shared many core features with those of the rural Catholic Irish: a backward people awaiting guidance towards modernity by a more advanced society. The image of the victimised Macedonian Slav peasant became central to this process in reinforcing the Ottoman Empire's ascribed status as the West's oppressive, culturally inert antithesis.[50] In both parallels, peasants represented potential beneficiaries of the civilising mission, impeded only by conservative Oriental influences and their own cultural obduracy.[51] European civilisation could therefore be replicated in lands deemed to be inherently non-European. Herzfeld and Gallant further maintain that this paradigm also permitted Westerners to construct and assign specific identities for the people inhabiting those lands as a means of quantifying their 'cultural (and by extension moral) qualities'.[52]

From a geopolitical perspective, proponents of the post-Berlin status quo in the South Slav lands could feel vindicated in January 1900. Central to this belief was Austria-Hungary's administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Sarajevo, boasting most of the features deemed prerequisites of a 'modern European city', existed at the centre of this expanding web of modernisation, supposedly unrivalled in the South Slavonic lands. Infrastructure projects in particular were singled out for praise, having eased travel across the mountainous interior. With over 3000 km of roads and railway lines built by 1907 this suggested, according to Michael Palairet, the early stirrings of industrialisation.[53] Nevertheless,

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[50] Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, p.93.
[51] See for example, Miller, *Travel and Politics*.
[52] Herzfeld, *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass*, pp.11-15; Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion*, pp.55-56.
[53] According to Palairet, Bosnia-Herzegovina boasted 'about 54 per cent of the region's large-scale industry' in 1914. This claim – based on Palairet's own regional estimations which exclude Greece, Romania and independent Albania – should be treated with a degree of circumspection. Palairet, *Balkan Economies*, p.237;

Edwardian discourse tended to laud the Monarchy's achievements by emphasising the compatibility of its infrastructural and agricultural reforms with the territory's pre-existing agrarian structures over their potential to facilitate socio-economic transition. This appeared conducive to the notion of the civilising mission's role in improving the lives of local peoples in accordance with pre-existing social structures.[54]

As with other archetypes, this representational trend was established by late Victorian commentators such as Miller, who lauded the Dual Monarchy's introduction of 'technical training' as the correct approach for the overwhelmingly agricultural economy of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the independent Balkans, by contrast, Miller had noted that the 'evil effects of too much higher education' produced only 'a *Gelehrten-proletariat* which takes to politics as a means of getting a living', leaving agriculture underdeveloped and the population impoverished. Reforms on land ownership and taxation, rather than a redistributionist 'agrarian revolution' (as had occurred in early nineteenth-century Serbia), alleviated the peasantry's fundamental grievances and addressed the root cause of previous instability without remedying 'an old wrong by committing a new one'. For these reasons, Miller concluded 'the Bosnian *kmet*'[55] was better off at the close of the nineteenth century 'than the Dalmatian or Sicilian peasant'.[56] Sympathetic visitors to the province, in the wake of the annexation, concurred. The question of redistribution itself, remarked a former Conservative MP, made severing vestigial Ottoman rule a necessity since 'the Bosnians must themselves have a share in the responsibilities of making it by means of proper representative institutions'.[57]

The tangible presence of a civilising mission in rural districts was all the more apparent through the irregular way in which the government implemented its development programmes. Wrench noted these inconsistencies on a tour of several rural settlements.

Peter F. Sugar, *The Industrialization of Bosnia-Hercegovina, 1878-1918* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1963), pp.71-73, p.233. See also Sparks, *The Development of Austro-Hungarian Sarajevo*.

[54] [Eliot], *Turkey in Europe*, pp.356-357, p.363; Drage, *Austria-Hungary*, pp.335-342, 449-452; Mitton, *Austria-Hungary*, p.191; Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion*, p.59.

[55] Indentured peasants who worked the land on Muslim-owned estates, akin to serfs or tenant share-croppers.

[56] Miller, *Travel and Politics*, pp.100-107.

[57] Drage, *Austria-Hungary*, pp.617-618.

Following a visit to the state-run central Bosnian village of Bugojno, he reported that conditions were an 'outstanding example' of modern efficiency – even the slaughterhouse was 'spotless inside'. By contrast, Prisap, near Livno in northwest Herzegovina, was held up as an example of 'bad Turkish planning'. Ireland recurrently appeared as a point of comparison with Wrench describing Prisap as comprising mostly of 'mere hovels', similar to 'those in the west of Ireland'. The only decent building, built with government funds, was 'dirty and run-down' through neglect. The peasants had not concerned themselves with its maintenance, remaining – like the Irish – 'all so natural and so like children'.[58] Unsubtle comparisons to the Celtic fringes also implied caprice as an underlying trait in the South Slavonic psyche and a potential impediment to the civilising mission. The main road to Herzegovina's frontier with Montenegro, for example, stopped short of the border in the town of Gacko 'lest that warlike race [Montenegrins] should resent the familiarity and seize it, with almost Irish quickness, the chance of a fight'.[59]

The language of the civilising mission was also an incorporated feature of the Balkan Committee's anti-Ottoman campaign. In a 1907 pamphlet, Buxton argued that Istanbul's continued rule in Macedonia was representative of a form of psychological degradation that consigned Slav Christian peasants to civilisational entropy. While Britain's own 'historic monster', the slave trade, 'affected but directly 700,000…[T]hose whom Turkish rule degrades in body and in mind are many millions'.[60] The sight of peasants arriving and leaving Ohrid in 1903 had struck Brailsford as emblematic of this collective inertia, being 'a slight race that ages prematurely and clothes itself in a pathetic suggestion of childhood'; their costumes 'hardly have varied since the first Slavs invaded the Balkans'.[61] Following the Ottomans' recapture of territory from Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War, Buxton continued to warn that their mere presence posed an existential threat. 'The record of Turkish rule in

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[58] 'Diaries of John Evelyn Wrench', *Wrench Papers. Vol. XVI*. BL: Add MS 59556. p.40.
[59] Trevor, *My Balkan Tour*, p.187.
[60] Noel Buxton, *Europe and the Turks*, pp.119-120.
[61] Brailsford, *Macedonia*, pp.76-77.

Europe is one not only of demoralisation, retardation and cruelty', he vented in *The Times*, 'but of menace to European peace and ruin to Turkey herself.'[62]

The Edwardian romanticising of rural traditions and social structures was still often yoked to derogatory evaluations of their respective state or governing entities. 'While Servia earns the contempt of the civilized world as a State,' commented one author, 'the Servian peasant sows in hope and reaps in peace' – a state of affairs deemed equally applicable to Dalmatia.[63] Even the Macedonian *rayah* drew admiration for the aspiration that they not be 'destined to drag the chain of slavery for ever'.[64] The moral fortitude of villages where 'no one is idle' and communities expressed 'heroic virtue' through honest toil, accentuated their status as victimised captives of Ottoman rule, ensuring that everything 'material and social is stunted and atrophied'.[65] Neither was the alleged absence of moral civilising qualities limited to critiques of the region's previous hegemon. Excluding an expressed admiration for rural culture and an absence of urban poverty that typified liberal dialogue by the late 1900s, Seton-Watson had initially found little to enthuse him when visiting Serbia for the first time in 1908. Finding it to be more 'corrupt and inefficient then Hungary', he proposed that 'in the interests of European stability', it be annexed by Austria-Hungary.[66] Nevertheless, his subsequent observations on the condition of Slavonic peasantries of Dalmatia as having remained on the cusp of civilisation, provoked similar accusations that, like the Ottomans, the Monarchy too was in danger of falling short in implementing its own civilising mission.[67]

Less partial observers were more disposed towards theorising that the cultural milieu was as equally to blame as the legacy of Ottoman rule. James posited that emigration refined the average Montenegrin into 'an industrious and reliable labourer on roads and in mines', yet this cultural metamorphosis always proved temporary. On returning to 'his own pastures', the

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[62] Noel Buxton, 'The Turks and Adrianople', *The Times*, 14th August 1913, p.5.
[63] Drage, *Austria-Hungary*, p.662.
[64] Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour*, p.148.
[65] T. Comyn-Platt, *The Turk in the Balkans*, pp.19-20.
[66] Miller, 'R.W. Seton-Watson and Serbia', pp.59-60.
[67] Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question*, pp.6-7.

former migrant reverted to 'an effeminate predilection for adorning his person in fancy vestments', stalling the potential for further betterment.[68] Following the outcry generated by Austria-Hungary's formal annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, Henderson defended the Monarchy's action by claiming it had 'rescued' the province from cultural inertia and decay. Drawing on established analogies with British Crown rule in India, which granted 'equal rights before the law for protection of person and property, and liberty to all to worship as they please', he warned that the 'onerous' cultural attributes of Ottoman rule would reassert themselves in the future were the populace allowed to retain even nominal political links to Istanbul.[69] An American commentator even suggested to a putative British readership in 1906 that Macedonian peasants could benefit from the ongoing crisis. Despite their political motives, nationalist-run schools were still a 'civilising presence' in offering impoverished village children rare opportunities for formal education.[70]

As exemplified by Scott-James in 1905, the Habsburgs' perceived success in Bosnia-Herzegovina initially granted a measure of plausibility to the idea of intervention as a means of diffusing tensions. Following the Serbian regicide, Vivian alluded to this in his warning that Serbia had 'been put back at least a century…If I were Foreign Minister, I would counsel an occupation of Servia by the Powers, perhaps even a partition.'[71] Having become infatuated with Serb culture on visiting the country in 1904, the Japanese specialist, Alfred Stead, importuned the FO to restore its suspended diplomatic ties as a means of reviving Britain's own imperialistic instincts. In August 1905, influenced by the recent Moroccan crisis, Stead even presented the recently enthroned Petar I Karađorđević with a memorandum proposing

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[68] James, *Times of Stress*, p.176 *ft.*
[69] Henderson, *A British Officer*, p.106.
[70] Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1906), pp.155-156. This perspective on the so-called 'Macedonian question' seemed less feasible among British commentators: 'It is easy to tell from his [Moore's] narrative that he belongs to a country which has no active share in the problem,' ran an anonymous review in *The Spectator*. 'He does not attempt to sketch any solution…' 'The Balkan Trail* [Review]', *The Spectator*, 22nd September 1906, p.401.
[71] Herbert Vivian, 'A "Glorious" Revolution in Servia', *The Fortnightly Review*, Vol.75 (July-December 1903), p.75. Were it not likely to provoke a Russian counter-occupation of Bulgaria, Bourchier had also suggested that a Habsburg occupation presented 'the best cure for Servia' following the coup. Quoted in Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*, p.178.

that his country exploit its status as a regional pariah by becoming a British economic satellite. His optimistic proposals included a loan of 87,500,000 French francs in exchange for mining concessions and trade tariff agreements which would compel Britain to protect its interests, as France had done in Morocco, from any extrinsic threat posed by Austria-Hungary.[72]

As the victimhood narrative gathered momentum, Austria-Hungary's own treatment of its subjects and neighbours garnered increased scrutiny. Buxton castigated Austria-Hungary for imposing 'economic slavery' on Serbia and Montenegro for 'the crime of rekindling freedom', at the height of its 'Customs War' with Serbia from 1906 to 1908. This course of action, he predicted, would only serve to exacerbate unrest.[73] The political predominance of Austrians and Hungarians also provided the impetus for a shift in the Monarchy's image as a civilising force, casting a veneer of ambiguity around its motivations in the region. From 1908 onwards, Seton-Watson and Steed increasingly influenced the tone of debate on Austria-Hungary in the absence of a rival expert authority, their respective anti-German and anti-Hungarian beliefs shaping impressions on the treatment of South Slavs and other minorities within its borders. While this did not convey the overt subtext of the victimhood narrative as in the Ottoman Balkans, it nevertheless sowed doubt as to the Monarchy's own capacity to act as a moral force.[74]

The Monarchy's rising belligerence from 1906, culminating in the 1908 Annexation Crisis, represented the first blow to its once infallible reputation, prompting a backlash in both

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[72] A. Stead, *Memorandum o odnosima između Engleske i Srbije*, ASANU. NO. 12880/3. Despite growing nationalist bellicosity, Montenegrin and Serb politicians continued to pursue the economic patronage of foreign powers. Between 1903 and 1914 for instance, Prince Nikola, with Serbian backing, had opened his country to development by a Venetian consortium that included the proposed 'colonisation' of uninhabited coastal districts by Italian settlers. Palairet, *The Balkan Economies*, p.240.

[73] Buxton, *Europe and the Turks*, p.48. Neither had Austria-Hungary's vaunted catalogue of successes in Bosnia-Herzegovina been above scrutiny before 1908. See for example T.W. Legh, 'A Ramble in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *New Review*, No.5 (November 1891), pp.470-480.

[74] In his first major publication, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, Seton-Watson outlined what he perceived as the repression of non-Hungarian ethnicities in the Hungarian portion of the Monarchy (Transleithania) as a correspondent for *The Spectator* in 1906. 'First Impressions of Transylvania, dated 1906', *Seton-Watson Collection*, SSEES, SEW/1/1/1. See also [R.W. Seton-Watson] 'Scotus Viator', *Racial Problems in Hungary* (London: Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd., 1908). Steed's own anti-Germanism stemmed from his time as *The Times*' Vienna correspondent from 1902 to 1914. See Henry Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years 1892-1922: A Personal Narrative [Vol.1]* (London: Heinemann, 1924). For a critical analysis of his anti-German sentiments see Andre Liebich, 'The Antisemitism of Henry Wickham Steed', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.46, No.2 (2012), pp.180-208.

British liberal and conservative press. Opinion appeared to be consistent with the government's position, castigating the Monarchy for having instigated an international crisis by 'tearing up' the Berlin Treaty and disrupting Europe's 'moral order'.[75] Nevertheless, in the annexation's immediate aftermath, a current in British literary representations presented the expropriation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a logical step in protecting the populace from the chaotic realities of independence or a return to direct Ottoman rule. Holbach opined that the *kmetovi* respected good governance and economic stewardship rather than 'whether Bosnia be Austrian or Turkish'. Correspondingly, Orthodox Christians had 'little faith in their kinsfolk' across the eastern frontier, finding even less appeal in calls for a 'Greater-Servia'.[76] Rumours of intensifying anti-Habsburg sentiments were attributed to press sensationalism.[77] More cynical observers offered a less positive impression. Dillon reported that, following a discreet rendezvous in Sarajevo's central bazaar, the city's Orthodox archbishop had implored him to press for British intervention. In contradiction to the pro-Habsburg praise expressed in an official interview the previous day, the prelate informed him that the Monarchy sought to politically 'crush' Bosnia's Serbs while continuing to impoverish the peasants by placating the Muslim *beys*.[78]

While never generating the vindictive hostility marshalled against the Ottomans, the political implications of the annexation fed into discursive British fears of the emergent spectre of 'pan-Germanism' with the suspected hand of Berlin overshadowing Austria-Hungary's efforts to counter nationalist agitation. Roy Bridge contests that this incremental subversion of the Monarchy's image by press and intellectual figures, such as Seton-Watson, was itself informed by changing attitudes within the FO. Although quickly accepted as a political reality, the annexation undermined official faith in the Monarchy as a stabilising or moral force by increasing consternation over the potential influence of German

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[75] Demirci. *British Public Opinion*, pp.30-31.
[76] Holbach, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, pp.20-21.
[77] Whitwell, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina*, p.63.
[78] (Dr.) E.J. Dillon, 'Foreign Affairs', *The Contemporary Review*, No.513 (September 1908), p.382.

brinksmanship in the region.[79] While press opinion generally framed this in political and diplomatic terms, a growing perception of chauvinistic pan-German influences prompted a re-evaluation of the Habsburg civilising mission. 'Austria's [new] mission' would be the creation of a 'trialist' state as the only guarantor of 'resolving Southern Slav aspirations' and securing its survival in the northern Balkans.[80]

By the 1910s, even British consular correspondence had grown discernibly less commendatory. Reporting on the Habsburg authorities' continued use of emergency powers in Bosnia-Herzegovina – several months after Serbia's success in consolidating its territorial gains in the Second Balkan War – Britain's consul in Sarajevo, Edward Freeman, quoted a Croat observer: 'Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina depends entirely on the power of the sword.' Trust in the military authorities was so low among peasants and town-dwellers that any talk of political rights and constitutions was now dismissed as 'only a make-believe'.[81] This pessimism was reflected in the wider critical assessment of the disjointed implementation of the Monarchy's civilising mission across its other South Slavonic provinces. At the close of 1911, Britain's consul in Dubrovnik recommended that the government consider investing in agriculture and infrastructure to assuage the Dalmatian peasantry's belief that Vienna regarded them as 'an inferior race'.[82] This erosion of official confidence in the Monarchy's moral presence, and by extension its competency as a stabilising force, formed the crux for what Seton-Watson had identified as validating the argument for local self-determination. Croatia-Slavonia, in particular, was touted as a model for South Slav political empowerment as a means of independently achieving modernity.

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[79] Roy Bridge, 'The British Foreign Office and National Questions in the Dual Monarchy', in Evans; Kováč & Ivaničková (eds.), *Great Britain and Central Europe*, p.45, 60; Demirci, *British Public Opinion*, p.33.
[80] Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question*, pp.343-344.
[81] 'Freeman to Grey, No.6, 6th October 1913', *Austria-Hungary*, FO 371/1575.
[82] 'Lucas-Shadwell to Cartwright, 29th December 1911', FO371/1296.

This had only been 'ushered in' with the appointment of the 'Peasant Ban'[83] Ivan Mažuranić, in 1873, whose social background made him better attuned to his people's needs.[84]

This fluidity in attitudes was indicative of a protracted process of realignment in British perceptions that signified the changing image of the region's imperial hegemons against a climate of cultural pessimism and uncertainty. According to Drapac, Seton-Watson and other proponents of South Slav self-determination invoked 'increasingly harsh' anti-German sentiments to progressively demarcate the cultural and political contours of the future Yugoslavia in this period.[85] Yet, the extent to which the Monarchy's image as a civilising, moral force declined prior to 1914 remains ambiguous. Coverage of its territories was far too sporadic and limited for a consistent popular image to develop. Anti-Germanism is also too simplistic an explanation: as Scully maintains, the bellicosity of British propaganda in 1914 belied a latent sense of cultural Anglo-German kinship that persisted throughout the Edwardian period.[86]

As with discussion of culture, the image of the peasant as an object to be civilised cannot be understood without an appreciation of the complex interplay in popular discourse that sought, in an age of presumed crisis, to define what civilisation should become. While the peasant remained an object for civilising, the shift towards a hierarchy predicated on morality accentuated more sceptical voices on the matter of who the civilisers were to be. In the absence of British-style values and morality, the only logical outcome appeared to be repression and victimhood.

Peasant Woman as a Metaphor for Victimhood?

Alongside organised labour and Irish Home Rule, Dangerfield identified the suffrage movement as representing the most significant challenge to the middle-class Victorian liberal

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[83] A Croatian aristocratic or military title denoting a local or provincial ruler. Under Hungarian rule, its usage in Croatia-Slavonia held a similar meaning to viceroy.
[84] Seton-Watson, *The South Slav Question*, pp.91-92.
[85] Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.35-62.
[86] Scully, *British Images of Germany*, pp.316-317.

order, with female political enfranchisement often appearing at the heart of Edwardian discourses concerning the nature of British identity.[87] In parallel to key events in the South Slavonic lands, the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903, and its switch to militant forms of protest in 1906, kept the issue in the public eye until the suspension of most campaigning activities in 1914.[88] While not necessarily drawing overt comparisons, its influence in relation to imaginative geography's internalisation of the South Slavonic victimhood narrative became more apparent as the suffrage campaign intensified.

At the turn of the century, the 'domestic woman' was still popular in Britain as a feminine ideal, despite relating primarily to the aristocratic upper classes; qualities associated with traditional femininity were themselves looked upon as an articulation of virtues inherent to the British national character, with the nation regularly personified as a woman in patriotic ephemera.[89] Sara Mills observes that the conflation of the middle- and upper-class domestic spheres with feminine presences invariably rendered those who appeared to exist apart from them into certain cultural archetypes. Travel publishing, for instance, reinforced such stereotypes: the majority of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century accounts still in circulation after 1918 appeared to have been authored by middle- and upper-class women fitting the stereotype of 'indomitable eccentric spinster'.[90] Goldsworthy and Hammond cite Durham's involvement in the Albanian national cause as typifying this persona of the unmarried British woman seeking personal emancipation and individuation in overseas causes.[91] Moreover, their status as wealthy foreigners granted them an elevated social standing which they were otherwise unlikely to have achieved in Edwardian Britain, even coming to display forms of

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[87] Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p.138; Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p.68.
[88] Contrary to popular belief of a full cessation of activism in 1914, the war's outbreak exposed the extent of the suffrage movement's ideological polarisation. Splinter groups, such as the left-wing Workers' Suffrage Federation, continued to campaign for universal enfranchisement, albeit on a smaller scale. Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*, p.68. See also Martin Pugh, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928, Revised 2nd Edition* (London: Routledge, 2009 [1998]).
[89] Kostova, *Tales*, pp.15-17; Powell, *The Edwardian* Crisis, pp.69-70.
[90] Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.27.
[91] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.165; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.208.

behaviour considered masculine.[92] Yet , by virtue of her more proactive and increasingly political role in Britain's regional engagement, Durham's experiences and perspectives would have been atypical among male as well as female Britons travelling in the South Slavonic lands between 1900 and 1913. Furthermore, any propensity to frame representations against domestic questions such as women's suffrage was more a reflection of how authors tended to ascribe similarities only after expounding on cultural differences.[93]

The British conceptualisation of femininity as the personification of spirituality and genteel moral virtue requiring protection from masculine worldliness, appeared to find its antithesis in the South Slavonic lands. By the early 1900s, the Balkans were popularly imagined as a 'sort of museum of masculinity'; earlier portrayals of its inhabitants 'as feminized, unwarlike and subservient' were now superseded by 'physical toughness and violence, sexual conquest and the subordination of women, guns, strong drink and moustaches'.[94] As the Edwardian era progressed however, negative impressions, while remaining present, increasingly reflected carried implied reference to Britain's own cultural failings in meeting the expectations of protecting women from abuse or neglect - to the detriment of society as a whole. In this regard, even descriptions of the peasantry's less edifying qualities could be partially relativised while enhancing a collective (as opposed to individual) victimhood status.

While the South Slavonic peasantry was itself characterised as being almost invariably male, a recurrent pejorative was the comparatively low social standing of women in rural communities. Travellers in Dalmatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular, were often at pains to outline a culture of rampant male chauvinism in remoter Dinaric highland communities where prepubescent boys were 'held to be worth more than the women' and 'uniformly high' birth rates within the patriarchal system of familial *zadruge* deemed emblematic of an ascribed

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[92] Ibid., p.152.
[93] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.150.
[94] Wendy Bracewell, 'New Men, Old Europe: Being a Man in Balkan Travel Writing', in Wendy Bracewell & Alex Drace-Francis (eds.), *Balkan Departures: Travel Writing from Southeastern Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.137-138.

role as submissive breeders.[95] Marriage, one artist noted, was usually arranged 'as men and women mix together so little, there is not much opportunity for the usual love-making [courtship]' with newly wedded brides even refusing to be left alone with their husbands.[96]

This imaginative motif fully manifested in the warrior mountaineer culture of Montenegro where, in 1913, it was reported that a household's social value continued to be measured by the number of able-bodied males it had produced.[97] Even for admiring romantics, 'the treatment of women was the single worst mark' against the country, the enshrining of equal rights in civil law in the 1850s apparently unable to dilute chauvinistic customs or patriarchal misogyny.[98] In more isolated provinces, female family members were reportedly observed as being expected to walk backwards when exiting the presence of men, whose hands they were always expected to kiss in greeting as a mark of subservience. Attempting to stem this practice, King Nikola had decreed that all clan elders first kiss their wife's hand at public events.[99] The extremes of patriarchy could offer social advantages, however. Despite lives of toil and child-bearing, strict rules governing Dinaric communal life were noted as safeguarding against domestic and sexual violence. '[N]o woman in Montenegro is ill-treated, nor may man lift hand against her', one positive summation of the country's cultural practices concluded.[100]

Jezernik states that the most egregious fault was the apparent absence of feminine beauty in Dinaric Slav society, most notably in Montenegro and Herzegovina.[101] Anecdotes proliferated of women prematurely aged from carrying out manual labour. Considering anything besides fighting as undignified, 'the opposite sex looks on' while peasant women in Cetinje perform work 'which, in other countries, is left to day-labourers,' remarked a visiting

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[95] Drage, *Austria-Hungary*, pp.461-462; Erlich's survey observed that both Serbia and the Croat lands had, in fact, experienced a general decline in birth-rates and the number of *zadruga* after 1900. Erlich, *Family in Transition*, pp.288-289; Trevor, *Montenegro*, pp.55-56.
[96] Trevor, *Montenegro*, p.57.
[97] Wyon & Prance, *The Land of the Black Mountain*, p.192.
[98] In 1855, the then reigning Prince Danillo I introduced a civil constitution in his efforts to modernise the country. (Rev.) W. Denton, *Montenegro: Its People and Their History* (London: Daldy, Isbister & Co., 1877), pp.124-127; Trevor, *Montenegro*, p.299; Ford, 'Montenegro in the Eyes of the English Traveller', p.365.
[99] This also applied to children and male servants. Wyon & Prance, *The Land of the Black Mountain*, pp.196-197.
[100] Trevor, *Montenegro*, pp.45-47.
[101] Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, pp.109-110.

diplomat.[102] This ostensibly confirmed the belief that beauty, as understood in the West, was exclusive to civilisation.[103] The condition of women also appeared to highlight how modernisation either failed to impact on traditional attitudes or proved socially detrimental, echoing late nineteenth-century impressions of a degenerative urban underclass. Travelling from Niš to Zaječar in east Serbia, Durham was informed by her driver that 'there were always at least three women to one man working in the fields and that the "man" was usually a boy'. Heavy labour seemed pointless when one could find employment in a nearby town as a 'pandur' (policeman). Meanwhile, the 'gazda' (head) of a household could spend his days 'elegantly in a kafana'.[104] The comparatively lowly standing of South Slavonic peasant women in general could also serve as a prism for ethnic contrasts. Magyar farmers in Hungarian-ruled lands 'honoured their womankind', noted one tourist, with men performing all heavy labour unless strictly necessary, presumably in contrast to their South Slavonic (or Romanian and Slovak) counterparts.[105]

Chauvinism did not necessarily preclude the existence of female agency within women themselves, who were often depicted as reinforcing their victimhood through their own retrogressive cultural conditioning. Brailsford found a notable allegory for Ottoman rule in the 'silent and docile' Macedonian peasant woman who never asked 'for novelty and innovation nor rebelled against the conventions and monotonies of her lot'.[106] In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Christian and Muslim peasant women were admonished for undermining Austria-Hungary's civilising efforts through a passive resistance to education (even when their male relatives approved of them receiving it).[107] Concurrently, women in Montenegro were also deemed to

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[102] [Le Queux], *An Observer*, p.23.

[103] Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, pp.111-112. The inferior status of women in Montenegro had long been noted by South Slavonic intellectuals. Writing in the 1830s, Karadžić claimed that even the term 'woman' was deemed an insult among Montenegrin men. Cvijić later explained that, besides shepherding or fighting, manual labour was considered degrading to a mountaineer's honour; however, in a modern context this could be construed as indolence and overt misogyny. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Crna Gora i Crnogorci*, (ed.) Golub Dobrašinović (Cetinje: Obod, 1975 [1837]), pp.89; Jovan Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique*, pp.288-289.

[104] A small café-bistro, historically ubiquitous across the South Slavonic Balkans. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, pp.193-194.

[105] Adrian (& Marianne) Stokes, *Hungary* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1909), p.14.

[106] Brailsford, *Macedonia*, pp.76-77.

[107] Henderson, *A British Officer*, *pp*.77-78.

be equally guilty of perpetuating regressive practices. For instance, on encountering a woman bearing a heavy load while a male relative rode beside her on a pack-animal, Jackson noted that 'neither of them would consent to change their position, and put the load on the mule and make the man walk'.[108]

During her secondment with the MRF, Durham became progressively more negative in her assessment of the Macedonian peasants, of whom the majority were women and children, unable to find their foibles 'in any way lovable or admirable'.[109] Writing in *The Monthly Review*, she described the crowds of female refugees who insistently importuned the MRF as lacking any of the aesthetic attributes associated with rural life. The ignorance and superstition displayed by her humanitarian charge, demonstrated in their refusal of medical treatment while constantly demanding handouts of food, money and clothing, only compounded a perceived state of visible degeneracy associated with rural Ireland and Britain's urban underclass:

> They are stumpy, they are stout, they are heavily built and clumsy, they have faces like Dutch cheeses; they wear their hair in two draggly, skimpy pigtails which they prolong with wool and string…they tie their heads up in black handkerchiefs which cover mouth and chin in Mohammedan manner, and their costume is the most unlovely ever yet devised; they call me their 'golden sister'; the yard is full of them, and they are all unutterably filthy.[110]

Besides irritation, however, this fatalistic obstinacy was interpreted as another facet of the victimhood narrative, forged through the inter-generational cultural trauma of Ottoman rule. 'Were it not for their extreme poverty and misery, my golden sisters would be intolerable,' Durham concluded.[111] Like Brailsford, she also deemed the plight of the Macedonian Slavs as indubitable evidence of a Turkish inability to prevent social fragmentation, being a 'densely, crassly, hopelessly stupid people', or maintain basic civil order in their own dominions – 'one wants to chase the lot out of Europe'.[112] This further converged with ideas of a stymied urban-rural divide and cultural inertia as a product of Ottoman oppression. In Bitola's bazaars and

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[108] Jackson, *The Shores of the Adriatic*, p.391; Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, p.111.
[109] Edith Durham, 'My Golden Sisters: A Macedonian Picture', *The Monthly Review*, Vol.15 (May 1904), p.76.
[110] Ibid., pp.76-78.
[111] Ibid., p.73.
[112] Durham, 'Letter to Mrs Seymour, 7th January 1904', RAI: MS 43.

'quasi-European shops', the only female presence Brailsford could see was among parties of peasants, the streets being 'no place for a respectable Christian woman'.[113] Abbott noted, however, that the former was at equal risk of harassment from military patrols and officials. In some districts, the kidnapping and forcing of peasant girls into Turkish harems was claimed to be so severe that parents tattooed their teenage daughters with crucifixes as a means of identification.[114] Evidence of this practice in other South Slavonic lands merited similar reactions. Although Holbach dismissed tattooing among Catholic Herzegovinian women as the vestige of a 'simple superstitious religion of the Middle Ages', others regarded it as a renunciation of individuality by becoming 'branded'. [115]

Beneath various uncomplimentary forms of representation, peasant women appeared to embody the crystallising victimhood narrative. What appeared as a persistent degradation of femininity and it associated spiritual and moral virtues, also echoed the hardening of differing attitudes around the suffrage issue as public impressions were shaped by the sensationalising of militant suffragettes, retaliatory police violence and the force-feeding of imprisoned, hunger-striking female activists from 1906 to 1913.[116] Against this, romanticised depictions of patriarchal peasant life began to evoke an image of internalised social stability framed against the re-emerging victimhood narrative of war, violence and impoverishment, where the imposition of a cultural modernity had evolved into a destabilising force.

The Shifting Perception of Violence

Since the 1870s, violence had been the dominant motif associated with southeast Europe in British imaginative geography. 'Talking of war, there'll be trouble in the Balkans in the spring,' comments one of Rudyard Kipling's characters, the phrase becoming an adage for

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[113] Brailsford, *Macedonia*, pp.182-183.
[114] Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour*, p.171. Durham later rejected explanations for this practice among Herzegovinian Catholics. Citing examples of the custom in Albania, she theorised it to be of preventative significance predating both the Slavs' and Ottomans' arrival in the peninsular. E.M. Durham, 'Albania Past and Present', *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol.4, No.1 (1917), pp.12-13.
[115] Holbach, *Wayside Wanderings*, p.62; Munro, *Rambles and Studies*, pp.46-47.
[116] Searle, *A New England*, pp.456-470.

the region.[117] At the turn of the century, notions of violent conflict became interwoven with narratives of Western decline. Demonstrating the *fin de siècle* fashion for ascribing a racial context to the degeneration of Western civilisation, one commentator warned of bullishness among 'the Chinese of Europe [Slavs]' in the 1890s. A 'great European war', originating in the Balkans would be 'one of the few political certainties of our time'.[118] Hulme-Beaman predicted an equally dismal fate for Macedonia as 'one of the great battlefields of Eastern Europe'.[119] The spike in violent guerrilla activities across the territory from 1903 to 1908 appeared to seal its reputation as 'that land of terror, fire and sword'.[120] By 1913, customs such as the 'law of vendetta' or headhunting, and a discursive preoccupation with individual incidents of violence were, according to Todorova, often conflated with social normalities, becoming 'frozen' into an archetype for the entire region.[121] Yet, this stance obfuscates the fact that violence 'was not always interpreted in the same manner, nor did it stand unchallenged' as an emblem of ingrained cultural animosity.[122] Popular reactions, such as the outpouring of opprobrium against Serbia following the 1903 regicide, for instance, were more a perfunctory disdain towards the nature of the act, often exposing a persistent dearth in British public knowledge as opposed to an instinctive prejudice.[123]

Furthermore, following the 1903 disturbances in Macedonia, violent occurrences were increasingly channelled into the allegorical motifs surrounding the victimhood narrative. Unsurprisingly, the territories of the Ottoman Empire were the primary political focus of this

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[117] John L.C. Booth, *Trouble in the Balkans* (London: Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., 1905), pp.vii-viii.
[118] Legh, 'A Ramble in Bosnia and Herzegovina', pp.479-480.
[119] Hulme-Beaman, *Twenty Years in the Near East*, p.137.
[120] Statistics compiled by Britain's consulates in Bitola, Skopje and Thessaloniki reported 66 violent assaults between 1894 and 1900, climbing to over 3,300 'known murders' between 1903 and 1908. [Le Queux], *An Observer*, p.6; Basil C. Gounaris, 'Preachers of God and Martyrs of the Nation: The Politics of Murder in Ottoman Macedonia in the Early Twentieth Century', *Balkanologie*, Vol.9, No.1-2 (2005), p.37.
[121] Jezernik, *Wild Europe*, pp.127-132; Todorova, *Imagining*, p.7, 144.
[122] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.79.
[123] Sensationalist speculation was not restricted to the British and European presses. *The New York Times* dedicated an entire column to analysing the cultural iniquitousness of defenestration among the 'Slav' race. The fact that the assassins had thrown the royal couple's bodies out of a palace window following their murder was ascribed to their being descended from 'forest dwellers living in square-built log houses'. Centuries of 'indulgences in vodka and brandy' had made 'the window habit' a racial instinct that turned the conspirators 'into wild beasts'. 'Out the Window', *The New York Times*, 24th June 1903. Cited in Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*, pp.192-193.

dynamic with atrocity narratives involving an already oppressed Christian populace construed as a blot on Britain's claim to be Western civilisation's moral beacon.[124] Committee literature informing readers that a situation where 'men [had been] shot down in their fields, women outraged in their homes, and children stabbed at their mother's knee' was occurring 'within three days' of London' by railway travel, represented no less than a collective British failure to uphold civilisation's most fundamental tenets.[125] Politically, however, sensationalist rhetoric quickly lost its potency after 1903 as the question of who was actually committing these attacks against civilians became progressively more ambiguous.[126] What these developments reveal, however, was a shift in the perception of violence as a normative cultural trait embedded in South Slavonic society to an aberrant manifestation of a malign form of modernity that victimised rural communities or, more egregiously, eroded their spiritual virtuousness through the imposition of corrupting forces such as nationalism.

The incorporation of violence into thematic portrayals of victimhood was itself indicative of the efforts of regional actors to influence political narratives. Seeking to capitalise on the resurgence in anti-Ottoman sentiments following the Hamidian Massacres, VMRO representatives and Balkan diplomats circulated 'pro-memoria lists' to the Western press, detailing evidence of atrocities and forced displacement. As in the 1890s, the Ottoman government's clumsy attempts at controlling the flow of negative coverage, by refusing to grant travel permits to foreign correspondents, unintentionally aided its enemies' cause.[127] Consequently, as this agitation entered its most intensive period in March 1903, Dillon reported on the rape and torture of Slav women and children by the Ottoman forces, based on Bulgarian-

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[124] D.M. Mason, *Macedonia and Great Britain's Responsibility* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), pp.4-12.

[125] Victoria de Bunsen & Noel Buxton, *Macedonian Massacres: Photos from Macedonia* (London: The Balkan Committee, 1907), pp.6-9.

[126] The Committee's attempts to sensationalise events in Macedonia by publishing a series of graphic photographs in 1907, for example, were undermined by it being obliged to admit that those responsible for the scenes depicted were likely to have been 'Christian bands'. De Bunsen & Buxton, *Macedonian Massacres*, pp.5-6; Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', p.584.

[127] International outrage concerning the Armenian Massacres began to migrate towards the Balkans in September 1902 when European newspapers reported on the Ottomans' suppression of the Gorna-Djumaya revolt in eastern Macedonia. R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.127; Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, pp.231-232.

supplied information.[128] Audiences were also instructed on the cultural repercussions of these attacks; the loss of what an average Briton might consider a 'hovel' for instance, effectively signalled the Macedonian peasant's spiritual 'death' as he became an outcast from the village he once deemed 'his paradise'.[129]

In keeping with the British propensity to arrange people into moral, rather than civilisational, hierarchies, Edwardian popular fiction now appropriated Balkan violence to promote 'Britain's superior sense of justice' and explore qualities of 'self-mastery and volition'. Echoing Hope and other late Victorians, Anglophone heroes could discover unknown depths of intrinsic genius in order to aid or assume leadership over 'noble primitive' peasants against 'degenerate' foreign invaders or their despotic ruler.[130] Neither was public moral triumphalism entirely complacent in its potential to intervene in matters outside the Edwardian domestic sphere. This was principally reflected in the tide of humanitarian condemnation against the exploitation and brutalisation of the native Congolese under Leopold II of Belgium's privately administered Congo Free State, leading to its dismantling in 1908.[131]

As Perkins notes, however, organised opinion's efforts to bring this moralistic energy to bear on the South Slavonic Balkans were constrained by the dubious influences and activities of regional nationalists.[132] Internecine violence between the VMRO and other groups, as well as reported attacks on peasant communities in particular, began to partially impede the further development of a Slavonic victimhood narrative. 'The Turk is consistently held up as the personification of human devilry,' observed one journalist in the immediate aftermath of the Balkan Wars, but whether his 'savagery' matched that of 'the Bulgarian

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[128] E.J. Dillon, 'The Reign of Terror in Macedonia', *The Contemporary Review*, No.447 (March 1903), p.313.
[129] Comyn-Platt, *The Turk in the Balkans*, pp.100-101.
[130] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.77. For examples of this popular literary trope see Tom Bevan, *The Insurgent Trail. A Story of the Balkans* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910); John Finnemore, *A Boy Scout in the Balkans* (London: W. & R. Chambers, 1913).
[131] See for example, Dean Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement, 1896-1913* (London: Routledge, 2016).
[132] Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', p.584.

"voivodes" [war-lords]' was questionable in the extreme. Scenes of peasants lying dead in their fields and framed by burning villages could not conceal the fact that the perpetrators were likely to have been Christian Slavs.[133] By 1913, the Eastern Question's innate complexity was even highlighted for those 'who only see it from a distance' in romanticised fiction, while re-emphasising British moral superiority. The Turks may have been 'more than useless, as rulers' but Macedonian Slavs were 'a long chalk off being the same kind of Christian that you may meet rambling to an English village church on a fine Sunday morning'.[134]

As early as 1903, the appearance of Greek and Serbian fighters focused concerns on regional nationalism's role in perpetuating violence. The Macedonian philologist, Krste Misirkov, argued that it was not Ottoman backwardness but the 'megalomania' of Balkan nationalism that had brought about the disastrous consequences of Ilinden–Preobrazhenie. Foreign encouragement only aggravated this situation, with Misirkov citing, among others, several senior Anglican bishops.[135] While invariably framed as the principal victims of violence, peasants still occupied a subordinate position to the external forces that produced it. In the course of her secondment with the MRF, Durham claimed to have repeatedly clashed with the pro-Bulgarian Bishop of Ohrid, who took exception at her refusal to divert supplies to the VMRO. Incensed by her unwillingness to serve as a political accessory, the prelate had exercised his spiritual authority over the refugees, turning them against the mission and engendering Durham's disillusionment with their plight.[136]

The South Slavonic peasantry's potential for violence, and the social patina of lawlessness it conveyed – including the purportedly civilised Habsburg domains – raised the issue of insidious political manipulation by nationalists, paralleling latent fears over the possibility of renewed unrest in Ireland. In 1903, the Conservative and Unionist press seized

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[133] W.H. Crawfurd Price, *The Balkan Cockpit: The Political and Military Story of the Balkan Wars in Macedonia* (London: T. Werner Laurie Ltd., 1913), p.14.
[134] Finnemore, *A Boy Scout in the Balkans*, p.12.
[135] Krste P. Misirkov, *Za makedonckite raboti* (Sofiā: Pečatnica na 'Liberalnij Klub', 1903), pp.1-2, p.34.
[136] Durham, 'My Golden Sisters', p.79.

on *Reuters'* coverage of a wave of disturbances in Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia – in response to the trial of several Croatian Serb politicians charged on fabricated evidence – as an appropriate parable for Dublin Castle's perceived appeasement of nationalist agitators. Disputed allegations that rioting peasants had been lynched, or summarily executed in police retaliations, also served as a warning to Britons to exercise moral restraint.[137] Anti-German riots in Ljubljana in 1908 – attributed to the once passive rural Slovene populace's 'corruption' by crude 'pan-Slavist chauvinism' and subsequently spread by Croat and Czech secessionists – was again cited as demonstrating modern nationalism's corrosive impact on the rule of law.[138]

Discussion of brigandage, and the culture surrounding it, demonstrated another aspect of the ambiguous association between peasants and violence. In his assessment of the origins and consequences of the Serbian regicide, Vivian dedicated an entire chapter to the subject, imbuing it with the medieval romanticism that had first attracted him to Serbia in the late 1890s. 'The real brigand is usually a political refugee, who only desires to be let alone and is content if he can steal enough to keep body and soul together, or else a political emissary who travels about trying to force an unwilling peasantry into revolution.'[139] Centuries of repressive Turkish rule made Macedonia 'the headquarters of brigandage' where such individuals arose as avatars of the downtrodden. In relation to Macedonia, Vivian contested that the once noble concept of the brigand had been perverted by its state-utilisation as *komitadji*: armed bands of insurgent irregulars (such as those of the VMRO).[140] Whereas the image of the Dinaric mountaineer evoked a sense of heroic primitivism, their more contemporary incarnations further east practised a more insidious form of violence existing outside of normal warfare.[141] After being held to ransom by VMRO *komitadji* in 1905, a British businessman supported this assessment

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[137] 'Race-Riots in Croatia. Railways Torn Up: Mob Fired on by Troops', *St. James's Gazette*, 22nd May 1903, p.15; 'The Rising in Croatia', *Edinburgh Evening News,* 23rd May 1903, p.4; 'The Rioting in Croatia. A Tragedy', *Belfast News Letter*, 25th May 1903, p.8.

[138] 'Anti-German Riots in Austria', *Belfast News Letter*, 21st September 1908, p.8; 'Mob Charged by Military', *The Irish Times*, 21st September 1908, p.7; 'Serious Riots', *The Western Times*, 21st September 1908, p.4; Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.141-142.

[139] Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy*, p.254.

[140] Ibid., pp.263-266.

[141] Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.118-121.

by describing his captors as little more than a territorial arm of the Bulgarian state apparatus, emboldened by its idolisation in the British press through an organised campaign by 'propagandists'. So prevalent was this that Bulgarian military officers reportedly led VMRO bands in raids on peasant villages (later blamed on the Ottoman authorities) without bothering to 'discard their uniforms'.[142]

Regardless of culpability, violence provided a rare impetus for promoting wider interest in the region itself while propagating the victimhood narrative beyond the social confines of the informed public. In early 1904, Serbia's suspended *chargé d'affaires*, Aleksandar Jovičić, attended a 'much discussed presentation' at the residence of Dr. John Berry and his wife Dr. Mary F. Dickinson Berry, who had travelled across Serbia 'in defiance of the boycott'. Accordingly, the 'simple and virtuous' lives of the peasantry had impressed them into attempting to counter press sensationalism 'invented in Vienna'. The audience included several senior parliamentarians, all of whom Jovičić described as 'making notes' and gazing at the Berrys' photographs of peasants and rural Serbian life 'as if hypnotized' by a country of which they knew little beyond the 'intrigue of Belgrade'.[143] In contrast to other attempts at encouraging engagement, these brief flurries of interest could find resonance in the broader public sphere. A film depicting King Petar's coronation by the director Frank Mottershaw, for instance, played to sell-out audiences in Sheffield and London from 1904 to 1905.[144] Another pioneering cinematographer enticed audiences with his series, *The Macedonian Atrocities*, featuring footage captured during Ilinden–Preobrazhenie.[145]

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[142] P.L.M. Wills, *A Captive of the Bulgarian Brigands: Englishman's Terrible Experiences in Macedonia* (London: Ede, Allom & Townsend, 1906), pp.6-7.

[143] Arhiv Srbije, *Ministarstvo inostranich dela, Političko odeljenje* (1904), Fascikla – III, Docije – IV, I/9 Pov.br. 2191, Jovičić-Pašiću, 2/15. XI (1904).

[144] The only known British presence during Petar's coronation in September 1904 was believed to have been Bourchier, Mottershaw, a few 'curious tourists', and Serbia's 'honorary counsel in Sheffield', Arnold Muir Wilson. Srdya Knezhevich, 'Pochasni konzul Srbiye Arnold Myuir Vilson', *Istoriyski chasopis*, Vol.39 (1992), pp.171-172.

[145] Peter Kardjilov, '"Cinematograms" of a Balkan Conflict: Charles Rider Noble in Bulgaria, 1903–1904', *Film History: An International Journal*, Vol.24, No.3 (2012), p.302; pp.313-314.

Despite ambiguities, the Edwardian period was ultimately representative of the discursive separation of peasant culture and the syllogism of state and nationalism as the arbiters of violence. It was not coincidental that critiques of negative archetypes quickly gained a presence in popular discourse after 1903. 'For the West has a short term memory,' Durham wrote in rebuttal to the 'hysterical' yet 'insincere' reactions to the murders. Only 'a few generations ago, when it, too, was young,' discarded heads were public spectacle and executed criminals' corpses 'rotted and stank on wayside gibbets'. Dinaric highlanders would have baulked at such gruesome displays which were antithetical to their own 'primitive honour'.[146] The actions of the May conspirators, observed de Windt, seemed incongruous with the demeanour of their rural co-nationals whose existence appeared almost completely detached from state politics.[147] Vivian, profoundly shaken by the regicide's exposure of an aspect of Balkan politics at odds with his own interpretation of an organic Arcadian idyll, adamantly rejected any association between Serbia's capital and its hinterlands. Through the *zadruga* system, peasants' virtues manifested in self-sufficiency, a preference for the communal and a 'natural capacity' for self-government that spurned state impositions. A 'constant craving to acquire more land' had nothing to do with a 'desire for power or ostentation, for they are essentially simple in nature… It is only when they go abroad for their education, don black coats and a thin veneer of progress, that they invite criticism' in their embracing of a corrupt modernity. For this reason, Vivian wished 'to remember them as I have known them – admirable survivors of the age of chivalry'.[148] His outrage over the regicide nevertheless prompted him to switch to the Montenegrins as the object of his unremitting romantic favour.[149]

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[146] Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, p.336. Durham's assessment appeared misleading, according to early nineteenth-century British sources. On a visit to Montenegro in 1839, the archaeologist Henry Leyard claimed to have been welcomed to Cetinje with a reception hosted in a fort decorated with 'Turkish heads'. A later game of billiards was interrupted by a band of mountaineers returning from a successful raid on the Albanian city of Shkodër. To Leyard's stated outrage, the expedition's spoils had included more heads, including those of children. Layard, *Autobiography and Letters*, pp.127-133.
[147] De Windt, *Savage Europe*, p.146.
[148] Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy*, pp.247-252.
[149] Herbert Vivian, 'Montenegro', *The Fortnightly Review*, Vol.93 (February 1913), p.320.

Fundamentally, it was this latter perception espoused by Vivian that witnessed the gradual recalibration of the peasantry's image in British imaginative geography. Simultaneously, a continued emphasis on unrest and the perpetrators' link with nationalism found resonance in discursive ideas of moral contingency in the misappropriation of the state monopoly on violence.[150] In some respects, the outbreak of the Balkan Wars provided clarity to the tensions that began to appear during this process of discursive transition – while giving rise to potential solutions to the question of victimhood.

Moral Humanism and the Balkan Wars

While the manner and long-term significance of the Balkans Wars' impact on British imaginative geography remain open to debate, it is difficult to refute that the events of 1912 to 1913 were a historic turning-point in Anglo-Balkan engagement, commensurate with the Eastern Crisis. Capitalising on a resurgent public interest, traditionally pro-Balkan Liberal and Radical rhetoric hailed the Balkan League's (comprising Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia) declaration of war on the Ottomans in October 1912 as the culmination of the nineteenth-century liberationist struggles dating back to the Eastern Crisis, or earlier to Greek Independence.[151] Writing from Sarajevo, Evans proclaimed 1912 as the inevitable 'beginning of the end' for Turkey-in-Europe; from the 1875 uprising in Herzegovina, 'the chain of events is unbroken'.[152] Furthermore, while more conservative press opinion initially supported the government's pro-Ottoman line, this stance was shortly discarded as a wave of military defeats by the armies forced Istanbul to relinquish most of its remaining Balkan holdings, leaving the FO obliged to realign its position.[153]

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[150] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', pp.190-191.

[151] Keisinger, *Unzivilisierte Kriege*, pp.120-121; Eugene Michail, 'Western Attitudes to War in the Balkans and the Shifting Meaning of Violence 1912-91', *The Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.47, No.2 (April 2012), pp.220-221.

[152] Arthur J. Evans, 'The Drama of the Balkans and its Closing Scenes', *The Contemporary Review*, No.564 (December 1912), p.766.

[153] Despite officially retaining their support for the post-Berlin status quo, British diplomats had secretly taken steps to encourage Greece's entry into the League in order to diminish its suspected potential as a vehicle for Russian pan-Slavism. Demirci, *British Public Opinion*, pp.42-43.

Representationally, 1912 also highlighted the extent to which the image of the region's people had grown increasingly fluid as a result of its interconnection with domestic issues. While Pamela Sezgin notes a continuation in derogatory characterisations, these largely resulted from Edwardian unease at the corrupting influence of contemporary nationalism.[154] For instance, Dillon characterised Serb leaders as 'both clever and nervous' in attempting to manipulate their country's patriotic energy while another correspondent described Serbia's call to arms as 'wild and unrestrained' as peasants from 'the most desolate farmsteads' and 'tiniest hamlets' accepted 'the call to the colours […] as though it were an invitation to a national festival in which religion was mingled with merry-making'. Urged on by their women and 'village orators', excitable bands flooded Belgrade in October 1912 'without uniform and without arms, but with the look of men who were spoiling for a fight'.[155] As Sezgin further notes, debates and rebuttals ensured impartiality in war reporting, with readers and contributors in the same publication holding differing opinions on its official stance. Ideals of persistent pejorative stereotyping were challenged in the national and specialist presses as the wars offered informed and organised opinion a contemporary forum in which to debate and re-evaluate preconceptions of the region.[156]

At a more popular imaginative level however, the subsequent exposure of widespread atrocities committed by the League's armies further reinforced the presentation of violent unrest as the persecution of pure and innocent rural communities by an extreme faction of the degenerative forces suspected of residing within urban modernity. As the League's members attempted to replicate the perceived ideal of ethnically homogenous nation-states in the lands they annexed, Western (and some dissenting regional) commentators redefined the conflict as

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[154] Pamela Dorn Sezgin, 'Between Cross and Crescent', in Yavuz & Blumi (eds.), *War and Nationalism*, p.428.
[155] Dillon, 'Foreign Affairs', *The Contemporary Review*, No.563 (November 1912), p.726; Philip Gibbs & Bernard Grant, *The Balkan War: Adventures of War with Cross and Crescent* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1913), pp.17-20. Western depictions of broad public support for the wars within the Balkan countries obscured a complex reality. Even in 1912, the outbreak of war had met with opposition from elements of Serbia's agrarian and socialist movements while much of the rural population resisted nationalist overtures. See, for example, Siniša Malešević, 'Obliterating Heterogeneity through Peace: Nationalisms, States and Wars in the Balkans', in John A. Hall & Siniša Malešević (eds.), *Nationalism and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[156] Dorn Sezgin, 'Between Cross and Crescent', pp.429-431.

a 'war of extermination', articulated as the convergence of the modern era's worst excesses.[157]

In the case of the war's reception in Britain, this dynamic partially served to obfuscate or relativise the initial exuberant reaction fostered by the war's outbreak, especially among those who had been engaged in championing the interests of specific countries. Early reports on the number of refugees and reports of war crimes were dismissed, as organised opinion writers in nearly every major daily and periodical (Liberal and Conservative) espoused the desirability of evicting the Ottomans from continental Europe. Dillon provided continuous analysis of events in *The Contemporary Review*'s 'Foreign Affairs' section, confidently predicting that peace was 'now in sight' as the 'long-awaited' Balkan conflagration promised an end to nearly ten years of conflict.[158] Nevertheless, Dillon was also cautious to note the conflict's potential to escalate in light of the recent 'Austro-Servian' dispute.[159] Brailsford further countenanced this in *The Nation*: 'Better an end with horrors than horrors without an end.'[160] Even the distinguished anti-militarist, Norman Angell, acknowledged that '"two opposed purposes" were present in the Balkans'. The very nature of Ottoman rule amounted to 'peace' in name only, necessitating its forcible removal in the interests of European stability. Angell speculated, however, as to whether 'the Balkan peoples prove Pacifist or Bellicist; adopt the Turkish or the Christian System?'[161]

This excitement quickly dissipated with the outbreak of the short-lived Second War in 1913 that pitted Bulgaria – the object of Gladstonian pro-Balkan sentiments since the Eastern Crisis – against Greece and Serbia. By this point, a stream of vignettes concerning rape, arson, mass killings, mutilations, and other atrocities was featured on the pages of the British press –

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[157] Michail, 'Western Attitudes to War', pp.223-225; Mark Biondich, 'The Balkan Wars: Violence and Nation-Building in the Balkans', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol.18, No.4 (2016), pp.397-398. See also Stefan Sotiris Papaioannou, *Balkan Wars Between the Lines: Violence and Civilians in Macedonia* (PhD Thesis, University of Maryland, 2012).
[158] 'Relief Appeals', *The Times*, 26th October 1912, p.5; Dillon, 'Foreign Affairs', *The Contemporary Review*, No.563 (November 1912), pp.734-737.
[159] Dillon, 'Foreign Affairs', *The Contemporary Review*, No.564 (December 1912), pp.873-876.
[160] H.N. Brailsford, 'Politics and Affairs: The War and the Concert', *The Nation*, Vol.8, No.2 (12th October 1912), p.88.
[161] Norman Angell, *Peace Theories and the Balkan War* (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1912), p.13. See also idem, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to their Economic and Social Advantage* (London: William Heinemann, 1910).

with coverage focussing on Montenegro's and Serbia's campaigns in Albania and Kosovo.[162]

As with Ottoman efforts to conceal the extent of the Hamidian Massacres and suppression of Ilinden–Preobrazhenie, efforts at censure by the League members served to ultimately exacerbate their ascribed guilt, including at an official level. A dispatch from the consulate in Bitola in early 1913, following Macedonia's annexation by Serbia, estimated that 'less than 12,000' of the district's 149,000 inhabitants 'are Serbs, or rather the creation of Servian propaganda since the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina'. This was in spite of the 'scientific' evidence the Serbian military authorities routinely presented to the territory's foreign consulates when pressed on reports of abuse against civilians.[163]

The extent of war crime accusations even prompted an investigation by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, consisting of a commission comprising representatives from the USA and the European Powers. One of its witnesses, Raymond Fisher, the only Briton recorded as serving in an active military capacity as a volunteer in the Bulgarian army from 1912 to 1913[164], testified that 'Bulgarian' villages in east Macedonia were being subjected to a program of 'Serbianization' that encapsulated peasant victimisation by modern power structures. Peasant women died 'as the result of violation' while survivors endured privations from forced requisitioning of crops to be 'used in the trenches as bedding' and a levying of taxes 'even on burned houses'.[165] Another diplomatic dispatch from Bitola in June 1914 observed that modern state mechanisms were beginning to replace outright military aggression as a means of consolidating territorial gains. Enforced taxation was used by the Serb authorities

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[162] Both sides sought to control the flow of information by restricting civilian access to the front. One British correspondent wrote that while en route to Macedonia, he and a colleague had been detained by the authorities in Belgrade for several days without explanation. On arriving in the war's main theatre , both were treated by their respective Bulgarian and Ottoman hosts 'not as war-correspondents, but almost as prisoners of war – not as friends, but as enemies of dangerous character' with access to the front-lines restricted by their military escorts. Gibbs & Grant, *The Balkan War*, p.1; (Sir) Adam Block, *Come Over to Macedonia and Help Us* (Constantinople: Le Comité de Publication D.A.C.B, 1913), pp.1-6, 19-24; Michail, 'Western Attitudes to War', p.226.

[163] 'Creigh to FO; Despatch No.16, 27th March 1913', *Monastir (Political)*, FO 294/51.

[164] In contrast to that of other foreign nationals, military engagement by British nationals was modest; Fisher's own Macedonian Volunteer Legion, for example, comprised mostly of returning American émigrés.

[165] *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan War* (Washington D.C.: The Endowment, 1914), p.318.

as a disincentive to drive Muslim peasants, including returning refugees, from their land. This was compounded by the local administration permitting their Christian neighbours 'to terrorise them to such an extent that agriculture has in many cases been impossible'.[166]

Politically, these revelations further marginalised the majority of organised opinion with lobby groups such as the Balkan Committee fracturing along partisan lines of individual ethno-political preferences. For Vivian, the war appeared to validate the extent to which Serbia now existed under 'terrorist rule', its chivalric agrarian traditions and peasantry corrupted by degenerate modern ideologies of ethno-nationalism. Consequently, Vivian championed Montenegrin expansion and unification with Serbia under the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty, thereby 'ending the regicide terrorism of the last nine years and restoring greater Servia, almost the Servia of Dushan, to her old place among civilised nations'.[167] Appeals for a reversion to earlier tradition found little empathy among more critical voices such as Durham who, despite volunteering to serve in the Montenegrin Red Cross, had grown increasingly hostile to her peers' pro-Slav loyalties.[168]

Nevertheless, her 1914 account of Shkodër's occupation by the Montenegrins came in the wake of the Austrian publicist Leo Freundlich's *Albaniens Golgotha* and Leon Trotsky's coverage, all espousing the belief that liberationist rhetoric had masked campaigns of 'extermination' rooted in seditious nationalist ideology imported from the West.[169] Like Vivian, Durham also alluded to the twisting of earlier customs into macabre parodies by the contemporary political climate, symbolised in the widespread use of facial mutilation. Montenegro's Spanish attaché and a Russian doctor serving in Western Kosovo 'corroborated' her claims of the practice as having been encouraged as a terror tactic by the Montenegrin army

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[166] 'Creigh to Crackanthorpe; Despatch No.48, 24th June 1914', *Foreign Office: Embassy and Consulates, Turkey (formerly Ottoman Empire): General Correspondence*, FO 195/2457.

[167] Vivian was referring to the famous medieval Serbian ruler Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, who was recognised as the country's most successful monarch. Herbert Vivian, 'After the War', *The Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 93 (February 1913), p. 320.

[168] Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, pp.3-4.

[169] See Leo Freundlich, *Albaniens Golgatha: Anklageakten Gegen die Vernichter des Albanervolkes* (Vienna: J. Roller, 1913); Leon Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky,* trans. Brian Pearce (New York: Monad Press, 1980).

whose troops had 'scarcely left a nose on a corpse between Berani and Ipek'.[170] This perversion of the country's heritage to suit nationalist aggrandisement was articulated in a recorded argument with a teacher from Podgorica who defended the practice as an 'old national custom': 'Of course we shall cut noses; we always have.'[171] Durham's charge of mutilation by Montenegrin troops, for example, was rebuked by the Irish novelist Joyce Cary, also serving with the Red Cross in Montenegro, whose posthumous memoir of service maintained that bands of Albanian irregulars had borne responsibility.[172] By 1913, other claims and counterclaims over the culpability and extent of the violence against prisoners and refugees were also being exchanged across the public sphere's various discursive channels with growing enmity.[173]

Neither did the belief that the wars' excesses reflected a wider civilisational contagion precipitate a unanimous shift in how the region was represented. As the First War drew to a close, Durham had initially directed blame at the West for restricting regional ambitions for self-determination and escalating nationalist agitations. Restraining these through the Berlin Treaty had 'only made the final explosion more violent'.[174] Following the second conflict, however, and the question of a necessary disenfranchisement, discussion became enmeshed in more general humanitarian debates as to how similar outrage might be prevented in the future. Attempts to explain the root causes diverged between universalist and particularist interpretations. Observing the minimal economic disruption the war had brought to Serbia's agricultural economy, convinced Brailsford, as one of the Endowment's two British representatives, in the validity of the first approach: the moral and social collapse, stemming

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[170] Britain's attaché, by contrast, had believed the Montenegrin's official line uncritically. *My Balkan Notebook Vol.II* [1940], Mary Edith Durham Collection', RAI: MS 41/1, p.8; eadem, *The Struggle for Scutari (Turk, Slav, and Albanian)* (London: Edward Arnold, 1914), pp.236-237.

[171] Ibid., p.185.

[172] Joyce Cary, *Memoir of the Bobotes* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), p.48.

[173] In mid-1913 for instance, Buxton engaged in a prolonged dispute with pro-Muslim campaigners in the letters section of *The Times* claiming that evidence for anti-Muslim atrocities was mostly fabricated by Istanbul. Noel Buxton, 'Faked Atrocities', *The Times*, 9th April 1913, p.7; Aubrey Herbert, 'Faked Atrocities', *The Times*, 10th April 1913, p.5; A. Majid, 'Faked Atrocities', *The Times*, 29th May 1913, p.7; Buxton, 'Faked Atrocities, *The Times*, 30th May 1913, p.7.

[174] E.M. Durham, 'The Soul of the War', *The Nation*, 16th November 1912, p.695.

from a combination of ethnic hostility and contemporary nationalism was indicative of a more extreme form of the cultural malaise deemed to have afflicted industrial Britain. Given the Serbs' apparent lack of cultural restraints however, again attributed to the Ottoman legacy, he subsequently proposed that 'those regions not ready to govern themselves' should have sovereignty transferred to a (democratic socialist) supranational body.[175] By contrast, Durham later retreated from external explanations, attributing the wars' excesses to the inherent Slavonic (specifically Serb) cultural deficiencies. In a 1920 biography, the 'bestial experience' had, she claimed, convinced her that the 'Balkan Slav and his vaunted Christianity' were a uniquely disruptive force. A racial propensity for violence necessitated that 'all civilisation should rise and restrain him from further brutality'. Conversely, she claimed to have been equally convinced that such an 'obscene' occurrence would not happen in enlightened 'West Europe'.[176]

General critiques in the public sphere however, conceived of the violence as indicative of the region's cultural permeation by pernicious influences, reemphasising the victimhood narrative. Contributors to the *Africa Times and Orient Review* and the conservative *National Review*, who had protested against the wars at the outset, argued that nationalism, inspired mainly by Western ideas and interference, had been the true source of regional instability. The religious and moral crusader rhetoric of British commentators had only allowed atrocities and misrule to appear permissible if perpetrated against Muslims.[177] A pro-Turkish pamphlet was more strident in its criticism, urging readers to overcome their anti-Muslim prejudices and exercise public opinion 'against the atrocities' as a whole. Subsequently, the British government and Liberal organised opinion were accused of inadvertently enabling the current state of affairs through their historical treatment of every minor complaint made by Macedonian Christians 'as an international emergency'.[178] Suggestions of 'ancient' or 'tribal'

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[175] Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter*, pp.105-107.
[176] Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*, p.238.
[177] Dorn Sezgin. 'Between Cross and Crescent', p.463.
[178] Block, *Come Over to Macedonia and Help Us*, p.29.

hatreds were also dismissed as, like Vivian, blame was apportioned to governments and urban-based nationalist intellectuals whose duplicitousness further propagated the peasantry's persona as a naïve but sympathetic victim of history.[179]

Beyond these evolutions in regional victimhood narratives, the Balkan Wars captured Western imagination as a showcase for new military technologies such as naval warships and military aircraft as well as tactical innovations synonymous with the First World War, including artillery bombardments, barbed wire and massed infantry charges.[180] Conversely, Montenegro's and Serbia's campaigns in Albania and Kosovo retained much of the aesthetics of 'traditional' forms of Balkan war fought by peasant mountaineers.[181] In Cary's experience, King Nikola's army possessed no medical corps, relied on Serbia for ordnance and was comprised almost entirely of peasants who conducted the war in 'sheepskin coats'. Chaotic attacks by waves of infantry would occasionally be presaged by suicidal squads of 'bomb throwers': elderly men wearing 'the long white frock, blue breeches and white stockings of civil dress' who had volunteered for service 'because as they said it would not matter if they got killed'.[182] Indeed, the fatalism identified as permeating the conflict presented another facet of peasant victimhood. Writing from Montenegro in the winter of 1912, Durham declared modern war itself had evolved into a form of social necrosis. Hospital wards overwhelmed by infected patients and the diseases spread by the mass movement of armies and refugees created a state of perpetual misery for both victor and vanquished alike: '"The Balkan land for the Balkan people." But the Balkan lands were but sparsely populated, and the victims innumerable.'[183]

As a question of historical engagement, 1912 and 1913 marked a notable departure from previous patterns of public reaction to violent unrest. By the end of hostilities, the conflict had

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[179] 'The Atrocity Campaign', *The Times*, 18th January 1913, p.5.

[180] Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.63-66; Igor Despot, *The Balkan Wars in the Eyes of the Warring Parties: Perceptions and Interpretations* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2012), pp.172-180.

[181] See Cary, *Memoir of the Bobotes*.

[182] Ibid., p.119.

[183] M.E. Durham, 'Miseria', *The Nation*, 21st December 1912, p.528.

itself metastasised into a conduit for expressing the newly-conceived popular sense of Britishness as an active force on the world stage through humanitarian intervention. Inspired by the mythology surrounding Florence Nightingale, women in particular were drawn into aid or medical provision. In the Balkan context, historical precedence had been established during the Eastern Crisis in which Irby's supervision of food distribution to Christian refugees in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and an emergency aid mission to Bulgaria led by Emily Anne Beaufort, had both come to press and parliamentary attention in 1876.[184] Human suffering during wartime thus became the moral pinion to which engaged members of the public affixed their roles as representatives of Britain's superior standing in the hierarchy of civilisation. Aid work itself was envisioned as an expression of defiance against the prevailing spirit of cynicism perceived to be afflicting Western civilisation.

In contrast to the 1870s however, international humanitarian intervention during the Balkan Wars occurred on a much grander scale as volunteer missions from each of the major powers flocked to the region.[185] In Britain, this filtered into a philosophical discussion of the country's claim of moral superiority and its affirmation through direct action. A campaign to expand the service remit of Red Cross volunteers, for example, elaborated on the organisation's international ethos as corresponding to the 'unique sense' of British moral compulsion. Volunteers popularised the campaign as a moral confrontation between 'the medium of the benevolence of the British public' and narrow-minded 'national limitations', indicative of forces arranged against this new spirit of international humanitarianism.[186]

The Balkan Wars also intersected with a formative shift in British altruism which would continue to develop throughout the twentieth century; the social reformer Eglantyne Jebb

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[184] Edward A. Freeman, 'Bosnian and Herzegovinian Refugees', *The Times*, 3rd July 1876, p.6; Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, p.32; Todorova, *Imagining*, p.98-99. This earlier British presence occasionally converged with the development of state or civil institutions in the Balkan countries. During the Romanian War of Independence (1877-1878), an 'English' military hospital in Bucharest was reported to be under the 'directorship' of a 'Mrs. E.B. Mawer' who later established a Romanian nursing society, supported by Florence Nightingale. See E.D. Tappe, 'Florence Nightingale and Rumanian Nursing', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol.49, No.114 (January 1971), pp.125-127.

[185] Despot, *The Balkan Wars in the Eyes of the Warring Parties*, pp.181-191.

[186] *The British Red Cross in the Balkans* (London: Cassell & Co., 1913), pp.v-vi.

highlighted the suffering of Albanian and Macedonian children in 1913 as inspiration for her establishing the *Save the Children Fund* in 1919.[187] This also represented a departure from the discursive ambiguity that had previously surrounded women's suffrage, as participants presented direct analogies between domestic and overseas issues. Mabel Ann St. Clair Stobart, an active suffragist and avowed humanitarian who had led a 'Women's Convoy Corps' in Bulgaria and Macedonia, exemplified this conflation of moral virtuousness with humanitarian interventionism. In a pamphlet authored on her return to Britain in 1913, Stobart argued for the need for female participation in national defence in order to validate women's right to political enfranchisement.[188] However, this commitment to suffrage was enmeshed in spiritualist interpretations of humanitarianism, visualising relief work as 'the militant arm' of anti-militarism. Women should take it upon themselves to limit its destructive impact on the lives of soldiers and civilians as a moral challenge to the persistence of war, 'regardless' of where or whom it affected.[189]

Conclusion

While the Second Balkan War splintered organised opinion and further soured the region's political reception within the public sphere it also revealed the extent to which the pejorative nineteenth-century cultural archetypes had been subverted. Although similar narratives had evoked emotive and vociferous reaction in the realm of public opinion during the 1820s and 1870s, their twentieth-century incarnation proved more enduring in its harnessing the peasantry's plight as an allegory for the degraded condition of industrial civilisation. In tandem with the perceived escalation in Britain's own domestic unrest in the early 1910s, the violent

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[187] The devastation wrought by the Serbian army also convinced Jebb to abandon the non-partisan ethos of her humanitarian mission by gathering Albanian testimonies on the actions of the Serbian army and passing them on to Buxton. Clare Mulley, *The Woman Who Saved the Children: A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009), pp.154-165.

[188] Jenny Gould, 'Women's Military Service in First World War Britain' in Margaret R. Higonnet (ed.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp.115-116.

[189] M.A. St. Clair Stobart, *War and Women: From Experience in the Balkans and Elsewhere* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1913), pp.xiv-xvi.

excesses of the Balkan Wars became a logical manifestation of the moral decay at the heart of the modern age, encapsulated in the atrocities or spiritual corruption of a previously untainted Slavonic Balkan peasantry.

Moreover, singular or homogenous pools of political opinion no longer determined how these territories were represented in 1912. Greater plurality of contributing views set against a decidedly more cynical domestic environment than that which had existed during the Eastern Crisis, meant essentialising imagery was less likely to be uncontested as exemplified in the Endowment's detailing of violence against Muslims as well as Christians.[190]

The transitions which occurred during the Edwardian period also revealed a moralistic turn in how Britons perceived themselves in their own geographical imaginations. The 'shift of focus in the moral standards of the liberal camp from liberty to non-violence' after 1912 was conducive to this trend.[191] Organisations such as the Endowment, formed in 1910, implied a new spirit of humanism; in Britain's case this was interwoven with a narrative re-imagining of the need to reconnect with a national identity predicated on innate moral superiority. Unlike the self-assuredness of the Victorians, maintaining or reacquiring this cultural virtuousness necessitated a moral pro-activeness lest it be eroded by materialistic complacency or darker dehumanising influences which the spread of industrial and intellectual modernity had assumedly unleashed in other parts of the world. The First World War was to further expedite this trend as Britain entered its most significant period of direct engagement.

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[190] Dorn Sezgin, 'Between Cross and Crescent', pp.489-490.
[191] Michail, 'Western Attitudes to War', p.227.

Chapter 4. Direct Engagement and Moral Identities: The British and the First World War in the South Slavonic Balkans

Among the developments which served to stimulate British interest in the South Slavonic Balkans during the early twentieth century, none were as significant in reaching the public consciousness as the First World War. Serbia's unanticipated victories over three invasion attempts by Austria-Hungarian forces in 1914, directly resonating with the emotive rhetoric surrounding Belgium's military resistance to the German army that same year. This heroic narrative of 'gallant little Serbia' was further magnified in October 1915 when the country was eventually occupied by the Central Powers.[1] Rather than surrender, however, the Serbian High Command ordered a mass retreat through Albania and Montenegro to the Adriatic coast, from where Serb soldiers and civilians were evacuated by Entente naval convoys evacuated to Corfu, Corsica and other Mediterranean outposts.[2]

Framed against this dramatic military context, the war represented a critical point in Anglo-Balkan cross-cultural relations as the apex of engagement between Britons and the Southern Slavs. During the conflict, over 400,000 British and Imperial subjects were deployed in Serbia and Macedonia in both military and humanitarian capacities.[3] Unlike previous conflicts, this British presence was distinguished by the diversity of its social composition, comprising high numbers of women and working-class men. This granted a more demographically representative cross-section of British society the potential to form independent impressions of the people and culture.

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[1] These comprised the armies of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Bulgaria. Although Bulgaria had remained neutral in July 1914, it joined the Central Powers in September 1915 after Berlin offered more than half of the territory acquired by Serbia since 1877.

[2] See Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War 1914-1918* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2007). Montenegro also came under Austro-Hungarian occupation in January 1916, leading King Nikola to flee into exile in Italy and France with the remnants of his army and government, capitulating to the Central Powers shortly afterwards. Srdja Pavlović. *Balkan Anschluss: The Annexation of Montenegro and the Creation of the Common South Slavic State* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), p.68, 76.

[3] Monica Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women', p.77; Wakefield & Moody, *Under the Devil's Eye*, pp.230-231.

As with the Edwardian years, imagological historiography has tended to adopt a broadly interpretative approach towards the First World War, with more theoretically expansive studies of first-wave scholarship subsuming 1914 to 1918 into a thematic chronology of recurrent Balkanist motifs and discourses.[4] More recent analysis attributes greater historical significance to the conflict, but only as a means of highlighting the evolution of certain paradigms, such as the changing dynamics of British engagement through the influence of female aid workers in isolation from wider domestic cultural contexts.[5] Drapac, for instance, highlights the significance of leading volunteers as 'informal diplomatists' whose work was subsequently expropriated by pro-Serb and pro-Yugoslav propagandists in Britain.[6] These assessments remain largely restricted to a subset of published personalities, and ignore the wider majority of British experiences and engagements. The experiences of military personnel, in particular, are almost absent from this analysis, despite forming the majority of the wartime presence.[7]

Despite the historically unique circumstances, the war undercut the comparatively hermetic debates and moralistic rhetoric characteristic of the previous decade by facilitating a temporary space in which representational impressions were exposed to a greater plurality of viewpoints, rooted in social rather than narrowly political concerns. It also promoted more proactive forms of engagement exemplified by the personal bonds volunteers forged with South Slavs – including the peasantry. These new criteria, revealed in both published and unpublished materials, reflect a complex set of observations framed by domestic or individual existential concerns and issues such as gender and alienation.[8]

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[4] See Todorova, *Imagining*; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*; Norris, *In the Wake*.
[5] See Hammond, *The Debated Lands*; idem, *British Literature and the Balkans*; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*.
[6] Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, p.81.
[7] On British military intervention in the Balkans from 1915 to 1918, see Alan Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika: The Macedonian Campaign 1915-1918* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965); Wakefield & Moody, *Under the Devil's* Eye.
[8] Like Todorova, Hammond's description of a rupturing in the 1910s overlooks the fact that popular representations of the peasant had been in gradual ascendance since before 1914. Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', p.56.

As with the Balkan Wars, depictions of civilian trauma, emphasising displacement, privation and individual human tragedy were instrumental in drawing British public attention to developments in the Balkan theatre. Hammond observes that subsequent British memoirs produced a 'chain of counter-assertion' in representations from 1915 to 1939 that broke with earlier pejorative paradigms. A 'previously marginal cluster of [positive] motifs, images and evaluations' displaced older pejoratives but remained 'conditioned' by earlier preconceptions as well as the language of the civilising mission.[9] Besides the fact that a shift against disparaging cultural archetypes was already in evidence by 1912, such an approach typifies the historiographical tendency (inspired by Hobsbawm) to perceive 1914 as the definitive point of departure. In actuality, the Great War served to amplify and consolidate pre-existing trends while continuing to reinforce the status of peasants as perpetual victims, in conjunction with public assuredness in Britain's own innate moral virtue.

This chapter explores the First World War's impact as a historical catalyst that further enmeshed representations of the peasantry in popular discursive issues as a result of a higher number of Britons, from more varied social backgrounds, becoming involved in direct regional engagement. It also considers how the war prompted a further evolution in the image of the peasant through the appearance of the 'peasant-soldier': a motif contingent on what Norris terms 'positive militarism'. Whereas violence was previously characterised as an egregious expression of the Balkan's innate primitiveness, its wartime association with the Serb peasantry's resistance to the invading Central Powers integrated it with the victimhood narrative. This also served to align Britain and Serbia's war efforts as reflecting of a wider moral endeavour, in the context of the general European conflict.[10]

'English sestre' and Peasant Soldiers

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[9] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.129-131. See for example, A. Goff & Hugh A. Fawcett, *Macedonia: A Plea for the Primitive* (London: John Lane, 1921).
[10] Norris, *In the Wake*, p.34.

In a conflict that has historically privileged the experience of the male combatant, British intervention in the South Slavonic Balkans was unique among the war's European fronts in initially comprising of a mostly female civilian presence. At the beginning of the war, units of volunteers, representing a myriad of aid organisations, had begun providing emergency aid to the Serbian army and civilians; besides the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance, the Serbian Relief Fund (SRF), founded by Seton-Watson in August 1914, and the Scottish Women's Hospitals (SWH) were the most significant. Resultantly, some 600 British nurses and female doctors oversaw an expansive network of hospitals and clinics throughout Serbia by October 1915, the largest in proportion to other wartime fronts.[11] Religious groups and private individuals, notably the Scottish tea merchant Thomas Lipton, also provided financial aid, logistical assistance or organised their own volunteer units.[12] The relatively small numbers of trained and professional medical staff were assisted by numerous non-specialist auxiliaries recruited in Britain, locally or even from among the ranks of enemy POWs.[13] While the majority of volunteers remained in their postings after the Central Powers' occupation of Serbia in late 1915 (or had been relocated to other theatres prior to this), a determined minority, including a SRF unit commanded by Stobart, joined the columns of civilian and military refugees fleeing to the coast.

What singled this earlier period out from later developments in the wartime Balkans was its role in establishing a link between the British and Serb war efforts. As news of female volunteers' humanitarian activities filtered back to the home front through the press and publications by volunteers from 1915 to 1917, Serbia's plight was revealed to the public

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[11] Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women', pp.77-79.

[12] As one SRF nurse speculated, Lipton's arrival might have also had a commercial aspect. Following each of his supply deliveries, 'Lipton's tea was on sale in every town and village we passed through'. 'The Mad Escapades of a War Nurse, unpublished', *Private Papers of Miss A.J. Pinniger*, IWM Documents: 2320, p.57.

[13] The exact numbers of non-medical staff who served in these units is difficult to ascertain since volunteers frequently transferred between organisations and military fronts, and POWs were recruited on an ad hoc basis in response to shortfalls in staffing. For discussion on the use of enemy-combatants as orderlies, see for example James Berry, F. May Dickinson Berry, W. Lyon Blease [& Other Members of the Unit], *The Story of a Red Cross Unit in Serbia* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1916); J. Johnston Abraham, *My Balkan Log* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.,1922); I. Emslie Hutton, *With a Women's Unit in Serbia, Salonika and Sebastopol* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1928).

through a specifically gendered prism.[14] The reported deaths of female volunteers during the evacuation, or from an aggressive typhus epidemic that broke out in early 1915, granted home audiences a window into the war's devastating impact on civilians, with Serbia itself believed to have suffered one of the highest death tolls among the First World War's participating countries.[15]

Although British women volunteers had been active in Balkan humanitarian efforts for nearly four decades prior to 1914, these operations had usually been restricted to isolated individual efforts. As Monica Krippner notes, within weeks of its outbreak, the First World War had eclipsed all of Britain's preceding interventions in terms of scale and professional organisation.[16] It also brought a far wider range of ideological convictions and political outlooks, in contrast to the Liberal-dominated Edwardian era. Like the Balkan Wars however, a discernibly anti-militarist current, as espoused by Stobart in 1913, gradually developed among leading volunteers as an alternative form of patriotism, establishing much of the ideological tenor for organisations such as the SWH.[17]

When considering the implications of this sudden wave of direct engagement, historiography tends to view these aid missions in narrow political terms, codifying them as a wartime trend in which woman sought new forms of expression to domestic campaigning.[18] Indeed, biographical texts on dominant personalities such as Stobart or the SWH's energetic founder, Dr. Elsie Inglis, accentuate a political commitment to women's suffrage as

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[14] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.59.

[15] Although Serbia's war losses were estimated to have been proportionally among the highest of the war's participants, the exact numbers are contested due to a lack of records: estimates range from approximately 450,000 to over 1 million. Danilo Šarenac, 'War Dead as a Yugoslav Burden: Serbian War Casualties and the Interwar Years', presented at *ASEEES-MAG Summer Convention "Images of the Other",* Lviv (Ukraine), 27th June 2016. See also Slobodan G. Markovich, 'Serbia's War Losses during the Great War Reconsidered', in Dragoljub R. Živojinović (ed.), *The Serbs and the First World War 1914-1918* (Belgrade: The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2015), pp.369-381.

[16] Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women', pp.76-77.

[17] Ellen Chivers Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia* (London: Methuen & Co., 1916), pp.1-3; (Dr.) Caroline Matthews *Experiences of a Woman Doctor in Serbia* (London: Mills & Boon, 1916), pp.2-3; Eva Shaw McLaren (ed.), *The History of the Scottish Women's Hospitals* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), pp.1-4.

[18] See Angela K. Smith, *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism and the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Alison S. Fell & Ingrid Sharp (eds.), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For Serbia and other eastern theatres see Angela K. Smith, *British Women of the Eastern Front: War, Writing and Experience in Serbia and Russia, 1914-20* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

instrumental to their wartime engagement in the Balkans.[19] Imagological historiography has itself generally accepted such reasoning. According to Evans, the 'righteous indignation' female volunteers had expressed over a lack of political rights in Britain translated into support for the wartime plight of Europe's smaller nations.[20] At the public level, however, Michail considers their work to echo the late Victorian ideal of virtuous feminine caregivers that, according to Drapac, was politically instrumentalised to manipulate British public sympathies.[21] While such assessments carry some validity, as with the disparities in how nineteenth-century diplomats and business figures had perceived the Balkan Slavs, this oversimplifies a far more nuanced picture. Although leading figures such as Inglis played an influential role in publicising wartime humanitarian aid, among the missions themselves, any pretensions of concrete political agendas were in the minority among a plurality of public and private expressions of opinion.[22] This plurality subsequently reflected, in effect, the projection of various social anxieties and dissatisfactions – including, but not restricted to, issues of gender – underlying popular discourse directly onto the region. As a consequence, the Serbian people's plight was depicted in propaganda narratives as one of the multiple wartime objectives, the resolution of which fell within Britain's – now fully realised – purview as civilisation's moral arbiter.

Such developments were emblematic of the First World War's historical salience in reframing ideological perceptions with the vigorous discursive energies previously mobilised against urban poverty and other domestic issues, now directed outwards under the aegis of Britain's place as a moral force. Writing of her experiences on the Albanian retreat in 1916 – and the estimated 140,000 deaths resulting from it – Stobart reiterated her claim that militarism

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[19] See (Lady) Frances Balfour, *Dr. Elsie Inglis* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918); M.A. St. Clair Stobart, *Miracles and Adventures: An Autobiography* (London: Rider & Co., 1936); Leah Leneman, *In the Service of Life: The Story of Elsie Inglis and the Scottish Women's Hospitals* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1994).

[20] The SWH, for example, was founded in 1914 with extensive financial backing from several suffrage groups. Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.7.

[21] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.60.

[22] McLaren, *The History of the Scottish Women's Hospitals*, pp.5-8.

represented 'maleness run riot'.[23] At its core, the Great War had evolved into a spiritual crusade against militarism and the 'retrogressive' materialism and retreat from spiritual values that she believed existed at its heart. In this instance, Stobart's stated beliefs were rooted in the concept that women in war embodied 'domestic order surrounded by turmoil and chaos'.[24] As 'primitive Woman' was naturally motivated to defend 'an individual concrete life', Stobart surmised that 'modern Woman must now, in an enlarged sphere, defend the abstract life of mankind'.[25] While few other volunteers shared her rhetorical grandiosity, her belief that women were the enablers of British cultural and moral virtue provided the conduit through which to inform, and retain the interest of, the public. Harold Lake, a British logistics officer who published his experiences before the campaign concluded, reserved praise for British nurses and medical staff as the only example of 'British worth' in an otherwise 'dismal' campaign. Only in honouring their sacrifice by liberating the Serbian homeland would Britain's claim of being first among civilised nations be vindicated.[26]

The outbreak of war in August 1914 had itself inflamed Britain's already febrile domestic climate and the social questions underlining it, as opposed to facilitating a widespread embracing of humanitarianism or moral calling. Mawkish calls to 'keep the home fires burning' hardened the resolve of female volunteers seeking to contribute directly to the British war effort.[27] Inglis's inspiration for the SWH's operational focus outside the Western Front was rumoured to have stemmed from the War Office's response to an earlier proposition. On suggesting that teams of doctors and nurses be sent to France and Belgium to bolster the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), it had been suggested that she 'go home and sit still'. In spite

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[23] M.A. St. Clair Stobart, *The Flaming Sword in Serbia and Elsewhere* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), pp.vii-viii. The exact number of deaths endured by Serbia remains a matter of debate and contestation. 'Introduction by Mark Cornwall', p.vii, 152.

[24] Smith, *British Women of the Eastern Front*, pp.155-156.

[25] Stobart later speculated that these beliefs had led to a series of 'miracles' which enabled her to escape a premature death several times, including execution by a German firing squad following her temporary internment in Belgium, where she had been managing another field hospital at the beginning of the war. Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, pp.vii-viii; 3-4; eadem, *Miracles and Adventures,* pp.158-165.

[26] Harold Lake, *In Salonika with Our Army* (London: A. Melrose, 1917), pp.226-228, p.284.

[27] The title of a patriotic British music hall song that appeared in October 1914. Monica Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy: Women at War in Serbia 1915-18* (London: David & Charles, 1980), p.28.

of this, however, Inglis had been careful to limit overt political connections between the SWH's founding and contemporary politics, rejecting any reference to women's suffrage in the organisation's title and mission statement.[28] Nevertheless, politics did serve, initially, as a source of internal tension; younger or less politicised SWH volunteers expressed fears that their aid work would be secondary to the political agendas of the more radical elements of the suffrage movement. Katherine Stuart MacPhail, a Glaswegian doctor serving in the SWH's first Serbian Unit from 1914 to 1915, recalled a collective sense of relief that radical sympathies were comparatively uncommon among volunteers:

> We knew we were being sent out under the auspices of the 'Suffrage Societies' and each was afraid that every other was a strong supporter, but were much relieved to find that almost none of us was what might be called 'strong', and that Serbia was the common bond, not suffrage.[29]

For the majority of participants, the compunction to volunteer in Serbia came from more modest impulses. Katherine Hodges, who had accompanied Jebb to Macedonia in 1913, joined the SWH as a driver the following year, later writing that she had succumbed to a 'naïve base euphoria', in a similar manner to those recruited into Herbert Kitchener's New Army. With 'no concept of what war actually was', the opportunity to serve on any military front seemed 'a wonderful adventure', even in the more cynical atmosphere of 1918.[30] In actuality, the level of work confronting volunteers on arrival in Serbia, already racked by an internal refugee crisis and outbreaks of numerous diseases, overwhelmed all other considerations.[31]

Furthermore, an overrepresentation of women among the ranks of volunteers obfuscated the fact that aid work was, in general, perceived as an alternative route to direct participation for those frustrated at being denied formal service in an active theatre. Despite its

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[28] The ban on allowing female doctors to serve in the RAMC was only lifted in 1916, owing to wartime expediencies and mounting casualty rates among male personnel. Balfour, *Elsie Inglis*, pp.156-162.

[29] Furthermore, despite Inglis's efforts to present her organisation as apolitical, the 'National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies' continued to appear in the SWH's letterhead and on the sides of its vehicles throughout the war. MacPhail also later claimed that these unresolved tensions between politics and humanitarian ideals were behind her decision to resign at the end of 1915. 'Letter dated September 1916', *Private Papers of Dr. K.S. MacPhail*, IWM Documents: 6767.

[30] 'Unpublished Memoir, dated 1934', *Private Papers of Miss K. Hodges*, IWM Documents: 1974, p.5.

[31] Jean Bray, 'The Extraordinary Ambassador: Biography of Dr Katherine Stuart MacPhail', unpublished, 1972, *MacPhail*, IWM Documents: 6767, p.6.

name, the SWH, for example, was open to both men and non-Scottish volunteers, most having been rejected by the army or barred from serving in the RAMC and other formations. Hodges recounted having to be escorted to the front of a queue when seeking to apply, the SWH's recruitment centre in central London having been 'swarmed' by male volunteers 'eager to get to any front, regardless of whose uniform they wore'.[32] As with their female colleagues, rejection by official channels was common. John Abraham, a surgeon with the Red Cross in Skopje, claimed to have volunteered in protest at the War Office's rejection of his application to serve on the Western Front, on the grounds that he was 'too old' despite being only thirty-six![33]

Despite holding extensive influence in shaping the domestic propaganda narrative, volunteers with previous regional connections such as Stobart and Louise Paget (the wife of Britain's then ambassador to Serbia, Ralph Paget) remained a small minority, reflecting the narrow social basis of direct engagement before 1914.[34] For most of those involved in humanitarian relief efforts, Serbia and the South Slavonic Balkans were not an initial consideration. SWH and Red Cross orientation meetings were met with cheerful claims that volunteers neither knew, nor seemed especially concerned, about where they were deployed.[35] MacPhail later admitted that rejection by the RAMC, rather than 'a wild and barbaric people, living in a wild country', had prompted her to join the SWH 'on impulse'. Warnings from the FO about the 'dark intrigues and unknown subtleties' women were likely to encounter in the region only served to enhance its allure for 'more adventurous' volunteers.[36]

In spite of general political apathy, questions of gender and the role of women as wartime actors became instrumental in tying relief work to discursive domestic issues. Inglis,

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[32] 'Unpublished Memoir', *Hodges*, IWM Documents: 1974, p.6

[33] Assuming an enlistee was able to pass all prerequisite health checks, the maximum age for recruitment into the British army's operational formations was 38. J. Johnston Abraham, *Surgeon's Journey* (London: Heinemann, 1957), p.3.

[34] *Dr Elsi Inglis memorijal-bolnica za žene i decu* (Belgrade: Štamparija 'Jovanović', 1929), p.25; Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women', p.73.

[35] Leneman, *In the Service of Life*, p.33.

[36] Bray, 'The Extraordinary Ambassador', *MacPhail*, IWM Documents: 6767, p.1.

a trained surgeon, exemplified this convergence of priorities, entering the war from a professional background and rising to prominence as the most high-profile volunteer in the Balkan theatre. Her approach to wartime service was typified by her formative years as a trainee doctor in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Clashes with the male-dominated medical establishment and the experience of practising among Scotland's urban working class moulded her outlook into one of perpetual struggle against other entrenched 'injustices'.[37] This was mainly reflected in her attitude towards female poverty and illnesses, which mirrored Stobart's views on war as a civilisational affliction necessitating intervention on behalf of its victims. Leah Leneman describes her political values as a mixture of 'Victorian virtues', Christian morality and suffragist dogma that appeared authoritarian to younger SWH volunteers. This mentality was demonstrated in the SWH's militaristic hierarchy and the compulsory wearing of 'austere military-styled uniforms'.[38] Furthermore, as with Stobart, a belief in humanitarianism was conjoined with the view that social change could be secured by accruing patriotic credentials and aptitudes beyond regular 'peacetime' requirements. In Inglis's case, this meant a widening of employment opportunities for women in medicine.

Continuity with pre-war women travellers was still evident in the perception of female volunteers in wartime discourse. Personality and the individual had come to play a salient role in promoting discursive interest in the region, particularly those personalities possessing a patina of the idiosyncratic. Flora Sandes, whose recruitment into the Serbian army in 1915 garnered her domestic fame as the only British woman known to have served in an active combat role, was the preeminent example. 'I seem to have just naturally drifted, by successive stages, from a nurse to a soldier,' she later recounted in her autobiography, 'and for seven years lived practically a man's life.'[39] Rather than politics, Julie Wheelwright observes that Sandes's

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[37] Once 'she had won the vote', quoted her biographer, husbands who disrupted their family life through excessive drinking would be publically 'horsewhipped' until they had 'learnt to behave'. Balfour, *Elsie Inglis*, pp.41-64.
[38] Leneman, *In the Service of Life*, pp.3-4, 38-39, p.81.
[39] Flora Sandes, *The Autobiography of a Women Soldier: A Brief Record of Adventure in the Serbian Army, 1916-1919* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1927), pp.9-12. See also eadem, *An English Woman-Sergeant in the Serbian Army* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916). As the only British woman known to have actively

motives stemmed from social frustration, unable to join 'her male counterparts in the pursuit of life beyond the stifling confines of Edwardian Britain'.[40] In contrast to her peers who perceived their roles as an extension of the feminine sphere, Sandes's entry into a direct combat role symbolised the culmination of her desire to overcome these limitations.[41] The Serbian army – stretched to breaking-point in 1915 – offered a potential avenue for social emancipation.

Like Inglis, MacPhail represented another personality who was attracted to humanitarian aid in response to dissatisfaction over employment rights.[42] However, she was equally unique among volunteers in her continued engagement with South Slavonic peasant communities after the war, as her priorities and immediate allegiances underwent a partial metamorphosis from 1915 to 1918. Working among peasants, notably children, fostered a growing emotional and personal bond through which she came to associate her work with the Serbian, and later Yugoslav, national cause.[43] While Sandes represented a dramatic departure from the feminine norm, the 'naturally pacifistic' MacPhail symbolised the wartime humanitarian ethos when separated from a more overt political subtext. This aversion to militaristic structures was demonstrated in late 1915, when she gravitated towards caring for civilian non-combatants. After the war, she remained in Serbia where she founded an 'Anglo-Yugoslav' paediatric ward in Belgrade.[44] Serbs had not been 'wild savages as people had

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volunteered for military service during the First World War, Sandes has attracted a considerable degree of attention. For a recent, albeit largely narrative, biography see Louise Miller, *A Fine Brother: The Life of Captain Flora Sandes*, (Richmond: Alma Books Ltd., 2012).

[40] Julie Wheelwright, 'Captain Flora Sandes: A Case Study in the Social Construction of Gender in the Serbian Context', in Allcock & Young (eds.), *Black Lambs*, p.91. On Sandes's adoption of a masculine persona during the war see also Julie Wheelwright, *Amazons and Military Maids: Women who Dressed as Men in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty and Happiness* (London: Pandora, 1989); Janet Lee, 'A Nurse and a Soldier: Gender, Class, and National Identity in the First World War Adventures of Grace McDougall and Flora Sandes', *Women's History Review*, Vol.15, No.1 (March 2006), pp.83-103.

[41] Ibid., p.85.

[42] Bray, 'The Extraordinary Ambassador', *MacPhail*, IWM Documents: 6767, pp.2-3.

[43] Precedence for this, according to her biographer, was shown in her work among impoverished Irish and Polish immigrant mining communities 'in their grim hovels […] often with families of eight or ten to a house' in the early 1900s. Ibid., p.3.

[44] Želimir Dj Mikić, *Ever Yours Sincerely: The Life and Work of Dr Katherine S. MacPhail*, trans. Muriel Heppell (Cambridge: Perfect Publishers, 2007), pp.128-129.

imagined', a dramatic *volte-face* to her motivations for travelling to the South Slavonic Balkans in 1914.[45]

Wartime Serbia proved ideal for those seeking personal or professional fulfilment. As Krippner notes, freedom from 'rigid conventions' found foreign women 'carrying out complicated surgery and running entire hospitals and ambulance columns'.[46] Sandes's time in the Serbian army granted her access to the culture of masculine camaraderie and aligned her experiences with those of male combatants. Tangentially, volunteer leaders often found themselves exercising almost unprecedented influence and responsibility.[47] The SWH leader, Dr. Eleanor Soltau, for example, had, by mid-1915, effectively assumed control of anti-typhus measures in the city of Kragujevac's surrounding rural districts.[48] Recurrent shortages in the number of trained medical staff also found volunteers undertaking responsibilities far exceeding the proficiencies of their training. Additionally, the typhus epidemic and 1915 retreat through Albania and Montenegro, granted volunteers a collective stake in the narrative of wartime heroism while converting the South Slavonic theatre into a space of resistance to historical interpretations of female subordination.[49]

Patriotic portrayals of female heroism also served to bring the plight of the Serbian populace to the attention of the British public, integrating the victimhood narrative into the wartime context. While never openly addressed, the collective allegory constructed within volunteers' accounts characterised the condition of the Serbs with whom they interacted – the majority of whom were peasants or peasant conscripts – as akin to that of a sickly child, victimised by the cruelty of historical circumstance. Wilson described amputees and convalescents evacuated to Egypt as 'child-like' in their bravery and cheerfulness, eager for the educational activities humanitarian groups offered in preparation for a return to civilian

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[45] Francesca M. Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos: Recollections of Relief Work in and between Three Wars* (London: John Murray, 1944), pp.11-12, p.111.
[46] Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy*, p.13.
[47] Sandes, *The Autobiography*, pp.63-85.
[48] Gordon Gordon-Smith, *Through the Serbian Campaign* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1916), pp.265-275.
[49] McPhail recounted being called upon to perform an autopsy in 1917 – despite having no experience beyond assisting senior practitioners. Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy*, pp.13-14; Mikić, *Ever Yours Sincerely*, pp.59-60.

life. This was juxtaposed, however, with a quiescent despondency that their 'mother' Serbia lay under enemy occupation.[50] By 1916, such depictions had coalesced around the caricature of the peasant-soldier – mobilised in the defence, and subsequent reclamation, of his homeland – becoming a *casus belli* which wartime propaganda amplified into a collective analogy for a shared spirit of Anglo-Serbian defiance. In contrast to Austria-Hungary or Germany, wrote the itinerant nurse Ellen Davies, 'the army is the people and every man is a born soldier'. Even the most pacifistic of peasant would march to fight for his country, as he would to protect a woman's honour.[51] This maternal attraction was so potent that peace with Austria-Hungary was incomprehensible, the loss of a son in war being the highest form of honour for a Serbian mother. Likewise, 'Serb dwellers on Austrian soil' now looked to union as a spiritual revivification rather than irredentism.[52]

Questions of attitudes to women were occasionally a cause for concern, possibly precipitated by reports of widespread sexual violence in the Balkan Wars. Douglas Walshe, a British military transport officer, reminisced at how Serb patriarchal beliefs had been 'rather offensive to our ideas'. However, one 'never heard the least whisper of trouble with the women in the [Macedonian] villages'. As a peasant nation – almost culturally identical to Macedonia – Serbs were 'a surprisingly moral race on Active Service'.[53] Female doctors emphasised that their position as caregivers was comparable to that of female relatives, noting that they were referred to as 'sestre' (sisters) or 'Maika' (mother) in Stobart's case.[54] When questioned as to whether Serb soldiers objected to receiving treatment from women practitioners, Soltau's associate, Frances Wakefield, claimed the contrary:

> First, these simple peasant lads respect women, especially the mother figure, which, of course, given the special circumstances, we were. Second, they preferred us to the army doctors – they claimed that women surgeons were more

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[50] Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos*, pp.31-32.
[51] Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia*, p.71.
[52] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.124.
[53] Douglas Walshe, *With the Serbs in Macedonia* (London: The Bodley Head, 1920), pp.237-239.
[54] Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, p.124.

gentle, never rough, and generally more tender and patient. After all, most women are, aren't they? [55]

The contingency of gender in warfare was also offered validation by Sandes. Peasant girls had fought in the Serbian and Montenegrin armies since 1912, with one serving in her own regiment at the time of her recruitment: 'To their minds there was nothing particularly strange about a woman joining up.'[56]

For the public, Britain's humanitarian presence served as the main conduit through which the South Slavonic Balkans were presented as a showcase for the application of British moral compassion to wartime injustice. Nevertheless, popular interest was mainly attributable to the uniqueness of a military theatre in which British engagement appeared dominated by female non-combatants. It also exemplified the war's placation of pre-existing domestic issues: despite their humanitarian work attracting widespread praise, female volunteers' hopes of professional parity with their male counterparts were as distant in 1918 as they had been in 1914.[57] While examples such as Sandes aroused interest as anomalies, individualised rebellions were 'unconnected to a broader social analysis of gender inequalities' in the minds of the general public.[58] The volunteer presence was therefore revealing of the limitations of direct engagement for engendering intercultural connections or promoting social causes, especially when framed against a domestic context heavily buoyed by wartime propaganda.

Forgotten Armies at War

In October 1915, the Entente Powers, already facing military set-backs or stalemate in other theatres, commenced their intervention in southeastern Europe with the deployment of a large

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[55] Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy*, p.53. Erlich's research granted this maternal analogy a degree of scientific validation. With the exception of the Littoral, 50 to 75 per cent of the Slavonic villages and *zadruge* surveyed recorded the tendencies of mothers to side with and place the needs of their children above those of husbands. Interpersonal bonds between mothers and sons were distinctly closer in Serbia, Montenegro, and 'highland' areas where traditionalist attitudes regarding male heirs as 'future protectors and providers' retained stronger social resonance. St. Erlich, *Family in Transition*, pp.96-99.
[56] Sandes, *The Autobiography*, p.9, 12.
[57] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, p.86.
[58] Wheelwright, *Amazons and Military Maids*, pp.145-148; Lee, 'A Nurse and a Soldier', pp.99-100.

Anglo-French expeditionary force in the Aegean port of Thessaloniki, Greece's prized territorial acquisition from the Balkan Wars.[59] Reorganised into the 'British Salonika Forces' (BSF), the initial aim of the 60,000 troops (including evacuees from the failed Dardanelles expedition) who comprised Britain's contribution was to serve as a relief effort for the beleaguered Serbian army and deter the Bulgarians from advancing into neutral Greece.[60] Serbia's occupation abrogated this objective, but the conditions of the Entente alliance inhibited London from redeploying these men to other theatres, even while the Balkan front remained mostly static between 1916 and 1918.[61]

In contrast to the humanitarian missions, analysis of the wartime experiences of Britain's considerably larger military presence in what was designated as the Macedonian Campaign, following Serbia's occupation in 1915, remains neglected by historical scholarship.[62] This may also reflect the place of the First World War in popular Western memory, which continues to situate it 'in an imagined space in France and Flanders'[63] while overlooking developments in other theatres. This lack of interest can also be attributed to perceptions of the French-led campaign as being merely a 'sideshow' to the strategically vital engagements in Belgium and France.[64] From a purely military perspective, a persistent shortage of supplies, faulty or poor-quality field equipment, and inconsistent and disorganised tactical planning critically diminished the BSF's operational effectiveness. Both major instances of

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[59] An advance guard of British officers had already been sent to the Aegean at the end of September.

[60] Over the centuries, the city's cosmopolitan demography had given rise to several variations on its Greek appellation of Thessaloniki: *Salonica/Salonika* (Ladino), *Sãrunã* (Armenian), *Solun* (Old Church Slavonic) and *Selanik* (Turkish). Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika*, p.11.

[61] Maintaining an Entente base in Thessaloniki, however, was considered vital in securing the naval transit routes between the war's African, Middle Eastern and Western theatres. (Captain) A.J. Mann, *The Salonika Front* (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1920), pp.vi-vii; D.J. Dutton, 'The Calais Conference of December 1915', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.21 (1978), pp.145-149.

[62] In general, interactions between British forces and civilian populations or refugees during the First World War remains an under-researched area of study. See Craig Gibson, *Behind the Front: British and French Civilians, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[63] Keith Jeffery, *1916: A Global History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), pp.2-3. Throughout the centenary of the First World War, interest in alternative narratives concerning Britain or other participants has become more pronounced in academic and general history. For wider consideration of alternative First World War narratives, see for example, Robert Gerwarth & Erza Manela (eds.), *Empires at War: 1911-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[64] Cyril Falls, *Military Operations, Macedonia (Volume 1): From the Outbreak of War to the Spring of 1917* (London: HMSO, 1933), pp.5-9.

British-led offensives against Bulgarian positions near Lake Dojran in southeast Macedonia (in 1917 and 1918) resulted in heavy casualties and ignominious defeats.[65] This dismal campaign record was compounded by the near constant loss of manpower from various tropical diseases and environmental factors. Malaria proved particularly devastating with a 75 per cent infection rate resulting in an estimated 160,000 deaths.[66]

Michail asserts that BSF personnel contributed little to British Balkan imagery. Unlike their female counterparts, the number of written accounts that reached publication was relatively small, mostly appearing after 1918 and tending to reflect the opinions of officers and administrative staff. This appears to have been compounded by the contents of the diaries and correspondence produced by rank-and-file soldiers on active service, which were mainly concerned with illness, hygiene, the weather and inadequate rations, interjected with descriptions of their living quarters, the trenches, Thessaloniki and observations on local flora and fauna.[67] In retrospect, BSF veterans could find comfort in knowing that they had been spared the horrors of the Western Front: when fighting in the remote mountainous terrain of the south Macedonian borderlands, as an Anglo-Greek military surgeon later remarked, ordnance and machine guns posed far less of a danger to infantry squads while the topography rendered gas and chemical weapons virtually useless.[68]

However, oppressive boredom and the front's desultory ambience, stemming from political indecision in London and Paris, led many soldiers to conclude that they had been denied the purported glory of serving on the Western Front. Later accounts recast this criticism as a wilful public denial of the BSF's own 'valid' sacrifices in the emerging British post-war

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[65] A British division had also engaged the Bulgarians at Dojran as part of a French-led offensive in 1916. This had also resulted in heavy losses. Wakefield & Moody, *Under the Devil's Eye*, pp.82-83, 96-98, 217-219.
[66] In October 1917, for example, over 20 per cent of all BSF personnel were listed as hospitalised, yet only 18,187 of these were combat-related cases. T.J. Mitchell, & G.M. Smith, *History of the Great War – Medical Services: Casualties and Medical Statistics of the Great War* (London: John Murray, 1931), p.187.
[67] Much of the archival material held at the IWM contains preserved plant specimens and sketches of local landscapes. Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.65.
[68] 'Macedonian Medley 1917-1918, undated', *Private Papers of Dr. T. Stephanides*, IWM Documents: 13891, pp.41-42.

mythos.[69] Although spared the more excessive horrors of modern trench warfare, Macedonia presented the average BSF infantryman with a myriad of dangers and privations. While disease was a factor of everyday life, the real danger, according to a volunteer nurse, was psychological, manifesting as a form of extreme neurosis dubbed by medical personnel as 'the Balkan tap'. Following three years of isolation, 'revolting food', 'dreary' mountain scenery and the adverse after-effects of anti-malarial quinine, the greatest surprise was how rare reported incidents of suicide had been.[70] The landscape, climate and even local population intermingled into a singular context of boredom and discomfort that translated into an indifference or contempt for 'all the Balkan people'.[71] Public perceptions in Britain only exacerbated such antipathy, as wartime popular culture and discourse derided the BSF as a drain on British military resources. 'If you want a holiday go to Salonika,' ran a popular music-hall act at the time.[72]

A further point of contrast with volunteers was the restrictions on movement which staff and officers complained of as having prolonged the campaign by limiting the British ability to coordinate with most of its allies – specifically the Serbian army after its redeployment to Thessaloniki in May 1916. The journalist, Harry Owen, who edited the force's wartime newspaper, *The Balkan News*, lamented that the positioning of the main Entente encampments had placed the French armies between the BSF and their Serb counterparts.[73] This ongoing agitation was apparently reciprocated. Henry Fitch, a liaison officer at the Serbian headquarters, routinely reported on soldiers' rising anger against French intransigence and the Entente's general disinterest. 'And I don't blame them,' he remarked in 1917.[74] Nevertheless,

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[69] H. Collinson Owen, *Salonika and After: The Sideshow that Ended the War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), pp.v-vi.

[70] 'IWM Interview with Rumney, Mary Millicent. Recorded 3rd March 1976', IWM Sound Archive, Catalogue no.739.

[71] 'A Conducted Tour, with all Found, and a Shilling a Day to Spend, ca.1970', *Private Papers of C.R. Hennessey*, IWM Documents: 12705, pp.150-152; 'Untitled Memoir, undated', *Private Papers of R. Gwinnel*, IWM Documents: 11601, pp.24-27.

[72] Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika*, p.145.

[73] Owen, *Salonika and After*, p.118.

[74] 'Reports dated 28th April and 12th May 1917', *Private Papers of H. Fitch*, IWM Documents: 76/191/1.

restitions did not entail a complete absence of engagement. Outside the camps, British and Serbian non-combat personnel exchanged logistical, engineering and technical support, as shown in their joint management of the BSF Motorised Transport Unit, while interaction occurred in Thessaloniki or through joint training exercises.[75] As a result, this popular dichotomy in how Britain's humanitarian and military missions were perceived, reinforced by veterans' accounts, was instrumental in promulgating the Serb peasant-soldier as a positive wartime motif.

The manner of categorising South Slavs, and other Balkan peoples, as possessing a natural disposition for war had extensive pseudo-scientific precedence, originating in the 1850s. Seeking comparisons with the British Empire's own recruitment methods, observers in the latter half of the nineteenth century drew on 'martial races theory'[76] as a theoretical standard for evaluating the various ethnic groups within the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, and later, the independent Balkans. Official and journalistic depictions had, in particular, emphasised social organisation in the South Slavonic lands as conducive to a cultural milieu of material prowess. Assumedly 'ancient' patrilineal families and clans believed to have been cultivated under the *zadruga* system, notably in Montenegro and among the Croat and Serb regimental communities utilised in the defence of the Habsburg Military Frontier[77], were thus assessed as racially conditioned for war.[78] This martial paradigm appeared to still be in evidence in July 1914. The post-war memoir of a former US diplomat cited an interview with the British military attaché in Belgrade who confidently predicted the repulsion of the Habsburg forces only days before the first invasion, having observed Serbian field operations first-hand during

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[75] 'Report dated 5th October 1916', Ibid.; 'Diary, dated April 1916', *Private Papers of T.G. Craddock*, IWM Documents: 16826, p.36.

[76] A form of classification based on anthropological and ethnographic theories of cultural, historical, racial and social hierarchy which was used to rationalise the recruitment of 'warlike' ethnic or social groups into the British and colonial armies such as Scottish Highlanders, Punjabi Sikhs, Nepalese Gurkhas or men from specific Indian castes. See Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

[77] A Habsburg province encompassing most of the Monarchy's southern borderlands which served as a *cordon sanitaire* against the Ottoman territory from 1553 until its abolishment in 1881. Besides Croats and Serbs, its population comprised Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks and various other ethnicities.

[78] Ford, 'Montenegro in the Eyes of the English Traveller', pp.361-374; Suonpää, *Perceptions of the Balkan Slavs*, pp.90-92, 105-109.

the Balkan Wars. Despite a paucity of equipment, weapons and ammunition, the peasant conscripts who comprised its infantry were ranked as near-perfect soldiers, able to live on 'next to nothing' and – like the British – in possession of 'a fund of common sense', conducting military operations without officers.[79]

The Serb peasant-soldier motif might therefore be interpreted as a perpetuation of this colonial stereotype. As Goldsworthy contests, its development in wartime British propaganda was a crucial point of divergence, further exemplifying how events often exerted greater influence than preconceptions.[80] While not immediately apparent in 1914, the First World War witnessed the gradual reorganisation of British economic and civil life towards a common national goal: maintaining the country's military strength in the pursuit of victory. As the illusion of a short, decisive conflict gradually dissipated between 1915 and 1916, meeting this objective through national mobilisation overshadowed other issues; duty and unity were elevated as societal ideals while the war itself was construed as a virtuous mission.[81] British participation in the Balkans and derisive public perceptions of the BSF contravened this narrative. In lieu of a British presence, propagandist energies were projected onto the Serbs (usually in conjunction with humanitarian volunteers) whose victory in 1914 and heroic defeat in 1915 deemed them worthy of military adulation. Innate martial qualities were reinterpreted as features of a positive militarism commensurate to a shared Anglo-Serbian moral essence that reached beyond racial and cultural differences. Serbs' military stoicism, attributed to their status as 'a peasant nation', evoked Britain's own innate agrarian virtuousness with the peasant-

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[79] The Balkan Wars left the Serbian army overstretched and lacking in transportation, modern weaponry and food. James Lyon notes that even in July and August 1914, lines of 'exhausted conscripts' marched to battle in civilian clothes. By contrast, their Habsburg opponents boasted the latest model of rifle and fielded some of the war's most advanced artillery. Nevertheless, Serbia's victories at the battles of Cer and Kolubara revealed Austria-Hungary's inexperience of contemporary warfare; this was exacerbated by the inept military leadership of the invasion force's commanding officer, Oskar Potiorek: the governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina who had been responsible for security arrangements during Franz Ferdinand's fateful visit to Sarajevo. By November 1914, Serbia's 'peasant mob' had 'destroyed the Dual Monarchy's Fifth and Sixth Armies, leaving the Empire's southern border almost completely undefended'. James M.B. Lyon, '"A Peasant Mob": The Serbian Army on the Eve of the Great War', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol.61, No.3 (July 1997), p.481; Charles J. Vopicka, *Secrets of the Balkans* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1921), p.34.
[80] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.30-31.
[81] See George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

soldiers' 'simple love' of country and cheerful willingness to endure privations and hardships mirroring domestic propaganda's portrait of the average 'Tommy'.[82]

These qualities were regularly presented as a composite of 'heroic' peasant idiosyncrasies and were noted to have been instrumental in the Serbs' recapture of Bitola in September 1916, the campaign's only significant military accomplishment prior to the final breakthrough in September 1918.[83] Reports on air raids against Entente positions noted a tendency among Serb soldiers on sentry duty to stand and shoot at aircraft, with complete disregard for their own personal safety – traits that appeared ubiquitous among the region's Slavs.[84] Neither had the Serbian leadership been unaware of these admiring cultural perceptions; Serbian generals, increasingly frustrated at their allies' lack of commitment to a major offensive before mid-1918, attempted to arouse interest by boasting that 'love for the Fatherland' and combat experience in the Balkan Wars ensured an army ready to fight at the shortest notice.[85] Even defeat in 1915, Fitch would later assert, had failed to dent what he deemed an innate racial audacity, expressed as a propensity for exaggeration:

> "Why?" said a high Serbian officer to me, "Why do you English and French fight in trenches? We Serbs don't fight in trenches, we attack all the time. If our enemy builds a trench we throw him out. If the Serbian army had landed on Gallipoli," he added, "we'd have been in Constantinople in three weeks."[86]

Reconceiving the Serb peasant as a dauntless fighter and valued comrade along lines of positive militarism did not negate previous racial or cultural pejoratives. Walshe dismissed a 'circulating' caricature of the Serbs as a 'vengeful' people. Their treatment of POWs had, in some respects, been superior to other armies, providing rations and accommodation identical

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[82] Ibid., p.35; Alice & Claude Askew, *The Stricken Land: Serbia As We Saw It* (London: Eveleigh Nash Company, 1916), p.45; Owen, *Salonika and After*, pp.119-120; Walshe, *With the Serbs*, pp.219-222.

[83] Lake, *In Salonika*, p.112; Mann, *The Salonika Front*, pp.65-70.

[84] 'Letter, undated', *Private Papers of W.G. Ostler*, IWM Documents: 12335; Mann, *The Salonika Front*, pp.22-23. While being 'the best comrades to have on the ground', a former German pilot recalled how Bulgarian peasant soldiers would intermittently open fire 'on anything that flew', claiming to have no memory of their actions afterwards. Georg Wilhelm Haupt-Heydemarck, 'War Flying in Macedonia' in W.E. Johns (ed.), *Wings: Flying Stories*, Vol.1, No.3 (London: John Hamilton Limited, 1935), pp.59-60.

[85] Aleksandar M. Stojićević, *Istorija naših ratova za o̧lobodenje i ujedinjenje od 1912-1918 god* (Belgrade: Štamparija Gl. Saveza Srpskih Zemljorad Zadruga, 1932), p.301.

[86] 'Recording of a BBC Interview with Henry Fitch, 2nd April 1941'. IWM Sound Archive Catalogue no.29987.

to their own and even inviting Bulgarian prisoners to Orthodox holiday celebrations.[87] Nevertheless, like other such shifts, the adoption of positive militarist sentiments was neither consistent, nor universally shared. 'Undying enmity rules here,' commented one SWH volunteer who accompanied the Serbian military during its 1916 Bitola offensive; the Serbs were recorded as being 'in a dangerous mood' with their planned engagement of the Bulgarians appearing to presage a 'racial fight' driven by a desire for revenge.[88] This impulse was reiterated in a less-sanitised account (that only appeared in the late 1930s) by an 'unprofessional soldier' who recalled a disturbing discovery made by his regiment after crossing the, now abandoned, Bulgarian positions at Gevgelija in southeast Macedonia in September 1918:

> The conduct of our fellows was exemplary but not so some of our allies. We soon came upon grim evidence of this, in the shape of blackened Bulgar corpses at an abandoned hospital. All of them were sitting up in their beds and rotting. Someone had got there before we did […] (The Serbian Army was ahead of them.)[89]

In contrast to those who served in Serbia before October 1915, operational constraints offered the BSF fewer opportunities to engage with their Serb allies. Yet, this did not imply a complete absence of interaction, as demonstrated in the development of the peasant soldier through observations of the Serbian army. Significantly, wartime representations of the peasantry as a unitary body, driven by an innate desire to reclaim its national homeland, exposed a further evolution in its image between 1915 and 1918. Whereas Edwardian depictions presented rural South Slavs as mostly cultural actors, their wartime military role now located them at the socio-political centre of their respective national narratives: the identifiable equivalent of the man-in-the-street archetype characterised in propaganda as forming much of Britain's fighting strength on the Western Front – even while its

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[87] Walshe, *With the Serbs*, p.240.

[88] Stebbing, *At the Serbian Front in Macedonia* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1917), p.101.

[89] 'I Saw the Futile Massacre at Doiran' in (Sir) John Alexander Hammond (ed.), *The Great War – I Was There! Undying Memories of 1914-1918*, Vol.3, No.46 (London: Amalgamated Press, 1939), p.18. See also Richard C. Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough: The Battle of Dobro Pole 1918* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2010).

representatives in the BSF were ridiculed – was marginalised and mostly forgotten after November 1918.[90]

Peasant Society in War and Exile

In contrast to the Edwardian years, the singular context and scale of British intervention in wartime Serbia was presented as having facilitated more intimate forms of intercultural engagement, removed from the alienating influence of bipartisan political ambiguities. Depictions of aid missions relieving the afflictions of sickly or wounded Serb soldiers, in particular, developed empathetic links with the circumstances facing British forces in the West.[91] Conversely, however, volunteers placed particular significance on the months following the abatement of the Serbian typhus epidemic in mid-1915. Although localised outbreaks remained a threat, many aid workers who had expected a perpetual state of emergency suddenly found themselves 'surplus to requirement'.[92] Delayed coverage in the British press, 'months' after the epidemic had been brought mostly under control, resulted in overstaffed units inundated with 'shoals of devoted Englishwomen…ready to risk their lives in a danger which no longer existed'.[93] Looking to alleviate the tedium of this 'waiting time', some seized the opportunity to better acquaint themselves with the host culture, allowing for a far wider cross-section of British society to gain first-hand experience of regional life previously restricted to a small, less socially-representative elite.[94]

Hammond postulates that this absence of conflicting political questions or a propensity to judge the manner of one's engagement in relation to Britain's foreign policy stances, granted

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[90] The only formal acknowledgement of the BSF's wartime achievement was a letter from the Bishop of London, published in *The Times* on 8th November 1918. Arthur Winnington-Ingram, 'Our Army in Salonika. A Gallant Force: Testimony of The Bishop of London', *The Times,* 8th November 1918, p.5; Wakefield & Moody, *Under the Devil's Eye*, p.233. As Mazower has argued, BSF personnel's experience of wartime engagement in Macedonia, particularly in Thessaloniki, represent a rich yet critically under-examined avenue of enquiry in both Balkan and First World War historiography. Mazower, 'The Oriental City', p.59, pp.108-109.
[91] Leneman, *In the Service of Life*, pp.82-83.
[92] Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia*, p.39.
[93] Jan Gordon, *A Balkan Freebooter*: *Being the True Exploits of the Serbian Outlaw and Comitaj Petko Moritch* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1916), pp.3-4.
[94] 'The Mad Escapades of a War Nurse', *Pinniger*. IWM Documents: 2320, p.54; Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women', p.77.

motifs, of which Britons had been more inclined to approve, a far greater literary presence. What Victorian-era diplomats and travellers had previously perceived as cultural backwardness now signified 'spiritual depth', with the Serbs essentialised as a naturally 'congenial' people, embodying all the positive virtues once conceived of as vestiges of the Ottoman cultural legacy. The family-orientated village communities, among whom many volunteers worked, were extolled for their apparent disinterest in material possessions and a semi-spiritual attachment to their land.[95] As already stated, this supposed representational *volte-face* was indicative of the drift away from more pejorative assumptions. In the majority of instances, the First World War served to further legitimise an already analogous bracketing of peasant customs and culture into a perceived era of pre-industrial innocence. For the Red Cross doctor, Claude Askew, a lack of modernity meant 'the conditions of life in Serbia' resembled a societal 'ideal' by guaranteeing a sustainable quality of life for its 'essential social element' – the peasantry. Echoing previous accounts, lack of modern development and a preference for communal life translated to social stability and the absence of poverty.[96]

As with their Edwardian peers, wartime British commentators invested in the figure of the peasant various positive qualities attributed to the ambient cultural nostalgia – 'a distinct strain of [rural] Englishness' or 'the noble simplicity' previously projected onto Britain's Celtic fringe. Romantic poeticism was also evident, albeit rarer, among the BSF. In a series of articles for *The Balkan News*, one 'Private H. Sinclair' described Slavonic Macedonian peasant customs as similar to those he had witnessed in 'the remotest parts' of the Scottish Highlands and Outer Hebrides. Rather than symbolising the region's cultural alienation however, Sinclair depicted such customs as reflecting a universal desire to rationalise the mysteries of the divine:

> "East and West", thought I, yet how much akin! Children groping in the darkness
> for that which we know lies beyond. And for that instinct I thanked God.[97]

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[95] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit,* p.123.
[96] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, pp.94-95.
[97] (Private) H. Sinclair, *Highland Memories in Macedonia. Reprinted from the Balkan News (1917-1918)* (Salonika: The BSF Library Vol.3, 1919), pp.6-7.

Ultimately, however, wartime representation was focused on depicting the Serbs. Through the various memoirs and reprinted journals by volunteers, and some BSF veterans, which appeared throughout 1916, 1917 and (to a far lesser extent) immediately after the war, a more coherent, albeit often inconsistent, image of the peasant was increasingly presented to the public. In both military and civilian life, Serbia's 'sons of the soil' possessed a range of qualities applicable to a mythical golden age of English rural tradition, the ideal of which could even be discerned in Serbia's landscape.[98] Comparisons to Britain's Celtic heritage also remained in evidence alongside equally patronising and infantilising descriptions; one SRF nurse, for instance, likened the solemnity of the Serbian soldiers' 'lovely voices' to the Welsh.[99] The continued prevalence of such a paradigm was echoed in:

> They are like the Irish in their gaiety, their depression, their mercurial temperament; tears and smiles all a-bubble; and in their carelessness of money, a real heart-free neglect of it when they have the necessaries.[100]

Alternatively, life among the Serbian peasantry also reinforced impressions of the same otherness that separated them from an increasingly unstable modernity. A Red Cross nurse, who previously served alongside the Greek army in the Balkan Wars, observed that, prior to the Russian Revolution, aid work in Serbia validated British public impressions that war still existed in parallel to wider civil society. Even at the height of the epidemic, civilian life to the south of the front lines, notably in the villages where women and children constituted most of the labour force, 'went on as normal' with complaints about food, inactivity and the monotony of routine dominating the average volunteer's experience.[101] Even the aftermath of the 1915 invasion – in the areas that fell within the Austro-Hungarian zone of occupation – appeared as little more than a perfunctory transition between what may have been identical sets of governing social strata. Peasants, Davies observed, did not seem 'to feel the incongruity' of

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[98] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, p.361; Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.119; Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia*, p.141; Matthews, *Experiences of a Woman Doctor*, p.43; Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant*, p.44-45; Monica M. Stanley, *My Diary in Serbia: April 1st – Nov 1st 1915* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1916), p.102; Walshe, *With the Serbs*, pp.14-15; Mann, *The Salonika Front*, p.59.
[99] Stanley, *My Diary in Serbia*, p.68; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.135-137.
[100] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.137.
[101] 'The Mad Escapades of a War Nurse', *Pinniger*. IWM Documents: 2320, p.52.

coming under the dominion of the Habsburg army: 'it is "the Government" and that explains everything'. The installation of Bosnian Serbs in administrative positions made it seem all the more congenial while, aside from their uniforms, the 'Hungarian' rank-and-file were noted for conducting themselves in an almost identical manner to that of the Serbs.[102]

As with organised opinion before 1912, wartime representations were quickly consolidated into a hierarchy of articulation that amplified certain personalities who expressed eccentricity or conveyed a sense of authority through experience. The personalities of authors also continued to play a role in guiding the formulation of imagery.[103]

Yet, in contrast to preceding decades, as with the peasant-soldier motif, pre-existing patterns were quickly subsumed into the wartime context, notably the expanded range of British engagement. The artists Jan and Cora Gordon, who initially worked as part of a Red Cross unit under James Berry, exemplified this by eschewing pseudo-anthropology and political commentary, and imbuing much of their wartime experience with a current of irony and scepticism; an almost postmodernist departure from their contemporaries.[104] Two subsequent accounts – *The Luck of Thirteen* , detailing their work and departure in the retreat, and *A Balkan Freebooter*, the biography of a former Serb brigand interviewed by the Gordons – defied previous modes of representation by forming their narratives around the individuals they encountered, often subverting archetypes.[105] This intimate style, coupled with a far greater astuteness and sense of realism, comparable to that of Dillon, contributed to this wartime significance. Initial public awareness of the extent of the retreat's death toll and the ensuing

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[102] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, pp.231-232; Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia*, pp.225-226.
[103] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.60-62.
[104] According to their current copyright holder, the Gordons proved 'something of a publishing phenomenon'. From 1915-1937 they authored 25 books between them alongside numerous articles and short essays mostly concerning art and travel. On the Gordons visit: *http://www.janandcoragordon.co.uk/*
[105] An early review praised *The Luck of Thirteen* praised for its humour and realism, comparing the Gordon's narrative to that of Kinglake's *Eōthen*. 'The Luck of Thirteen by Mr. and Mrs. Jan Gordon', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 19th April 1916, pp.2-3. See (Mr. and Mrs.) Jan Gordon, *The Luck of Thirteen: Wanderings and Flight through Montenegro and Serbia*, (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1916); Idem, *A Balkan Freebooter* (1916).

chaos of the refugee columns, for example, came from materials Jan Gordon had had republished in *The Illustrated London News* in December 1915.[106]

The most significant point of representational divergence, which was also closely linked to the shifting impressions of Serbian militarism, manifested in the gradual, and inconsistent, recalibration of the peasant's perceived role as the social arbiter around which the nation's political, as well as cultural, life pivoted. Published accounts linked Serbian national resistance to its 'thoroughly democratic', and ethnically and culturally homogeneous peasant society's lack of an ingrained class divide. A wealthier peasant may have owned greater land and property holdings, yet his dress, mannerisms, habits and lifestyle were identical to those of less affluent neighbours. This was evident in the Serbian approach to life, noted by Berry as being expressed through an indifference for social stratification and neutering the corrupting excesses of the modern state. Among the elite, Western civilisation appeared 'skin-deep ... many of them remained, in habit of mind, peasants'. A General staying in Berry's hospital shared his bedroom with his daughter, as would 'a small farmer'.[107] Correspondingly, Field Marshal Živojin Mišić, who commanded Serbia's victorious army in 1918, was described as having more the manner of an 'elderly farmer' than a member of High Command. When Owen attempted to interview his associate, Stepa Stepanović, he was taken aback to discover the Field Marshal wore a private's uniform, spoke no foreign languages and was self-effacing in demeanour, confirming '[h]ow much Serbs are a peasant race'.[108] This 'primitive habit of life' persisted as much within the country's political administration as it did in the villages. Berry recounted rumours of older deputies in the *skupština* remaining illiterate, even after being elected, while civil administrators approached their duties with the insouciance of subsistence farmers.[109]

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[106] '"A Living Snake with Heads for Scales": The Refugees on the Trail during the Great Serbian Retreat', *The Illustrated London News*, 25th December 1915, pp.4-5.
[107] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, pp.129-130.
[108] Owen, *Salonika and After*, pp.212-213.
[109] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.130.

Against this wartime evaluation of Serbia's social dynamics, the image of the Karađorđević monarchy enjoyed a particular reversal of fortune, becoming the political manifestation of the peasant spirit. Stories of the elderly King Petar firing on enemy positions when visiting the front lines in 1915 were equated with the repulsion of the Habsburg invasions, while the traditions, habits and virtues perceived as instinctive among the peasantry were portrayed as the guiding principles of their leaders.[110] As the war progressed, King Petar's role was increasingly conferred onto his son, Crown Prince Aleksandar, de facto commander-in-chief due to his father's health problems. He projected a persona of 'warrior-king', thematically tied into popular representations of the obstinate Serb peasant soldier. Moreover, admiration for his personal conduct – sharing in the 'Spartan lifestyle' of his men – reinforced notions of social bonds forged in the absence of class hierarchy.[111]

Nevertheless, the Crown Prince's aloofness set him apart from his compatriots. Owen remarked that even those with regular access knew little about Serbia's commander, who spent most of his time at the front lines or his residence in Thessaloniki. Rather than arrogance or cold indifference, this air of mystery granted him a sense of seriousness and maturity. Visits to convalescing soldiers were conducted in the manner of a concerned, yet not indulgent, patriarchal figure, blending the 'peasant spirit' with the persona of a responsible war leader.[112]

Continuing the popular discursive backlash against negative archetypes, the consolidation of the peasantry's social function prompted a more vehement re-evaluation of more morally egregious traditions. Public perceptions of a culture permeated by brigandage and other violent practices were challenged as historic misrepresentation, as British commentators noted that incidents of violence were markedly absent from their own experiences.[113] Those less enamoured by this romanticisation of peasant life could still discern

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[110] Everard Wyrall, *The Gloucestershire Regiment in the War 1914-1918* (London: Methuen & Co., 1931), p.191.
[111] Stebbing, *At the Serbian Front*, p.72.
[112] Owen, *Salonika and After*, p.128.
[113] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, p.154; H.I.W, *The Experiences of a Unit in the Great Retreat (Serbia 1915)* (Cambridge: Crompton & Sons, 1916), p.23; Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia*, p.134.

poetic aspects in its traditions that deemed them justifiable. Jan Gordon's *Balkan Freebooter* presents its protagonist's descent into criminality as being born of historical expediency, with violence as the historical legacy of Ottoman rule and circumstance.[114]

Direct engagement in peasant culture often served as a reflection of the immediate concerns and preoccupations of the British participants; unsurprisingly, eating and drinking, a universal theme in war literature, was a recurrent motif. Serbian 'Slavae' (*Slave*)[115] and other such 'prasnici' (holidays) were associated with lavish (often daylong) feasts that appeared 'from nowhere including clean cutlery and plates despite visible lack of water'.[116] When framed against the peasantry's seemingly limitless hospitality ('the most commendable of Oriental virtues') and the apparent religious connotations surrounding the feasts and rituals associated with it, wartime Serbia's apparent abundance of food appeared comparable to an innocuous rural love of 'wholesome pleasures' and appreciation of seasonal produce, implying associations with 'old England'.[117] Participation in celebrations furthered this theme of cultural inclusivity, manifesting as a shared affinity between Serbia's present and a cultural impulse among Britons to recapture their own rural past. Female volunteers, in particular, talked emphatically about invitations to dance the *kolo*[118], interpreted as both ingratiation into the host culture and a metaphorical return to rural origins.[119]

Deviations from this ambient communalism could incur criticism, notably for Serb urban-dwellers and non-peasants. One nurse recalled that the only Balkan inhabitant for whom she felt contempt was 'a fat prosperous-looking refugee' who refused to share his food with three starving soldiers while on the retreat.[120] Such disparities appeared equally apparent in

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[114] Gordon, *A Balkan Freebooter*, p.127; Norris, *In the Wake*, pp.32-33.
[115] A traditional Serbian Orthodox celebration of a patron saint, normally accompanied by a feast. Although usually associated with the extended family, these private religious affiliations are also commemorated among larger communities and organisations, including the Serbian army.
[116] 'Serbia: Reminders from Ostrovo, October 1917-May 1918', *Private Papers of Dr. J. Rose*, IWM Documents: 6776.
[117] Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, p.131; 'The Mad Escapades of a War Nurse, p.52'.
[118] A traditional circular folk-dance common to most of the South Slavonic Balkans, including Bulgaria.
[119] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.131.
[120] H.I.W., *The Experiences of a Unit*, p.14.

Serbia at the end of 1915. In contrast to the peasantry's general apathy or quiet resignation to the Habsburg takeover, Davies remarked that 'the educated classes writhe under it', as their urban-based privileges were stripped away and they fell under suspicion of nationalist agitation.[121] Detachment from civilisation was also construed as a form of carapace against modernity's less desirable elements. To the pleasure of a BSF chaplin, refugees returning to Serbia proclaimed they had no need for revolution. The utopia 'Mr Marx preached to the urban mass' had been achieved in the peasant village, 'without bloodshed'.[122]

Despite appearing decades after the war's conclusion, this respect for peasant communal strength through the preservation of tradition and heritage appeared to exert some influence on the otherwise mostly disengaged memories of BSF personnel. On inspecting an 'abandoned' church during a patrol of Macedonia's 'Slav border', a former infantryman in a London regiment battalion recalled being humbled to discover the extent to which the peasants had gone to preserve its interior for their community's return. Reflecting on this episode '50 years or so' later, he considered this display of a common humanity as a turning-point in revising his opinion of 'a front which nobody seemed to have heard of'.[123] However, attempting to estimate the frequency of such incidents among the rank-and-file, based on memoirs written possibly decades after the war's conclusion, would be purely speculative. Although reactions were determined on an individual basis, any deeper sense of empathy or solidarity was unlikely to have been fostered given the often transient nature of deployments. A private in the Devonshire regiment, for example, recalled only in passing how 'destitute' refugee women 'who had come down from Serbia' would gather around his camp's incinerator where they would 'fight for the scraps of food which were taken there to be burnt'.[124]

Village or familial communalism was presented as defining the national psyche, with the Serb peasant conducting himself in war 'as he would in life', boasting of his nation, but

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[121] Ibid., p.226.
[122] 'Life of an Army Chaplin (Padre) 1917-1919, undated', *Private Papers of Reverend J. Sellors*, IWM Documents: 1277, p.50.
[123] 'A Conducted Tour, pp.121-122', *Hennessey*, IWM Documents: 12705.
[124] 'Wartime Service 1915-1916, undated', *Private Papers of F. Marshall*, IWM Documents: 15450.

regarding himself to be of little consequence. This was mirrored in his treatment of enemies, where hatred of an opposing country did not translate into animosity for its peoples. Berry, in keeping with propaganda narratives, informed wartime readers that Habsburg soldiers, by contrast, exhibited no passion for their cause, appearing as a mixture of 'sheep and heroes'.[125] Unlike in Serbia, where even 'the illiterate peasant' countenanced a vague sense of national identity through 'the living influences' of 'ancestors', 'national heroes' and their country's political independence, that of their counterparts would remain 'in abeyance' under Hungarian domination. As a result, Croat soldiers lacked any impetus to fight or appeared unwilling accessories in a punitive campaign against a people similar to their own.[126] Linguistic reciprocity and the assumption of shared rural traditions also saw volunteers tending towards portraying non-Serbs as part of the same overarching cultural milieu. 'Austrian' prisoners, many of whom were noted as also being of South Slavonic peasant stock and 'identical' to Serbs in language, 'manner and custom', were often exonerated through their recruitment into the British missions as hospital orderlies.[127]

Moreover, the veneer of Serbian cultural uniformity that initially greeted the majority of volunteers, who had been sequestered in Serbia's more ethnically homogeneous central and northern districts, found its antithesis in the south. While passing through northeast Montenegro, the Gordons were bewildered to discover Turkish shops whose 'turbaned-owners' sat cross-legged on the floor, 'but only spoke Serbian'.[128] A similar sense of dislocation was expressed by volunteers who encountered the hospitality of Islamic communities in Kosovo during the retreat. Observing that peasant congeniality had more in common with that of Muslim Albanians and 'Turks', some participants in the retreat extended an implied divergence between peasant society and state institutions to include the Church.[129]

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[125] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, pp.124-125.
[126] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, pp.87-88; Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.239.
[127] Abraham, *My Balkan Log*, p.127.
[128] Gordon, *The Luck of Thirteen*, pp.43-44.
[129] H.I.W, *The Experiences of a Unit*, p.19.

Alongside the appearance of the peasant-soldier motif, the most notable outcome of changing wartime discourses was the emergence of a secondary caricature in the pre-existing victimhood narrative: that of the peasant exile. Britons who participated in the retreat recounted images of death, starvation and widespread misery infused with biblical or mythological allusions. *The Illustrated London News* highlighted descriptions of the refugee columns in Montenegro, with Jan Gordon likening them to '[a] living snake with heads for scales'.[130] William Smith, a volunteer in the SWH, related an equally apocalyptic vision while leading a party of nurses to join the retreat:

> The road was a moving mass of transport […] men, women and children all intent
> on escape […] This procession had been passing continuously for days […] it was
> the passing of a whole nation into exile, a people leaving a lost country.[131]

This loss of homeland and the psychological and spiritual trauma it inflicted was summarised by Stobart as 'the tragedy of a nation wrenched by the roots from nationhood'.[132] The combined chaos and confusion of peasant columns was conceived of as allegory for a collective severance of the national soul. In 1915, the land itself was said to resemble a nightmarish dreamscape, its barren, 'tortured' appearance seemingly reflecting the people's collective suffering, consistent with Edwardian anxieties of the degradation wrought by war and other modern excesses. This was framed by the encroaching armies of the Central Powers whose propaganda channelled the dread of a potential wartime invasion.[133] This, in turn, invoked the possibility of a double tragedy: death outside a homeland, which was considered indivisible from the national body. Within days of the Serbian army's arrival on Corfu, for instance, Sandes recorded the lack of burial plots as the most pertinent source of anguish: 'The Serbs are not a maritime nation, the idea of a burial at sea is repugnant to them.'[134] MacPhail even advised the French authorities to rehouse refugees on Corsica in abandoned mountain

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[130] '"A Living Snake with Heads for Scales"', pp.4-5.
[131] Quoted in Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy*, p.112.
[132] Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, p.164.
[133] Askew, *The Stricken Land* , pp.25-26; Gordon-Smith, *Through the Serbian Campaign*, pp.37-38; Matthews, *Experiences of a Woman Doctor*, pp.107-108.
[134] Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant*, p.206.

villages. To the culturally land-bound Serbs, coastal life was an anathema, the sea constantly precipitating a sense of dread and visible distress.[135]

The impact of the retreat clarified the degree to which British engagement had further developed the peasant's image beyond that of distant victim. In the context of Serbia, and later by extension all their fellow Southern Slavs, the rural communities existed as the nexus and progenitors of national culture and identity. Marvelling at how peasant refugees created a 'little Serbia' while staying on Corsica, the anthropologist Olive Lodge discerned an historical capability for such societies to cyclically revive 'that intangible something which makes a nation'.[136] These signs of cultural endurance existed in opposition to the transience of modern statehood. As he watched peasants riot in the Kosovan city of Priština during the retreat, the American journalist, Fortier Jones, mused at the fragility of modern state trappings: 'The Government was crumbling, a nation was dying, and all such superfluities as courts of justice and police were a thing of the past.'[137] Like his British counterparts, Jones stressed the peasantry as the source of Serbia's innate robustness as a nation.[138] Likewise, British accounts invariably voiced their own conviction in the peasantry's indomitable spirit in preserving rural traditions as a guarantor of a future return to independence.[139]

The Moral Panacea of a British Intervention?

While the experience of direct wartime engagement engendered a further shift away from earlier pejorative archetypes, the First World War exposed the extent to which British imaginative geography might potentially change before December 1918. In the context of those serving on in Serbia or Macedonia, any rehabilitation of the rural Southern Slavs occurred in relation to how their attributed qualities corresponded with the reordering of nationalities into

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[135] Mikić, *Ever Yours Sincerely*, p.42.
[136] Olive Lodge, *Peasant Life in Jugoslavia* (London: Seeley, Service & Co., 1942), p.17.
[137] Fortier Jones, *With Serbia into Exile* (New York: The Century Co., 1916), pp.296-297.
[138] Ibid., p.447.
[139] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, pp.362-363; Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant,* pp.113-115; Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, pp.294-295.

a moral hierarchy that had gained traction in British popular discourse by 1914.[140] The First World War's historical saliency was thus its establishment of a direct and, ostensibly, concrete link between the contemporary circumstances facing the South Slavonic peoples and the self-perception of the British as representatives of a civilisational morality. Their wartime actions thus represented the pinnacle of humanistic civilisation and positive modernity – associated with medicine and the implementation of Western standards. Despite the lionisation of their martial skills and robust rural social structures, depictions of Serbs in this dynamic were determined largely by their status as innocents, victimised by the immediate antithesis of British morality (according to domestic British propaganda): German militarism.

While the discursive shaping of the Serbs as victimised peasants, standing in defiance of regional hegemons, had allotted them a place in such a hierarchy, this did not prevent their allies from identifying a plethora of cultural and developmental deficiencies that often directly echoed overt colonial mentalities. Concurrently, the reshaping of peasant culture into a distinctive Serbian identity was itself expressive of the nineteenth-century colonial attitudes that underlined official representations of the Ionian Greeks, as noted by Gallant.[141] Excluding specific individuals such as MacPhail, this was evident in the generally superior role British nationals cast for themselves and the British humanitarian and military mission – in the absence of an actual colonial narrative – as a distinctive civilising force.

Although Britain's military, and arguably its humanitarian, contribution diminished in importance after 1915, British nationals continued to exhibit a tendency to characterise their presence in Serbia and Macedonia as conducive to a beneficent colonial presence. The initial capacity in which volunteers arrived in Serbia as aid providers and medical auxiliaries, for instance, resulted in many of their day-to-day perceptions being formed through the prism of medicine and modern hygiene standards. As with Stobart's call for women to confront war through aid work, the focus on disease prevention imbued discursive ephemera with the

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[140] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', p.194.
[141] Gallant, *Experiencing Dominion*, p.55.

implicit understanding that Britons, by providing the remedy to shortfalls in the Serbs' own practices, were vicariously disseminating superior moral and practical standards. Allusions to religious symbolism, such as the sobriquet of 'English *sestre*', added a quasi-spiritual dimension to their role as medical staff.[142] Volunteers from devout or proselytising backgrounds even defined aid dispensation as a secular version of overseas missionary work, where success was measured by the acceptance of Western hygiene practices and preventative measures.[143] The Hippocratic Oath and perceived virtuousness of the medical profession itself became temporal virtues, transcending the boundaries of nationality, language or ideology. The children's novelist, Mabel Dearmer, who volunteered as an SRF orderly, disclosed that the head doctor of the 'Serbian hospital' in Kragujevac, where she was assigned, was in fact an Austrian POW. Wartime political allegiances had 'never stopped his work of saving life – first as an officer of his own army, then as a doctor among the Serbs'.[144]

In keeping with the various inconsistencies this moralistic subtext produced in relation to representational change, not all aspects of the host culture met with universal approval. Despite their attributed religious wholesomeness, some volunteers were of the opinion that communal living and boundless hospitality encouraged and normalised excessive drinking. Even with the arrival of Habsburg troops in October 1915, Berry noted that those aid workers of a more conservative or religiously prudent temperament continued to express dismay that the 'blight' of elderly peasant women hawking 'rakia'[145] (and other unedifying enterprises) continued regardless.[146] Nor was the notion of a society that apparently lacked class distinctions met with complete approval. Stobart admitted that the sight of senior officers regularly

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[142] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, p.254.
[143] Indira Duraković, 'Serbia as a Health Threat to Europe: The Wartime Typhus Epidemic, 1914–1915', in Joachim Bürgschwentner, Matthias Egger & Gunda Barth-Scalmani (eds.), *Other Fronts, Other Wars?: First World War Studies on the Eve of the Centennial* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014), pp.274-276.
[144] Mabel Dearmer, *Letters from a Field Hospital* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1915), p.134.
[145] A collective term for fruit brandy, popular in Serbia and other South Slavonic countries.
[146] No discernible wartime (or post-war) consensus appeared to exist on Serbian attitudes towards excessive drinking. Some British accounts present their South Slavonic allies as a comparatively sombre people, in contrast to other nationalities, including the British. However, for some volunteers, a relaxed attitude to alcohol represented a source of discomfort, revealing the role of social attitudes in influencing perceptions. Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.188, pp.231-232; Stanley, *My Diary in Serbia*, p.40.

consorting 'unconsciously' with conscripts was disconcerting. Between Serbia's 'peasant egalitarianism' and Germany's 'regimented hierarchy', the British, she concluded, had achieved the 'correct' level of social parity.[147]

The preponderance of female volunteers was central to this moralistic subtext, finding an ideological genesis in more esoteric currents of the suffrage movement. By 1900, anxieties over civilisation's decline were interpreted by social campaigners such as Ellice Hopkins, as symptomatic of a corrosion in moral standards. According to Hopkins, the duty of upper-class British women was to lead 'the crusade for restoring morality to the world' by pursuing sexual and political equality. Such an undertaking was anchored to notions of British racial superiority and a belief that feminine qualities could be harnessed as a civilising force.[148] Against this standard, Serbs and other South Slavonic peasants existed in a transitional social phase. British admiration for the peasant lifestyle and reverence for tradition was confounded by a lack or absence of the structures and amenities associated with Western modernity. This absence was invariably tied to the cultural legacies of Ottoman rule; continued representations of the South Slavonic Balkans were subsequently regarded as peripheral, albeit less distant, to Britain who now conceived of itself as civilisation's 'moral' centre.[149]

Such involvement in an active war zone also afforded these women, and their marginalised male counterparts, a degree of cultural purchase in British wartime heroic narratives, otherwise directed to those serving in the West. Efforts to tackle diseases such as typhus gave credence to this perception, characterising aid work as an extension of the war, waged against an 'enemy within'.[150] This was reinforced by the dangers facing medical staff. Writing in May 1915, Dearmer described how in some hospitals near Kragujevac, British nurses had 'bathed and soaked in typhus' on a daily basis during the epidemic.[151] She herself

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[147] Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, p.144.
[148] Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 2015 [1992]), pp.149-150.
[149] Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.119-120.
[150] Matthews, *Experiences of a Woman Doctor*, pp.23-24.
[151] Dearmer, *Letters from a Field Hospital*, p.135.

died from typhoid fever less than two months later.[152] Similarly, by 1917, many among the Entente forces based at Thessaloniki had come to regard the Balkans as less of a military campaign than a response to a series of medical emergencies, and inadequate infrastructure. Having been concentrated near the malaria marshlands along the eastern edges of the Macedonian border, BSF personnel were particularly vulnerable to the presence of disease which fostered an image of the Macedonian front as a site of stagnation and inertia, even in scientific medical literature.[153]

Indira Duraković argues that this insistence on the dissemination of Western medical and hygiene practices offers insight into continuing Balkanist narratives. Following the outbreak of the typhus epidemic, Western medical experts classified the region as 'a menace to the health of the Western world … a synonym of death, starvation and disease'.[154] Enumerating the variety of diseases in early 1915, Berry mused that no other overseas posting would be 'so rich to the student in "interesting cases"':

> There were specimens of almost every known fever among the out-patients: measles, small-pox, scarlet fever, relapsing fever, malaria, typhus, diphtheria, whooping-cough, tuberculosis […] All the terrible and often thought to be overdrawn pictures of the text books come to life. Neglected disease seldom seen at all in this country, [Britain], is there [Serbia] comparatively common.[155]

Generalisations concerning the Serbs' own 'crude' or 'medieval' attitudes towards sanitation were also prevalent, despite claims to the contrary.[156] Foreign eyewitnesses related anecdotes of hospitals overcrowded beyond capacity, contaminated supplies, and patients lying

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[152] Ibid., p.182.

[153] By 1918, entire infantry units were being redeployed in remote mountain valleys and marshlands to implement anti-malarial measures under the command of officers drawn from the RAMC and Royal Engineers. This involved dramatic environmental measures including controlled 'prairie fires' and rerouting of rivers and streams, and attempts to drain marshland as a means of destroying mosquito breeding grounds. William George Willoughby & Louis Cassidy (RAMC), *Anti-Malarial Work in Macedonia among British Troops* (London: H.K. Louis, 1918), pp.31-37; Mitchell & Smith, *History of the Great War*, p.187.

[154] Duraković, 'Serbia as a Health Threat to Europe', pp.271-272.

[155] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, pp.142-143.

[156] The Serbian military surgeon V. Soubbotitch claimed that the disease had been spread to Serbia externally, tracing the outbreak to infected Habsburg soldiers abandoned in the Western city of Valjevo after the failure of the Monarchy's initial invasion in August 1914. V. Soubbotitch, 'A Pandemic of Typhus in Serbia in 1914 and 1915', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine: Section of Epidemiology and State Medicine*, Vol.11 (1918), pp.31-32.

in garments 'foul and alive with vermin'.[157] Inadequate facilities and poor hygiene practices even obliged foreign medical staff to initially suspend the treatment of patients while they worked to install 'disinfection plants': often rudimentary ovens used to 'bake' or 'boil' a patient's clothing as a basic method of sterilisation.[158] This was compounded by reports that overcrowding and staffing shortages had caused conditions in wards to deteriorate to the point that patients would regularly develop bed-sores due to neglect.[159] Shortages, and the stream of wounded soldiers, presented the greatest challenge, becoming particularly acute as the war depleted Serbia's own medical strength.[160] Abraham's preliminary inspection of the Skopje military hospital in early 1915 illustrated this desperate situation, the only visible staff having been a single Serb medical officer:

> He was operating at great speed in a large out-patient department, surrounded by wounded, extracting bullets and pieces of shrapnel without any anaesthetic. We asked him why. He looked at us with lifted eyebrows. "I haven't the time for anaesthetics," he said in faltering German.[161]

The attitudes of the peasants themselves were also presented as an obstacle to the British mission of instilling superior Western standards. Outpatients who arrived at Berry's hospital would, according to the Gordons, often attempt to flee 'to avoid being doctored', especially when instructed to remove items of clothing.[162] Nurses based in military hospital wards were also prone to complain of the difficulties in maintaining (what they considered to be) a healthy atmosphere, against the Serbs' aversion to drafts and preference for unventilated buildings, where they could live 'in a good fug' of 'warmth and cigarette smoke'.[163] The peasants inexplicably 'loathed, even feared, fresh air and ventilation', wrote an SWH doctor.

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[157] Richard P. Strong, *Typhus Fever with Particular Reference to the Serbian Epidemic* (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 1920), pp.14-29.

[158] Ibid., pp.16-19.

[159] Leneman, *In the Service of Life*, pp.17-18.

[160] Colonel Vladimir Stanojević, the director of the Niš military hospital, calculated that of the country's 534 trained doctors, 132 were already dead when the epidemic peaked in March 1915. Cited in Zoran Vesić, Branislav Popović, Mirjana Korica & Zorica Stošić, *Srpski vojni sanitet* (Belgrade: Ministarstvo Odbrane, 2009), p.48.

[161] Abraham, *Surgeon's Journey*, p.135.

[162] Gordon, *The Luck of Thirteen*, p.4.

[163] Similar complaints were levied against French soldiers on the Western Front. Balfour, *Elsie Inglis*, p.164.

'It was a constant struggle to keep the windows open to prevent the stuffiness they all loved.'[164] Nevertheless, by mid-1915, British and other Western medical experts could observe a shift in peasant attitudes towards hygiene and sanitation. An American doctor noted, with satisfaction, that rural communities had started to adopt their own 'crude and primitive' initiatives such as villages constructing their own sterilisation ovens and disinfecting their own clothing. These measures were judged as highlighting a 'desire for communal preservation' when faced with a tangible crisis.[165]

The success of the international presence in subduing the epidemic in six months was cited as affirmation of the irrefutable superiority of Western civilisation.[166] In constructing a moral hierarchy with Britain at its head, these interpretations fed into the caricatures and identities that volunteers often assigned themselves in their accounts. Stobart's efforts to alleviate suffering had, she later wrote, granted her the persona of crusader, maternal figurehead and military commander. These she ascribed to her capabilities as a figure of empowered British femininity, a quality that had also guaranteed the survival of her entire party during the retreat.[167] Inglis and other prominent volunteers were equally adamant that only British women could demonstrate the inimitable sense of competence necessary to assist the Serbs.[168] Even Sandes, despite her position as a commissioned officer and 'honouree Serb', stressed her Englishness as endowing her with an inherent moral virtue, extending 'to England's obligation to support the Serbs'.[169]

In the context of Britain's comparatively minor military role, veterans also found legitimacy in claims of moral superiority. Despite the campaign being under French leadership, Owen argued that the BSF left 'its mark' on the lives of Macedonia's inhabitants through

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[164] Quoted in Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy*, p.55.
[165] Strong, *Typhus Fever*, pp.25-28.
[166] Edward Stuart, 'Sanitation in Serbia', *The American Journal of Public Health*, Vol.10, No.2 (February 1920), p.124.
[167] Smith, *British Women of the Eastern Front*, pp.155-156.
[168] Balfour, *Elsie Inglis*, p.211; Matthews, *Experiences of a Woman Doctor*, p.72; McLaren, *The History of the Scottish Women's Hospitals*, p.366.
[169] Sandes, *An English Woman-Sergeant,* p.63; eadem, *The Autobiography*, p.14; Lee, 'A Nurse and a Soldier', p.95.

infrastructural improvements and superior moral standards. Alongside road-building, a 'straightforward' honesty and reputation for efficiency made the BSF the Entente's *Armée de Liaison* and standard-bearer for Western civility. Even the 'most mulish of the peasants – and they can be very mulish – began to realise that something new was abroad', Owen stated in 1919. After years of crisis, the average farmer came to realise that the presence of foreign troops did not always entail 'conquest, rape and looting'.[170]

Fraternisation and cooperation with the multi-national Entente forces also evinced a propensity to formulate cultural hierarchies of national character, as articulated by an anonymous poem published in *The Balkan News* in 1917 depicting a joint patrol of military policemen in Thessaloniki. Juxtaposed with the ostentatiousness and barely-repressed excitability of his French, Greek and Italian colleagues, the British officer exudes natural confidence and authority in his simple khakis and equable demeanour. His 'morose and moody' Serb compeer conveys even less natural authority, mirroring the 'booted Russian at his side'.[171]

Moral superiority was notably evident in the disdain that Britons often expressed towards the Serbian state. The formulation of Serbia as a society of humble and honest peasants could itself be considered partially a response to the difficulties they faced when dealing with official channels. State corruption was the most obvious point of criticism. Aid workers in Macedonia were reported to have regularly lodged complaints with British and French military officials regarding the Serbian army's misappropriation of funds and supplies intended for refugees. This was compounded by an 'excruciating level of dishonesty' with promises 'made lightly without the slightest intention of keeping them'.[172] Berry even advised prospective volunteers to feign ignorance of the language or avoid officials altogether in the interests of expediency.[173] British accounts, Hammond notes, keenly stress their aid missions' autonomy from both the state and military authorities, despite many units having initially placed

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[170] Owen, *Salonika and After*, pp.131-146.
[171] N.D.M., 'To a Military Policeman', in *Salvos from Salonika* (Carlisle: Charles Thurman & Sons, 1919), p.16.
[172] 'Life of an Army Chaplin (Padre) 1917-1919', *Private Papers of Reverend J. Sellors*, IWM Documents:1277, p.28.
[173] Berry et al., *The Story of a Red Cross Unit*, p.118.

themselves under the supervision of the government or Serbian Red Cross.[174] While female-run units could partly express this as symbolic of their gender's organisational and professional competency, instances of their managerial autonomy appeared interlinked with the latent suspicion of 'inferior' Balkan state structures.[175]

This also invited both private and public criticism of the region's less reputable modern tendencies, notably nationalistic chauvinism. Following the recapture of Bitola, an SRF worker distributing aid to surrounding villages voiced disdain for the discrimination she encountered. The supervising Serb corporal insisted that Christian peasants receive preference over the 'Turks', of whom he was 'very scornful'.[176] Neither did engagement with peasant communities ameliorate lingering negative preconceptions from the Edwardian era. Another relief worker who managed a refugee transit camp in Thessaloniki remarked that Serb refugees from Macedonia were 'for the most part I fancy minor officials'. In contrast to the 'blameless peasants' who had fled Serbia proper, the former were no doubt escaping 'the vengeance of the Bulgarian population they had been oppressing!'[177] Even assertively pro-Serb voices were not inattentive to ulterior motives. Sandes observed that her recruitment was as much a question of her presumed propaganda value as it was a matter of alleviating personnel shortages. An upper-class British woman in a Serb regiment could be perceived as linking Serbia's wartime struggle to the wider Entente cause and serve as a pliable totem of British moral support in the absence of tangible military aid.[178] A 'young Greek' who had attempted to enlist at the same time as Sandes had been swiftly rejected, the commandant stating that he 'would have no foreigners'.[179]

Neither were the peasants entirely beyond reproach. Serb soldiers, with whom Britons interacted in Thessaloniki, shared a reputation with the Greeks for being lazy, disorganised and

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[174] Ironically, the British Red Cross had refused to accept female volunteers at the beginning war prompting many to register with its Belgian, French, or even Serbian counterparts.
[175] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, p.82.
[176] 'Diary 30th-31th March 1917', *Private Papers of Miss L. Creighton*, IWM Documents: 1898.
[177] 'Diary, 7th January 1916', *Private Papers of Dame K. Courtney*, IWM Documents: 9785.
[178] Lee, 'A Nurse and a Soldier', p.95.
[179] Sandes, *The Autobiography*, p.14.

unscrupulous.[180] Less critical voices also remarked that peasant-soldiers had an objectionable predilection for lying or exaggeration, interpreted as a psychological vestige of Ottoman rule.[181] Racial epithets did occasionally circulate, particularly in relation to Serb actions considered detrimental to the broader war effort. Ernest Troubridge, who commanded a British naval detachment on the Danube, ranted in his journal of 'Slav incompetence', laziness, and disorganisation on receiving word of the government's plans to evacuate Belgrade in October 1915: 'It seems to me all are tired of effort, like all Slavs.' This, he further postulated, may have also signified a 'traitorous' desire to 'resume their normal Slav existence of idleness, plotting and dreaming while the virile Teuton colonises the country, bringing prosperity in his train'.[182] Published BSF accounts offered equally unedifying portraits of the Macedonian peasantry, whose cultural association with Bulgaria placed them under suspicion. Lake and Owen, for instance, attributed German success in bombing raids to information supplied by Slav peasants, influenced by Bulgarian nationalism and German promises, 'which take form and substance in tangible rewards'.[183]

In this regard, the motif of the civilising mission became interlinked with Britain's military intervention as a campaign to remove seditious external influences, specifically the Germans, conceived of as the inversion of the British moral presence.[184] Accounts by volunteers echoed those of wartime propaganda, casting the Germans as a negative and disruptive force. As one Red Cross nurse wrote, hostility was never expressed towards Austrian orderlies – 'that was reserved for the Germans'.[185] Military reports and testimonies of BSF soldiers also intoned this sentiment in the case of the Bulgarians. Ernest Jones, a former Welsh

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[180] 'Letter, dated 21st July 1915', *Private Papers of Miss M. Ingram,* IWM Documents: 2786; 'Journal, undated', *Private Papers of Miss G. Holland*, IWM Documents: 1042, pp.160-168.

[181] Walshe, *With the Serbs*, pp.50-51.

[182] Quoted in C.E.J. Fryer, *The Destruction of Serbia in 1915* (Boulder: Colombia University Press, 1997), pp.150-153.

[183] Lake, *In Salonika*, p.188; Owen, *Salonika and After*, p.27.

[184] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, p.109; Matthews, *Experiences of a Woman Doctor*, p.79; Stobart, *The Flaming Sword*, p.163.

[185] Elsie Corbett, *Red Cross in Serbia, 1915-1919: A Personal Diary of Experiences* (Banbury: Cheney & Sons, 1964), p.67.

BSF private, explained that the Bulgarian patrols he confronted, were 'always commanded' by Germans who were believed to recruit from among the local Macedonian populace. Recalling the manner in which these officers behaved, Jones mused that the former could have been mistaken for a 'foreign legion' rather than Germany's mutual ally.[186]

Notable shortcomings were, however, mainly dismissed as vestiges of the Ottoman legacy or attributed to the faults of 'all young races'. Davies admonished volunteers who complained of undesirable working conditions, noting that Serbia was not to be judged against 'British standards' as these were 'inappropriate' for meeting the social needs of a peasant society.[187] In some instances, perceived failings or weaknesses in the modern British character could be juxtaposed with that of the Serb peasant. Writing to the US *charge d'affairs* in Sofia, Paget (who was herself imprisoned by the Bulgarians following Serbia's occupation) spoke of her shame at the lack of decorum among British POWs in Bulgarian camps. Their captors even complained to her of laziness, fights, drunkenness, and 'brazen demands' for better rations over the 'Spartan diet' that sustained Serb prisoners. The latter by contrast, bore their misfortune stoically without complaint.[188]

Even in the aftermath of the war's conclusion, the idea of the civilising mission in the South Slavonic Balkans retained a degree of influence over the popular imagination. Written by two BSF veterans, *Macedonia, a Plea for the Primitive* reiterated pre-war tropes, theorising that the territory had 'degenerated' from the glories of ancient Macedon to 'a vassal State with a hybrid population'. Echoing Brailsford's earlier assertion that the province was isolated by cultural inertia and religious fatalism, the text mused at the various 'anomalies [such] as Bulgarian-speaking Moslems and Turkish-speaking Orthodox' which they themselves had encountered.[189] Nowhere was this more evident than in the native peasantry: 'the living negation of the aphorism "Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis" [Time changes and we

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[186] 'IWM Interview with Ernest Victor John Jones, undated', IWM Sound Archive, Catalogue no.12678.
[187] Davies, *A Farmer in Serbia*, p.46.
[188] 'Letter to Lewis Einstein (US *charge d'affairs*, Sofia), 24th May 1916', *Paget Papers (3rd Series) Vol.XX 1914-1945*, BL Western Manuscripts: Add MS 51261.
[189] Goff & Fawcett, *A Plea for the Primitive*, pp.ix-x, 37-38.

change with them]'.[190] For Lake, Macedonia appeared ripe for a post-war intervention in the form of a new civilising mission. If any lessons were to be learned from an 'unprofitable adventure' deemed 'unimportant by the British public', it was 'not unimportant that a fertile land should lie waste and be desolate'. The peasants, being 'so poor and depressed', were unlikely to help themselves, however. With Western aid, science and emigration:

> …a new Macedonia could be created […] the present inhabitants learning in time that after all there is comfort in cleanliness, that it is not necessary to be ugly, and that an upstanding, well-built house is a better habitation than a hovel with mud-plastered walls.[191]

Lake's published grievances over what he viewed as a waste of British potential, was evocative of many of the wider attitudes and perceptions during British wartime engagement with the Southern Slavs. By the beginning of 1916, it was less exotic otherness than victimhood that sustained their presence in the public eye; the fact that those who propagated it also sought to vanquish the various identified sources of this victimhood rendered it ultimately self-defeating as a basis for building and sustaining deeper post-war links.

Conclusion

In terms of both the scale of engagement and representations stressing cultural reciprocity over otherness, the First World War remains singularly unique in Anglo-Balkan relations. Rather than merely breaking with existing trends, British experiences of the wartime South Slavonic Balkans brought about their culmination by bringing issues concerning the Serb peasantry into the immediate orbit of British popular discourse as an active challenge to British moral identity. As illustrated by Inglis, MacPhail, Sandes and various other BSF personnel, alleviating or highlighting the plight of refugees, undertaking developmental work or confronting Germany's regional allies served to validate a British sense of place as a force for moral order, articulated as both a practical and symbolic response to the perceived evils of the modern era.

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[190] Ibid., pp.35.
[191] Lake, *In Salonica*, p.287.

The wartime shift towards this representational apex also served to dismantle the remaining cultural barriers of the Edwardian era by raising the imaginative status of the peasantry beyond that of mere victim. As the Serbian army crossed the frontier back into Macedonia in September 1918, the peasants who comprised its ranks and those who had fled overseas as refugees now stood as arbiters of their nation's cultural and social identity. In conflating the Serb national movement with the virtuousness of peasant suffering and defiance as Britain's wartime allies, the war also served to ameliorate the negative connotations associated with it before 1914. In relation to popular discourse and engagement of the public, the valorisation of the Serb peasant-soldier, mediated mainly through the experiences of a mostly female humanitarian presence, integrated the South Slavonic Balkans as a point of common reference against which Britain's role in the war could be understood. Furthermore, as the exploits of the British volunteers increasingly gained the public's attention, this representational shift was projected into the wider social sphere through its incorporation into propaganda narratives.

Nevertheless, the move towards this point was itself inconsistent and marked by a persistence of archetypes and attitudes indicative of British regional engagement in earlier periods. Despite venerating peasants as innately virtuous, wartime representations failed to advance beyond framing them as simplified caricatures who could never be positioned as Britain's cultural equals. Additionally, the solidarity formed through the wartime motivation to resolve peasant victimhood immediately revealed its limitations by being sustained by the historical contingency of the First World War. This was illustrated in the stark contrast with British regional involvement during the Second World War. Here, the lack of a relatable civilian element failed to produce an equivalent to Inglis or Sandes; figures whose depictions in propaganda as embodying British justice and moral virtue captured a triumphal sense of the

national self-image that was reflected in representations of the South Slavonic Balkans from 1914 to 1918.[192]

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[192] From 1940 to 1944, Britain's regional presence in the Balkans was almost exclusively restricted to military and intelligence personnel, the majority of whom were deployed in Greece. See for example, Ioannis Stefanidis, *Substitute for Power: Wartime British Propaganda to the Balkans, 1939-1944* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

Chapter 5. Peasants into Yugoslavs: Narrating the End of Victimhood in British Wartime Propaganda

For the majority of Britons, Serbs and other South Slavs, if they were even acknowledged, served as a footnote to the domestic perceptions of the Great War as a crusade against German militarism, precipitated by the invasion of Belgium in August 1914.[1] While Serbia was initially introduced to the public in late 1914 as a gallant ally, by the end of 1915 the campaign in the Balkans was perceived more as a humanitarian emergency through its association with female medical volunteers. In keeping with the now archetypal pattern of Balkan war imagery, depictions of the South Slavonic peasant as a victim of malign alien interferences galvanised public sympathy.[2]

Although imagological historians – whose scholarship encompasses the period after 1913 – acknowledge the First World War as a turning-point, its influence as a cultural factor has tended to remain subordinate to its political implications. Todorova and Goldsworthy, for instance, analyse its impact as contiguous to a broader thematic process of geopolitical classification that transformed the Balkans into an eastern borderland of 'small nations' of intermingling cultures.[3] Subsequent studies have attributed greater importance to the war as a catalyst for various changes in British representations after 1914 – notably a 'fragmentation of the Balkan image' with wartime alliances remoulded and continuing to shape imaginative geography throughout the 1920s and 1930s.[4]

Wartime propaganda has also been observed as an influential factor in the subversion of the archetype of Balkan violence by portraying it as having emanated exclusively from

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[1] Scully, *British Images of Germany*, p.6, 129. See also Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Toby Thacker, *British Culture and the First World War: Experience, Representation and Memory* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

[2] Perkins has also observed that one of the Liberal campaign's principal successes was to reshape the image of the Balkan peasant as a largely sympathetic figure by 1915. Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', pp.55-56.

[3] Todorova, *Imagining*, pp.33-35, p.46; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.88-91.

[4] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.28.

outside the region.[5] While Austria-Hungary's own imperial ambitions served to nominally fill this role, its integration into propaganda narratives cast both it and Bulgaria as proxies of Germany – Britain's moral antithesis as the nexus of militaristic aggression. In relation to the formation of Yugoslavia, this propaganda has been noted for its, often overt, historical revisionism. Drapac and Evans emphasise the activities of Seton-Watson and other anti-Habsburg intellectuals as having cast Yugoslavia's formation as pre-determined. Wartime propaganda, overseen by pro-Yugoslav personalities such as Seton-Watson and Steed, perpetuated a belief that linguistic reciprocity and vague tribal origins were a logical basis for political unification, while evidence of cultural differences and political alternatives, specifically those excluding union with Serbia, were ignored.[6] Perkins theorises that the First World War also represented a discursive shift in how Balkan history was perceived among Britain's Liberal intelligentsia. Rather than an heroic struggle of liberal and humanitarian ideals against Oriental tyranny and colonial excess, by 1918 a less radical interpretation, championed by academic figures such as Seton-Watson and the historian Ramsay Muir, framed it as a linear process of the 'rise of nationality' in former imperial hinterlands such as the Balkans, with the nation-state displacing Europe's hegemonic empires.[7]

Discussions of this wartime fragmentation as a product of political tensions once again minimise the preceding developments in imaginative geography alongside the effect of wartime propaganda on the evolution of British popular discourse. As highlighted by Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, British propaganda in the First World War was pivotal to the propagation of various psychological techniques and methods of persuasion in order to sustain the conflict's legitimacy in the public eye. Information was carefully managed and coordinated to promote this belief. Propagandists often codified their messages through a range of subliminal and rhetorical appeals to attitudes, beliefs, values and societal norms

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[5] Norris, *In the Wake*, p.33; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.125.
[6] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.5; Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, p.64.
[7] Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe', pp.585-586. See also Ramsay Muir, *The Expansion of Europe: The Culmination of Modern History* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1917); R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1917).

perceived to hold resonance with the widest possible cross-section of the public.[8] Britain was presented as possessing both the capacity and duty to act as 'a standard for a new world order opposed to German values' with the war construed as a crusade against immoral and corrupting forces.[9] By 1916, these efforts at shaping popular perceptions had resulted in the state control of major communication channels, obfuscating or censoring any dissenting voices while privileging those whose message aligned with these ideals.

Historiographical fixation on foreign influences has also downplayed the role of South Slavonic actors, specifically those for whom the First World War represented the corollary of growing disenchantment and frustration with the nineteenth-century status quo. In April 1915, a group of anti-Habsburg Croat, Serb and Slovene political secessionists met in Paris where they founded, with Serbian financial support, *Jugoslavenski odbor* (the Yugoslav Committee: JO). It quickly relocated to London however, calculating that gaining influence in Britain would better serve to raise their cause's profile among the Entente as a whole.[10] By 1916, groups such as the JO and their British advocates could freely utilise the country's wartime propaganda apparatus to advance their post-war agendas. Recognising that popular support was a form of leverage at a political level, they attempted to appropriate the peasant victimhood narrative and place it within the wider context of a grand British wartime mission. This was most definitively conveyed through the exhibited work of the pro-Yugoslavist Croat 'peasant-sculptor' Ivan Meštrović at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the summer of 1915. Through a romanticised amalgamation of various folk traditions and rural mythologies, Meštrović's work articulated a coherent Yugoslavist vision which was itself indelibly tied to a cyclical narrative of peasant martyrdom.[11] This continued the following year with widespread civic and religious observations of the Serbian national

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[8] See Garth S. Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion,* 6th edn (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2015).

[9] Sluga, 'Narrating Difference', p.192.

[10] Hugh Seton-Watson & Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W.Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (London: Methuen, 1981), pp.108-109.

[11] 'J.B.' [James Bone], 'The Temple of Kosovo', *The Spectator*, 10th July 1915, pp.9-10; Perkins, 'Peasants and Politics', p.56.

holiday *Vidovdan* (St. Vitus Day).[12] Linguistic and cultural reciprocity, coupled with the threats posed by external interference, were all seized upon as preconditions of the need to achieve a post-war political union.[13] Humanitarian depictions of the Serbs as suffering innocents came to represent all those who had been victimised by the Central Powers. Equating the fate of 'gallant little Serbia' to that of 'brave little Belgium' served to reassure the public of the righteousness of Britain's cause, highlighting support for Serbia, and later Yugoslavia, as paradigmatic of Britain's own moral precedence.

This chapter concludes the study's core analysis by assessing how the First World War – far from representing a discursive break with the recent past – signalled the historical apotheosis of Anglo-Balkan intercultural engagement during the modern period. Conversely, it also examines how the war further served to reveal the limitations of the South Slavs' shifting image in imaginative geography as 1918 brought an apparent final resolution to the victimhood narrative.

Draining 'Serbia's Cup of Sorrow' through Wartime Solidarity

Parallel to British humanitarian, and to a far lesser extent military, engagement in the South Slavonic Balkans, the war's most distinguishing feature was the opportunities it afforded to British audiences for participating in their country's intervention. While this took a mostly indirect form as a concerted (and heavily mediated) emergency aid campaign in support of the various humanitarian missions, it nevertheless represented, arguably, the nearest equivalent to a mass regional engagement. The context of the First World War projected the evolving discursive understanding of British identity outwards onto the campaigns being

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[12] A religious holiday commemorating the defeat of the then largest medieval Serbian principality and its allies by the advancing Ottoman forces at the battle of Kosovo. It is believed to have taken place on 15th June, based on the calendar system at the time. However, it is popularly associated with the 28th.

[13] Connie Robinson, 'Yugoslavism in the Early Twentieth Century: The Politics of the Yugoslav Committee', in Dejan Djokić & James Ker-Lindsay (eds.), *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp.14-16.

fought in mostly overseas theatres.[14] Success in these campaigns prompted wartime propaganda narratives to foster a sense of moral solidarity with allied countries, perceived as fellow collaborators in resisting German militarism. In the case of Serbia, such narratives, reinforced by a highly proactive humanitarian campaign, instituted the notion of wartime Anglo-Serbian solidarity as reflecting Britain's own inherent virtue as civilisation's moral centre. Audiences were thus encouraged to become 'active' in the truest sense by contributing to the Serbian relief effort and attending events to promote this solidarity as a demonstration of their patriotism and superior moral values.

The prescient role of the war's rapidly shifting context in influencing this belief was illustrated by what transpired in its opening months. In the interlude between the Second Balkan War and the escalation of international tensions in July 1914, the extent to which public interest in southeastern Europe had fallen away, following its brief flaring in 1912, was evidenced by the widespread indifference Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination elicited in the public sphere.[15] In contrast to the Annexation Crisis or the Balkan Wars, the events in Sarajevo were perceived as having no immediate bearing on British interests. Speaking at Guildhall on 17th July, David Lloyd George dismissed 'any foreseeable diplomatic contretemps in Europe' as 'no more than a small cloud on the horizon'. The threat of 'a quarter of a million men under arms' and the 'implacable revolutionary ferment' in Ireland were of more pressing concern.[16] In the press, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the wider South Slavonic Balkans were quickly overlooked amid reports on diplomatic machinations in Europe's capitals. Only Austria-Hungary's 'demarche' to Serbia, which the foreign secretary, Edward Grey, had somewhat ironically announced at a cabinet meeting on Irish unrest,

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[14] The closest equivalent to a military engagement in British territory was between the Royal and Imperial German navies in the North Sea, and the aerial dogfights that later ensued during the German bombing raids.

[15] Christopher Clark's influential study, *The Sleepwalkers*, has recently shifted attention back to the region, taking a revisionist stance on Austria-Hungary's perceived vulnerability, and focusing on Serbian politics and the country's role in precipitating the July Crisis. See Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012); T.G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[16] A.J.A. Morris, *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament 1896-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p.355.

solicited official alarm.[17] That the British establishment seemed to have been taken unawares once again reflected the limited attention allotted to southeastern Europe outside periods of international turbulence.

In the now fragmented and elite academic and journalistic sphere of organised opinion, attitudes towards the Balkan Wars had engendered a sense of moral relativism as well as outrage, both underscored by widespread indifference. The Carnegie Endowment's final report went largely unnoticed owing to its publication occurring in the wake of the assassination, numerous disparities in its findings and its inconclusiveness over how blame should be apportioned.[18] Reacting to its release, *The Economist* editor, Francis W. Hirst, another former Commission representative, speculated as to whether the Balkan Wars had been forewarnings of what might transpire in future conflicts. Would 'the armies of civilised Europe…even the British Tommy' respect the edict of international law 'once the actual tide of war had swept away normal restraints'?[19]

Like the 1903 regicides, the events in Sarajevo elicited a familiar mixture of shock and morbid curiosity in the British public, coupled with a recourse to pejorative archetypes among some quarters.[20] By 30th June, the ever-assiduous Steed could present his readers with an established order of events, confirm the number of conspirators, and substantiate Vienna's claim of 'a carefully laid plot' behind the murders.[21] In an editorial, he further contended that pro-government rallies held across Bosnia-Herzegovina were unlikely to quell Muslim and

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[17] Watt, 'The British Reactions to the Assassination at Sarajevo', pp.235-236.

[18] Much of this was owing to the unwillingness of the war's participants to fully cooperate with the investigation and the openly contradictory witness testimonies. In one instance, Fisher stated that a massacre of Muslims in eastern Thrace, attributed to his regiment, was instigated by local 'Armenian porters' out of personal enmity for the Turks, despite survivors who had fled to Istanbul asserting the contrary. *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan War* (1914), pp.280-281.

[19] Francis W. Hirst, 'The Balkan War Enquiry', *The Economist*, 18th July 1914, p.106.

[20] An article appearing in *The Manchester Guardian* on the 29th June even stated that the assassins' motives were 'unknown and unimportant' when compared to the human tragedy. 'The Assassination of the Austrian Heir Apparent', *The Manchester Guardian*, 29th July 1914, p.1.

[21] A few days later, Serbia's London envoy reported to the Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, that through the concerted efforts of Austrian officials, 'nearly all the English newspapers attribute the Serajevo outrage to the work of Serbian revolutionaries'. No.7, 'M.M.S. Boschkovitch, Minister in London to M.N. Pashitch, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, London June 18/July 1, 1914', *The Serbian Blue Book* (New York: American Association for International Conciliation, 1915), p.9.

Orthodox unrest since both groups 'have always resented the annexation'.[22] Speculation quickly surrounded this truncated discussion of culpability. In mid-July, the populist magazine *John Bull* announced that it had uncovered evidence of a plot by Serbian intelligence, devised in various embassies, including London. As a perpetual 'menace' to European peace and 'a hot-bed of cold-blooded conspiracy and subterfuge', the editor concluded that 'Servia must be wiped out'.[23]

Amidst sensationalist hyperbole and hermetic diplomatic narratives, however, any wider interest Sarajevo and Serbia might have captured in the public imagination instantly dissipated. 'I knew nothing of European complications and cared less. The murder of an Archduke meant no more to me than some tale of an imaginary kingdom in Zenda,' wrote Dearmer, implying that fictional locales still offered a more palpable frame of reference for audiences than factual texts.[24] The Monarchy's formal declaration of war on 28th July 1914 was met with further indifference interspersed with denouncements of Serbia as 'a nation of regicides and cut-throats', deserving punishment.[25] What was assumed to have been the political and cultural remoteness of the new Balkan conflict in relation to 'the man in the street' was supposedly articulated in a satirical poem that appeared in *Punch* magazine on 5th August:

> TO SERVIA:
> 'You have won whatever of fame it brings
> To have murdered a king and the heir of kings,
> And it well may be that your sovereign pride
> Chafes at a touch of its tender hide;
> But why should I follow your fighting line,

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[22] 'The Tragedy of Serajevo', *The Times*, 29th June 1914, p.2, 9.

[23] When the Serbian ambassador threatened legal action, the FO intervened, informing him that *John Bull* and its inflammatory editor, Horatio Bottomley, were already facing multiple lawsuits in Britain. Julian Symons, *Horatio Bottomley: A Biography* (London: The Cresset Press, 1955), p.162; Alan Hyman, *The Rise and Fall of Horatio Bottomley: The Biography of a Swindler* (London: Cassell, 1972), pp.143-144. For further analysis on British press reaction to the assassinations and wartime attitudes towards Austria-Hungary, see Harry Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary During the First World War* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[24] Dearmer had confused the town in which Hope's popular novel is set with his fictional kingdom of Ruritania. Similarly, she had only volunteered as an orderly in order to accompany her husband, a chaplin for the Red Cross, to the region, her knowledge of Serbia advancing it to being 'a country penetrated by disease'. Dearmer. *Letters from a Field Hospital*, p.46, pp.60-62.

[25] Quoted in Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, p.26.

For a matter that's no concern of mine?' [26]

By August, apprehensions over the prospect of possible British involvement in a general European conflict incited a string of hostile correspondence. As Catriona Pennell comments, enemies and allies became 'very fluid concepts' in July and early August 1914.[27] Critical voices argued that a war against Germany would be akin to abandoning the British ideal of an enlightened Western civilisation in order to aid its monolithic Eastern Slavonic antipode. 'Let us be perfectly clear at any rate,' the *London Daily News* stated to its readers on 28th July, 'what we are asked to do is to strike a blow at Western culture in order to bolster the infinitely lower culture of Eastern Europe.'[28] Scully's theory on the vagaries of historical Anglo-German antagonism was exhibited by the opposition's appeal to latent ideas of cultural kinship.[29] A petition from nine Oxbridge academics, reprinted in *The Times*, contested that 'war upon her [Germany] in the interests of Servia and Russia would be a sin against civilization', as the European nation was 'leading the way in the Arts and Sciences…so near akin to our own and with whom we have so much in common'.[30] Angell also stressed Teutonic commonality as grounds against British intervention: would assisting Russia in the creation of 'a dominant Slavonic federation of, say, 200,000,000 autocratically governed people, with a very rudimentary civilisation, but heavily equipped for military aggression, be a less dangerous factor in Europe than a dominant Germany of 65,000,000 highly civilised and mainly given to the arts of trade and commerce [*sic*]?'[31] More popular media presented a markedly less-considered message. Unperturbed by the outcry its earlier accusations had elicited from the Serbian embassy, *John Bull* remained stridently brazen, rhetorically stating four days after the German invasion of Belgium: 'TO HELL WITH

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[26] Quoted in Irene Cooper Willis, *England's Holy War: A Study of English Liberal Idealism During the Great War* (New York: Knopf, 1928), pp.10-11.

[27] Pennell, *A Kingdom United*, pp.26-27

[28] Quoted in Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary*, p.39.

[29] Scully, *British Images of Germany*, pp.319-320. A similar view was present among critical voices in Germany, particularly within the Social Democratic Party. See for example Stefan Berger, *The British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats, 1900–1931* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[30] 'Scholars Protest against War with Germany', *The Times*, 1st August 1914, p.6.

[31] Norman Angell, 'The Menace of War: Dominance of Russia or Germany', *The Times*, 1st August 1914, p.6.

SERVIA. *Why Should Britain Shed Her Blood to Save a Nation of Assassins?'* This spectacular mis-reading of the public and international mood (and poor publication scheduling) resulted in its anti-Serb rhetoric being quietly discarded in the succeeding issue.[32]

Coupled with Serbia's military success in 1914, the previous decade's discursive recalibration of civilisation as a moral phenomenon offered a domestic environment already conditioned to accept the notion of Anglo-Serb solidarity as a natural recognition of the elemental values Britain and its allies were now striving to save. The modernising standards of Austria-Hungary – now little more than Germany's regional appendage – were regarded as a corruption of Enlightenment ideals by militaristic authoritarianism and the exploitation of less-developed regions. This twisted reflection of progress was assigned the derisory epithet of 'Pan-Germanism' or *Kultur* with the Balkans representing a microcosm of a far wider moral and cultural struggle. As Western civilisation's moral standard-bearer, Britain's wartime duty was not to Serbia *per se*, but to uphold the ideals it personified in opposing the spread of pan-Germanism. The Serb peasant-soldier became the valiant avatar of democratic virtue; having once stood as the 'guardian' of Christendom against the Ottoman conquests, he now fought to preserve the legacy of the Enlightenment and European moral order.[33] Denouncing the German adoption of trench warfare at the first Battle of the Marne in September 1914, Lloyd George warned that Germany's advancements in science and art had been counterpoised by a loss of 'the noble human qualities'. Juxtaposing this with the Serbs' conduct at Cer against Austria-Hungary, he concluded that, while boasting of the trappings of industrial civilisation, 'Prussia cannot conceive of self-sacrifice in a righteous cause'.[34]

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[32] This article, referenced by critics of the post-Versailles order as evidence that the British popular mood had been opposed to war with Germany in 1914, was peculiar in its contradictory stance on intervention. While the author (presumably the editor himself) opposed fighting on behalf of Serbia's independence, he also demanded that the Royal Navy establish a blockade of Germany in order to launch pre-emptive attacks on its naval strength. Hyman, *The Rise and Fall of Horatio Bottomley*, pp.145-151.

[33] (JO), 'Manifesto', *South Slav Bulletin*, No.3 (November 1915), p.7.

[34] 'A Great Speech', *The Times*, 21st September 1914, p.9. A subsequent letter from Mijatović thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for tacitly lending support for a future 'Yugoslav union'. Chedo Mijatovich, 'Serbians and Mr Lloyd George', *The Times*, 23rd September 1914, p.9.

Similarly, Serb peasants who fled as refugees or fell under the 'tyrannical' sway of the Central Powers, emerged as secular martyrs to political and cultural freedom.[35]

In this context, qualified by the wave of publications from British volunteers in 1916-1917, Serbia's oft-repeated epithet of being 'a nation of peasants' conferred to its rural populace the status of vassals for national identity.[36] As previously discussed, this included a fostered sense of cultural familiarity and unanimity in the pursuit of wartime aims with portrayals of the unequivocal Serb peasant-soldier corresponding with propaganda depictions of the easy-going 'British Tommy' serving on the Western Front.[37] Similarly, the likening of agrarian Serbia to romantic perceptions of pre-industrial rural Britain as a fountainhead of stability and democratic values placed both countries in opposition to the perceived wave of modern authoritarianism borne of urbanised decadence.[38]

This imaginative recalibration of the Serb nation's image as a morally virtuous and capable, albeit less culturally-advanced, wartime ally legitimised a revision of popular negative associations originally formulated in 1903. Following Serbia's victories at Cer and Kolubara, the 'nation of regicides' could be easily recast as 'gallant Serbia', the eastern equivalent to 'brave little Belgium'.[39] Even before 1915, Serb martial prowess appeared in propaganda as a manifestation of a moral fortitude quintessential to the national character. As Chirol gushed in an October pamphlet, '[T]he splendid pluck with which her sons have faced the Austrian Goliath and smitten him hip and thigh' had removed any 'blots' on the Serbian national character. Although 'the worst pages of her history' had framed British perceptions before the war, both countries now found common ground in the 'shared cause of freedom'.[40] The first volume in Britain's official war history, appearing at the end of 1914, also sought to

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[35] 'Serbia's Sacrifices', *The New Europe*, Vol.1, No.1 (October 1916), p.32.
[36] 'The Doctrine of Ascendancy: Race Problems in Austria-Hungary', *The Round Table*, Vol.5 (December 1914 - September 1915), pp.93-96.
[37] R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Spirit of the Serb* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1915), p.24. See also Sidney Low (ed.), *The Spirit of the Allied Nations* (London: A. & C. Black, 1915).
[38] 'Nietzsche and the "Culture State"', *The Round Table*, Vol.5 (December 1914 - September 1915), pp.418-421.
[39] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.126; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, pp.88-98, p.125; Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.71-76; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.85-86.
[40] (Sir) Valentine Chirol, *Serbia and the Serbs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p.3, 18.

assuage lingering public doubt by echoing Vivian's hypothesis of a division between Serbia's 'false' urban and authentic rural national culture. Pre-war 'globe-trotters' seldom saw beyond 'the artificial gaieties of Belgrade', misconstruing the 1903 regicide as emblematic of the national character rather than the traditions of the 'true Serbs', dwelling peacefully in their villages.[41] Seton-Watson reiterated this message in a 1915 volume of propaganda essays. The true 'spirit of the Serb' existed in agrarian tradition, an attachment to the landscape and democratic peasant virtues, rather than in the pseudo-Westernised cities that dominated the itineraries of tourists and foreign correspondents.[42]

At a practical level, channelling popular support for the Serbian relief effort into outward mobilisation of the public's energy and enthusiasm was a relatively simple task for groups such as the SRF, established in August 1914 under the patronage of several political and religious notables.[43] The emotive impulse engendered by the peasantry's victimhood status in imaginative geography, as well as obvious conflations with Belgium and the concrete affiliation the public could invest in the humanitarian missions, brought a stream of donations. A letter of appeal by Sandes, published in the *Daily Mail* at the end of 1914, attracted over £2,000 worth of donations in three weeks while an SWH donation drive in March 1915 raised £1,165 in just two days.[44] As a member of its founding executive, Seton-Watson later boasted that the SRF alone collected and distributed over £1,000,000 in humanitarian and medical aid.[45] By 1918, these organisations had expanded their operations into other areas of humanitarian provision such as education and housing for Serb evacuees. Local governments and communities also launched initiatives, often competing to outdo one another in announcing donation drives and charity events. Independent funds providing

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[41] H.W. Wilson & J.A. Hammerton, *The Great War: The Standard History of the All-Europe Conflict*, *Vol.1*, (London: The Amalgamated Press, 1914), p.11.

[42] Seton-Watson, *The Spirit of the Serb*, pp.13-19.

[43] These included Evans, the former Viceroy for India and Conservative peer, George Curzon, and the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, while Mary of Teck, the wife of King George V, served as the SRF's patron throughout the war. Krippner, 'The Work of British Medical Women', pp.72-73.

[44] Estimated at £117,000 and £200,000 when adjusted for inflation. Sandes, *The Autobiography*, p.15; Leah Leneman, *Elsie Inglis: Founder of Battlefield Hospitals Run Entirely by Women* (Edinburgh: NMSE Publishing, 1998), p.6.

[45] Approximately £60,000,000 by contemporary values. R.W. Seton-Watson, *Masaryk in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), p.36.

accommodation and scholarships to Serb children and students were even established in Aberdeen and Edinburgh.[46] The wartime British presence and cultural impetus engendered by the public's experience of 'total war' also provided incentives for engagement at an intercommunal level. Following Serbia's liberation in October 1918, for instance, a vigorous campaign in Glasgow was organised by MacPhail's father to raise supplies for returning refugees.[47] Although it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which these public campaigns elicited a broad cross-societal response, their overt success – achieved on a voluntary basis – speak of the extent to which the war had precipitated the discursive changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Nevertheless, while larger organisations like the Red Cross could secure funds and resources through size and name alone, smaller, specialised groups such as the SRF and SWH were obliged to engage in disseminating propaganda as a means of retaining the divided attentions of the wartime public. Given its already politicised nature, ostensibly humanitarian appeals increasingly merged with pro-Serbian and, by 1917, Yugoslavist efforts to disseminate their post-war agendas by converging their message with pre-war victimhood narratives, while simultaneously attempting to draw links with British atrocity propaganda. The South Slavonic Balkans provided an ideal setting to illustrate the constructed psychological paradigm of a German master plan for perpetuating imperialist designs through its Habsburg, Bulgarian and Ottoman proxies. *Serbia's Cup of Sorrow*, a 1915 SRF pamphlet, presented the occupation alongside that of Belgium as a portent for the humanitarian disaster that might accompany a German invasion of the British Isles.[48] The Irish lawyer William Bailey offered a similar scenario in his depiction of Austria-Hungary's wartime regime in Croatia-Slavonia. '[For] the benefit of the State', all 'Serbo-Croats'[49] were branded potential subversives, a pretence by the war ministry to requisition food and property and leave them

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[46] Snežana Toševa, *Srbija i Britanija: kulturni dordiri početkom xx veka* (Belgrade: SANU, 2007), p.24, 37.

[47] Mikić, *Ever Yours Sincerely*, p.81.

[48] *Serbia's Cup of Sorrow* (London: Serbian Relief Fund, 1915), pp.2-4.

[49] This was likely a reference to Croatia-Slavonia's large Serb population. However, Bailey's text failed to provide any further clarification. W.F. Bailey, *The Slavs of the War Zone* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1916), p.158.

destitute, while the military openly abused its emergency powers to persecute peasants and other 'poor miserable hapless and ignorant folk'.[50] The psychological angle present in such imagery also offered a rhetorical challenge to the veracity of British claims of a superior moral standing when the country had earlier failed to provide Serbia with military relief; monetary and material donations from the public now served as a form of exoneration.[51]

Regardless of the extensive coverage afforded to the Serbs' victimisation and an often vaguely defined sense of shared values, the extent to which the First World War facilitated a popular discursive sense of intercultural connection proved superficial. Excluding the presentation of peasants as virtuous martyrs, their representation in wartime literature did little to actively challenge pre-existing archetypes at any substantive level. One such example is presented in *An English Girl in Serbia*, set during the Serb retreat and featuring a female protagonist. Despite locating its narrative within the war's cultural context, the text provides little in the way of revision to popular archetypes. Serb soldiers become the 'noble savage' allies of the British heroes while Bulgarian 'comitadji' assume the antagonist roles previously conferred on Albanians or the Ottoman authorities.[52]

More notable was the marked absence or discussion of actual war crimes committed against Southern Slavs, in contrast to those suffering from medical ailments and refugees. While the German-Swiss forensic scientist Archibald Reiss's documentation of atrocities committed by the Central Powers from 1915-1918 was not published until 1919, his 1915 report on atrocities committed by the Habsburgs in 1914 was markedly absent from atrocity narratives alongside other allegations of genuine war crimes.[53] Reiss's later findings, such as

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[50] Ibid., pp.158-159.

[51] While other organisations and individuals adopted a similar tone, the campaign was monopolised by the SRF. See, for example, *Serbia's Cup of Sorrow*; (Lady) L. Paget, *With Our Allies the Serbs* (London: Serbian Relief Fund, 1915); *An Appeal for Serbian Prisoners of War* (London: Serbian Relief Fund, 1917); *The Serbian Colonies in Corsica* (Corsica: Serbian Relief Fund, 1917).

[52] May Wynne [Mabel Winifred Knowles], *An English Girl in Serbia: The Story of a Great Adventure* (London & Glasgow: Collins Clear Type Press, 1916), p.27, pp.115-117.

[53] Britain and Austria-Hungary were both signatories to The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, established to protect POWs and civilian populations in wartime. See Archibald Reiss, *How Austria-Hungary Waged War in Serbia: Personal Investigations of a Neutral* (Paris: A. Colin, 1915); Idem, *The Kingdom of Serbia. Infringements of the Rules and Laws of War Committed by the Austro-Bulgaro-Germans: Letters of a Criminologist on the Serbian Macedonian Front* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1919).

those pertaining to Bulgaria for instance, were corroborated by earlier testimonies from British and other Entente POWs. Reports by neutral American observers also exposed a wartime blurring between the front and hinterlands, targeting civilians as occurred in the Balkan Wars. The VMRO, who assisted the Bulgarians in annexing Macedonia, reportedly plundered and attacked with impunity.[54] Serbs in Bulgarian-occupied zones were believed to have been subjected to forced deportations, while US humanitarian volunteers asserted that Serb POWs had been routinely worked to death in labour camps, reminiscent of the Belgian Congo. British volunteers who accompanied Entente forces back into Macedonia and Serbia in 1918 also received testimonies of Bulgarian atrocities and attempts to re-'Bulgarianize' the populace, that had culminated in 'local massacres' in Niš and other annexed territories as a 'grim repeat' of 1912 and 1913.[55] The US legation in Sofia had even informed Paget that Germans were welcomed since they brought 'an influx of money and demand for labour' and 'pay liberally' rather than invoking looting and enslavement. Nevertheless, Macedonian Slavs suffered privations as the German army eventually commandeered even basic amenities. In rural areas, disease among women and children increased due to a proliferation in prostitution and rising rates of suicide and infanticide, with parents murdering children to 'save them from starvation', had left entire villages deserted.[56]

Serbia's marked absence from actual British atrocity propaganda was further evidence of the contextual limitations under which the image of the South Slavonic peasant was able to evolve. Bastian Scianna contests that Reiss and his peers had only begun to redefine military attacks on civilians as a violation of 'a main component that had to be protected' during the period.[57] While violence against non-combatants was entrenched as an aberration worthy of condemnation, discourses on their treatment had yet to evolve into a matter of absolute

[54] Ibid., p.612.
[55] 'Life of an Army Chaplin6-38', *Private Papers of Reverend J. Sellors*, IWM Documents: 1277, pp.36-38. Milovan Pisarri, 'Bulgarian Crimes against Civilians in Occupied Serbia during the First World War', *Balcanica*, Vol.44 (2013), p.373.
[56] 'Letter to Einstein, 22nd April 1916', *Paget Papers*, BL: Add MS 51261.
[57] Bastian Matteo Scianna, 'Reporting Atrocities: Archibald Reiss in Serbia, 1914-1918', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol.25, No.4 (2012), pp.613-614.

wartime importance.[58] In this regard, the superficial depictions of Serbia's plight in British propaganda signified the war's transient nature as a conduit for rationalising an otherwise incongruous alliance by appealing to a heightened public sense of moral virtuousness. Comparable to the Serb peasantry's admittance to the moral hierarchy on the basis of victimhood, the campaign to alleviate the humanitarian crisis further revealed the limitations to which any form of mass engagement could be sustained in this period.

Yugoslavia in the British Moral Crusade

Besides emotive appeals in an, initially, febrile atmosphere, built upon an existing image of South Slavonic victimhood, the ability to channel and shape the flow of information as propaganda in the wartime public sphere proved far more conducive to those seeking to advance political agendas. In contrast to an often intangible myriad of anxieties and allegories that had defined Edwardian representations, the domestic atmosphere of the Home Front simplified this process by focusing popular discursive concerns on Britain's role in the war. By extension, the image of the victimised peasant as a figure of resistance to pan-Germanism was a useful conduit for directing public sympathy to the objective of a post-war Yugoslavia, in line with Britain's primary war aims, as well as fulfilling a form of moralistic duty. Conversely, as with humanitarian aid to Serbia, the Yugoslav propaganda campaign further illustrated the extent to which the success of such causes was contingent on the immediate social context of the First World War.

At its crux, the JO's Yugoslavist narrative stipulated that Croats, Serbs and Slovenes existed as three distinct 'tribes' which collectively comprised a single South Slavonic race, therefore legitimising the post-war unification of all Habsburg South Slavonic territories with Serbia and Montenegro in a single – federalised – Yugoslav entity. In Britain, this rationale,

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[58] Similar to Mazower's assessment of the BSF, Scianna and Milovan Pisarri argue that further research on the treatment of civilians and POWs is required in order to develop a clearer picture of the Balkans as a theatre in the First World War. Scianna, 'Reporting Atrocities', p.617; Pisarri, 'Bulgarian Crimes against Civilians in Occupied Serbia', pp.389-390.

which had also preoccupied regional observers, came to a head with the outbreak of war.[59] Having warned that the archduke's death should not serve as pretence for the abandonment of the 'Habsburg mission' of ensuring greater political freedom for non-Austrians and Hungarians, Seton-Watson had discarded all vestiges of his support for Austria-Hungary by August 1914.[60] '[F]rom now on the Great Serbian state is inevitable; and we must create it,' he confided in a letter to his wife on the same day Britain entered into the war. Trialism[61], 'the solution I have advocated for years', had been rendered 'dead' by what he deemed to be a combination of Hungarian nationalism and pan-Germanist militarism. To preserve South Slav identity and 'save the Diet of Agram [Zagreb]…Dalmatia, Bosnia, Croatia, Istria must be united to Serbia'.[62] By 1916, this perceived struggle for Yugoslav freedom was enmeshed in broader narratives concerning the Entente's prescribed moral duty to secure the rights of 'subject peoples' in Central and Eastern Europe. *The New Europe* journal, instituted by Seton-Watson and Steed in October 1916, became the platform for this movement, with the Czechoslovak secessionist Tomáš Masaryk's veneration of nationality and political self-determination through the portioning of Austria-Hungary as its ideological lynchpin.[63]

In contrast to their fellow anti-Habsburg Czechoslovak and Polish secessionists, representatives from the South Slavonic lands faced greater obstructions to their state project from wartime diplomatic machinations. As Dragovan Šepić notes, while the former could claim their homelands to be under historical foreign occupation, the latter faced a potential annexation based on the promise of extensive territorial acquisitions the Entente had already

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[59] See Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*.

[60] R.W. Seton-Watson, 'The Archduke Francis Ferdinand', *Contemporary Review*, No.800 (August 1914), pp.288-303.

[61] A political movement within Austria-Hungary that proposed the creation of a third state, encompassing most of the Habsburgs' South Slavonic territories, transforming the Monarchy into a tripartite political entity. It originated in elite Austrian and Croatian circles during the 1880s as a political reaction against Hungarian nationalism and came to enjoy the support of various influential figures including Franz Ferdinand.

[62] 'Letter to May Seton-Watson, 6th August 1914', SEW/3/3/3.

[63] *The New Europe*'s co-founders also included the archaeologist Ronald Burrows (who was instrumental in convincing Greece to enter the war as a British ally) and the Liberal MP Frederick Whyte with Masaryk as its main political consultant. Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, p.112. On the Entente's wider international efforts at anti-Habsburg propaganda, see Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

made to Italy in the secret 1915 Treaty of London. In order to countervail Italian claims, the JO needed to convince the British and French governments that its homeland represented an allied nation with indivisible cultural and political borders.[64]

Promoting and normalising the belief in a post-war Yugoslav state as an integral part of the British wartime mission thus became the cornerstone of the JO's efforts to legitimise their cause in the wider public sphere. In conjunction with pro-Serbian efforts, co-ordinated by Seton-Watson under the auspices of the SRF, Yugoslav propagandists stressed that their cause was interlinked with Entente war aims while seeking to capitalise on the public's immediate anxieties regarding Germany. Underlying propaganda messages were thus worked into a broader narrative emphasising Southern Slavs as a 'bulwark' against the German ambition to subjugate continental Europe.[65] Beginning in the nineteenth century, Austria-Hungary had used 'every means in her power' to 'compromise', 'defame', and 'crush' the Yugoslav idea by sowing 'mutual jealousies and conflict' between Southern Slavs. This was compounded by a growing subservience to German imperialism that not only made the Monarchy responsible for the war, but guilty of seeking to exterminate the Serbian nation 'as Germany's vassal state and pioneer'.[66] Heroic Serb peasant defiance had inspired the Entente intervention: 'In this way the Jugoslav problem became a European problem', with a Yugoslav union the only solution for resolving the war's central quandary (alongside the defeat of German militarism).[67]

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[64] The treaty stipulated that in exchange for entry into the war against Germany, Italy would receive various territorial acquisitions at the Monarchy's expense. These included the entire Austrian Littoral; nearly a third of Carniola; northern Dalmatia and the majority of its adjacent islands; and a protectorate over Albania. Incidentally, Montenegro and Serbia were also promised territory despite neither having been aware of the agreement. Dragovan Šepić, 'The Question of Yugoslav Union in 1918', *The Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.3, No.4 (October 1968), pp.35-36.

[65] Bogumil Vošnjak, *A Bulwark Against Germany: The Fight of the Slovenes, the Western Branch of the Jugoslavs, for National Existence*, trans. Fanny Copeland (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1917), pp.3-5; R.G.D. Laffan, *The Guardians of the Gate: Historical Lectures on the Serbs* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1918), p.89. See also Crawfurd Price, *Serbia's Part in The War, Vol I, Being the Political and Military Story of the Austro-Serbian Campaigns: The Rampart against Pan-Germanism* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1917).

[66] (JO), *The Southern Slav Library I: The Southern Slav Programme* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1915), p.12.

[67] Ibid., p.13.

Propaganda was careful to stress German desires to expand eastwards as the underlying cause of regional problems. In relating this to the peasants, both the JO and Serb government's representatives drew upon a convoluted mixture of overlapping narratives emphasising repression and resistance. Srdjan Tucić, an editor for the JO's regular news sheet, the *South Slav Bulletin*, defined the Second Reich and the Monarchy as the Ottomans' historical heirs. In contrast to the latter, Habsburg repression had been more seditious in attempting to render Southern Slavs into a race of slaves. Whereas Ottoman brutality 'steeled the hearts of the Slavs they oppressed…Austrian captivity has cankered them and made them effete'.[68] Across this propaganda narrative the peasant predominated as the embodiment of South Slavonic cultural consciousness and an emblem of sacrificial Christian martyrdom. Resistance to Ottoman rule was therefore categorised as a near-exclusive rural phenomenon promulgated by *hajduks*, peasant revolutionaries and those who had guarded the former Habsburg-Ottoman frontier.[69]

While Croat and Serb nationalist rhetoric had recurrently construed their countries as Christian Europe's 'bulwarks' or 'frontiers' against the spread of Islam, the war heralded a significant discursive shift in emphasis onto the Germanic powers. Tucić even framed their acts of aggression as an historical continuity with these powers, describing the region as a 'latter day *Prussian Islam*'.[70] Serbs and anti-Habsburg Southern Slavs had continued to fulfil their role in defending Christian Europe by opposing an Austria-Hungary 'that had strayed away from its European and Christian heritage' through its alleged embracement of pan-Germanism.[71] This stance was reiterated as the logical conclusion to Serbian history in Robin Laffan's *Guardians of the Gate* (1918) which characterised Serbia's current plight as the final stage of a great struggle, waged over generations to preserve its national spirit while formally serving as Europe's main line of defence against the Ottoman advance. This struggle, being

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[68] Srdjan Tucić, *The Slav Nations*, trans. Fanny S. Copeland (London; Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), p.144.
[69] 'Manifesto', *South Slav Bulletin* (November 1915), pp.6-9.
[70] Tucić, *The Slav Nations*, p.177.
[71] Robinson, 'Yugoslavism in the Early Twentieth Century', p.19.

of a spiritual and cultural as well as martial nature, had now arrived at its climax in the form of pan-Germanism, a statist rejection of the Christian ideals the Serb peasants had sacrificed their own nationhood to protect, which usurped the Ottomans as the 'menace' of Europe.[72]

A similar attempt at spiritual and moral vindication was promulgated by the Anglophile Bishop of Ohrid and Žiča, Nikolaj Velimirović, who arrived in Britain in 1915 on the pretext of providing religious instruction to refugee students.[73] Winning the backing of the Anglican ecclesiastical establishment, his sermons and lectures stressed the Southern Slavs' role in history as comparable to that of a grand religious mission, while also alluding to British social anxieties. Defining Serbia as 'Europe's America', the 1804 and 1815 uprisings were construed as a counterblast of the 'downtrodden' against a degenerative slide towards 'political nihilism'. This rhetoric flowed into a wider struggle that pitted the 'humble' against the 'unjust and brutal'. Playing to religious philosophical critiques of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'godless Superman', Velimirović presented the peasant as the embodiment of the pious and altruistic 'All-man'. While the Superman selfishly sought individualistic domination, the All-man represented the will of the collective, offering democratic equality and stability. A political union of Croats, Serbs and Slovenes was thus essential for cementing a South Slavonic democratic ideal. British Christians wishing to defeat the 'scientific perfidy' and 'atheistic brutality' of Berlin or the 'Turkish Nietzscheanism' of the Ottomans should therefore seek 'Jugoslavia's realisation'.[74]

This wartime mantle of linguistic and cultural unity even transcended the impasse of contemporary ideology. At the third Zimmerwald Conference in Stockholm, Bosnian and Croat delegates argued the case for Yugoslav unity along much the same lines as the JO. From a Marxist perspective, it was argued, the economic potential of the Habsburgs' South Slavonic provinces had been squandered since the Monarchy had exploited them like

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[72] Laffan, *The Guardians of the* Gate, pp.167-182.

[73] Jovan Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), pp.24-28.

[74] Nicholas Velimirović, *The Soul of Serbia* (London: The Faith Press at the Faith House, 1916), pp.18-20, 78-81.

'African colonies'. Forty years of 'civilisatory activity' had failed to resolve widespread peasant illiteracy and impoverishment. Such activity equated to little more than a safeguarding of feudal privileges and capitalist exploitation by a 'surplus of squires and priests'.[75] British pundits also attempted to present these sentiments as encompassing Britain's own political spectrum. Writing in *The New Europe* at the end of 1916, the pro-war 'veteran of English Socialism', Henry Hyndman, stressed that Europe could never achieve universal human rights without the Monarchy's partition. However, Hyndman caveated this by stating that the call for Austria-Hungary's partition 'lays us open to the charge of hypocrisy', while London denied Home Rule to Ireland and India.[76] Advocates for other national groups also attempted to harness their own narratives of victimhood and repression within the contemporary 'prison of the nations'.[77]

However, the campaign's effectiveness in reaching a more general audience ultimately relied on the extensive public presence that the JO, Serbs and their pro-Yugoslav British sympathisers were able to build, notably in 1915 and 1916. As demonstrated by organised opinion's faltering efforts in the Edwardian era, movements for overseas political change had been at a disadvantage in attempting to sustain themselves in the public sphere. In parallel with the humanitarian efforts, the Yugoslav message benefitted from the First World War's importance through its ability to disseminate these basic messages via Britain's wartime information channels. *The New Europe*, for instance, while only managing to achieve a circulation of 5,000 as its height, established itself as wartime Britain's recognised authoritative voice in continental affairs with many of its regular contributors already holding influential posts in the FO. Consequently, information presented in the journal filtered

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[75] Mijo Radešević & Franjo Markić, *Memorandum: Addressed by the Jugoslav Socialists to the International Socialist Peace Conference in Stockholm* (London: Jugoslav Workman's Association, 1917), pp.3-11.

[76] H.M. Hyndman, 'British Policy and the Rights of the People', *The New Europe*, Vol.1, No.2 (December 1916), pp.329-334.

[77] The Anglo-Polish historian, Lewis Namier, applied a similar standard in comparing Czech Bohemia to Serbia as societies permeated by 'enlightened' peasant values and a shared 'love of freedom'. As the Serbs preserved their identity through protracted struggle, so the Czechs, by developing distinctive literary and intellectual traditions, safeguarded theirs against an insidious 'Germanization'. Namier insisted that this maintenance of Slavonic identity within the Dual Monarchy even held strategic significance for the Entente, arguing that a 'Czech-wedge' had historically frustrated the creation of a German-Hungarian dominated 'Mitteleuropa'. Lewis B. Namier, *The Case for Bohemia* (London: The Czech National Alliance in Great Britain, 1917), pp.9-10.

through into Britain's more mainstream propaganda channels. The ability to disseminate information was further assisted by the figure of Steed who assisted Seton-Watson in co-ordinating the spread of pro-Yugoslav propaganda. Steed's capacity as *The Times* foreign affairs editor granted him regular access to its powerful proprietor, Viscount Northcliffe (Alfred Harmsworth). Although possessing little knowledge of regional affairs, Northcliffe's profound anti-Germanism was channelled towards a pro-Serb, and by extension pro-Yugoslav, stance in his more widely-read publication, the *Daily Mail*. [78] In this manner, wartime representations of the South Slavs acquired the potential to reach a genuinely mass audience, albeit as a point of minor interest.

Alongside the ability to channel their message to the wider social sphere through the press, spectacle and public visibility were of equal, if not greater, importance. Meštrović's 1915 *Kosovo* exhibition, while attracting a relatively exclusive audience, was nevertheless effective in serving as a concrete reference point from which the wider public could derive an understanding of what was presented as Yugoslavism's core philosophy. While basing itself on a confused blend of national mythologies (indicated by the title), the exhibition accentuated similar themes of peasant sacrifice and guardianship, yet presented them as quintessential 'Yugoslav' values inherent to all Southern Slavs. This depiction also contravened the idea of the 'Serbian soldier' as Yugoslavism's symbolic essence, focusing instead on racially pacifistic and 'civilising capacities' with authentically peasant roots.[79] The positive critical response to *Kosovo* was itself informed by pre-existing social tensions which the war had served to amplify. Arnold Toynbee, echoing Scott-James's earlier pronouncements, commented that the 'primitive' traditions and rural culture presented in

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[78] Its nearest equivalent was the *Near East* that ostensibly dealt with Middle Eastern affairs but frequently covered the Balkans. Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary*, p.188.

[79] Elizabeth Clegg, 'Meštrović, England and the Great War', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.144, No.1197 (December 2002), p.745.

Meštrović's work were an important contribution to Western civilisation at a time when belief in modernity as a force for human progress was under threat from German militarism.[80]

It was, however, the work of British Serbophiles and pro-Serbian organisations – notably the 'Kossovo Day Committee' – formed under Inglis, with Seton-Watson as secretary and the Berrys, Paget, Stobart and Velimirović as cultural advisors that emerged as the focal point for such propaganda from 1916 to 1917. Blurring humanitarian sermonising with political lobbying, the Committee disseminated Yugoslavist literature and organised a range of events aimed at fostering a political dimension to popular Anglo-Serbian solidarity. A specialised bookshop in London sold Serbian literature, with Seton-Watson estimating that over 30,000 copies of the Serbian national anthem had been purchased.[81] Central to the Committee's strategy, however, were the week-long celebrations focused on *Vidovdan* in 1916. Across some 12,000 schools, children were taught peasant folk songs and introduced to a mythologised appropriation of Serbian history in the form of a 'school address' – composed by Seton-Watson – after which they were instructed to write essays. *Vidovdan* itself drew extensive coverage in the national and local press (with over 400 articles covering the Committee's activities alone) while a series of public processions and enthusiastic religious observance eulogised Serbia's aspirations as indicative of a new international moral vision being championed by Britain. This message was further disseminated to a mass audience through cinema and public events; the *Punch* cartoon, 'Heroic Serbia', captured its essence, equating the medieval Serb kingdom's defeat by the invading Ottomans in 1389 to its stand against the Central Powers in 1915. It was subsequently reproduced and displayed in public spaces around the country throughout the summer of 1916.[82]

The sudden kindling in public fascination for Serb and Kosovan history was seized upon as evidence of a shared political significance among other South Slavs.[83] As with

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[80] Ibid., pp.745-746. See also Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
[81] 'Letter to Milenko Vesnić, 17th July 1916', SEW 3/3/3.
[82] Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary*, pp.76-77.
[83] Robinson, 'Yugoslavism in the Early Twentieth Century', p.19.

Meštrović's exhibition, the JO representative Bogumil Vošnjak, through a confused blend of overlapping romantic narratives, elaborated on medieval Serbia's 'sacrifice' as a mnemonic for a South Slavonic desire for political unity, accentuating the fact that Bosnian and Croat armies had also fought at Kosovo. Since both these states had been subsequently conquered by a 'German Empire', Kosovo served as the historical blueprint for collective South Slavonic suffering at the hands of alien cultures.[84] In conjunction with Velimirović, the JO repeatedly challenged the British to prove their claim to a superior moral virtue by intervening on behalf of Serbia and the Southern Slavonic peasants living under Habsburg domination. 'What we people without home wish to see,' pronounced Vošnjak, 'is the stern, imperturbable will of English public opinion to destroy this despair of an Empire [Austria-Hungary].'[85] Identifiable similarities in Serb, Croat and Slovene rural traditions (and even claimed comparisons with Britain) were also accentuated as evidence of a dormant national consciousness with the peasantry's naturally 'democratic instincts' repressed by the Austrians' and Hungarians' 'autocratic tendencies'.[86]

Discursive portraiture of repressed peasants also became a shared reality between the Habsburg and former Ottoman territories as evidence of a tradition of systematic persecution by outsiders.[87] In substance, however, these appeals were ancillary to the more contemporary issue of Italian irredentism. The JO's own literature made no secret of the potential fate awaiting those Southern Slavs inhabiting areas claimed by Italy, warning the British public that the fulfilment of these claims would represent a historical betrayal by perpetuating the

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[84] Bogumil Vošnjak, *Jugoslav Nationalism: Three Lectures* (London: Polsue Limited, 1916), p.13.

[85] Ibid., p.23.

[86] Bogumil Vošnjak, a leading Slovene representative in the JO, even referenced the medieval Slavonic principality of Carantania – claimed to be a Slovene ancestral homeland – as the progenitor of these democratic peasant traditions. Hereditary monarchy, a concept reviled as 'foreign and unnatural' to Carantania's 'honest peasant soul', had been shunned in favour of directly electing the reigning dukes, in ceremonies reminiscent of medieval Scotland. (JO), *The Southern Slav Library I*, pp.5-6; Bogumil Vošnjak, *A Chapter of the Old Slovenian Democracy* (London: J. Murray, 1917), pp.8-9.

[87] (JO), *The Southern Slav Library VI: Political and Social Conditions in Slovene Lands: Carniola, Carinthia, Illyria and Styria* (London: The Near East, 1916), pp.16-18.

cycle of South Slavonic victimhood.[88] Pro-Yugoslav British voices also warned of the repercussions facing Dalmatia's Slavonic peasantry if London continued to treat their homeland as 'disposable' in its dealings with Italy.[89]

The success of the 1916 *Vidovdan* commemorations also drew positive commentary from British pundits who interpreted them as a display of spiritual and moral humility, only conceivable in a pre-industrial society. The most impassioned of these plaudits was articulated by G.K. Chesterton in an opinion piece for the *Daily News* in which he conceptualised the Serbian national idea as the model for the ideal nation, derived from people's collective memory, specifically of past tragedy. Amalgamating this rhetoric with his own personal belief in distributism[90], Chesterton expounded that this ideal could only be inherent in societies structured around agricultural smallholdings.[91] Against 'that ancient ideal…Serbia must be called the eldest brother of the Alliance [Entente]':

> We must be content to tell the Prussian, well knowing that he will not understand us, that we are fighting to give him a Kosovo Day to make a man of him, that he may someday be as civilised as a Serbian peasant…the chief fruit of this philosophy is the national idea itself, the sacramental sense of boundary, the basis in an almost religious sense of agriculture, the idea of having a home upon this earth, which the Arab armies out of the deserts can hardly even be said to have violated, having never begun to understand.[92]

This final intellectual usurping of any pejorative vestiges from the peasantry's image fell in tandem with the revision of recent Serb history. Seton-Watson's school address, for example, stated that following the deaths of the last two Obrenović rulers (agents to Germany's 'baggage porter', Austria-Hungary), King Petar's reign marked 'the Serbian

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[88] As further details of the Treaty of London were leaked into the public sphere, the JO even sought to reassure Italy that 'her justified supremacy in the Adriatic' would be safeguarded by a large anti-German state on its eastern shore. *South Slav Bulletin*, No.12 (August 1916), p.1.

[89] 'Adriatic Imperialism', *The New Europe*, Vol.1, No.2 (October 1916), p.49.

[90] A Christian economic ideology derived from Catholic social teachings, and claimed to exist in opposition to both capitalism and socialism. Distributionist theory classifies property ownership as a fundamental human right while arguing that the means of production should be spread as broadly as possible across the social spectrum, allowing individuals and families to work for themselves rather than others.

[91] G.K. Chesterton, 'This Thing Called a Nation: The Spiritual Issue of the War' (reprinted from the *Daily News*), in *The Lay of Kosovo: History and Poetry on Serbia's Past and Present* (London: The Kosovo Day Committee, 1917), p.18.

[92] Ibid., pp.32-35.

national revival'.[93] This was granted further validation by his conduct in 1914 and 1915: humbly releasing his men from their oath of loyalty to him in 1914, only for them to 'unanimously' renew it, was presented as indicative of the 'brotherhood' that existed between king and peasant-soldier. Prince Aleksandar received praise along much the same lines; acts of selflessness, such as refusing to be evacuated over other refugees at Durrës despite having recently undergone emergency surgery, were emphasised as signs of the noble qualities of a heroic 'warrior-king'.[94] Vošnjak linked his decision to retreat across Albania as harking back to that of his predecessors at Kosovo, choosing 'exile, poverty, and death' offering a basis for Serbia's 'national resurrection' and with it Yugoslavia's 'national unity.'[95] The crown prince also invited praise as a post-war unitary figure. 'The prince is the apostle of progress as well as a knight paladin,' commented Askew. An eagerness to 'develop the capabilities of his land' by improving agriculture appeared as a post-war remedy to the Habsburgs' uneven development of their own South Slavonic territories.[96] *Punch*'s widely syndicated 'Heroic Serbia' represented this process's wartime apogee by casting the prince as the embodiment of Serbian martial resistance, presenting the public with a point of individual reference onto which these collective ideals could be projected.

By 1917, the wartime propaganda campaign's efforts in disseminating its message to the wider public had exposed its ingrained tensions. The JO's Croat members complained of 'Orthodox exclusivism' in how propaganda conflated Yugoslavism with Serbian national interests.[97] The post-war ramifications this could entail for the rest of the independent and non-Habsburg Balkans were another point of contention. In a report for the SRF's Montenegrin counterpart, also established in 1914, its most active member, the educationist Alexander Devine, voiced concerns that Montenegrin and Serb refugees were being treated as

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[93] R.W. Seton-Watson, *Serbia: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. A School* Address (London: Vacher & Sons, 1916), pp.13-16.
[94] Ibid., pp.22-23.
[95] Vošnjak, *Jugoslav Nationalism*, p.7.
[96] Askew, *The Stricken Land*, p.353.
[97] Gale Stokes, 'The Role of the Yugoslav Committee in the Formation of Yugoslavia', in Dimitrije Djordjević (ed.), *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918* (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Books, 1980), p.55.

'one and the same' by the French authorities for suspected political reasons.[98] As the war progressed, Devine's apprehensions only increased over Montenegro's subordination to Serbia in the war's propaganda narrative:

> The Serbian propagandists are so active and avail themselves of funerals and the fashionable columns in the *Morning Post* at every possible occasion that turns up to advertise themselves. I don't mind that, but I do mind their doing so to the detriment of their sister country.[99]

Neither was the campaign's apparent success both within and outside the contextual parameters of the Home Front's public sphere entirely uncontested. The FO was initially wary of calls for the Monarchy's partition, viewing Seton-Watson's continued efforts to influence foreign policy-making by shaping public attitudes with the same mixture of irritation and suspicion through which officialdom had come to perceive organised opinion in general. The potential dangers of this non-governmental interference even resulted in his activities being temporarily silenced in 1917 when he was drafted into the RAMC as a hospital orderly. Nevertheless, the disruption his removal created for the propaganda campaign belied its already diminishing public presence even before the end of the war.[100] Indeed, the 1916 *Vidovdan* commemorations indicated the extent to which even carefully orchestrated emotive propaganda could sustain popular interest in the South Slavonic cause. Subsequent celebrations organised in 1917 and 1918 failed to attract any significant interest as national attention gravitated towards achieving a resolution on the Western Front.[101]

Anti-Serb or Radical elements of organised opinion also endeavoured to voice their opposition, with Brailsford and Durham vociferously protesting to *The Manchester Guardian* and other sceptical publications, while Buxton and Bourchier warned of Serbia's post-war

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[98] 'Abridged Report by Mr. Alex Devine, pp.2-3; 8-9', *Viscount Gladstone Papers Vol.XXX 1916-1926*, BL Western Manuscripts: Add MS 46014.
[99] 'Letter to Herbert Gladstone, 2nd June 1917', *Viscount Gladstone Papers Vol.XXX 1916-1926*, BL Western Manuscripts: Add MS 46014.
[100] 'Letter to F.C.J. Hearnshaw, 28th March 1917' SEW/3/2/7; Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, pp.197-198.
[101] Anticipating little or no public interest, the 1918 commemorations were used as a pretext to commemorate Inglis, who had died in November 1917 from cancer. Funds raised by the event were used to establish an honouree Chair in Medicine at the University of Belgrade. Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary*, pp.77-78.

aggrandisement creating further instability.[102] The isolation in which these efforts at producing a counter-narrative appeared exposed not only an inability to resonate with the febrile wartime atmosphere but also the rarefied circumstances in which representation of the South Slavonic Balkans occurred, presaging a resumption in its continued drift from the public consciousness after 1918.

Conclusion

For Yugoslavia's British and South Slav advocates, the outbreak of the First World War had occurred at the most opportune moment. By 1914, the South Slavonic peasants' status as victims had effectively crystallised while, in contrast to the Edwardian era, wartime Britain provided arguably the only instance in which the domestic context was fully conducive to promoting a form of popular engagement. Those seeking to further humanitarian or political aims found in the British wartime propaganda narrative a pliable rhetorical mechanism which could be used to shape the resolution of the South Slavonic peasantry's victimhood, achieving wider resonance with the public's need for moral vindication. Through this, representations of the peasant crossed the imaginative threshold from a simple analogy on the shortcomings of modern industrial society, to a symbolic justification for British regional intervention in keeping with a broader wartime mission. The singular importance of this wartime context was the extent to which it granted South Slav actors a measure of agency in shaping British perceptions. As the activities of Meštrović and Velimirović reveal, the atmosphere of wartime propaganda was itself a facilitator for direct channels of popular intercultural engagement.[103]

Nevertheless, the adoption of the peasant as an object of moral intervention, based on the established precedence of a culturally noble rural underclass victimised by an amoral iteration of modernity, was illustrative of the extent to which such developments relied on the

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[102] Noel & Charles Roden Buxton, *The War and the Balkans*, 2nd edn (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1915), p.9; Grogan, *The Life of J.D. Bourchier*, pp.163-166; Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary*, p.197.
[103] Robinson, 'Yugoslavism in the Early Twentieth Century', pp.23-24.

specific context of the period for continuity. As discussed, even before December 1918, a fixation on victimhood had revealed limited possibilities for sustaining an acute level of public empathy, or for promoting closer cultural ties to the region once the motif around which it was maintained was revised.

Not only did Yugoslavia's formation provide a logical conclusion to what had developed as the popular understanding of the South Slavonic question, it ended over a century of debate on Britain's geopolitical stake in the region. This sense of apparent finality was further cemented in 1919 with the vestiges of the Eastern Question having been ostensibly resolved: the war had left the Ottoman Empire moribund while the Entente's victory in Macedonia had brought about Bulgaria's compliance. In the wider international context, concerns that the newly-proclaimed Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic might continue the expansionist policies of its imperial predecessor had dissipated with the outbreak of civil war in November 1917. For the public, the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the expunging of Berlin's influence in the region appeared to bring closure to the victimhood narrative, with Southern Slavs having seemingly triumphed in liberating a repressed peasantry from malicious external hegemonies.[104] The prospect of further repression in Adriatic coastal areas annexed by Italy – or within the new South Slavonic kingdom itself – no longer appeared as a British concern.[105]

In reflecting on the progression of popular perceptions in the twentieth century, 1900 to 1918 was, curiously, almost self-contained: by virtue of an alignment of changing social attitudes and historical occurrences, a people who previously existed at the periphery of imaginative geography had come to orbit the debate on what constituted British identity. The 1916 *Vidovdan* commemorations were, arguably, the identifiable culmination and full realisation of this representative trajectory that had brought a non-pejorative image of the South Slavs to the fore of British imaginative geography, linked to a popular discourse

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[104] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.4.
[105] Čedomir Antić, *Neizabrana Sabezinca: Srbija i Velika Britanija u prvom svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2012), p.495.

refashioned irrevocably by the war. Ultimately, however, the extent to which this shift managed to overturn popular archetypes and images was debatable, further illustrating that any change was mitigated by circumstance and inherent superficiality.

Chapter 6. Representing the Peasants as Yugoslavs after 1918

Although recent scholarship on pre-Socialist Yugoslavian statehood has produced insightful and original research on its political and social divisions, imagological historiography has broadly focused on overarching themes deemed generally applicable to the entire Balkans.[1] Following the First World War, the Balkans appeared to recede rapidly from the public sphere alongside a precipitous decline in British regional engagement. Michail interprets this as indicative of a broader theme of 'interwar disengagement' stemming from declining press coverage, government aversion to overseas engagements, and British disenchantment with Balkan politics after 1918.[2] By the 1930s, even imaginative geography had reverted back to something resembling the late nineteenth century, characterising southeast Europe as a space devoid of historical significance that novelists and film-makers could appropriate as a setting for escapist entertainment.[3]

However, imagological historiography has acknowledged that this did not negate the influence of recent socio-political and cultural developments. Among vague clichés alluding to regional backwardness, the Balkans now provided a setting in which contemporary political and social trends could also be examined and critiqued, as shown in Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train*.[4] This was equally evident in travel literature which, in the absence of non-fictionalised coverage by most other media, reappeared as the most readily accessible source of contemporary information available to the public. Here too, as Hammond maintains, this new phase of cultural 'othering' deviated from the Victorian era in so far as it now essentialised the Balkans as semi-Arcadian in its 'comprehensible' village social structures and 'colourful' aesthetics; a stark contrast to the realities of life in industrialised Europe.[5]

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[1] See for example, Christian Axboe Nielsen, *Making Yugoslavs: Identity in King Aleksandar's Yugoslavia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014); John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building 1903-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Pieter Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia: Education, Yugoslavism and the Balkans before World War II* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

[2] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.19-20.

[3] Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, pp.101-102.

[4] Ibid., pp.104-111; Kostova, *Tales*, p.197.

[5] Hammond, 'Escape from Decadence', pp.146-148; Idem, *British Literature and the Balkans*, pp.180-191.

In the case of Southern Slav representations, interwar authors' impressions took a more exaggerated form than those of their Edwardian predecessors, increasingly predicated on the discursive basis that Britain was now trapped in a state of perpetual decline. Political extremism and heightened socioeconomic unrest marked the timbre of this period; riven by a pervasively morbid cynicism, Western civilisation was perceived to be entering a stage of 'terminal crises'.[6] Galvanised by this post-war disenchantment, British authors narrated overseas exploits in what was now regarded as a modernist effort to rectify the misrepresentations of their disingenuous Victorian forebears; a trend encapsulated most fully in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*.[7] Although initially conceived over three separate trips to Yugoslavia from 1936 to 1938, her two-volume account did not reach publication until the height of the London Blitz in 1941, an appropriate time for West to proffer the book as an analogy of Europe's civilisational decline. The agrarian world of the South Slavs not only provided relief from an ailing Britain afflicted by cultural 'idiocy', but offered insight into the essence of humanity: 'Violence was indeed all I knew of the Balkans, all I knew of the South Slavs […] I had come to Yugoslavia because I knew that the past had made the present and I want to see how the process works.'[8]

Despite its lasting success as one of the few early twentieth-century Balkan travelogues still in circulation during the 1990s, the actual context of *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*'s initial publication – during a national crisis rather than the period in which it was set – is telling of an overall failure to reach wider audiences before 1939. Similarly, while the nascent growth of British tourism to Yugoslavia during the 1930s implied the stirrings of a new form of engagement, this was again beyond the majority of most Britons.[9]

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[6] W.D. Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture, & Decline in Britain, 1750-1990* (London: Routledge, 2001 [1994]), pp.11-12; Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) p.29. Revisionist analysis of interwar British history has tended to offer a more mixed picture. See for example, John Stevenson & Chris Cook, *The Slump: Britain in the Great Depression* (London: Routledge, 2013 [1977]).
[7] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, p.158.
[8] West, *Black Lamb, Vol.1*, pp.53-54; Allcock, 'Constructing the Balkans', pp.237-238; Marina MacKay, *Modernism and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.35.
[9] See Hannes Grandits & Karin Taylor (eds.), *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010).

This chapter will illustrate the historical uniqueness of the period of 1900 to 1918 in engendering a degree of intercultural and ideological engagement which the preceding and subsequent decades had failed to capture. Of particular note was the corrosion and disappearance of much of the domestic infrastructure that had facilitated this process, reflecting continuing social change in Britain itself. Although tourism and socio-political anxieties prompted a revival in cultural interest that centred on the figure of the peasant in the 1930s, this was almost entirely a preserve of the elite. Moreover, the failure to engender public interest was accompanied by the recognition that even South Slavonic peasant society appeared to be finally succumbing to the encroachment of modernity.

The New Peripheries

In considering the domestic analogies and discursive recalibration of British identity that had afforded the South Slavonic peasantry a place in British public sympathies in the 1910s, the context of the interwar decades ostensibly promised continuity. Social tensions which stemmed from economic stagnation and unresolved levels of unemployment echoed the domestic circumstances which had fuelled many of the popular allegorical connections. Like the pre-war labour unrest, these anxieties were granted vindication in the form of mass social demonstrations such as the 1926 General Strike or the 1930s Hunger Marches. The late Victorian and Edwardian public proclivity for rural nostalgia also endured with developments in the interwar years, precipitating far higher levels of interpenetration between town and country. Villages, which had previously appeared threatened with extinction, were repopulated by an influx of former city dwellers: 'rural industries' were retooled for urban consumption as 'local crafts' and town planners began distinguishing areas of countryside from urban sprawl as a social amenity for working-class neighbourhoods.[10] Moreover, Britain's artistic and

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[10] Alun Howkins, 'Death and Rebirth? English Rural Society, 1920-1940', in in Brassley, Burchardt & Thompson (eds.), *The English Countryside Between the Wars*, pp.21-24; Christopher Bailey, 'Rural Industries and the Image of the Countryside', in, Ibid., pp.145-150.

intellectual climate remained deeply influenced by the still active pre-war pastoralist movement with cultural and educational movements predicting 'a new rural civilisation' rising to usurp the decadent urban one.[11]

Despite this cultural continuity and the press's political fixation on the conclusion of the First World War, the wave of apathy that had manifested in the early 1910s, already in evidence again by 1917, reasserted itself with a wider public extrication from foreign affairs. The region's return to obscurity was itself the logical outcome of wartime success. The collapse of Central and Eastern Europe's imperial hegemons and the redrawing of borders at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference were unlikely to have engendered much opposition to the 'widespread acceptance that Balkan liberationist movements had reached the end of their road'.[12] Post-war rhetoric's accentuation of the Southern Slavs as heroic architects of their own fate magnified these assumptions, quelling any apparent need for further British intervention.[13] This proved detrimental to the efforts of those still sequestered in the region, however; travelling through southern Yugoslavia as an envoy for the Red Cross in the summer of 1919, Stobart warned that a sudden withdrawal of wartime aid had resulted in rates of typhus and other diseases (aggravated by the 1918 influenza pandemic) returning to levels comparable to 1915.[14]

Domestically, the war's aftermath had removed most of the discursive mechanisms on which organised and informed opinion had previously relied in order to maintain their presence in the public sphere. Experts now struggled simply to present their views as the number of discursive platforms, including *The New Europe*, declined.[15] By 1920, Seton-Watson admitted in a letter to Steed that the journal's impending liquidation was the logical outcome of 'deadened public opinion'. Indeed, in the face of such disinterest, he predicted that private

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[11] Brassley, Burchardt, & Thompson, 'Conclusion', in ibid., p.239.

[12] Dilks, 'Public Opinion and Foreign Policy', *Collection de l'École française de Rome*, Vol.54, No.2 (1981), p.57, pp.68-69; Finney, 'Raising Frankenstein', p.321; Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe*, pp.1-3; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.20.

[13] F.S. Copeland, 'Who are the Yugoslavs', *The Balkan Review*, Vol.1, No.1 (February 1919), pp.32-33; M.R. Vesnitch, 'The Aspirations of Serbia', *The Balkan Review*, Vol.1, No.2 (March 1919), pp.265-268.

[14] M.A. St. Clair Stobart, 'Peace Celebrations and Serbia', *The Times*, 23rd August 1919, p.6.

[15] Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, pp.408-411.

individuals would be 'less and less likely to embark unaided upon such a venture as *The New Europe*', as they had done so before the war.[16] The dissolution, or fragmentation, of these channels was further exacerbated by the fact that the war had negated or stripped away much of the domestic context for which representations of the South Slavonic peasantry had served as an allegorical, or analogical, vehicle. For example, in August 1914, the Liberal-led Land Campaign had 'simply fizzled out. Ending not with a bang but a whimper' when the government suspended it before any agreements were reached. Despite Buxton's subsequent attempts to revive it in his capacity as Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries in both of the interwar Labour governments, the financial crisis of 1931 left it moribund as a political issue.[17]

The rapid surge in disengagement was compounded by the obvious disparities in the idealistic expectations of Yugoslavia as the culmination of the Balkan liberationist struggles, fostered by wartime propaganda and the post-war realities. Institutional corruption, official incompetence, economic disparities and antagonistic nationalist politics generated both instability inside the new kingdom, increasing British cultural disenchantment.[18] Politically, too, the FO judged Yugoslavia's value as being primarily strategic, comprising a *cordon sanitaire* against the Soviet Union as part of France's 'Little Entente' that echoed its stance on Serbia in the early-nineteenth century.[19] Finney and Miklós Lojkó regard this as characteristic of the process of diplomatic, as well as cultural, disengagement that assuaged British attempts to re-engage in the late 1930s. Whitehall's earlier misguided belief that traditional diplomacy was more effective than economic intervention and 'moral' influence depreciated its ability to later cultivate regional opposition to Nazi Germany.[20] This was reflected on the ground through

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[16] By 1920, Seton-Watson complained of having to finance the paper's printing, editing and circulation costs himself, estimating to 'have lost £7,500 [the equivalent of £234,000 today] on this enterprise'. 'Letter to Wickham Steed, 8th October 1920', SEW/17/26/6; R.W. Seton-Watson, 'A Farewell Survey', *The New Europe*, Vol.17, No.2 (December 1920), p.52.

[17] F.M.L. Thompson, 'Epilogue: The Strange Death of the English Land Question' in Cragoe & Readman (eds.), *The Land Question*, pp.259-267.

[18] See for example, Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

[19] Dragan Bakić, '"Must Will Peace": The British Brokering of "Central European" and "Balkan Locarno", 1925-9', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.48, No.1 (January 2013), p.26.

[20] Finney, 'Raising Frankenstein', p.319; Lojkó, *Meddling in Middle Europe*, pp.44-45.

the failure of Anglophile institutions, such as the Anglo-American-Yugoslav Club or the Anglophone expatriate newspaper, the *South Slav Herald* to foster economic and cultural ties.[21]

Even committed exponents of national causes whose aims had been bolstered by the febrile atmosphere of the British Home Front, found themselves publically, and often professionally, marginalised. This alienation was exacerbated by death, financial difficulties or growing introversion, characterised by acrimonious and hermetic academic disputes over historical culpability for the First World War's outbreak and European instability, resulting in the majority abandoning either the Balkans or the public sphere entirely.[22] However, the South Slavonic Balkans' disappearance as a subject of socio-political engagement after 1918 did not merit a complete abandonment of engagement through literary and scientific depictions of rural communities. Indeed, as with the 1910s, the latter decade of Europe's interbellum period was itself marked by a brief revival in cultural and scientific interest. As West's account would later demonstrate, the flurry of artistic, literary and scientific representations this produced were anything but divorced from the idiom of popular allegory. Conversely, what would arguably become the twentieth century's most influential work of English-language Balkan travel writing emerged from within one of its most demonstrably elitist contexts. Whereas the peasantry's shifting image in the Edwardian and wartime periods resulted from a process of engagement that sought to form parallels with social issues which resonated with wider British society, this interwar revival in cultural interest resulted from the growth in British overseas tourism.

Until the 1930s, the South Slavonic lands had still exuded the appearance of remoteness as part of a Germano-Italian cultural sphere where Britons had limited purchase, even as travellers. However, by the late 1930s, this veneer of inaccessibility had faded. In 1919,

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[21] It was noted in 1939 that most of the club's members used it as a social venue and were not especially interested in learning about Britain. Similarly, in early 1939, the *Herald* reported that Britain's and France's failure to fill the Great Power vacuum after 1918 meant the kingdom had grown almost entirely dependent on the Third Reich for its exports. 'Reich's Overwhelming Role in Yugoslav Economy', *South Slav Herald*, 16th January-16th February 1939, p.8; Stefanidis, *Substitute for Power*, p.245; Antić, *Neizabrana Sabezinca*, p.496.
[22] Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.127-134; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.95-96.

Yugoslavia's delegation to Paris had succeeded in retaining most of the Dalmatian coast; one of the few Balkan enclaves with an established history of international tourism.[23] While an 'enduring genre' of Balkan travel literature proliferated in Orientalist idioms of 'quaintness' and picturesque poverty, it also revealed Yugoslavia to be a promising new holiday destination.[24] Travel companies were equally keen to promote the kingdom as a land 'rich in spas', 'new hotels', outdoor activities, historical architecture and picturesque remoteness. Additionally, itinerant scholars were presented with opportunities to pursue their anthropological interests, as companies also promised access to 'traditional festivals' and 'authentic cultural encounters' in more remote rural districts.[25]

This persistent ideal of rural society as representative of an organic national character remained widespread in travel literature, which still characterised the Balkans 'as the Volksmuseum of Europe'.[26] Following the war, former volunteers, campaigners and even BSF veterans published a wave of peasant poetry, songs and folk stories collected and transcribed during the Balkans campaign.[27] The association of modernity with disillusionment also saw folklorism and popular anthropology reach their apex, further fuelling enthusiasm for 'authentic' traditional cultures. Throughout the 1930s, a coterie of academics and enthusiasts, such as Lodge and the *Le Play Society* – a research organisation dedicated to geographical and sociological fieldwork overseas – departed for the region to conduct their own research on village societies.[28] At a less esoteric level, the romantic zeitgeist was perceivable through guidebooks and articles on Dalmatia which urged their readers to venture away from the hotels and modern amenities of the coast in search of spiritually healthier alternatives in the form of

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[23] See Dejan Djokić, *Nikola Pašić and Ante Trumbić: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* (London: Haus Publishing, 2010).
[24] John K.Walton, 'Preface: Some Context for Yugoslav Tourism History', in Grandits & Taylor, *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side*, p.xiv.
[25] Ibid., pp.xv-xvii.
[26] Todorova, *Imagining*, p.63.
[27] See for example, Ellen Chivers Davies, *Tales of Serbian Life* (London: G. Harrap, 1919); Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.139.
[28] Richard Clarke & Marija Anteric, '(British) Anthropological Tourism in Slovenia 1932-2007', *Anthropological Notebooks - Društvo antropologov Slovenije*, Vol.15, No.1 (2009), p.3. See also Olive Lodge, *Peasant Life in Yugoslavia* (London: Seeley, Service & Co., 1941).

rural hospitality and rustic country inns. Such efforts to convince British visitors to explore the hinterlands were furthered by the inclusion of introductory language guides, often accompanied by warnings of difficulties in communication outside the main urban centres.[29]

The late 1930s' vogue for the Eastern Adriatic could, in part, be attributed to the changing image of the region in popular fiction. Ann Bridge, who visited Dalmatia in 1930, was later credited with having increased popular British interest through the success of her romantic novel *Illyrian Spring*. Bridge's emphasis on the notion of remoteness as a romantic cultural palliative for contemporary anxieties was reinforced in Ethel White's *The Wheel Spins*, albeit to a far lesser extent.[30] Literary endorsement, coupled with promotion by travel companies, soon undermined Dalmatia's projected image as an undiscovered European Arcadia; Dubrovnik alone recorded over 10,000 British visitors annually from 1936 to 1938.[31] Romance, difference and cheapness became the promotional hallmarks of the Yugoslav government's central tourist agency Putnik, founded in 1923 and boasting a branch in London by 1939. Pitched 'to that vast mass of middle-class people who are in need of a real change but must watch the cost', Yugoslavia's exhaustive list of romantic selling-points also included 'picturesque costumes and interesting customs'.[32]

This targeting of a specific social group, even one under financial constraints, was telling of the exclusivity that now surrounded perceptions of the South Slavs. Rather than being seen as a people whose democratic virtues made them the moral counterparts of the British, they were something to be encountered by the minority whom were able to invest in such a luxury. Furthermore, efforts to encourage these tourists to engage with inland communities

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[29] See for example Oona H. Ball, *Dalmatia* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932); Grace Mary Ellison, *Yugoslavia: A New Country and its People* (London: John Lane, 1933); Muriel Innes Currey, *Yugoslavia: A Guide Book approved by the Official Tourist Department for Yugoslavia* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1939).
[30] See Ann Bridge, *Illyrian Spring* (London: Daunt Books, 2012 [1935]); Ethel Lina White, *The Wheel Spins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955 [1936]).
[31] John B. Allcock, 'The Historical Development of Tourism in Yugoslavia to 1945', in John B. Allcock & Joan Counihan, *The Studies in the History of Tourism in Yugoslavia* (Bradford: University of Bradford, 1989), pp.13-19.
[32] Quoted in Walton, 'Preface', in Grandits and Taylor (eds.), *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side*, p.xvi; 'Where Shopping is Easy on the Purse', *South Slav Herald*, January-February 1939, p.5.

revealed the limitations of this elitist aim. The process and dynamics of interactions through mainstream tourism were themselves constrained by the extreme unfamiliarity with the traditional power relations present in familiar sites such as Dubrovnik or Zadar. Anecdotes concerning discomfort, poor hygiene, the embarrassment of communication difficulties and a general unfamiliarity with the hinterlands served to subconsciously define itineraries around a distinguishable 'tourist zone', bordered by unknowable rural peripheries.[33] The failure of Bridge's and White's depicted heroines to converse with inland rural dwellers also reinforced these impressions of acute 'impotence' and 'vexation and powerlessness' that discouraged Britons from venturing beyond the familiarity of the coast and larger cities.[34] A report that appeared in the *Herald* in 1933 stated that nearly a third of peasant traders' profits in the Herzegovinian town of Trebinje the previous year had come from international tourism. This welcome injection of foreign capital was apparently tempered by the fact that the majority of these visitors were Austrian, Czech or German; one Muslim merchant complained to the *Herald*'s correspondent that the 'English' had been 'disappointingly scarce' that year.[35]

Witnesses to the 'Passing of Arcadia'

Although the majority of British interactions with interwar Yugoslavia appeared to come through mainstream tourism, this did not signify a complete secession of efforts to shape public knowledge of the region and its inhabitants. With 'the Orient's' boundaries having receded further eastwards after 1918, southeastern Europe's diminished strategic or diplomatic value did not subdue the fascination for exploring the continent's new cultural frontiers. In the summer of 1921, for example, the Gordons embarked on a three-month sketching tour of Bosnia-Herzegovina with the expressed aim of fashioning a narrative centred on 'the life of simple folk which is denied to the ordinary tourist'.[36] Although troubled by food poisoning and

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[33] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.52.
[34] Bridge, *Illyrian Spring*, pp.198-206; White, *The Wheel Spins*, pp.15-16.
[35] Geoffrey Gibson, 'Market Day in Trebinje: A Hercegovina Vignette', *South Slav Herald*, September 1933, p.3.
[36] 'Two Vagabonds in the Balkans', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol.66, No.1 (July 1925), p.59.

discomfort, the Gordons' excursion offered British readers initial insight into the poverty and growing socio-political ambiguity which largely determined the peasantry's position in the new state. It was also observed that the transition of sovereignty from Habsburg to Yugoslav rule appeared, from the general population's perspective, to be a chaotic and disjointed process made worse by poor infrastructure and limited access to education. Economic disruption across the territory, resulting from land and property redistribution in 1918 and 1919, had been further exacerbated by the new government's 'lack of diplomacy' in dealing with 'complex social problems'.[37] However, this sense of realism, characteristic of the Gordons' prior expositions, was a discernible rarity during this period.

This propensity to romanticise Yugoslavia's under-developed state was especially evident in the revival of British cultural interest during the late 1930s: village customs were not only interpreted as being synonymous with authentic 'Yugoslav' national culture, but represented an augmentation of previous trends into a dichotomy between modernity and tradition. Having been previously attacked as a textual apologia for Serb nationalism, characterised by anti-Croat and anti-Muslim prejudices that distorted Western perceptions of Yugoslavia's collapse in the 1990s and early 2000s, West's work has been increasingly re-evaluated through this historical subtext.[38] Hammond contests that the narration of her journey is itself symbolic of 'an intervention into the Balkanist tradition' by a woman who challenged previous decades of cultural disparagement by framing the West as being locked into a spiral of stagnation and acting as the 'presentiment of impending disaster'.[39] This finds expression in her preoccupation with sacrifice and the hope of rebirth as analogous with Western

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[37] Jan & Cora Gordon, *Two Vagabonds in the Balkans* (London: The Bodley Head, 1925), p.50, pp.149-150.

[38] For critiques of West's alleged Serbophilia, perceived to have played a role in determining Western responses to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, see for example, Brian Hall, *The Impossible Country: A Journey Through the Last Days of Yugoslavia* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994); Daniele Conversi, 'Moral Relativism and Equidistance in British Attitudes to the War in the Former Yugoslavia', in Thomas Cushman & Stjepan G. Meštrovič (eds.), *This Time We Knew: Western Reponses to Genocide in Bosnia* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp.244-281; Branimir Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide* (London: Hurst & Co., 1999); Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Modern Library, 1999); Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin, 2002).

[39] West, *Black Lamb, Vol.1*, p.288; Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, pp.159-160.

civilisation's contemporary degradation through destructive modern impulses.[40] However, while covering each constituent territory (excluding Slovenia) and denouncing Victorian archetypes constructed 'by male journalists, historians and travel writers', her insights were still mainly a synthesis of the latent anxieties underpinning peasant representation before the war.[41] Unsurprisingly, the peasantry's 'preference for life' offered a possible counterpoint for her pessimistic image of Western hedonism and political self-destruction.[42]

For many of West's peers writing on Yugoslavia in the years prior to the Second World War, agrarian Yugoslavia was more cathartic than revelatory. Dismissing criticism of its underdeveloped state, *The Times*'s former Russia correspondent, Stephen Graham, expressed pleasure for 'a somewhat backward State which has not tamed Nature with many roads and railways'.[43] Like West, he also alluded to a sense of humanistic and spiritual solidarity with the agricultural class who remained untainted by the 'blight' of urban living. Indeed, Graham's disdain for modernity was articulated in his denouncement of the term 'tourism' – the 'shallow metropolitanism' it evoked, he argued, made it a 'word to be fought'.[44]

Reactionary impulses were also evident in ostensibly non-romantic representations. The *Le Play Society,* for instance, had formed in response to its members' opposition to the perceived disenfranchisement of 'adult amateurs' in the field of geographical sciences, as well as an increasing use of socioeconomic theory and other developments reflective of British academia's cumulative realignment into learned hierarchies.[45] Kuklick notes that by 1938, membership of specialist organisations, such as the RAI, were dominated by middle-class 'professional scholars'. This led to a steep decline in public interest after 1918 as expectations that those working in fields such as anthropology now conform to an accepted scientific rigour,

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[40] West*, Black Lamb, Vol.2*, pp.543-544; Goldsworthy, *Inventing*, p.196; Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp.163-164; MacKay, *Modernism and World War II*, pp.35-37.
[41] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, pp.159-160.
[42] MacKay, *Modernism and World War II*, pp.44-47.
[43] Stephen Graham, *The Moving Tent: Adventures with a Tent and a Fishing Rod in Southern Jugoslavia* (London: Cassel & Company, 1939), p.v.
[44] Ibid., pp.15-18.
[45] Clarke & Anteric, 'Anthropological Tourism in Slovenia 1932-2007', pp.8-9.

and qualitative research practices saw fewer popular studies reaching publication than had been the case during the Edwardian era.[46] In the context of the South Slavonic peasantry, Lodge's *Peasant Life in Jugoslavia* represented a coda to this tradition. Focusing on rural customs and domestic economy in districts 'away from Western influences and civilization', Lodge's evocative work illustrated her belief in the significance of history and environment as the principal drivers of social development. This commitment to presenting readers with an 'exact' portrayal entailed conducting her fieldwork while adhering to a lifestyle similar to her subject of study, echoing Durham's earlier approach to Albania.[47]

In keeping with the geopolitical dimension of pre-war anthropology, the accentuation of peasant customs as authentic to Yugoslavia became increasingly intertwined with theories of a nascent national culture among British authors. Lodge's notes on folk traditions along the Bulgaro-Yugoslav border, for example, stressed a cultural continuum extending westwards. 'Semi-pagan' ceremonies honouring the rites of spring in Serbia's eastern extremes, for example, were practised in vestigial form as far west as the villages in Zagreb's environs. Equally, the marriage customs of Macedonia and Slovenia's agricultural communities were noted for including variations of the same rituals.[48] Artistic representations further reinforced this sense of an underlying connection between Yugoslavia's constituent territories. Between the wars, Meštrović remained the only Yugoslavian cultural figure with a significant international presence: his efficacious blending of modernism with peasant folklore was adjudged as integral to Yugoslavism as a cultural idea.[49] The *Herald* also projected this notion of a unitary South Slavonic identity onto a 'mosaic' of overlapping village traditions.[50] These

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[46] Kuklick, *The Savage Within*, pp.68-71.

[47] Lodge, *Peasant Life*, pp.18-19.

[48] 'Notes on Peasant Traditions, undated', *Lodge Collection (1919-1956)*, SSEES, LOD/1.

[49] Ernest H.R. Collings, 'The Exhibition of Serbo-Croat Art', *Balkan Review*, Vol.2, No.2 (December 1919), pp.349-350; 'Peasant Painters', *South Slav Herald*, January-February 1939, p.12.

[50] Copeland, 'Where a Snail is Chained Up!', South *Slav Herald*, January-February 1939, pp.10-11; 'How Croat & Serb Peasants can Cooperate: Prof Herceg's Plan', *South Slav Herald*, February 1940, p.6. This sentiment was echoed by contributors to both national and local British periodicals. H. Gregarious Brown, 'A Leeds Man's Tour in Serbia: Crossing the Country on Foot', *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 30th September 1919, p.8; 'On Foot through Serbia' *The Mercury Press*, 14th May 1929.

perceptions were in further evidence at a 'Yugoslav art' show, held in Liverpool and Glasgow in 1939. Echoing the 1907 Balkan States exhibition, members of the public were introduced to the country's 'spiritual and temporal quintessence' through ethnological displays of 'national costume', dances and recitals of peasant ballads and epic poetry.[51] Such sentiments were embedded throughout *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, extolling the peasantry as the source of Yugoslav artistic creativity and spontaneity rather than an 'aspiring middle class'. Native art was 'not a plaything; but a necessity […] a cup into which life can be poured and lifted to the lips and be tasted'. From this, she postulated, a Yugoslav national character would eventually form.[52]

Besides being mired in academic or journalistic obscurity, efforts to inculcate public understanding with the belief that commonalities in South Slavonic peasant culture indicated a crystallising Yugoslavian identity were undermined by a general ambivalence and the contradictory manner in which they were presented. Press coverage and travel literature tended to regard the country through its various cultural differentiations: a collection of historical polities and provinces bound by language rather than a single national entity with a heterogeneous identity based on a 'variety of types, costumes [and] culture'.[53] As Wolff notes, West's own text routinely contradicts its professed support for a unitary Yugoslav identity by presenting each constituent people as historically distinct.[54]

Representative of this interwar trend was the Slavophile Scottish linguist, Fanny Copeland, a wartime associate of Seton-Watson who had served as a translator for the JO from 1915 to 1919. Having taken part in Yugoslavia's creation from a distance, and coming to live in Ljubljana from 1921 as an 'adoptive' Slovene and Yugoslav, Copeland's status occupied a similar 'spatial and temporal junction' to that of Durham as Britain's only dedicated authority

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[51] 'Yugoslav Art Show in Liverpool and Glasgow', *South Slav Herald*, June 1939, p.10.
[52] West, *Black Lamb*, *Vol.1*, p.55.
[53] Nora Lavrin, *Jugoslav Scenes; Dry Points by Nora Lavrin* (London: Stanley Nott, 1935), p.11.
[54] Larry Wolff, 'This Time, Let's Listen', *New York Times Book Review*, 10th February 1991, p.28.

on the Slovene ethnic territories.[55] Despite later denying any political subtexts, her role as expert intersected with that of cultural advocate and campaigner against Italy's occupation of ethnic Slav areas.[56] This was corroborated through her various publications, constructing Slovenia as a pacifist 'alpine' cultural enclave within Yugoslavia, threatened by aggressive non-Slavonic neighbours. Like Bourchier or Durham, this identification with a liberationist cause 'subsequently provided the route to personal emancipation'.[57] Her role was also revealing of a continued British willingness to defer to experts in shaping discursive patterns, illustrated in her facilitation of the *Le Play Society'*s survey work, centred on the rural municipality of Solčava near the Austrian border in 1932.[58]

The conflation of culture with ethnicity which Copeland confidently ascribed to the Slovene territory was largely absent from her depictions of Yugoslavia's other provinces. South of the border, the racial and religious mix of the 'ambiguous Orient' rendered any clear division or boundaries redundant, placing lands such as Montenegro and Herzegovina outside the ordered Central European sphere.[59] The *Le Play* survey was more explicit in its distinctions. Slovenia's Slavonic links might have been historically 'with the south', yet the territory exemplified a case of geographical isolation eclipsing ethnic traditions, mirroring Cvijić's and Tomašić's understanding of Dinaric society as being determined by environmental factors.[60] Even Solčava's peasants lacked the racial characteristics of the 'tall, broad headed…dark and muscular…Dinaric type' inhabiting the Yugoslav lands south of the Sava river.[61]

Besides an implicit disenchantment with modern society, the anxieties of the late-interwar years were compounded by the fact that traditional peasant society was already

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[55] Richard Clarke & Marija Anteric, 'Fanny Copeland and the Geographical Imagination', *Scottish Geographical Journal*, Vol.127, No.3 (2011), p.180.
[56] *The Jugoslav Minority in Italy* (Geneva: International Union of Associations for the League of Nations, 1927), p.5; Fanny S. Copeland, 'The S.E. Face of the Mojstrovka', *The Alpine Journal*, Vol.40, No.2 (November 1928), pp.45-46.
[57] Clarke & Anteric, 'Fanny Copeland and the Geographical Imagination', p.181.
[58] 'What Struck Me Most About Ljubljana', *South Slav Herald*, May 1933, p.3.
[59] Fanny S. Copeland, 'Three Go South: Through Montenegro to the South Land', *South Slav Herald,* December 1933, p.3.
[60] Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique*, pp.322-323; A. Davies, 'Slovenia', in Dudley L. Stamp (ed.), *Slovene Studies* (London: Le Play Society, 1933), p.14; Kaser, 'Balkanization of the Balkans', pp.92-93.
[61] A. Davies, 'Ethnography', in Stamp (ed.), *Slovene Studies*, pp.23-24.

beginning to disappear. Encounters with the trappings of 'modernity', or intimations of its encroachment were liable to induce a sense of loss and nostalgia, particularly for those with memories of the South Slavonic lands before 1914. Wrench, while on a return trip to the region in 1935, expressed dismay at there being 'very few people in costume left' and the fact that traditional customs and ceremonies had even disappeared from central Montenegro.[62] Lodge and Copeland corroborated this dwindling of customs, noting that rural traditions in Croatia, north Serbia or Slovenia were mostly vestigial or observed only among older peasants.[63]

This enhanced antipathy towards modernity was equally prone to manifest through malign geopolitical external threats; what Hammond terms 'frontier psychosis'.[64] As she passed through Italian-occupied Istria, West presented the rigid use of bureaucratic and martial authority, implemented by the Fascist authorities as a form of collective cultural defilement, describing it as a 'bad headachy dream'.[65] The existential menace presented by Italian Fascism served as the principal undercurrent in Copeland's definition of the 'unnatural' Italo-Yugoslav border as an arbitrary imposition of 'barbed wire tangle' and 'cement pillars' in remote areas of west Slovenia's Alpine wilderness and an ominous reminder of the 'Italianization' occurring across the western frontier.[66]

Perceptions of the spread of modernity as disruptive and unwelcome found associations with the growing presence of the state. Overspending on the police and military forces revived pre-war motifs of corruption while reinvigorating the peasant victimhood narrative among critical voices such as Durham.[67] Some commentators construed this as indicative of the

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[62] 'Journal of a Balkan tour…; 14 Aug-10 Oct 1935'. *Wrench Papers Vol. XXXVIII*, BL Western Manuscripts: Add MS 59578, p.14.
[63] Fanny S. Copeland, 'Three Go South: Through Montenegro to the South Land', *South Slav Herald*, November 1933, p.7; Lodge, *Peasant Life*, p.75.
[64] Hammond, *British Literature and the Balkans*, p.28.
[65] West, *Black Lamb, Vol.1*, p.123.
[66] The Italian shelling of Slovenia's Mount Triglav while she was climbing it in 1931 seemed to confirm her claim of a cultural struggle for survival. *The Jugoslav Minority in Italy*, pp.34-42; Copeland, 'The S.E. Face of the Mojstrovka', p.46; Fran Barbalić, 'National Minorities in Europe – V: The Jugoslavs of Italy', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol.15, No.43, (July 1936), pp.179-184; Clarke & Anteric, 'Fanny Copeland', p.186.
[67] Noel Buxton & T.P. Conwell-Evans, *Oppressed Peoples and the League of Nations* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1922), pp.88-89; Edith Durham, 'Croatia and Greater Serbia', *The Contemporary Review* (November 1923), pp.504; R.W. Seton-Watson, 'The Jugoslav Dictatorship', *The Contemporary Review*, No.793, January

deteriorating international situation in the late 1930s. Wrench commented on the presence of 'goose-stepping soldiers' in Dalmatia as another unwelcome reminder of Europe's transformation into 'a simmering cauldron. Every man fearing his neighbours'.[68] Even nominally apolitical material commented on regional political tensions. In seeking the 'simple and wild', Lodge placed her study in contention with the West's 'ever-encroaching blanket of ordinariness' and a 'machine-made' outlook.[69] Writing on her own experiences, Erlich attributed the success of her 1937 survey to its revelation of the peasantry's own sense of an impending cataclysm and irreparable social change:

> They felt that they were storing up treasures before it was too late. They were anxious to record their knowledge of old ideas and traditional attitudes before they all were lost. Already Nazis were on the march.[70]

In contrast to the war, an inability to agree on an aggressor or offer a tangible solution to these developments prevented this attempted revival of the victimhood motif from overcoming public apathy.[71] The sombre contrast between modernity and an increasingly anachronistic rural nostalgia in interwar rhetoric was itself revealing of the absence of any profound ideological or social reference points through which the wider public could re-engage. Copeland's writing on the idyllic pastoralist culture of Velika Planina in the winter of 1939 and 1940 analogised this as an essential theme of comfortable isolation, entrenched in a sense of ambient rural nostalgia. An end to remoteness now marked the effective death of this idyll as 'lost, indeed and forever. We shall have seen the passing of Arcadia'.[72] Change, whether the intrusion of a now detested modernity, the disruption of war or an abandonment of what Evans had originally termed 'customs and costumes', had now become its own pejorative motif.[73]

1932, pp.23-31; Idem, 'King Alexander's Assassination: Its Background and Effects', *Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol.14, No.1 (January-February 1935), pp.41-47.

[68] 'Journal of a Balkan Tour', *Wrench Papers*, BL: Add MS 59578, p.84.

[69] Lodge, *Peasant Life*, p.19.

[70] Erlich. *Family in Transition*, p.vi.

[71] Kostova, *Tales*, p.177.

[72] F.S. Copeland, 'Lost World in Carniola', *The Alpine Journal*, Vol.52, No.260 (May 1940), p.96.

[73] Evans, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina*, p.89.

Conclusion

Regardless of the limited cultural revival of the 1930s, interwar period reflected the extent to which any resonance in the public sphere had pivoted around the domestic subtext and the ongoing discursive shift at this specific point in British history. While the war itself had brought the intersection between widespread British societal concerns and the plight of the South Slavonic peasant to its apex, it had also neutered any future potential for a sustainable form of engagement. While Michail attributes this to the protracted fracturing of the region's wider image in the eyes of the British public, the peasantry's effective disappearance as a factor in popular discourse was mainly contingent on its continued recalibration around shifting societal contexts after 1918.[74]

The extent to which the war had left this brief early period of intercultural contact and even exchange effectively moribund was clarified by the gradual disappearance of earlier regional facilitators before and after the first Yugoslav state's collapse. Seton-Watson's efforts to replicate the erstwhile public success he had enjoyed during the First World War, for example, proved entirely incompatible with the tightly-regulated intelligence post he held in the Second World War. Barred from accessing policy-makers or having even anonymous contact with the press, he resigned from his position in 1942, fading into relative academic obscurity.[75] While his contemporaries experienced far greater public isolation, Seton-Watson's fate mirrored the rest of Edwardian organised and informed opinion. Between 1920 and 1958 the cohort of personalities who had once 'expanded the uses and channels of public knowledge of the region, bringing it to academia, to politics and to the centre of the public sphere' died with no immediate successors to take their places.[76]

At the wider societal level, the attitudes and ideological mentalities which came to dominate Britain's interwar domestic climate proved far less conducive to many of the cultural

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[74] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.27.
[75] Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, pp.430-431.
[76] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.50-51.

and allegorical factors that had meshed with popular ideas in the Edwardian and First World War years. The socio-economic and political changes facilitated by the excesses of wartime not only undermined the previous cultural trends but shattered many of the illusions pertaining to British identity as a moral construct. The earlier Edwardian belief that a return to a past of social comprehensibility could mitigate the shortcomings of modernity had itself been undermined, culturally manifesting in the final 'critical assault on nineteenth-century certainties' in Liberal notions of a progressive trend.[77] Rural nostalgia and belief in a virtuous pre-industrial age could not adequately sustain interest in a peacetime Yugoslavia whose wartime promise had engendered far greater resonance than the reality of its interwar existence.

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[77] Overy, *The Morbid Age*, p.29.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this study has been to develop an understanding of how representations of ostensibly remote communities, such as the South Slavonic peasantry, in early twentieth-century Britain became intrinsically linked to shifting popular perceptions of cultural identity. It has focused specifically on 1900 to 1918: a period in which discursive social anxieties, originating in the late nineteenth century, gained traction in the wider public sphere and transformed a previously pejorative Balkan leitmotif into a complex and dynamic social allegory. This inconsistent polarity in representation allowed Britons to shape and present the peasant motif in accordance with personal or wider socio-political preferences that fluctuated or quickly evolved over this short historical period. Such changes were conditioned and directed by two critical factors: the increasingly multifaceted rhetorical nature of the public sphere, and the contingency of certain events during this period – particularly the First World War.

It will therefore conclude by directly addressing its three analytical aims: firstly, what was the significance of allegory in forging links between representations of the South Slavonic peasantry and domestic issues which dominated popular discourse; secondly, what made the period 1900 to 1918 historically unique in facilitating this process; and thirdly, how did these factors legitimise Yugoslavia's creation in late 1918 in the eyes of the British public? Each of these points will be framed against the theoretical framework established in the introduction in order to position the study's conclusions in relation to previous research. It will also consider the implications for imagological historiography by offering some suggestions as to possible directions for future scholarship.

The South Slavonic Peasantry as a Popular Allegory

This study has presented an alternative to these direct forms of comparison. It has introduced a conceptual framework which considers the South Slavonic Balkans' place in imaginative

geography to have been determined ultimately through an ability to find resonance with the domestic debates that shaped British identity at the beginning of the twentieth century. By focusing on the ways in which representations became allegorical in early twentieth-century discussions on the contested meaning of Britishness, it has attempted to shift imagological historiography's focus away from how images of different cultures are formed to the role they play in rationalising the identities of those to whom they relate at a precise point in time. In adopting this alternative angle, it has also sought to enhance scholarly understanding of how the Southern Slavs came to be perceived outside the elite minority capable of actively engaging with the region for most of this period. What emerged was a process of gradual modification whereby cultural representations of these western Balkan territories were rationalised as an allegory to fit into the changing British self-perceptions crystallising under the new popular discourse.

As highlighted in the Introduction and Chapter One, by the turn of the twentieth century popular discourse had become multifaceted, highly complex in nature and mostly oriented towards domestic and social questions. Having emerged from the perceived erosion of British global power and the philosophical waves of pessimism that spread across western Europe's ideological spaces towards the end of the nineteenth century, this reordering of reality incrementally manifested in the public arena as a range of social anxieties. Chapter Two illustrated that popular consternation and the prevalence of pessimistic rhetoric in the public sphere, while never consistent across society in general, was indicative of a drift away from the veneration of modernity towards a system of morality.

From 1900, Britain's social and discursive climate also lent itself to the deconstruction of emergent and pre-existing norms encircling the evolving concept of 'modernity'. This was accompanied by a latent sense of anxiety over whether continued modern developments were necessarily following a course that would be morally beneficial to British society, the Empire and, by extension, civilisation in general. Modernity and urbanisation were correspondingly

reconceived of as social models requiring a reassertion of British moral values in order to assuage stagnation, decline and social fragmentation, the suspected consequences of a society that had abandoned such values.

While direct representations of South Slavonic peasants initially had little traction in the British public sphere, their significance lay in how they found varying degrees of resonance with societal issues. As argued in Chapter Two, much of this was facilitated by the public sphere itself, as a fluid rhetorical forum and nexus of ideas which related mostly to Britain's domestic situation. South Slavonic rural communities thus became analogous with a vague, romanticised public understanding of British morality as having originated in a distant agrarian past. This orbited an ongoing domestic narrative of a British social order in flux, riven by concerns over public health, urban poverty and unrest regarding numerous perceived socio-political and economic injustices. Debates over land reform and the utopian ideals of a revived British agricultural class offered a notable point of reference from which to extol the cultural virtues of the South Slavonic peasantry as a more positive cultural model.

Chapter Three's analysis of the narrative of South Slavonic peasant victimhood revealed its allegorical value as a conduit for reshaping the peasant's role within a moralistic framework of civilisation. Perceived fidelity to rural traditions and lifestyles, supposedly free of urbanised Western hedonism, mirrored what the British, notably English, observers considered to be their own cultural origins. This gradually brought the South Slavonic peasantry out of the pejorative Oriental milieu and into the new moral hierarchy as denizens of the same sphere of inferred cultural virtue. By contrast, attempts at promoting political or foreign policy initiatives risked persistent failure before 1914. Such enterprises existed outside the popular narrative, were tainted by latent associations with violent nationalism, corrupt state actors and other undesirable elements, or could not sustain popular interest due to few or no points of reference and a general public indifference towards matters of foreign politics.

Consequently, the image of the South Slavonic peasant acquired social currency when presented less as a desired reality than as an echo of virtues and traits that were perceived as integral to the earlier formation of Britain's own national character. By emphasising them, repression or mistreatment of the South Slavonic peasantry became interpretable as a metaphorical assault on these perceived moral qualities. This discursive influence became more implicit in the years leading up to 1914, while traumatic depictions of peasant suffering in the immediate aftermath of Ilinden-Preobrazhenie might have still echoed the cynical or fatalistic attitudes of late nineteenth-century observers. A decade later however, more cohesive allegorical links had been established between the peasantry's contemporary circumstances and the excesses of an industrial civilisation perceived as morally degraded by destructive modernistic impulses. As a result, South Slavonic peasants were as likely to be cast principally as victimised innocents worthy of British moral sympathy and, increasingly, humanitarian assistance.

The transformation of the South Slavonic peasantry's imaginative status, through its ability to resonate as an allegorical point of reference, was not necessarily indicative of an outright public rejection of modernity nor the transition to an urbanised society. This can instead be interpreted as an outcome of an unconscious categorisation of modernity into 'positive and negative' aspects based on their assumed worth. In the spirit of Judeo-Christian or Enlightenment traditions, innovations such as the 'healing' potential of modern medicine were subliminally linked with positive trends. Philosophically, concepts stressing individual and collective emancipation were also celebrated as distinctively British ideals that challenged the perceived social stagnation of the late nineteenth century. Subsequently, in the public sphere, the narrative gradually acquired coherence as a mission to resuscitate, or preserve, these newly realised moral qualities, albeit with little political or social consensus as to how this was to be achieved.

As contested by the fourth and fifth chapters, this narrative was at its most socially influential during the First World War, which saw a convergence of this allegorising process of representation with wider propaganda narratives. Through its facilitation of more direct forms of engagement by a wider cross-section of British society, specifically women with no prior regional connections, the war directly integrated the figure of the South Slavonic peasant into the changing notion of British identity. This, in turn, allowed for previous negative connotations, such as nationalism, to be subverted by the idea of Serb peasant soldiers as bearers of the same essential qualities as the British, turning them into regional counterparts in a joint crusade to preserve civilisation as a moral entity. The humanitarian presence, and widespread public involvement in charitable campaigns, was of equal significance in presenting the war, and the South Slavs' place within it, as an analogical expression of Britain's role. This manifested through organisations such as the SWH, which were narratively distinguished as virtuously feminine and anti-militaristic.

Conversely, the war also exposed the limitations of allegory and social resonance as a means of altering popular perceptions. Although afforded a more generous place in the moral hierarchy, Serbs and other Southern Slavs were consistently relegated to a lower position within it. Moreover, representations of engagement itself were not devoid of the language of the civilising mission while the absence of South Slavonic peasants from atrocity propaganda narratives betrayed their relative shallowness as emotive props for justifying British involvement in the wider war. In this regard, representing the South Slavonic peasantry as a popular allegory never resulted in a complete break with earlier trends nor signalled a concrete shift towards further growth in intercultural connections.

The Significance of 1900 to 1918

Of equal, and in certain respects greater, importance to these allegorical and narrative trajectories was the period of the early twentieth century in which they occurred. Since the

early 2000s, the cultural and socio-political specificities of historical context have gained greater historiographical recognition as one of the main factors in shaping knowledge and identities. Authors such as Evans and Marković have structured specialised studies around certain events to more precisely evaluate the factors guiding cultural and political actors.[1] Suonpää and Michail adopt similar approaches but structure their analyses around broader time frames covering multiple events and long-term historical developments.[2]

This study suggests, however, that even recent imagological scholarship continues to underestimate historical context as a factor in determining and fashioning both representations and perceptions. This is notably evident in the propensity for periodising history in order to incorporate it into broadly thematic theoretical frameworks, such as Balkanism, or correlating multiple time periods in order to trace the evolution of a recurrent motif or idea. Goldsworthy's and Hammond's proposed deconstructions of Anglophone literary Balkanism exemplify this problem by assuming that a homogenous image of the region persisted across each era.[3] Concurrently, studies more sensitive to contextual nuance continue to adhere to the principle that the process of British engagement still occurred in periodic phases, generally corresponding with Hobsbawm's model.

In conjoining the Edwardian and First World War periods into a single chronological focus, the study has considered how historical contingencies converged at a notably unusual point in British (and South Slavonic) history. Unlike the nineteenth century, the rapidity of events in the early twentieth century formed a more consistent framework that elevated them to allegorical points of reference for changes impinging upon the lives of the wider public. Both the beginning and end of this period were marked by British involvement in conflicts with socially (and psychologically) traumatic repercussions. The Second Boer War accentuated anxieties by drawing public attention to a broad spectrum of pre-existing socio-political issues,

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[1] Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia*, pp.74-81; Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.1.
[2] In Suonpää's case, 1856 to 1914 and 1900 to 1950 for Michail.
[3] Goldsworthy, *Inventing,* p.187; Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, p.112, 153.

heightening a sense of cultural disillusionment, unease and vulnerability. The growing presence of societal divisions were compounded by active displays of unrest, mirroring – what was sensationally presented as – a period of protracted upheaval in the South Slavonic Balkans.

In this context, as demonstrated in Chapters Three, Four and Five, the leitmotif of victimhood gained greater resonance by establishing the peasant's status as an allegory for contemporary domestic problems and potential solutions, conducive to the discursive reorientation of a British identity. This evolving sense of civilisation as a moral entity was less predicated on its supposed realisation than in the belief that action was needed in order to maintain Britain's ostensible place at its apex. The discursive currents which gave form to this in the public sphere came from a sprawling, and often contradictory, miscellany of cultural, religious and ideological notions. Such anxieties, alongside other calls for a break with the current social status quo, elucidated ideas of an active citizenry formed through 'moral character', which was integral to the 'public spirit'.[4] By 1914, this had fused narratively into the sense that an ingrained heroism constituted the true essence of British identity but necessitated that it be demonstrated rather than merely implied. The impetus for this came through the demands of groups such as the women's suffrage and labour movements, who regularly framed their public actions in moral terms.[5] This rhetorical trend became more precipitous as political unrest in Ireland and the presence of female and labour militancy were ratcheted upwards from 1910 to 1914, without resolution.

The intersecting of this milieu with South Slavonic peasant representations was linked to a rising belief that community and state actors were morally obliged to intervene on behalf of those deemed openly vulnerable such as the elderly, the physically disabled and the unemployed. While building upon nineteenth-century legislative action to regulate the conditions of industrial employment, notably efforts to guarantee the safety and moral welfare of child labourers, the twentieth century witnessed the rapid expansion of this trend under the

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[4] Searle, *A New England?,* pp.369-375.
[5] Thompson, *British Political Culture*, pp.140-141, 224-232. See also Powell, *The Edwardian Crisis*.

Liberal welfare programmes of 1906 to 1914.[6] Cultural visions of a renewed rural England, free of urban poverty and morally invigorated by a new progressive social transparency, found reference in the village communities of the future Yugoslavia as positive allegories for the revival of British national health.[7]

It was, however, the South Slavonic peasantry's ascribed victimhood status, precipitated by the Balkan Wars and Britain's entry into the First World War, which aligned its contemporary circumstances with those of British moral narratives. Chapter Three showed how much of this had followed on from a prior distinction between a backward but peaceable peasantry and its repression by alien state authorities – or corruption by negative modern influences – leading to a reappraisal of violence as an inherent cultural trait. The study's emphasis on the period of 1912 to 1918 deviates from previous contributions to imagological historiography by exploring how British engagement with peasants became an extension of the popular discursive context. Analyses by Hammond and Michail, for example, provide little mention of the pre-war period, basing many of their impressions on post-war literature or high-profile figures such as Sandes.[8] The role of gender in emphasising a link with the wider British war effort, and to a lesser extent social status, is an area of particular neglect. As discussed in Chapter Four, representations by humanitarian volunteers were framed not so much by concrete analogies but by attempts at locating personal experiences (and post-war ambitions) within the heroic moral narrative of Britishness.[9] Their work in alleviating the plight of patients and refugees or assisting the Serbian army, provided a partial counterpoint to the caricature of British worth, personified as a young, able-bodied male. The circumstances that led the majority of BSF personnel to regard deployment on the Balkan Front as a form of emasculation illustrates the role direct action played in legitimising wartime identities.

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[6] Searle, *A New England?*, p.365.
[7] Readman, 'The Edwardian Land Question', in *The Land Question in Britain*, pp.182-183.
[8] Hammond, *The Debated Lands*, pp.114-121; Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, pp.59-62.
[9] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, p.7, 227 *n.24*.

Chapter Five's examination of the South Slavonic peasantry's representation in wartime propaganda revealed the war's singular importance in accelerating a relatively piecemeal trend by outlining a similar development in the public sphere. Propaganda narratives translated the alleviation of the Serb peasantry's wartime, and historical, victimhood as an appeal to the latent public persona of an active citizenry. In demonstrating solidarity for an ally who shared the same essential moral qualities, the war briefly allowed a cross-section of the British public to momentarily move beyond erratic patterns of representation by participating in a form of cultural exchange, a prospect unimaginable before 1915.

Somewhat conversely, this quantification of British moral heroism placed it in opposition to a myriad of seditious modern influences that threatened civilisation's moral function. Wartime propaganda expanded the narrative's scope as a mission against the earthly embodiment of these egregious forces, namely Germany. Becoming almost historically contiguous with the previous centuries of Ottoman rule, these modern hegemons represented the opposite of British morality, conquering and enslaving under the pretext of racial or degenerate urban ideologies. Following the First World War, vestiges of this earlier animosity could be seen in elitist rebuttals of Westernisation as corroding Yugoslavia's otherwise organic agrarian social order – and by extension the moral fecundity of the South Slavonic peasantry.[10]

Fundamentally, sustaining a deeper sense of cultural affinity for the Southern Slavs was practically impossible owing to the fickleness of Britain's pluralistic public sphere and the constantly evolving nature of the domestic climate. While the First World War saw an unprecedented diversification in direct contacts, personal contributions from former members of the largely working-class BSF failed to have any impact beyond a private sphere of familial and veteran associations. Volunteers, while enjoying a modest degree of prestige after the war, did so only through the status conferred upon them in propaganda narratives as having represented Britain's ideological wartime mission in an otherwise insignificant military theatre.

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[10] 'Journal of a Balkan tour', *Wrench Papers*: Add MS 59578, p.33; Graham, *Moving Tent*, pp.vi-vii.

Furthermore, any demonstrable successes were isolated by their specific wartime context: the hopes of female professionals that their humanitarian work would translate into greater career opportunities proved baseless as women continued to be denied the right to practise in more prestigious fields after 1918.[11] On a practical level, organised opinion's descent into self-destructive ethnic favouritism after 1913 signified the corrosion of the conduits and channels that had formerly served to rally interest by elaborating upon points of cultural reference. The subsequent wartime ambitions of Seton-Watson and other pro-Yugoslav advocates to maintain this level of exposure as a means of shaping foreign policy ultimately failed because that interest had always been ephemeral. Michail's theory of 'the fragmentation and decline of the Balkan image' after the war was thus a symptom of British moral heroism's disappearance from the popular cultural landscape alongside the discursive contexts that enabled it to manifest from 1900 to 1918.[12]

British Moral Identity and the Yugoslavian Idea

When measured against the convergence of these discursive and historical factors, the creation of Yugoslavia in December 1918 was a far less surprising outcome. By analysing the trajectory of peasant representation against the shifting discursive perception of British identity in the early twentieth century, this study has explored how the appearance of a South Slavonic union after the First World War existed as a cultural rationale.

This also challenges the use of the Balkanist consensus as an interpretative framework for why the country received British support. As the only comprehensive analyses on this specific subject, both Drapac and Evans interpret the country's formation as a product of elite ideology, primarily represented by Seton-Watson, and the diplomatic machinations of Western powers. Drapac's references to female volunteers in Serbia, for instance, limits them to

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[11] Domestic employment prospects had factored into MacPhail's personal motivations for remaining in Yugoslavia following the war. Leneman, *In the Service of Life*, pp. 217-219; Wakefield & Moody, *Under the Devil's Eye*, pp.x-xii, 233-234.

[12] Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, p.28.

informal political functionaries while Evans provides little reference to the 'wider public' beyond a small number of published wartime accounts, with neither considering how these dialogues might have been influenced by other factors besides elite prejudices.[13]

While the concept of a Yugoslav polity only acquired recognition in the public sphere from mid-1915, the cultural basis for its legitimacy in imaginative geography was mostly established through the recalibration of the South Slavonic peasantry's image as commensurate with the popular refashioning of British identity. This confluence of representative trends was amplified from 1912 to 1918 as the intersection between the victimhood narrative and Britain's own social climate was accentuated by historical events. The resultant outcome of this period in regional history was widespread trauma brought about by disease, human displacement, privation, brutalisation of civilians, and environmental and infrastructural destruction. Representations of these outcomes attributed them to the actions of external forces or influences while positioning them in relation to British heroic morality as a force for international arbitration. By the First World War, peasant victimhood was no longer the result of circumstance or the failings of a callous foreign policy, but the violation of a 'protected' group by an extraneous evil, echoing the framing of the Liberals' welfare reforms.[14]

Forging this sense of analogical equivalence allowed the JO, Kosovo Committee and other pro-Yugoslav campaigners to legitimise their political cause by denoting it as symbiotic with British identity as a pro-active moral force. As highlighted in Chapter Five, despite claims by propaganda narratives that a Yugoslavian national entity had historical precedence, its actual realisation was secondary to its representation as a necessary aspect of the public's engagement in Britain's wartime mission. While moulding knowledge to suit agendas was paramount, British and foreign actors quickly came to recognise the importance of harnessing popular sentiment by appealing to idealised self-perceptions. The wartime atmosphere thus allowed a

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[13] Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia*, pp.9-10, p.91; Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, pp.80-83.

[14] Scianna, 'Reporting Atrocities', p.617.

complex territorial rearrangement to be conceptualised as analogous to a collective British act of restoring civilisational morality by intervening on behalf of a historically-repressed people. Regardless of fading popular interest after 1916, this temporary conjoining of a moral identity and victimhood narrative had completed the transformation of South Slavonic identity in British imaginative geography.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study has identified a welcome shift away from the constrictive Balkanist-Orientalist thesis towards a more measured historicism. However, what might be loosely defined as a new imagological understanding of southeastern Europe, encompassing a diverse range of perspectives, requires further development as an avenue of historical enquiry.

As reflected in the exploration of wartime engagements, further analysis of historical individuals or groups in British society presents another area of inquiry, with Perkins's and Rodogno's respective explorations of British Liberalism and humanitarian engagement with the Ottoman Balkans serving as recent examples.[15] Surveys on other groups in the context of different time periods, such as the political Left in the early Cold War, would assist in tracing a more precise understanding of the relationship between domestic and international points of view. The changing nature of engagement through the mediation of international bodies and forums such as the League of Nations may also offer a useful perspective on the place of the Balkan countries in a supranational, rather than national, framework.

Intertextuality and historical contingency present further avenues of inquiry for building a similar understanding of countries other than Britain, allowing historians to develop an awareness of regional perceptions as reflections of differing national circumstances, rather than as a collective expression of Western cultural prejudice. Furthermore, while initial efforts have been undertaken to address the lack of attention given to the imaginative geographies of

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[15] Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, pp.3-14. See Perkins, 'The Congo of Europe'.

the Balkan countries themselves, exploration of how southeastern Europeans have historically perceived their Western neighbours merits greater scholarly attention than it has, thus far, received.[16]

Outside of imagological scholarship, new areas for further historical investigation continue to be uncovered. For example, Chapters Two, Three and Four of this study have shown that British medical aid and relief funds were a recurrent form of non-political or economic intervention from 1903 to 1919. While scholars have considered this aspect of regional involvement from a biographical or gendered angle, the role of missions in shaping British attitudes and knowledge merits further analysis.[17] Further research into early twentieth-century humanitarian interventions from the perspective of organisations such as the MRF, SRF and SWH also represent a fascinating historical exploration of the interplay between the perceptions of the other and Britain's changing social climate. Above all, the study's focus demonstrates the current dearth of research into the First World War's Balkan theatre. Reactions and responses to the wartime Serbian refugee crisis, in particular, might even invite tentative comparisons as to how the West seeks to address similar crises in the twenty-first century. By paying greater attention to these earlier phases of British engagement with foreign cultures, scholars can assist in shedding light on those communities currently on the margins of history.

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[16] See for example, Wendy Bracewell & Alex Drace-Francis, *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe, 1550-2000* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008); idem (eds.), *Balkan Departures*. On imagological perceptions of Europe in post-Socialist Balkan societies, see Tanja Petrović (ed.), *Mirroring Europe: Ideas of Europe and Europeanization in Balkan Societies* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014). On the wider Eastern European context see György Péteri (ed.), *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010); Ljiljana Šarić; Andreas Musolff; Stefan Manz & Ingrid Hudabiunigg (eds.), *Contesting Europe's Eastern Rim: Cultural Identities in Public Discourse* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2010).

[17] Writing on this subject currently remains discursive or narrative in nature. See for example, Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy*; Wheelwright, *Amazons and Military Maids*; Smith, *British Women of the Eastern Front*.

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