

YUGOSLAVIA: THE ASSASSINATION OF A NATION
A STORY OF HOW CULTURAL IDENTITY WAS POLITICIZED AND DESTROYED

By

Maja Subasic

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Introduction

Perception is a powerful thing. How we are perceived can affect our quality of life for the better or for the worse. Whether or not we pretend to care about how we are perceived, it cannot be argued that others treat us in a particular way based on how they perceive us to be. Perception implies a sense of judgment. But not just any judgement, an unavoidable, organic judgement that we cannot ever free ourselves of because it is a part of human nature. While we cannot hide from judgement, we can influence perception.

The culture of Yugoslavia has fallen victim to false perception. Much of what is known about the country and its people has been oversimplified and misconstrued. "...The images used to represent us only diminish our reality further" (Said, 1986, p.4). Due to the Balkan war in the 1990s, Yugoslavia has become synonymous with ideas about ethnic tension, civil war, and tragedy, but this is not what I grew up with.

The Yugoslavia where I was born was a country that was rich in culture, community, and enjoyment of life. It was a place where people of different backgrounds lived and worked together, side-by-side in peace. It was a place where family and friends laughed and celebrated together. It was a country that was loved by the people, because the country was good to its people; then, this sense of community was shattered.

The leadership of Yugoslavia turned against the people by corrupting ethnic identity for its own purposes. Yugoslavs were made to believe that they could no longer live together as they had done before because the government has tapped into "a

powerful reservoir of traumatic memory, subject to manipulation on the part of all who seized the 'disjunctive moment' to reconstitute the state according to nationalist definitions (Denich 1994, p.367)." All of a sudden, the people were told that they were too different to live harmoniously and that they posed a threat to one another. For example, Serbs were told that "Serbs in Croatia have never been as endangered as they are today. The resolution of their national status must be a top priority political question (excerpt from "The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts" as cited in Silber and Little, 1996, p.31). Every part of the culture became politicized, including holidays and celebrations, education, and even foodways. No longer did culture imply a sense of enjoyment for the human spirit and the building of a sense of community; it was redefined as a political statement dividing people into Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. This politicization cut into the people as a knife cuts into a birthday cake until nothing is left but a few crumbs and sprinkles. And, it is because of those very crumbs and sprinkles that I have decided to undertake this project. Though the terror of war has sunken its barbaric fangs into the cultural flesh of the country, the people have managed to keep bits and pieces of the culture from festering. A culture survives because it is deemed important by the people that live it. Culture enables us all to have a richer life and a more fulfilling human experience because it is our means of celebrating community through sharing customs, ideas, and laughter. I grew up with a very positive idea of Yugoslav culture and identity, so I wish to bring this side to light. Through this project, I hope to contribute to redeeming the culture and the sense of community that was once and still remains important to Yugoslavs everywhere.

To analyze the above series of events and how they came to pass, I will first

address the methods that I used to gather the information for this project. I will then discuss the meaning of culture through the framework of Cultural Sustainability, particularly as it pertains to the Yugoslav identity. What happened in Yugoslavia is an example of how identity can be altered through the systematic manipulation of ethnicity and culture and used to instill hatred and divisiveness among the people of a community. In order to better understand how such changes manifested themselves, I will present a discussion of Yugoslav society prior to the Balkan wars. The general themes of Balkan life, including cultural values, politics, community relations, and societal attitudes will be analyzed to demonstrate that Yugoslavs are not inherently conflict-prone as is frequently stated in the works of Western intellectuals (Denich 1994; Cohen 1995). This will be followed by a discussion of ethnicity and folklore to address the changes that took place in Yugoslav identity.

In order to examine the methods that were used by Yugoslav nationalists to transform, and ultimately, destroy the Yugoslav identity, the Balkan wars will be discussed. In this section, I also aim to address the statements that were made by Western intellectuals regarding the nature of the war and how their misanalysis helped propagate the destruction of Yugoslav society. I will then talk about the cultural transformation that occurred as a result of the Balkan wars through the case studies of several Bosnians in diaspora. To ground the idea of identity, I will also include several examples of identity destruction that have occurred globally due to factors similar to the Yugoslav case. I have also included my personal memoir in this project to communicate my position in relation to the themes that I have discussed for it serves as both a case study and a statement of authority.

I want to acknowledge the fact that I did not delve deeply into Yugoslav history beyond the last century for I felt that it was of greater importance to begin with that which I knew, that is, the Yugoslav history that is more-closely tied to the recent Balkan wars. This piece is meant to serve as a point of departure for the work that I plan on engaging with in the future. For that reason, I had to take the time to analyze and grapple with my personal issues relating to the material covered in this work, namely pertaining to identity. Admittedly, the result of this process produced contradictory areas in terms of how I discuss culture and identity throughout this piece. For example, I use the terms “Yugoslavs” or “Bosnians” interchangeably because sometimes I am not sure whether to use the present widely-accepted, yet incorrect term of “Bosnian” or the term “Yugoslav” which I feel is a better fit for my standpoint being that the term is more inclusive and allows for the idea of a diverse Yugoslav population, rather than purposefully kept these areas of vulnerability in my work, as I feel that it reflects the ambiguousness which plagues Yugoslav identity. With these ideas, I hope to invite reconsideration of the events and further study of the related concepts.

Methodology

Personal Narrative

Due to the fact that this story is close in proximity for me, I decided to include a personal narrative. Initially, I struggled with the decision of whether or not to include myself in this project because I did not want my personal journey to overpower the overall message but it quickly became apparent that I could not tell the story honestly without explaining my relationship to the topics covered in this piece. Including my story not only explains my reasons for undertaking this project, it also serves as a case study

of an experience that is similar to that of many Yugoslavs. In other words, to tell my own story was a method of telling the stories of many others.

It was incredibly difficult for me to relive my past through writing about it, but I knew that there was no other option if I was going to carry-out this project correctly. Even though my memories live on to haunt me, I know that I am incredibly lucky to have escaped unscathed aside from bearing emotional scars. The truth is that many others have suffered far worse fates than I have, some of whom are still living today. It would have been cowardly of me to conceal my personal story, for I have asked others to openly share theirs with me and with the world.

My personal narrative justifies my stance and addresses any potential biases in relation to the themes presented. As social scientists, we cannot be objective by denying our relation to the very subjects that we care so deeply about. The closest that we can come to the truth is by admitting any potential biases that we may have, for that is precisely what makes us human.

Literature Review

In order to provide a scholarly basis to the topics that I intended to discuss, I examined several readily-available literary works to determine the story that was being told about Yugoslavia. This process led me to conduct a critical analysis of the literature that is available about not only the Balkan war, but also about Yugoslav culture and the topic of refugees. In doing this, my aim was to provide a reputable scholarly base upon which I could sow ideas about Yugoslav society that I was introduced to organically due to my upbringing, as well as those ideas that I developed through my personal journey of making sense of it all. Yet, in making such an attempt of establishing a strong

scholarly base, I discovered numerous gaps in the literatures which only serve to re-instill the need for greater research on Yugoslav culture.

Much of the literature about Yugoslav history that I found was one-sided and accusatory, painting a picture of ancient ethnic hatred that were merely disguised for a period of time. I felt that this literature reinforced the reasons that were given by the political heads for waging war in the first place, rather than accurately explaining how such distortions of history were used as a method of justification for the war. The literature, even when authored or co-authored by Yugoslavs add to the ethnic divisiveness by using various group-versus-group scenarios, each painting a particular ethnic group as the villain and another as the victim.

I was even more surprised at the lack of literature about Yugoslav culture void of the shadow of the war. The mention of culture was primarily used in reference to the recent Balkan wars. In other words, culture is used to reinforce the notion that the war was waged due to tensions that resulted from ethnic and religious differences among the people. Not only is this an oversimplification of the war, it is an insult to the rich cultural traditions of the region. When I examined more general literatures on Eastern European culture, I found prevailing stereotypes and lumping-together of the people in the region (Schwartz and Bardi, 1997;Hudson, 2001; Cote, 1950). Little was discussed about the diverging spheres of influence in Eastern European lands and how these impacted the cultures of the countries in the region.

Furthermore, when I examined literature on refugees to understand the Yugoslav refugee experience, most of what I found were portrayals of refugees from underdeveloped nations who immigrated to western nations for better opportunities

(Kivisto and Blanck, 1990; Gold 1992; Foner, 1987; Takaki, 1994). While I understand why this theme is more common among literature about refugees, I feel that it is an injustice to the refugee experience to leave out other types of refugees. In the Yugoslav case, the people were not suffering due to decades of mass starvation, lack of resources, and oppression; they were suffering due to the extraordinary circumstances of war. Prior to the war, Yugoslavs enjoyed a certain level of prosperity under an atypical communist regime where they were permitted Western ideas and access to travel. The story of the Yugoslav refugee is not a story of a people that is accustomed to mass suffering, rather it is a story of a people that was reduced from prosperity to mass suffering in the matter of a few, short years.

Though much of the literature I found on the above-mentioned themes was incomplete, it permitted me a level of freedom in attempting to address these gaps, as well as providing me with the challenge of doing so in the most accurate and complete way. These literary voids also serve as direct markers indicating potential causes for the misunderstandings and misinterpretations relating to Yugoslav culture and the Balkan wars.

Interviews

In order to provide a relatable narrative element to the project, I interviewed several Yugoslavs in diaspora in October 2010. The interviews were conducted in-person with the aid of an audio recorder. I selected this device so that I could capture the entirety of the subjects' stories and emotions. Additionally, the audio recorder permitted a level of discreteness to make the subjects as comfortable as possible when speaking about the difficult subject matter.

The interview candidates that I selected for this project are Kasim Subasic, Milan Marinkovic, Zekira Marinkovic, and Danijela Marinkovic. All of the interview subjects were permitted to choose the language that they wanted to be interviewed in so that they would be as comfortable as possible. Kasim Subasic was interviewed in English, while Milan, Zekira, and Danijela Marinkovic were interviewed in Serbo-Croatian. I then transcribed all of the audio files and translated them into the English language.

Kasim Subasic is my father. I chose to interview him because it is important for me to tell my parents' story as a way to thank them for all of what they have done for me. In the field of Cultural Sustainability, the idea of preserving one's own community is extremely important, for the ties that people have to their own communities provide them with the necessary passion to invest in preserving their cherished cultural ways. Since I left my birth country at a young age, my parents were the only ties that I have to my native community and, therefore, it is important to explain their perspective for it is an extension of my own.

My father, Kasim Subasic, is a Bosnian Muslim who married my mother, Borka Subasic, who is a Bosnian Orthodox-Christian. At the time of the interview, my father was fifty-six years old. My family left Bosnia in 1992 and ended up in a Hungarian refugee camp. Shortly afterward, my family moved to Germany, prior to migrating to the United States in 1997. My parents' story is a story of a mixed marriage amid religious and ethnic turmoil. Our family was literally divided in two due to the war and the only way that my parents could stay together and save my sister and I was to leave the country as soon as possible. My parents' story tells the story of those people who have spent most of their lives living in a peaceful Yugoslavia only to be torn from their roots

because they refused to accept the belief that all Yugoslavs could not live peacefully as one nation.

I also chose to interview Milan and Zekira Marinkovic, a Bosnian couple who moved to the United States in the late 1990s. Milan is Serbian (Orthodox Christian) and his wife, Zekira, is Muslim. At the time of the interview, Milan was sixty years old and Zekira was fifty-two years of age. Milan and Zekira, along with their two daughters, Danijela and Dijana, remained in Bosnia during the entire conflict. Being in a mixed marriage proved extraordinarily challenging circumstances for the Marinkovic family during the time of the war-a fate shared by many who refused to adapt the separatist attitude that the war brought along with it. After the war, the family decided to migrate to the United States because they saw that the war had destroyed what was once their home and they saw moving as the only way to ensure a future free of persecution and despair.

I chose to interview Milan and Kira's youngest daughter, Danijela Marinkovic who was in elementary school when the fighting erupted. At the time of the interview, Danijela was twenty-seven years of age. Danijela's perspective provides a contrast to the perspectives of the older individuals that I interviewed. Even though Danijela doesn't remember a lot of events that occurred during the war, I chose to interview her because she falls under the transitional immigrant category; she came to the United States at an age where her level of integration into American society is greater than that of the older individuals. Danijela's description of her adaptation to American life added an important element to the Yugoslav refugee story.

On Transcription and Translation

After I conducted the interviews, I spent approximately three hours transcribing each interview which proved to be simultaneously challenging and rewarding. Due to this being my first attempt at using an audio recorder for interviewing, I felt somewhat uncomfortable with the equipment which made for poor sound quality. In order to compensate for the quiet tone, I had to use a sophisticated headset and turn up the volume to the maximum level so that I could correctly transcribe what the interviewees said during their interviews.

I frequently had to rewind the recordings in order to make certain that I transcribed the information correctly. Furthermore, I wasn't certain how to transcribe long pauses or occasional stuttering of words. I wanted to be certain that the transcriptions were verbatim which seems simple enough but it was challenging to keep myself from attempting to edit the interviews to edit out occasional stuttering and veering off on tangents that weren't necessarily relevant to the subject at hand. After a while, however, I got used to the tempo of just typing out what was said and it was much smoother thereafter.

Listening to the interviews while I was conducting them and later when I was transcribing them was also emotionally draining at times. It was challenging to maintain poise and professionalism as the interviewer because the topics were emotionally stirring for me. I often felt myself holding back tears, particularly when I was interviewing my father. I could tell that he was struggling and holding back many details, which was painful to watch and listen to.

After I transcribed all of the interviews, I had to translate the interviews that I had conducted of the Marinkovic family from Serbo-Croatian into English. Through I speak

the Serbo-Croatian language fluently, I am not familiar with certain terms related to regional or generational dialects which somewhat limits my understanding. My lack of understanding of these regional and generational dialects was most apparent to me when I was translating Milan Marinkovic's interview because his word-choice often proved unfamiliar to me. In order to grasp the full extent of what he wanted to say, I used a Serbo-Croatian to English dictionary to convey his message in the most accurate way possible. The fact that Serbo-Croatian is a phonetic language made this task much easier, however, because I could clearly make out the words, even though I was not always familiar with them.

I want to point out that the Serbo-Croatian language is very closely tied to the culture of the people in the area, more so than I have observed of English or German. I will go as far as to argue that it is necessary to have a grasp of the Serbo-Croatian language in order to understand the regional culture. While speaking the language of a people is an asset to any study of a culture, it is vital in the Yugoslav case. Culturally, the Serbo-Croatian language can often be sarcastic and refer to widely-known regional culture references which cannot be translated into another language because it loses all of its meaning when it is taken out of context, in a manner similar to a fish not being able to survive out of water.

Literature Review

Yugoslavia: Before and During the War

In order to frame the thesis and provide it with necessary structure, I first looked to find as many books about Yugoslavia as I could because I wanted to be certain to be thorough in explaining the history of the country. Yugoslavia underwent drastic changes

in less than a century, which I believe is one of the causes that led to the split. The history of the country also explains the relationships between Muslims, Croats, and Serbs and how this relationship morphed through time. It is important to understand how these peoples co-existed for their cultural ways are extremely similar with regional differences that resulted from outside spheres of influence.

Laura Silber's and Allan Little's *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* was the most complete and neutral book that I could find, tracing the history of Yugoslavia from its creation to the end of the Balkan conflict. Silber and Little meticulously explain what lead to the war event by event including the partition of Yugoslavia and the role that leadership played in exacerbating the events. "Yugoslavia did not die a natural death. Rather, it was deliberately and systematically killed off by men who had nothing to gain and everything to lose from a peaceful transition from state socialism and one-party rule to free-market democracy (Silber and Little, 1996, p.25)". The interweaving of social and political causes that led to the conflict are important to note, because they reflect how political mythology can negatively impact a society causing separation therein and leading to its ultimate breakdown.

In *Bosnia & Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* by Robert J. Donia and John V.A. Fine, Jr., I found a great deal of cultural history that intertwines with the political history that I found in *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*. Donia and Fine explain that a "multiethnic Bosnian society" has been in existence for centuries and that the recent war is based on myths which "betray" the very essence of the society (1994, p.1). I used this piece to illustrate my point for coexistence among the three predominant nations that comprised Yugoslavia, for it is this very tradition that is at the heart and soul of this project, serving

as a beacon of hope and inspiration for peace.

Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition by Lenard J. Cohen was extremely useful to me in explaining the role of the United States in the Balkan conflict. While the international community as a whole was involved in attempting to quell the conflict, my focus is purposefully on the United States because the individuals that I interviewed for this project are all Bosnians who immigrated to the United States. It was not only relevant for this reason, but also because the actions of the Clinton administration during that time directly impact Bosnian attitudes toward the United States and the western world in the present day. In fact, the role of the U.S. and of other western nations led to a significant change in the attitude that Yugoslavs have toward the west. The fact that Cohen dubbed the U.S. policy toward Bosnia "an ambivalent hierarchy of interests (1995, p.282)" speaks volumes in this regard.

I also looked at *The National Question in Yugoslavia* by Ivo Banac to gauge how Yugoslavs viewed themselves prior to the Balkan Wars. This book proved useful in explaining that the nation-state concept was a new invention and that Yugoslav tribes were in existence prior to the invention of this concept (Banac, 1984). Milorad Ekmecic's essay titled "The struggle for Nation States and Modern Society" helped me understand the changes that occurred in Yugoslav society over a prolonged time period, which helped reaffirm my points of a unified Yugoslav history.

In order to gain a better-understanding of how the Balkan wars were being portrayed, I read the works of several Western intellectuals. Thomas Cushman's article "Anthropology and Genocide in the Balkans: An Analysis of Conceptual Practices of Power" helped me dissect some of the claims that were being made by Western

intellectuals about the Balkan wars. Cushman's tone echoed my own critiques of the available literature, helping me frame the diverging arguments that I wanted to present. I looked at two articles by Bette Denich, "Unmaking Multi-Ethnicity in Yugoslavia: Metamorphosis Observed" and "Dismembering Yugoslavia: Nationalist Ideologies and the Symbolic Revival of Genocide", both of which helped me understand the origins of the incorrect portrayal of the Balkan conflict. Although I commend Denich for reporting on the Balkans from the get-go, her one-sided, over-simplistic understanding of the conflict is what helped spark the international confusion around the conflict. Denich often cites "ancient ethnic tensions" as the reasoning behind the wars; a myth which I spend a great deal of time dispelling in this project.

Personal Memoirs

I also wanted to be certain to include as many personal accounts as possible, for there is little out there, especially in the English language that thoroughly and accurately portrays the Yugoslav culture. Much has been politicized and morphed after the war, so finding neutrality and truth became my mission.

Slavenka Drakulic, a Croatian reporter and social critic, did a fantastic job in defining the changing attitudes and ways of life from before the war to shortly after the war. In *Café Europa: Life After Communism*, Drakulic explains, through her own experiences, how Yugoslavs were taught to think and behave and how this impacted their outlook in life, as well as toward other nations. The most significant matter, which I tried to highlight throughout the thesis, is how the Yugoslav experiences differed from other Eastern Europeans. Drakulic explains how Yugoslavs were emancipated and had many more freedoms than their Eastern European counterparts. "Traveling was very

important to people from Yugoslavia, because we could do it, while the others in Eastern Europe could not. It was also a rebellion against the communist state, making ourselves vulnerable to the 'contamination' of Western ideas and lifestyles (1996, p. 18)". It is this experience that most significantly demonstrates how Yugoslavs view the world, for they are not a people that is shut-off from the rest of the world-as is commonly perceived of Eastern Europeans.

Several years ago, while I was an undergraduate student at Elizabethtown College, I had the opportunity to attend a talk by, journalist, professor, and author, Samantha Power. Listening to Ms. Power brought up a whirlwind of emotion in me, because it felt so good to hear someone tell the story that I desperately wanted to tell. Ms. Power spoke of American involvement in relation to instances of genocide. What struck me in particular was her emphasis on the Balkan case, because it was so personal for me.

After the talk, I immediately purchased her book *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* and I had the opportunity to speak with her and express my gratitude for her work. In my book, Ms. Power wrote "For Maja, with apologies for what was allowed to happen to your beautiful country". Ms. Power inspired me with her words and her kindness on that day and I wanted to be sure to include her work in this project as a way to thank her for her work and for that day.

A Problem from Hell: American and the Age of Genocide discusses how American leadership repeatedly fails to keep its promise when it comes to preventing and stopping genocide. Power cites many instances where America failed to take proper action or any at all, including Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and Iraq. In an effort

to relate the topics that I discuss in my thesis to an international community and broaden the scope of my work, I referred to Power's analysis of the above-mentioned examples.

"Brothers at Arms Texas Documentary Tour: Mitko Panov's Comrades" by Anne S. Lewis and "An Inner Exodus: The many Diasporas of Balkan Cinema" by Gareth Jones both reference the documentary film "Comrades" which speaks of the Balkan diasporic experience which I used in example of the aftermath of the Balkan wars. Panov's documentary speaks of the struggles that Yugoslavs endure despite the fact that the war has ceased.

Refugees and Immigrants

When I was searching for articles and books on refugee experiences, I came across many books that were written from perspectives that did not match the Yugoslav experiences. The public image of contemporary immigration has been distorted by immigration influx from Third World origins (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p.7). Most of the books that I found speak of a refugee who comes from underdeveloped nations and who has not been introduced to the ways of the western world. Commonly, this refugee lived in squalor and lacked opportunities prior to immigrating to the United States or other western nations. However, this image does not reflect the backgrounds and reasons for immigration of Yugoslavs. There is a stereotype about refugees that seeps into our psyches and our literature, and we fail to recognize that all humans, regardless of political, economic, or social status, can be refugees depending on the climate of the day.

Perhaps this is due to a secret fear of becoming a refugee, for being a refugee,

means that one does not have control of their circumstance. Being a refugee means that you are in a state of limbo; that your previous existence has been forcefully stripped from you. As humans, we seek control of our lives and our environment in every arena imaginable. Being a refugee means that you have been reduced to the mercy of other people, like an animal. Recognizing this literary void, I decided to include my personal experience, as well as several case studies of other Bosnians to more accurately represent and define the Yugoslav refugee experience.

This being said, I was extremely pleased to have found *Immigrant America: A Portrait* by Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut because these authors explain that this is “because the sending countries are generally poor, many Americans believe that the immigrants themselves are uniformly poor and uneducated (1990, p. 7).” The authors attempt to convey a more realistic image of American immigrants, taking care to dispel various myths which are tainting the cultural exchange and learning among people with different backgrounds. Portes and Rumbaut are definitely on the right path with changing the depiction of the American immigrant landscape, a feat that I wholeheartedly support and wish to contribute to.

In order to explain the process of assimilation, I turned to Milton G. Gordon’s *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. Gordon’s perspective is more of one from the observer or outsider of the assimilation process, pondering the question of “when has full assimilation been reached?” Gordon’s theories were useful in gauging the level of assimilation of the interview subjects by providing a broader perspective of the phenomenon as it pertains to American society. “Assimilation has not taken place, it is asserted, until the immigrant is able to

function in the host community without encountering prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behavior (Gordon, 1964, p.63)". Peggy Levitt's chapter "Transnationalism" from *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* helped me frame the "next steps" in terms of what it means for society to become more globalized as a result of the intermingling of cultures through refugees and immigrants.

The chapter titled "Refugees" by Charles Simic in Andre Aciman's *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss* was refreshing in the sense that I could truly relate to the themes that Simic spoke of, including the prejudice that refugees face during their journey to their new homeland and the difficulty of communicating with others due to insecurity. Simic's account of refugees was also one that echoed the idea that refugees are individuals who did not want to leave their homes, but had to due to the politics of the time (Simic, 1999). Sebastiao Selgado's introduction to the photography collection titled *Migrations: Humanity in Transition* truly spoke to me in numerous ways so I used quotes from this piece throughout the paper because Selgado's words were remarkably congruent with the message that I wanted to portray.

Ethnicity

Raoul Narroll's "On Ethnic Unit Classification (and Comments and Reply)" helped prove my point of a joint Yugoslav ethnicity. I used Narroll's characteristics of an ethnic group to justify that the division of people nations in the Balkans does not possess a valid basis. Larry Danielson's *Studies in Folklore & Ethnicity* provided needed information concerning definitions pertaining to ethnicity and how these definitions were formed and what they mean in the context of a folk. Danielson also spoke of

the “articulation of ethnicity through folkloric behavior (1977, p.1)” which assisted in the explanation of cultural practices of Yugoslavs residing in the United States.

Additionally, this book served to help explain the assimilation processes that occur when a person relocates to a new culture. Having this information helped support the personal stories provided by various Yugoslav immigrants by providing examples of commonly-encountered challenges and feelings that an immigrant undergoes during the assimilation process. “Is There A Folk in the City?” by Linda Degh and Leonard W. Moss explained the origins of communities (refugee communities) in the United States.

Werner Sollors’ *The Invention of Ethnicity* was instrumental in explaining how the Serbs used myths to re-define the Serb identity, thereby fictionally creating a history of a separate peoples. This “invention” is what was used to divide Yugoslavia’s people by claiming that the people were not of one group, rather of warring groups that were in competition for resources with one another. What became of even greater importance was to note that “ethnic conflicts do not appear less real just because they are based on an “invention”, ethnic construction (Sollors, 1989, XV)”. Sollors’ work helps explain how we are always creating and re-creating ethnicity, which also translates into how all cultures change over time, rather than being static. I first read *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* by Michael Foucault as an undergraduate student when I was majoring in Criminal Justice. As I was thinking of ways to explain how imposing a new identity upon an individual leads to cultural collapse, I remembered this book which speaks of imposing identities. I used Foucault’s explanation to demonstrate the negative effects that politicization of culture has on a people’s psyche.

Vermeer in Bosnia by Lawrence Weschler was a gift of a find, because he truly

captured several key themes that I wanted to portray in this project. Weschler explained how the creation of “self” and “other” contributed to the ethnic divisions of Yugoslavia. What’s more, Weschler points out the insanity of this “historic cycle of floodtides of ethnic bloodletting (2004, p.10)” by pointing out how Serbs, Croats, and Muslims lived together peacefully for decades and decades. Weschler’s approach to the topic was refreshing due to his vivid use of language and courage to point out the many discrepancies in the conflict.

The chapter “Nation, Ethnicity and Community” by Gerd Baumann helped me understand how modern society has formed over the last few centuries and what that means for the cultures of the present world. Linda Degh’s “The Study of Ethnicity in Modern European Ethnology” proved useful in explaining the Eastern European understanding of a nation, drawing on similar themes as Baumann.

Edward W. Said’s *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* provided a case study for the misrepresentation of a people’s identity. Said’s discussion of the prejudices against Palestinians because of the conflicts in the Middle East related to the idea of oversimplification of a culture due to a one-sided portrayal by the media body. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* by Liisa Malkki then came in hand to describe how such misrepresentation affects refugees, leading to them becoming invisible which essentially equates to cultural disappearance (Malkki, 1995).

Culture

The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning by John Hawkes was useful in tying-in the concepts of Cultural Sustainability, while also

proving that Tito's Yugoslavia was a culturally-sound society prior to the war. I referenced Richard B. Lee's book on the San people, *The dobe ju/'hoansi* to explain the sarcasm and joking present in the Serbo-Croatian language. The dobe ju/'hoansi are the only other people groups that I know of who use this type of duality to communicate.

Finally, I included Edmund Stillman's *The Balkans* to cement the content by adding a necessary cultural background. Stillman takes the time to discuss the Balkans as a whole but takes care to separate the histories and cultures of the countries when necessary, including century-old traditions onward. Being of Yugoslav origin, I am very critical of any publications discussing the culture because much of what is out there has been misconstrued, politicized, and divided according to the newly-created ethnic lines. Stillman's analysis of Balkan history and culture provided factual information without the bias that pollutes the Balkan truth. "Yugoslavia is a Mediterranean country; it belongs to the region of the sun. Its merriment has been blotted out too often in the tragic past (1964, p.93)".

Theorizing Culture from the Standpoint of Cultural Sustainability

Culture is an intangible universal concept that belongs to all people. Culture is created, shaped, and morphed to fit societal needs. "Culture is one of those omnibus terms like democracy or environment which embraces many different usages employed by many different people for many different purposes (Hawkes, p.iii, 2001)". Many sources and values can serve as cultural templates that guide a society's way of life, including place and religion.

In the Yugoslav sense, a place-based culture is shared by all of the people through a bond that is formed through a mutual understanding unknown to the outside

world. Through the commonalities of language, food ways, music, history, and everyday life, an unspoken social contract organically guides Yugoslav society as it has done for centuries.

This place-based Yugoslav culture emerged slowly and organically with the changing society, like a sweet plum ripening through the warmth of the Yugoslav sun. "This culture is not the decoration added after a society has dealt with its basic needs. Culture is the basic need-it is the bedrock of society (Hawkes, p.3, 2001)." This place-based culture was something that was not rigidly defined, yet it existed because the people lived it. It existed because it was created out of a sense of need with cultural resources that were native and common to the region. This culture was not consciously developed, rather it was something to the equivalent of an infant knowing how to breathe upon emerging from its mother's womb. Culture wasn't forced upon the people; it simply existed because it was needed for basic life.

Yet, from time to time, voices of opposition made themselves heard because they wanted to exert a sense of ownership of this culture. Because of this, the Yugoslav culture was under attack like a free-range spring chicken being engulfed by a ravenous wolf. No longer was it considered sufficient to simply live culture. In fact, it was deemed meaningless to live without a label. Due to the new voices and ideas, people began defining themselves more prominently through their religious-orientation.

No longer was it acceptable to be a Yugoslav, one was pressured to declare themselves to be a Croat, Serb, or Muslim to be considered a citizen. "As Bette Denich points out: "In the South Slavic languages, the word "*narod*" means both "people" and "nation". Thereby, the "nation-state" is attached to a specific "nation", or "people,"

conceived as an ethnic population (1993, p.51)". This meant that being a Yugoslav had no meaning on its own and that, Yugoslavia, was not a true nation. Many western intellectuals have argued that Yugoslavia is an invention that never truly existed. Yet, that can be said of any nation or group of peoples, for nations and citizenship are mere manifestations of humanly-created societal boundaries that have shifted and fluctuated throughout history. To say that Yugoslavia was an invention is to say that Yugoslavs are not real people. This matter is personal to me because I am the child of a Slavic Muslim and a Serb. I do not fit these narrow definitions of "*narod*". If I am not a Yugoslav, then I am nothing at all.

Western intellectuals like Bette Denich argue that "the equation between "people" and "nation", contained within the single word "*narod*" provides no allowance for nationhood detached from ancestry (Denich, p.51)". And, misinterpretations such as these further add to the chaotic cauldron of hell that Yugoslavia's identity has been submerged into. The problem is not the encompassing nature of the term "*narod*", rather the problem is that being Yugoslav was deemed insufficient as an identity marker and not by the people themselves but by greedy leadership.

The nation of Yugoslavia was murdered and tactfully butchered by its own leadership. To say that Yugoslavia is fictitious is to say that the United States of America is fictitious. The United States consists of fifty states and the citizens call themselves and are known as "Americans". There is a wide-spread understanding that individuals have a diverse ancestral heritage, yet they do not go as far as to divide themselves into new-found mini-nations of Italian-Americans, Chinese-Americans, etc. Rather, some practice bits and pieces of their ancestral cultural ways but under the

umbrella of being an American citizen. In the same fashion, Yugoslavia encompassed six states and two provinces that were occupied by a multi-ethnic Yugoslav society. There were some regional differences and dialects among the people that naturally-occurred to meet the needs of their place-based culture, but as a people they were (and still are) one.

It can be argued that there needs to be a certain level of homogeneity among a people for them to be considered a nation, but where specifically are these lines to be drawn? If a nation were to be defined so narrowly, would that not mean that the United States of America is not a *real* nation?

Americans have been accused of not having a culture, yet many Americans protest this statement. How then, it is fair of American intellectuals to impose such rigid judgements upon Yugoslavs, thereby reinforcing the politics of Yugoslavia's corrupt leadership? I am a Yugoslav and an American through-and-through, so does that mean that I am without nation and culture? The fact that I do not fit the above-described rigid standards does not mean that I am without nation, culture, or identity. Rather, it testifies that the definitions that were imposed upon Yugoslavs are ill-fitting, outdated, and senseless. Forcing one's identity to fit such rigid definitions is like performing self-mutilation to fit into a tiny dress. The terms "Yugoslavia" and "Yugoslav" are purposely used throughout this paper as a protest against the corruption of leadership and the division of the Yugoslav people.

Culture, as I define it for the purpose of this piece, is a collective achievement of the human condition that is innately formed in response to the need for a greater existence. Culture is both a conscious and unconscious human manifestation.

Therefore, culture can have regional, religious, linguistic, or political roots. Regional or place-based culture emerges out of basic life needs including the attainment of foodways and shelter. Regional culture develops out of best practices for survival in a particular environment. In other words, regional culture is how people respond to the natural resources that they are provided with in their immediate environment.

Religiously-based culture emerges out of the human need to explain one's environment through supernatural means. Religiously-based culture appeals to the human need for understanding its origins and creation. Linguistically-based culture emerges out of shared means of transmitting information which leads to cultural similarity. While, politically-based culture emerges out of the need for the attainment of power and control of one's environment, specifically in response to the competition between people groups. Politically-based culture leads to the formation of tribes and nation states which serve as arenas for displaying power. Of these, regionally-based culture possesses the greatest purity for it exists for the noble purpose of basic survival without imposing the philosophies of the other three types of culture. Regionally-based culture does not dictate the existence of a people beyond these basic needs, while linguistically, religiously, and politically-based cultures impose idealistic boundaries upon people.

Cultural Sustainability is about preserving the cherished culture of a people through the inclusion of the community whose culture is being threatened by various forces. The Yugoslav identity and way of life has been under threat by its own leadership for a period of time and much of what Yugoslavia was has deteriorated as a result (Donia and Fine, 1994). The question that no one seems to be asking is: "What is it that most truly matters to the Yugoslav people?". Did the people ask for these "ethnic"

divisions? Was it worth the cost of countless lives to cut the identities of Yugoslavs into categories of Serbs, Croats, and Slavic Muslims, thereby excluding all individuals who do not fit into those three categories, including Jews, Gypsies, Asians, and individuals whose parents intermarried?

If that is the case, then culture is merely a product of a rigid ethnic or religious category, meaning that anything that does not fit into these pre-determined categories cannot be constituted as culture. To over-categorize and compartmentalize ourselves is to cheapen the human experience. Humans differ from other beings on earth for their ability to reason and make their own choices. Therefore, it is a crime against humanity to deny people the right to live and choose their identity freely.

Culture came about organically because people wanted to celebrate life and community together in a spirit of simplicity stemming from their basic human needs. Is that not what life is about? There would be no music, song, or dance if that was not what we all wanted at the very core of our being. If that is the case, then the politicization of culture would bring about the opposite effect. If every part of identity and culture holds a thread to politics, it becomes void of the human spirit. Before ethnicity, race, religion, or politics, we are just human. Culture, first and foremost, exists out of the need to survive through sharing the experience of life with others. To counter this simple human desire is a threat to the livelihood of community; a crime that was committed first-hand by the Yugoslav leadership against its own people.

Yugoslav Culture

Tito's Yugoslavia

Tito's Yugoslavia (1943 to 1992) was the antithesis to what the region has been

kneaded into today by the post-Tito leadership. It was a multi-ethnic nation that was organized under the motto of “brotherhood and unity”. All of my life, I have always heard about how good life was in Tito’s Yugoslavia for all people, regardless of whether they were Serb, Croat, Slavic Muslim, Roma, Jewish, etc. Yugoslavia, under Tito was a nation for the people and, in turn, the people loved Yugoslavia. My father, Kasim Subasic, reflected on this time period:

“My life in Bosnia was, I can say, pretty good...everything was pretty much in its place. We lived in the middle of town, everything was close to our apartment. Like the elementary school, public transportation, ambulance. Actually everything, everything we needed was within a couple hundred yards around us. And I had a good job. And, we had, if I can say, a lot of fun in that time of our life. We had a couple, maybe two-three families who were very good friends. And we, we had a very active social life. We visited each other all the time, we visited different places, we used to sit together making jokes and, if I can say that, life was really, really good at the time (personal conversation 2010)”.

When people hear the word “communism”, they envision a gray social uniformity void of individualism, joy, and color. When author Edmund Stillman visited Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, he described the country as “...a pleasant shock in a world accustomed to bad news (Stillman, 1964, p.91)”. While, the communist ideals of equality and togetherness were obligatorily weaved into every aspect of life per Tito’s regime in order to instill a sense of community among Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, the people were not suppressed in terms of their everyday lives. As Leonie Sandercock states: “Diversity is not just to be tolerated, but valorized, given value by the dominant

culture (Hawkes, 2001, p.13)". Through inclusion of all people within Yugoslavia, Tito planted the seeds for a multi-ethnic society.

Under Tito, Yugoslavia became "the first self-proclaimed socialist state to adopt policies designed to promote individual satisfaction rather than purely collective well-being (Stillman, 1964, p.92)". After the end of the Second World War, the old Balkan cultural traditions were revived by Yugoslav citizens and the people were "once again enjoying artistic and educational opportunities (Stillman, 1964, p.81). "Large cities in the Balkans have been vigorous cultural and academic centers for centuries (Stillman p.81)" and the end of the war brought about a heightened sense of enjoyment of life for the towns people.

When Tito's regime took effect, villagers struggled to hurriedly adapt to the revived urbanization. "People were forced to leap from feudalism to communism, without the time or education to develop a civic society and all its values and habits, from the concept of private property to human rights, from democracy to toilet paper (Drakulic, 1996, p.36)". This rapid transition did not allow for society to become properly acclimated to the urbanization, thereby, perpetuating the existence of such a social gap between villagers and towns people. Nonetheless, Yugoslavs from the villages made every effort to convert to the new system.

Milan Marinkovic explains his family's move from the village to the city:

"My father and mother worked the land, because they wanted a better life and so my mother and father decided to move to the city where life was easier-schooling, going to the doctor and all of that-the easier life. When I was born, it was very difficult to work the land because the means were so primitive and it was difficult to maintain, so in

order to have an easier life and for us children, my parents decided to move to the city. That happened in 1955-when we moved to Tuzla in Bosnia. We stayed there until we left for America (personal conversation 2010)”.

Prior to that war, Yugoslavia was thriving both socially and economically. Yugoslavs took great pride in preserving old traditions and cultural ways in numerous forms. As Stillman describes: “The old art and literature are still close to the hearts of the people (1964, p.122)”.Balkan literary history has always been of great importance to the people of Yugoslavia and has been passed down from generation-to-generation for centuries. Mirroring the bitter-sweet history of the region, the texts reflect the Balkan romanticized view of suffering. According to Yugoslav culture, the spirit is of greater importance than the flesh. And, for this reason, Balkan folklore, poetry and art continue to celebrate the inner world of humanity rather than the outer (Stillman, 1964).

While Balkan culture places greater emphasis on the human spirit than the outside world, the culture is anything but demure. “No livelier folk-art form exists than that of the enormously variegated, swiftly moving dances of the Balkans (Stillman, 1964, p.126)”. Yugoslavs find no greater enjoyment than getting together with others to sing, dance and celebrate, for this is how they most like to honor their inner spirit. There are many variations of dances, depending on the theme of the festivities. In the warrior dance, for example, “men sweep their swords in great arcs as they leap and twist in the constantly shifting kolo, or circle, characteristic of most Balkan dances. The eerie sound made by the flashing swords, known as “whiffling,” was originally intended to frighten away the beasts of the Balkan forests (Stillman, 1964, p.126)”.

Under Titoism, such social activities centered around the arts and culture were

encouraged to support a sense of community among the people, while outward displays of religiosity were discouraged to quell any differences among the Yugoslavs. As a result of over fifty years of a very secular and secularizing Yugoslav state, few modern-day Yugoslavs are deeply religious (Donia and Fine, 1994, p.9). Yet, regardless of the religious suppression, the Yugoslavs were content with their lives. Milan Marinkovic explains:

“I was happy with my job and so I decided to educate myself and everything was okay. I had an apartment which was given to me by my company. We lived in the center of the city, two children were born there, and we stayed there until the very day that we left for the United States. Most importantly, I was satisfied with my life. I had many friends, acquaintances, and family members. We were very social and we were there for one another. We had a nice, stable life, which I want to have forever (personal conversation translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)”.

Milan's wife, Zekira Marinkovic, a Muslim born in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina provides a female perspective:

“My life before the war was extremely good. I gave birth to two daughters. I had a job at a hospital in the city. My husband also worked. We had a divine apartment with two bedrooms. We earned enough money to cover all of our living expenses...We had nothing to complain about in our lives. That was before the war. When the war began, everything was different (personal conversation translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)”.

The Four Pillars of Sustainability

Sustainability centers around passing on “a world at least as bountiful as the one

we inhabit” to future generations (Hawkes, 2001, p.25). According to Jon Hawkes, there are four pillars that embody sustainability: *economic viability, environmental responsibility, social equity, and cultural vitality*.

Hawkes equates economic viability with “economic prosperity (2001, p.25)”. In terms of Titoist Yugoslavia, economic viability was evident due to the lifestyles that Yugoslavs were able to afford. Starting in the late 1950s, it became easier and easier for Yugoslavs with passports to travel because visas were not a requirement. “Yugoslavia was well off and people would afford to travel both as tourists and as what they called ‘shopping tourists’, to buy what we could not get in our own country (Drakulic, 1996, p.16)”. In the following decades, millions of Yugoslavs traveled abroad to spend their money and would bring back a taste of the west to their families, friends and neighbors. Traveling was important to Yugoslavs because they had the freedom to do it, while other Eastern Europeans could not and it was a way to demonstrate a separation from communism (Drakulic, 1996, p.18).

Due to the resulting western exposure, many Yugoslavs were introduced to western films, music, fashions, foods, and attitudes. “The intellectual young of the country study abroad, and even when they do not, they are fully conversant with the work of *avant garde* Western writers, artists and film directors. Popular recordings, from the Beatles to whatever new outrage is current in the West, are also available; the Yugoslavs themselves play assiduous jazz (Stillman, 1964, p.92)”.

The concept of environmental responsibility refers to a sense of “ecological balance (Hawkes, 2001, p.25)”. In the 2007 independent film project titled “Fatal Circle” by Bosnian director Nisvet Hrustic that I helped translate from the Serbo-Croatian into

English, the topic of Yugoslavia's dilapidating environmental responsibility is the focus. While this is not the topic of this paper, I want to briefly address this point for the sake of being thorough in citing Hawkes' *Four Pillars of Sustainability* because all of these components are necessary for a healthy society (Hawkes, 2001). And, while much more evidence is needed to support this hypothesis, it can be deduced from Hrustic's film (as well as from word-of-mouth and through my own experiences) that the Yugoslavs' respect for the environment has plummeted which may indicate the decrease in favorable public opinion of the present state of society as a whole (a topic perhaps best left for future research).

Social equity refers to a sense of justice, engagement, cohesion, and welfare (Hawkes, 2001, p.25). In Titoist Yugoslavia, the communist principles of economic equality prevailed throughout the land. In the old days, traveling was a privilege reserved for those who were well off and they would bring back various goods that one could not find in Eastern Europe. While today, it is not a matter of not being able to find certain goods, the unwritten custom of bringing presents back for friends and relatives remains because most goods are still much cheaper in the west. There is also the egalitarian principle of "the haves" giving to the "have not's" which still remains in the Yugoslav psyche. Therefore, those who have (a.k.a. those living abroad) are expected to give to those who do not have (a.k.a. those living in the old country). In Titoist Yugoslavia, there was a true sense of '*drustvo*'. In Serbo-Croatian, '*drustvo*' refers to an active form of friendship, camaraderie, and social engagement in the community. This term specifically refers to a multi-dimensional participation in communal activities where members of the *drustvo* are expected to devote time to leisurely activities (such as a

variety of social get-togethers), while simultaneously being available to help out members of their *drustvo* when needed. *Drustvo* differs from the Serbo-Croatian term '*prijatelj*' which also means 'friend' but does not imply the social responsibility and sense of community which '*drustvo*' entails.

Cultural vitality, the primary focus of this discussion, refers to a sense of creativity, diversity, innovation and overall wellbeing of society (Hawkes, 2001, p.25). Yugoslavia had a rich cultural landscape and readily-available activities that inspired a sense of togetherness among Yugoslavs. "Prosperity has brought new interest in sports and other leisure-time pursuits. On the dance floor and ski slope, and in the sunshine of beach resorts (Stillman, 1964, p.81)". Due to a heightened standard of living, Yugoslavs were able to enjoy economic stability which enabled them to have free time to enjoy themselves and take part in social events. "On any fine evening in spring, strolling crowds fill the streets of Belgrade, Zagreb or Sarajevo (Stillman, 1964, p.93)".

Ethnicity and Folklore

This section is dedicated to the exploration and definition of concepts relating to ethnicity and folklore in an effort to analyze the re-definitions of Yugoslav identity by Yugoslav leadership and Western intellectuals as a result of the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

According to Raoul Narroll (1964), an ethnic group contains the following four basic characteristics: 1) biological self-perpetuation 2) shared basic cultural values realized through a common expression of cultural forms 3) the constitution of forms of communication and interaction 4) possession of a membership which is recognized by itself and others, "as constituting a category distinguished from other categories of the

same order (Danielson, 1978, p.9)".

It is commonly known that all peoples are capable of biological self-perpetuation whether such self-perpetuation occurs between homogeneous or heterogeneous individuals. Therefore, biological self-perpetuation is not a characteristic of ethnicity for one's ability to produce offspring is not hindered by ethnic lines, rather certain physical characteristics such as height and skin color can serve as indicators of belonging to an ethnic group in the traditional sense. Due to globalization, heterogeneous societies are becoming more and more common, which will undoubtedly create an even greater need for the re-definition of what constitutes an ethnic group. In the Yugoslav case, the matter of biological self-perpetuation in the traditional sense proves irrelevant due to the fact that one cannot distinguish Yugoslavs by the above-described physical characteristics. With that being said, Yugoslavs bear no distinction in terms of phenotypic or genotypic biology.

Secondly, specific fundamental cultural values are found among Yugoslavs that serve as evidence of shared tangible and intangible culture. Throughout the Balkans, these cultural commonalities are manifested through forms of national dress, literatures, folk dances, food ways, and unspoken social codes. The national dress varies regionally in terms of color and minor stylistic elements, but in all cases, it includes a head piece embellished with *dukati* (gold coins), a peasant blouse, an embroidered cropped vest, *opanke* (Slavic moccasins), and a long skirt or *dimije* (harem pants) for women. For men, the national dress includes a cap of some sort (a *fes* if the wearer is Muslim), knickers or harem pants, a blousy peasant shirt, *opanke*, and an embroidered cropped vest or jacket. Balkan literatures have been shared by all people in the region

for centuries, containing the themes of a romanticized suffering, homage to shared Balkan landscape features, and the simplicity of life in the Balkans. All folk dances are based on the idea of a *kolo* (circle dance) where dancers hold each other's hands while swiftly moving their feet to the *narodna muzika* (folk music) which echoes themes of communal celebrating such as weddings and drinking with the *drustvo* (see above). In terms of cuisine, all people in Yugoslavia share the knowledge and consumption of popular dishes such as *sarma* (sour cabbage stuffed with beef and rice), *pita* (thin flaky dough filled with either cheese (*sirnica*), ground beef (*burek*), potatoes (*krompiraca*), spinach (*zeljanica*), etc)-it is the Balkan equivalent of the Italian pizza, *baklava* (a thin, flaky honey cake), and, of course, the ever-popular Balkan fast-food, *cevapi/ cevapici* (grilled sausages made of ground meat served in a flat bread (*lepina*) along with onions and *ajvar* (Balkan salsa made of eggplants and peppers).

The national language of Yugoslavia was Serbo-Croatian (Serbian and Croatian), which in itself demonstrates a sense of unity due to the indication of plurality of people. Serbo-Croatian was taught in Yugoslav schools, written in both the Latin and Cyrillic (Old Church Slavonic language most commonly-found in Russia and Eastern Europe) alphabets (Ager, 1998). Aside from the actual language, Yugoslavs share the understanding of a language-based relationship centered around sarcasm and joking which bears some similarity to that of the San people of the Dobe area of southern Africa by the name of Ju/'hoansi-!Kung. The Ju/'hoansi people possess the custom of a joking kin relationship whereby those individuals who are close of kin use joking as a form of endearment (Lee, 2003, p.68). Similarly, Yugoslavs use certain dual phrases that can be used as insults or terms of endearment depending on the tone in which they

are uttered. For example, the phrase “*jebem ti mater*” is the Serbo-Croatian equivalent of the English phrase “*fuck you*”. However, in Serbo-Croatian, this phrase is often used by older Yugoslavs when speaking to younger Yugoslavs who are close of kin as a term of endearment. In other words, being able to insult one another jokingly reinstates a close bond between the Yugoslav people. While an outsider who is not accustomed to these cultural nuances would most likely be shocked, Yugoslavs recognize this duality of language and are not stirred by it when they hear it.

The problem arises in reference to Narroll’s fourth point regarding categorical identification of an ethnic group. While Yugoslavs bear no relatively significant biological, cultural, or linguistic distinctions, religious differences are present which have lead to the creation of separate nations as a result of the politics of the Balkan wars in the 1990s. Yugoslavia’s most prominent religions (although not the only ones) were Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam. Individuals of the Orthodox Christian persuasion were considered Serbs, those of the Catholic persuasion, Croats, and those of the Islamic persuasion, Slavic Muslims, respectively. Due to these definitions, religion was equated to ethnicity (bearing similarity to the case of Israeli Jews). While these terms were merely intended in reference to one’s religion, rather than as ethnic umbrella terms, the fuzzy edges around these definitions invited national and international confusion. Spurred by extremist nationalist propaganda, the Yugoslavs and the world were convinced that Serbs, Croats, and Slavic Muslims were, in fact, different nations of people. Soon, Yugoslavia was divided among ethnic lines to accommodate the new-found categories of Slavic Muslim, Croat, and Serb nations. The oversimplification is ludicrous for it is a well-known fact that most, if not all, countries in

the world are multi-ethnic and inter-religious. Yet, since the early 1990s, Yugoslavia remains crudely severed into small, superficially-homogeneous independent nations.

“Ethnic groups are typically imagined as if they were natural, real, eternal, stable, and static units (Sollors, 1989, p.xiii)”. A folk, on the other hand, is “a group of people united permanently or temporarily by shared common experiences, attitudes, interests, skills, ideas, and aims (Degh and Moss, 1970, p.218-219)”. Based on these definitions, the term ‘ethnic group’ implies an immovable, rigid construction, while the term ‘folk’ allows for metamorphosis. Due to the fact that society and most everything in life is ever-changing, the rigidity of the definition of what constitutes an ‘ethnic group’ seems ill-fit for our reality, while ‘folk’ is more appropriate in this sense. Folklore then is the result of the “function of a shared identity (Danielson, 1977, p.9)”, free of the implied restrictions characteristic of an ‘ethnic group’. This brings back the point that I iterated earlier in reference to religion-based versus place-based culture. Religion-based culture and ethnic groups are socially restrictive, while place-based culture and folk groups are more permeable constructs. Over-categorization inherent to the former is, therefore, socially limiting, creating conflicts within and among individuals, while the latter allots more freedom of self-identification to the individual and permits greater social unity. Therefore, seeing the Yugoslavs as a folk, rather than as distinct ethnic groups of Serbs, Slavic Muslims, and Croats would allow for an increased sense of individual choice and overall tolerance.

What further supports this notion is that ‘*ethnic folklore*’ is defined as the traditional expressive behavior maintained consciously and unconsciously by a particular ethnic community (Danielson, 1977, p.1). It is what defines how a particular

group of people interacts with one another based on a mutual agreement, spoken or unspoken. For Yugoslavs this refers to a basic social contract encompassing a shared language and communication, food ways, customs, and social norms described above. These traits are “commonly shared by the membership and ...comprise the essentials of in-group relations. (Degh, 1975, p.120)”.

The ‘*folklore of ethnicity*’, defined as the traditional expressive behavior used publicly and privately to demarcate one ethnic individual or community from another, is what permitted conflict among Yugoslavs leading to the downfall of the once-peaceful multi-ethnic society (Danielson, 1977, p.1). As a result of to the public manipulation of ethnic definitions of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims by the Yugoslav leadership, a façade of separate identities was fabricated to justify separation of the three nations. “Rather than establishing universalistic, egalitarian criteria for citizenship, these formulations vest statehood in a single ethnic ‘nation,’ from which nonmembers are excluded by definition (Denich, 1994, p.369).” Due to the fact that ethnicity is articulated through the expression of folkloric behavior, the façade of entirely separate identities is not credible. “Ethnic groups constituted sub-societies which created their own “subcultures” derived from “national cultural patterns blended with or refracted through the particular cultural heritage of the ethnic group (Gordon, 1964, p.38).” While Serbs, Croats, and Muslims differ due to varying religious practices, their basic social contract, including language, food ways, and social interaction is congruent. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to label Serbs, Slavic Muslims, and Croats as three distinct subcultures of Yugoslavs, rather than entirely separate ethnic identities.

The fact of the matter is that ethnicity itself is a human invention that is re-

invented over and over again. “The interpretation of previously “essentialist” categories (childhood, generations, romantic love, mental health, gender, region, history, biography, and so on) as “inventions” has resulted in the recognition of the general cultural constructedness of the modern world. What were givens in intellectual pursuits until very recently have now become the problematic issues (Sollors, 1989, p.5)”.

With that being said, the existence of culture is nothing more than a product of human invention serving a distinct purpose.

Due to the fact that the customs that we create essentially start out as fictitious rituals, they are also subject to change. As society morphs, traditions also change to fit the most relevant needs of society at that point in time. Due to this, “many traditions turn out to be “neo-traditions” that are made up in order to make more palatable breaks with actual traditions or to substantiate politically motivated feelings of people hood” (Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger as cited in Sollors, 1989, p.xii). In order to divide the people of Yugoslavia into distinct nations, separate histories and traditions were invented by the Yugoslav leadership to justify the ethnic divisions and genocide. Croatia was portrayed as a separate entity, far closer to Western Europe in culture and heritage than to Slavic nations; while Serbia, was portrayed as the motherland and true national identity of Yugoslavia. Yet, as Sollors (1989) points out, ethnic conflicts do not appear less real just because they are based on an invention, nor does it make them any less dangerous.

War

A Snap-Shot of Pre-War Yugoslavia

In an effort to provide a contextual framework for what led to the dissolution of

Yugoslavia, it is necessary to clarify the political state of the nation prior to the Balkan wars. Yugoslavia has a long history of a complex socio-political tango, never more apparent than in the last century. Embracing the Herderian concept of nationhood, therefore, proved to be, both, the birth and death of Yugoslavia (Banac, 1984).

According to Milorad Ekmecic (1974), Yugoslavia embraced all speakers of Serbian and Croatian without regard to their religious or political persuasion, only to later reject them for the very same reasons. The following pages are dedicated to the exploration of events that led to this dramatic reversal and to one of “the most prolific war crimes to occur on European soil since the Second World War (Cushman, 2004, p.9)”.

Under the leadership of Josip Broz, known to his Partisan guerrilla army as Tito, Communist Yugoslavia was founded on November 29, 1943. In 1973, the Yugoslav constitution granted substantial power to each of its six republics, as well as to its two provinces. Each Yugoslav state had its own central bank, police force, judicial system, and educational system in place. Tito also designed a system to balance institutional power between the republics in Yugoslavia as a means to distribute power among the nations (Silber and Little, 1996). The republics functioned “like Siamese quintuplets sharing vital organs, incapable of separation without serious damage (Denich, 1993, p.48)”. Yugoslavia had a system of ten Communist parties—one for each of the six states and one for each of the two provinces, as well as, one for the army and one for federal Yugoslavia. “More than anywhere else in Yugoslavia the doctrine of Brotherhood and Unity was rigidly enforced in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Silber and Little, 1996, p.207)”. Nationalists were often times jailed or forced into exile, which later proved to be disastrous because these nationalists came back in full force after Tito’s death. Instead

of appointing a successor to take over after his death, Tito created a system of an eight-member presidency where the head of each republic and province would take annual turns as head-of-state and commander-in-chief of the army.

Under Tito, the Yugoslav population was not divided into distinct categories resembling the flavors of Neapolitan ice cream. Rather, the multi-ethnic population coexisted in a manner comparable to the ingredients which make up banana split ice cream. The flavors of Neapolitan ice cream can stand alone; whereas a banana split would lose its distinction if the ingredients were separated. Yugoslavia was a tripartite ethnic composition of a “blending of Muslims, Serbian, and Croatian backgrounds of people who increasingly intermarried and intermingled...(Denich, 1993, p.48)”.

Therefore, to oversimplify Yugoslavs into Serbs, Croats, and Muslims is an insult that would make Tito turn in his grave. This narrowing of identities and referring to the recent war as “ethnic” demeans the Yugoslav cause as a whole and ignores centuries of a common identity that “has continued to be felt by many under siege (Donia and Fine, 1994, p.7)”.

In fact, “Serbs and Croats and Muslims lived equably together, with a high degree of intermarriage, and so forth (Weschler, 2004, p.22)”. Since the Second World War, thirty to forty percent of urban marriages in Bosnia have been mixed (Donia and Fine, 1994, p.9). All of these people “speak the same language (one which in the twentieth century we have come to call Serbo-Croatian) and have a shared historical past. The only difference among them is their different religious backgrounds (Donia and Fine, 1994, p.9)”. This tradition of tolerance and coexistence goes back to many centuries. For example, “the famous and enormous medieval tombstones (the so-called

Bogomil tombstones or stecci), for example, were built by members of all three of the Christian denominations then existing in Bosnia (Donia and Fine, 1994, p.7)". "Minarets and Orthodox and Catholic churches jumbled together in an architectural expression of multiethnic coexistence which, though it had frequently been interrupted by periods of conflict, had characterized this region for centuries (Silber and Little, 1996, p.27)". Tito's death in 1980 marked the end of the era of unity that characterized Yugoslavia for centuries (perhaps most apparent during Titoist Yugoslavia) . Young and old began to see that the Yugoslavia that they once loved was being taken from them right before their eyes. Even though she was just a child, Danijela Marinkovic remembered when she first sensed the approaching change:

"I was young. I came home from school and was watching TV and, at that moment, nothing was clear to me (personal communication translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)". As one Yugoslav put it "We all cried, but we did not know we were also burying Yugoslavia (Mahmut Bakalli as cited in Silber and Little, 1996, p.29)".

War

The dissolution of Yugoslavia is foremost a story about people; of their ability to commit acts of atrocity, as well as acts of kindness. The victims of this tragedy were ordinary people who hoped for the preservation of a multiethnic Bosnian society. "The perpetrators were nationalist extremists, organized and heavily armed by political and paramilitary leaders intent on destroying Bosnia's multiethnic society (Donia and Fine, 1994, p.1)". Thus, when Yugoslavia's leaders bit into the "forbidden fruit of nationalism", the path which led to the Balkan wars was inevitable (Denich, 1994, p.371).

War. How does a nation find itself amidst a civil war? What is the process that leads communities and individuals to engage in the chaos of warfare? What happened to Yugoslavia is nothing short of a deliberate assassination carefully crafted by those who were left in charge of its care. "Yugoslavia did not die a natural death (Silber and Little, 1996, p.25)". This unnatural death was caused by a series of inventions comprised of ethnic fables and illusions of supremacy and birth right.

Prior to delving into the specific causes of Yugoslavia's dissolution, I want to point out that statements claiming that, "...the abrupt end of Yugoslavia as a multicultural state restored the Balkan peninsula to its historic reputation as a zone of endemic ethnic conflict and international intervention," as made by Bette Denich (1994, p.368) dismiss the above-described history of century-old coexistence among the people, thereby, deepening the ethnic divide. The Balkan wars were not the product of "suppressed memories (Denich, 1994)" of ethnic grievances among Yugoslavs; rather this idea was used by nationalists to valorize the Balkan wars to Yugoslavs and to the outside world. "Such interethnic violence usually gets stoked by specific individuals intent on immediate political or material advantage... (Richard Goldstone as cited in Weschler, 2004, p.24)". There were no guiltless parties in this conflict, for all sides are responsible for committing atrocities and war crimes (Cushman, 2004, p.9).

After the death of Tito, nationalists began to resurface in Yugoslavia in a manner similar to garbage being washed up on the shore; everyone sees it and feels a sense of disgust, yet few bother to bend down and pick it up. "In the collapse of the Yugoslav political order, leadership was seized by those waiting in the wings for a second moment in history, hoping to reverse the outcome of an earlier defeat (Denich, 1994,

p.383)". In order to create a sense of a community of nationalists, "a mediated form of cohesion that depended, among other things, on literacy and "national" (and ethnic) literatures" was adopted (Sollors, 1989, p.xii). It was recognized that "nationalism needed a literature to be spread (Benedict Anderson as cited in Sollors, 1989, p.xii)". Even bookstore windows became increasingly more filled with displays of nationalism by expressing "narrower nationhood (Denich, 1993, p.52)".

On September 24, 1986, a publication in the newspaper, *Vecernje Novosti*, exploded through Yugoslavia. The newspaper featured the excerpts of the *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts* expressing nationalist grievances felt by Serbian academics. The document also cited that Serbs living in Kosovo "face total genocide" and that they were also in grave danger throughout the other republics (Silber and Little, 1996, p.31). The Memorandum argued that "the country was disintegrating, and that forty percent of Serbs had been left languishing beyond the frontiers of the motherland (Silber and Little, 1996, p.32)". This document was instrumental in establishing a sense of nationalism within Serbs. In response, "people formed themselves into increasingly cohesive ethnic blocs...(Denich, 1993, p.48)".

Villagers throughout the land, began standing guard at night with rifles, checking identity papers of all who came by (Silber and Little, 1996, p.212). In Croatia, "the red-and-white checkerboard banner was already flying throughout the region (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 212)". Bosnian flags were being set ablaze in Croatia and vice versa. Serbs began declaring SOAs (Serbian autonomous regions), complete with checkpoints guarded by armed men. As a result, the pressure to identify with a specific 'nation'

became greater and greater leading to the decline of the Yugoslav nationality. “Parents registering the birth of children from mixed marriages were instructed to choose one or the other nationality, rather than registering the child as ‘Yugoslav (Denich, 1993, p.51)’”.

Television served as another important medium for the spread nationalism. Since each republic had independent control over the media, the information that was relayed to the public directly reflected the nationalistic views of the leadership. “Within the context of opposition, the nominal categories of ethnic identity took on emotional meaning, as viewers aligned themselves with the politicians speaking in behalf of ‘our people’ in opposition to others, perceived as presenting a threat (Denich, 1993, p.56)”. As, Mustafa, a Bosnian-Muslim explains:

“Everything was great and then someone imposed and spread fear so that you felt threatened by me and I by you (from the documentary film *Comrades* by Mitko Panov as cited in Lews, 2001)”.

On Ethnic Cleansing

Yugoslavia's violent dismemberment “added the term ‘ethnic cleansing’ to the global vocabulary (Denich, 1994, p.367).” The topic of ethnic cleansing within Yugoslavia is imperative to mention on several counts. First, ethnic cleaning was a primary tactic that was used during the war to divide the nations. Secondly, understanding how ethnic cleansing was used to divide the people of Yugoslavia proves that all ethnicities were victims. Thirdly, “in Bosnia, it became the defining characteristic of the conflict (Silber and Little, 1996, p.244)”. The crimes that were committed within Yugoslavia were not crimes committed against Serbs, Muslims, or Croats; rather, they

were crimes committed against humanity.

The evidence for planned attacks on civilians and the “systemic extirpation of people based on their ethnicity abounded...(Cushman, 2004, p.8)“. The ethnic cleansing was a systematic plot to destroy entire communities from top to bottom (Silber and Little). Such “systematic terror was used by all the warring factions (Serbs, Croats, and Slavic Muslims) to displace ethnic populations as a means for establishing control over territory (Denich, 1994, p.368)”. Starting in the spring of 1992, Serbian para-military hit-squads swept through northern and eastern Bosnia, seizing control village by village. Thousands of Bosnian refugees fled to near-by Croatia, driven from their homes because of their nationality. This was the beginning of a systematic cleansing campaign, comparable to Hitler’s campaign against Jews in the Second World War. The targets of the cleaning were prominent community leaders such as intellectuals, political party heads, and wealthy individuals. Names of such individuals were placed on a list of individuals to be targeted for cleansing. Village by village, the terror spread and those who could, would flee before they terror reached their home. Rapes, expulsions, burnings, lootings, and massacres were a conscious and calculated means of ethnic destruction (Cushman, 2004, p.9). According to Silber and Little (1996, p.244), the northwestern Bosnian village of Orasac provides a horrific illustration of the terror:

House by house they ordered the people out into the main street. The men were separated from the women and children; and the women and children, after being robbed of their money and jewelry, were allowed to go free-north, towards Bihac town, while their homes were looted, blown up or burned. The men-180 of them-were taken to the village primary school, and held there for two days. On the second day a Serb

officer, whom none of the village men knew, arrived with a list of six names. One man-Dubravko Handzic-was selected at random and given the list. It contained the names of prominent local Muslims. Handzic was ordered to point them out. They were then separated from the rest. Their fate was never discovered”.

After two days, the remaining men from Orasac were separated into smaller groups. About seventy of these men were sent to a tractor-repair plant in the near-by village of Ripac. “They were housed in open-sided storage depots with sheet-metal roofs and slept on the bare concrete floor. They were subject to random beatings by their captors, some of whom were former neighbors. They were held there until they could be safely moved to one of the larger detention centers (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 245)”.

In the village of Biscani, the paramilitaries stormed in and killed dozens of innocent people, first beating them with clubs and rifle butts, and then sending survivors to a nearby detention camp. At these camps, prisoners were mentally and physically tortured. They were told graphic stories of the fate of their families and how they would be killed in the same manner the next day. “At dawn, they would be taken out, convinced that they would be killed, only to be thrown into a new detention camp (Silber and Little, 1996, p.245)”. They were forced to sing nationalist songs and commit “atrocities against each other-mutilation, physical and sexual, and, even, mutual killing (Silber and Little, 1996, p.245)”. The prisoners also had to dig mass graves and bury the dead and were sometimes even killed themselves after completing the tasks. This system of abuse was designed to instill deep hatred and fear to ensure that the people could never again live together (Silber and Little, 1996, p.245).

“Armed forces committed atrocities against civilians to intimidate them into fleeing as refugees (Denich, 1994, p.368)”. The Bosnian city of Sarajevo posed a particular challenge because the ethnicities lived together so closely. In order to expel all non-Serbs, the Serbs went above-and-beyond to ensure that non-Serbs were segregated to the point where a normal life was impossible. They were fired from their jobs, forbidden to travel, and even publicly harassed. Their homes and businesses were attacked and destroyed in a campaign “hauntingly reminiscent of the early Nazi curbs on the activities of Jews (Silber and Little, 1996, p.146)”. “They have seen friends and relatives tortured, murdered, or “disappeared,” they have cowered in basements as their towns have been shelled, they have seen their homes burned to the ground (Salgado, 2000, p.13)”. Muslims were also prohibited from assembling in groups of larger than three people. Some Muslim households put up white flags as a sign of surrender, in hopes of being allowed to leave. Many Muslims and Croats were forced to sign documents surrendering all of their property and belongings to their captors and were only then permitted to leave. Hundreds of thousands gave up everything they had due to fear of losing their lives and their families. “Frequently, they even paid for the privilege of being robbed (Silber and Little, 1996, p.246)” so that they could flee into exile. They would walk for days and days carrying their belongings through the mountains seeking safety. Along the way, they risked being shot at and beaten, many perishing on the perilous journey before reaching safe areas (Silber and Little, 1996, p.248).

Many Yugoslavs chose to leave, because they no longer felt welcome in their own country:

“Actually, we spent all, all the war, we spent on the outside Bosnia...because my marriage is a mixed marriage...I am a Muslim and my wife is a Orthodox Serb. And because of the nature of the war, that everyone fight-fought against everybody else- Muslims against Serbs, Croats against Serbs, Croats against Muslims. So I didn’t see myself fighting that kind of war. I didn’t want to fight against my brothers-in-law or the family of my wife (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)”.

Kasim Subasic continues to explain the basis for the actions that he took, by stating *“my wife’s family lived in mostly Serb populated city called Banja Luka...I didn’t know where to go, so I decided last minute to send my wife and my children to her parents and then we’ll see later what happens. So I did that and I stayed by myself for about three months in our apartment and when I get the chance to go I left for, actually, I had the offer to go with my family to Sweden but because of the nationality of my wife and myself we couldn’t go the same way. And we decided to come to Hungary but different ways. So my wife went, with the kids, through Serbia. And I went through Croatia to Hungary. But when we finally came together in Hungary, that we lost the chance to go to Sweden so we didn’t know where to go. So we stayed in a town in Hungary named Mohac for about four months looking for a chance to go somewhere else because life over there was not very pretty. So finally a chance came through a Bosnian doctor who lived in Germany...so I talked to them and they promised to help us come to Germany (personal communication 2010)”.*

Like many other Yugoslavs in mixed marriages, Kasim and his family decided to start a new life abroad:

“I actually liked Germany very much. Actually, the beginning, for a couple of

months of our life in Germany, was not very pretty but because we lived with a German family that was not very nice to us. I don't know why, but anyway, we survived. After a few months, I got a job and we found an apartment. So our life came...back. It can never come back like it used to be, but it became a kind of normal life. After a while, I got an even better job and we moved to the next city...and then we got another apartment and soon our daughter started...first grade of elementary school. Through all that time, we learned the language and then you also have to learn how the whole society works so it takes some time to understand and adapt how the country functions. And I wished that we could stay in Germany but, unfortunately, we couldn't because Germany did not want to take any refugees from Bosnia (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)".

While some Yugoslavs, like Kasim and his family decided to leave Bosnia, many others, like Milan and Zekira Marinkovic, stayed behind:

"During the entire war, my family and I were in Tuzla. I encountered the beginning of the war in my company, when I was automatically discharged from my position because I was born in Serbia-I am a Serb...It is known how and for what reasons, but they simply did not trust me because I was different, of a different faith and a different people and I was discharged...When your neighbor who had lived beside you for a long time gives you dirty looks and says, "The children of Serbs should be killed as soon as they are born"-it is terrifying...I spent my life at home-fear, poverty, scarcity was severe. There was no food, no clothing, no heat, and we didn't have electricity. For water, I sometimes had to go six or seven kilometers to fill-up the canisters and then pull them on the wagon that I made. We transported the water so

that we could cook and bathe ourselves. That water lasted for a day or two and then we would have to go again, whether it was summer or winter. The worst thing was when one had to gather wood in the winter. We didn't have electricity so we purchased a wood stove, which we needed wood for. We went-you receive a permit and you go into the woods and you chop-all by hand. You chop it up into smaller pieces for the fire, but the wood was wet or too dry, which created thick smoke. The smoke was suffocating. That was horrendous. That part of my life, I never want to...it's difficult for me to talk about, let alone return to that part of my life; it is better to commit suicide (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

Milan discusses the feeling of terror during the war:

"It is such a literal fight for life or death. On one side you hear of so-and-so being killed, bombs, grenades, countless people dying on the battle field. You are in a blockaded city, there is no food coming in, there is no electricity, there is nothing-hopeless. Sometimes you think that it will never end. Night after night, one sleeps in basements for the fear of grenades under the doors in one's apartment-things like that happened. Grenades would fall onto balconies and explode-it was chaos. Therefore, we spent days and days in the basement. The children went to school, actually it was not a school, these were basements where children gathered to learn...My children would go to school and I would go to work and the grenades would begin to fall. I would begin to worry about my children. Where are they? Are they okay? So many times I just wanted to leave work, but the grenades were falling (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

Zekira remembers watching her children suffering amidst the terror:

“The children completed their homework and assignments by candlelight and it was very difficult for them. They would cry for days because we didn’t have enough to give them. Nothing (Zekira Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)”.

Milan Marinkovic explains the experience of bearing witness to the demise of his once-beloved country:

“...Then people came along who vandalized, almost everything that was old and sacred. I understand that those people lost everything-they had to leave their homes, they lost many loved ones in the war, they came to a new place...their entire villages were destroyed, but that was not my doing. They would cut things up, urinate on entrances, set fires, break elevators, and, with this, they destroyed many public cultural centers...most of them were horrible people. The new people came and their behaviors forced the natives of the city to leave; they kicked them out. That is why people left (personal communication, 2010)”.

Author’s Background

The stories of my father, Kasim Subasic, and Milan, Zekira, and Danijela Marinkovic tell not only of their personal experiences but also the stories of many others who have experienced similar fates as a result of the Balkan wars. In order to contribute further to the narrative of the Yugoslav people, as well as to explain my role and understanding of these topics, I have decided to share my personal memoir in this piece:

How the War Seeped into my Childhood

I was born on July 8th, 1987 to a Muslim father and a Serbian Orthodox mother

in what were then the remnants of Tito's Yugoslavia. At the age of five, I left Yugoslavia to escape the civil war, along with my parents and my older sister.

My first memory of the war was boarding the bus and seeing uniformed soldiers among the normal looking people. I didn't know what made them different, but even at the age of five, I could sense that they had a different smell to them-they smelled cold somehow. But I don't mean cold in the sense of how the air smells when fresh snow has fallen-no, this cold smell wasn't crisp or pure, it was a dingy cold smell, an uncomfortable cold smell.

Before, I knew it, my mother, sister, and I left Vitez to go to Banja Luka to stay with my Serbian grandparents, while my father stayed behind to take care of matters. Several other members of my mother's family stayed with us at my grandparent's house in Banja Luka, including my two cousins, Njeko and Aco. Njeko was a year older than me so we played together, while Aco was closer to my older sister's age. Njeko and I played outside in my grandmother's garden a great deal of the time. My grandmother had many different plants in her garden, including roses and poppy. She planted the poppy to make strudel, but Njeko and I would find our own use for it. We found beer bottle caps and we would fill them with mud and use the colorful poppy seeds to decorate them to make them look like little pies.

I also remember that my grandfather took Njeko and I with him when he went fishing in the nearby Vrbas River. My grandfather would put hay in a wheelbarrow and have me sit on it and he would wheel me to the edge of the river while Njeko followed closely by. We would then play by the water while my grandfather fished.

As time passed, the situation became more grave and even our innocent play

time was occasionally interrupted by the war. My grandparent's house is built off of a main road, and sometimes when Njego and I played outside, drunken soldiers would drive-by shooting their guns. We would run into the house to hide from them. I don't remember being afraid, because I don't think that I understood just how serious the situation was. As time went on, however, Njego and I had to stay in the house more and more.

A scene that I vividly remember is standing on the upper level terrace of my grandparent's four-story house along with my cousins, uncle, grandparents, mother, and sister and watching the explosions in the distance. I remember the enormous orange and black flames in the distance and the echoes of gun fire. It was when I first felt afraid of the war.

I don't recall the amount of time that we were in Banja Luka, but I know that it was for several months. As time went on, food and basic items became more and more scarce. My grandmother kept chickens and I recall the one morning when my mother said that there aren't any eggs for us to have for breakfast. I shook my head in protest and sprinted out of the house, down the stairs, and straight into the chicken coop. I scared the daylight out of the hens, but I was able to find an egg that one of the younger hens had laid. My mother said that the egg was still very hot when I handed it to her so I may have literally scared the egg out of the poor hen, but that part is debatable.

As resources kept becoming more and more scarce, I remember that my mother would go and dig in the fields for a sack of flour so that we would have something to eat. I also remember that my grandmother sold her cow and got a goat instead because

it was more economical. It is funny but before the war I never felt like I missed anything or that I desired anything. Before the war, I didn't understand what it meant to be selfish or what it meant to yearn for something. Like any child, I loved candy and chocolates but during the war, those things were not available like before. I remember that one day, my mom gave me a box containing cake decorating sugar crystals of various colors. To me, it felt like a huge celebration but I also knew how precious this was so I hid my treasure in the fabric on the sewing machine so that my cousin Njogo would not get to it. Somehow he discovered my hiding spot and he spilled some of the colorful sugar crystals on the floor, which made me feel incredibly sad. I just remember feeling exceptionally devastated at that moment, because I knew that my mother worked really hard to get the sugar crystals for me and I knew that they could not be easily replaced.

During this entire time, my mother, sister, and I were separated from my father. Then, one day, it was time to leave Banja Luka. I remember traveling with my mother and sister during the night and sleeping during the day at houses of various contacts that my parents had. The plan was that we would leave Bosnia and reunite with my father in Hungary. We would go through Serbia and my father would go through Croatia so that we could all get out of Bosnia safely. During this time, I remember that my mother often told me to stay silent. It took my years to find my voice again.

From People to Refugees

My family was reunited on the Hungarian border. I remember how good it felt to feel my father's embrace again and to see my parents together. From there we moved into a hotel in Mohac, Hungary right by the Danube River, where we ended up staying for about one month. Neither of my parents spoke Hungarian so communication with

the locals was far from easy. Not long after our arrival in Mohac, my uncle from Switzerland came to Hungary to pick-up my sister who is eleven years my senior. My parents felt that it was best to spare her from whatever might lie ahead because our future was uncertain at that time, while I remained with them because I was too young to be separated from my parents. It was a couple of years until we would see my sister again, and the last time that my family would ever be whole again.

Shortly thereafter, I recall strolling in a park with my parents, where we met a Yugoslavian man who told my parents about a Yugoslavian refugee camp that was in Mohac. Not long after that meeting, my parents and I found ourselves among our fellow Yugoslavs in the Hungarian refugee camp.

This is probably one of the most painful chapters of my life to bring up for many reasons, really. I am still not over what happened at the refugee camp or what happened after and I probably never will be. The entirety of this time is a swirl of ugliness in my life. We arrived at the refugee camp and we were escorted to a room with several beds in it. My parents and I had to share a small bunk bed in a room of complete strangers. Another family had the bunk above us, while we had the one below. The room was bare like a glass hamster bin that one might find at a pet store-it was the same kind of shame. We were then moved to another made-due room that didn't even have a door-rather, we were only covered by a curtain that people would pull open as they pleased just because they felt like peeking in at us-in a manner similar to how one would peek at animals.

The camp was quite large and we only had one bathroom to share with the entire camp, as well as a cafeteria which had one refrigerator for the entire camp. Once in a

while the camp authorities would allow us access to a storage area where we could get clothes, toys, and other goods that I suppose were donated from someone. I remember how my mother was reluctant to take anything, as she found it degrading and she also forbade me to touch the things. As time went on, we also took part in this pity ritual-mirror our ever-degrading humanity. My mother tried to make a home for us in the small make-shift room that we were given. She stacked cardboard boxes that she found to create shelves where she would neatly stack our belongings.

We didn't have many friends at the refugee camp, because most of them weren't mixed like we were so we were looked upon as traitors. The women would encourage their children to beat me because I was nothing but a mutt to them. I remember the pain, tears, and confusion that I felt at that time. At the age of five, hatred and prejudice were foreign to me, but hit-after-hit I became an expert.

To get our meals we had to walk several miles in the hot Hungarian sun, only to be fed a spicy soup that we unaccustomed to at every meal. I can still smell the vulgar spice of the soup and it makes me sick to my stomach every time I think of it. We were lined up and ordered around like cattle because we were the refugees and we needed a meal which meant that we were at the mercy of the camp authorities.

At time we did leave the camp for a short while. I remember that several times, my parents took me to a Marzipan shop that sold the most wonderful Marzipan figurines. I was happy to have candy confections in my life again but I knew not to eat them because if I did, they would be gone, and I wouldn't have anything pretty to look at.

I call an instance where I had a loose tooth that needed to come out so my mother tied a piece of red string to my tooth and then the other end to a door handle to

yank it out. That night, I put the tooth under my pillow in hopes of making a deal with the tooth fairy where I could have candies in exchange for my tooth. The next day, my tooth was gone and there was a bag of candy there-the bag of candy that I already had and had been saving. I then realized that it wasn't the tooth fairy that took my tooth, but that it was my mother because I knew that the tooth fairy wouldn't pull a trick like that but that my mother would. I was disappointed, not because I realized that the tooth fairy didn't exist, but because I realized that the tooth fairy didn't do business with refugee mutts like me.

While we were at the camp, both of my parents found ways to make a little bit of money by doing under-the-table work. My father would work all day in a hen slaughter house to only receive enough money to buy one pack of cigarettes-to adult Yugoslavs, cigarettes were more important than food. For many years, I assumed that all adults smoked cigarettes because it was mandatory until I realized that there were also the kinds of adults who didn't smoke. I recall that my mother had to wash glassware and that the acid in the containers burned the skin off her hands. I remember seeing my mother crying because she couldn't use her hands and my father had to help to get dressed and undressed and use the bathroom. During this time, I first realized that my parents were vulnerable just like me. It's a scary thing to realize that the people who were always there to protect you and make everything better also have fragile moments. It is like having your last barrier of protection taken from you, leaving you exposed to the raw reality of life.

I don't remember how it came about that we left the camp, but I remember that my mother packed a few items that we could bring and I remember standing outside in

a group with other refugees and being silent. My mother took off her golden jewelry, including a golden anchor pendant, and gave the items as gifts to the camp administrators that she felt were good to us. I remember feeling angry at her actions, because it felt wrong to me. I didn't like that my mother was giving away the last precious items that she had on her. The anchor pendant was something that I always associated with my mother and it was the hardest thing for me to part with. I grew up with that anchor dangling above my head while my mother held me close to her when I was very young and I didn't want to part with that symbol. But perhaps the attachment that I felt with that anchor pendant was what my mother symbolically wanted to let go of as a way to mentally let go of her past life. To this day, I never asked my mother about this, as I am still too bitter about the subject.

Deutschland

My parents and I arrived on the German border along with an elderly Yugoslav woman in tow. From what I recall, she was going to meet a family member in Germany. We, on the other hand, had no one. As we approached the border, I remember that my mother reminded me to be quiet and to keep my head under the blanket.

We arrived in Germany at 4 o'clock in the morning. It was cold and the streets were desolate. We were far from home and twenty marks to our name. We walked into a train station to seek shelter from the cold. The only other people there were homeless vagabonds and drunks. My mother and I sat on a bench while my father went to find a pay phone to call the only contact that we had in Germany-a Yugoslav doctor who had moved to Germany many years before the war. We sat on the bench for a while and as the day bloomed, more people filled the train station. A woman came up to us and put a

ten mark bill in my hand and my mother began weeping. My mother wept because her refugee status came to full fruition at that point, because someone actually noticed that we were the type of people that are in need to help.

From Refugees to Slaves

We then found ourselves in the town of Neustadt bei Coburg in Bavaria. We were sponsored by a German family, who loved us as much as Nazi's loved Jews. We were given a very small room to stay in, where my parents and I shared a bed. Even though there was a communication barrier, they found ways of making it clear that they wanted us to stay in that room. When we wandered out into the living room to join the Germans, they would not speak with us. If they noticed that we were watching a television program, they would change the channel. Little by little, we learned that they did not wish to see us. At that time, I still enjoyed my baby bottle from time to time. My mother later told me that she allowed it because she noticed that it provided me with a sense of security-a false hope that was very precious at that time. The German family did not feel as though I should have my bottle, so they took it away. It was as though they were our masters and we were there slaves. It did not matter that my mother was there and fully capable of rearing me; they took away her right to motherhood at every chance that they got.

I remember an occasion when the German family had invited guests over and the guests had two girls around my age. I was very excited to see the little girls because I felt terribly lonely and longed to have friends to play with. The girls and I played with dolls for a short while and then the German father called the girls away. When the little girls returned, they began hitting me. I didn't understand why they didn't like me all of a

sudden and I cried as they kept hitting me. All of the adults stood by watching in silence and did not react, including my mother. I do not blame my mother for not protecting me; it wasn't a choice that she had at that time. I know that that beating and the ones that followed were far more painful for her to watch than they were for me.

A day came when I was permitted to go outside and I was very excited to play in the green grass and feel the sunlight again. I ran around so much that I exhausted myself so I plopped down in the grass. While I sat in the grass, many small red bugs crawled all over me and I was terrified. I quickly stood up in horror, while the small red bugs continued to crawl all over me. I did not scream, because I had learned to be silent. So I continued to stand there in horror and all that I could think to do was to close my eyes and hope that they would just go away.

The little red bugs were ladybugs. And, even though, I was terrified at the time, I now know that that was just a sign of many good things coming my way, for ladybugs are good luck and, for a few minutes, I was the luckiest girl in the world (even though I did not feel very lucky with little ladybug feet crawling all over me).

Emancipation

A while passed and my father got a job working in a furniture factory. As soon as they had saved enough money, my parents and I moved into our own apartment and away from the awful German family. My mother found some under-the-table jobs cleaning houses and I started kindergarten.

I hated the German kindergarten since day one. I was terribly shy and being new and not knowing the language posed additional barriers. I walked into the kindergarten and I felt exposed and afraid, until I spotted a Barbie house that is. I

walked over the Barbie house and I started playing with it. A girl by the name of Kenny walked over to me and she asked me what my name was but I was too shy to respond. She asked me several times but I didn't respond. She then hit me and walked away. I didn't like Kenny. I soon learned that her grandmother was one of the kindergarten teachers and that Kenny got away with pretty much anything. After Kenny hit me, tears came to my eyes because I thought that I would be hit every day. I snuck out of the classroom and I hid under my coat in the hallway and cried.

On the same day, I didn't realize but it was time for gym class and I didn't have the proper clothing, so the teacher made me strip down to my pantyhose-which exposed my underwear and made me feel very embarrassed. After that, it was time for lunch. My mother packed a sandwich, baked goods, fruit and juice. It was entirely too much food for a six-year-old but the kindergarten teachers made us eat everything that was in our lunch pail. Quickly, I began stuffing whatever I couldn't eat into my pockets so that they wouldn't force me to eat it all.

When I got home on the first day, I cried to my mother about how awful the German kindergarten was. My mother told me that it would get easier after a few days and then she suggested that I watch some cartoons on television to cheer myself up. We changed the channel and we found my favorite show, *The Carebears*. I was very excited that they, too, came all the way from Bosnia to Germany. I felt that the Carebears underwent the same things as I did, so I felt much better about it all. However, shortly into the program, I realized that the Carebears had already learned German and that I was very much behind. I began crying to my mother, "Mama, the Carebears learned German before me. I am never going to be able to learn it". It felt

rather devastating.

After a few days, I made a new friend by the name of Anja. Anja lived in my neighborhood and she was in the same kindergarten class as me. Anja was also pretty quiet but we got along well. After kindergarten, we would ride our bikes and play with dolls, and, sometimes, eat candy and ice cream. It felt good to finally have a friend.

While we lived in Neustadt, we had Turkish neighbors who introduced us to a German family. The Germany family became good friends to us and they helped my father find a better job. They helped introduce us to the German way of life and we spent a great deal of time with them. After a while, they helped us move to the nearby city of Coburg, which, to this day, is still my favorite place in the world.

Normalcy

In Coburg, I started first grade-the German way. My parents escorted me to the opening event and presented me with a Tuete which is a large conical object filled with candy, school supplies and toys that is given to German children when they start school. I wore a blue velvet sailor dress that my mother made just for the event, along with a pair of shiny white shoes. I felt like a real person sitting among the other German children, which was a great contrast to how I felt in kindergarten.

I made several friends at school, but my best friend, up until I left Germany, was Julia. Julia lived down the street from me and we would talk to school together every day. We both loved to wear dresses, watched *Sailor Moon*, worshipped the German pop star *Bluemchen*, and shared a fear of the dog behind the tall black fence that we had to pass when going to school every day.

My life in Germany became quite normal and I was happy for the most part. I felt

that I had a group of friends with whom I belonged and I just felt normal, which was the best feeling in the world. I loved strolling to the city with my parents and getting ice cream and playing in the city's *Rosengarten*.

However, our stay in Germany was also plagued by constant worry about the future because we were in Germany only as a temporary asylum. My parents followed the news and the radio very closely to try to predict what would be next. In addition to that, my parents worked a great deal to save as much money as they could. Because my parents worked, I was responsible for getting myself ready for school, eating breakfast, and making sure the house was locked. I would then walk to school and walk home alone as well. My father warned me to stay away from cars that would pull over because there were several kidnapping incidents that were occurring at that time. It was important for me to be vigilant because, due to my illness, I was unable to run very fast. I was on a breathing pump during the entirety of our life in Germany, but, I didn't care, because I was happy to have friends.

Then a day came when my parents decided to take the opportunity to move to the United States because the Clinton administration was offering permanent citizenship to former Yugoslavs who could not return home. At the time, it was the only option that we had for a normal life, for life in Bosnia would have been anything but normal. We had nothing to return to in Bosnia and my parents wanted to spare me from political ridicule in the segregated school systems. There was no place for people like us because we didn't know how to live divided.

How I got Here

I didn't want to leave Germany. I didn't want to leave my friends. I was happy and

I felt normal. I wanted to do the same things that my friends would do and to share all the memories that we dreamt about together. Yet, shortly after my tenth birthday, we arrived in New York at JFK airport.

My parents told me that our life would be just like Hollywood and that I would be even happier in America than I was in Germany. For many nights, I dreamt of big cities and bright lights because that is what America meant to me at the age of ten.

From JFK airport, we flew into Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where our sponsors awaited us. They picked us up and took us to a house of several other refugee families. I hated it right away. The room where we stayed was bare and ugly and I cried myself to sleep that night. I came to the realization that America wasn't like Hollywood and that there were no bright lights. I didn't stay asleep for long, due to the time difference. My father and I decided to take a stroll about Harrisburg at three in the morning to find a pay phone to let our German friends know that we had arrived and were safe.

The next day, we met the other refugee families, including another Bosnian family, a Croatian family, a Nigerian family, and a Burmese family. I was equally intrigued by all of them, because they were all so different from me, even the Bosnian family. The Bosnian family had a daughter who was close to my age and, since we spoke the same language, we played together. We would play with our Barbie dolls and then she would begin singing Bosnian folk music and I would begin singing German pop music and we would just stare at each other in wonder and confusion. Even though we had similar origins, our experiences were clearly very different.

The Burmese family also had two little girls that we would sometimes play with. The language barrier made it somewhat difficult but we found our way around it through

non-verbal communication. The one day, we were playing and the Burmese girls noticed my glitter toenail polish and were intrigued by it. They were rubbing my toes with their hands because they did not know what it was. I ran into my room and grabbed my nail polish and I painted their toes to look like mine. We sat for a while there looking at our toes and then we ran off to play again.

Even when I wasn't playing, I loved watching the other people around me. The Nigerian family wore colorful long dresses that I had only ever seen on television before. And the dad of my Burmese playmates wore a blanket wrapped around his waste and a sleeveless shirt. We all shared a kitchen as well and I found it intriguing to see the women cook and to experience all of the different smells of food. We all went to the grocery store once a week and the other families helped explain to us what products are best to use. My favorite thing about America was *Tastycakes*. I always had a sweet tooth and the variety of *Tastycakes* brought me a lot of joy.

American Life

After about three months, our sponsors helped us move to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where I started fourth grade. It wasn't an easy transition for me, because I didn't know the language and I was still terribly shy. On my first day, the children on the playground asked me if I had a boyfriend and I was very embarrassed. In Germany, we didn't have boyfriends; we were still playing with our Barbie dolls. In class, our teacher asked us to share our favorite thing to do and I say "I love play with Barbie" and all of the children laughed and said that that was for "babies". I was rather embarrassed for a few weeks after that.

And, after a while, I got accustomed to life in America. I feel that in high school, I

first felt fully integrated. Although, college proved to be the true coming-out of my personality. It was my professors and my peers that helped me finally find my voice again, the voice that I had lost during the war.

Rebuilding Life

A New Start

In 1997, after years of conflict, the Balkan wars came to an end with the signing of the Dayton agreement. The Owen-Stoltenberg Plan was devised shortly thereafter in order to re-map Bosnia Hercegovina as a “federal republic composed of three republics: ‘an essentially Serbian republic, *Republika Srpska*; a Croatian republic, *Herceg-Bosna*; and Moslem republic...*Bosna* (as cited in Cohen, 1995, p. 286)”. Under this plan, each of the three republics would have “the character of an essentially semi-independent ethnically based state (Cohen, 1995, p.287)”. Through doing so, the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan reiterated the idea imposed by Yugoslavia’s corrupt leadership; that Serbs, Croats, and Slavic Muslims were separate nations, incapable of peaceful coexistence. As a result, national and international recognition of the separate identities of Yugoslavs made it nearly-impossible for any individual who did not fit into the above-mentioned categories to have a life in what remained of Yugoslavia. Thousands of individuals who could not be identified by the new ethnic categories were forced into refugee status.

“Refugees and displaced persons, unlike migrants, are not dreaming of different lives. They are usually ordinary people-”innocent civilians”, in the language of diplomats-going about their lives as farmers or students or housewives until their fates are violently altered by repression of war. Suddenly, along with losing their homes, jobs,

and perhaps even some loved ones, they are stripped of their identity (Salgado, 2000, p.12)". One never purposefully chooses to be a refugee; one becomes a refugee because there are no other options available to them at that period of time. As Charles Simic explains, "...we had no ambition to stray far beyond our neighborhood in Belgrade. We liked it fine (1999, p.120)". The fact of the matter is that most people "are compelled to become migrants, refugees, or exiles by forces beyond their control, by poverty, repression, or war (Salgado, 2000, p.7)".

Fortunately for the Yugoslavs, the outside world grew to recognize this dilemma and offered asylum to Yugoslav refugees for a period of time. Among the countries that offered either temporary or permanent citizenship to individuals devastated by the Balkan wars was the United States of America. And, despite the abundance of opportunities to start a new life, the task of "moving to a foreign country is not easy, even under the most propitious circumstances. It requires elaborate preparations, much expense, giving up personal relations at home, and often learning a new language and culture (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p.9)." Waves of Yugoslavs embarked on a journey to find new communities to belong to where their identities would, at least, be tolerated, and, hopefully, accepted. "They set off with the belongings they can carry, making their way as best they can, aboard rickety boats, strapped onto trains, squeezed into trucks, or on foot; they travel alone, with families, or in groups (Salgado, 2000, p.7)".

Yet, despite the generosity of the sponsoring countries, Yugoslav refugees encountered numerous obstacles mirroring those of countless refugees across the globe. Prior to even reaching their destinations, refugees struggled with prejudice at every turn. "Every passport office, every police station, every consulate had a desk with

a wary and bad-tempered official who suspected us of not being what we claimed to be. No one likes refugees (Simic, 1999, p.123)". Due to the repeated harassment resulting from the stigma associated with being a refugee, many refugees decide to conceal their true identities. Liisa Malkki speaks of such an instance in regard to Hutu refugees in Tanzania; "Many denied that they were refugees-a pose made credible (or at least hard to disprove) by the plurality of identities available in their complex urban context (1995, p.156)". People become refugees because their identity, in one form or another, was not accepted in their home country. Refugees then embark on a journey of social acceptance, and, if they do not encounter it along the way, their sense of self disintegrates over time. And, along the way, they adapt new identities for their hope for acceptance as their true selves diminishes due to the repeated disapproval. It is as Edward W. Said explains, in regard to Palestinian diaspora; "Wherever we are, we are dogged by our past, but we have also created new realities and relationships that neither fit simple categories nor conform to previously encountered forms (1986, p.5)". The truth of the matter is that all people, regardless of their nationality, race, gender, age, or religion, want and need to be accepted.

Identity

One cannot discuss the topic of identity without addressing the factors that shape it. "In this century, the executioners' best friends have often turned out to be writers and intellectuals (Simic, 1999, p.134)". The world that we live in is one of mass-communication. Through television, online, and print media, we are constantly exchanging messages with others. And, as a result, much (if not everything) of what we say and do is documented. Through such documentation people can be over-simplified

and objectified into mere objects of knowledge that can be controlled (Foucault, 1979). In the instance of Yugoslavia, the information that was presented by so-called subject-matter experts, including academics and journalists, was used to inform the policies affecting the region.

During the early years of the war, several European countries met in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss the raising of funds for aid for the Yugoslavian crisis, as well as to discuss what to do to assist Yugoslav refugees. Germany had a large population of Yugoslav immigrants and refugees and proposed the idea of the countries opening up their borders to temporarily accommodate the refugees during the crisis. The British Minister of Overseas Development argued against the idea, insisting that the best possible solution would be to keep the refugees as close as possible to their home land for the ease of returning home (Silber and Little, 1996, p.247). The assumption that refugees would be able to return after the fighting ceased was to “miss the whole point of the war, which was being waged deliberately to ensure that they would never return (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 247)”. Washington supported the United Nation’s initiative of sponsoring “safe areas” in Muslim areas that were besieged. This plan called the Joint Action Plan was supported by the U.S., Russia, Spain, the U.K. and France (Cohen, 1995). UNHCR and UNPROFOR workers escorted several thousand refugees from northwestern Bosnia into neighboring Croatia, only to later realize that they were themselves assisting with the ethnic claiming process (Silber and Little, 1996). Public officials such as former Secretary of State Warren Christopher helped fertilize the growing myths created by Yugoslav nationalists by making flawed statements expressing that “the hatred between the three groups is almost unbelievable...and it’s

centuries old (Power, 2002, p.XII)". Christopher's explanation not only served to justify the hesitance of policy-makers to intervene in the Balkan wars, but also the furthered the misunderstanding of the conflict through drastic oversimplification. Many top Pentagon officials felt Bosnia was similar to the situation in Vietnam and that the U.S. should avoid getting mixed into it at all costs (Cohen, 1995, p.293)".

As a result of such communications that were made by intellectuals, policy-makers, officials, and journalists, average citizens were informed that Yugoslavs (and others in similar situations) are naturally-warring individuals, thereby basically stating that the conflict was really not a big deal to the people involved as if they somehow grew to expect it. Therefore, when refugees come to a country to start a new life, they are preceded by a reputation of barbarism. As one Hutu refugee residing in Tanzania explains; "Apart from problems of food and lodging, the gravest problems were only that the citizens considered us to be savage animals. (excerpt from interview-name n.a., Malkki, 1995, p.150)".

Refugees, therefore, do not only lose their homes, loved-ones, and jobs, but also their identity. "Stateless, dispossessed, de-centered, we are frequently unable either to speak the 'truth' of our experience or to make it heard. We do not usually control the images that represent us; we have been confined to spaces designed to reduce or stunt us; and we have often been distorted by pressures and powers that have been too much for us (Said, 1986, p.6)". The above is universal for "...in distant corners of the globe, people are being displaced for essentially the same reasons (Salgado, 2000, p.8)". And, their identities are threatened by the same forces.

While the identities of individuals from several, if not all, nations have been

morphed through politicization, one of the most compelling cases in recent history is that of individuals of Middle Eastern decent. As a result of media portrayal, citizens in the Middle East have often been portrayed as naturally conflict-prone, often being equated with the label of “terrorists”. As a result of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, “Palestine’s Arab identity-and I am perfectly willing to grant that it has other identities too-was and is being rewritten and defaced, as when you scrawl across a perfectly legible page and turn it into something ugly and offensive (Said, 1986, p.72)”. Instead of being portrayed as average citizens with families and jobs who are victims of the politics of their country, Palestinians are portrayed as violent, culture-less barbarians. “Yet, for all of the writing about them, Palestinians remain virtually unknown. Especially in the West, particularly in the United States, Palestinians are not so much a people as a pretext for a call to arms (Said, 1986, p. 4)”.

The people of Iraq faced a similar fate due to heavily-politicized media scrutiny. Dictator Saddam Hussein waged a ruthless war on the Kurds of Iraq. As Samantha Power (2002) states: “Between 50,000 and 100,000 Kurds (many of whom were women and children and nearly all of whom were non-combatants) were executed or disappeared between February and September 1988 alone (p.244)”. Due to the madman’s regime and a lack of outside intervention, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were brutally victimized and displaced. “The numbers of those eliminated or “lost” cannot be confirmed because most of the men who were taken away were executed by firing squad and buried in exhumed, shallow mass graves (Power, 2002, p.244)”. Yet, in the media, the citizens of Iraq were portrayed as terrorists, rather than victims of a madman’s regime.

The case of Rwanda was yet another bloody and senseless war that was waged on innocent civilians. A conflict erupted between Rwanda's Hutu and Tutsi, who like the Yugoslavs, were essentially the same group of people. The distinguishing fact between the two groups occurred centuries ago, when anyone who had ten or more cows was labelled a "Hutu", while anyone who had five or less cows was labelled a "Tutsi". This minor difference among people was the only seed necessary to wage a long history of terror. "Because the Hutu and Tutsi had lived intermingled and, in many instances, intermarried, the outbreak of killing forced Hutu and Tutsi friends and relatives into life-altering decisions about whether or not to desert their loved ones in order to save their own lives (Power, 2002, p.334)". The difficult decisions that the Hutu and Tutsi had to make mirrored those of the Yugoslavs who were also forced to make unreasonable choices between their friends and loved ones. And, in both cases, the outside world did little to combat the unreasonable crime against humanity. "Rwandan Hutus in 1994 could freely, joyfully, and systematically slaughter 8,000 Tutsi a day for 100 days without any foreign interference (Power, 2002, p.503)".

"Because her husband was Tutsi, her children had been categorized as Tutsi and thus were technically forbidden to live. But the machete-wielding Hutu attackers had assured the woman that the children would be permitted to depart safely if she agreed to accompany them. When the woman stepped out of the church, however, she saw the assailants butcher eight of her eleven children (Power, 2002, p.334)". Yet, the world did not hear the woman's cry or those of anyone else for that matter.

"After the massacres of the Tutsi by the Hutu, the Tutsi military takeover led Hutu to flee by the hundreds of thousands into Zaire (now Congo), Tanzania, and Burundi

(Salgado, 2000, p.14)". While, both the Hutu and the Tutsi people were victims in the case of Rwanda, the media slanted the politics in favor of the Tutsi, labeling the Hutu's as the aggressors and the Tutsi as the victims. Because of this, the Hutu faced discrimination even when the roles were reversed. As a result, Hutu refugees adopted numerous identities to conceal their true origins to evade the potential repercussions. "The most readily observable expressions of fear-or of the desire for anonymity-where the circumvention of any bureaucratic entanglement that might require an official declaration of personal legal status, and, also, a quickness to avoid involvement with strangers, particularly when this entailed revealing one's status (Malkki, 1995, p.157)". These "strategies of invisibility" were adapted because, to many Hutus, it was worse to be associated with the stigma than to become invisible (Malkki, 1995, p.156)".

On Relationships

An individual's identity is important throughout the course of one's life for self-perception and how one is perceived by others directly affects how individuals are treated, and, in turn, how they treat others. Therefore, the portrayal of a people's culture through various forms of media can affect the exchanges between people. While, I interviewed Milan Marinkovic, he described the first encounter between his family and their American sponsors at the airport:

"When they saw us at the airport, their eyes widened and they were speechless and they wondered what had happened. They all watched the news, read the newspapers, and had a certain image of Bosnia. When we arrived, it was something entirely different. They expected an old woman with a headscarf and an old man with a

cane with dozens of children behind them. However, we came, who had lived a very European lifestyle in Bosnia. They first stared at us in shock, then smiled at us and hugged us, and later they kissed us and cried (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

In the interview, Milan often made mention of the similarities between his family and Americans, as if to prove that they are indeed on the same level as the natives. The theme of acceptance is reiterated here through Milan's story because the acceptance that he encountered upon arrival proved to be an important affirmation of his identity. It is as Charles Simic described of his arrival decades before; "They didn't send us back. Our being here and breathing was perfectly legal (1999, p.125)". It may appear trivial on the surface, but the mere approval of being able to simply 'be' and 'exist' are very important to a refugee for they simply did not have these freedoms before (at least on consistently).

During the interviews, I asked all of the interview candidates to reflect on their present lives in America in an effort to gauge their levels of satisfaction and assimilation into the culture. At the time of the interview, as well as presently, all of the interview subjects resided in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Zekira Marinkovic responded to the question by saying: *"I have a job. I have my own house. I have a bed to sleep in. I have food and I can say that I am content* (personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)". The answer may appear basic, but when one learns of Zekira's life during the war, one is able to understand her appreciation of what is considered basic to someone who has never had to go through what Zekira went through.

My father, Kasim Subasic, offered a similar response to Zekira's:

"My life is relatively comfortable over here and I have a pretty nice job...We bought a new townhouse, that is also nice. What I don't like very much over here, basically in Lancaster County, is that this is a pretty conservative part of the United States. I would be happier if people around here were a little bit more civilized. I said that people used to throw trash around the grass or many people don't care about their kids (personal communication 2010)".

He later adds; *"we paid our bills on time. We are not missing anything. We are able to provide what we need. It would be better if we had a little bit more not just because we need more, but, for example, it would be nice if we could take a vacation, at least every couple of years, if not every year (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)".*

While Yugoslavs were able to reclaim a sense of normalcy in their new countries of residence, it is important to note that the shadow of the war always follows them in their footsteps. Due to the politicization of identity, every aspect that previously comprised one's identity has changed. "Even the question of recipes is no longer innocent (Drakulic, 1996, p.205)" because the manner through which a dish is prepared has also been politicized to reflect the new-found ethnic differences among Yugoslavs. In her book, Slavenka Drakulic reflects upon a time when she went to visit Bosnian Muslim friends in Stockholm, Sweden, where she made the mistake of asking if the *sarma* was half beef and half pork. She later confesses that she instantly regretted asking the question for her Muslim hosts do not eat pork due to their faith and she feared that such a question could be considered insensitive and cause a rift in their

friendship(1996, p.205). Due to the politicization of everything from one's identity to the very food one eats, the relationships between Yugoslavs have suffered due to the constant fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. "Of course, we always had the option of getting together with other Yugoslavs for some home-style food. However, there was a heavy price to pay...Nostalgia was big on the menu at such gatherings, and so is anger at how events turned out (Simic, 1999, p.128)".

When I interviewed my father, he reaffirmed the shallowness of present-day relationships between Yugoslavs:

"We also do not have very deep relationships with Bosnian people that live over here. Most people that came over here from Bosnia are middle class people...the people like you to think better about him that he actually is...most people are not honest about themselves. And then the Bosnian people over here, actually most of them, many of them, became too materialistic...I think that it's some psychological thing when you lost everything you had, you try to get as much as you can in your present life or in the place where you presently live...sometimes I feel lonely, sometimes not. I'm pretty close to my family and...I spend...Monday through Friday working. Then on the weekend, we usually get a visit from somebody of our friends or we visit them and we sit and talk together a little bit (Kasim Subasic personal communication 2010)".

My father's reflection on his relationship with other Bosnians reflects the societal change that has occurred among Yugoslavs. Whereas they were previously very social and community-oriented, many Yugoslavs have become more secluded because of the war. In other words, the war that was waged devastated the sense of *drustvo* that was previously a primary characteristic of Yugoslav society. *Instead of working together to*

for the betterment of the drustvo, many Yugoslavs now focus their energy on things such as attaining material items to fill the social void.

In order to escape the effects that the war has had on their lives, some refugees seek to integrate themselves with the native community of their newfound residence. Yet there are barriers that make this adaptation difficult. My father, Kasim Subasic, reflected on some of the reasons why it is difficult for him to build close relationships with the locals in Lancaster County:

“I interact with local people over here but that is not a very deep interaction....people are too conservative...there is too much religion, but too little faith. It’s the main reason I can’t establish deep relationships with this community (personal communication 2010)”.

Milan Marinkovic elaborates on his attempt to integrate himself into the local community by attending local events. Yet, despite attending cultural events, Milan also makes mention of the limited relationships that he has with the locals, as well as with other Bosnian Diaspora:

“I do not have many close ties or relationships with the locals...However, when the opportunity arises, whether it is with Americans, Bosnians, Hispanics, one finds time to exchange a couple of words, to greet one another...On the weekends, we spend time with everyone. We go out to restaurants or have dinner’s at someone’s home, and we also keep in touch over the telephone during the week. I like that this city has a variety of cultural events. They have festivals and carnivals. Actually, a carnival will be taking place in New Holland very shortly and, then also in Ephrata and in Lancaster. There are always events in the summer in the park, where there is live music from around the

world and three to four thousand people attend (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

Cultural Change

By original definition, "old lore" was considered to be a pure and traditional ethnic behavior, while influences from a new environment were considered as "intrusions (Danielson, 1977, p.10)". *"During the war, everything changed. Customs, and all that...the reason why we left Bosnia is exactly because of that. It's because those customs changed, both in the religious sense, and the interactions with people. In education, television itself-the way the news was presented, the way that people dress, and the way that people look upon religiosity-it completely changed...it was an obliteration of culture; it was something unnatural...(Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".*

Yet, while these changes were taking place, some Yugoslavs stood their ground and refused to acclimate to what was happening around them. *"During the time of war, I retained my cultural practices and I didn't want to change any of my practices. And I have brought those practices with me here and I have also tried to teach my children these practices",* said Zekira Marinkovic (personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian, 2010)".

While Zekira and Milan Marinkovic desperately clung-on to their old way of life amid a changing Yugoslavia, my father explains why he began adapting new cultural ways in Germany:

"What I liked most about Germany was... their appreciation of time. For a German everything has to be on time; you promise them something, you go with that.

And then, you go with that, exactly how you promised and the time you promised. In Bosnia it's perfectly normal that your neighbor comes to your home anytime, day or night, doesn't matter why, and that is perfectly normal. But in Germany it's not that case. It's not that way. And that's one thing I adapted also. And even now I have hard time to imagine that my neighbors are able to come to my house without calling me on the phone or asking me if I have time (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)".

He also explained the simple changes that he made, such as drinking coffee:

"In Bosnia, we used to drink Bosnian coffee, for example, and it's strong, very, very strong, coffee. And, then, you drink a little, a little-usually two little cups of that. And that would be for one time and then you would drink that coffee that way five or six times a day. And then in Germany, they used to drink coffee just like over here (in America)-filtered coffee. And that's as soon as we tried that coffee, we adapted it then. Since then, we drink only that coffee. We never went back to the Bosnian coffee (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)".

My father went on to explain the reasons behind why he embraced the German culture by stating:

"There are many things that I stopped doing in Germany. I actually stopped spending time with my friends because I lost my friends. And then most of your cultural practices are happening in a circle of your friends. And when you lose all of that, there is not much left".

While some past behaviors are shed or altered to make room for new behaviors, not all folkloric ways are ever fully abolished (Danielson, 1977, p.10). This is even more true in older individuals for they have had more time to marinate in their previous

culture, making it more difficult to separate themselves from their previous communal identity.

The immigrant is characterized by having difficulties adjusting to a new environment, which includes learning a new language and cultural ways, culture shock, changing names, and various social blunders (Danielson, 1977, p.14). Charles Simic explains the astonishment and the embarrassment of speaking and not being able to communicate are deeply humbling “and how he tried to overcome the communication barrier by teaching himself to speak the English language. (Simic, 1999, p.127)” “...I tried to follow the TV and radio programs. In secret I repeated words and phrases I overheard: Hey, smart aleck! Crackerjack. Okeydokey. Chase butterflies. Hogwash. Hold the phone. Go to the dogs (Simic, 1999, p.127)”. During the interview, Milan Marinkovic spoke to me about the minor differences that he had to learn to become accustomed to in America:

“We didn’t know many things, I mean, how to use them. Like a coffee machine, which I didn’t have in Bosnia. I mean, I had one, but they are not the same. Then we looked at how to turn it on and how it works. Now, now this is mine. I use it (personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)”.

Perhaps the thing that makes this transition most difficult is that, in American society, “their move is commonly portrayed as a one-way escape from hunger, want, and persecution...” which is not necessarily the case but, nonetheless, leads to prejudices and accompanying social complications (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p.7). Despite the difficulties in losing one’s former identity, having to learn a new language and becoming accustomed to the ways of a new culture, the greatest difficulty is finding

one's place in a new society. "The immigrant experience is not a linear, irreversible journey from one membership to another. Rather, migrants pivot back and forth between sending, receiving, and other orientations at different stages of their lives (Levitt, 2010, p.41)". My father, Kasim Subasic, illustrates this point:

"My life is divided in some way, between Bosnia and the United States. It's actually two parts of life. And what I adapted is, outside my home, I live an American life as an American. And then, inside our home, we have most things we use to do in Bosnia. I mean the way of life, we have about the same...Basically my wife, myself, my daughter, we lived together and then we live not much differently like we lived in Bosnia. (personal communication 2010)."

Re-Creating Cultural Ways

In a foreign world, many refugees and immigrants attempt to recreate aspects of their former lives to sustain their identity through familiar cultural ways. "We keep re-creating the interior-tables are set, living rooms furnished, knick-knacks arranged, photographs set forth-but it inadvertently highlights and preserves the rift or break fundamental to our lives (Said, 1986, p. 58). "Food ways are intimately associated with the warmth of family which is a pivotal force in ethnic socialization (Danielson, 1977, p.21)". Edward W. Said discussed how "the same food and eating rituals organized around a table or central space occur with maddening regularity (1986, p.58)". *"We had a fantastic cuisine and our native cuisine is something that I do not wish to abandon (Zekira Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".*

"Food ways cited and their description functioned as ethnicity boundary markers

(Danielson, 1977, p.1)". "The continuity of eating habits among ethnic groups is one of the strongest forms of Old World behavioral persistence (Danielson, 1977, p.21)". As a means to sustain their culture, Yugoslav immigrants practice traditional foodways in their host countries. *"We try every day (to sustain cultural traditions)-we make Bosnian food, we get together with other Bosnians, we spend time together and so forth (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)"*. *"We still eat Bosnian food. My wife cooks Bosnian food. I don't cook myself, I have no idea about that (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)"*.

Bosnian food is *"pretty close to the food people eat in Greece, Turkey, and that part of the Balkan peninsula (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)"*. Foods such as *sarma* (minced meat mixed with rice, chopped onions, an egg, spices and salt tightly wrapped in sour cabbage), *pita* or *burek* (thin pastry dough stuffed with either beef, cheese, spinach, potatoes, cabbage, etc), and *cevapcici* (grilled sausages), and *baklava* (a sweet pastry dessert filled with nuts) continue to be made in Yugoslavs all over the world. Our *"most famous food is named cevapcici. That is a food that is made from a piece of flat bread about six or seven inches diameter and you cut them in half and we put some like, it looks like little sausages made from the ground beef on the grill. After we grill them, we put them inside that flat bread and then with some onion and that's a recipe that's probably a couple hundred years old-and it's good (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)"*.

"Another specific Bosnia food is pita. That food is made from the stuffed dough and you can put anything inside. It's basically like pizza. As you know, you can put anything on pizza, whatever you like, so same with pita. You can put grounded

meat...you can put cheese-anything you want. And, by the way, it's much better than pizza (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)".

Reflecting this ethnic socialization through food ways, Milan Marinkovic reflects on the food presentation practices in Bosnia and America:

"The way that the food is prepared and served, that is what we accepted very graciously. We had all of those hospitality customs in Bosnia. Here (in America) they create an ambience with decorations and beautification...we did things in a similar fashion and set the dining room table, but we didn't have all of the details that add beauty...we didn't have money for it...and one could not buy such things because they were not available (personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

While food is a primary means of retaining cultural ways abroad, it is certainly not the only means. Yugoslavs stay true to their social nature, despite the group tensions that were brought on by the war. Yugoslavs are proud of their identity and continue to remain actively engaged in their cultural practices. Such cultural practices can be either simple or elaborate. For example, author Slavenka Drakulic notes the fact that "Bosnian refugees...exchange and borrow tapes from the 'homeland'. It doesn't matter if it is a movie, a musical, a show or a news program, anything will do. They watch them all.(1996, p.206)". Others prefer a more engaging social activity which includes getting together with other Yugoslavs in diaspora to surround oneself with a shared cultural atmosphere. *"Some Bosnian families come to visit and we turn on Bosnian music and we dance. Through this I teach my daughters and they also come along to our parties and we sing together and dance and quite often sit and talk about our culture-as we did*

where we lived before, in our Bosnia (Zekira Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

While such festivities and celebrations continue onward, *"the war did its damages...for example, "The Day of Women"...it is like "Mother's Day" here; it is a celebration to honor women. That used to be celebrated all over, but now it's not important* (Danijela Marinkovic, as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

Nonetheless, Yugoslavs still continue to celebrate their native holidays and events. *"Kira and I have different religions. She continues to celebrate her Muslim holidays here and I celebrate my Orthodox-Christian ones. We celebrate all of them together and we have also adapted the American ones* (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

"In Serbia and Montenegro, the great religious festival of the year is the *Slava*-the anniversary of the "day of glory" on which the celebrant's clan accepted Christianity centuries ago. On this day the priest blesses the *zito*, a traditional feast dish of sweetened boiled wheat dating from pagan times which is also eaten at the grave of the dead-the latter custom being traceable to pre-Christian funeral feasts. In Yugoslavia, even dedicated Communists proudly observe such customs (Stillman, 1964, p.136)".

Milan explains that *"it is a wish to be with people and to build relationships; to invite your friends to your holiday and to become closer. It is to keep those traditions alive and for them to continue to be traditions for subsequent generations* (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

Despite the fact that Yugoslavia is no longer a multi-ethnic country, the above examples illustrate that Yugoslavs, wherever they may be, still have a longing for the

sense of *drustvo* that they once had. Through engaging in and re-creating their cultural ways abroad, Yugoslavs are sowing the seeds for what was once the essence of their *drustvo*. And, it is because of these people and their love for *drustvo* that Yugoslavia's soul is still alive—a prime example of the need of culture for humanity's sustainability (Hawkes, 2001).

Cultural Effects

“Increasing numbers of migrants maintain ties to the nations that they come from at the same time that they establish roots in the countries where they settle (Levitt, 2010, p.39)”. As a result of this transnational attitude, societies are becoming more and more globalized due to the multi-ethnicity of their citizens. Such multi-ethnic relationships form a “melting pot” where subcultures and dominant groups alike, “adjust themselves to common ideals and purposes (Danielson, 1977, p.7)”. Some might see this cultural blending as a threat to cultural uniqueness, but the truth of the matter is that “there are differences of color, language, culture, and opportunities, but people’s feelings and reactions are alike (Salgado, 2000, p.15)”. The similar plight of the people from the nations described above certainly seems to indicate that, in all corners of the world, people are just people. Perhaps the light side of globalization is that it may lead to greater realization of our similarities, resulting in greater respect for the identities of people around the world.

Conclusion

The story of Yugoslavia echoes the themes of tragedy and suffering characteristic of a Balkan *Sevdalinka* (folk ballad). Yugoslavia was a nation that once proudly represented the slogan of “brotherhood and unity” only to become synonymous

with the term “Balkanization” defined by fragmentation and disintegration as a result of the Balkan Wars in the 1990s. This drastic reversal of the Yugoslav identity occurred due to the politicization of ethnicity that was conspired by Yugoslavia’s own leaders in an effort to divide the people so that they could seize greater political power. The propaganda that was unleashed during the Balkan wars was later furthered by Western intellectuals and leaders, consequently assisting in the erasing of Yugoslavia and its people.

Today, Yugoslavia is no more. It is a country that once was, now only serving as a reminder of the atrocities that people are able to commit against one another. Yugoslavia died because the identity of its people was taken from them, because, in the end, a country is just a group of people. Yugoslavs were divided into Serbs, Croats, and Slavic Muslims, leaving no room for individuals who did not fit into these three categories. The loss of identity destroyed the peaceful multi-ethnic community that was once Yugoslavia.

What we have learned from this experience is that the politicization of culture and ethnicity is a death sentence to community. “The noble-sounding attempt to make the whole of society accept a particular worldview always leads, sooner or later, to the slaughter of the innocents (Simic, 1999, p.133)”. Culture is meant to be enjoyed, appreciated, lived, and shared with others. When we create boundaries through politics and religion, we destroy acceptance among people. As a result, communities disintegrate and a way of life, a culture, is lost. “Cultural diversity is integral to social cohesion, human development, peaceful coexistence and the prosperity of societies (The Santorini Statement, 3rd Annual Ministerial Meeting of the International Network of

Cultural Policy, Hawkes, 2004, p.14)".

What ultimately led to the rescue of the people of Yugoslavia was that "Western public opinion spurred NATO interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo because of the emotional impact of television pictures of burning villages and massacre sites (Salgado, 2000, p14)". The world is one community of people that is growing closer and closer due to mass communication technology and it is becoming more and more difficult to turn a blind eye to the plight of our brothers and sisters in opposite corners of the globe. We are meant to be each other's keepers, for that is what defines a community. Due to this responsibility to each other and to ourselves, we are all guilty of crimes against humanity, if we do nothing to protect it. "The people wrenched from their homes are simply the most visible victims of a global convulsion entirely of our own making (Salgado, 2000, p.8)". It is our duty as people to reverse the cycle of cultural destruction and loss of identity in the world community, simply because it is in our power to do so.

Cultural Sustainability

This project could not have come to fruition without the tremendous inspiration, support, and guidance that I received while being a student of the Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability program at Goucher College. Though I had discovered my interest in the social science research as an undergraduate student, I felt that I was lacking clarity of direction and inspiration. When I became a part of the M.A.C.S. program, I felt that my vagabond emotions finally found a community where I belong. It wasn't easy at first, because I was afraid to venture into a territory that I knew would require me to expose my inner-most feelings. Being around individuals who were so open, sincere, and proud of their own identities, gave me the strength to embrace my

own-both the good and the bad of it. In a way, this project expresses the result of this journey.

Cultural Sustainability re-awakened my belief in people and in communities. It has taught me that if I am to ask of others to conquer their fears and to become better world citizens that I must be brave enough to do so myself. The people that I have encountered along my journey in this program have been the earth and the sun to my seed; they have simultaneously grounded me and helped me grow, both professionally and personally. And, because of this, I was able to remember something that I had forgotten a long time ago; the importance of community. And, through this, I was able to open my heart and realize what was important to me, and that is preserving the culture of my family, countrymen, and ancestors.

Despite the fact that I had to leave my homeland, Yugoslavia, behind at the age of five, I carry fond memories of the people with me wherever I go. Despite the atrocities of the war and despite being away from my homeland for twenty years, I always felt a strong pull to my origins. The truth is that I always loved being a Yugoslav because my parents, Kasim and Borka Subasic, taught me to appreciate and be proud of the Yugoslav culture. My parents taught me to love all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, political persuasion, or race because that is what Tito's Yugoslavia stood for. Yet, as a result of the war, Yugoslavia's reputation and culture were severely tarnished. Cultural Sustainability gave me the courage and the tools that I need to help restore the culture and sense of community in Yugoslavia for my parents and Yugoslavs everywhere so that our *drustvo* can continue on.

My Contribution

In order to follow-through on my promise to restore Yugoslav identity and culture, I plan on undertaking several projects in the future that inspire community engagement and collaboration. As a part of this project, I have begun collecting information to build a website to serve as a virtual community for Yugoslavs around the globe to share fond cultural aspects with one another. The website will include my personal story of leaving the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and my journey home after twenty years of living abroad. I hope that sharing my personal experiences will make other Yugoslavs feel comfortable enough to share theirs as well.

Additionally, I wish to use the interviews of my father, Kasim Subasic, and the Marinkovic family that I have on audio in some sort of larger project that involves collecting the stories of the Yugoslav Diaspora in the United States. I want to make sure that their stories are heard by others and for generations to come so that all people, regardless of origin, know of the horrors of war and that they recognize that we are all just people.

On a more personal note, I wish to re-visit my homeland and collect the biographies of all of my living relatives, as well as gather information on ancestors. Because I am so far away from my family and I do not get to spend as much time with all of them as I would like, I would like to immortalize them in a way so that I may share their stories with my children someday.

Recently, I came across the trailer of a new documentary film titled *Houston, We Have a Problem* that is set to be released in the spring of 2013 about the Yugoslav space program. I was flabbergasted when I saw the trailer because, like most Yugoslavs, I was unaware of the fact that Tito had a secret underground space program

(*Houston, We have a Problem* trailer, 2012). In the trailer, it is revealed that Tito sold the space program to the United States which is how Yugoslavia was able to flourish economically. Due to this intriguing discovery, I would like to explore the societal effects of other Yugoslav discoveries as a means of defining Yugoslav global presence more clearly.

Final Words

This project is an homage to Yugoslavia's people and all people who believe in the motto of "brotherhood and unity". It is a promise to those who were lost in the tragedy of the Balkan wars and for all people whose culture was violently taken from them. I want to conclude this project with the words of my fellow Yugoslavs:

"One always needs to speak about where he is from, so that he does not forget one's place of birth. So that one does not forget that they have family over there too...My traditions, my origins,-these I do not want to forget. They remain so that one knows about them. (Milan Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

"When I have children, I want to pass down all of the things that my parents passed down to me, you know, from knee-to-knee. I think that it is very important to retain that which is your own, but also, to learn about that which belongs to the other-that is important (Danijela Marinkovic, personal communication as translated from the Serbo-Croatian 2010)".

"Whatever happened in Bosnia, whatever people think about Bosnia-some people don't think very good, some do. I am, I can say, I am proud to be a Bosnian and I love Bosnia. And, I am officially Bosnian-American now because I got an American

citizenship seven or eight years ago. To be honest, what I can say, I am not able to love America. I never will. I love Bosnia. You can love one place, one person-that's my way of love, the way I think. And in another way, I have heard other people say "I love America", but I cannot say that. Honestly, I cannot love America. I respect America in a big way and the most reason I respect this country is that this country took us, when no one, no other country, wanted us. And I will never forget that. But, as I said, I love Bosnia. I am proud to be from that country, from former Yugoslavia...And I like you, my daughter, to know where we came from. I am okay that you love being over here, that you love this country, but it's a part of your history, of our family history, and I think that that's something that you need to know about (Kasim Subasic, personal communication 2010)".

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Appendix of Interviews

Kasim Subasic
Zekira Marinkovic
Danijela Marinkovic
Milan Marinkovic.

Interview Log

Interviewee: Kasim Subasic
D.O.B. 05/22/1954
P.O.B. Gacice, Bosnia Herzegovina

Interviewer: Maja Subasic

Date: 10/11/2010

Location: Subasic Residence

4 Bradford Drive, Leola, PA 17540
Lancaster County, U.S.A.

Comments: The time indicates where the various portions of the interview questions can be found on the audio recording.

Documentation:

Audio: folder
Scanned Photos:

Transcription by: Maja Subasic
4 Bradford Drive
Leola, PA 17540
717-475-4339
Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Transcription of Kasim Subasic Interview

-Start of Part 1 of 3 (Recording One)-

00:00:00 State today's date:

October 11, 2010

your name,

Kasim Subasic

your age,

56

your birth date,

May 22

and place of birth

Vitez, Bosnia Hercegovina. Former Yugoslavia

00:00:37 Where do you currently live?

I currently live in Leola, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

00:00:46 How did you end up in either Lancaster County?

I came over here with my family from Germany. Why Lancaster County, because it was a Bosnian family, actually a guy that use to work with me in Bosnia. He worked in the same company and they came over here a couple months before us. Because we have re-connected during our times in Germany so that is the reason we came over here because we wanted to have somebody we know

00:01:28 Now can you please specify your background, whether it's ethnic or religious (What is your background (ethnic, religious, social, etc.)?)

I am Bosnian, actually Bosnian-Muslim. And, I am a middle-class worker.

00:01:47 And, can you please describe your life in Bosnia before the war (What was your life like in Bosnia?)

My life in Bosnia was, I can say, pretty good. Because, why I am saying that, because just before the war started I was like thirty-nine years old. My life was basically...I mean everything was pretty much in its place. We have, we have...I have nice family, we had, we had a kid. We lived in the middle of the town, everything was close to our apartment. Like the elementary school, public transportation, ambulance. Actually everything, everything we needed was within a couple hundred yards around us. And I had good job. Basically everything was in its place, if I can say. Say it that way

00:03:01 Can you describe what job you had and go into a little bit more detail about your everyday life?

I was working my last job was I worked as head of maintenance in the company that I worked for. I was in charge of the mechanical maintenance of the machinery in the company that I worked for. And then, that was about two miles from the place that we lived. And, we had, if I can say, a lot of fun in that time of our life. We had a couple, may two-three families who were very good friends. And we, we had a very active social life. We visited each other all the time, we visited different places, we used to sit together making jokes and, if I can say that, life was really, really good at that time. It's the shortest that I can say about my life at that time.

00:04:37 And this is all before the Balkan civil war, yes?

That, that's right. Yeah.

00:04:44 And what happened during the Balkan civil war? Where were you when it happened? (Where were you during the Balkan civil war?)

Actually we spent all, all the war, we spent on the outside Bosnia. We have been in Bosnia only for a few months since war started. Actually, the war did not happen in our town at that time. It was everywhere around but not in our town, so that was kind of the last chance we had to leave the town. We left. That's what happened. So we heard a little bit of the war, but we actually did not suffer from the war.

00:05:42 And where were you during the war? You said you were outside of Bosnia...

Yes, because my marriage is a mixed marriage. Actually my, as I told you, I am a Muslim and my wife is a Orthodox Serb. And because of the nature of the war, that everyone fight-fought against everybody else-Muslims against Serbs, Croats against

Serbs, Croats against Muslims. So I didn't see myself fighting in that kind of war. I didn't want to fight against my brothers-in-law or the family of my wife. So that is main reason that I decided, actually before real war started that I have to go, with my family, somewhere. I didn't know where but I already knew that I needed to go, that I have to go somewhere. So what happened was my wife's family lived in mostly Serb populated city called Banja Luka. Actually her family came from that city to my town and then her parents still lived over there so just because I didn't know what to do with them or myself. I told you, I didn't know where to go, so I decided last minute to send my wife and my children to her parents and then we'll see later what happens. So I did that and I stayed by myself for about 3 months in our apartment and when I get the chance to go I left for , actually, I had the over to go with my family to Sweden but because of the nationality of my wife and myself we couldn't go the same way. And we decided to come to Hungary but different ways. So my wife went, with the kids, through Serbia. And I went through Croatia to Hungary. But when we finally came together in Hungary, that we lost the chance to go to Sweden so we didn't know where to go. So we stayed in a town in Hungary named Mohac for about 4 months looking for a chance to go somewhere else because life over there was not very pretty. So finally a chance came through a Bosnian doctor who lived in Germany and they came to visit refugees from Bosnia and they brought some goods from Germany, like clothes and things like that...So I talked to them and they promised to help us come to Germany. So after a month, we all came together to Germany. And we were there for about 5 years and then we came over here.

00:10:10 Can you talk a little bit about your life in Germany? How was that for you?

My life in Germany: I actually liked Germany very much. That country works in the way that I like a country to work. I got pretty much, actually the beginning -for couple months of our life in Germany - was not very pretty but because we have been we lived with a German family that was not very nice to us-I don't know why, but anyway, we survived. Shortly, after a few months, I got a job and we found an apartment. So our life came, if I can say, back, it can never come back like it used to be, but it became a kind of normal life. And, after a while, I got an even better job and then we moved to the next city, about ten miles away and then we got another apartment and soon our daughter started-went to school-first grade of elementary school. Through all of that time, we learned the language and then you also have to learn how the whole society works so it takes some time to understand and adapt how the country functions. So basically after some hard time at the beginning, most of our life in Germany was pretty good, if I can say. And I wished that we could stay in Germany but unfortunately we couldn't because Germany did not want to take any refugees from Bosnia. So that's why we came over here.

00:12:37 And you said that you presently live in Leola, Pennsylvania?

Yes.

00:12:42 And how do you feel in your present location? Can you describe how your life is now?

My life is relatively comfortable over here and I have pretty nice job. We have-we bought a new townhouse-that is also nice. What I don't like very much over here, basically in Lancaster County, is that this is a pretty conservative part of the United

States. And that is something that I am not very happy about.

And you choose to stay, despite your unhappiness with the conservatism here?

What I can say, I am not that young so I actually don't have a plan to move. I don't know what can happen but I don't have any plans to go anywhere else so that's how it is right now.

00:13:58 So you said that you are not planning to go anywhere at this time but would you think about returning to Bosnia? Is that an option for you?

Yes, I was thinking a lot about that but you have to be realistic. Returning to Bosnia at this time or anywhere in the near future is not very smart idea. At first, if I decide eventually to but I will not go there you have to look for a job and in a country where unemployment is probably around 30% it's a pretty small chance to find any job so my plan about Bosnia is eventually if I get or when I get retired, that's at least my wish, to go eventually back to spend the rest of my life over there.

00:15:10 And is most of your family in Bosnia or do you have family here?

00:15:14 Excuse me?

00:15: 16 Is most of your family in Bosnia still?

My immediate family is over here-my wife and my daughter. And then, I still have four sisters in Bosnia and they lived over there all the time-with their families.

00:15:36 And let's move to talking about the present here-about your life in Lancaster County. So you said that you plan to stay here. Can you talk about your interactions with the local people that live here in Lancaster County?

Yes, I interact with local people over here but that is not very deep interaction. It's only-we actually have one American family that we-I can say-in some way we are friends-we visit each other on some occasions-not too often-and that is-maybe there are a few more families that we have some relationship but that is not very deep relationship, as I said.

00:16:39 And why do you think that is?

It's mostly because I told you about the kind of society in this area over here. People are, for my taste, people are too conservative. People are too its hard to say too religious. Yes, in some ways, too religious, but what I think religion is not a problem, at least, in my mind. But it's, religion is used in a way that I think should not be used. As I used to say, there is too much religion, but too little faith around over here. It's the main reason I can't establish deep relationships with this community.

00:17:41 And do you think that if you were in a different place in the United States, in a different community, that that would be different?

I think so. I didn't see much of the United States. I did see most of the East Coast but that's basically all I saw. As much as I know, talking to other people and what I have seen on TV, there are many much more liberal societies around the United States. So, I mean, when I say liberal, I mean free-minded people. Because I like to talk what I think and that's what I'm expecting from other people.

00:18:42 And you said that your relationships with locals with Americans here are not so deep. How about your relationships with other Bosnian families, with other Bosnians in the community? Can you talk about that here?

Ah, that is an interesting question. We also don't have very deep relationships with Bosnian people that live over here. We have few good friends. We don't have much contact with rest of the Bosnian community over here. If you want to know why, I can tell

you.

Yes, definitely that would be good.

What I think is that most people that came over here from Bosnia, let me say, are middle class people. Many of them have been, I am not sure, because people don't speak truth about themselves coming over here. Because we never met each other before and the people like you to think better about him than he actually is. And then, I don't know what to say, people are not, most people are not honest about themselves. And then the Bosnian people over here actually most of them, many of them, became like too materialistic. So they are looking for stuff for self-Why is that that way? I don't know but I think that it's some psychological thing when you lost everything you had, you try to get as much as you can in your present life or in the place where you presently live. So that is what I think the reason why that is how it is.

00:21:11 How does this make you feel? You said that you don't have many very deep relationships with either locals or other Bosnian Diaspora. Do you feel lonely or has it brought you closer to your family? How would you describe that?

I can-maybe both of them-in some way and sometimes I feel lonely, sometimes not-all depends. I'm pretty close to my family and then-how's my life-my life-I spent 5 days from the week from Monday through Friday working and I am getting occupied with my job and then on the weekend we usually get visit from the somebody of our friends or we visit them and we sit and talk together a little bit. That's about-that's basically that.

00:22:21 Can you go a little deeper into what you like about your immediate environment? Let's just focus on the likes. What do you like about where you are right now?

What I like-it's not best time to talk about that right now because of the present situation in the economy. But still, I can say we-we have relatively comfortable life. At least we paid our bills on time. We are-we are not missing anything. We are able to provide what we need. It would be better if we had a little bit more not just because we need more but, for example, it would be nice if we could take a vacation, at least every couple of years, if not every year. Just to let you know, last vacation I had was ten years ago so as I told you before, what my life-what our life over here is we have pretty nice place to live. It's a new community around us. We don't know much people-many people around over here but all together it's okay, if I can say it that way. I don't want to say that it's good or bad, it's relatively good.

00:24:11 Can you talk about some of things that you dislike about your current environment?

What I don't like-I would be happier if people around over here were a little bit more civilized. I said that people used to throw the trash around the grass or many people don't care about their kids. Actually there are many -a lot of people that came from everywhere. I don't know if it's because of the crisis or what but there are people from all around the United States that basically came over here so many-or some of them who are not very-didn't adapt themselves to this society and then that's something that I am not very happy about.

00:25:15 And, if it's okay with you, do you mind talking about some cultural practices or would you like to take a break?

Okay, let's take a little break.

Okay.

-End of Part 1 of 3 (Recording One). Total: 00:25:26-

-Start of Part 2 of 3 (Recording Two)-

We are going to resume the interview now, after a break.

00:00:09 Let's talk a little bit about cultural practices. This is...can you specifically talk about the cultural practices that you have adapted during the time of the war? You mentioned that you lived in Germany for a number of years. What parts of German culture have you accepted or adapted to your own lifestyle?

What kind of German culture adapted? The first thing and then I like it most, even before I came to Germany. I like the precision the Germans adapt through their-in their civilization, if I can say like that.

-End of Part Two of Three (Recording Two)-

-Start of Part Three of Three -

Ok, we are going to resume our questions now.

00:00:05 If you can please discuss-go a little bit into cultural practices, especially the ones that you have adapted during the time of the war. You mentioned that you lived in Germany. Can you discuss the German culture and how you've adapted parts of it.

Oh ok, I...what I liked most in Germany was something that I knew even before I came to Germany, was about-their appreciation of the time-if I can say that. For a German everything has to be on time; you promise them something, you go with that. And then, you go with that-exactly how you promised and the time you promised. And, I am person like that. If I say that I am coming at five o'clock, it has to be at five o'clock. Or if you promise something to me, I'm expecting you to do the same thing-and that is the way how German lived. That's one thing I like a lot about German. Through our life, Germany, like everywhere, like over here, through the time you adapt many things you are even not aware of it. One of things I, we adapted in Germany was so fast even today we are a little surprised..In Bosnia, we used to drink Bosnian coffee, for example and that it's strong, very very strong coffee and then you drink a little, a little-usually two little cups of that. And that would be for one time and then you would drink that coffee that way five or six times a day. And then in Germany, they used to drink coffee just like over here -filtered coffee. And that's as soon as we tried that coffee, we adapted it then. Since then, we drink only that coffee-we never went back to the Bosnian coffee. That's one thing, what else I can say..What-that's one thing we learned in Germany thing that is pretty much the same over here. We learned that people you know or your neighborhood or people around you are not very familiar with each other like in Bosnia. In Bosnia it's perfectly normal that your neighbor comes to your home anytime-day or night-doesn't matter what or doesn't matter why-and that is perfectly normal. But in Germany it's not that case. It's not that way. And that's one thing I adapted also. And then even now I have hard time to imagine that my neighbors are able to come to my house without calling me on the phone or asking me if I have time. That is way how it is. I just-that's one more thing I adapted without thinking about it and I like it actually.

Are there any other things that you adapted during you time in Germany?

I'm thinking is there-actually there are not many things that I adapted there. That was my first time in my life I spent a longer time in another society-another country. It's more about learning how everything works, than adapting things. I cannot say that I adapted

many things in that time, but I learned a lot.

00:04:56 Thank you. Let's talk about the opposite. You said that you abandoned drinking Bosnian coffee, are there other cultural practices that you abandoned because you moved to Germany? Did you stop doing things that you would have done in Bosnia?

Yea, there are many things that I stopped doing in Germany. I actually stopped spending time with my friends because I lost my friends. And then most of your cultural practices are happening in a circle of your friends. And when you lose all of that, there is not much left. Like I said, there is not much left and there is not much that I adapted over that time. I don't know if that is good enough or not, but it's how it is.

00:06:15 That makes sense, so let's talk about, if we can, your cultural practices in relation to your present residence. I mean since you moved from Germany to Lancaster County in the United States, have you adapted additional cultural practices from this area?

It's hard to say many ways, many things are same over here as in Germany. It's western civilization and then, both are western civilization, and even have many differences. Basic way of life is about the same. So except learning language and then some of the way how society works. There are not many things, actually, I changed since I came from Germany. I've seen different things, I've not seen before. Especially Amish people, some other religious groups that we did not have chance to see or to contact before, but, if I can say, everyday life is not much different than our life in Germany.

00:08:11 Can you then maybe discuss some additional cultural practices that you have abandoned as a result of coming to the United States? They can be Bosnian cultural practices or the ones that you attained in Germany.

Yeah, that is something that I just was thinking about. Basically, my life is the divided some way, if I can say, in between Bosnia and then-and the United States. It's actually two parts of life. And what I adapted is, outside my home, I live an American life as an American. And then, inside our home, we have most things we used to do in Bosnia. I mean the way of life, we have about the same. Is that because same people-we live together in Bosnia or I don't know what. Basically my wife, myself, my daughter-we lived together and then we live not much differently like we lived in Bosnia. Especially we eat-we still eat Bosnian food. My wife cooks Bosnian food. I don't cook myself, I have no idea about that. So basically, we have Bosnian life inside our home- at least my wife and myself-our daughter is a different story. Outside of our home, we are like every other American. That's about that, yeah.

00:10:11 Can you describe a little bit more about the life inside your home? Can you discuss what kinds of Bosnian foods-you know, how is that different from American foods?

Bosnian food is mostly oriental food. So, if I say oriental, that means-that's a kind of food that is pretty close to the food people eat in Greece, Turkey, and that part of the Balkan peninsula. And we have many specific kind of food, if I say, and then our most famous, at least for us, most famous food is named *Cevapcici*. That is a food that is made from a piece of flat bread about maybe six or seven inches diameter and you cut them in half and we put some-like -it looks like little sausages made from the grounded beef on the grill. After we grill them, we put them inside that flat bread and then with

some onion and that's a recipe that's probably a couple hundred years old-and it's good. And then another specific Bosnian food is *Pita*. That is a food made from the *stuffed, if I can say,*

You can say it in Bosnian

Tjesto

Dough

Yea and then you can put anything inside. It's basically like a pizza. As you know, you can put anything on pizza-whatever you like, so same thing with *Pita*. You can put ground meat, you can put tomato, you can put cheese-anything you want. And, by the way, it's much better than pizza.

00:12:54 And you said that you see yourself living a Bosnian lifestyle-you and your wife, but you said that your daughter, which is me, you think that my life is very different-it's a different story. Can you talk about that? That's a difference generationally, that's interesting I think.

Ah, it's not much to talk about it. But that's only generational gap, that's the only thing. I came over here too old to become a real American. I mean to adapt the American way of life and everything else. And my daughter came over here-you came over here actually when you were ten years old and what else you can learn than American life? And you probably see America as your home. It is your country because you don't remember much from Bosnia and I-that is one way that we are not adapted in the same way in this society. I came over here when I was, oh my God, forty-seven years old and then I spent most of my life in Bosnia so, actually, I will never be able to adapt this way of life one-hundred percent because I am born over here, I am raised over here-I spent a lot of time over there so I will always be a Bosnian and you probably won't.

Alright, that's interesting.

00:14:49 And, speaking of that, you know, what are you doing to pass down the Bosnian culture and history to subsequent generations-to me-to other people here that are of Bosnian decent?

Whatever happened in Bosnia, whatever people think about Bosnia-some people don't think very good, some do. I am, I can say, I am proud to be a Bosnian and I love Bosnia. And, I am officially Bosnian-American now because I got an American citizenship seven or eight years ago. To be honest, what I can say, I am not able to love America. I never will. I love Bosnia. You can love one place, one person-that's my way of love-way I think. And in another way, I have heard other people say "I love America", but I cannot say that. Honestly, I cannot love America. I respect America in a big way and then most reason I respect this country is that this country took us, when no one-no other country wanted us-and I will never forget that. But, as I said, I love Bosnia, I'm proud to be from that country-from former Yugoslavia-that doesn't exist anymore. And I like you, my daughter, to know where we came from. I am okay that you love being over here, that you love this country, but it's a part of your history-of our family history-and I think that that's something that you need to know about.

-End of Part 3 of 3-

(Total time for all three parts: 43.5 Minutes)

Interview Log

Interviewee: Zekira Marinkovic
D.O.B. 08/19/1958
P.O.B. Tuzla, Bosnia Herzegovina

Interviewer: Maja Subasic

Date: 10/17/2010

Location: Marinkovic Residence

Comments: The time indicates where the various portions of the interview questions can be found on the audio recording.

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Audio: folder

Digital photos:

Transcription by: Maja Subasic
4 Bradford Drive
Leola, PA 17540

717-475-4339

Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Translation by: Maja Subasic

4 Bradford Drive

Leola, PA 17540

717-475-4339

Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Zekira Marinkovic Interview:

(Total 00:19:12)

00:00:01 Molim Vas recite danasnji datum, Vase Ime, Vase godiste, Vas datum I mjesto rođenja

Danasnji datum je oktobar sedamnesti dvije hiljade desete. Moje ime Zekira Marinkovic. Rodjena sam Augusta devetnestog hiljadu devetneste pedesetosme. Rodjena sam u Bosni-Hercegovini, u gradu Tuzla.

00:00:30 Hvala, Gdje trenutno živite?

Sada trenutno živim, u Americi sam, u drzavi Pennsylvaniji, grad Lancaster.

00:00:42 Kako ste dosli u Lancaster County?

U Lancaster County dosli smo putem jedne organizacije I imali smo sponzore I dosli

smo hiljadudevetstodevedesetdevete (1999) godine. Tacno, dvacet-devetog septembra.

00:01:07 Molim Vas opisite Vase (Porijeklo, Religiju, ITD)

Moje porijeklo, rodjena sam u Bosni-Hercegovini, gradu Tuzla. Religija mi je –ja sam musliman.

00:01:25 Molim Vas opisite Vas zivot u Bosni prije rata? Koliko god mozete mi dati detalje.

U Bosni sam zivjela I u Bosni sam se rodila. Tacnu u gradu Tuzli. Moj zivot prije rata je bio jako dobar. Rodila sam dvije cerke, imala sam posao u jednoj bolnici u gradu. Moj muz je isto tako radio. Imali smo jedan divan apartman sa dvije sobe. Kolko smo zaradjivali, imali smo toliko dovoljno da zivimo. Imali smo sve uslove-su bili super. Sve dok samog pocetka rata mozemo rec da nam je zivot bio jako, jako dobar. Nismo uposte imali primjedbu na nas zivot. To je bilo prije rata. Kad je nastupio rat sve je bilo drugacije.

00:02:33 Mozete molim vas da opiste...Gdje ste bili za to vrijeme rata?

Za vrijeme rata citavo vrijeme bili smo prije dolaska u Ameriku bili smo u Bosni-Hercegovini, u gradu Tuzli. Nas zivot je bio jako tezak za vrijeme rata. Nismo imali hrane, nismo imali struje, vode..Nismo mogli da idemo na posao. Imali smo radnu obavezu. Morali smo da idemo pjeske kilometrima do posla. Ja sam sama radila u bolnici. Moj muz je prestao da radi jeli smo razlicte religije. Jas am bila muslimanka, a on je srbin I onda smo imali problema. I trenutno nije mogao da radi. Imo je jako puno problema posto je u tom djelu pretežno si zivjeli muslimani. I onda, nas zivot je bio jako tezak, I za mene I za moje cerke. Isle su u skolu, imali su skolu bez struje, bez vode, bez hrane, bez icega. Kad su granate padale bili smo u sklonistu, u podrumu gdje smo provodili tu vrijeme danima I danima smo provodili. I onda kad bi prestalo pucanje I granate, onda bi usli malo u stan I izeli sto nam je naj potrebniije I ponovo sisli u podrum I tako je to bilo. Djeca su svoju zadacu I svoje zadatke obavili pored svijeca I jako im je bilo tesko. Po danima su plakali, jelo nismo imali dovoljno da im pruzimo-nista.

00:04:39 Kako se osjecate u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Sada, trenutno nam je dobro. Mogu reci da mi je dobro. Imam posao, imam svoju kucu, imam krevet da spavam, imam hranu I mogu da kazem das am zadovoljna.

00:05:03 Jeli imate namjeru da ostanete u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Ako da, do kada?

Ako ne, gdje planirate da idete?

U ovom gradu I u ovom mjestu bi ostala. Mjesto je mirno, fino, imamo posao, I dobro mi je. Do kada ostanem, ostacu vjerovatno moj citav zivot to gdje sad I jesam.

00:05:36 Jeli imate opciju da se vratite u Bosnu? Zasto ili zasto ne?

Ja nemam namjeru da se vratim u Bosnu. Ovde su moja djeca. Mi smo zadovoljni I nebi zeljela da se vratim I da se vratim tamo. Ja mislim is smatram da vise moj zivot nije vise tamo. To nije isto I nebi zeljela da se vratim. Ovde cu ostati do kraja moga zivota.

00:06:17 Koliko cesto imate kontakt sa lokalnim stanovnistvom u Lancaster County?

Ja imam ovde dosta prijatelja I mogu da kazem da se druzim dosta sa stanovnistom Lancastera. Ljudi koji su mi prijatelji, jako prijatelji to su Americki, prijatelji Americki koji su bili sponsori. Oni su divna famelija, famelija koji su divno ljudi-mi se posjecujemo, mi se druzimo zajedno I imam jako dobar kontakt sa ljudima tako das am zadovoljna.

00:07:00 Kakve odnose imate sa lokalnim stanovnistvom? Mozete li to malo vise

opisati?

Jako, odnosi su jako divni sa stanovnistvom. Ja se druzim sa tim ljudima. Biras sebi ljude, biras sebi prijatelje I biras sebi skim se mozes druziti I skim se nemozes druziti. Ja se druzim sa ljudima Amerikancima koji su ljudi na, mogu reci, na malo visokom nivou gdje su kulturni, fini, gdje mogu nesto da naucim of njih. Prvo to mogu da naucim malo vise engleski jezik da pricamo vize engleski jezik. A onda o nekim drugim stvarima mogu od njih da naucim. Dai h pitam nesto sto nikad nisam znala tamo u Bosni. Dai h pitam, bila je rijec o skolovanju cerke, onda kad mi je cerka jedna bila bolesna kome da se obratim, kojem doktoru. Jako puno informacija je trebalo, jeli mi nista nismo znali o Americi, o zakonima. Tako das u ti ljudi jako nama pomogli, da mi to naucimo I kad mi je trebalo nesto da pitam ja sam s tim ljudima nalazila u kontakt I imala sam jako prave informacije, tako das am jako zadovoljna sto se tice stanovnistva I ovog mjesta.

00:08:46 Kakve odnose imate sa Bosancima u ovom mjestu?

Ako mogu da kazem iskreno, kojim putem sam dosla I zbog cega sam dosla u Ameriku, dosla sam zato sto sam sa nekim ljudima imala problema u Bosni, to je normalno I ovde ima dosta razlicitog zvjeta, naroda, mogu rec, dosta razlicitog. Tako da isto tako medu Bosancima ima dosta razlicitog svjeta. Tako da ti sebi sam biras s kim ces se druziti I s kime neces se druziti I tako. Mi smo od samo pocetka izbjegavali da se druzimo, ne zato sto je nevolim bosance, nego zato sto sam ja dosla u Ameriku zato so sam zeljela da naucim prvo jezik, zeljela sam da naucim nesto malo vise, da pricam sa ljudima I da tako a onda sam, sa bosancima ako se druzis moras da pricas samo svoj jezik I normalno da tu svoju kulturu da isto tako da budes kao I oni I tako da smo mi, da sam ja zeljela da se sto manje se druzim sa nasim ljudima. A imam par famelija skojima se druzim, koji mi dolaze, I gdje zajednicki napravimo nasu bosansku hranu pa jedemo I nekada idemo na nasu-bosansku-zabavu tamo gdje se napravi pa onda tu nase obicaje nezaboravljamo, zajednicki malo ali kazem vam da ja toliko puno htjela da budem sa tim ljudima.

00:10:56 Koje ste kulturne obicaje primili za vrijeme rata?

Za vrijeme rata je bilo jako tesko jeli u mom gradu je za vrijeme rata dosli su ljudi sa strane gdje je bio grad pun ti ljudi I bilo je jako tesko ziviti I primiti sve te kulturne obicaje. Sve je prestalo onako sto je bilo nekad, sve je bilo drugacije. Sve je bilo drugajice I jako nam je bilo tesko prihvatiti. Kulturni obicaji su bilo jako jako izmjenini I jako je bilo tesko sve to primiti. Ja sam pokusala da ostanem ono sto jesam I da drzim se svog obicaja I svoje kulture- I ostala sam ono sto jesam.

00:12:02 Koje ste kulturne obicaje odbacili za vrijeme rata? Jeli bila tu neka velika promjena ili?

Za vrijeme-ja sam- ja sad vam kazem da sam ja svoje obicaje zadrzala I nisam htjela nikakve obicaje da mjenjam. I te obicaje sam donjela, sa sobom sam donjela I ovde I pokusala sam da isto tako ucim moju djecu te obicaje.

00:12:39 Koje ste kulturne obicaje primili od Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Pa bile su male izmjene mogu rec male izmjene bile su kad sam dosla ovde. Prvo je bila hrana, malo smo hranu izmjenili. Htjeli smo da pokusamo da se prilagodimo ovde u Americi u gradu Lancasteru, u drzavi. Tako da smo prihvatili I hranu ovde I htjeli smo malo da izmjenimo taj svoj zivot. Htjeli smo da se prilagodimo onim ljudima koji nam dolaze, Amerikanci, da zivimo I mo kao oni-da nismo ni pocemu-da se nerazlikujemo. Da budemo prijatelji I da tako da ovaj da se prilagodimo njihovim obicajima I njihovoj

kulturi. I uspjelosmo u tome nesto. Jas am zadovoljna I sretna sto je to tako.

00:13:49 Koje ste kulturne obicaje odbacili zbog Vaseg trenutnog mjesta boravka?

Pa kad smo sada ovde, mislim ovde smo u Americi. Ovde smo u Americi I pokusavamo da zivimo kao u ovaj ovde narod I ja nemogu reci da zelim da odbacim ono sto sam imala u Bosni I kako sam zivjela tamo u Bosni ali ipak mislim da trebam da prihvatim ovu kulturu I ovo-jel mi se svida. Sve ovo sto ovde sto je dosada ovde ovako, meni se svida I ja prihvatam sve I sve je super.

00:14:49 Sta Vam se svida u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Ovde gdje sam sada u Lancasteru svida mi se mali je gradic, malo je mjesto I nemamo nikakvih problema. Djeca kod su jos isla u skolu uopste nismo imali nikakvih problema. Niko nas nije dirao, niko nas nije napado, niko nam nije govorio sta ja znam-da smo mi neke druge drzave da smo mi dosli ovde da-nismo nikada imali problema. Da nam je neko dosao na vrata, da nas je neko napado. Jako mirno mjesto I mogu rec da uopste I sto se tice posla imamo jako fin posao da idemo, das mo bezbrizni, da mirno spavamo. Tako da nam se jako svida.

00:16:01 Sta Vam se nesvida u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Pa ja bi vise ovde u ovom gradu nekad mi nedostaje –mali je gradic-nekad mi nedostaje da njegde izadem malo, da vise da prosetam-vise-I onda dobro nemam vremena slobodnog vise, da malo vise uživamo jel se puno radi. Normalno mora se raditi. Ja bi ipak zeljela da malo nesto-mala neka promjena mi bi dobro dosla- ja mislim da bi dobro dosla-mozda da ima vise covjek slobodnog vremena pa da vise malo izade pa da vise malo ode negdje tako zeljela bi vise da odem da promjenim malo grad da samo vidim kako je u drugom gradu ziviti ali kazem sve zavisi od vremena, nemamo vremena I tako da ovaj ali u sustini zadovoljna sam I nije mi lose ovde.

00:17:26 Sta Vi cinite da sacuvate Vase narodne obicaje i historiju? (Pogotovo za slijedece generacije)

Ja pokusavam svoje obicaje da zadrzim s vremena na vrijeme da napravim neki rucak-nas Bosanski, neku hranu nasu pa onda se sakupimo svi-pa onda kazem par famelija kad dodu-pa mi se sakupimo pa mi pustimo nasu muziku I nas ples-dance-tako da I ucim svoju djecu I cerke I one su isto tako kad idemo na neku nasu zabavu I zapjevamo, zaigramo, cesto sjedimo pa pricamo o nasim obicajima-kako smo mi to u nasom mjestu, u nasoj Bosni, kako smo mi to radili. Pa pricamo kako smo-o nasim jelima. Mi smo imali izvrsnu kuhinju I nasu narodnu tu kuhinju I nezelim da je odbacim. Zelim da generacije I generacije moje djece-I oni kad imaju –kad I oni budu imali svoju djecu da pricaju kako im je bilo u Bosni I da odvedu svoju djecu tamo I da nase obicaje imali smo I kulturu I sve ostalo. Imali smo dobro I da nijem nam bilo lose prije rata.

00:19:03 Imate li jos ikakve dodatne komentare?

Ne.

Translation of the Interview of Zekira Marinkovic

(Total Time 00:19:12)

00:00:01 State today's date, your name, your age, your birth date, and place of birth:

Today's date is October 27, 2010. My name is Zekira Marinkovic. I was born on August 19, 1958. My place of birth is the city of Tuzla in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

00:00:03 Thank you. Where do you live?

I currently live-I am in the United States of America, in the state of Pennsylvania, in the city of Lancaster.

00:00:42 How did you end up in either Lancaster County?

We came to Lancaster County through the aid of an organization and we had sponsors and we came in the year 1999. To be exact- on the 29th of September.

00:01:07 What is your background (ethnic, religious, social, etc.)?

My background is that I was born in the city of Tuzla in Bosnia-Herzegovina. My religion is-I am Muslim.

00:01:25 What was your life like in Bosnia? Please provide as much detail as you can.

I was born in Bosnia and I lived in Bosnia, right in the city of Tuzla. My life before the war was extremely good. I gave birth to two daughters; I had a job at a hospital in the city. My husband also worked. We had a divine apartment with two bedrooms. We earned enough money to cover all of our living expenses. We had all the resources that we needed; they were good. Everything right up to the beginning of the war itself, we can say that life was very, very good. We had nothing to complain about in our lives. That was before the war. When the war began, everything was different.

00:02:33 Can you please describe-Where were you during the Balkan civil war?

During the entire war, before our arrival in the United States, we were in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Our lives were extremely difficult during the time of the war. We didn't have food, we didn't have electricity, water,...we couldn't go to work. We had labor duties and we had to travel many kilometers by foot to get to work. I was the only one working in the hospital. My husband stopped working because we are of different religions. I was a Muslim, and he is a Serb, so we had problems, so he couldn't work at that time. He had many difficulties because that area was predominantly inhabited by Muslims. And then, our lives were very difficult, for me and my daughters. They went to school, but the school was without electricity, without water, without food, without anything. When the grenades were falling, we were in the bomb shelter in the basement, where we spent days upon days during the time of the war. And when the shooting and grenades would stop, we would go into our apartment to take the things that were most necessary and we would return to the basement. That is how that was. The children completed their homework and assignments by candlelight and it was very difficult for them. They would cry for days because we didn't have enough to give them-nothing.

00:04:39 How do you feel in your present location?

Now, presently we are well. I can say that I am well. I have a job, I have my own house, I have a bed to sleep in, I have food and I can say that I am content.

00:05:03 Do you plan on staying in your current location?

If so, for how long?

If not, where do they plan to go?

I would like to stay in this city and in this area. The area is nice, quiet, I have a job, and I feel good. How long I will stay, I will probably stay where I am until the end of my life.

00:05:36 Is returning to Bosnia an option for you? Why or why not?

I do not intend to return to Bosnia. My children are here. We are content here and I wouldn't wish to go back and that we return there. I think and believe that my life is no longer over there. It isn't the same there and I wouldn't want to go back. I will stay here

until the end of my life.

00:06:17 *How much or often do you interact with the locals in Lancaster County?*

I have many friends here and I can say that I interact a great deal with the locals of Lancaster. People who are my friends, good friends, are Americans, Americans who were sponsors. They are a wonderful family, a family who consists of wonderful people. We visit each other, we spend time together, and I have very good contact with people and I am content.

00:00:07 *What kinds of relationships to you personally have with the locals?*

Wonderful, the interactions with the locals are wonderful. I am friends with these people. You choose your people, you choose your friends and whom you can spend time with and whom you can't spend time with. I am friends with Americans who are individuals, I can say, who are of a higher class-who are polite, friendly, and from whom I am able to learn something. The first thing that I can learn is a bit more of the English language, so that I can speak the English language. I can also learn about some other things from them and ask them about some things that I never knew in Bosnia. I can ask them-there was a discussion about my daughter's education and, then, when one of my daughters was ill, we discussed about whom to turn to-which doctor. We needed a great deal of information because we didn't know anything about America, about the laws. These people were a great help to us in learning about those things and I could turn to them when I had questions and they would provide me with accurate information. Therefore, I am extremely pleased with the locals.

00:08:46 *What kinds of relationships do you have with the Bosnians in this area?*

If I can be honest, through what path and for which reasons that I can to the United States, I came because I had problems with certain people in Bosnia, which is normal and there are many diverse people and groups here as well, very diverse. Therefore, there is great diversity among the Bosnians here. Therefore, you choose whom you befriend and whom you don't befriend. Since the very beginning we have avoided befriending Bosnians, not because we don't like Bosnians, but because I came to America, first, to learn the language, I wished to learn a little something more, to speak with people and to learn from them, and then, if you are friends with Bosnians, you must speak your native language and that you share your culture with them and that you are like them, therefore, we, I wished to keep contacts with Bosnians to a minimum. But I have a few families with whom I am friends with, who come to visit me, with who we make Bosnian food together and we sometimes go to our-Bosnian-parties when they are organized so that we do not forget our customs, to be together for a bit, but I am telling you that I don't really wish to spend too much time with these people.

00:10:56 *What cultural practices have you adapted during the time of the war?*

During the time of the war, it was very difficult because many people from the outside came to my city and the city was full of these people and it was very difficult to live and to accept the habits of these people. Everything ceased to be what it once was; everything was different. Everything was different and it was very difficult for us to accept this. The cultural customs were changed drastically and it was extremely difficult to accept all of it. I attempted to remain that which I was and to uphold my customs and my culture-and I remained what I once was.

00:12:02 *What cultural practices have you abandoned during the time of the war?*

During the time of the war, I, like I just told you, I retained my cultural practices and I

didn't want to change any of my practices. And I have brought those practices with me here and I have also tried to teach my children these practices.

00:12:39 *What cultural practices of your present residence have you adapted?*

Well, I can say, that there were small changes when I came here. First the food, our eating habits changed a little bit. We wanted to try to assimilate into America, into Lancaster, into this country. Therefore, we also changed our food a bit, and we wanted to change our lives a little. We wanted to fit in with the people who visit us, who are Americans; so that we could live as they live-so that we do not differ from them. We wanted to be friends with them and to accept their practices and their culture. I am content and happy that that is how it is.

00:13:49 *What cultural practices have you abandoned due to your present residence?*

Since we are here, we are in America. We are here in America and we are trying to live like the people here and I can't say that I want to abandon what I had in Bosnia, but I still feel that I ought to accept this culture, because I like it. I like everything here and how it's been thus far, I accept it, and everything is excellent.

00:14:49 *What do you like about your immediate environment?*

Where I presently am, in Lancaster, I like that it is a town, it is a small area and we do not have any problems. While the children were still in school, we did not have problems of any kind. No one touched us, no one attacked us, no one told us-I don't know-that we are from a different country, that we came here-we never had problems. No one came to our door; no one attacked us. It's a very calm place and, I can say, and when it comes to work-we have very nice jobs-we are without worry, we sleep peacefully. Therefore, we like it very much.

00:16:01 *What do you dislike about your immediate environment?*

Well sometimes I could like in this city, because I miss it, because it is a small city, I miss going out for a bit to take a walk, but then again, I do not have a lot of free time to enjoy myself more because I work a lot. But it's normal, one must work. I would like a little something-a small change would do me good-perhaps that one would have a bit more time to go out and go to a different place to change things up a bit, to see what it's like to live in a different city. But, as I said, that depends on time and we don't have that much time, but, generally, I am happy and content here.

00:17:26 *What are you doing to pass down your culture and history to subsequent generations?*

I try to sustain my customs by preparing a Bosnian lunch, some of our food, from time-to-time, so that we can all get together. Like I said, some Bosnian families come to visit us and we turn on Bosnian music and we dance-dance. Through this I teach my daughters and they also come along to our parties and we sing together and dance and quite often sit and talk about our culture-how we did it where we lived, in our Bosnia, how we did it. And we also talk about how-our foods. We had a fantastic cuisine and our native cuisine is something that I do not wish to abandon. I wish that generations and generations of my children-when they have their own-when they have their own children, that they talk about how it was in Bosnia and that they take their children there-and our customs and culture and other things that we had. We had it good and things were not bad for us before the war.

00:19:03 *Do you have any additional comments?*

No.

Interview Log

Interviewee: Danijela Marinkovic
D.O.B. 07/28/1983
P.O.B. Tuzla, Bosnia Herzegovina

Interviewer: Maja Subasic

Date: 10/17/2010

Location: Marinkovic Residence

Comments: The time indicates where the various portions of the interview questions

can be found on the audio recording.

Documentation:

Audio: folder
Digital photos:

Transcription by: Maja Subasic
4 Bradford Drive
Leola, PA 17540
717-475-4339
Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Translation by: Maja Subasic
4 Bradford Drive
Leola, PA 17540
717-475-4339
Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Transcription of Danijela Marinkovic Interview

(Total: 00:20:30)

00:00:03 Molim Vas recite danasnji datum, Vase Ime, Vase godiste, Vas datum I mjesto rođenja

Sedamnesti Oktobar, Danijela Marinkovic, moje godiste dvajest-osmog jula osam-deset trece godine u Tuzli, Bosni

00:00:19 Gdje trenutno zivite?

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

00:00:25 Molim Vas opisite Vase (Porijeklo, Religiju, ITD)

Posto su moji roditelji iz mjesanog braka, mama mi je muslimanka, a tata pravoslavac tako das am ja neodlucna.

00:00:46 Dobro hvala, I kako ste dosli u Lancaster County?

Pomocu organizacije koja nam je pomogla da dodemo, posto smo imali tamo problema.

Bila je organizacija za pomoc za fameliju.

00:01:05 Molim Vas opisite Vas zivot u Bosni prije rata?

Trenutno, prije rata, znaci bila sam velma mala. Normalan zivot smo imali. Isla sam u prvi razred. Znaci, normalan zivot sam imala kao djetе-nista mi nije, ono, bilo potrebno. To je to-nista –bas se toga toliko I ne sjecam, mozda ipak sam bila mala. Znam das am isla u skolu , roditelji su mi radili, zivili smo-imali smo stan, igrala sam se sa drugaricama kao normalno djetе, znaci zivjela sam u onim normalnim stvarima.

00:02:06 Hvala, I gdje ste bili za vrijeme rata?

Za vrijeme rata, cjeli rat, znaci, bila sam u Bosni-u Tuzli, u gradu. Tu sam cijelo vrijeme bila.

00:02:20 Mozete molim te opisati malo to vrijeme u Vasem zivotu?

Trenutno se sjecam, samo se sjecam te slike kada je poceo rat. Bila sam mala, dosla sam iz skole, gledala sam t.v. I nije mi-u tom trenutku nije mi nista bilo jasno. Samos am cula od stariji ljudi sta se je desavalo. Ma da, kako ta kazem, nije mi bilo jasno kako je se to pocelo. U glavnom, u glavnom u vrijeme rata je bilo velma tesko stanje. Znaci, ne sjecam se svi detalja a I nebi sve mogla da I opisem sad te stvari, ali znam u glavnom da je mi bilo tesko.

Razumijem. Ne problema. Koliko god mozes.

00:03:19 Kako se osjecate u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Pa, po prilicno mi se svida-mislim, ne mogu sad reci-ima naravno neki stvari koji bi voljela da –ono, da promjeni se. Medu tim, tako je sad trenutna situacija. Ono, svida mi se, ali naravno, moze bolje.

End of Part 1 of 2. Total Time 00:03:44

00:00:00 Kako se osjecate u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Pa mislim, da proprilicno da je signurno mjesto, da oscejam se udobno. Znaci, bez ikakvih problema. Ono, jednostavno osjecam se-imam osjecaj nekada, da je ovo u kuci Bosna-nekad se osjecas ono-jeli pricamo isti jezik-sve isto je ono. Nema toliko-ono-sto se tice tih stvari. Ono-pricam sa roditeljima Bosanski-tako me-to ono-nekad me posjeca isto ko da sam tamo u Bosni.

00:00:53 Razumjem. Jeli imate namjeru da ostanete u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Ako da, do kada?

Ako ne, gdje planirate da idete?

Pa bili smo bas pricali o tome. Na primjer da isto ovde u Lancasteru, samo gdje je malo, malo bolje mjesto. A sto se tice-na primjer-polazka u Bosnu I to-vec je to druga prica. Ali pricali smo o tome, da bi voljeli u drugu eriju u Lancasteru da se preselimo, radi nase sigurnosti. Osjecamo da-da je vrijeme.

00:01:37 Jeli imate opciju da se vratite u Bosnu, ako zelite? Jeli to mogucnosti?

Pa drugo su zelje. Na primjer-mnogi od nas, ili neznam ni ja na primjer, ja prva bi se voljela da vratim. Medu tim, kad sve to skontas, velma je tesko. Ono-voljela bi jednog dana da se vratim I da imam sve ono sto sam imala prije rata-to bi bilo naj bolje. Ali, take su sad mogucnosti da izgleda nisu bas toliko sanse. Broj jedan radi posla; slabe su mogucnosti da se nade. Broj dva, politicki problemi koji su tamo nastali prije-u tokom rata I dalje se nastavljaju-znaci nije se nista promjenilo. Tako to su te dvije stvari koje nemogucavaju nas da se vratimo.

00:02:41 Koliko cesto imate kontakt sa lokalanim stanovnistvom u Lancaster

County?

Na primjer, gdje radim naravno svaki dan sam sa dodirima sa stanovnistovom ove County. Znaci u dodiru sam I kad sam bila I u skoli znaci sam morala biti u –znaci u cesto sam sa stanovnistvom.

00:03:16 Kakve odnose imate sa lokalnim stanovnistvom?

Pa, normalne. Znaci, zavisi, na primjer oko mene, znaci koji zivimo. Znaci pozdravis se normalno, bez ikakvi problema. Onima kojim si –na primjer Amerikanci koje sti steko kao prijatelj , znaci, snjima si u normalnom kontaktu kao sa ostalim ljudima. Znaci, bez ikakvi problema.

00:03:51 Kakve odnose imate sa Bosancima u ovom mjestu?

Pa, svako se zabavio sa svojim problemima-sa svojim stvarima. Tako da pokusaje se uvijek naci nacina da postanes –da sa nekim imas kontakt-sa Bosancima. Jeli ipak zelis da sve svoju kulturu I obicaje zelis da podjelis sa njima ovde. Tako da ono ako je ikakav moguc nacin ima par famelija skojima mozes naravno, sa nekima nemozes. To je ono normalno. Skim imas nesto ono zajednicko sa njima ces se signurno druziti bez obzira da li je Bosanac ili druge vjere-ili neke druge...*ethnicity*

Razumijem**00:04:46 Koje ste kulturne obicaje primili za vrijeme rata?**

Za vrijeme rata..tacno se nebi mozda toliko bas sjetila ti godina posto sam bila bas ono mala. Mozda neki detalja, neki praznika, slavljene I neki obicaja ono pijanje neki kafa ili neki pogotovo su praznici ti koji su glavni bili.

00:05:25 Jeli to se nastavila za vrijeme rata ili su ljudi prestali da slave? Kako se sjecas takve stvari?

Pa, ja mislim da..mislis poslje rata?

Za vrijeme rata.

Za vrijeme rata..

U taj period kad ste bili u Tuzli I kad je rat bio. Ako se sjecas.

Nebi se bas sjetila ali ja vjerujem da je to polako ono-hocu rec na primjer u tokom rata si pokusavu da to ovaj –te obicaje-medu tim, rat je cinijo naravno svoje. Nemas vremena kad da se brines za takve stvari. Moralo je se da se brines o drugim stvarima. Tako da covjek nije mogao da se brine o onim normalnim stvarima. Morao si da se brines mozda kako da -gdje da nades hranu, kako ces ici u skolu-te stvari. Ali one ostale kulturne stvari, sto su normalne, nisi mogao da to imas.

00:06:48 I zbog toga, to ide u drugo pitanje sto pise, onaj ...**Koje ste kulturne obicaje odbacili za vrijeme rata? Jeste generalno sve odbacili ili kako bi opisali...?**

Nebi bas rekla das mo sve odbacili, naravno. Ali ima, na primjer, ima dosta stvari koje smo odbacili, koji mozda I nismo trebali ali jednostavno rat je ucinio svoje. Da jednostavno to je poslo polako da se izbrise iz naseg zivota.

Mozes li dati primjer?

Ok, na primjer pojedini praznici. Na primjer, trenutno, na primjer, evo dan zena. To je se prije toliko slavilo medu tim sad je to toliko, ono, svedno. Nema te navike da se to slavi. Jednostavno dode taj datum I prode. Nema nista specialno ko prije, ono sto se-jednostavno, jeli svijet to zaboravio ili nece da se uopste trudi. Nesto se dogada.

Mozete li mozda opisati taj dan zena? Kad se desava? Ljudi koji ce ovo slusati mozda nisu poznati sa time, pa da objasnimo staje to.

Pa, dan zena je isto kao ovde Mother's Day. Znaci slavi se, zene slave-zahvaljuje se zenama za taj dan. One se skupe, znaci slave se, napravi se kao jedna, jedna mala zabava. I igraju I hrane dosta, nase hrane –Bosanske...
Hvala.

00:08:57 Koje ste kulturne obicaje primili od Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka? Posto ovde sad zivite, kakve ste stvari prihvatili?

Ja mislim da na pocetku nemozes sve da tako prihvatas. Ali sa vremenom vise, vise, vise, vise, sto vise godina si ovde, naravno. I ja mislim das mo dosta toga prihvatili sto jednostavno moras da budes kao I ostali ljudi ovde. Da slavis na primjer, dajem samo primjer Halloween. Znaci, prije u Bosni znaci nikad nisam cula-nisam nista znaci, ali ga ovde slavim zajedno sa svojim-sa svima. Znaci, samo taj primjer. A I ostali, cak I ostali praznici koji nikad nismo culi naravno ovde morass a-nije da moras, nego jednostavno zelis da se uskladis sa drugim svijetom.

00:10:07 Razumijem. Imali jos ikakvih-mozda ponasanje, obicaja mladih ljudi ovde razlika...?

To je definitivno, ponasanje, samo na primje rpocetak kad sam dosla u Ameriku-u skoli ponasanje, drugaciji nacin skole, edukacije. To je tamo drugacije. Skoro devedeset posto ima razlicti stvari na koje smo se morali da naviknemo. Samo skola na primjer I na nacim jezik koji moras da naucis. Na primjer, ja sam isla u skolu, prvi dan nista nisam znala jezika dok na primjer moras da svaki dan ucis, ucis da bi jednostavno mogao komunicirati sa ostalim.

00:11:03 Mozeteli mozda jos dati primjera te razlike u edukaciji

Na primjer sto me malo pogodilo kad sam dosla ovde, toliko u skoli nema discipline kako sam na naucla, na primjer, u Bosni. Jednostavno mozda je to sto je mozda samo dio te takve skole ili mozda sto, jednostavno, osjetila sam da jednostavno nema dovoljno edukacije da se ucitelji brinu o nekim drugim stvarima, sta nebi, da jednostavno mozda zato sto je to ono populacija u Lancasteru Hispanic I da mozda oni I oni donose svoje kulturu-komplikovano je, velma.

00:12:11 Koje ste kulturne obicaje odbacili zbog Vaseg trenutnog mjesta boravka?

Pa nebi rekla da sam ista odbacila ono sto sam sve donjela na primjer iz Bosne to sam-to smo sacuvali ovde. Pogotovo sa roditeljima koji su me naucili tako od malena. Znaci to je jednostavno-pricamo u kuci Bosanski jezik. Hrana-jedemo znaci Bosansku-nastojimo naravno jela I Americka ali vise na nas nacin zato sto smo tako navikli. Onda, isto, praznici slavimo, nastojimo znaci I ako nema se vremena ovde ali uvijek nastojis da imase se-da nade se vremena. Isto tako knjige nastoji se pa procitas knjigu na nasem jeziku na nebi slucanjo jednostavno na nebi zaboravio. Pokusas nacin da gledas nac televizor u Bosni da se sve posjetis da nebi ono zaboravio. Jeli ipak, I ako si ti I ovde, naprimjer I ako sam ja ovde, jos moje-osjecam moj dio je tamo. Da me interesuje sta se I tamo dogada, kakve su vjesti, jeli se ista promjenilo od desavanja. Ono, ipak me to interesuje, bez obzira sto sam ja ovde.

00:13:55 Sta Vam se svida u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Jednostavno, ono, mislim svida mi se sve-mozda bi to moglo da bude bolje. Ali jednostavno, ono, mislim das am zadovoljna. Mislim solidno je; nista ekstra, nista-ono normalno.

Razumijem. Molim te mozes li mi dati primjere neke-edukacije, posla, detalje

života, sitnice..?

Naprimjer, šta velam volim ovde za posao sto mladi mogao da uspiju u zivotu. Sto naprimjer sto nisam mogla u Bosni da prvi problem je bio u bosni da –skola. Problem, na primjer ovde te niko ne gleda na primjer zbog te vjere, zbog, neznam ni ja, sto si tamniji, sto si velma to volim. Na primjer, na poslu isto mozes da uspijes. Mozes da bez obzira ko si, sta si mozes da dodes do vrha. Mozes das a svojim znanajem I skolom mozes da uspijes u zivotu I sto je to velma dobro na primjer u Bosni bez obzira sto imas I skolu i sve omladina nije zasticena. Bez obzira sto savrsis skolu nista mu neznaci, tako da to se nama svida ovde.

Imali jos ikakvi primjera-u skoli ili vezi posla?

Pa na primjer sto se tice, ja mislim da je to glavno. Skola I to sto mi se-nama svida. A sto se tice, na primer, ovaj Lancaster County nisam bas ono-na primjer-totalno je drugacije mjesto gdje sam ja zivjela prije I gdje sad zivim. Drugacije je-nije samo izgled ono, mislim jeste I izgled sto se tice ono, vanjskog djela na primjer gdje sam ja zivljela je malo veci grad znaci –grad je. Nije kao, ja bi prije ovo rekla da je ovo kao manji gradic, nesto tako, ono. Ono, to jos bas nisam se bas navikla na to.

00:16:49 Mozesli jos malo opistati te razlike, te izmedu Tuzle I ovde?

Pa razlika izmedu, gdje sam znaci, grada Tuzle I ovde na primjer sto sam ja navikla na primjer u gradu ljudi setaju I ljude vidise is sve, a ovdje je toliko brz tempo zivota na primjer da jednostavno ljudi nisu, nemju vremena da toliko bas uživaju. Toliko su koncentrisani na posao da kroz to nepomisle na sebe sto je velma ono, I velma je brz tempo zivota. Radis ono, nekazem, imase vreme vikendom, ali ne bas toliko vikendom, ali koliko bi trebalo. Ali na primjer u Bosni, mozes toliko nismo radili imali smo dosta vremena da izademo, da idemo u grad, vise da se sa ljudima druzimo-a sto nije ovde bas toliko. To je, ja mislim da to je sto me ono bas...

00:18:11 Sta Vam se nesvida u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka? Jeli to glavna stvari ili imajuli jos neki detlaji?

Pa dobro to je ono sto bi voljela na primjer da bude vise, na primjer, za edukaciju da bi se to trebalo malo promjeniti. To je to, sto sam ti rekla. Skola, broj jedan, ja mislim da bi to trebalo da se promjeni citav sistem. Ja znam kad sam tek dosla koliko sam samo dana plakala I koliko mi je to tesko palo, jednostavno da ono navikla sam drugaciji sistem I svatam nemora biti isto ali da je jednostavno, da djeca budu vise “educated” I da na primjer idu u “college” da se pripreme vise-voljela bi to.

00:19: 12 Sta Vi cinite da sacuvate Vase narodne obicaje i historiju? (Pogotovo za slijedece generacije)

Pa pokusajem na nacin da na primjer sa roditeljima to zajedno ono proslavim ili neke na primjer praznike I pokusajem znaci uvijek da na nasem pricam I sa nasim svijetom pokusamjem uvijek ono jeli zelim da sve ono sto je bilo prijem, znaci sve te obicaje da budu isto ovde. Mislim, koliko je moguće. Ali naravno za iducu generaciju ako budem naravno kad budem imala djecu I sta vec naravno sve ovo sto su mene roditelji ucili hocu da prenesem na njih posto ipak ono voljela bi da se to prenosi sa koljena na koljeno jeli ja mislim da je to velma vazno da cuvas svoje a I naravno ucis tude sto je ono-vazno.

00:20:17 Imalite ikakve dodatne komentete za bilo sta ili ista dodatno da kazete?

Ja mislim da je to, to.

Hvala, Vam.

End of part two of two. Total: 00:20:30.

Translation of Danijela Marinkovic Interview

(Total Time 00:20:30)

00:00:03 State today's date, your name, your age, your birth date, and place of birth

The 17th of October. Danijela Marinkovic. My birth date is July 28 in '83 in Tuzla, Bosnia.

00:00:19 Where do you live?

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

00:00:25 What is your background (ethnic, religious, social, etc.)?

Since my parents have a mixed marriage-my mother is Muslim and my father is Orthodox Christian, I am undecided.

00:00:46 How did you end up in Lancaster County?

With the aid of an organization that helped us come here, because we had problems over there. It was an aid organization for families.

00:01:05 What was your life like in Bosnia before the war?

Currently-before the war which means that I was very young. We had a normal life. I went to the first grade. Which means that I had a normal childhood; I wasn't missing anything. That is that. I don't remember that much, maybe because I was so young. I know that I went to school, my parents worked, we lived-we had an apartment, I played with my girlfriends like a normal child, which means that I lived with all the normal stuff.

00:02:06 Thank you. Where were you during the Balkan civil war?

During the time of the war, during the entire war, I was in Bosnia, in Tuzla, in the city. I was there the entire time.

00:02:20 Can you please describe your life during that period?

Currently I recall-I only recall the image of the war starting. I was young, I came home from school, I was watching T.V. and in that moment nothing was clear to me. I only heard what was happening from the older people. How do I explain? It wasn't clear to me how it all started. Mostly importantly, during the time of the war, the situation was very difficult. I don't remember all of the details but I wouldn't even be able to describe all of those things now, but, most importantly, I know that it was a difficult time.

I understand. It's no problem; just tell me what you can.

00:03:19 How do you feel in your present location?

Well, I basically like it. I mean I can't say-I mean there are obviously things that I would like to see change. Besides that, that is the current situation. You know, I like it, but it could be better.

End of Part 1 of 2. Total Time 00:03:44

00:00:00 How do you feel in your present location?

Well I think, it's a relatively safe area. I feel comfortable. This means without any problems. Basically, I feel, I sometimes feel like that inside of the house, we are in Bosnia-because we speak the same language, you know, it's all the same. There isn't much, you know, when it comes to those things. I speak with my parents and it reminds me of Bosnia.

00:00:53 Understood. Do you plan on staying in your current location?

If so, for how long?

If not, where do they plan to go?

Well, we were talking about that. For example to move somewhere within Lancaster to a place that's a little better. But when it comes to returning to Bosnia, that's a different story. But we talked about that, that we would like to move to a different area of Lancaster, for our safety. We feel that, that it's time.

00:01:37 Is returning to Bosnia an option for you, if you'd wish? Is that a possibility?

Well, wishes are different. For example, most of us, well I don't have an example, but I would be the first one who would want to go back. Besides that, when you think about it, it's rather difficult. I would like to go back one day and have everything that I had before the war-that would be the best thing. But, the opportunities right now mean that there isn't really a chance for that. Number one: because of employment. Jobs are hard to find. Number two: the political issues which arose because of the war are still there, which means that nothing changed. So those are the things that are hindering us from returning.

00:02:41 How much or often do you interact with the locals in Lancaster County?

For example, where I work, I am in contact with the locals of this county on a daily basis. I was also in contact when I was attending school, which means that I had to be in contact regularly with the locals.

00:03:16 What kinds of relationships to you personally have with the locals?

Well, normal ones. This means that it depends, for example, the people that live around me. You greet each other, which is normal, without any problem. With those, for example, Americans that you befriended, you have normal relationships like with all other people. This means that it's without any problems.

00:03:51 What kinds of relationships do you personally have with the Bosnians in this area?

Well everyone is busy with their own problems, their own stuff. One always tries to find means to remain in touch with Bosnians. Since one wishes to share one's culture and customs with them here. Therefore, if there is any time of possibility, there are a few families with whom you can, with whom you just can. That's normal. You are going to befriend with people with whom you have things in common with, whether they are Bosnian or if they are of another faith or another...ethnicity.

I understand.

00:04:46 What cultural practices have you adapted during the time of the war?

During the time of the war...I wouldn't really remember that, because I was so young. Perhaps some details, some holidays, celebrating some customs-drinking coffee or some holidays, they were the most important.

00:05:25 Did that continue during the war or did people stop celebrating? Do you remember things like that?

Well, I think...do you mean after the war?

During the war.

During the war.

During that time when you were in Tuzla, during the war. If you remember.

I don't quite remember, but I think that it slowly...I want to say, for example, during the time of the war, people tried, but, as the war did its damages. One doesn't have time to

think about those things. One had to worry about other things. Therefore, one couldn't concern himself with normal things. One had to worry about, maybe, how to find food, how to get to school-those things. But all those other cultural things, which are normal, you couldn't have those things.

00:06:48 And that brings me to the next question, which says...

What cultural practices have you abandoned during the time of the war? Did you generally abandon everything or how would you describe it?

I wouldn't say that we abandoned everything, obviously. But there are, for example, there are many things that we abandoned, which we maybe shouldn't have but, simply, the war did its damages. That that simply began to be erased from our lives.

Can you provide me with an example?

For example; certain holidays, for example, the "Day of Women". That used to be celebrated all over but now, it's like, not important. People aren't accustomed to celebrating it. Simply, that date comes and ends. There isn't anything special like before, simply because people have forgotten or they do not want to put the effort forth. Something is going on.

Can you please explain that "Day of Women"? When does it take place? The people who may hear this may not be familiar with that, so we should explain it.

Well, the "Day of Women" is like "Mother's Day" here. It is a celebration to honor women. People get together and they make, like, a small party. They dance and there is food-our food, Bosnian...

Thank you.

00:08:57 What cultural practices of your present residence have you adapted, since you live here now?

I believe that in the beginning you can't accept everything just like that. But with time more and more, and more and more, the more years that you are here, it happens of course. I think that we adapted most of it simply because you have to be like the other people in your environment. To celebrate, for example, Halloween. Before, in Bosnia, I never heard of it, but, here, I celebrate it with my-with everybody. That's just one example. And even the other holidays that you may not have heard of before, you have to-well, you don't have to, but you simply wish to fit-in with everyone else, so you celebrate them.

00:10:07 I understand. Is there, perhaps a behavior or custom of young people here that is different..?

That's definite. The behavior, for example, when I first came to America, the behavior at school, the different ways of the schools, of education. It is different over there. There are almost 90% differences that we had to get accustomed to. Just school itself, for example, and the language in which you must learn. For example, I went to school, my first day I didn't know the language at all, but you have to learn a little every day, you learn so that you can communicate with the others.

00:11:03 Can you perhaps provide examples of the differences in education?

For example, what really struck me was the lack of the discipline that I was used to in Bosnia. Simply, perhaps it was the school that I attended, but I felt that they do not have adequate education, because the teachers worry about other things, that because, perhaps it's because the population in Lancaster is Hispanic and that they bring their culture here. I don't know. It's very complicated.

00:12:11 What cultural practices have you abandoned due to your present residence?

I wouldn't say that I abandoned anything. Whatever I, whatever we brought here from Bosnia, we kept with us. Especially because my parents taught me to be like that since I was younger. It means that it is simple and we speak the Bosnian language in our home. Food-we eat Bosnian-we also adapted American, but more in our style because that is what we are used to. Also, we celebrate holidays, if we have time-we try to make time. We also read Bosnian books so that we do not accidentally forget. Because, even though you are here, even though I am here, I feel that a part of me is still there. I am curious as to what goes on there, what the news is, if anything has changed. Of course, it interests me, despite that fact that I am here.

00:13:55 What do you like about your immediate environment?

Simply, I mean I like it, but it could be better. But, I think that I am content. It's alright, nothing special, you know-normal.

I understand. Please, can you give me some examples-education, work, details about life, little things...?

For example, what I really like here about work is that young people can succeed in life. That is what I couldn't do in Bosnia, the first problem there was school. Here, for example, no one picks you out because of your faith, or because, I don't know, because you are darker, or because you are...that is what I really love here. For example, you can also succeed at work. You can, despite who you are, reach the top. You can succeed in life with your knowledge and education, which, in Bosnia, even though you have the education, the youth is not protected. Despite the fact that they finish college, it doesn't mean anything, so that is why we like it here.

Are there any other examples, in relation to school or work?

Well, when it comes to that, I think those were the main things. School and that, that is what I truly like. But when it comes to Lancaster County, I am not so, you know, it is completely different from the place where I used to live and now. Its different-not just from appearance, I mean, also appearance, but the place where I use to live was a larger city-a real city. It's not like, I would call this a town, and I am still not quite used to that.

00:16:49 Can you please describe those differences a bit more-between Tuzla and here?

Well the difference between where I am, between the city of Tuzla and here, is that in the city I am used to people talking walks and to seeing them more. Here, however, life moves so quickly that people don't have time to enjoy themselves as much. People are so focused on their work that they don't stop to think of themselves because the pace of life is so fast here. One works, except for the weekends, and one has time on the weekends, but not that much time, but enough, I suppose. But in Bosnia, we didn't have to work as much, we had more time to go out, to go to the city, to spend time with people, which isn't the case here. I think that that is it..

00:18:11 What do you dislike about your immediate environment? Is that the main thing or are there other details?

Well, I feel that it ought to be more-that the education needs to change. That is that, what I said. School is the first thing that needs to change, I mean the entire system. I know that when I came here, I cried for days because it was so difficult for me,

because I am accustomed to a different system and I know that it doesn't have to be the same, but I think that children should be more educated and that they should be more prepared for college-I would like that.

00:19:12 What are you doing to pass down your culture and history, especially to subsequent generations?

I try, for example, along with my parents, to celebrate certain holidays together. I always try to speak our language and be with our people and to have things be like they were before-to have our customs remain alive here as well. I mean, as much as possible. But for the subsequent generation, when I have children, I want to pass down all of the things that my parents have passed-down to me-so that it is, you know, "knee-to-knee". I think that it is very important to retain that which is your own, but to also, learn about that which belongs to the other-that is important.

00:20:17 Do you have any additional comments or things that you might like to add?

I think that that is it.

Thank you.

End of part two of two. Total: 00:20:30.

Interview Log

Interviewee: Milan Marinkovic
D.O.B. 11/22/1950

P.O.B. Pancu, Vojvodina, Serbia

Interviewer: Maja Subasic

Date: 10/17/2010

Location: Marinkovic Residence

Comments: The time indicates where the various portions of the interview questions can be found on the audio recording.

Documentation:

Audio: folder
Digital Photos:

Transcription by: Maja Subasic
4 Bradford Drive
Leola, PA 17540
717-475-4339
Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Translation by: Maja Subasic
4 Bradford Drive
Leola, PA 17540
717-475-4339
Maja.Subasic@mail.Goucher.edu

Transcription of Milan Marinkovic Interview

00:00:00 Molim Vas recite danasnji datum, Vase Ime, Vase godiste, Vas datum i mjesto rođenja

Danasnji datum je oktobar 17, 2010 godine. Ja se zovem Milan Marinkovic. Rodjen sam Novembra 22, 1950 u Pancu.

00:00:24 Gdje trenutno živite?

Trenutno zivim u Lancasteru, Pennsylvania.

00:00:28 Kako ste dosli u Lancaster County?

1998 mi smo zivjeli u Tuzli i onda je se pojavila zelja i potreba da izademo iz Bosne i onda smo se prijavjeli tom svjetskom crkvenom servisu. Ispunili smo aplikaciju i cekali smo process godinu dana i tako smo 1999 dobili Slobodan dolazak u Americkoj drzva 1999, 29 novembra. Pardon, septembra, i onda smo dosli u Lancaster County.

00:01:04 Molim Vas opisite Vase (Porijeklo, Religiju, ITD)

Jas am rođen u Pancu u Vojvodini. Moj otac i majka su radili zemlju i međutim pojavjelo se...pripadam inace orthodox, pravoslavnoj vjeri i radi boljeg života i šta, moja majka i moj otac su se dogovorili da pređu u grad gdje je lakše školovanje, odlazak doktoru i sveg drugoga, lakšeg života. Ja kad sam rođen bilo je vrlo teško raditi zemlju, to je bilo primitivno način onda teško se održavalo u životu onda radi lakšeg svega ovaj život i radi nas djece roditelju su (odлучili?) da pređu u grad i to je desilo 1955 kad smo dosli u Bosni-Tuzli i ostali smo do polaska u Ameriku.

00:01:59 Molim Vas opisite Vas život u Bosni prije rata?

Ja sam u Bosni završio osnovnu i srednju školu odnosa za nat kao tokar i radio sam u firmi gdje sam postigao i visoku edukaciju. Bio sam dobar radnik i isli smo, radio sam na masinama raznim kao dobar radnik i onda sam često puno puta odlazio na razna takmicenje metalaca gdje sam ja osvajao i razne nagrade. Bio sam zadovoljan sa svojim poslom i zato sam je školovao predjelio i bilo je sve uredno. Imao sam stan dobio sam of firme u koji sam preselio 1984 iz jednog manjeg stana. Mi smo živjeli u centru grada tu se rodile dvije djece i tu smo ostali do samog polaska u Ameriku. U glavnom, bio sam zadovoljan sa svojim životom. Imao sam dosta prijatelja, drugova, famelija. Puno smo se družili, i u dobro kao što se kaže i kad je trebalo šta pomoći i tako da smo imali jedan fin, solidan život koji bi ja uvijek zeliyo da imam.

00:03:09 Gdje ste bili za vrijeme rata?

Pa citav vrijeme rata ja sam sa svojom porodici completely bio sam u Tuzli. Živili smo i sam pocetak rata je me zatekao u firmi gdje sam ja automatski odmah dobio otkaz posto sam ja rođen u Srbiji, srbin sam. Taka su vremena naisla, rat je počeo. Zna se kako i zasto i nisu jednostavno imali povjerenje bio sam drugci, od druge vjere i druge nacije i onda sam dobio otkaz. Vreme sam provodio kuci, strah, bjeda, neimanjstina teska bila. Nije bilo hrane, nije bilo odjece, nije bilo ogrijeva, struju nismo imali. Za vodu sam nekad morao da idem po 6-7 kilometara pa da napunim one kanistere i da vucem kolica koja sam ja licno pravio. Dovolacili smo da mozemo da kuhamo, da se operemo. Ta voda je trajala mozda jedan dan-dva i onda ponovo i tako je to bilo i ljeti i zimi. Naj gore je bilo u zimi kad si morao da nabavis i drva. Nismo imali struje pa smo kupili jedan sporet na lozenje. Da bi naložio onda moras imati drva. Isli smo-dobijes potvrdu i odes u sumu i oslejes drvo i osjeces da-sve je rucno rad bio. Isjeces ga na komade i lozis, drva su bila mokra, suha. To se dimilo. Pusilo se, zagusio se. To je bilo uzasno, taj dio života koji ja nikad nevoleo što se kaže, teško mi da pricam, kamali da se vratim na taj dio života, bolje je se ubiti. To je takva, borba u bukvalanom smisli za život i smrt. Na jedno strani svaki dan cujete poginuo je ovaj, poginuo je ovaj, bombe, granate, na ratistima se ginilo, nemilice. Vi ste u gradu koji je zatocen-nema do toga hrane, nema struje, nema nicega bez nadje. Imate nekad osjecaj da nikad se neće to završiti. Noci i noci spave se u podrumima od straha granata ispod vrata u stanu jeli je se desavalo. Granata padne na balkon i ljudima eksplodira-to je haus. Tako da smo provodili dane u podrumu. Djeca su isli u školu, u stvari to nije bila škola-to su bili podrumi gdje su djeca dolazila. Dosao je dan nakon-kada su me ponovo pozvali u firmu i preko neki prijatelja sam uspeo da predem u tu-ponovo na posao. Bio sam sav sretan. Nije se bila nikakva plata vidjela, nisam nikakav novac dobijao. Dobijao se mozda dva kilograma brasina ili litar ulja. Ali si bio sretan i zato malo što dobijes. Tako da ovaj, tako jednostavno si dosao ponovo u kontakt sa svojim radnim kolega skim si proveo dio svog života, koji su ti bili stvarno prijatelji i ostali za vrijeme rata, bez obzira što ste druge nacionalnost.

Tako da smo pružali jednima drugim podršku i pomoć i onda ti taj dio davao nadu za bolje sutra, da ćeš isplivati. Jeli sam jedini kad nemozes ništa uraditi pogotovo recimo u zgradi gdje sam stanovo bilo je 12 stanara, zgrada sa 3 sprata. Kad te tvoj vecerasni komšija koi je s tobom proveo toliko vremena gleda te popreko i kad ti kaže srbsku djecu treba ubiti, djecu cim se rodi treba se ubiti to je bilo sok, to je bilo strahota. A oni preko puta moji vrata, to je 3 metra. I onda on mene zagrli i kaže "komšija ti se ne brini, ja tebi cuvam leđa". Sta to znaci? On meni cuva leđa? On je iza mene. Tesko je bilo živjeti sa takvim nacinom života i straha. Djeca idu u skolu, ja sam poceao da radim, onda granate pocinju da padaju i ja mislim na djecu. Gdje su dceja? Sta je snijima? Dode mi toliko puta da izletim is posla, a granate padaju. Srecom nije se ništa desilo ovaj, za to vrijeme rata ali malo po mali mislim neke stvari su se normalizovale i to je se u nekom normalu da mozes da zivis jedan dio dana normalno. Tako da ovaj je pocelo da umata pomoci. Baziralo je se neko svjetlo, da će biti bolje. Medu tim u glavnom je bilo da ostanemo zdravi i zivi. Straha od pucanja od granata od stahota od posljedica od rata, od bolesti i sta ja znam, svega toga-srecom isplivali smo. To su vremena luda, to su vremena koja netreba nikad zaboraviti, treba pamtit i da se nebi vratilo na to isto. Ali treba, sto se kaže, kreniti napred i staviti u stranu da razmisljana da nebi covjek skroz na zivcima slomijo se, sta ja znam.

00:08:12 Hvala, i kako se osjećate u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Pa poslije sve onog-strahote i onoga jada i nemastine i svega i ovaj kad smo dosli u naše mjesto boravka u odnosu Lancaster, Pennsylvania mi smo ovde živjeli kao jedan veliki sanj. Kao to se nedogada meni jeli nemozes da vidis dosli smo u jednu normalnu sredinu gdje ljudi normalno rade i žive i negleda te na ime kako se zoves ni koje si religije ni odakle si dosao i prihvataju te kao svoga, kao normalno. I onda, iz te kontradiktornosti dolazis u jedan normalan svijet. Nemozes da vjerujes da se to desilo tebi, da si ti taj srecni koji je dosao ovde da živi normalno. Ja kad sam dolazio u Ameriku, moja želja be bila prije dolaska u Ameriku, moja želja je bila da nadem posao, da imam krov na glavu, da skolujem djecu. I sad odjednom mi se te mogucnosti stvaraju, odjednom, preko noci. Ljudi, nasi sponsori iz crkve su dosli u nasli su nam smjestane. Dvije sobe spavace, kupatilo, topla voda uvijek i kuhinja, frizider pun hrane-to je bajka. Mislim sada ovo stanovniste kad gledam, kad se vratim ti 12 godina nazad prije nego sto smo dosli, kad smo dosli ovde. Mislim, i to je bilo skromno mislim sve ali za nas je to bilo nesto veliko, ogromno. Kad ti odvrnes onu sladinu i pustis vodu mozes toplu i mozes hladnu. Otvoris frizider, on pun. Pa onda ides u prodavnicu a ti imas stotinu vrsta hljeba da biras. A ti si tamo zeliyo hljeb. Ja sam sanjo, Majo, vjeruj mi, sanjao sam jeli cu li ikad vise jesti bjeli hljeb. Jeli je se u ratu jela ona kukuruza, ona brasino, i pomjesalo se malo bjelo brasino. To je trdvo, to je ne ukusno. Ali ti to jedes jeli moras da prezivis. I sad dolazis ovde u prodavnicu gdje ti je rafa od sto vrsta hljeba, pa vamo ti je meso, i sve ono sto ima ovde pa ti nevjerujes. Ja sad pricam zovem telefonom svoje prijatelje u Bosni i pitaju me kako sam se snasao poslije par dana. Kad ja njima kazem sta smo dobili za to kratko vrijeme, oni meni kazu "Pa daj, ti nas slazes". Nema razloga da vam lazem, to je tako ovde. I kazem dosli smo ovde i ovaj ljudi su nas prihvatili kao svoje najrodenije kad su nam dosli na ajrodrom, dosli njih sedmero Amerikanaca iz-nasi ti sponsori, iz te crkve koja je nas prihvatila. I kad su na nasem jeziku rekli "dobro dosli u Ameriku", mi smo poceli plakati. Oni kad sun as vidjeli ostali su ovo je iz razgovora, kasnije, kad su oni nas vidjeli na ajrodromu oni su vako otvorili

oci I gledali su jeli sta je se desilo? Svi su oni smatrali ko ovaj gledali televizor, citali novine, sta ja znam pa ono imali su sliku neku o bosni. Kad smo se mi pojavili to je bilo sasvim nesto suprotno. Oni su ocekivali neku staru zenu koja je zamotana I starog covjeka sa stapom, kamaru djece iza sebe. Medu mi smo dosli, mi smo zivjeli, kako se kaze evropski, pravo evropski zivjeli u bosni. Dosli smo ovde oni su zinuli gledali u nas I onda su se osmjehjili I zagrlili nas I posli sun as ljubiti I plakati. I dobro mislim, taj dolazak sam je bio fantastican. Dosao je glavni pastor iz crkve navece u pola deset I donjeao je Zekiri buket zvjeca. Pozelio je dobrodoslicu I ovaj mi smo se zahvaljeli na docek u na svemu tome. I onda su oni nas ostvaili, mozda nakon sat vremena, ostavili su nas same I mi smo sjeli I gledali vako I pipali gledas sta je ovo. Mnoge stvari nismo ni znali, mislim kako se upotrebljava. Kao aparat za kafu nisam u bosni imao, mislim imao sam ali nistu isti, sad gledas kako se to ukljuci, kako ovo, kako one masine. Ali dobro, mislim, I taj prvi uticak je bio I sokantan ono znas ali ono pozitivno I tako eto. Sad, sad je ovo moje. Ja ovo koristim. Nemozes u momente da vjerujes. Prvi moment je bio strasan, dobro mislim ono, pravo.

00:12:28 Jeli imate namjeru da ostanete u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Ako da, do kada?

Ako ne, gdje planirate da idete?

Imam namjeru da ostanem do kraja zivota. Jeli, ovde su me ljudi prihvatili. I ovde imam posao dobar, posao isti radim za koji sam se skolovo u bosni. I imam posao I jos ovaj I sto kazu u tolko rada u Americi ovde sam se naucio I mnogim stvarima sada I mnogo stvarima savremenim komputerskim masinama, imam dobru poziciju gdje sam fino placen, imam normalno sati koliko hocu da radim sto je vrlo tesko danas. Tako da nemam namjeru uposte da idem bilo gdje. Mislim, napravio bi gresku da-to je moje misljenje. Mada, sto kazem, Danijela je uvijek bila za to da idemo u neki veci grad-cerka moja mlada. Dai demo u veci grad, das u za nju mogucnosti vece. Ja se slazem snaj, mislim ali medu tim meni nije, meni odgovara mirno mjesto, malo mjesto gdje su ljudi vrlo "friendly", vrlo prijateljski raspolozeni prema tebi. Javi ti se sa osmjehom ovi, sto kaze I neznamo se. Prolazimo jedan pored drugog, pogotovo ovde svaki mi se javi I mahne mi I pita te "Kako si?" I tako. Zato osjecam da je ovo mjesto sigurno, sto se tice I kriminala I zasticen si dosta. Blizu mi je posao, sto je vrlo vazno. Shopping centeri, doktor, sve je to na blizini I tako da nemam namjere-do kraja zivota

00:14:15 Jeli imate opciju da se vratite u Bosnu? Zasto ili zasto ne?

Pa, mislim, prvo da kazem, ja nezelim da se vratim u bosnu. Mozda ima, sto se tice mogucnosti. Mozda bi mogla da se vratim sa te strane. Medu ti, to, ja sam isao par puta na godisni tamo I sreo sam ljude, prijatelje. Medu tim, to vise nije moj grad koji sam ja ostavio. Tu su sada drugi ljudi, drugi obicaji, drugaciji nacin zivota, kulture, ponasanja. Ja kad sam dosao tamo, Majo, ja sam vidjeo-ljudi zive u nekom haus. Nemu u nicemu reda. Oni ljudi na ulici jos uvijek prodaju nesto. Mozes misliti, u jednom gradu, koji je urbani grad, civilizaciski, sto kaze ovaj, na visokom nivou bio. Sad vidite neke ljude koji su drugacije obuceni, simomasni ljudi na tvotvaru, prodaju hranu da trotvaru. Seljak dode sa-da odnese svoje one proizvode, sir I kajmak I poredao na tvotvaru. Stavi dole najlon, neku krp u sad tu ljudi prolaze, to je hrana. Dobro ljudi se snalaze, ljudi se snalaze kako znaju I mora nesto nekako da radi. Ali nije to moj grad vise, recim ja sam par puta sjedio u nekim kaficima I namjerno ostanom duga da vidim jeli bi koga sreo od mojih prijatelja. Po tri sata nikoga ne strenem. Moji su prijatelju koji su ostali, zatvoreni u

gradu, zatvoreni u stanu, ma nemam sta da trazim na ulici. Jeli je porasto criminal na naj vecom mogucem-droga, alkohol, prostitucija. Mlade devojke su ostale, sto kaze, cure nemaju posla. Zavrse skolu, nemaju posla, podaju se losim stvarima I momci isto. Prodaja droge, uzimanja droge I prostitucija, kriminal. To uzas, uzas. Isti razolga se nebi vratio, policiju da zoves na intervenise, ma jok, nema sanse. Jeli nije to moje misljene, to je misljene ljudi koji tamo zive. Policija je duboko upetljena u te stvari. To je bilo u novinama, na televiziji nebi vjerovao gdje se ljudi prodavaju kao roba-djevoke kao nacin posao u nastranstvu. Odu tamo I izgubi im se svaki trag. Jeli ljudi rade sve moguće da dodu do novca, to je uzas, uzas. Firme su zatvorene, nema posla u firmama. I ako ljudi radi u firmama, privatnim firmama momci, rade po 3 mjeseca I nemaju dinara jeli im gazda nece da plati. Drzi ih stalno vezano uzase. Ako nedodes sutra, neces ni dobiti ni ono sto sam ti prije duzan. A uvijek mu duzan za tri mjeseca. Tako da su ljudi primereni da rade u nedogledu za daba, a ustvari gazda im nece nikada platiti. Jeli su na polozej dosli ljudi koji su se bavili kriminalom, lopovlukom, otimacijom, I sad je on zauzeu polozej I sad on ima kapital I on sad radi. Kakav taj moze covjek da bude inace? Kriminal se udružuje. Previše kriminalcima se udružuje u gangove, mafia. Ma uzas, uzas. Zato kazem I da imam neznam koliko novaca da bjelo karton da kupim da se vratim, nebi, nema ti para. Da zivim medu takvim svjetom, moja djeca, ne, nikad, nikad.

00:17:52 Koliko cesto imate kontakt sa lokalnim stanovnistvom u Lancaster County?

Ma dobro sad, malo blizi sad kontakt I druženje I to nema to tolikoga bas puno. Jeli svi smo mi zauzeti sa radom, puno radimo recimo takav mi je sada trenutno posao I firmi da imaju ugovore koji su veliki mislim moraju se ispuniti tako da mi svi radimo puno sati. Ali ponekada se pruži prilika, bilo sa Amerikancima, bilo sa Bosancima, bilo sa Spanjolskim ljudima, uvijek nades vremena promjeniti koju rijec, pozdraviti se, I pitati se ovako I onda naj vise vremena reci mo ima se subotom, vikendom kad se družimo sa svima. Izademo u restorane ili vecera kod nekoga kod kuce I razgovorom cujemo se telefonima cesto puta sa svima. Ovaj, malte ne svaki dan, svaki drugi dan se održavamo kontakt I razmjenu misljeni I tako. To sada recimo ima kontakt kad su praznici blizu, uvijek se sastavljamo I negdeje izlazimo ili neko pravi veceru ili Thanksgiving ili rođendan, evo konkurentno sad imam. Ova nasa, Sue McKenzie, pravi rođendan 7 Novembra pa smo pozvati, vise famelija ce biti tu I to se napravi pravo.

00:19:22 Kakve odnose imate sa lokalnim stanovnistvom?

Dosada nikad nisam imao probleme sa lokalnim stanovnistvom ovde. Uvijek kazem I ako bude neki problem mirno se rjesava na fin nacin, bez ikake sile ili vredanja. Nego bas ono pravo, recimo mogu rec kontakt, problem recimo parkiranja auta. Blokira ti auto sanduce za postu, ja odem kod komsije I kazem "Molim vas nisam juce primio postu, maknite vase auto". On se izvinjava "I'm sorry", "nece se to vise ponovit". I on makne auto bez ikakvih problema. Tako da nikad nismo imali ni bilo kavkih problema. Cak smo par puta isli na godnisni I komsije se sami ponudi, "nemoj te se nista briniti ja cu nagledati ovde da neko nebi nesto". Ja se zahvalim I to je tako. Super mi je, nema nikavih problema.

00:20:14 Kakve odnose imate sa Bosancima u ovom mjestu?

Isto kao u bosni sto smo imali. Covjek se nemoze družiti sa svima. Imas par famelija skima si blizi. Imas nekoga skime sto kaze ovaj skime samo pijes kafu. I nekoga koga

primas u kucu I pravis veceru. Ima opet neki skime samo ides u restoran. Mi smo ovde nasli recimo priblizno sebi ljude, bosance koji su slicnog mentaliteta, slicne kulture, slicne edukacije, I onda nades zadenicko sa takvim ljudima I sa takvim se druzis. Ostale bosance ti samo visi pozdravis I to je to. Tako da, sa nekima si blizak, vrlo blizak, sa nekima si samo na pozdravu, sa nekima vidimo se na partyma, sjedimo zajedno ali to je to. Licni kontakt, na primjer u kuci, sa svima nema. Jeli covjek menoze fizicki da ti sad svakoga primis I da svakome odes pa trebalo ti vremena. Tako da moras sa svjestima na normalnu mjeru da imas I puno obaveza, I puno posla u kuci I tako I u shopping I sve.

00:21:34 Koje ste kulturne obicaje primili za vrijeme rata?

Sta ja znam, recimo u tolko rata je se sve promjenilo, obijaci I to. I jedan dio mozda, I razlog iseljenja iz bosne I u pravo to. Sto su se ti obicaji totalno promjenili I u religiskom smislu, u odnosima medu ljudima, u edukaciji, recimo televizija sama, nacin prezentovanja vijesti, nacin odjevanja, nacin ovaj kontakta gledanja vjeristvosti-religije, totalno je se promjenilo. To vise nista nije bilo normalno. Ja kazem I to je dio, veliki dio sto sam ja izasao sa mojom famelijom. Nisam mogao da prihvatim te nove obijace, tu kulturu koja je bila-neznam kako se to moze na Engleski prevesti-nadrikultura, to je nesto neprirodno ta kultura. Tu kulturu mozda imaju ljudi koju necjenuju nikoga, ljude nikakve postovanje religije I obrazovanja, sta ja znam, svako nosi svoj dio kulture. Ali to meni nije priblizno, to meni nije blisko. To ti pored najbolje volje, tvoje tjelo, tvoj mozak to odbacuje. Nemozes ti to da prihvatis, ti nemozes da se sputis na taj nivo. Jeli to je ispod tvog nastranstva, ispod tvog nivoa zivota. Tako da ja to uopste nisam mogao prihvatiti. Ni u snu da razmisljan o tome, da kazem da mozda mogu da uzmem za sebe nesto. Blize mi je, dosao sam ovde u Ameriku I neke obicaje, neku kulturu, nesto novo. A sto sve to mogu da prihvatim? Jeli je to pribliznije meni. Covjek se rada I zivi, prima od roditelja dio kulture, kasnije kroz skolovanje I svatam moj zivot, taj koji sam imao u bosni pribliznije mi je ovde. Jeli sam ja to dozivio, I nisam to ja rekao "Jas am blizak tome". Ne. Nego su ljudi Amerikanci skojima smo u stupili u kontakt, to su nasi prijatelji I kazu da se mi absolutno po kulturi nerazlikujete od nas. U cemo se razlikujemo? Recimo oko ti praznika koji su religiski. Oni slave uskrs, mi slavimo svog uskrs. Bozic I to. Vrlo, vrlo, 90% je isto. 95% je isto. Pa oni kazu, nevidimo izmedu vama razliku nikakvu. Medu nas I vas. Absolutno. Mi smo zivjeli takav zivot I nasli smo isto ovde. Oni su bili zacudeni, drago im je bilo sto je to tako. Jeli je vrlo tesko kad ti imas neku kulturu, obicaj svoj I sad dolazis u drugu sredinu, drugu kulturu I tesko je to pribliziti, vrlo tesko. Evo, ta nasa Sue, bas ona kaze, ta crkva gdje ona radi kao volonterskica oni su sponzori nekim ljudima iz iraka. Kaze "Milane, poznavaci vas I druzenjem svama mi smo mislili da su I oni priblizni vama. Medu tim to je toliko razlika, toliko, ovaj, kontradiktorno da nemozes da svatis. Ti njima pomazes I ocekujes poziv u kucu. Ne, ne. Ti to ostavis sve pred vrata sto si mislio ja njima das I onda se vracaj. Ako je nekad desi, recimo ona je prisveli svadbu. Na svadbi muskarici sjede u jednoj sobi a zene u drugoj sobi". To je za njih bio sok, za Amerikance. Zato kazem obicaj I kulture I to, to je sirok pojam. Moras sebi nac slicno da bi bio blizak sa njim da se druzis.

00:26:03 Koje ste kulturne obicaje odbacili za vrijeme rata?

Pa bilo za vrijeme rata. To je u tolko rata. Dosli su ljudi novi, izbjeglice su dosli sa strane. Ima ljudi, recimo sa sela. Imali su svog obicaj, recimo nacin hrana-kuhanja. Nacin oblacenja, nacin govora-izrazavanja, nacin ponasanja na ulici-na javnim

mjestima. Ja nisam to mogao prihvatiti ni u snu. Kazem bilo je u stvari pojam nekulture. To su ljudi iz grada koji su imali neki svoj izgrađen način ponašanja i na javnim mjestima i sve. I onda su došli ljudi koji su malte ne vandalizam, uništavanje svega što je bilo staro. Razumijem, ti su ljudi izgubili- napustili su svoje kuće, izgubili su i dosta familije u ratu, došli su u nepoznatu sredinu, u nepoznatu –bili su užasni ti, recimo da mi živimo jedan normalnim životom kad je se već njegovo selo se tamo razislo- nisam mu ja to uradio. Među tim on je našao razlog da to radi kod nas-svega. Recimo u sjećanje, u haustorima pisanje, paljenje vatre, lihtovi pokvareni, sve-javni kulturni centri uništeno bilo. To nisu radili odrasli ljudi, to su djeca. Ali to je dio kulture koji su primili od roditelja, od ovog, od onog. Ti roditelji nisu nista uradila na usavršavanju te djece. Da se promjene su nastale, da se sad uci od urbanom životu. On njega pusti, i on jednostavno radi jeli on je smatrao da je on došao i on je tamo izgubio sve on da može da sad radi ovde šta hoće. Ta Tuzla je njega primila, otvorila mu svoja vrata i dala i učinila sve što mogućnosti, i iza svoje mogućnosti jeli je Tuzla bila blokirana, nije mogla nista. Dali su njima. Među tim oni su-oni to nisu cijenili, oni nisu prihvatili-ne, nekazem svi, daleko odtoga, ali većina naroda, većinom su bili užasni. Ti novi ljudi koji su došli, ti novi običaji istjerali su ljude domicilne ljude koji su tu živjeli, istjerali su. Zato su ljudi i otišli.

00:28:35 Koje ste kulturne običaje primili od Vaseg trenutnog mjesta boravka?

Normalno dolaskom u novu sredinu imaju normalno kulturni običaji drugaciji i šta ja znam. Haj da se vratimo na kulturni običaj vjerski praznika i to. Normalno različit su u jednom djelu, u načinu okodena, spremanja hrane, serviranja-što smo mi vrlo rado prihvatili od njih. Jeli smo svatili da je to nešto bolje, nešto naprednije, nešto što ti čini ljepši ugođaj. Mi smo svi u Bosni imali te običaje doček familije, prijatelja, i ono. Ali što mi se pored svega, dočekaj i ono, ovde se pravi ambijent, dekoraciju, proljepsavanje. Neko će reći možda da je to kic-ovo i ono-među tim taj kic stvara neki fin ugođaj-aranžiranje cvjetica, postavljanje stola trpezarijskog sa lijepim tanjirima, sa dodatnim onim svjecama, atmosferu praviš. Mislim ja sam bio kod Amerikanaca jednom na večeri, obična jedna večera. To je bila supa od graha i jedan kolač, ali što je bio dekorisan kao da je neka svečanost. I odmah ti to, ti negledas više u onom tanjiru šta ti je. Nije to uopšte važno. Ti se ljepo osjećaš, ko fino, ko da imaš neku veću vrijednosti. Ti možeš i jeste najljepše jelo ako je spremjeno u lošem serviranju, u lošoj atmosferi ali ti to jelo ti baš neznaci. Ti se najedeš i sve ali nemaš onaj fin osjećaj, nije kompletno. Znači treba da bude kompletno. Tu su Amerikanci, ja mislim, vrlo-broje jedan na svijetu što se toga tiče. Dekoracije, uljeptsavanja, enterijera unutra i u to oni imaju ekspertise. Ja znam bar kako je to do sada bilo. Jesmo mi to radili na sličan način, isto trpezarijski što ali nemaju oni detalji koji to čine ljepotu. On su zato, a mi nismo ni imali para za to, a nismo ni imali mogućnosti da kupimo to. Nismo to prodavali.

00:31:09 Koje ste kulturne običaje odbacili zbog Vaseg trenutnog mjesta boravka? Znam da ste ranije razgovarali radi kafe, jeli više nekuhate Bosansku više...?

Sada recimo, ja sam u Bosni, ja sam u Bosni pio ovaku kafu procjedjenu. Jeli šta je problem, jeli mi je problem sa stomakom, ta naša Bosanska kafa je mi bila teska i nisam mogao da je pijem. Nego uvijek sam, ovaj, ako nista, ta Bosanska kafa je morala da stoji u solji duže vremena da se ona slegne onaj taval dole i onda da ja pijem. A reci u kaficama i to, ja sam uvijek trazio ovu kafu koja je procjedjena-Americka kafa u stvari, kazem Americka, ali to je procjedjena kafa. Tako da mislim da do ovde nije bilo problem

uopste-pijenje te kafe. Nama je to puno sto je Zekira radila u Americkoj bazi, slagacu te, mozda jedno tri godine radila u Americkoj bazi. Bas je radila u kuhinji, bas na serviranju I spremanje jela I toga. Tako da smo mi sa igrom slucaja vec imali pripremu gotovu za nacin kako Amerikanci serviraju, kako kuhaju hranu, sta piju, sta vole, sta nevole, I to, jeli smo imali. Kad smo dosli ovde nije nam bilo uopste nepoznato. Uopste nam nije bilo nepoznato, jeli nas nas sponsor pitao, "Kako vi ovo-isto kao I mi." Eh, imamo svoj nacin, ali smo mi prihvatili ovo jeli vise nam odgovara. Ali zato sto je Zekira radila u Americkoj bazi I ona je to prihvatila I prenjela nama I mi smo tako-bilo je vrlo jednostavno, bilo je nam normalno tako.

00:32:50 Hvala. Sta Vam se svida u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Sta mi se svida? Svida mi se prvo sto je grad miran, sto se tice problema veliki-kriminala, droga, I toga I to. Dosta je miran. Svida mi se sto mi je sve blizu. Sve mi je blizu, netrebam puno vremena trositi, recimo na kupovino, odlazak, izlet u neki restoran, ili... vrlo vazno. Da neputujes satima I to. Svida mi se nacin okodjenja ljudi, to mozete biti ono, kao sto ni kazu "fake" I ono, ali se onu fino osmiju gdje god dodes, fino te doceka na vratima, obicno te na vratim doceka u restoran za osmjehom I pitate kako si. Odes u soping I na kasu kad prvo dodes ona te pita kako si. Osmjeh-toga u Bosni nema. Nikad nije bilo. U naj bolja vremena, kad su ljudi bili ono financiski zadovoljni I sve-on te nikad ne pita dobar dan I kako si. Kako ste? Izvolite? Jeli ste dobro danas? To te ovde pita, fino. Mozda on nije dobro raspolozen, ali on je naucen tako da on to radi, to mozda radi automatski, ali meni to odgovara. Ja ulazim, a on je uvijek spreman da se obrati. Onda svida mi se recimo, onaj, sto ovaj grad ima dosta razliciti kulturni obicaja. Ima svakakvih festival, karnivala, evo u pravo he citi u New Hollandu, kako se kaze, karneval, pa u Ephrati, pa ovde u Lancasteru. Pa uvijek preko ljeta imaju neki kulturni dogadaji, kad se desavaju, u parku bice muzika iz citavog svijeta, po tri-cetri hiljade ljudi dode na taj –u glavnom uvijek ima nesto organizovano za ljude, uvijek imas sansu da se druzis, da vidis nesto, da saznas nesto. A da negovoris o vrste hrane, o stotina-o hiljada restorana I takve stvari

00:35: 03 Hvala. Sta Vam se nesvida u Vasem trenutnom mjestu boravka?

Pa, nemogu rec da mi se ne svida, ali osjecam svaki dan da puno ljudi dolazi novih. Grade je, prenaseljen. Onda imaju cetvrti u gradu koji su zapustene, sta ja znam-dosta ima smeca, stare su kuce koje se neodrzavaju. Ljudi nisu bas ono-tako. Ali to u svakom gradu vecem ima. Mislim, ja s time nemam problema, ali nije lijepo za vidjeti.

Da, razumijem.

00:35:46 Imali jos ista za to pitanje?

Pa dobro, nemogu rec da mi se nesto ne svida, recimo nesto kapitalno, nesto veliko. To su male sitnice koje nisu idealne, ali kad prodes pet minuta ti si vec zaboravio na to.

Dobro.

00:36:04 Sta Vi cinite da sacuvate Vase narodne obicaje i historiju? (Pogotovo za slijedece generacije)

Ja sam to malo krenio I prije..Evo recimo ja I Kira smo razlicte religije. Ona slavi se svoje praznike muslimanske ovde, zadrzava, isto ja moje pravoslavne. Mi svi to zajedno slavimo I pripazili smo cak Americke obicaje. Tako da imamo kulturu svi nacija I naroda obukucenu I to prenosimo svojoj djeci da slijedece generacije to nastave tako. A sta je u stvari to? To je sve u zilju da se druzis, da stvaras prijateljstva, da svoje prijatelje zoves

za neki praznik svoj, da se zblizis. Da to ostane tradicija, I to treba da bude tradicija za sljedece generacije. Onda, prica se dosta Bosanski da ti ostane u glavi Bosanski jezik, ti ucis Engleski svaki dan I nesto. Ali pricaj Bosanski da ne zaboravis to. Moja Danijela isto kaze, da ima djecu, moraju Bosanski znati. Imali smo goste, mala Sara, ona je ovde rodjena, a super price Bosanski, pise-njoj osam godina, ali ona pise Bosanski I govori Bosanski. Engleski normalno. A u tome stoji vrijednosti koju treba sacuvati. I pricaj stalno o dakle si, da ne zaboravis svoje mjesto, gdje si rodjen. Da ne zaboravis da mi I tamo imamo fameliju, mi stalno odrzavamo kontakt-svaki dan telefonom ze cujemo, sa tetkama, sa dajidjom, sa rodjacima. Vidimo se na Skype. Znaci stalno svoju tradiciju, svoje porjeklo necu da zaboravim nikada, to ostane da se zna. Desilo se par puta za ljudima, evo Amerikancima, oni su rodjeni u Americi, ali njegov je djed dosao, ali on nema pojma odakle je dosao djed. Nema veze blage ni koje jezike je pricao, ni iz koje zemlje-nista. Absolutno nezna o svome porjeklu nista, sto smatram da to nije uredu, mislim, nemam reci da kazem... Treba I deset generacija da prode, ali da I ona deseta generacija poslje tebe da zna porjeklo. Mi smo imali susret sa jednom Amerikankom koje je u New Hollandu, ne, ne, nije u New Hollandu, iznad New Hollanda, ima kucu I bogata je. I ona je donosila nam je knige I pricala nam je o svome zivotu, kao mala, sta ja znam, I ona je rodjena ovde ali njena je baka doseljela iz Evrope od nekle, odakle nema pojma iz Slovenije ili iz Slovacke ili iz Ceske. U glavom potece Slavenskog porjekla, a ona ne zna. Ona kaze da je vrlo uskracena za dio historije I za sebe ne zna, odakle potice, sto je vrlo tesko. Znaci, ko je kriv? Njena mati? Njen djed? Njena baka? Nisu prenosili sa koljena-na-koljeno po generacijama svoje porjeklo, o svojoj zemlji, odakle potice. A mi se to trudimo svaki dan-pravimo Bosansku hranu, skupimo ljude Bosance, I druzi mo se, I tako.

00:39:36 Imate ikakve dodatne komentare uz ova pitanja?

Nema nikakav komentar. U glavnom ostajemo, svida nam se ovde, kad pravimo poredjenje imed zivota u Bosni I ovaj ovde, ovde su vrlo velike mogucnosti za svakog, nije bitno..Sto mi se ovde, prvo svida niko te ovde ne pita odakle si, pita initivno, ne da ti be kasirao, ni koje si religije. Vazno je samo da hoces da radis, da si, sa se tridis, I da, sto kaze, pripadas ovaj zakon ovde, I niko te ne dira za nista. Ti ako si pametan, ako si skolovan, uspjeses ovde u zivotu, to je sigurno. Samo treba da nesto hoces I ovde mozes. U Bosni si ti mogao biti najbolji, ali ako nisi imao nekoga da te gura, da te proturi na onaj, sto mi kazemo, pokvareni nacin, nisi mogao uspjesi u zivotu nikad. Tamo su jace famelijarne veze I, nego igdje. Ovde opet, bez obzira, pita jeli ima neko da te preporuci, ali ne, istog razloga, da bi te samo primio radi toga. Vrlo je vazno da primis nekoga da nema kriminalni dosjega, da netrosi drogu, nekoga da radi za tebe ko je normalna osoba, to je najvise. Tako zam ja bar svatio. Ne u svim vrstama posla, ali da ti je cist dosia, da si cist, I ono ..

Hvala Vam I to je, to.

End. Total Time 00:41:15

Translation of Milan Marinkovic Interview

Total Time 00:41:15

00:00:00 State today's date, your name, your age, your birth date, and place of birth

Today's date is October 17th of the year 2010. My name is Milan Marinkovic. I was born

on November 22, 1950 in Pancu.

00:00:24 Where do you live?

I currently live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

00:00:28 How did you end up in either Lancaster County?

In 1998 we lived in Tuzla and then the desire and the need arose for us to leave Bosnia and, therefore, we signed-up at a church world service. We filled-out an application and we waited for one year for the process to occur. In 1999, we were granted free entry to the United States on November 29, 1999, pardon, September, and then we came to Lancaster County.

00:01:04 What is your background (ethnic, religious, social, etc.)?

I was born in Pancu in Vojvodina. My father and mother worked the land, because-I belong to the Orthodox Christian religion, I am a Serb- they wanted a better life and so my mother and father decided to move to the city where life was easier-schooling, going to the doctor and all of that-the easier life. When I was born, it was very difficult to work the land because the means were so primitive and it was difficult to maintain, so in order to have an easier life and for us children, my parents decided to move to the city. That happened in 1955-when we moved to Tuzla in Bosnia. We stayed there until we left for America.

00:01:59 What was your life like in Bosnia?

In Bosnia, I finished elementary and high school, where I was trained to fabricate metals with machines and I worked in a company, where I also achieved higher education. I was a good employee and we went-I worked on various types of machinery because I was a good employee and then quite often, I traveled to various competitions for metal workers, where I also received various awards. I was happy with my job and so I decided to educate myself and everything was okay. I had an apartment which was given to me by my company. I moved-in in 1984 from a smaller apartment. We lived in the center of the city, two children were born there, and we stayed there until the very day that we left for the United States. Most importantly, I was satisfied with my life. I had many friends, acquaintances, and family members. We were very social and we were there for one another. We had a nice, stable life, which I want to have forever.

00:03:09 Where were you during the Balkan civil war?

During the entire war, my family and I were in Tuzla. We lived-I encountered the beginning of the war in my company, when I was automatically discharged from my position because I was born in Serbia, I am a Serb. Those were the times that came to pass and the war began. It is known how and for what reasons, but they simply did not trust me because I was different, of a different faith and a different people and I was discharged. I spent my time at home-fear, poverty, scarcity was severe. There was no food, no clothing, no heat, and we didn't have electricity. For water, I sometimes had to go six or seven kilometers to fill-up the canisters and to pull them on the wagon that I made. We transported the water so that we could cook and bathe ourselves. That water lasted for a day or two and then we would have to go again, whether it was summer or winter. The worst thing was when one had to gather wood in the winter. We didn't have electricity, so we purchased a wood stove, which we needed wood for. We went-you receive a permit and you go into the woods and you chop wood-all by hand. You chop it up into smaller pieces for the fire, but the wood was wet or too dry, which created thick smoke. The smoke was suffocating. That was horrendous. That part of my life, I never

want to...it's difficult for me to talk about, let alone return to that part of my life, it is better to commit suicide. That is such a literal fight for life or death. On one side you hear of so-and-so being killed, bombs, grenades, countless people dying on the battle field. You are in a blockaded city, there is no food coming-in, there is no electricity, there is nothing-hopeless. Sometimes you think that it will never end. Night after night, one sleeps in basements for the fear of grenades under the doors in one's apartment-things like that happened. Grenades would fall onto balconies and explode-it was chaos.

Therefore, we spent days and days in the basement. The children went to school, actually it was not a school- these were basements where children gathered to learn.

The day came when I was allowed back into my company to work, through the aid of some friends. I was overjoyed. But there was no pay to be seen, I didn't receive money. I would receive maybe two kilograms of flour or a liter of oil, but I was happy even with the little that they gave me. So, simply like that, I came into renewed contact with my colleagues from work with whom I had spent a significant portion of my life. They were my true friends and they remained my true friends despite the war and despite the ethnic differences. We gave each other help and support, which re-instilled hope for a better tomorrow, that we would survive. I was the only one and you can't do

anything...for example, I lived in a three story apartment complex which had 12 apartments. When your neighbor who has lived beside you for a long time gives you dirty looks and says, "The children of Serbs should be killed as soon as they are born"; it is terrifying. And they lived across the hall from me, about three meters. And then we would hug me and say "Don't worry neighbor, I have your back". What does that mean? He has my back? He is behind me. It was difficult to live with that type of lifestyle and in that kind of fear. My children would go to school and I would go to work and the grenades would begin to fall. I would begin to worry about my children. Where are they? Are they okay? So many times I just wanted to leave from work, but the grenades were falling. Luckily nothing happened during that time of war and, bit-by-bit, things started becoming more normal, at least some parts of your life could be lived with some normalcy. Aid began to enter the city. A light emerged signaling that it would get better. Through all of that, the most important thing was that we remain alive and healthy. Fear of shooting, of grenades, fear of the aftermath of the war, of illness and, what do I say- of everything, but luckily we survived. Those are insane times, those are times that should never be forgotten and that need to be remembered so that it does not happen again. But, one needs to, as they say, move forward and push these things aside and not think so much about it so that one does not lose their mind.

00:08:12 How do you feel in your present location?

After all of that suffering, poverty, and scarcity, and everything, we came to our present place of residence in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and we lived here as though it was all a huge dream. "How can that happen to me?" Because you can't see, we came to a normal area where people work and live normally. No one looks at your name, your religion, where you came from, and they accept you as one of theirs, like normal. And from the contradiction, you come into a normal society. You can't believe that that happened to you, that you were the lucky one, who came here to live a normal life. When I was coming to America, before I came to America, my wish was to find a job, to have a roof over my head, and to educate my children. And, then, all of a sudden, these opportunities were realized, at once, over night. The people, our sponsors from the

church, came and found us a place to live. Two bed rooms, a bathroom, warm water all of the time, a kitchen, a refrigerator full of food-that is a fairytale. Now when I look at this residence and when I go back 12 years before we came here, when we came here, I mean it was modest then, but it was a big deal to us, a huge deal. When you turn on the faucet, you can get warm and cold water. You open your fridge and it is full. Then you go to the grocery store and you have hundreds of varieties of bread to choose from. Back there, you yearned for bread. I dreamt, Maja, believe me, I dreamt about if I would ever eat white bread again. During the war, people ate corn bread with only a small amount of flour that was mixed-in. It was tough, it was tasteless, but you had to eat it to survive. And, now, you enter a grocery store and you see shelves full of various kinds of bread, then you see the meats, and all of the other things and you can't believe it. After a few days here, I called my friends in Bosnia to check-in and tell them how we are doing. When I told them of all of the things that we were given in such a short amount of time, they said "you are joking". I told them that I was not joking, that it really was like that. I told them that we came here and the people accepted us like their closest of kin and that they met us at the airport. Seven of them came-Americans, our sponsors, from that church that accepted us. And, when they told us, in our language, "Welcome to America", we all began to cry. When they saw us, at the airport, their eyes widened and they were speechless and they wondered what had happened. They all watched the news, read the newspapers, and had a certain image of Bosnia. When we arrived, it was something entirely different. They expected an old woman with a head scarf and an old man with a cane with dozens of children behind them. However we came, who had lived a very European lifestyle in Bosnia. They first stared at us in shock, then smiled at us and hugged us, and later they kissed us and cried. That arrival was fantastic for us. The head pastor of the church came that evening at 9:30 and gave Zekira a bouquet of flowers. He welcomed us and we thanked him for everything. And then they left us, after about one hour, they left us alone and we sat and looked and touched everything. We didn't know many things, I mean, how to use them. Like a coffee machine, which I didn't have in Bosnia. I mean, I had one, but they are not the same. Then we looked at how to turn it on and how it works. And, I mean, that arrival was shocking, I mean in a positive way. Now, now this is mine. I use this. You can't believe it at that moment. The first moment was spectacular, I mean, truly.

00:12:28 Do you plan on staying in your current location?

If so, for how long?

If not, where do they plan to go?

I intend to stay until the end of my life, because the people here accepted me. Also, I have a good job, the same job that I was trained for in Bosnia. I have a job and, as they say, through working in America, I learned many more things and about more advanced computers and machines. I have a good position, where I am paid well, and I am able to work as many hours as I want, which isn't the case nowadays for most people. Therefore, I have no intend to go anywhere else. I mean that it would be a mistake to, that is my opinion. However, Danijela-my youngest daughter, always wanted us to move to larger city-to move to a larger city, where the opportunities are better. I agree with her, but it isn't for me. I prefer a small, calm town, where the people are friendly. They greet you with a smile and say hello, even though they do not know you. We pass by one another and everyone asks "How are you?" and so forth. Due to that, I feel safe

in this place and also when it comes to crime, we are reasonably protected. My job is near-by, which is very important. Shopping centers, the doctor, everything is close-by so I have no intentions-until the end of my life.

00:14:15 *Is returning to Bosnia an option for you? Why or why not?*

I mean, first I want to say that I have no desire to return to Bosnia. Perhaps, it is an option and I can return. I went back several times to vacation there and I met-up with people-friends. However, that is no longer that city which I had left. Now there are different people, different customs, different life, cultures, and behaviors. When I visited there, Maja, I saw that people lived in chaos. There no order of any kind in anything.

Those people on the street are still selling things. Can you image, in a city that was once urban, civilized, and on a higher level, now you see people who are dressed differently, poor people on the sidewalks who are selling food on the sidewalks. A man from the country brings his goods and sells his cheeses and milk on the sidewalk. He puts down nylon and rags-people walk there, it is food. Okay, so people are trying to make ends meet in the best way that they can and one has to work somehow, but that is no longer my city. I would sit in cafes and watch the passers-by to see if any of my old friends would stop-in. I would see no one for three hours. My friends who have remained are trapped in the city, trapped in their apartments; there is nothing to look for one the streets. It is because the crime has escalated to horrific levels-drugs, alcohol, prostitution. Young girls, young women are not able to find jobs. They finish school and can't find a job so they are led astray-same with the young men. The selling and usage of drugs and prostitution-crime. It is horrific, just horrific. That is why I wouldn't want to come back. If you try to call the police, forget about it, you don't have a chance. That is not my opinion, it is the opinion of the people who live there. The police is deeply intertwined in those matters. It was on the television and in the papers, otherwise, I wouldn't believe how people sell themselves like goods, young women do it as a job in other countries. They go there and every trace of them vanishes. People do everything possible to get money; it is horrific, horrific. Many companies are closed and there is no work there. If there is work in a company and they accept it, they do not get paid for three months –not a penny, because their boss doesn't want to pay them. He holds them bound. If they don't come the next day, they won't even get what he previously owes them and he always owes them three months worth. Therefore, people are forced to work for free and their boss will never pay them. The people who came to power are those who took part in crime, theft, robbery, and, now that they have a position, they are using it to make money. What can one expect of a person like that? They are tied-in with criminals, with gangs-the mafia. It is horrific, simply horrific. Therefore I say that no matter how much money I have to purchase the necessary paperwork, I would never, ever go back. To live among people like that with my children? No. Never. Never.

00:17:52 *How much or often do you interact with the locals in Lancaster County?*

I do not have many close ties or relationships with the locals. It is because we all work, people work a great deal, especially now, because my company has an agreement and the projects need to be completed by a certain deadline. However, when the opportunity arises, whether it is with Americans, Bosnians, Hispanics, one finds time to exchange a couple of words, to greet one another, and the most time that we have is on Saturdays, on the weekends, when we spend time with everyone. We go out to restaurants or have dinners at someone's home, and we also keep in-touch over the telephone during

the week. Daily, almost daily, we keep in touch and exchange opinions on matters. We have a lot of contact with people when a holiday is near, because we always get together to celebrate and have dinner-whether it is Thanksgiving or a birthday-which is coming-up soon. Our friend, Sue McKenzie, has a birthday on November 7th and we are invited. Many families will be there and it will be spectacular.

00:19:22 *What kinds of relationships to you personally have with the locals?*

I have not had any problems with the locals here. I always say, even if a problem were to arise, it is taken care of in a calm, friendly manner, without any problems. I mean really, for example, I can say when it comes to parking. If a car blocks my mailbox, I can go to my neighbor and say "Excuse me please, I did not receive my mail yesterday. Can you please move your car?" He says "I am so sorry. It won't happen again" and he moves his car, without any problems. Therefore, we have not had any kind of problems. In fact, when we go on vacation, our neighbor lady has said "don't worry; I will keep an eye on things to make sure that nothing happens". I thank her for it. It's wonderful; there are no problems.

00:20:14 *What kind of interactions do you have with Bosnians in this area?*

The same that we had in Bosnia. One cannot be friends with everyone. You have some families with whom you are closer. You have someone with whom you can have a cup of coffee with. And someone who you welcome into your home and serve dinner to. And there are those with whom you only go to restaurants with. We found people here who are similar to us, Bosnians who have a similar mentality, similar culture, similar education; and then you find things in common with them and you become friends. The other Bosnians, you might just greet when you see them and that is that. Therefore, with some you are close, very close, and with some, you are just at a greeting-level, some you see at parties with whom you might sit with but that is that. A personal contact in one's home is not for everyone. One can't physically invite everyone and visit everyone because it takes a lot of time. You have to be realistic of the possibilities because of your responsibilities at work and also at home, such as going grocery shopping, etc.

00:21: 34 *What cultural practices have you adapted during the time of the war?*

What do I know? During the war, everything changes, custom and all that. And one part of that, and the reason why we left Bosnia is exactly because of that. It's because those customs changed, both in the religious sense, and the interactions between people, in education, television itself-in the way that the news were presented, the way that people dress, and the way that people look upon religiosity-it completely changed. Nothing was normal anymore. Like I said, that is a reason, a big reason why my family and I left. I could not accept those new customs, that culture which was, I don't know how it is translated into English, it was an obliteration of culture, it was something unnatural-that "culture". People who do not respect anyone have that culture, people who do not respect religion or education, I don't know, everyone has their part in culture. But that is not appealing to me, it is not close to me. Against your best will, your body and your mind fight that. You can't accept it, because you can't stoop to such a low level. It is beneath your values, beneath your lifestyle. Therefore, I could not accept it. Not even in my dreams could I have found something therein that I could adapt. It is closer to me-I came to America to seek customs, culture, and something new. Why am I able to accept all of that? It is because that is similar to who I am as a person. Through work, life, through one's parents, and later through school, one becomes who he is and,

because of what I had in Bosnia, I am able to accept the way things are here. It is because I lived that, not because I randomly declared that it is what fits me. The people with whom we are friends, the Americans, they told us that “you are not culturally any different from us”. In what ways do we differ? For example, those religious holidays.

They celebrate Easter, we celebrate our Easter, and Christmas and such. It is very, very similar, 90% to 95% is the same. They say that they do not see a difference in terms of customs. That is the way that we lived and that is how we live here. They were in awe, but they were happy that that is how it is. It is very difficult when you have your own culture and you have to adapt to a new culture. It is difficult to become close with people, very difficult. The woman who works at that church, Sue, she told us that the church is now sponsoring some Iraqi refugees. She told me “Milan, because of knowing you and being friends with you, we believed that these people would also be very similar to us. However, it is different, that one can’t understand it. You help them and you expect them to invite you into their home. Oh, no. You leave everything that you wanted to give them before their door and you leave. Also, when they have weddings, the men are in one room and the women in another”. That was a shock to the Americans. That is why I say that cultures and customs, they can really vary. You have to find similarities with people if you expect to be friends with them.

00:26:03 *What cultural practices have you abandoned during the time of the war?*

Well it was during the war. That is how it is during the war. New people came, who were refugees from the outside. There are people from the country. They had their own ways, for example in cooking or food. Their own way of dressing, their own way of speaking- of expressing themselves, their ways of behaving on the street-in public venues. I could not even accept these things in my dreams. Like I said, it was the beginning of an uncivilized time. Before that, there were the people in the city who had a culture of their own, of how they behave in public venues and everything else. And then people came along who vandalized, almost everything, that was old and sacred. I understand that those people lost everything-they had to leave their homes, they lost many loved ones in the war, they came to a new place, but they were awful, and it was difficult to live a normal life-their entire villages were destroyed, but that was not my doing. Nonetheless, they found reasons to do those things in our city. They could cut things up, urinate on entrances, set fires, break elevators, and, with this, they destroyed many public cultural centers. Adults did not do these things, these were children. However, they learned these things from their parents and other sources. Their parents did nothing to socialize their children. They did not attempt to make changes, to teach them how to behave in civilized environments. They let them do as they please and they think that they are able to do whatever they want to because they lost their previous homes. The city of Tuzla accepted them and opened its doors and gave them her soul and whatever was possible, even beyond her capabilities because the city was blocked-off from supplies. They gave things to them, even though there was nothing to give. However, they did not respect that, they did not accept it. I don’t mean everyone, far from it, but most of those people, most of them were horrible people. The new people that came and their behaviors forced the natives of the city to leave, they kicked them out. That is why people left.

00:28:35 *What cultural practices of your present residence have you adapted?*

It is normal when one comes to a new place to encounter new cultural practices.

Let's return to the cultural practices in terms of religious holidays. Of course, they are different in the way that they are celebrated, in the way that the food is prepared and served-that is what we accepted very graciously. It is because we realized that their way was something better, something more advanced, something that makes the occasion more special. We had all of those hospitality customs in Bosnia. However, beyond all of that hospitality, here they create an ambience with decorations and beautification. Some people might find that tacky but those things create a special occasion- arranging flowers, adorning the dining room table with decorative plates with additional flowers- an atmosphere is created. I was once at an American's house for a dinner, an ordinary dinner. They served a bean soup and then a cake, but it was decorated like there was a special occasion. Immediately, you no longer focus on what is on your plate. It is not at all important. You feel wonderful and you have a heightened sense of worth. You can have the most wonderful meal but if it is served poorly and lacks atmosphere, it will not really have meaning for you. You eat and everything, but something is missing and you don't feel complete. It needs to be complete. I think that Americans are number one in the world when it comes to that. They have expertise in decorating and beautifying interiors. I know how that was up to now, at least. We did things in a similar fashion and set the dining room table, but we didn't have all of the details that add beauty. They are good for that, but we didn't have the money for it, not could one buy such things because they weren't available.

00:31:09 What cultural practices have you abandoned due to your present residence? I know that you mentioned coffee earlier, do you no longer drink Bosnian coffee?

For example, I drank this kind of filtered coffee in Bosnia. The problem was that the Bosnian coffee is very strong and that it upsets my stomach, so I could not drink it. If nothing else, I had to wait for the coffee grinds to settle to the bottom before I could drink it. However, in cafes, I always ordered American coffee, actually, it is filtered coffee but we call it American coffee. Therefore, I don't think that that was a problem here at all; the drinking of filtered coffee. It really helped us that Zekira worked at an American base for about three years. She worked in the kitchen and served and prepared food. Therefore, by sheer accident, we already learned about how Americans serve food, how they cook, what they drink, what they like, what they don't like, and so, because we were exposed to it. When we came here, it wasn't at all foreign to us.

Our sponsor asked us "How do you know to do these things in the way that we do them?" and we explained that we do have our own ways of doing these things, but that we accepted some of their ways because it worked for us. Due to the fact that Zekira worked at an American base, she adapted many things and influenced us, which made this transition very easy. It was normal for us.

00:32:50 Thank you. What do you like about your immediate environment?

What I like? First and foremost, I like that the city is calm when it comes to high crime, drugs, and that. It is rather calm. I like that everything is close-by. Everything is close-by and I don't have to spend a lot of time when I want to go to the store or out to a restaurant. It is very important that you don't have to travel for hours. I also like the way that people behave. It might be fake, I don't know, but I like the way that people smile at you, the way that they greet you at the door, they typically greet you at the entrance of a restaurant with a smile and ask you how you are doing. You go shopping

and the first thing that they ask you at the register is “How are you?” In Bosnia they do not have smiles like that. There never was. Even during the best times, when people were financially satisfied and so, there was never a “Good day” or “How are you”. How are you? Please. How are you today? They ask you that here nicely. They might not be in a good mood, but they are taught to do that automatically and I like that. I walk in somewhere and they are always ready to assist. Also, I like that this city has a variety of cultural events. They have festival and carnivals. Actually, a carnival will be taking place in New Holland very shortly and, then also in Ephrata and in Lancaster. There are always events in the summer in the park, where there is live music from around the world and three to four thousand people attend. There is always something organized for the people, where you can socialize, where you can see something, and where you can learn something. Don’t even get me started on the various foods that they have, there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of restaurants and such things.

00:35:03 Thank you. What do you dislike about your immediate environment?

I can’t really say that I don’t like something, but I feel that there are new people coming-in every day. The city is too crowded. Then there are parts of the city that are neglected. There is a lot of trash and old houses that are falling apart. The people in those areas aren’t really-. But it is like that in any larger city. I mean, I don’t have a problem with it, but it isn’t nice to look at.

Right. I understand.

00:35:46 Is there anything else that you would like to add to that question?

Well, I can’t say that there is something that I dislike, something that is important or big. Those are small things which are not ideal, but if you drive-by, you forget about it after five minutes.

00:36:04 What are you doing to pass down your culture and history to subsequent generations?

I started talking about that a bit earlier. Kira and I have different religions. She continues to celebrate her Muslim holidays here and I celebrate my Orthodox-Christian ones. We celebrate all of them together and we have also adapted the American ones. Therefore, we have a culture of all nations and people and we pass that down to our children so that they may pass it on to subsequent generations. But what does all of that really mean? It is a wish to be with people and to build relationships; to invite your friends to your holiday and to become closer. It is to keep those traditions to alive and for them to continue to be traditions for subsequent generations. Also, we speak the Bosnian language to keep it in our heads, while we learn more and more English every day. One speaks Bosnian so that one does not forget. My Danijela also says that when she has children, they must be able to speak in Bosnian. We had guests and little Sara who was born here, can speak Bosnian brilliantly and also write. She is only eight years old, but she speaks and writes in Bosnian. English also, of course. Within that, there is a worth that needs to be retained. Also, one needs to always speak about where he is from, so that he does not forget one’s place, where he was born. So that one does not forget that they have family over there too, we are constantly keeping in-touch with them via telephone, daily-with aunts, uncles, and cousins. We see each other via Skype. My traditions, my origins-these I do not want to forget; they remain, so that one knows about them. It happened a few times with Americans, who are born in America, but their grandfather came from another country, but they have no clue from where their

grandfather came. They have no clue what languages he spoke, what country he came from-nothing. They absolutely do not know a thing about their origins. I do not think that that is okay, I mean, I don't have the words for it...What needs to be is that even ten generations after you, that, that tenth generation knows of their origins. We met an American woman who lives in New Holland, no, no, past New Holland, she has a house and she is wealthy. She visited us and brought us books and told us of her childhood. She was born here but her grandmother is from Europe, but from exactly where, she is not sure. It is Slovenia, Slovakia, or the Czech Republic-of some sort of Slavic origin, but she is not sure. She says that she feels like her history is missing many parts and that she doesn't know much about herself, which is very difficult. So, who is to blame? Her mother? Her grandfather? Her grandmother? They did not pass it down from knee-to-knee, to subsequent generations-their origins, they land, where they stem from. But, we try every day-we make Bosnian food, we get together with other Bosnians, we spend time together and so forth.

00:39:36 Do you have any additional comments for any of these questions?

I do not have additional comments. Most importantly, we are staying here and we like it here. When we compare life in Bosnia with life here, the possibilities here are much greater, for everyone, regardless. No one here asks you where you are from-well, they ask you out of curiosity, not to pick you out-nor do they ask you about your religion. It is important that you want to work, that you try, and that you abide by the laws, and no one will bother you. If you are intelligent and educated, you will succeed in life-that is certain. You just need to want something and you can have it here. In Bosnia, you could be the best, but if you didn't have someone to help you about, I mean, in the corrupt way, you could never succeed in life. The family ties over there are stronger than anywhere else. Here they might ask you for a reference, but that isn't the sole reason that they would hire you. It is very important to hire a person who does not have a criminal background, who doesn't use drugs, someone who can work for you and who is a normal person, that is the most important thing. That is the way that I understand it, at least. Perhaps not in all lines of work, but it's important to have a clean record, that you are clean.

Thank you. That is that.

End. Total Time 00:41:15

