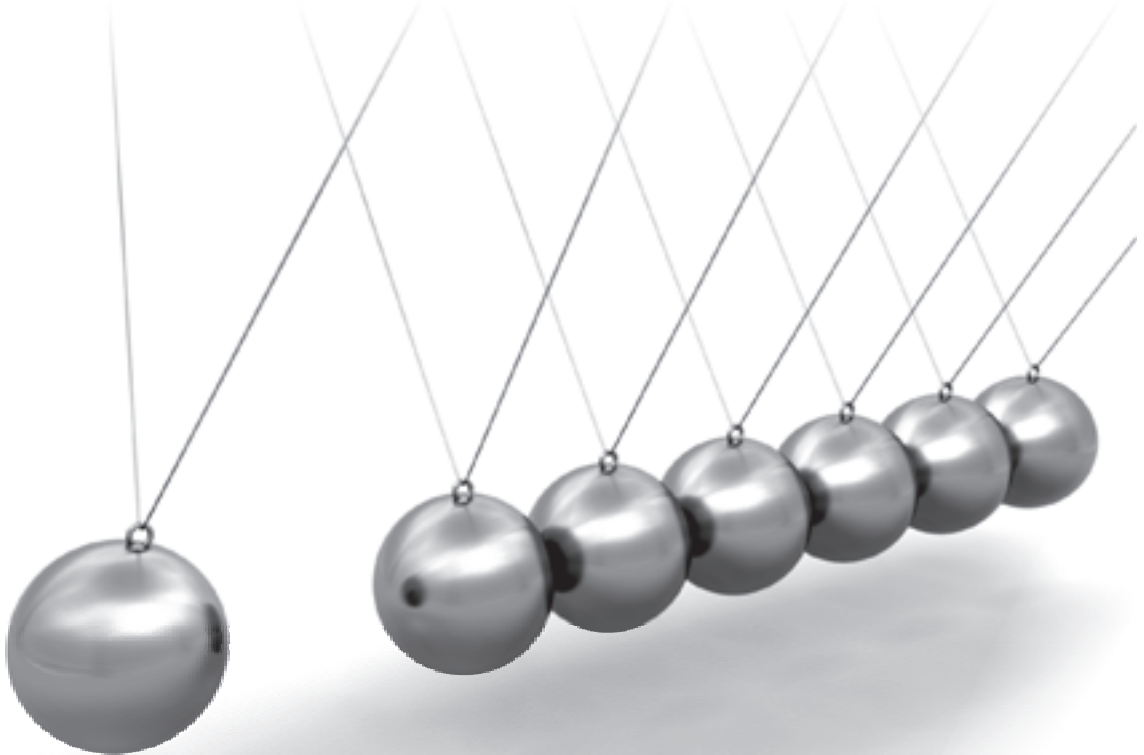


Culture of Remembrance, Visuality, and Crisis in the Balkans (17th-20th Century)

Edited by Nenad Makuljević



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FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

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and Crisis in the Balkans
(17th-20th Century)*

Edited by Nenad Makuljević

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Irena Ćirović*

ORIENTALISM, NATIONALISM, AND THE BALKANS: THE IMAGE OF THE MONTENEGRIN WOMAN

Abstract: Montenegro was one of the Balkan regions that attracted foreign travel writers during the 19th century, as well as artists who created many visual images of Montenegrins. Within this production, images of Montenegrin women made a significant part, mainly represented in terms of idealized female beauty, traditionalism, and especially of combativeness, but also as victims of wartime events. Mostly inspired by support to the Balkan Christians and their struggle, these images of Montenegrin women functioned as a part of the broader notions about the Balkans as the European “otherness.” Simultaneously, the very same images of Montenegrin women circulated within the Serbian public with altered meaning, becoming incorporated into the discourse of nationalism and female patriotism.

Keywords: Montenegro, the Balkans, image of woman, orientalism, nationalism

The discourse on the Balkans as the European otherness has been extensively explored in studies that mainly considered written material and textual representations. The range of offered ideas about the representation of the Balkans has been expanded by studies of visual images, viewed as active producers of discourse. The visual imagery of the Balkans is reconsidered through notions that constructed it as cultural otherness, associated with the primitive, violent, and uncivilized, employing essentialist logic which perceived the Balkans as backward. Despite the discussion that the term Orientalism is not entirely relevant to such representations of the Balkans (Todorova, 2006, pp. 5–36, 47–76), it can still be argued that they are mainly based on the rhetoric of Orientalization. Particularly

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in the 19th century when the Balkans were marked by Ottoman rule and the wars against it, visual images of the Balkans were highly charged with Orientalizing notions. However, this understanding of Balkan images can also be expanded, taking into account that many of them had cultural influence within societies at the Balkans. A number of the images created primarily for the Western market were met with positive reception among the local public, where they circulated transposed into the prism of national self-images (Makuljević, 2015). With this in mind, one can examine the adaptability of images to different discourses, such as Orientalism and nationalism, as well as the conditions that brought about their multiple meanings.

In visual representations of the Balkans, a paradigmatic example is related to Montenegro. The growing Western interest in the Balkans in the 19th century included Montenegro, which became one of the places attractive to travelers and explorers who left numerous written records (Marjanović, 2007; Šistek, 2009; Preston, 2009; Krivokapić & Diamond 2017, pp. 14–58). How Western visitors perceived Montenegro is inextricable from the perception of the Balkans as a whole, replete with generalizations and essentialism. Along these lines, Montenegro was mainly regarded as an inaccessible area, wild, cruel, with mountain people depicted with a combination of attributes like “primitive” and “traditional.” Through written accounts, several key elements emerge, mostly in the repeated characterization of Montenegrins as a tribe of rough highlanders, warrior-spirited and extremely traditional, whose heroic allure is emphasized by the fact that they never surrendered to the Ottomans.

A special place in literary narratives on Montenegro was given to the descriptions of womenfolk (Nelević, 2011), ranging from their physical appearance to their way of life within the strict patriarchal hierarchy, which was often commented as extremely harsh for a woman or sometimes affirmatively with regards to its “traditional” value which is increasingly being lost in modern societies. It was precisely the woman of Montenegro who became an almost dominant motif in numerous visual representations of this region. The Montenegrin woman was often the main and only protagonist in the works of foreign artists, put on display for the visual pleasure of a potential observer as the representative of an exotic and strange world. At the same time, in Serbian culture, the woman of Montenegro occupied an important symbolic place in the emerging national ideology, as the synonym for ideal female patriotism. In such an ideological framework, images of Montenegrin women by foreign artists were very well accepted and popularized, as representations that suited the ideas on gender roles and nation-building. In that sense, these gen-

dered images are postulated as one of the examples for questioning the intersection of Orientalism and nationalism, considering the social settings that impose the contexts of images as well as their cultural relevance.

The Montenegrin Beauties of Čermák

Among the artists who dealt with Montenegro, the Czech painter Jaroslav Čermák stands out. Bound mostly to Paris by his career, Čermák rose to considerable fame in Europe precisely for his depiction of scenes from Montenegro and Herzegovina, which he had visited on several occasions (Macan, 1961; Šistek, 2009, pp. 43–58). The first encounter is connected to his 1858 voyage to Dalmatia, from where he brought a myriad of props in the form of traditional garments and weapons, which he subsequently used in his works. Then, in 1862, Čermák took up residence in the vicinity of Dubrovnik for three years, from where he embarked on tours of nearby regions, creating paintings inspired by these parts. In Montenegro, the artist's visit left its mark in the form of several portraits he had created there, among which are portraits of the members of the Prince's family. One of the curiosities from this period is that Čermák was awarded by Montenegrin Prince Nikola I Petrović, probably because he had taken part in one of the battles Montenegrins fought against the Turks.

The motifs from these parts of the Balkans would become central to Čermák's oeuvre. Slavophil ideas and the support to Balkan Christians sparked Čermák's interest and led him to the thematization of Montenegro. His oeuvre was thus mostly interpreted along romanticist and patriotic lines, especially concerning the then-dominant Czech Slavophil discourse in which Montenegro represented the embodiment of the ideals of Slavism and the fight for freedom (Šistek, 2009, pp. 43–45). However, it seems that Čermák's work carries more complex layers of meaning and it warrants further consideration of its visual vocabulary, especially in line with the Western projections about the Balkans.

Depictions of women were the ones that occupied the central place in Čermák's visual representation of Montenegro. As the protagonists of most paintings, women are the key feature of Čermák's imagery of this world, which he thematically varied in several variants. One of the versions was portraits of an idealized young woman, a selected model, which was – with minor variations – repeated several times throughout the series of paintings. One of the main features of Čermák's female portraits was the typification of a character with black hair and dark eyes – as one critic stated, he was indeed designated as “the painter of the Montene-



Fig. 1: Jaroslav Čermák,
Černohorská kráska (Montenegrin Beauty),
1860–65.



Fig. 2: Jaroslav Čermák, *Černohorská madona / Černohorka s dítětem (Montenegrin Madonna / Montenegrin Woman with Child)*, 1865.

grins with rough mustaches and beautiful girls with hair as black as crow's wing" (Claretie, 1876, p. 149). What complemented this almost emblematic character of a Montenegrin woman were folk costumes and heavy jewelry, as a point of reference that ethnographically specifies the origin of the anonymous woman portrayed. In that, the painter freely used various materials, as in other compositions where he brings a mix of Montenegrin and Herzegovinian attires, aiming for the reality-effect in the final result. Incidentally, it is often the case that Čermák's paintings in their later life frequently varied in terms of names where both variants – the Montenegrin or the Herzegovinian – are simultaneously present, following the common practice of not differentiating much between these close and connected areas.

A similarly conceived female character also appears in Čermák's idyllic depictions of the mother with child. As an everyday scene, it has been repeated in many works, where Čermák varied similar female figures, giving them a very characteristic Madonna-like undertone (Šistek, 2009, p. 48). Such a feature is especially noticeable in scenes of the mother with her child where an animal is introduced as well, which not only invokes



Fig. 3: Jaroslav Čermák, *Herzegovka napájící koně* (*Herzegovian girl waters the horses*), 1873.

the idyllic moment of connection with nature but also refers to the iconography of scenes such as *Madonna of the Sparrow* or *Madonna with the Lamb*. The motif of female beauty in dream-like scenery Čermák also promoted in paintings such as *Herzegovinian Girl Waters the Horses*, which had no relation to the reality of these parts. The scene is constructed almost like a mythological vision of an indigenous maiden as the ultimate creation of the artist's imagination, in a fusion of the symbols of virgin wilderness and natural purity epitomized in the white horse.

For the European audience and in Paris Salons, Čermák's Montenegrin women fitted greatly into the corpus of Orientalist painting, which was then at the height of its popularity. They projected ideas typical for the discourse of 19th-century Orientalist art and Orientalized representations of "non-Western" women (Nochlin, 1983; Thornton, 1994; Lewis, 1996; DelPlato, 2002). Čermák's creations are dominated by women of Montenegro transposed into the idyllic realm of an imaginary world, a world of which these women became the only visual signifiers. The repeated idealized figure of a young woman, with a typified physiognomy and attractive features, in rich and extravagant garments of a mixed or invented origin, was not a mere idealized image of some "folk-type". It comprised the terms of female beauty, desirability, and exoticism, becoming a visual representation of a world which was a primitive, dangerous, and exotic destination to the Western public – comments such as "superb and barbarian countries" and "the country with rough customs, with martial traits" are just a few examples that appeared as an explanation of the homeland of Čermák's Montenegrin women (Proth, 1878, p. 173; de Ber-



Fig. 4: Jaroslav Čermák, *Razzia de bachi-bouzouchs dans un village chrétien de l'Herzégovine* (*Abduction by Bashi-bazouks in a Christian Village in Herzegovina*), 1861.

nard, 1860, p. 185). The imagination of these “non-Western” women was additionally ensured by keeping women exclusively in the role of a virgin or young mother almost as a rule, without the presence of a man or being in a more complex social relationship. In addition, the Montenegrin beauties depicted with accentuated traditionalism could as well bear meanings associated with female virtue and morality, “purity” untouched by the dangers of modernity, which, all together, ensured the exoticization of this feminine imagery and its commercial success.

Čermák achieved considerable exhibition success also with paintings such as *Abduction by Bashi-bazouks in a Christian Village in Herzegovina* or *Spoils of War (Herzegovina, 1862)*, which even more explicitly bear the features of the Orientalizing views. Thematizing wartime events, Čermák in both works used typical Orientalist motif, focused on the abduction of women for harems and sexualized female victims. This motif marked the visual representation of the Balkans in general – from the 1821 uprising in Greece and the subsequent war events in the Balkans, numerous works were focused on the woman as the symbolic marker of suffering and martyrdom, eroticized and sexualized in many respects, simultaneously projecting the image of Turks as barbarians “of uncontrolled passions”



Fig. 5: Jaroslav Čermák, *Jeunes Herzégoviniennes capturées par les Bachi-bouzouks* (Young Herzegovinian Captives by Bashibazouks), 1877.

(Athanasoglou-Kallmyer, 1989; Schick, 2007). Čermák repeated the topic of women's abduction in a series of works (Ćirović, 2015, pp. 178–181), among which one scene, *Montenegrin Woman in a Harem*, was created as a kind of an epilogue to the abduction narrative. Using the popular Orientalist theme, Čermák depicted the harem as a luxury place filled with women sex slaves in idleness, which repeated stereotypical projections of the harem in the Western imagination. In the harem scenery, the abduct-



Fig. 6: Jaroslav Čermák, *Černohorky v harému* (Montenegrin woman in a harem), 1877.

ed woman in Montenegrin costume was represented as an isolated figure, in contrast to the other slaves amusing themselves. Her figure, brimming with morality and chastity, fully clothed unlike others, provided the space for empathy with the sad fate of the captive woman, simultaneously enabling safe pleasure in gazing at the imagined and forbidden harem world.

The Montenegrin Women Warriors

One of the frequently occurring themes in narratives about the people of Montenegro was the impression of a rigid patriarchal system. In many of the 19th-century travelogues, commentaries were repeatedly made on the social setting in which women were not only subordinate to men but also in charge of most of the hard physical labor, while men were dedicated only to the roles of warriors. On the other hand, what especially stood out in written accounts was the uncommon bravery of Montenegrin women and their participation in warfare. Pavel Rovinsky (1897) recorded that women “constantly followed the army, bringing their husbands, fathers, and brothers ammunition and food, and simultaneously carrying away the wounded from the battlefield and tending to the injured” (p. 235), evidencing that many of these women were wounded and killed on the very same battlefield. William Denton (1877) repeats similar remarks, noting the heroism of the Montenegrin woman immortalized in national poems, as the one “who has not only hurried to and fro with food for her husband engaged in the thick of the fight, but has stood by his side through the long day of conflict, has loaded his rifle, has borne his banner in the field, and has even aided him, with a sword in hand, in defending their common country” (p. 86). In her travel accounts of Montenegro, Winifred Gordon (1918) brings almost identical descriptions:

In war it is the women who are the transport of the army. It is these splendid wives and mothers, who trudge for days on foot behind the soldiers, laden with provisions and ammunition, right into the firing-line, where they are often killed or wounded. A well-known Montenegrin, Dr. Grgic, told me that, during the fighting this winter, the women would walk a three days' tramp, bringing food to their men; see them a brief hour and trudge back again, repeating this all the time during every kind of winter weather. And their loads often weighed 40 lbs.! Brave, enduring and helpful as the Spartan mothers of old (...) (p. 281).

Alongside descriptions of participation in wars, women's behavior was often portrayed as the warrior valor expressed in motherhood and raising sons as fearless warriors, as well as in denial of fear and emotions on the occasions of seeing men off to war. Such a form of female militancy



Fig. 7: Vasily Dmitrievich Polenov, *The Herzegovinian on lookout*, 1876.



Fig. 8: Vlaho Bukovac, *Episode de la guerre du Monténégro (An Episode from the Montenegrin War)*, 1878.

should be seen in the light of the general narrative about Montenegrins, where prevails the image of Montenegrins as a “tribe of highlanders” that resisted the Ottoman enemies owing to the belligerence of its spirit, while their social setting was very rough and patriarchal. In such a framework, the role of women in Montenegro was not extraordinary as it reproduced the same social values. Although their militancy transcended gender norms and seemed like a certain intrusion into the masculine zone of war, it nonetheless did not presuppose independent fighting. Female combativeness was solely at the service of support to the male action and thus stayed in the zone of patriarchal hierarchy. As such, the militancy of Montenegrin women could suit and be negotiated both in visual works and literary ones, as a personification of the Spartan spirit, i.e. female courage that defies setbacks.

Belligerence as the dominant motif in the narratives on women of Montenegro found its place in the visual images, where it negotiated with femininity in a specific way. Its explicit thematization can be seen in several paintings, where the key feature is a warrior-like female figure with arms in her hands. *An Episode from the Montenegrin War* is the title of a painting by Vlaho Bukovac, with which the Croatian artist debuted at the

Paris Salon in 1878 (Kružić Uchytíl, 2005, pp. 22–23). The visual thematization of the war was done by Bukovac with a picture of a young woman in a rocky setting, resolutely holding the knife in hand. A similar scene is made by Russian artist Vasily Dmitrievich Polenov. During his stay in Paris in 1876, Polenov painted *The Herzegovinian on the Lookout*, a female figure in a rocky landscape, with a pistol in her hand and saber in her belt (Kopšicer, 2010, p. 152). The same female model and similar costume can be found in his previously made portrait *The Montenegrin Girl*. Both paintings were exhibited in the 1876 Academy of Arts Exhibition in St Petersburg, perceived as portraits of “two Montenegrin” as we can see from the notes on the exhibition made by the editor Fedor Chizhov (Saharova, 1964, p. 210).

The paintings by Bukovac and Polenov can be taken as examples that bear a complex set of meanings, entwining the notions of femininity, militancy, and wartime dangers. The depiction of a female warrior is generally a representation of challenging meanings, where the mixing of femininity and belligerence brings a problematizing aspect by coupling terms that are utterly contradictory according to gender conventions (Nochlin, 1999, pp. 35–57). However, the paintings by Polenov and Bukovac are in fact creations that effectively resolved the problem of the warrior woman by reducing their threatening potential. Although both female figures bear arms like warriors, the weapons in their hands are the only combat attribute of the portrayed women. The whole attitude and appearance of the figures lack the self-esteem of a strong warrior, while the emphasis is placed on idealized beauty and femininity. A dose of decisiveness is hinted in their slightly frowning faces, but pointing more to a state of endangerment and being forced to defend than to combative aggressiveness. Both armed women are visualized as ambivalence between warrior defense and vulnerability, presented in a form that did not provoke the expected norms of femininity, nor did it intrude into the masculine zone of warriorhood. Both of these Balkan female warriors are confined to conventional femininity which legitimized the narrativization of the armed woman. In the end, they are not the embodiment of a violent attribute, but an image emotionally charged by warnings about the threat from the aggressor whose presence is only suggested. As a representation of the wars in the Balkans, they provided the audience with secured space both for empathizing and enjoying the appearances of attractive armed women in exotic costumes, endangered and without the male savior.

The Montenegrin woman with a saber was also a theme in the work of the Czech artist Josef Huttary, but in a considerably more explicit version of a warrior. As a student of Jaroslav Čermák, Huttary also found his inspiration in the people of Montenegro, which he even toured with



Fig. 9: Josef Huttary, *Černohorská Judyta* (*Montenegrin Judith*), 1886.



Fig. 10: Théodore Valerio, *The Warrior mother*, 1850s

Čermák in 1862 (Šistek, 2009, pp. 46, 57). His depiction entitled *Montenegrin Judith* was published in 1886 in the Czech magazine *Zlatá Praha*, as a picture paired with the eponymous poem by Eliška Krásnohorská (1886), a woman author from the Czech circle of writers interested in Montenegro. Accompanied thematically by verses from the poem, Huttary's depiction brings a figure of a Montenegrin woman holding a saber and a severed head of her Turkish enemy. Along with the title, the whole composition refers undoubtedly to the iconography of Judith with Holofernes' head, a popular art theme suitable for a conceptual parallel. The meanings of Judith in art as the *exemplum* of heroism, fight against tyranny, female virtue that defies the male lust, provided a basis for the visualization of the heroine of the contemporary age (Renate, 2001). Huttary thus offered his variant of the Montenegrin woman as an active soldier, capable of murder, lending it symbolic and heroic legitimacy for the act of cruel revenge through reference to Judith.

In the corpus of images of Montenegrin female warriors, several of them coupled this theme with motherhood and child protection. Among numerous depictions from his 1850s voyage around Montenegro, French artist Théodore Valerio also created a scene with a woman who equipped with arms fulfills her guard duty by a cradle. The scene in fact referred to



Fig. 11: Richard Linderum,
Die Wacht der Montenegrinerin
(*Montenegrin woman on watch*), 1886.



Fig. 12: Jaroslav Čermák,
Femme monténégrine
(*Montenegrin woman*), 1860.

a custom in Montenegro that required men to leave their weapons with one of the older women before entering a church, as explained in Charles Yriarte's (1878, p. 443) travelogue in which Valerio's prints served as illustrations. Valerio also created this scene as an oil on canvas, where he emphasized the central motif of the monumentalized figure of the mother with weapons, after which this painting is currently named *The Warrior Mother*.¹⁶ A similar subject of an armed young mother also appears in the work by German artist Richard Linderum. Entitled *Montenegrin Woman on Watch*, his picture was published 1886 in the Leipzig magazine *Die Gartenlaube*. In addition, it was accompanied by the dedicated poem by Frida Schanz (1886), which significantly determined the whole reception of the image. The verses emphasize the suffering of the woman who in solitude and on the verge of losing courage invokes her absent husband. This provided the picture with a justification for the female arming, introducing the notion of the absent male protector and the loneliness of a woman jeopardized by a dangerous enemy. The same notion can also be found in the perception of one of Jaroslav Čermák's Montenegrin mothers.

¹⁶ Valerio's painting under title *The Warrior Mother* appeared at the Bonhams' London auction in 2006: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/14216/lot/102/> (accessed 5 March 2021).

The picture reproduced in 1860 in *Le monde illustré*, brought a portrayal of a mother and a sleeping child, next to whom are the weapons hung on the wall suggesting the war setting. The caption accompanying the picture in the newsmagazine offered a clarification of this scene with the “gracious” and “melancholy” young Montenegrin woman – that she had been depicted in the moment of contemplating about her absent husband and the dangers that await (de Bernard, 1860).

The Montenegrin Heroines and Nation

Many of the images of Montenegrin women for the European audience were also known to the Serbian public, mostly through reproductions in national magazines. Here they were received in a considerably different cultural context. In line with the idea of Montenegrins as part of the Serbian people, these images gained a new layer of meaning, congruent to national self-images. From the second half of the 19th century, the narrative about the Montenegrin woman gathered momentum in the patriotic-national discourse, in which she became the symbolical embodiment of female patriotism. In Montenegro itself, the idealization of women in national discourse can be traced in literary works, in which women’s bravery and combat support were celebrated. An example of such national heroizing of women can be found in the first literary magazine of Montenegro, entitled *Crnogorka* (*The Montenegrin Woman*), whose printing began in 1871 with the hymn dedicated to the Montenegrin woman on its cover. In his poem *Poputnica “Crnogorki”* (*Marching-Hymn to “Montenegrin woman”*) the founder of the publication Jovan Sundečić immortalized the Spartan character of the Montenegrin woman, depicting her as the one who has mastery of the knife and loads soldiers’ rifles, summing her role with the words – “both a homemaker at her home and a heroine in times of trouble” (Sundečić, 1871). In the same magazine, Sundečić also published the prose piece *Crnogorke junakinje* (*Montenegrin Heroines*), bringing stories about individual heroines who had distinguished themselves in warfare against the Turks (Nikčević, 2010, p. 347). The motif of women in war also found its place in the oeuvre of Montenegrin Prince Nikola I Petrović. His play *Balkanska carica* (*The Balkan Czarina*) begins with a poem dedicated to Montenegrin women. Verses of the poem immortalize their patriotic merits and glorify the unselfish help and self-sacrifice of Montenegrin women in battles (Petrović, 1886, pp. 1–6).

The same image of female war heroism is also outlined in the works by Serbian writers about life in Montenegro, such as Milorad Medaković (1860), Arsa Pajević (1891), or Ljubomir Nenadović (1889). Their writings

included descriptions of Montenegrin women, which mostly praised their patriotism and courage, devotion to their homes and homeland, mainly seen in the light of selfless support to their men in combat. Arsa Pajević (1891) sums his testimonies about wartime female support, stating about the Montenegrin woman character: “The Montenegrin woman wages war like a man, ready to cut off Turkish heads, she can endure anything a hero can, even things some men are not capable of” (pp. 448–449). There is also a comment in Medaković’s (1860) notes about the motherhood of Montenegrin women, highlighted in the patriotic desire to raise a son to be a hero:

Lulling him, she sings to him heroic songs, she nurses him with heroic milk, she fills his heart with what encourages his heroic force; she teaches him how to tie weapons around the waist, how to aim at his oppressors, how to avenge his father and brother and seek vengeance for his old folk... (pp. 19–20).

Envisioned in terms of female militancy, but that which only serves as a supplement to male warriorhood, the image of the Montenegrin woman had the capacity to be established as the ideal of female heroism through patriotic poetry and prose works. In visual arts, the Montenegrin woman was also represented in the terms of combative patriotism, like in the works of Serbian painters Đura Jakšić and Đorđe Krstić, especially in times of war against the Ottomans (Makuljević, 2006, p. 119; Ćirović, 2015, p. 176). In this symbiosis of patriotism and womanhood, the pictures of Montenegrin women by foreign artists were also popularized in the Serbian press, appropriated into the national discourse of female sacrifice. The most favored were works by Jaroslav Čermák, celebrated as a painter of national importance, next to which were works by other artists. The pictures published in the periodicals were frequently accompanied by texts that gave them the desired meaning and nationalized context. For instance, a series of portrayals of Montenegrin life by Théodore Valerio was published in 1880 in the yearbook *Orao: veliki ilustrovani kalendar (Eagle: The Great Illustrated Calendar)*, where they also served as suitable illustrations next to Arsa Pajević’s (1880) article about Montenegrin women. Next year, the same yearbook published pictures of Montenegrin women by Jaroslav Čermák and Théodore Valerio, accompanied with a textual note on Montenegro as the “nest of heroes” (*Orao*, 1881, pp. 127–128), as well as the patriotic short story *Majka Crnogorka (The Montenegrin Mother)* by Tomo Krstov Popović (1881).

Some images in Serbian periodicals were followed by literary descriptions oriented solely to female heroism and patriotism, unlike those from foreign newspapers. This was the case with the above-mentioned picture



Fig. 13: Jaroslav Čermák, *Crnogorka na straži* (*Montenegrin woman on watch*), 1874.

by Richard Linderum *A Montenegrin Woman on Watch* which also appeared in 1887 in the Serbian magazine *Nemanja*. Unlike the poem in the German newspaper which associated the same picture with the narrative of female victimhood and solitude, here it was accompanied by an article that celebrated the patriotic motherhood of Montenegrin women. The caption explained the picture with a story about a mother who puts her son to sleep with poems about Montenegrin heroism. She is thinking about her husband who is fighting on the battlefield, finding solace in the fact that she has a son who would avenge him. She fearlessly holds a rifle, prepared to “fire a bullet into the chest of the five-century-old enemy, if he dared to disturb her at her home” (*Nemanja* 1887, pp. 90–91).

A similar literary narrative accompanied a painting by Jaroslav Čermák entitled *A Montenegrin Woman on Watch*, published in 1874 in the illustrated magazine *Srbadija*. It is an image of an armed woman who is keeping watch in front of a rock shelter in which a man is sleeping while holding a child. Together with a commendatory part about the combat valor of Montenegrin women, the accompanying text in the magazine explained the portrayal as a moving scene with a wounded fighter on his deathbed, who is saying goodbye to his son. Instead of complaining, his wife is waiting for the Turkish bully with a rifle to kill him (*Srbadija*, 1874,



Fig. 14: Jaroslav Čermák, *Crnogorka* (Montenegrin woman), 1876.

pp. 29, 44). The same magazine *Srbadija* published in 1876 a portrait of a Montenegrin woman by Jaroslav Čermák, which just like other images provoked the patriotic sentiment. It was used as an illustration for the article about Montenegrin women, which not only praised their beauty but also ascribed to them moral qualities and patriotism, expressed in raising heroes and bravely seeing men off to war (*Srbadija*, 1876, pp. 29, 32).

✱

The images of Montenegrin women are paradigmatic examples of visual constructions that found their utilization in different cultural settings. Artists of Slavic, as well as those of French or German origins, whose interest in the Balkans was variously motivated, were the creators of visual representations with a similar Orientalizing effect in the aftermath. Shared elements can be found in the thematization of women as the main representative of an entire world. Created with an emphasis on beauty and attractiveness, in roles of virgins and young mothers with clear traits of traditionalism, the Montenegrin women were put on display for visual pleasure, kept within the vision that suited the Western imagination about this

little known Balkan people. Even the specific theme of the woman with arms, which was based on actual war events, was translated into an idealized construct that accented the conventional female beauty, combined with vulnerability and defensiveness. Their visual rhetoric provided the space for the allusions such as female solitude, endangerment, and, finally, the absence of a male savior, the ideas which could effectively play a role within imagination about the Orientalized world of the Balkans, where beautiful women are threatened by a dangerous and lusty enemy. Female endangerment found its other expression in the topics like the abduction for the harem, such as on Čermák's paintings with female captives, where the eroticization of the victim took its explicit form, and where, unlike the images of armed women, the enemy is manifested physically.

Same visual images of Montenegrin women were also popularized in the Serbian public, but appropriated into the national discourse of female self-sacrifice. Published in the press together with texts that gave them intended meanings, the images of Montenegrin women effectively operated in narratives on national identity. Projected as stellar examples of female patriotism, selflessness, and love for the homeland, these gendered images transcended from the Western Orientalizing view into a nationalized context. Based on the idea of female beauty, traditionalism, as well as subordination to the male action, their visual rhetoric was suitable in both discourses, in the Orientalist and the national one, so migration of their meaning was utterly unproblematic and compatible with different ideological concepts.

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ОРИЈЕНТАЛИЗАМ, НАЦИОНАЛИЗАМ И БАЛКАН: СЛИКА ЦРНОГОРСKE ЖЕНЕ

Апстракт: Као и други делови Балкана, Црна Гора је током 19. века привлачила бројне путописце, као и стране уметнике који су стварали визуелне представе о њој и начину живота у овим пределима. У оквиру те визуелне продукције знатан део чиниле су слике Црногорки, углавном креиране у терминима идеализоване женске лепоте, традиционалности, као и ратничке борбености, али и у улогама жртви у ратним околностима. Углавном инспирисане подршком балканским хришћанима и њиховој борби, настале слике Црногорки функционисале су у склопу ширих навода о Балкану виђеном у слици европске „другости“. Исте ове слике истовремено су циркулисале и у српској јавности, али са национализованим значењима и уклопљене у дискурс о женском патриотизму.

Кључне речи: Црна Гора, Балкан, слика жене, оријентализам, национализам

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