

**Paper: “The Dead Brother’s Ballad as a Balkan Shared Place of Memory”**

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Manuel Frias Martins

Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, Portugal

Reviewer 2: Blinded

Reviewer 3: Lidija Stojanović

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia

Reviewer 4: Sergiy Yakovenko

MacEwan University, Canada

# ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form 2021

This form is designed to summarize the manuscript peer review that you have completed and to ensure that you have considered all appropriate criteria in your review. Your review should provide a clear statement, to the authors and editors, of the modifications necessary before the paper can be published or the specific reasons for rejection.

Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

NOTE: ESJ promotes peer review procedure based on scientific validity and technical quality of the paper (not perceived the impact). You are also not required to do proofreading of the paper. It could be recommended as part of the revision.

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Reviewer Name: Manuel Frias Martins	
University/Country: Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon / Portugal	
Date Manuscript Received: October 15, 2021	Date Review Report Submitted: October, 18, 2021
Manuscript Title: The Dead Brother's Ballad as a Shared Place of Balkan Mythic Memory	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 1078/21	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: YES	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: YES	
You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper: YES	

## Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
<b>1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	

<p><b>The author centers the intellectual matrix of her paper on the idea that there's a cultural common ground in the Balkans represented by the "The Dead Brother's Ballad", building her whole argument around that idea.</b></p>	
<p><b>2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><i>(Please insert your comments)</i></p> <p>The abstract correctly divides the paper according to the usual major planes of the academic norms and practices.</p>	
<p><b>3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><i>(Please insert your comments)</i></p> <p><b>As it is, the paper shows quite a few corrections made by someone who is a better speaker of English than the author or the original translator. They avoid what I think it could be the disturbing presence of some «false friends». All in all, the paper is readable and without too many language discrepancies. The revisions of the translation that are shown in the paper should be erased.</b></p>	
<p><b>4. The study methods are explained clearly.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><i>(Please insert your comments)</i></p> <p><b>The study methods are mentioned in the context of the different areas of interest of the author, such as poetics, semiotics, mythology, etc. Sometimes the avenues of research become methodologically blurred, but more often than not they end up revealing interesting ideas and cultural connections in the Balkans.</b></p>	
<p><b>5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><i>(Please insert your comments)</i></p> <p><b>The results are clear, but they should rely more on deductive reasoning than on inductive reasoning. I don't believe there are errors, but some statements seem to spring from a simplified version of the cultural discourse related to the theme.</b></p> <p><b>I keep the impression that the author had to cut important slices of her argument in order to adapt her paper to the available publishing space. If it is not so, I believe the paper would gain a lot in expanding some arguments. On page 8, for example, the author jumps into a conclusion about the current religious identity in the Balkans, «with an excess of dogmatism, politics and moral hypocrisy». This culminates, however, just a brief description of the role of the Mother in the poem entitled The Dead Brother's Ballad.</b></p>	
<p><b>6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><i>(Please insert your comments)</i></p> <p><b>The ideas that eventually are put forth as strong conclusions seem more ideologically motivated than grounded on arguments that were previously developed in the narrative of the essay. Again, maybe the author had to</b></p>	

**struggle with the limited number of words or characters imposed by ESJ for publication. To my mind, everything in the paper points in that direction.**

**7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.**

**5**

*(Please insert your comments)*

The references are clearly in line with the topic.

**Overall Recommendation** (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	<b>X</b>
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

**Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):**

**I believe you should try to expand most arguments in order to better support your conclusions. In case you won't be given more publishing space to do so, I strongly advise you to cut some parts of the paper in order to find room for expanding the remaining topics.**

**Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:**

**I believe the topic is interesting enough to justify a few more characters.**

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Reviewer Name: Sergiy Yakovenko	
University/Country: MacEwan University, Canada	
Date Manuscript Received: October 15, 2021	Date Review Report Submitted: October 23, 2021
Manuscript Title: The Dead Brother's Ballad as a Shared Place of Balkan Mythic Memory	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 78.10.2021	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: <u>Yes</u> /No	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: <u>Yes</u> /No	
You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper: <u>Yes</u> /No	

## **Evaluation Criteria:**

**Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.**

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
<b>1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.</b>	<b>5</b>

<p>The title names the object of analysis (“The Dead Brother’s Ballad”) and suggests both the context in which it is going to be discussed (the Balkan mythic memory) and the conclusion that is going to be reached—that the poem is this memory’s “shared place.”</p>	
<p><b>2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p>The abstract clearly and concisely outlines the object, placing it in the context of all possible variations of the work, describes the synthetic methodology applied to its analysis, and presents the outcome of the discussion by determining the poem as a local and “transnational cultural heritage” and a “significant Balkan paradigm.”</p>	
<p><b>3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>
<p>There are no significant errors that would undermine the value of the argument, but the article could benefit from proofreading. For example, “motive” appears a few times in the meaning of “motif,” “inviolable” in the meaning of “invaluable,” or “expiration of the sin” instead of “expiation.” There are also some punctuation errors (mostly comma splices), a missing coordinating conjunction in a series at the end of a sentence, vague pronoun references, and odd prepositions (like “bear witness of” instead of “bear witness to”). Those are not serious issues, and they can be fixed by means of proofreading.</p>	
<p><b>4. The study methods are explained clearly.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p>This is a scholarly literary-critical article, which does not require as rigorous a description of methods as a scientific study would. The methodological basis of the essay presented in the abstract is revealed in the article itself by virtue of the various contexts and backgrounds against which the poem is analyzed, “combining diverse tools from poetics, semiotics, mythology” etc.</p>	
<p><b>5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p>The multilayered significance of the poem is shown clearly throughout the discussion. The original interpretation does not have any logical errors.</p>	
<p><b>6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>
<p>The conclusion is supported by the content, but I would recommend proving a more formal conclusion to address the central object of analysis (the poem itself) along with the cultural implications that are already well presented in the concluding part.</p>	
<p><b>7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p>The article has all the necessary citations.</p>	

**Overall Recommendation** (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	<b>X</b>

Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

**Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):**

The essay shows a depth of analysis, opens the poem to a greater literary and cultural comparative context, and reveals the poem's unique anthropological and geopolitical implications. In terms of structure, however, it feels more like a book chapter than a separate article. I recommend, therefore, to provide a more formal introduction that would specifically posit the Dead Brother's Ballad as the main object of analysis, including a thesis statement and an outline of the contexts in which it is going to be discussed (like in the abstract). By the same token, given the scientific orientation of the journal, a short and more all-encompassing conclusion following the chapter "The Anthropological Structures of the Ballad" (before the "epilogue" part or after) would wrap the article up nicely. Another recommendation would be to proofread the translation from the point of view of accuracy, for example, "narrated poems, i.e., stories that may have been turned into poems at some point." Based on the definition/explanation in the second part of this excerpt, maybe "poetical narratives" would better fit the description than "narrated poems."

**Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:**

This article is of great scholarly value. I do not have more comments or recommendations than those provided above.

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Reviewer Name: Lidija Stojanović	
University/Country: Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia	
Date Manuscript Received: 15.10.2021	Date Review Report Submitted: 22.10.2021
Manuscript Title: The Dead Brother's Ballad as a Shared Place of Balkan Mythic Memory	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 1078/21	
You agree your name is revealed to the author of the paper: <b>Yes</b> /No	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper, is available in the "review history" of the paper: <b>Yes</b> /No	
You approve, this review report is available in the "review history" of the paper: <b>Yes</b> /No	

## Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
<b>1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.</b>	<b>5</b>

<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	
<b>The title is excellent.</b>	
<b>2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.</b>	<b>5</b>
Excellent. Without any remark.	
<b>3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Suggestion for author of this article. To read carefully the English translation of the text in order to resolve the translator's suggestions.</b>	
<b>4. The study methods are explained clearly.</b>	<b>5</b>
The study methods are inventive, of course very good explained and incorporated in whole text.	
<b>5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.</b>	<b>5</b>
The results are innovative especially for folklore studies.	
<b>6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.</b>	<b>5</b>
Of course. In the manner of contemporary folklore analysis, the conclusions contain very inspiring new reading of one archaic motif in folk literature and culture.	
<b>7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.</b>	<b>3</b>
The author must correct some references, because they contain both information and documentation.	

**Overall Recommendation** (mark an X with your recommendation):

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	X
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

**Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):**

**Suggestions: all suggestions are given in my review notes.**

**Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:**

**With great pleasure, I recommend this article for publication.**