Presentation Formulas in South Slavic Epic Song

David F. Elmer

Ever since the pathfinding fieldwork of Milman Parry and Albert Lord, South Slavic oral epic song has supplied one of the principal *points de repère* for scholars interested in the study of oral, especially epic, traditions.[1] Parry traveled to the Balkans in the 1930s in search of a "living laboratory" in which to test his ideas about the oral and traditional nature of the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He found among the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of then-Yugoslavia a tradition that was remarkably similar to Homeric poetry in terms of both form and content. The Muslim communities concentrated in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandžak region of Serbia and Montenegro had developed a particularly rich repertoire of songs describing battles and raids along the Ottoman frontier of the recent or remote past. Parry, however, was interested less in the content of the songs than in their formal features and the techniques of their production. He embarked on an ambitious project of collecting audio recordings and written records intended to document as fully as possible these formal and technical aspects of the tradition. Lord, Parry's student and assistant in the field from 1934-35, continued this project with subsequent fieldwork in the 1950s and '60s. Their recordings and texts—which number in the thousands and are today conserved in the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature at Harvard University—allowed these two scholars to identify and describe phenomena that have been recognized as characterizing numerous oral traditions worldwide, principally the phenomenon of "composition-in-performance," by which is meant the technique of performing narrative through manipulation of traditional themes as expressed in traditional verbal formulas, without reference to a fixed text.

The phenomenon I intend to examine in this essay is likewise common to very many oral traditions, and for that reason it may at first glance appear to be unremarkable. Like performers in diverse other traditions, the singers of South Slavic epic frequently have occasion to address their audiences directly in the course of performance. It is not readily apparent whether these appeals to the listener—which are accomplished, as we shall see, by means of very short, relatively inconspicuous expressions—have any function beyond simply inviting the audience to experience a sense of participation in the performance. I will argue, however, that patterns of

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[1] Parry's writings are collected in Parry 1987. Lord 2000 represents the classic description of the South Slavic epic tradition. John Miles Foley has produced a number of important comparative studies of South Slavic tradition, which are routinely cited along with the works of Parry and Lord by writers on oral tradition more generally (see espec. Foley 1990, 1991, 1999).

direct address in fact have an important discursive function, at least within the corpus of songs I have selected for examination. Appeals to the listener serve as cues that guide listeners' perceptions of narrated events and assist them in tracking points of articulation in the song.

Methods and Theory

My analysis is based on the epic idiolect of Halil Bajgorić, a Muslim from the Stolac district in Herzegovina, from whom Parry and Lord collected a number of songs.[2] Bajgorić uses a set of recurring expressions to direct his audience's attention to particular characters or events in his narrative. The most important of these is the expression *kad evo ti*, which has a number of formulaic variants. This expression translates approximately into English as "when—here you are." Its normal usage can be illustrated with the following lines from Bajgorić's song *Ženidba Bećirbega Mustajbegova* (*The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey*, PN 6699, ll. 181-84):[3]

sidje Djulić na avliju kletu	Djulić goes down to the accursed courtyard
pa otvori na avliji vrata	and opens the courtyard gates,
kad evo ti careve gazije	when—here you are!—the sultan's hero
na doratu konju kosatome	on his long-maned bay horse.[4]

Kad is the subordinating conjunction "when," which links the expression to its syntactic context. *Ti* is the dative of the second personal pronoun, "you," and *evo* is a proximal deictic marker, something like Italian *ecco*. It is deictic because it *points* to something available to the perception of the addressee—deixis means "pointing"—and it is proximal because it points to something that is near rather than far.[5] Both *evo* and *ti* encode in themselves a direct appeal to the addressee. *Evo ti* is an expression one would use when presenting someone with an object, for example, a book or a glass of water. For this reason, I refer to this formula as a "presentation formula." Bajgorić's epic idiolect includes variant expressions with the *distal* deictic marker *eto*, for pointing to more distant objects; these too are presentation formulas, and figure into my analysis. Finally, I will direct some comments to another expression that is *not* a presentation formula, but that makes an equally direct appeal to the listener: this is the expression *a da vidiš*, which can be

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[2] For detailed information on Bajgorić, see Foley 2004:22-36.

[3] Throughout this paper I refer to texts by the number assigned to them in the archives of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Numbers prefixed with "PN" (for "Parry Number") indicate texts collected by Milman Parry, while those prefixed with "LN" (for "Lord Number") indicate texts collected by Albert Lord. The Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature is housed in Room C of Widener Library at Harvard University. In my transcriptions of Parry Collection texts, I avoid the use of punctuation, following the practice of Parry's assistant Nikola Vujnović. In the traditional medium of South Slavic epic, each verse normally constitutes a syntactic unit, so that punctuation becomes largely unnecessary for construing the meaning.

[4] In translating passages from PN 6699, I have made use of Foley 2004.

[5] For an introduction to the "poetics of deixis" in the context of ancient Greek epic tradition, see Bakker 2005:71-91.

roughly translated as "you should have seen" or "just look!" All of these expressions, it must be emphasized, are visual: they appeal expressly to the addressee's senses, and they place the object of reference within his or her perceptual sphere. In the context of performance, this perceptual sphere is the "mind's eye" of the listener; the formulas under consideration are the means by which the singer directs his audience's mental gaze.

I have selected for analysis seven songs that Bajgorić provided to the collecting team of Parry and Lord in June of 1935, and two songs he performed for Lord in 1950.[6] This set of nine texts provides an ideal object of analysis for two reasons. In the first place, Bajgorić's *Ženidba Bećirbega Mustajbegova* has recently been published in an excellent edition by John Miles Foley (2004), and the recording, with an electronic edition, is available on the Internet.[7] Unlike the majority of the Parry Collection's singers, therefore, Bajgorić has some broader currency. More importantly, however, Bajgorić's corpus exhibits an illuminating diversity in the manner in which songs were performed and collected. It includes texts that were sung and recorded on phonograph discs, texts that were recited (that is, performed in spoken delivery and without instrumental accompaniment) and recorded, and texts that were not recorded but rather taken down by dictation. These nine texts, which total about 5,370 verses, are the following:[8]

PN 6693. *Marko Kraljević i Nina od Koštuna* (*Marko Kraljević and Nina of Koštun*). 360 lines. Dictated, June 12, 1935.

*PN 6695a. *Marko Kraljević i Nina od Koštuna* (*Marko Kraljević and Nina of Koštun*). 464 lines. Sung, June 13, 1935.

PN 6696. *Paše udaraju na Koštun* (*The Pashas Attack Koštun*). 311 lines. Sung, June 13, 1935.

*PN 6697. *Alijaga Stočević i crni arapin* (*Aliaga of Stolac and the Black Arab*). 207 lines. Sung, June 13, 1935.

PN 6699. *Ženidba Bećirbega Mustajbegova* (*The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey*). 1030 lines. Sung, June 13, 1935.

PN 6702. *Boj na Osjeku* (*The Battle of Osijek*). 1072 lines. Dictated, June 13, 1935.

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[6] I have excluded two additional songs from my analysis because they are either incomplete or unusable. These are PN 6695 and LN 84. The former is a *proba* or "test" for the recording of PN 6695a: Parry routinely had his singers perform the first few lines of a song in order to make sure his recording equipment was functioning properly. The recording of LN 84, a version of *Marko Kraljević i Nina od Koštuna* collected by Lord in 1950, was not of sufficient quality to allow either Lord or subsequent researchers to transcribe the text.

[7] At http://www.oraltradition.org/zbm.

[8] I have indicated with an asterisk (*) texts that are currently available online through the website of the Milman Parry Collection (http://chs.harvard.edu/mpc). For complete information on the texts Parry collected from Bajgorić, see Kay 1995.

PN 6703. *Halil Hrnjica izbavlja Bojičić Aliju iz tamnice od Kotara bana* (*Halil Hrnjica Rescues Bojičić Alija from the Prison of the Ban of Kotar*). 638 lines. Dictated, June 13, 1935.

*LN 81. *Boj na Osiku* (*The Battle of Osijek*). 828 lines. Recited, June 7, 1950.

*LN 83. *Alijaga Stočević i crni arapin* (*Aliaga of Stolac and the Black Arab*). 459 lines. Recited, June 7, 1950.

The diversity of collection methods (recorded song, recorded recitation, or dictation) represented by these texts is important because we are examining a feature of Bajgorić's discourse that relates directly to the circumstances of the performance. In the earliest stages of my investigation I formulated the hypothesis that, because presentation formulas explicitly involve the audience, they would be more frequent in those texts that approximated a real performance—that is, the sung as opposed to the dictated or recited texts—because in singing Bajgorić would be more aware of the performative relationship with his audience. Subsequent analysis tended to confirm this hypothesis. Figure 1 shows the frequencies of presentation formulas in Bajgorić's texts, expressed as occurrences per 1000 lines. Although there is no hard and fast rule—PN 6696 (sung) exhibits a lower frequency than two of Bajgorić's dictated texts, while LN 83 (recited) approaches the frequencies of the sung texts—nevertheless there is an observable tendency toward higher frequencies in the sung texts.[9]

Fig. 1. Frequency of Presentation Formulas
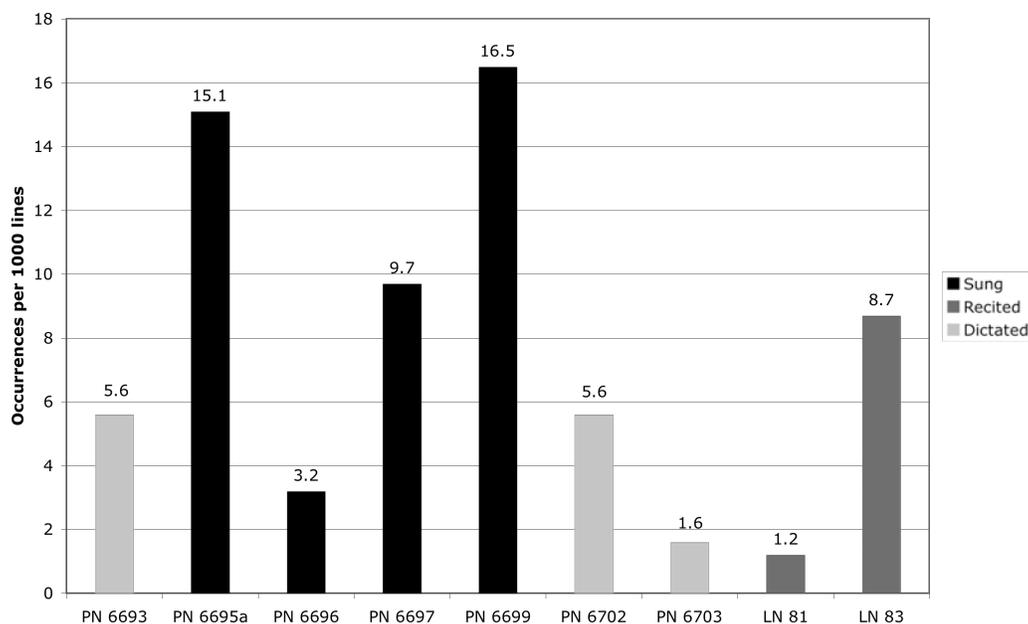
[9] The values shown in Figure 1 reflect only those presentation formulas spoken in the voice of the narrator. I have not included presentations uttered by characters within the narrative, since these are not explicitly addressed to the audience. Nevertheless, at the end of my paper I will point out that even those presentation formulas embedded within the characters' speech can resonate with the performative context and thereby contribute to nuanced discursive and aesthetic effects.

The bias in the distribution of presentation formulas is what we should expect, if we suppose that the sung texts reflect something closer to the circumstances of a "normal" performance than the dictated or recited texts. It is not difficult to understand the reasons for this bias. Wallace Chafe has identified second-person references such as those under consideration as symptomatic of the kind of "involvement" that generally characterizes oral discourse (1982:46). This "involvement" is naturally most apparent when contrasted with the "detachment" of written discourse, but, in a separate paper, Chafe has shown that the contrast between involved and detached language can be just as useful in distinguishing different kinds of oral discourse. Relatively more involved modes of speech—those that feature a high degree of interaction between speaker and hearer—are characterized by the presence of devices for "ongoing monitoring and feedback," relatively detached modes by their absence (1981:141-42). Presentation formulas and the attention-getting *a da vidiš* serve precisely this monitoring function: they are things "the speaker may do . . . to prod the listener into noticing and acknowledging the flow of information" (1982:47). As such, they are relatively more at home in the very involved mode of communication that is sung performance.[10] Singers within this tradition are constantly monitoring the reactions of their audiences and seeking ways to capture their attention, through modulation of the sung or instrumental melody, variations in tempo, eye contact, and so forth.[11] By contrast, dictation and recitation are relatively more detached modes of performance, with dictation representing the maximal degree of detachment. Parry's method of collecting songs by dictation was to seat the singer in some quiet place with his native assistant, Nikola Vujnović. The singer would recite verses one by one, pausing to allow Vujnović to write them down. Parry's photographs show the singers rather carefully observing the movements of Vujnović's pen (see Figs. 2-4): obviously they are monitoring the production of a text, not the involvement of their interlocutors in the narrative.[12]

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[10] Luka Marjanović, editor of an important collection of Bosnian epics, noticed a comparable phenomenon among his informants. When singing their songs, they would occasionally introduce a hypermetrical *ti* (dative of the second personal pronoun, essentially a highly compressed presentation) into lines that would be delivered "normally" (that is, with ten rather than eleven syllables) in recitation (Marjanović 1898:liv). For application of many of Chafe's ideas to the oral epic tradition represented by Homeric poetry, see Bakker 1997.

[11] This is a point that was brought home to me when I attended the performance of the Albanian *lahutar* Isa Elezi in Pejë (Peć) in August, 2003. (The epic songs of the Rugova mountains belong to a tradition that is cognate with the traditions of the South Slavs. *Lahuta* is the Albanian word for the *gusle*, the instrument on which the South Slavic singers accompany themselves.) Elezi made very effective use of melody, tempo, and eye contact in involving his audience in his song. The recordings in the Milman Parry Collection provide good documentation of the singers' manipulation of the musical aspects of performance. It is important to note that one often observes a modulation of melody or change in tempo at a point in the song where one might expect to find a presentation formula.

[12] For Parry's collecting methods, see Lord 1954:7-11. These pages contain excellent reflections on the "problem" posed by the absence of an audience in dictation, a problem that Parry managed to overcome by using his recording apparatus to capture a more or less normal performance (see espec. pp. 8 and 10).
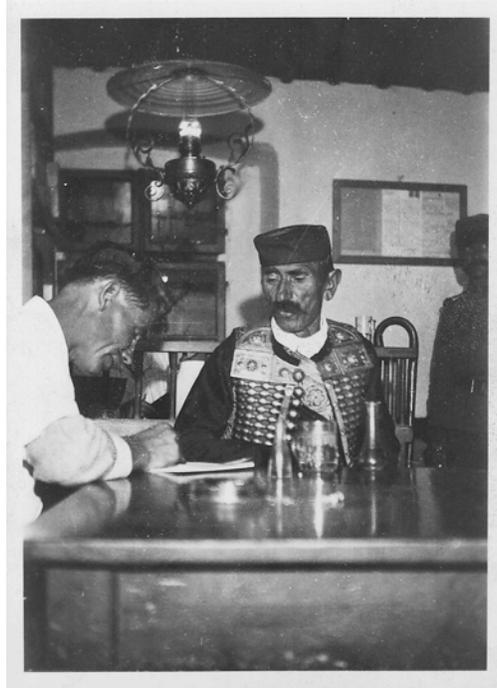
Figure 2. Mićo Savić dictating a song to Nikola Vujnović.
(Photograph courtesy of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature.)

Figure 3. Hajdar Habul dictating a song to Nikola Vujnović.
(Photograph courtesy of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature.)

Figure 4. Šćepan Prkačin dictating a song to Ilija Kutuzov.
(Photograph courtesy of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature.)

Because presentation formulas involve a deictic gesture, and therefore appeal to a particular point of view on the narrated events, they can usefully be considered in terms of a second set of theoretical concepts, in addition to Chafe's "involvement" and "detachment." In 1959, Émile Benveniste proposed a distinction between two different "plans d'énonciation," which he termed *discours* and *histoire*. *Discours* can be defined as that mode of utterance that "presupposes a speaker and an addressee, and in the former the desire to influence the latter in some manner"—there is an obvious connection here to Chafe's "involvement." In *histoire*, by contrast, the speaker disappears; events "seem to narrate themselves." That is to say, there is no discernible relation between the narrated events and any particular moment of narration, no linguistic trace of the presence of speaker or listener. *Histoire* is confined to writing, and is arguably made possible only by writing, while *discours* includes both speech and the many kinds of writing that, like speech, presuppose the interaction of a speaker and a listener, an "I" and a "you" (Benveniste 1959:70-73).

The distinction between *discours* and *histoire* is especially evident on the level of deixis. In essence, what Benveniste showed was that *discours*, linguistically anchored to the moment of utterance, proceeds from the point of view of the present shared by speaker and addressee. On the other hand, in the pure *histoire* of certain kinds of writing, the narration proceeds objectively, as it were without a narrator, and without the mediation of a point of view in the present. That is not to say, however, that such narration lacks a point of view: subsequent researchers have shown that the point of view of *histoire* is defined by the narrated events themselves (cf. Le Guern 1986, Basset 1989). That is, the notions of "here" and "now," "near" and "far," are defined by the characters and events within a narrative, not by an external narrator. Deictic cues, therefore, are oriented with respect to the moment of utterance in the case of *discours*, but with respect to some point of reference internal to the narrative in the case of *histoire*.

The consequences of Benveniste's distinction for narrative deixis have been confirmed and further developed by cognitive scientists investigating the psychological processing of narrative. Their approach, called Deictic Shift Theory, posits that, in narratives that lack an

explicit narrator, the center of the deictic field—the "origo," or point of reference with respect to which "here" and "now," "near" and "far" are defined—"is not the 'speaker' of the text but the experiencing character within the story world" (Galbraith 1995:25).[13] In other words, the deictic center, which in discourse is defined by the moment of utterance, is shifted into the world of the story in the case of written, fictional narratives.[14] Moreover, the deictic center shifts *within* the world of the story as it is progressively redefined by the unfolding events: there is not one deictic center, but as many as the writer contrives to establish.

The different deictic characteristics of performed utterances (Benveniste's *discours*) and the pure narration of (written) *histoire* are of immediate relevance to the presentation formulas we will shortly be examining. In the first place, the very appeal to the audience is enough to show that, in the case of these performed narratives, the deictic center is firmly anchored in the performance: we are dealing with a preeminent example of *discours*. Characters and events can be presented—can be made present—to the audience because "here" and "now" are features of the performance, and not of the spatial or temporal framework of the narrated events. Moreover, we will find that presentation formulas tend to occur at moments when our attention is being shifted from one character or place to another—that is, moments when, in pure *histoire*, the deictic center would shift in accordance with Deictic Shift Theory. In fact, such presentations mark an analogous shift on the level of *discours*. This is not so much a shift of the deictic center, since the center is always fixed by the moment of utterance, but a shift of the narrated world vis-à-vis that center. To use a somewhat fanciful image, it is as if the performance were a fixed lens through which the audience were invited to view a film strip depicting the events of the narrative. Presentation formulas shift that film strip, advance it, and bring a new character, place, or event into focus.[15] They reorient the participants in a performance by placing these new story elements at the center of their attention.

To broaden the use of filmic metaphors, we might describe the function of presentation formulas in terms taken from the cinema. Such formulas mark discursive shifts and articulate the movement in discourse from one point of focus to another.[16] This process of shifting and the resulting articulations can be thought of cinematographically as like the cuts of montage or as a kind of zooming in on a particular feature of a larger scene.[17]

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[13] For a complete introduction to Deictic Shift Theory, see Duchan, Bruder, and Hewitt 1995.

[14] For a comparable deictic shift in the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, see Bakker 2005:160-64.

[15] Bakker (2005:154-76) uses the proverb about Mohammed and the mountain to capture the ability of performed discourse to make narrated events present. Presentations are a matter of "the mountain coming to Mohammed."

[16] For this reason, presentation formulas and the *a da vidiš* formula can be included in the general class of "discourse markers," on which see Schiffrin 1987:31-41 and Siepmann 2005:34-45.

[17] An interesting question is whether the reverse process of "zooming out" similarly requires a conscious shift, or whether the epic idiom can accomplish this broadening of perspective simply by elaborating contiguous details. For an analysis of a scene from *Beowulf* in cinematographic terms, see Renoir 1962. I thank Anna Bonifazi for suggesting to me the cinematic metaphor.

Presentation Formulas in the Songs of Halil Bajgorić

   Bajgorić's basic presentation formula *kad evo ti* is part of a formulaic system that provides the singer with a considerable degree of flexibility in the deployment of presentations. The initial *kad* ("when") can be replaced by a variety of other monosyllabic conjunctions, including *pa* ("and"), *a* ("but"), and *dok* ("until"). The proximal deictic *evo* can be substituted by the distal deictics *eto* and *eno*, which correspond roughly to English "there" (as opposed to "here"). Finally, the second-person pronoun *ti* can be replaced by the third-person pronouns *ga* ("him"), *je* ("her"), or *ih* ("them"), in which case the pronoun refers to the object being pointed to, rather than the person being addressed. (The second person is nevertheless implied in the deictics *evo*, *eto*, or *eno*, all of which signify that the speaker is drawing the addressee's attention to something.) The complete formulaic system can be schematized as follows:

kad		evo		ti
pa		eto		ga
a		eno		je
dok				ih

Each expression within this system conveniently fills the first colon of a traditional 10-syllable line (as does the *a da vidiš* formula discussed below). The variability built into the system allows the singer to integrate presentations into a wide variety of syntactic and contextual environments. Further flexibility is provided by a related set of expressions consisting of *evo, eto*, or *eno* followed by a disyllabic noun in the genitive case, for instance (to take an example from one of the passages discussed below) *eto bega*, "there is the bey." These too are presentation formulas, since the deictic offers the object to the mental gaze of the listener. Such flexibility is an essential part of the craft of the South Slavic *guslari.*

   In Bajgorić's epic idiolect, the *kad evo ti* presentation formula and its formulaic variants serve the function, in terms of the metaphor suggested above, of a cinematographic cut. This is well illustrated by the lines cited earlier, which I now give with slightly more context (PN 6699, ll. 180-85):

skoči Djulić, izmet mu učini	Djulić jumps up, performs the service for him,	180
sidje Djulić na avliju kletu	Djulić goes down to the accursed courtyard	
pa otvori na avliji vrata	and opens the courtyard gates—	
<u>kad evo ti</u> careve gazije	<u>when—here you are!</u>—the sultan's hero	
na doratu konju kosatome	on his long-maned bay horse.	
pade momak begu u avliju	The young man arrives in the bey's courtyard.	185

In this passage, the initial focus is on Mustajbey's son Djulić as he descends from his father's tower to open the gate for Đerđelez Alija. But at line 183, Bajgorić shifts focus to Đerđelez, the hero, as he enters the courtyard. The camera has cut from one character to another. The formula

kad evo ti marks the appearance of a new figure on the scene, and directs the audience to shift focus from Djulić to Đerđelez.

We find a similar moment somewhat later in the song when Bajgorić suddenly "cuts" from Đerđelez's conversation with Mustajbey to Mustajbey's brother Mehmedaga as he arrives outside the tower (PN 6699, ll. 278-88):

tad zavika careva gazija	Then the sultan's hero begins to shout:	
ja ću, beže, u svatove poći	"I will join the wedding party, bey."	
u tom vaktu i u tom govoru	At that moment, as they are speaking—	280
<u>kad evo ti</u> brata Mehmedage	<u>when—here you are!</u>—Mustajbey's brother Mehmedaga,	
na njegovu debelu gavranu	on his stout black horse.	
pravo ide uz rosnu livadu	He goes straight up the dewy meadow,	
pravo ide pod begovu kulu	he goes straight to the bey's tower.	
u avliji konja razjašijo	He dismounted his horse in the courtyard,	285
mladji njemu konja prifatiše	a youth took his horse.	
<u>evo</u> momka na kulu bijelu	<u>Here</u> is the young man at the white tower,	
<u>evo</u> nosi hegbe sa mrkalja	<u>here</u> he carries his black mount's saddlebag	

Here the shifting function of *kad evo ti* has left its mark on the syntax, in the anacolouthon between lines 280 and 281.[18] The shift in focus involves not just a "cut" from one mental image to another, but a syntactic "cut" as well. Bajgorić uses a series of deictic markers—*evo ti* in 281 followed by the repeated *evo* in 287 and 288—to keep our attention focused on Mehmedaga until he can be introduced into the frame that is the main center of interest, the ongoing conversation about the prospective wedding of Mustajbey's son. Evidently, Bajgorić is keenly aware that he has briefly left one stage of action in order to track events unfolding on another. He uses the repeated *evo* to keep our gaze on the secondary stage until Mehmedaga can join the main group, and the two scenes coalesce into one.[19]

Line 287 exemplifies an important secondary usage of the deictic markers *evo* and *eto*. We have so far seen examples where the presentation formula "cuts" from one character to another. Variants of this formula can also serve to articulate movement through space, tracking a single character and cutting from one scene of action to another. In line 287, Mehmedaga moves only from the courtyard to the tower, but Bajgorić's songs are filled with clearer examples. Compare the following instance from his *Marko Kraljević i Nina od Koštuna* (PN 6695a, ll. 260-64):

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[18] We expect a finite verb to follow l. 280, but Bajgorić has substituted the presentation formula *kad evo ti* (which is nearly equivalent to "there appeared"). The slightly jarring effect of the syntax goes hand in hand with the sudden shift to a new object of interest.

[19] Alternatively, we might say that the repeated *evo* marks Mehmedaga's gradual progress toward the main stage of action, Mustajbey's room. That is, in accordance with the technique I discuss next, Bajgorić is using deictic markers to shift focus from one place to another. It is highly unusual for *evo* to mark such fine degrees of movement. The repeated use of the deictic is indicative of Bajgorić's acute awareness of the *telos* of Mehmedaga's journey: he is trying very deliberately to connect this new character with the main thread of the narrative.

kad to začu Kraljeviću Marko	When Kraljević Marko heard this	260
i prečita knjigu od matere	and read the letter from his mother,	
pa on dobra pritište šarina	he mounted his fine piebald horse,	
<u>pa evo ga</u> turskome Stambolu	<u>and here he is</u> at Turkish Stambol,	
pa upade caru na odaju	and he arrives at the sultan's hall	

The variant formula *pa evo ga* shifts the scene of action very suddenly from the Arabian border to Istanbul, where Marko Kraljević travels to ask the sultan for a release from military service. In this case the sudden shift across great distances emphasizes the remarkable speed with which Marko completes his journey: it is important to note that, in addition to their discursive function, presentation formulas can convey meaningful information.

The cuts Bajgorić makes by means of these presentation formulas involve varying degrees of displacement, but generally speaking they are always relatively major shifts in perspective. *Evo ti* and its variants therefore indicate a certain discontinuity in the narrative. When shifts of a less radical nature are required, Bajgorić tends to use a different formula, but one that likewise appeals to the audience's perspective: this is the *a da vidiš* formula mentioned earlier. If *evo ti* corresponds to a cinematographic cut, *a da vidiš* represents a more continuous movement, something like zooming in on a particular detail or the panning of the camera from one side to another.[20] Bajgorić tends to use this formula when he wishes to switch focus from one subject to another that is in immediate contact with the first. The switch in focus is less noticeable because the narrative itself leads in that direction. Compare, for example, the following passage, also from the *Ženidba*, which describes the most involved ritual moment in the song, the moment when the wedding party actually takes possession of the bride (PN 6699, ll. 603-8)[21]:

aj! djeveri na noge skočiše	Aj! the sponsors jumped to their feet,	
ej! Zlatiju curu prifatiše	ej! they took the maiden Zlata,	
digoše je na konja bjelana	they raised her onto the white horse.	605
<u>a da vidiš</u> ličkog Mustajbega	<u>But just look</u> at Mustajbey of the Lika:	
puno hegbe prosipaše zlata	he poured out his saddlebag full of gold,	
sve daruje prijatelje svoje	he presents gifts to all his friends . . . .[22]	

Bajgorić "pans," so to speak, from the bride to the father-in-law as he performs his part of the ritual. This switch from one character to another is less abrupt than what we have seen in

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[20] With reference to the singing of another of Parry's Stolac informants, Ibro Bašić, Foley describes the *a da vidiš* formula as the core of a "boundary line" that effects a transition to a new traditional unit ("multiform, motif, or element") within the song (1990:295-96; cf. Foley 1991:80, 1995:15n34, and 2004:211, 212, 214). My comments are intended to specify in greater detail the precise nature of this transition in Bajgorić's idiom.

[21] Cf. the comments of Foley (2004:212) on this passage, especially on l. 606.

[22] *Prijatelj* ("friend") refers in this context to a relationship established through the ritual of marriage. Similarly, Albanian *mik* (< Latin *amicus*) means both "friend" and "in-law."

previous cases, because at this moment in the ceremony the bride and father-in-law are a closely associated pair.

Later in the song we find the same formula being used to zoom in on an individual detail within a broader picture. Bajgorić shifts our attention from the army as a whole to one particular figure within the army, Buljubaša Mujo, as he asks the chief of the wedding party, Osmanbey, for directives (PN 6699, ll. 723-31):

kad su prvi na Mezevo bili	When the first Turkish troops arrived at Mezevo,	
polju pola vojska pritisnula	the army covered half the plain,	
redom vojska Baturića bana	the ranked army of Baturić ban.	725
namjestili od boja topove	They positioned their war cannon,	
u turbeta grla okrenuli	they turned their muzzles toward the tombstones.	
kad su Turci na Mezevo bili	When the rest of the Turks arrived at Mezevo,	
sastavili, redom iskupili	they assembled, ordered themselves in ranks—	
a da vidiš buljubaše Muje	but just look at Captain Mujo,	730
dje ovako Mujo progovara	where Mujo speaks thus	

A da vidiš in line 730 suddenly zooms in for a close-up view of what is going on in one particular part of the army (cf. Foley 2004:214). This is a logical, and so relatively continuous, movement; but it nevertheless marks an important point of articulation within the narrative, since it initiates a new sequence of action. Mujo's question prompts Osmanbey to isolate the bride from the rest of the army and establish a second, rearguard camp for her protection. This is an important point: the shifts in focus signaled by appeals to the audience often coincide with boundaries between distinct units of action.[23] In other words, Bajgorić's explicit demands for the audience's attention often mark the beginning of a new action or sequence of actions that is continuous internally but in a certain sense discontinuous from what precedes.[24]

The articulation of the epic's action, however, is not solely a matter of discontinuity. Actions and sequences of actions are the building blocks of the epics, so that the articulation of action becomes a means of flagging the formal structure of a song or its elements, that is, a way of signposting progress and thus continuity. Since any larger unit within a song tends to be

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[23] Cf. above, n. 20, on Foley's term "boundary line." Generally speaking, the most formulaic expressions in the South Slavic epic idiom often serve to initiate new units of theme or action. Thus the next major unit in Bajgorić's song begins with one of the most formulaic lines in his repertoire: *[a kad] svanu i ogranu sunce* (l. 745). From the singer's perspective, it is obviously advantageous to have at one's disposal ready-made formulas to serve as the "glue" between discourse units. But any adequate understanding of the performance must also view it as a communicative act, and assess the function or effect of these lines from the *audience's* point of view. From a communicative perspective, it is tempting to think of these formulaic incipits in terms of Chafe's "light subject constraint" (1994:85-92). If formulaic expressions are "lighter" in semantic content than non-formulaic ones, such expressions can serve as useful "starting points" in the sense developed by Chafe (1994:82-92).

[24] Conversely, we can observe an avoidance of presentations and *a da vidiš* formulas in passages that strive for an impression of continuous, fluid action. This is above all true of battle narratives. The complete absence of any direct appeal to the listener in the climactic battle scene of PN 6699 is a sign that Bajgorić wants to present the action of the battle as fluidly as possible, without the jarring effect of "cuts." The first "cut" after the battle—to Bećirbey (*kad evo ti bega Bećirbega*, l. 999)—actually marks the end of the fighting.

analyzable as a sequence of smaller parts, marking the individual parts can also serve to outline the larger unit they compose. In this way, the very expressions we have thus far examined in terms of discontinuity can also be used to establish the formal unity of large segments of discourse. I will cite several examples in which Bajgorić uses presentation formulas to delimit some of the most prominent formal structures in his songs.

The catalog of heroes as they arrive at Mustajbey's tower in preparation for the expedition is, for a Homerist like myself, the most epic moment in Bajgorić's corpus (PN 6699, ll. 390-405, 448-53):[25]

stade begu sila dolaziti	The bey's forces began to arrive,	390
a evo ti paše sa Budima	and—here you are!—the pasha from Budim,	
dje on vodi pet hiljada druga	where he leads five thousand comrades,	
pet hiljada druga dovodijo	five thousand comrades he brought.	
kad evo ti silna Osmanbega	When—here you are!—powerful Osmanbey,	
i on vodi dvanaes' hiljada	and he leads twelve thousand.	395
kad evo ti Biščević Alije	When—here you are!—Biščević Alija,	
i on vodi stotinu momaka	and he leads one hundred young men.	
kad evo ti buljubaše Muje	When—here you are!—Buljubaša Mujo,	
i on vodi pe' stotin' momaka	and he leads five hundred young men.	
dok evo ti Topalova sina	Then—here you are!—Topalo's son,	400
i on vodi pet hiljada druga	and he leads five thousand comrades.	
kad se sila iskupila bila	When the forces had gathered	
pa stadoše svate razbrajati	and they began to count the wedding party,	
koliko je kićeni' svatova	how many were the fine wedding guests,	
sve je društvo, samo Tale nema	the whole company is there, only Tale is lacking	405
sve gotovo samo Tale nema	Everything is ready, only Tale is lacking.	
dok evo ti budaline Tale	Then—here you are!—the great fool Tale	
na kulašu konju kosatome	on his long-maned dun horse.	450
a uzd'o ga šarenom uzicom	He reined it in with a motley string,	
a na njemu pa ni sedla nema	and on it there wasn't even a saddle,	
vet' gunjinu samu prebačijo	but he threw on only a coarse blanket	

Each individual entry is marked by a presentation, including the emphatically postponed entry for Tale, which is incorporated into the larger structure by means of the presentation formula. By thus marking each entry, Bajgorić establishes the catalog as a unified segment of discourse with a well-articulated structure. This structure is in fact an important element of the song's architecture: it provides the framework for an earlier scene, in which Mustajbey writes to each of

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[25] I am thinking of course of the great Catalog of Ships in the *Iliad,* Book 2. It is interesting to observe that the entry for Achilles' Myrmidons is displaced from Book 2 and postponed until Book 16 (ll. 168-97), in a manner perhaps comparable to the way Bajgorić postpones the entry for the hero Tale.

these heroes in the same order, and it is reproduced in an attenuated form on at least one other occasion.[26]

In Bajgorić's song *Boj na Osjeku* we find a similar structuring device, but this time making use of the presentation formula in its spatial aspect. The progress of the hero, Osmanbey, is marked by presentations as he stops at each of several locations (PN 6702, ll. 605-8, 618-19, 631-34):

<u>pa eto ga</u> na tabiju prvu	<u>And there he is</u> at the first bastion	605
đe mu taraf leže Osičana	where his division of Osijek men is stationed:	
ima njiha dvanaes hiljada	there are twelve thousand of them,	
dobri trista od rata topova	three hundred fine war cannon	
<u>eto bega</u> na drugu tabiju	<u>There is the bey</u> at the second bastion,	618
đe mu bjehu heratli spahije	where his division of *spahijas*[27] was	
pade beže na treću tabiju	The bey arrives at the third bastion	631
đe no bjehu Arnauti ljuti	where his fierce Albanians were—	
Arnauti kako vatra živa	Albanians like living fire,	
po broju i za dvanes hiljada	over twelve thousand in number	

Osmanbey's forces are divided into three distinct units. As the bey visits these units, his progress is marked by the phrases *pa eto ga* and *eto bega*; the omission of the presentation formula in the case of the third unit is part of the singer's strategy for emphasizing its special status (something like the postponement of Tale in the previous example). As in the catalog of PN 6699, the structure outlined by these presentations is formally important, because it determines the way in which the subsequent battle narrative unfolds.

Perhaps the most simple and at the same time most elegant example of the formally significant deployment of a presentation formula comes from Bajgorić's dictated version of *Marko Kraljević i Nina od Koštuna*. There is only one occurrence of the *evo ti* formula in this song (PN 6693, ll. 191-94):

sjede Marko pod žutu naranču	Marko sat beneath the yellow-green orange tree,
sjede Marko i opočinuo	Marko sat and rested.
<u>kad evo ti</u> careva telala	<u>When—here you are!</u>—the imperial messenger,
traži telal Kraljevića Marka	the messenger seeks out Kraljević Marko.

The presentation formula marks the arrival of a very minor character—an imperial messenger—but this is an event of considerable formal importance. This messenger, who summons Marko back to his home in Prilep, which has been ransacked by Nina of Koštun, is the exact counterpart

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[26] Sequence of letters: ll. 306 ff. Cf. also the sequence of heroes who pass the disguised Baturić ban at ll. 625 ff.

[27] A *spahija* or spahi was a member of an elite Ottoman cavalry corps.

of the initial messenger who had summoned Marko to the Arabian frontier, and thereby exposed Marko's home to danger. These two messengers not only articulate the action of the story; they also demarcate its two thematic poles of foreign and domestic. It may seem incongruous that our attention is so forcefully drawn to a minor character who immediately disappears from the narrative—that is, until we realize that this is the very moment when the structure of the song emerges clearly into view. The presentation formula marks the appearance of this structure as much as anything else.

Beyond Idiolect

I hope to have demonstrated that, in the epic idiolect of Halil Bajgorić, direct appeals to the listener serve a number of important discursive functions. They provide a signal to the audience that the singer is switching to a new point of focus, and so assist listeners in tracking the unfolding action. When used to delimit actions that belong to a larger series, they also help to establish the outlines of this larger discursive unit. My last example will show that these techniques are in fact not confined to the idiolect of this one particular singer. Moreover, and more importantly, it will show that the poetics of deixis—which is in essence the manipulation of distance in space and time from the performance—is not restricted to the narrator's voice, but can also involve the internal, quoted speech of the characters. Both voices can combine to produce sophisticated aesthetic effects.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Andro Murat, a young seminarian from the island of Šipan (near Dubrovnik), collected from his mother Kate the song of "Ivo Senjanin's Misfortune," *Huda sreća Iva Senjanina* (printed as no. 10 in Perić-Polonijo 1996:116-19). After an initial dialogue between Ivo and a girl of Senj, Murat's epic-flavored ballad relates the defeat of Ivo's army—and the death of his son Tadija—in a series of three messenger speeches. The arrival of each messenger is marked by the same presentation formula with which we are now very familiar. I reproduce here a generous portion of the text, as printed in Perić-Polonijo's edition (ll. 47-84, 98-116):

Još su oni u riječi tako,	They are still speaking thus	
kad evo ti Đure Senjanine.	when—here you are!—Đuro Senjanin.	
Jedva igra pod sobom dorina	Scarcely does his bay horse pace beneath him,	
niz konja je glavu prevjesio	he has hung his head along the horse's back,	50
vas u crnoj krvi ogreznuo.	he has been entirely drenched in dark blood.	
Govori mu Senjanine Ivo:	Ivo Senjanin speaks to him:	
"O moj pobre Senjanine Đuro,	"O my brother-in-God Đuro Senjanin,	
to ko te je tako izranio?	who has wounded you so?	
Nijednoga dobra ne vidio.	May he not see a single good.	55
Đe je, Đuro, silna vojska moja	Where, Đuro, is my powerful army	
i Tadija, drago d'jete moje?"	and Tadija, my dear child?"	
Njemu Đuro jedva progovara:	Đuro scarcely answers him:	
"Prođi me se, pobratime Ivo.	"Leave me be, brother-in-God Ivo.	

A moj pobre, kazat' ti ne mogu.	Ah my brother-in-God, I cannot tell you.	60
Na meni je trides' ljut'jeh rana	I bear thirty fierce wounds,	
na konju mi trides' i četiri.	my horse bears thirty-four.	
Pobro dragi, n'jesu rane male	Dear brother in God, these aren't small wounds,	
neg' je svaka od pedi junaške.	but each one is a heroic foot in length.	
Za mnom ide Senjanine Vide	Vido Senjanin is coming behind me,	65
on će tebi kazati pravednu;	he will tell you rightly;	
mene pusti, dragi pobratime,	let me go, dear brother-in-God,	
pusti mene b'jelu dvoru momu.	let me go to my white manor.	
Da bi meni Bog i sreća dala	May God and fortune grant	
da živ Đure b'jelu dvoru dođem	that I, Đuro, may come to my white manor alive,	70
da bi moje ja puštio duše	that I may give up my spirit	
na kriocu drage ljubi moje."	in the arms of my dear love."	
S tez'jem Đure prođe naprijeda	With difficulty Đuro passes on,	
<u>kad evo ti</u> Senjanina Vida.	<u>when—here you are!</u>—Vido Senjanin.	
Nosi jadan Senjanine Vide	He is carrying, wretched Vido Senjanin,	75
nosi jadan desnu u lijevoj	he is carrying, wretched one, his right arm in his left,	
pod njim doro na tri noge skače.	his bay horse hops on three legs beneath him.	
Govori mu Senjanine Ivo:	Ivo Senjanin speaks to him:	
"Pobratime Senjanine Vido,	"Brother-in-God Vido Senjanin,	
to ko te je tako izranio?	who has wounded you so?	80
Nijednoga dobra ne vidio.	May he not see a single good.	
Đe je, Vide, silna vojska moja	Where, Vido, is my powerful army	
i Tadija, drago d'jete moje?"	and Tadija, my dear child?"	
Njemu Vide jedva progovara	Vido scarcely answers him	
S tez'jem Vido pođe naprijeda	With difficulty Vido passes on,	
<u>kad evo ti</u> Mata Senjanina	<u>when—here you are!</u>—Mato Senjanin,	
dobro igra pod sobom dorina,	his bay horse prances well beneath him,	100
n'jesu Mata rane dopadnule.	no wounds have fallen upon Mato.	
Govori mu Senjanine Ivo:	Ivo Senjanin speaks to him:	
"Dobro doš'o, Senjanine Mato.	"Welcome, Mato Senjanin!	
Đe je, Mato, silna vojska moja	Where, Mato, is my powerful army	
i Tadija, drago d'jete moje?"	and Tadija, my dear child?"	105
Govori mu Senjanine Mato:	Mato Senjanin answers him:	
"Pobre dragi, od Senja Ivane,	"Dear brother-in-God, Ivan of Senj,	
rad' bi tebi bolje kazat' glase	gladly would I tell you better news,	
ma ne mogu neg' kako je pravo	but I cannot but speak the truth;	
a ti primi ove za najbolje.	take it as best you can.	110
Sva je tvoja vojska izginula	Your army has perished entirely,	
i Tadija, drago d'jete tvoje:	and Tadija, your dear child:	
<u>eno ti ga</u> u gori zelenoj	<u>there you are!</u>—on the green mountain	
mrtav Tade drumu pokraj puta.	is Tadija, dead beside the highway.	

| Na njemu je vrane i gavrane | On him are crows and ravens, | 115 |
| piju crne oči Tadijine. | they are drinking Tadija's dark eyes. | |

As in the case of Bajgorić's songs, the presentation formula serves a dual purpose: it "cuts" cinematographically from one subject of focus to another, and it articulates the song according to its three primary structural components, the three messenger speeches. The repeated presentations also place at the center of the audience's attention the pathos-filled spectacle of the wounded, dying soldier.

The emotional power of the final revelation of Tadija's fate depends on the interaction of the last messenger's words with the pattern of presentation established by the narrator's voice. At line 113 the last messenger "points" to Tadija's corpse using a variant of the presentation formula that employs not just the distal deictic marker *eto*, but *eno*, which refers to something that is actually absent, inaccessible to the participants in the moment of utterance. The pathos of these words lies in the distance that separates Ivo from his son, who is now lost to him forever. And we, too, as members of the audience, can feel the depth of that pathos by virtue of the deictic field established by the narrator's presentations. By means of the repeated *evo ti*, the narrator has repeatedly brought before our eyes the survivors of the battle. But now the survivors of the battle can only gesture toward Tadija as someone unpresentable, permanently lost even to the characters within the narrative, let alone to the audience as spectators of that narrative. Moreover, we must always keep in mind that, in performance, the words of the characters are pronounced by the voice of the performer, and so in a sense speak as much to us, as audience members, as to their intended addressees within the song. Thus, when the performer quotes the words of the messenger, we cannot help but feel the distance encoded by *eno* just as much as Ivo. If Tadija is now unbearably distant from Ivo, he is equally distant from us and the time and place of performance. The artful evocation of this distance makes our sense of Ivo's loss all the more vivid and immediate.[28]

Harvard University

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