ISSN 2638-9754

Bulgarian Studies

Volume 2

2018

Published by the Bulgarian Studies Association

Bulgarian *Studies*

Volume 2

2018

Published by the Bulgarian Studies Association

Bulgarian Studies
Volume 2
2018

Published by the Bulgarian Studies Association
Washington, DC

ISSN 2638-9754

Contents

Volume 2
2018

BULGARIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

Mariya Bobina, University of Iowa[1]

Introduction

During its Post-Communist history, Bulgaria has been moving towards democracy and a free market economy. The country submitted the official application for membership in the European Community in 1995, and, after the implementation of reforms, was admitted to the EU in 2007, integrating its trade, investment, social and political relations with the EU members. Having minimized economic obstacles for goods and investment flows, the country still faces multiple barriers for productive collaboration with other EU countries. These barriers stem from differences not only at the level of economic development but also from distinctive cultural divides that separate Bulgaria from other European countries.

Understanding cultural *similarities* with other EU members helps strengthen collaboration efforts, while acknowledging *differences* helps address "frictions". Hence, a cross-cultural analysis of Bulgaria within the European Union's cultural space has both theoretical and practical applications.

This research defines Bulgaria's cultural profile relative to other EU countries' profiles. Focusing on Bulgaria in cross-cultural research, the article provides arguments in support of the cultural profile methodology and its relevance to the Bulgarian case. It places this profile into a broader comparative framework based on the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) cross-cultural research (House et al. 2004) and provides empirical evidence that differentiates between EU countries that are more culturally similar to Bulgaria and EU countries with greater cultural differences. The article concludes with theoretical implications and policy recommendations.

Bulgarian Culture in Social Research

The country's population (est. 7.05 million in 2018) is culturally homogenous, as over 85% of its citizens declare themselves to be Bulgarians. Its culture is shaped by history, language commonalities (a South Slavic language of the Indo-European family), shared beliefs (religious and political), and ethnic heritage. Minkov and Hofstede, who conducted an analysis of European regions clustered on measures of values, confirmed that 75 percent of Bulgaria's regions form homogenous and clearly delineated clusters with the remaining leaning towards other diverse East European regions (2014). Bulgaria has few distinctive subcultures that may blend with the other countries (for example, Turks and

[1] The author appreciates support from the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and the University of Chicago's Center for East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies in this research.

Roma[2]); however, those are in relative minority and do not change the dominant Bulgarian ethnicity (Minkov and Hofstede 2012). Comprehensive empirical research on Bulgarian societal culture and its impact on the country's organizational practices, as well as positioning this culture in a cross-cultural space, has been limited due to restrictions to the access of empirical data from broad groups of respondents in the previously Communist-controlled society, delayed imports of Western organizational know-how, as well as traditional suspicion towards surveys and behavioral research in a conformist Bulgarian environment. Bulgaria was not included in the classical cross-cultural studies by Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars (1998), Schwartz (1992) or GLOBE research (House et al. 2004) and only recently has the World Values Survey and European Social Survey added data on Bulgaria to their databases.

Davidkov (2004) summarized the results of empirical studies of Bulgarian culture conducted by Bulgarian researchers. His research displayed a diverse methodological base on cultural studies of Bulgaria and explained that some scholars such as Todorov, Chadarova, Kabakchieva developed their original methodology while other researchers acquired either Hofstede's (1980) methodology (Kolarova, Minkovski, Vedur), or Trompenaars' (1998) methodology (Ivanova, Duraknev, Marinov, Katrandzhiev, Stoianova), or a combination of both (Gerganov, Silgiszhan, Genopov).

Most findings assessed Bulgarian societal culture alongside cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980) that currently dominate cross-cultural research. The profile emphasized behavioral patterns such as strong uncertainty avoidance, high power distance, and moderate individualism. The latter observations were supported by Karabel'ova's results of the 2010 survey that Bulgarian culture has "dominant individualistic" societal attributes (2011, 295). These results, however, deviated from Minkov's study that revealed lower individualism in Bulgarian organizations (2002). Karabel'ova's survey also confirmed power distance attributes "oriented rather towards the maintenance of social inequality with dominant strict control and directive style of management" (2011, 293) but found "low tolerance of uncertainty and high level of stress" that require consistent rules and legal framework in a society (2011, 301). Davidkov's comparison of the results of the surveys conducted in 2001 and 2008 also confirmed distinctions of Bulgarian culture such as high power distance and moderate gender egalitarianism along with a shift towards higher tolerance of uncertainty (2009). Overall, Bulgarian culture-focused studies present a distinctive aggregate profile of society, albeit with visible deviations of results in selected dimensions.

The comparative stream of cross-cultural studies responded to the analysis of the transfer of Western organizational and management know-how to Bulgaria that accompanied the inflow of multinational companies into the country's economy. These selected studies focused on the differences between Bulgarian and European partners in prevailing norms, values, and practices. For example, Michailova and Hollishead, (2009) in their analysis of Western assistance to Post-Communist Bulgaria, emphasized different levels of acceptance of innovations by different age groups. Comparisons with the Netherlands and Hungary on work motivation displayed Bulgarians' reduced

[2] With 8.8% in Bulgaria's population, Turks constitute the largest Turkish minority in the EU by percentage of total population, and Roma account for 4.9%.

responsiveness, downplaying feedback, and viewing extrinsic factors as sources of commitment (Roe et al. 2000). Comparisons with Austria in functional areas (such as marketing) highlighted Bulgarians' skepticism, sensitivity to perceived manipulation, reserved responses to advertising (Petrovici et al. 2007), and comparisons to Hungary and Romania explained that Bulgarian's lower fashion consciousness and higher dress conformity especially among the older population was due to relatively lower individualism and modest standards of living (Manrai et al. 2001).

While multiple studies have been conducted to reveal and analyze Bulgarian cultural distinctions in language, art, or demographic traditions of research, this particular analysis follows the mainstream pattern of comparative studies of values and behaviors in a society. The article follows the methodology of the 62-society GLOBE study[3] (House et al. 2004) that aggregated previous comprehensive cross-cultural research projects (Hofstede 1980; McClelland 1985; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961; Triandis 1995). In the GLOBE study, societal cultural profiles were measured separately but consistently in terms of two manifestations of culture: modal practices ("as is") and modal values ("should be") of collectives. Cultural values and practices were measured on a 7-point response scale with respect to nine cultural dimensions[4] that displayed high within-culture and within-organization agreement and high between-culture and between-organization differentiation. Sampling from managers permitted generalizations to reflect a broader culture in which managers operated.

The focused study of Bulgarian societal culture within the European Union cultural space presented in this article incorporates data collected and reported at the earlier stages of the project (Bobina and Sabotinova 2015, 2017; Bobina et al. 2017). Consistent with the methodology and traditions of the GLOBE research, a survey of managers has been conducted in Bulgaria. The original English version of the GLOBE questionnaire has been translated into the Bulgarian language and tested with back and forth translation conducted by two different teams of native speakers. 417 middle managers of Bulgarian firms in major cities of Burgas, Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna have been accessed through several professional and business networks in 2014–2015 (30% questionnaire response rate). The average age of respondents was 41.8 years; among them, 40.8% were men and 59.2% were women. On average, respondents had been employed for 18.1 years, and reported 14.9 years of formal education. Furthermore, 42 respondents (33.6 %) had received formal training in Western management techniques and practices. Functionally, 30 respondents (24%) worked in general administration and planning; 9 (7.2%) in research, engineering, technical support or production; 15 (12%) in finance and accounting; 13 (10.4%) in human resources management; 47 (35%) in marketing, sales or purchasing; and 11 (8.8%) in after-sales services. While all respondents spoke the Bulgarian language in their organizations, other languages were spoken such as English (46 respondents or 34%), Russian (24 or 19%), German (6 or 4.8%) and French (3 or 2.4%).

[3] The author served as a Country Co-Investigator in the GLOBE research project.

[4] Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), Future Orientation (FO), Power Distance (PD), Institutional Collectivism (IC), Humane Orientation (HO), Performance Orientation (PO), Group Collectivism (GC), Gender Egalitarianism (GE), Assertiveness (AS).

Sampling from middle managers permitted the generalization of the subculture of middle managers in Bulgaria, and increased the internal validity of the study by ensuring the homogeneity of the sample. However, the design of the GLOBE project, in particular through a combination of anthropological and psychological/behavioral traditions of culture assessment, a broader range of variables that were not often considered in cross-cultural theories increased the generalizability of these findings beyond the culture of middle managers alone towards the creation of a societal cultural profile.

Hence, the results of this study may contribute to research on similarities and differences of Bulgarian societal culture in the broader context of the European Union's cultural space. The analysis of the empirical data permitted the creation of Bulgaria's societal culture profile and its comparison to the cultural profiles of 17 European Union member countries (out of 28 members) and two candidate countries (out of 5) that were included in the original GLOBE study (Appendix 1). These countries accounted for about 88% of the EU population and represented all of the major European cultural clusters: Anglo, Germanic, Nordic, East European, and Latin European (House et al. 2004, 183-186).

Bulgaria's Culture: Societal Profile

The empirical study revealed a distinctive profile of Bulgaria's societal culture in terms of typical behaviors (practices, "as is") and in terms of value orientations ("should be"). It further permitted the comparisons of these data to the EU average scores as displayed in Figure 1 and generated predictions for the impact of culture on Bulgaria's economic health and its cooperation with its EU partners.

One of the general observations of Bulgaria's cultural profile is the sharp contrast between data based on perceived behaviors and data based on values. This gap is most visible in low scores on practices ("as is") vs. high scores on values ("should be") on Future Orientation, Performance Orientation, Uncertainty Avoidance and Humane Orientation as well as in high scores on practices ("as is") vs. low scores on values ("should be") on Power Distance. These findings may be interpreted in as indicators of the deep cultural transformation that the country and its people have been experiencing in the Post-Communist era along with aspirations for substantial change in current organizational practices.

The second general observation displays deviations from the EU average scores most visibly in practices on lower Uncertainty Avoidance and Future Orientation and higher Group Collectivism and Gender Egalitarianism, and in values on lower Uncertainty Avoidance and Future Orientation and higher Group Collectivism, Gender Egalitarianism and Power Distance. These differences translate into "cultural frictions" that impact effective interactions in international trade and investment, productive negotiations, and the implementation of collaborative projects, and into demand for additional resources and skills to address those "frictions".

Since in comparative research differences between societies should be studied along with similarities, the third general observation is the compatibility of select Bulgarian scores with the EU-averaged scores in practices on Assertiveness, Performance Orientation, Humane Orientation and Institutional Collectivism, and in values on Gender Egalitarianism, Humane Orientation, Institutional Collectivism, and Power Distance.

These similarities serve as contributors to effective cross-cultural interactions and add to productive cooperation between Bulgaria and other EU countries.

The combination of differences and similarities when compared to the EU data forms the unique societal culture profile of Bulgaria. The discussion of the findings on each separate GLOBE dimension follows. Figures 2 (behavior-tied data) and 3 (values-tied data) display Bulgaria's position on each dimension compared to other EU countries that participated in the GLOBE research.

Uncertainty Avoidance is the extent to which members of the organization or society strive to avoid uncertainty by relying on social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices to alleviate the unpredictability of future events. Following the conceptualization of Uncertainty Avoidance by Cyert and March (1963), Hofstede made it one of his classical cultural dimensions (1980), and Triandis distinguished between tight and loose cultures, explaining the domination of rules and conformism in the former case (1989). At the societal level, this dimension correlates with innovation and risk-taking; and Uncertainty Avoidance practice scores positively correlate with a country's economic health data (House 2004: 631).

Bulgaria's scores on Uncertainty Avoidance display a striking distance between practices and values as perceived by the members of the society. This gap on Uncertainty Avoidance (practices 3.11 vs. values 5.52) is the most visible among all of Bulgaria's data on the GLOBE-tied dimensions of culture. When compared to average scores for the EU countries, "as is" responses are the lowest among those countries and much lower than the EU average (4.26) while "should be" score is the highest among those countries and much higher than average (4.36). These observations may be interpreted as acceptance of uncertainty by members of Bulgarian society, which experiences fundamental transformation, and a preference for order and discipline to confront chaos and ambiguities in political and economic life that stem from the transformation. In addition, people who have experienced economic burdens and hyperinflation in the 1990s were quite disoriented by politicians' broken promises, and this added to the perceived gaps between reality and societal expectations about the future.

Future Orientation is the degree to which individuals in organizations or society engage in future-oriented behaviors, such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification. It relates to the societal perception of time frames (past, present, future) and meanings of experiences in those frames (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961). In future-oriented societies, members believe that current actions influence the future, believe in strategy and planning, and look beyond the present into the future. Hofstede emphasized this dimension by changing his earlier Confucian Dynamism (Hofstede and Bond 1988) to Long-Term Orientation (2001), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) applied the Time Horizon dimension to their studies. Per GLOBE research, Future Orientation practices scores positively correlated with countries' economic health (House 2004: 315).

Bulgarian data on Future Orientation also displays contrasting differences between practices ("as is", 2.99) and values ("should be", 5.49) scores and deviations from average scores for the EU countries (3.81 and 5.26). These data reflect the transformation of Bulgarian society from the Communist past associated with long-term future orientation and a central planning system through transitional economy and continuous government reshuffling with a focus on short- and medium-term goals in creating economic and

political infrastructure, and future expectations of the perceived stability and growth within the European Union. Low behavior scores on Future Orientation explain the lack of or ambiguities in strategic vision and suspicion about promised change in the managerial corps and society at large. They present the contrast between the desire of the Bulgarian people to be certain of what the future holds and the political and economic instability that accompanied the socio-economic transition. Inconsistencies in Future Orientation create challenges when working with more future-oriented partners from the EU.

Power Distance is the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be unequally shared; it relates to society's acceptance and endorsement of authority alongside status privileges. Theoretical explanations of different types of power (legitimate, expert, referent) and the need for power and other related attributes (Stogdill 1974; Yukl 2002; McCleland 1985) were supplemented by discussions on the connections of the power factor with government and religion. The relationship between Power Distance and countries' economic health have been assessed as negative for practices and were mixed for values indicators (House 2004: 557).

While the Bulgarian scores on Power Distance display differences between practices and values scores (5.52 vs. 2.60), this gap is quite typical for GLOBE responses evidenced in average scores for the EU countries (5.11 vs. 2.61). Bulgaria's distinction is that its Power Distance practices score is slightly higher than and values score are close to the average scores. These can be interpreted as a prevailing respect for authority and the acceptance of privileges in society combined with a heritage of vertical hierarchies and a centralization of the Communist past. Being historically dominated by great powers for centuries and seeking ways to preserve ethnicity, Bulgarians have developed strong survival skills and conformist behaviors. In recent decades, with higher levels of individual and economic freedoms and a striving for compliance with pan-European values, Bulgarians seek democratic solutions in their politics and daily life and a departure from high Power Distance practices. However, visible generation gaps and still existing challenges in the political landscape make this trend difficult and somewhat uncertain.

Institutional Collectivism is the degree to which organizational and societal norms and practices encourage and reward the collective distribution of resources and collective action, and ***Group Collectivism*** is the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. These phenomena have been widely discussed in the literature (Triandis 1995; Erez/Earely 1993; Hofstede 1980; Kim et al. 1994), with a high level of agreement on the construct, but differences in the scope and the uni- vs. multi-dimensional nature of the individualism-collectivism dyad and mixed results on its impact on countries' economic health.

The Institutional Collectivism practices score for Bulgaria (3.67) is lower than the average score for the EU (4.16); however, the "should be" score (4.65) is close to the average for these countries (4.66). These data may be interpreted as the perception of insufficient institutional support for collective actions at the level of organization or society, and expectations for stronger institutional affiliation in the future. The other explanation for the lower score on Institutional Collectivism is the lack of confidence in the society about the fair redistribution of resources, which could motivate towards stronger collective actions. At the same time, Bulgarian managers displayed a visibly higher Group Collectivism practices score (5.46) compared to the average score for the EU countries

(4.85) with a similar pattern in values scores (6.03 vs. 5.59), hence displaying the broadly perceived value of the group-oriented working environment and pride of and commitment to a family or a team. Overall, Bulgarian scores on collectivism are mixed; however, the profile suggests stronger support for a more collectivist environment and interest in effective collective actions and orientations rather than a trend towards more individualistic behaviors and values. These findings attest to known contradictions of a transitional society which reflect the consequences of the suppression of individual freedom and initiative in the past, individualistic behaviors aligned with networking for survival (often exploited by criminal structures) in the recent decades, as well as appreciation for strong family ties that stem from history and religion.

Humane Orientation is the degree to which individuals in organizations or society encourage and reward individuals for being fair, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others. This factor was partially considered in cross-cultural literature (Triandis 1995; Schwartz 1992; Hofstede 1980), and was discussed in relation to political systems and social policies. The GLOBE analysis did not find significant relations between Humane Orientation and economic health indicators.

Bulgarian societal culture data displays a gap between "as is" (3.50) and "should be" (5.6) scores, however, with practices scores being slightly lower and values being slightly higher than the average for the EU countries (3.81 and 5.48). Bulgarian managers did not reveal deviations on this dimension; however, the above-mentioned gaps may explain a developing nature of a welfare and legal system, and existing unfairness, corruption, and deviations from ethical norms in political and economic life. While Humane Orientation is usually inversely related to hostilities and aggressiveness in society, modest scores support moderate positioning of the Bulgarian profile on this dimension. Bulgarian values-tied data and the gaps with practices on this dimension reflect a desire for social justice, empathy and compassion for those who are unable to cope with the new environment or have fallen victims to Ponzi schemes, lost properties, savings, or investment in risks, and uncertain economic and social transitions.

Performance Orientation is the extent to which a society encourages or rewards group members for performance involvement and excellence. Cultural indicators of Performance Orientation may include achievement (McCleland 1961; Fyans et al. 1983), personal responsibility, standards of excellence, challenge (Maehr 1974), personal success through competence (Schwartz/Bilsky 1987), as well as hard work and status based on accomplishments (Trompenaars 1993). Per GLOBE research, Performance Orientation practices scores positively correlated with countries' economic health indicators measured with indexes of economic prosperity, economic productivity, government support for prosperity, societal support for competitiveness, and world competitiveness indexes, however with varying results for values scores (House 2004: 253).

The Bulgarian behaviors score on Performance Orientation (3.62), is lower than the average GLOBE score for the EU countries (3.94), succumbing to the heritage of the Communist era when the system de-emphasized the need to exceed planned benchmarks, and enterprise managers were not rewarded for achievements beyond those targets unless approved by authorities and streamed in propaganda (such as in sports or science). This situation limited the need for and access to additional resources and the flexibility in decision-making to pursue innovation. Achievements were not necessarily supplemented

by appropriate financial stimuli but were occasionally praised symbolically or with political promotions. Bulgaria's recent transition to a market economy was somewhat associated with predatory and non-transparent privatization and the engagement of criminal capital in economic activities; thus, growth was achieved not by exceptional innovations or performance breakthroughs, but through management buyout schemes or barter schemes (often with foreign, typically Russian, business and political involvement). And while clusters of ethical excellence in Bulgarian society cannot be ignored, multiple macroeconomic results were achieved with ethical and moral violations.

Nevertheless, Bulgaria's accession to the European Union puts pressure on enhancing its economic system and competing with other European countries' businesses, hence creating an endorsement of and compliance with higher standards of economic success. The value-tied score displays Performance Orientation (6.31) above the EU average (5.94) and offers an optimistic picture for Bulgaria's vector of economic and social performance.

Gender Egalitarianism is the extent to which an organization or society minimizes gender role differences, and its components include an attitudinal domain with gender stereotypes and gender-role ideology (Beall/Sternberg 1993) and behavioral manifestation with gender discrimination and gender equality (Hendrix 1994). This dimension was partially considered in Hofstede's Masculinity-Femininity dimension (1980). The empirical data on relationship between Gender Egalitarianism and countries' economic health are mixed and typically not significant (House 2004: 368).

In medieval patriarchal Bulgaria, the division of labor by gender was visible with men dominating the labor market. However, in the socialist era, the ideology of gender equality was promoted to bring more women into the economy. Today, women are more involved in household tasks and in education, healthcare or clerical jobs, while still less in senior management and administration, and technical sciences. Women have comparable educational levels with men but lag behind in pay levels. Under Communism, Bulgarian women were engaged in multiple economic activities and family services; however, the latter were ignored in official economic statistics. Nevertheless, Bulgarian data on gender roles in society emphasize the importance of egalitarianism, with its practices score (4.25) visibly higher than the average score for the EU countries (3.56), and with its values score (4.71) slightly lower than the average score for the EU countries (4.80). The data on the perception of gender roles in Bulgaria displays one of the most important distinctions of the country's societal culture profile. It confirms the advancements in the equality of the roles of women and men and displays Bulgaria among the leading EU countries in terms of perception of egalitarian practices. At the same time, values-tied data position Bulgaria slightly lower than the EU countries' average, hence offering predictions about the potential decline of egalitarian orientations in the future. Nevertheless, the data attest to the idea that Bulgaria remains an egalitarian society and may serve as a role model for the other countries promoting gender egalitarian standards in the European Union. And considering the growing role of women in the labor force in the near future, the knowledge of trends and perceptions in this area may help Bulgarian organizations capitalize on the roles women play as economic actors, creating a unique competitive advantage.

Assertiveness is the degree to which individuals in organizations or society are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships. Though an important

aspect of societal culture, this dimension has received relatively less attention in literature. It was conceptualized on a continuum between assertive and non-assertive behaviors (Rakos 1991) and Hofstede partially considered it in the masculinity-femininity dimension (1980). While Triandis (1995) suggested that economic health is positively connected to masculinity indexes, GLOBE research did not find significant correlations between Assertiveness and economic macro indicators (House 2004: 417).

The Bulgarian score on Assertiveness was lower than the average EU countries' score on practices (3.67 vs. 4.18) but higher on values (4.40 vs. 3.61). Assertiveness behavior-tied scores deviate from the average, thus explaining avoidance on confrontational, aggressive behaviors in an environment known for collective actions with obedient behaviors and a conformist mentality. The lower level of assertiveness in society may also be interpreted as a result of strong family bonds, nepotism, and friendliness and kindness, which are deeply rooted in Orthodox traditions. Additionally, higher values-tied scores may predict a move towards a more assertive social environment in the future.

Positioning Bulgarian Societal Culture in the European Union's Cross-Cultural Space

To position Bulgarian management in the cross-cultural space of the European Union, the author follows the mainstream Kogut-Singh index methodology (1986), which permits composite assessments of cross-country cultural distance measures. The cultural distance index is computed as corrected by variance averaged squared distances on cultural dimensions and takes the following form (1):

$$A_{iB} = \sum_{k=1}^{9} \frac{(I_{kB} - I_{ki})^2}{V_k} / 9 \quad (1)$$

A_{i_B}- cultural distance between country *i* and Bulgaria;
I_{kB}–score for Bulgaria on GLOBE's *k*–th dimension (*k* = 1,… , 9);
I_{ki} –score for *i*-th EU country on GLOBE's *k*–th dimension (*k* = 1,… , 9; *i* = 1,… ,21);
V_k – variance of the *k*-th index.

The computation of cultural distance indexes for pairs of all countries included in this research resulted in the creation of a cultural distance matrix. This matrix was further transformed into "cultural friction" map with a multidimensional scaling procedure applied to a square symmetric 21x21 matrix with expectations that mapping the cross-cultural landscape provided a perceptual map that showed how different or similar country profiles were and whether they clustered or not. This model did not require linearity or multivariate normality and was found more attractive than factor analysis. It resulted in a coordinate matrix (output) whose configuration minimized a loss function (strain) and reliability was tested with a squared correlation of the input distances with scaled p-shaped distances using MDS coordinates. R-squared as the fit measure for behaviors was 0.91 and

for values was 0.99—both higher than the required 0.80 for good metric scaling. Figure 4 displays the multidimensional scaling maps for the EU countries both on practices data and on values data.

Important observations stem from these "cultural friction" maps. Firstly, Bulgaria's behavior-tied positioning is relatively marginal, and is not visibly clustered with the other countries. This explains the greater cross-cultural barriers in cross-border interactions with other European partners and the negative impact of poor cross-cultural competencies on productive collaboration. Secondly, Bulgaria's values-tied positioning displays more consistency with the mainstream values orientation of the EU countries, hence offering optimistic arguments towards expected cross-cultural efforts and future successful collaboration. Third, the combination of the two "cultural friction" maps suggests that the vector of development of Bulgarian societal culture in the context of the European Union is aimed towards greater integration into the mainstream cultural core rather than exclusion from it.

The distance scores were further sorted in ascending order in order to distinguish between countries that are culturally closer to Bulgaria (on a composite Kogut-Singh index) and those that reveal greater cultural distance. Figure 5 displays distance scores for practices-tied and values-tied Bulgaria's societal culture relative to the EU countries.

In terms of distance proximity measured with practices and values scores, Bulgaria may be associated with distinctive cultural clusters (Ronen and Shenkar 1985; House et al. 2004: 178-218).

On a *practices* perceptual map, Bulgaria was positioned on the periphery of cross-cultural space. Among the six countries closest to Bulgaria on cultural distance, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary and Greece represented the Eastern European cluster, and Portugal and Italy represented the Latin European cluster. Amongst the six countries most distant from Bulgaria were Denmark and Sweden representing the Nordic cluster, the Netherlands and Austria representing the Germanic cluster, and Albania and Ireland representing other clusters. Bulgaria's proximity to the East European cluster can be explained by a shared recent history of Communist rule and the transition that followed, as well as close linguistic (Poland and Slovenia) and religious (Greece) ties. The findings attest to Bulgaria's compatibility with this cluster's general features such as high Power Distance, Institutional and Group Collectivism, and at the same time display attachment to the cultural heritage of family and group cohesion (Bakacsi et al. 2002). The findings are also consistent with comparisons of East Central Europe (including Bulgaria) on culture-determined time behaviors, emphasizing risk aversion, harmony seeking and face saving (Fink and Meierewert 2004).

On a *values* perceptual map among the six countries with the lowest values-tied cultural distance from Bulgaria, three countries—Albania, Slovenia and Poland—represented the East European cluster, and Spain, Italy, and Portugal represented the Latin European cluster. Amongst the six countries with the greatest values-tied distance from Bulgaria were Germany, the Netherlands and Austria representing the Germanic cluster, Greece and Hungary representing the East European cluster, along with Turkey from the Middle Eastern cluster. These data support the assumption of Bulgaria's cultural greater compatibility with societies of Latin European and Eastern European clusters and differences from countries from other cultural clusters.

Overall, the data on Bulgaria's cultural compatibility with Latin European and Eastern European clusters not only support the assumptions about historic roots and ties in the region but also attest to greater cross-border opportunities in collaborating with those countries.

Conclusions

The empirical study of Bulgaria's societal culture based on the survey of a management population created a distinctive profile along behavior and anthropological traditions of social scholarly literature. It revealed distinctions of behavior-tied and values-tied attributes of Bulgaria that stem from history, religion, and language, as well as from societal, political, and economic developments. Placed in the broader context of multi-country comparative and cross-cultural research, this study positioned Bulgaria in the European Union's cross-cultural space.

The Bulgarian *behavior-tied* cultural profile is relatively high on Collectivism, Power Distance, and Gender Egalitarianism, and relatively low on Performance and Future Orientation, with extremely low scores on Uncertainty Avoidance. Low Performance Orientation stems from the previous centrally planned system with a low individual initiative and limited achievement-oriented deviations from plans. While lower Uncertainty Avoidance scores may respond to a search for entrepreneurship and innovation, low Future Orientation limits those initiatives to short-term moves rather than long-term endeavors, with a focus on survival in a turbulent economic environment. Lower scores in Humane Orientation and Future Orientation may explain a lack of attention to the effective development of people in organizations, and high Power Distance scores support the existing bureaucracy and the search for tough moves in restructuring businesses and industries.

The Bulgarian *values-tied* cultural profile provides a promising picture with an emphasis on future-oriented strategic development, and a search for a humanistic and democratic-value system. The scores on Performance Orientation and Future Orientation display expectations of effective market-driven achievements aligned with a commitment to long-term growth vision, and higher scores on Uncertainty Orientation support a search for a more disciplined socio-economic landscape. Scores on Collectivism lean towards stronger collective actions rather than a drift towards individualism.

These findings attest to Bulgaria's transition towards free-market behaviors with an emphasis on performance and innovation, a striving for stability, discipline, reliance on collective actions, and the search for values-tied compatibility with other countries. It is also clear that this profile cannot be understood without a deep knowledge of the history and culture of Bulgarian society.

The configuration of Bulgaria's cultural profile shapes organizational practices, the perception of effective leadership, and serves in some cases as a contributor to or, in other cases as impediment to, effective cross-border business activities. The study revealed two important patterns for Bulgaria's societal culture when elevating the research to the level of European Union countries. Firstly, it distinguished between EU countries on a composite "cultural friction" scale that are closer to Bulgaria from countries that are more distant. The closeness may contribute to productive relations and effective cross-border collaboration,

while the distance may force parties to seek additional competencies, resources, and tools to manage cross-cultural conflicts. Second, the study highlighted similarities and differences on a dimension-by-dimension basis, offering more details for the cross-cultural analysis of Bulgaria in the EU cross-cultural space. Overall, the analysis confirmed Bulgaria's cultural proximity to countries of East European and Latin European clusters in practices and substantial behavior-tied distance from countries of the Germanic, Nordic, and Middle Eastern clusters. It also supported Bulgaria's values-tied compatibility with the Latin Europe and Eastern European clusters.

This research has both theoretical value and practical implications. It applied the cross-cultural research pattern to Bulgaria, a country that has long been on a periphery of scholarly attention, and addressed culture analysis in the broader context of multiple countries of the European Union. These data can be further applied to complex economic models that explore culture's effects in international trade or foreign direct investment. Hence, the study contributed to a deeper understanding of a country's societal culture and, in broader terms, added to the existing scholarly literature on Bulgaria, adding a cross-discipline comparative perspective for future research.

This research may assist policymakers in preparing and making decisions that consider cultural factors in cross-border relations in the EU. Cultural distance may serve as a predictor for more or less efficient interactions and in the latter case, justify the need for additional competencies and resources to overcome "cultural frictions" in dealing with EU partners.

References

Ambos,B. and Hakanson, L. "The Concept of Distance in International Management Research." *Journal of International Management,* no. 20 (2014): 1-7.

Bakacsi, G., Takos S., Karacsonyi, A. and Imrek V. "Eastern European Cluster: Traditions and Transition." *Journal of World Business*, no. 37 (2002): 69-80.

Beall, A. and Sternberg, R., eds. *The Psychology of Gender*. New York: Guilford Press, 1993.

Bobina, M. and Sabotinova, D. "Cultural Attributes of Bulgarian Management." *Economic Studies,* no. 2 (2015): 106-130 [in Bulgarian].

Bobina, M. Sabotinova, D. and Grachev, M. "Women in Bulgarian Management: Cultural Perceptions". *Journal of Business Diversity* 17, no. 3/4 (2017): 10-22.

Bobina, M. and Sabotinova, D. "Bulgarian Management in a Cross-Cultural Space." *Journal of East European Management Studies* 22, no. 1 (2017): 105-127.

Chhokar, J., Brodbeck, F. and House, R., eds. *Culture and Leadership Across the World. The GLOBE Book of In-depth Studies of 25 Societies.* Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007.

Cyert, R. and March, J. *The Behavioral Theory of the Firm.* Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute of Technology, 1963.

Davidkov, T. "Where Does Bulgaria stand?" *Papeles del Este,* no. 8 (2004): 1-22.

Davidkov, T. *Organizational Culture in Bulgaria*. Sofia: St. Klement University, 2005 [in Bulgarian].

Davidkov, T. *National and Organizational culture*. Sofia: St. Klement University, 2009 [in Bulgarian].

Erez, M. and Earley, P. *Culture, Self-identity, and Work*. NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Fink, G. and Meierwert, S. "Issues of Time in International, Intercultural Management: East and Central Europe from the Perspective of Austrian Managers." *Journal for East European Management Studies* 9, no. 1 (2004): 61-84.

Fyans, L., Salili, F., Maehr, M. and Desai, K. "A Cross-cultural Exploration into the Meaning of Achievement." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 44, no. 5 (1983): 1000-1013.

Hendrix, L. "What is Sexual Inequality? On the Definition and Range of Variation." *Cross-Cultural Research,* no. 28 (1994): 287-307.

Hofstede, G. *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980.

Hofstede, G. and Bond, M. "The Confucius Connection: from Cultural Roots to Economic Growth." *Organizational Dynamics* 16, no. 4 (1988): 4-21.

House, R., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. and Gupta, eds. *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: the GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004.

Karabel'ova, S. *Values and Cultural Practices in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Klassika i Stil, 2011 [in Bulgarian].

Kim, U., Triandis, H., Kagitcibasi C., Choi, S. and Yoon, G., eds. *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method and Application*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications,1994.

Kluckhohn, F. and Strodtbeck, F. *Variations in Value Orientation*. New York: HarperCollins, 1961.

Kogut, B. and Singh, H. "The Effect of National Culture on the Choice of Entry Mode. *Journal of International Business Studies* 19, no. 3 (1998): 411-432.

Maehr, M. "Culture and Achievement Motivation." *American Psychologist*, no. 29 (1974): 887-896.

Manrai, L., Lascu, D., Manrai, A. and Babb, H. "A Cross-cultural Comparison of Style in Eastern European Emerging Markets." *International Marketing Review* 18, no. 3 (2001): 270-285.

McClelland, D. *Human motivation*. Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1985.

Michailova, S. and Hollingshead, G. "Western Management Training in Eastern Europe: Trends and Developments over a Decade." *Human Resources Development International* 12, no. 2 (2009): 117-133.

Minkov, M. *Why We are Different? International Differences in Families, Societies, and Business*. Sofia, Klassika i stil, 2002 [in Bulgarian].

Minkov, M. and Hofstede, G. "Is National Culture a Meaningful Concept? Cultural Values Delineate Homogenous National Clusters in In-country Regions." *Cross-Cultural Research* 46, no. 2 (2012): 133-159.

Minkov, M. and Hofstede, G. "Clustering of 316 European Regions on Measures of Values: Do Europe's Countries Have National Cultures?" *Cross-Cultural Research,* 48, no. 2 (2014): 144-176.

Maehr, M. "Culture and achievement motivation". *American Psychologist*, 29, (1974) 887-896.

Petrovici, D., Marinova, S., Marinov, M. and Lee, N. "Personal Values and Perceived Social and Economic Effects of Advertising in Bulgaria and Romania." *International Marketing Review* 24, no. 5 (2007): 539-562.

Rakos, R. *Assertive Behavior: Theory, Research and Training*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Roe, R., Zinovieva, I., Dienes, E. and Ten Horn, L. "A Comparison of Work Motivation in Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Netherlands: Test of a Model." *Applied Psychology: an International Review* 49, no. 4 (2000): 658-687.

Ronen, S. and Shenkar, O. "Clustering Countries on Attitudinal Dimensions: a Review and Synthesis." *Academy of Management Review*, July (1985): 435-454.

Schwartz, S. "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theory and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries". *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, New York: Academic Press 25 (1992): 1-65.

Schwartz, S. and Bilsky, W. "Towards a Universal Psychological Structure of Human Values." *Journal of Personality and Human Psychology* 53, no. 3 (1987): 550-562.

Stogdill, R. *Handbook of Leadership: a Survey of Literature*. New York: Free Press, 1974.

Triandis, H. "The Self and Social Behavior in Different Cultural Contexts." *Psychological Review,* 96 (1989): 506-520.

Triandis H. *Individualism and Collectivism*. Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1985.

Triandis, H. *Individualism and Collectivism.* New York: Routlenge, 2018.

Trompenaars, F. *Riding the Waves of Culture*. London: Nicholas Brealey, 1993.

Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Global Business.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1998.
Yukl, G. *Leadership in Organizations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.

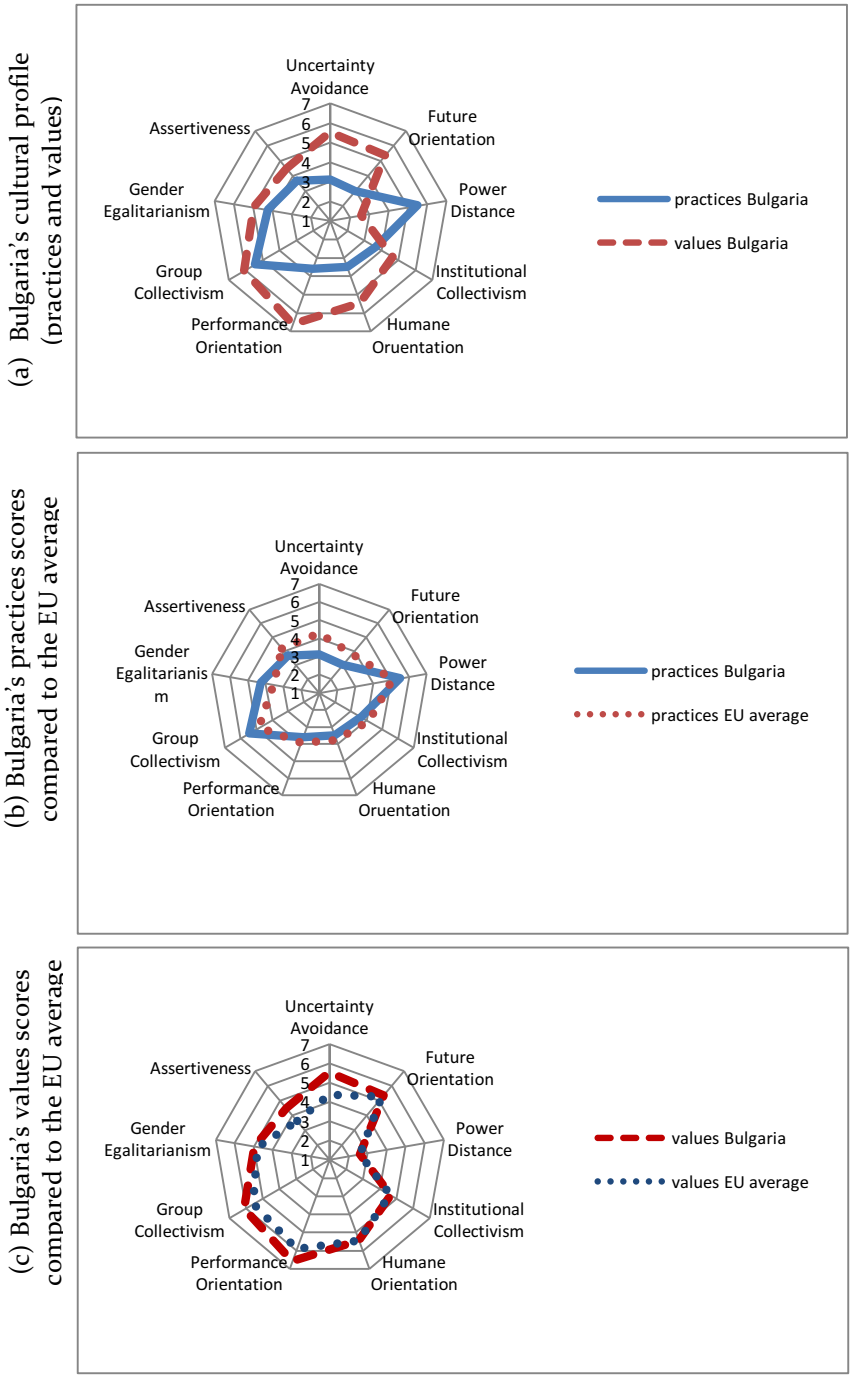


Figure 1. Bulgaria's societal culture profile and comparisons to the EU average scores

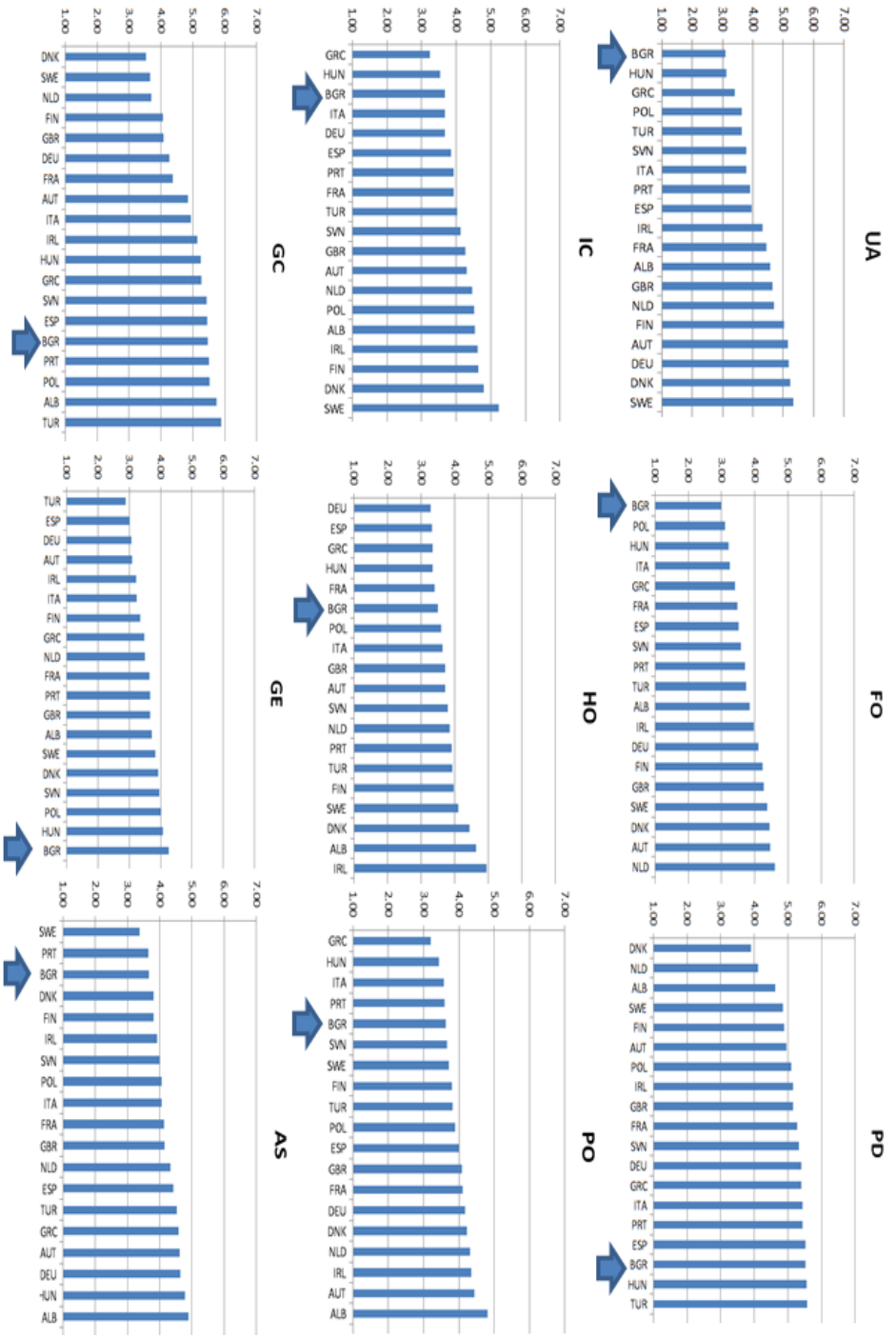


Figure 2. Behavior-tied ("as is") societal culture scores for Bulgaria relative to the EU countries

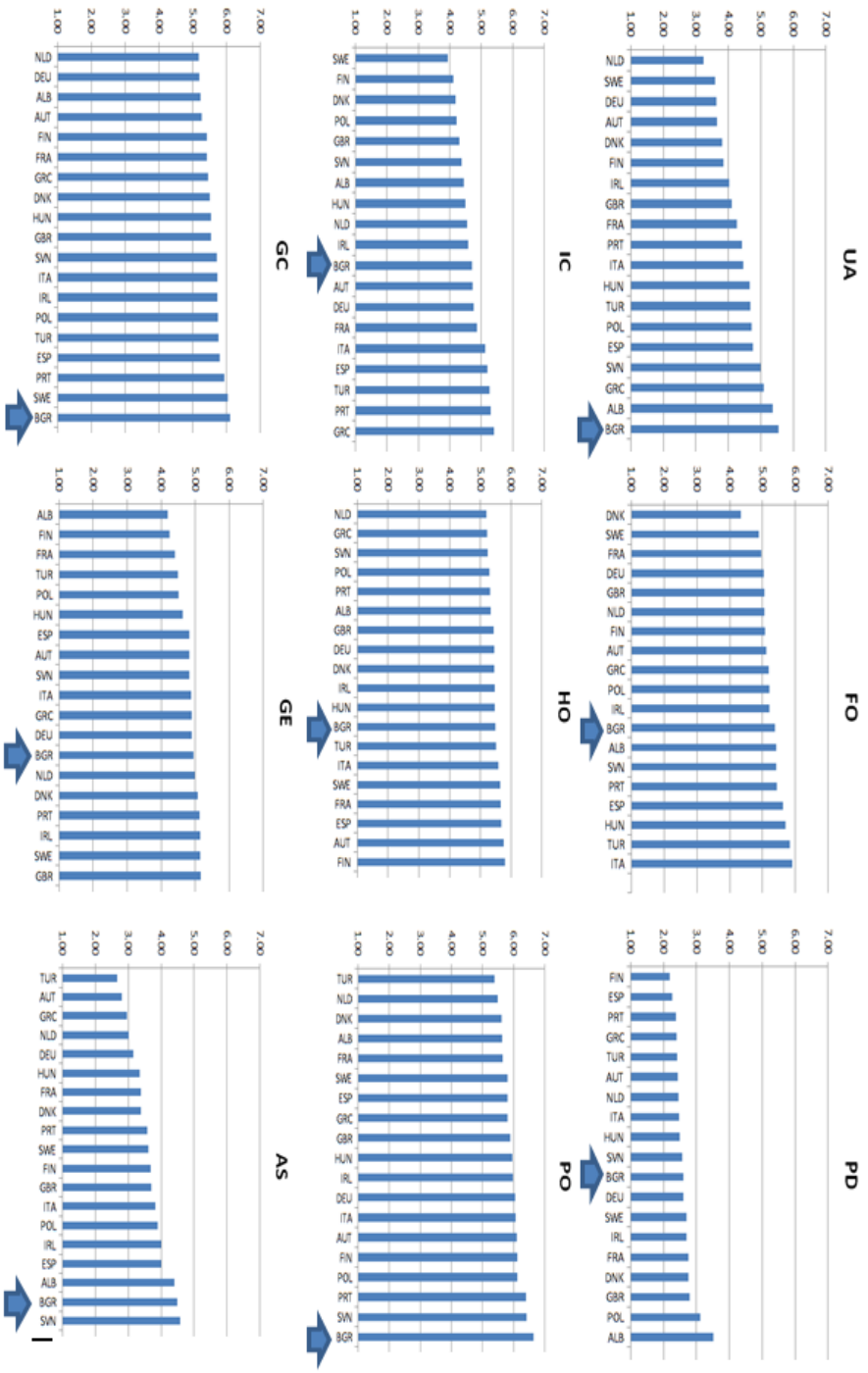
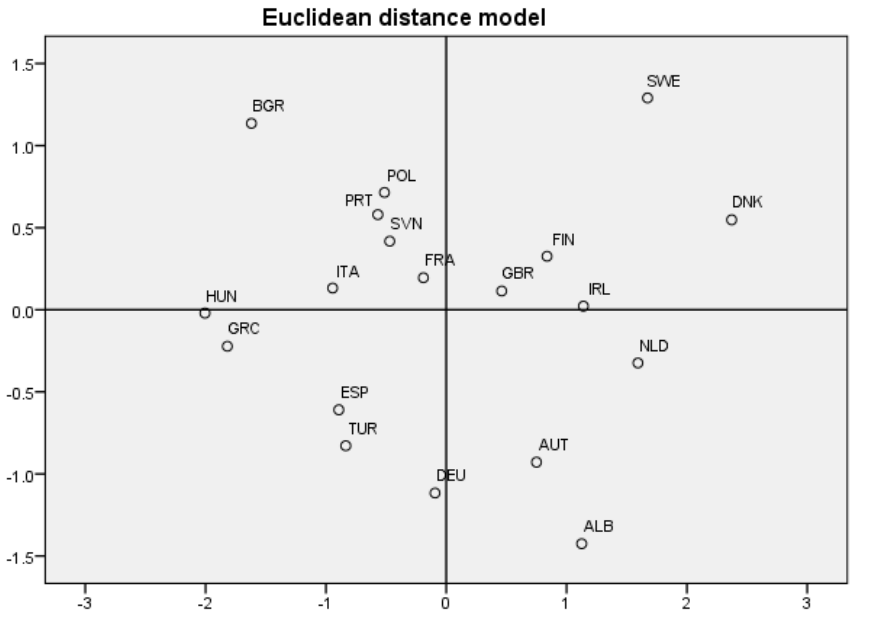
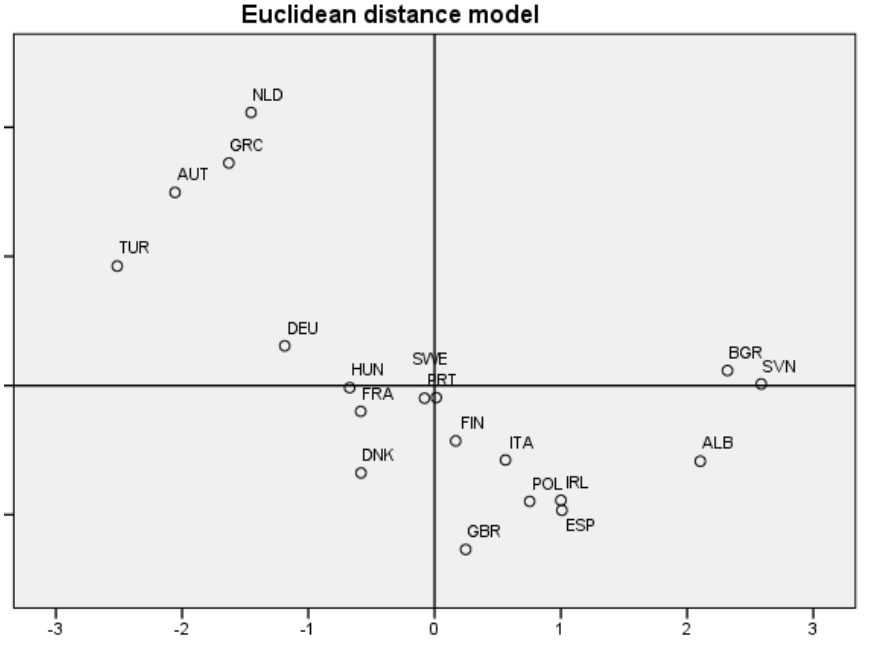


Figure 3. Values-tied ("should be") societal culture scores for Bulgaria relative to the EU countries

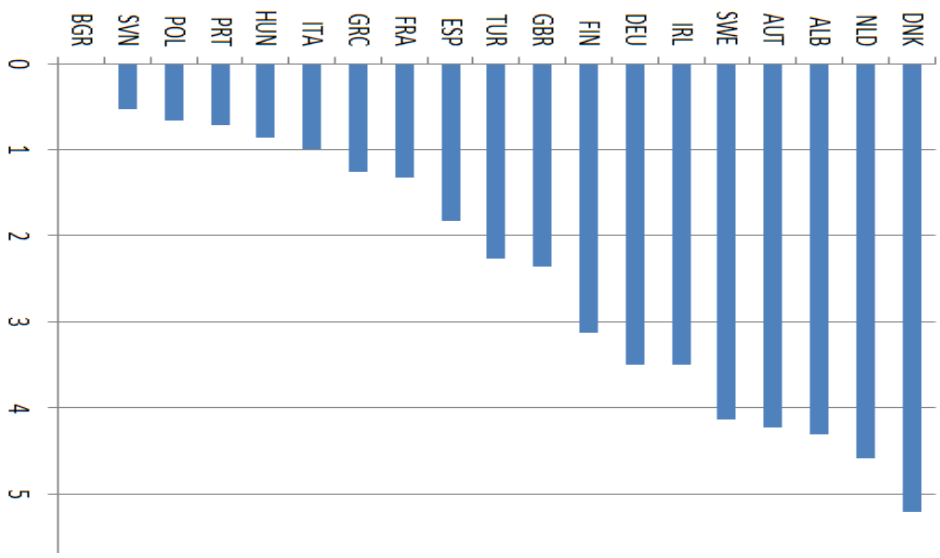


(a) Practices

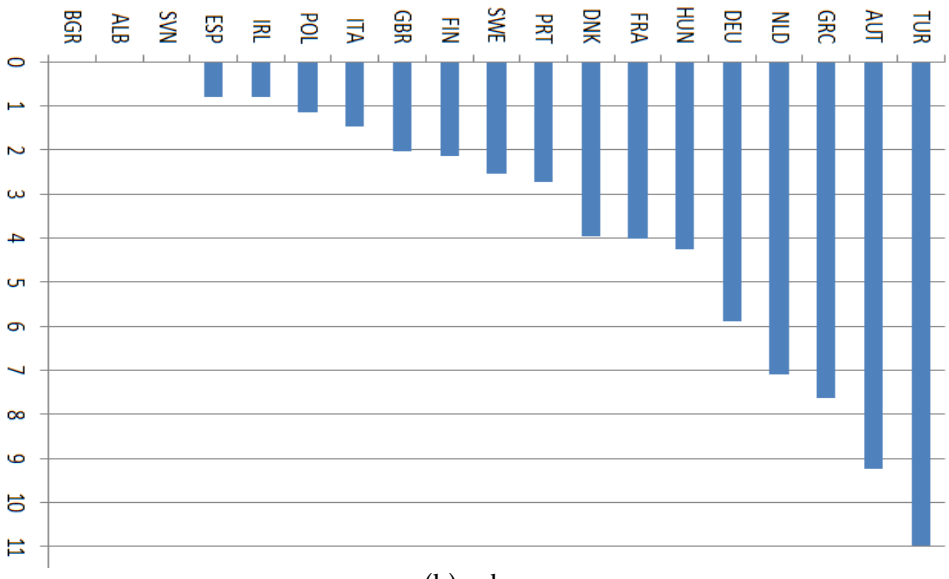


(b) Values

Figure 4. "Cultural friction" maps for the EU countries (multidimensional scaling of cultural distance matrixes)



(a) practices



(b) values

Figure 5. "Cultural friction" (composite cultural distance on practices-tied and values-tied data) between Bulgaria and the EU countries.

Appendix 1. List of the European Union countries (members and candidates) that participated in the GLOBE cross-cultural research (with ISO codes)

Albania (ALB)
Austria (AUT)
Bulgaria (BGR)*
Germany (DEU)
Denmark (DNK)
Spain (ESP)
Finland (FIN)
France (FRA)
United Kingdom (GBR)
Greece (GRC)
Hungary (HUN)
Ireland (IRL)
Italy (ITA)
Netherlands (NLD)
Poland (POL)
Portugal (PRT)
Slovenia (SVN)
Sweden (SWE)
Turkey (TUR)

Source: (House et al. 2004; * - Bobina and Sabotinova 2017)

LAUGHING AT CULTURAL DIFFERENCE: ALEKO KONSTANTINOV'S *BAY GANYO* AND ALEK POPOV'S *MISSION LONDON*

Miglena Dikova-Milanova, Ghent University

After postmodernism, and in the contemporary European cultural climate, difference and especially cultural diversity are still acknowledged and, in most cases, perceived as something that needs to be cherished, protected, and further developed.[1] In the general terms of what is seen as progressive cultural thinking, the recognition of difference is positive while discrimination against otherness is considered to be highly conservative, hence negative. This cultural and political recognition and expectance of difference is not, however, without restrictions and limitations that are exclusive of certain types of behavior, thinking and beliefs.[2] Both literature and philosophy question the commonly excepted stereotypes connected to difference and venture into the realm beneath the surface of the norms for cultural correctness. Both literature and philosophy question the lurking hypocrisy behind public attitudes when it comes to dealing with difference in general and cultural difference in particular. This text will show that the outcome of some literary investigations in particular into difference could be controversial and even purely paradoxical. Literature, I argue, much more than philosophy, ridicules both progressive and conservative perceptions of difference.

When it comes to discussing difference from a philosophical point of view, French philosopher's J-F. Lyotard's ideas on the *differend* stand out. Consequently, this article

[1] The postmodern 20th-century movement in European philosophy, music, arts and architecture is associated mainly with the shift of attitudes to the concepts of truth, knowledge and meaning. The postmodernists, already in the 1960s and late 70s, question the singularity of scientific (and any other) truth and meaning. Overall, postmodernism, and its offshoots post-structuralism and critical theory, promote the notions of incompleteness and pluralism of truth and meaning. This change from universal modern approach to multiplicity and complexity of truth and meaning had their impact on the perception of culture, politics and economics. Representative of the ideas of late postmodernism, deconstruction and post-structuralism are the works of the French philosophers and thinkers J. Derrida (*The Gift of Death*, 1992), G. Deleuze (*Difference and Repetition*, 1968) and J-F. Lyotard (*The Differend*, 1983).

[2] For example, although the concept of political multiculturalism has its many strongholds, sometimes keeping the balance between interaction and uniqueness can be difficult. Too much investment in the interculturalism can lead to loss of cultural identity, while putting the emphasis on the preservation of singular cultures can result in cultural isolation and even conflicts with the representatives of other cultural groups.

outlines and analyses three main attitudes toward difference, that of J-F. Lyotard and those of two Bulgarian literary texts: *Bay Ganyo*, written by Aleko Konstantinov in 1894, and *Mission London*, written in 2001 by Alek Popov. The aim of the article is to interpret the literary conceptualization of difference and its cultural value while using the philosophical notion of the *differend*. The irony is that the two Bulgarian texts not only (and despite the time span between their creation) go against the idea of how important the recognition and retention of cultural difference is, but also come close to "solving" one of the traditionally most daunting philosophical problems about the impossibility of reconciling universality (the stronghold of modernity) and difference (one of the most visible concepts of French postmodern philosophy).[3] It appears that the two Bulgarian texts laugh not only at cultural difference, but also indirectly mock the struggle for acknowledgment of the presence of otherness that determines the very core of concept of difference. Furthermore, is it not the case that recognition and cultivation of cultural difference could be another form of discrimination and, if so, does Lyotard's concept of the *differend* still hold its original validity?

Lyotard and the Differend

In his *The Differend*, J-F. Lyotard speaks about difference that is beyond cultural, legal, or even linguistic recognition. It seems that, according to the philosopher, the *differend* is not a characteristic of one object, situation or person; it is rather a description of a complex relationship. While describing the *differend,* Lyotard uses linguistic, juridical and philosophical terms and metaphors. Here I will outline the main parts of Lyotard's legal-like and linguistic reasoning on difference.

The Juridical Turn

[3] A good example of a systematic modern philosophy that creates and uses universally valid rational concepts is that of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Overall, German Idealism, as part of the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment, strongly believes in the universal validity of human reason's judgments and bases its concepts of morality, freedom and knowledge on the universality of reason.
In general, the logical and intellectual reconciliation of universality, i.e. of the believe that truth is universally valid for the whole of humanity, and the conviction that there is a plurality of truths and attitudes to justice, for example, is quite impossible. Despite the fact that Lyotard bases his concept of *the differend* heavily on the Kantian assumption (see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Eric Matthews, trans., Paul Guyer, ed. and trans., (Cambridge, 2002)) that within the universal reason there are domains whose functions should be kept separated, his postmodern ideas are opposed to the Kantian trust in the existence of one universal for all mankind discourse of truth, freedom and morality. The characters in the two Bulgarian texts "resolve" the tension between plurality and universality by simply exaggerating the power of universality (of one culture considered to be the best) or by denying the rights of difference (unwillingness to acknowledge and stand by one's own cultural belonging and authenticity). Both approaches are related to laughter, irony, and satire.

While describing the *differend* in juridical terms, Lyotard uses the concepts of a victim and plaintiff. The difference between the two is that while the plaintiffs have the language and legal means to prove the wrong they have suffered, the victims, as paradoxical as it sounds, are deprived of any adequate means of expressing and testifying to the crimes committed against them. Consequently, if there is no proof, there is no crime. As an example, Lyotard points at a situation in which the judge and the one responsible for the damages inflicted upon the victim are the same person(s).[4] We can define a situation as *a differend*, Lyotard continues, when one of the participating parties standing in front of a tribunal is completely deprived of the means to state their case. In such juridical situations, the official language and rules according to which the case is handled belong exclusively to one of the parties. That is to say, the victims cannot establish the reality of the wrong they have suffered within the language of the judge. Within the idiom of the judge the victim remains a plaintiff. This means, I argue, that within the language of the judge it is not possible to adequately express the non-trivial character of the wrong in question. There is no idiom, new or already existing, that signifies to the fullest, the fact of the wrong. As Lyotard puts it:

> *I would like to call a* ***differend*** *[****diffèrend****] the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim. If the addressor, the addressee and the sense of the testimony are neutralized, everything takes place as if there were no damages. A case of a differend between two parties takes place when the 'regulation' of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom.*[5]

The victim, one can conclude, is deprived of a voice. Lyotard uses the word 'silence' to describe the forced inability of the victim to speak. The victim, however, can speak with the voice of a plaintiff. The claim of a plaintiff can be heard in court and it complies with the idiom of the judge. Lyotard writes that in front of the tribunal "[*t]he one who lodges a complaint is heard, but the one who is a victim, and who is perhaps the same one, is reduced to silence*".[6] This peculiar internal division between the plaintiff and victim within one and the same individual comes to show that within one homogeneous political or cultural environment, certain crimes or certain features of somebody's way of being cannot be expressed. The silence Lyotard has in mind is not trivial in nature; it is not just a logical or polite pause in a conversation, negotiation, court litigation or in a narrative. This silence is profound and beyond repair within the framework of the conducted exchange of words and ideas. The silenced party's true character and features are made invisible, I argue, within the contextual environment of the one who speaks and is heard. This silence is a sign of suppression of the very existence of the victimized party. Here, one should understand existence not as purely physical or formal presence, but as a recognition of one's authentic state of being with the values, regulations, habits and cultural peculiarities that are an inherent part of this existence. This content-deprived existence I consider to be form of a partial non-existence.

---

[4] See Lyotard, *The Differend*, 8.
[5] Lyotard, *The Differend*, 9.
[6] Ibid., 10.

In this respect, Lyotard's concept of silence is related to his ideas on reality and what is real. Reality, Lyotard states, is not something that is objectively given and established beyond any doubt or intervention. Quite the opposite: what we consider "real" is a question of referring to something that is commonly agreed upon to be present. This agreement follows the workings of cultural, political, legal and economic institutions, the regulations and procedures of which Lyotard names "*unanimously agreed-upon*" protocols.[7] These protocols produce (effectuate) one or another form of reality. What is considered real then, one can assume, is the product of a publically agreed upon strategy. By default, if something or someone does not fall under the category of the real within certain area of human activity, they do not actually exist. Within such a strategy—cultural, political or language-like—the plaintiffs can establish and prove the reality of their claim, while the victims cannot plead for justice. To put it differently, the essence of the wrong the victims have suffered is not part of the reality established by the "*agreed-upon*" protocols.

Both Lyotard's description of the functioning of the tribunal and its idiom and his distinction between the plaintiff and victim can be applied to the notion of cultural difference. In this sense, a practical person would be more satisfied in the position as a plaintiff rather than being a victim, I argue. In the former position, one can have a fully acknowledged and calm half-existence within a host culture, while in the latter, one has yet to fight for recognition. Such peculiar non-existence, or rather half-existence, is well illustrated by the fate of many of the characters in the two Bulgarian books. The characters in question are present and, at the same time, strangely non-present within the everyday life of the European countries they visit or live in. Their true and deeply rooted tastes, attitudes and aspirations meet the resistance of the new environment abroad. Part of their old cultural habits are recognized by their hosts, while other of their typical cultural features cannot be translated into the language strategies of the hosts. As a result, the characters become partially visible and partially invisible in their new surroundings. They are seen, and not seen, for who they actually are.

This suspension of authenticity is comically taken advantage of by the clever Bulgarians in order to achieve their goals for career and financial prosperity abroad.[8] That is to say, the suspended part of the characters' cultural persona is in a position of a *differend*. That means that one part of the characters' authentic individuality is silenced and denied recognition by the foreign host culture. For the somewhat opaque logic and ethics of

[7] Ibid., 4.

[8] The strategies of hiding and avoiding their full (or authentic) identity that the characters of the two Bulgarian texts employ bear resemblance to the paradoxical figures of language and logic depicted by J-F. Lyotard in his article "On the Strength of the Weak" ("Sur la force des faibles"). There, the philosopher explores the unsuspected strength of the use of language and untraditional logic by, for example, the sophist who succeeds in turning a disadvantageous situation upside-down and winning the argument. These shocking twists of logic and masterful trickery are typical for the Bulgarian characters as well. However, the argument in Lyotard's article defies yet again universality, while the Bulgarian literary characters, I argue, tend to use the logic of universality for achieving their own goals. See "On the Strength of the Weak", in *Toward the Postmodern*, Robert Harvey and Mark S. Roberts, eds., (New York, 1999), 62-73.

laughter, however, there is a positive side to the lack of recognition and silencing. If one is treated as a victim, then one is justified in neglecting and avoiding some of the rules and regulations of the host culture. Even more, being half-present brings the possibility for detachment from cultural restraints: there is a freedom brought by the fact that one is only half-noticed. Such comical escapes from the official rules are probably possible only within certain limits. When the inflicted damages upon the victims are a question of life and death, the context changes and seriousness returns, while taking over the making of ethical choices.[9]

The Linguistic Turn

Lyotard's second track of describing the *differend* is that of linguistic analysis. At the very beginning of his book on difference, Lyotard gives the following definition:

> *… a differend [differènd] would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgement to both in order to settle their differend … would wrong (at least) one of them (and both of them if neither side admits this rule). … A wrong results from the fact that the rules of the genre of discourse by which one judges are not those of the judged genre or genres of discourse.*[10]

The connection between language and events, or language and reality, that Lyotard establishes in *The Differend* is complex and questions the very foundation of any pretences for a universal validity of principles, ideas and strategies (philosophical, cultural, political, economic, etc.). The genres of discourse, one can assume, are language-like strategies, which give the rules of how to link together heterogeneous phrase regimens. In their turn, phrase regimens offer sets of rules for the concatenation of phrases in a certain consequential order. A phrase is shaped, Lyotard uses "*constituted*," according to the guiding regulations typical for a given regimen.[11] There are different regimens of phrasing: "*reasoning, knowing, describing …* ". [12] These regimens are heterogeneous and cannot be simply translated into one another. Hence, the role of the genres of discourse, whose main aim is to concatenate heterogeneous phrase regimens. This linkage is far from being unproblematic. Each genre of discourse creates sets of possible phrases. According to Lyotard, there is a *differend* between the genres of discourse and the sets of phrases they link. Additionally, there is no one universal genre of discourse that has the overruling power to settle disputes between heterogeneous genres or phrase clusters.[13] If a genre takes on the role of a universal authority,

[9] Lyotard's opening example (*The Differend*, 3) is on the impossibility to prove as a direct witness the existence of a gas chamber. In this case, the applicability of laughter's logic should be perused with caution and respect to the victims.
[10] Lyotard, *The Differend*, xi.
[11] Ibid., xii.
[12] Ibid., xii.
[13] Ibid., xii.

this genre will create a *differend* (or *differends*): many phrases will be linked against their best strategic interests and will suffer wrong.[14] The linking of a phrase is always pending and cannot be postponed, as there is no possibility for a non-phrase situation. Even the silence is a phrase, states Lyotard. In other words, the linkage is always necessary, but its mode never is. Additionally, there is never a final phrase. The process of linking is infinite, one can assume.

The *"'good' linkage*" of the infinite line of events carries with itself an ethical responsibility as well.[15] As already mentioned, there is a *differend* between two or more heterogeneous regimens of discourse.[16] In the lack of universal rules for good linking of new events/phrases, the responsibility of thinking increases, as in each singular case the right phrase regimen needs to be selected. Each genre of discourse connects phrases formed within heterogeneous regimens according to a certain dominating goal, or towards, as Lyotard calls it, "*a single finality*".[17] The genres have different strategic aims, so they could link one and the same phrase in a distinctively divergent manner. The recognition and selection of the right link also presupposes vigilance in identifying and not overlooking the presence of a *differend*. *"To bear witness to the differend"* is the most important task of philosophical politics, states Lyotard.[18] This is why, when in the process of concatenation a victim is created, or a *differend* goes unnoticed, a re-phrasing or re-linking needs to take place. Lyotard outlines the following strategy to be applied in such cases:

> *To give the differend its due is to institute new addressees, new addressors, new significations, and new referents in order for the wrong to find its expression and for the plaintiff to cease being a victim. This requires new rules for the formation and linking of phrases.* [19]

The phrasing of the wrong then calls forward the invention of new rules for linking and new ways of phrasing—one can say, new language strategies. Overall, the cases of a *differend* require the creation of new idioms in order to correctly express each *differend's* core. Overall, Lyotard defines the *differend* as an "*unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be*".[20] One of the first signs of the presence of a *differend* in a need of phrasing, is silence, which for Lyotard is "*a negative*

[14] The requirement for the lack of one set of universal rules for (ethical, political, economic, cultural, etc.) judgements, which is presented in *The Differend*, is closely related to another concept used by Lyotard in his book *Just Gaming*, namely "paganism". In both cases—that of the *differend* and that of *paganism*—a new rule (language game, idiom, wording) has to be invented in order to accommodate the uniqueness of an event. See Jean-François Lyotard, *Just Gaming*. Wlad Godzich, trans., (Minneapolis, 1994).
[15] Ibid., xii
[16] See *The Differend*, xi.
[17] Ibid., 28.
[18] Ibid., xii.
[19] Ibid., 13.
[20] Lyotard, *The Differend*, 13.

phrase".[21] The bearing witness to the *differend*, one can say, triggers a creative act of inventing idioms "*which do not yet exist,*" pushes forward the development of language and thinking and assures that ethical awareness is still intact. [22]

While Lyotard creates strategies for re-establishing the rights and honor of the *differend* and giving it a voice, the characters of *Bai Ganyo* and *Mission London* are busy of concocting ways for blocking, or even for completely cancelling, the *differend*. The laughter in the two texts mocks difference and is distrustful of the aptitude of thinking to do its ethical duty and recognize and word each case of a *differend* as it comes along. Laughter exposes and denounces the laziness of thought and its unwillingness to recognise its shortcomings.[23] The characters in the texts are as if aware of the scandal hidden in the core of the *differend*: the culturally inherent attitude, discourse, and language genre mechanisms for exclusion, suppression and transformation of difference. The logic of laughter here could be recreated as follows: if there are cases of a *differend* to begin with, then there are problems with thinking and the workings of culture(s), so, why not cut corners and avoid both the recognition as being different, but also the eventual negative consequences of that recognition: open exclusion and discrimination. In other words, laughter questions the very core of the agility and readiness of thinking and it reveals the frailties of the human condition. The economics of laughter saves thinking a lot of effort and aims at quicker and more efficient results.

Before applying Lyotard's linguistic turn to the interpretation of cultural difference, the following should also be made clear. In general, each culture or set of cultural attitudes could be seen as analogous to a phrase regimen.[24] Consequently, the dissimilarities between cultures or cultural attitudes can be expressed by the concept of the *differend*. That is to say, cultural difference is a concept analogous to that of the *differend*. The *differend* that signifies the heterogeneity between two or more genres of discourse could be seen as a cultural sign informing about an interaction and contact between heterogeneous cultural attitudes. This means that phrases and events can be connected and given reality according to the rules of one or another cultural attitude. For example, a person who dwelled within a given culture and then travels to or settles in another culture is bound to be treated as a case of a *differend*. Namely, certain elements of his or her character, values, and skills will be lost or interpreted

[21] Ibid., 13.

[22] Lyotard writes: '*What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them.*' (*The Differend*, 13).

[23] Lyotard's ideas on the differend are seriously influenced by the thought and philosophy of German idealist Immanuel Kant. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant talks about 'lazy reason' to describe human rationality's lack of drive to reflect and criticise itself and to question the foundations of its conclusions and consequently, to re-examine its knowledge about the world we live in. On the link between 'lazy reason' and human reason's proneness to illusion see Kant's footnote in his "Critique of Pure Reason", (London: Macmillan), A 689/ B 717, 561.

[24] For me the notions of 'culture' and 'cultural attitudes' are, on one hand, synonymous. However, the notion of 'cultural attitudes' is more general and is not exclusively related to one national culture only. Additionally, there could be different cultural attitudes within one and the same national culture.

differently within the two or more cultures. Exactly those gaps or silences within the existence of the characters abroad create many comical and amusing situations.

The phrase that defines the event of Chavdar Tolomanov, one of *Mission London*'s characters upon his arrival in London could be: "I am an actor and one day will be world-famous." Bai Ganyo could partially identify his persona, far too colorful for a one-line definition, with the phrase: "I am a merchant, selling rose oil across Europe, while trying to make profit from everything and out of everyone."[25] The two phrases can be linked to (at least) two potential genres of discourse: one assertive, hence closer to the characters' own perception of themselves, the other much more damaging to the personages' self-esteem and future commercial and career plans. Both literary texts explore the second case scenario, which is much more challenging for the characters.

In both Bulgarian texts, the host cultures are depicted as superior to the much more modest home cultural establishments, attitudes, and habits. Consequently, in both texts the settings for ignoring the *differend*, so as to avoid possible hustle and becoming a victim, are in place.

Mission London: Being the Plaintiff

Chavdar Tolomanov lives in London, his vocational dreams for recognition as an actor are slipping further and further away, and he makes his living as a petty criminal. Upon his arrival in the UK's capital, Tolomanov tried to approach the London studios and get a film role, but receives only rejections. Alek Popov describes Tolomanov's efforts to place himself on the professional actors' scene in London:

> *He started assaulting all the available casting agencies in the city, as well as all the producers. The English, being, in principle, a polite people, received him warmly, although with slight surprise; they nodded, seemingly with some respect for his artistic CV, but then politely declined to employ him. The reason was simple–his Slavic accent. He made big efforts to cure that cruel disease, and had even made some progress. Unfortunately, the said progress made itself heard during the last phase of competition for the part of a malicious computer maniac of Russian descent, who penetrated the allies' security system. The producers decided that his accent was not expressive enough and gave the part to someone else, 100% English, who made it sound far more sinister. That was a heavy shock for Tolomanov.*[26]

Following the structure of the utterance and connection of phrases, suggested by Lyotard, the conflict between Tolomanov and London's film making scene, a conflict which clearly indicates the presence of *a differend*, can be recreated as an interaction between an addressor

[25] The fact that the emblematic Bulgarian literary character Bai Ganyo sells rose oil in Europe is not trivial. This commodity had become the typical trade mark of Bulgarian produce and economic well-being. On the significant social, historic and cultural role of another typical Bulgarian commodity, tobacco, see Mary C. Neuburger's *Balkan Smoke: tobacco and the making of modern Bulgaria*, (New York, 2013).

[26] Alek Popov, *Mission London*, (London, 2014), 15.

and addressee. Tolomanov, who is the addressor in the above situation, formulates and sends to the addressee the phrase: "I am a good actor, hence I am fully employable." In its turn, the addressee, i.e. the British cinema industry, understands the phrase as: "He is completely unemployable, that is to say, he is not good enough to be an actor." There is no adequate phrase regimen that can correctly and accurately word Tolomanov's message, and he does not manage to establish the authenticity of his statement. That is to say, Tolomanov's alleged phrase, although also based on the actuality of the former actor's status at home, fails to conform to the requirements of the unanimously agreed upon protocol for being an employable actor in the UK.[27] Consequently, the phrase which defines Tolomanov professionally, instead of being linked into a genre of discourse that confirms a successful employment, is redirected towards, and connected to, a genre of discourse of rejection and professional marginalisation. The existence of homogeneity between the genres of discourse that accurately words Tolomanov's former professional status in Bulgaria and the idiom of the cinema makers in England goes on unnoticed, signalling the failure of thinking in the philosophical and ethical sense of the word. And while the wrong inflicted upon the victim Tolomanov is a fact that cannot be worded and set right without a serious additional effort, the plaintiff Tolomanov is given a very good straightforward reason for his professional misfortunes in England. Ironically enough, the reason given is a bleak echo of the *differend* that Tolomanov culturally embodies abroad: the former actor's strong foreign, namely Bulgarian, accent.

At this point, Tolomanov, and the novel's plot, could have chosen to do the right thing and restore the loss of the *differend*, while wording the wrong that has been inflicted on the character. However, for Tolomanov, Lyotard's procedure for voicing the wrong—changing the addressor (Tolomanov himself, who fails to deliver the desired right message), the addressee (the film makers in the UK, who do not believe in the addressor's abilities to formulate the right message and are distrustful of the contents of the message altogether), the signification (the assumption that he is an actor, the meaning of the event that needs to be expressed and made real) and finally, the referent (the reality of the fact that Tolomanov is an actor, also in the UK)—is lengthy and quite uncertain in its outcome.[28] One could only imagine what would happen if thinking could not do its job properly and not protect Tolomanov's *differend* from disappearing altogether. In his turn, Tolomanov, who is not sufficiently shaken and offended by the refusal of the British film industry to respect his inherent difference, decides to take the safe way out and to remain in the role of a plaintiff. The plaintiff is already part of the genre of discourse of the tribunal. The only obstacle that a plaintiff needs to fix in order to fully join the culture of the judge is to remove, in one or another way, the reason for the court case. So, Chavdar Tolomanov kills his heavy Bulgarian accent. Ironically, he is punished for acting as a conformist and for choosing mimicry over the defending of the *differend*: because of losing his accent, he is refused a job. The reason

[27] Alek Popov explicitly mentions that in Bulgaria, Tolomanov was if not famous, at least popular: "*Chavdar Tolomanov was a former film actor. In the past, in the time of darkest, deepest socialism, he has played a few roles that made him famous at the local level.*" (*Mission London*, 35).

[28] For the steps that the victim has to undertake in order to voice the wrong he/she has suffered see Lyotard, *The Differend*, 13.

for the refusal is the lack of convincing and sufficient East-European accent in his, by then much improved, English pronunciation.

Overall, Tolomanov's manipulativeness, his attempt to cheat authenticity and to cut corners, his decision to neglect his own rights and to pretend to be a part of a genre of discourse he is not do not deliver the expected results. The *differend* comes back with a vengeance and Tolomanov finds himself in an increasingly difficult situation in the British capital. The failure to learn the lesson of the *differend* and to stick to one's authenticity is part of the typical behavior of many of the characters in *Mission London*. Voluntary mimicry and roleplaying become their second nature. The result of the loss of genuineness and of any reference point for creating more or less persistent identity is the characters' infinite mimicry. Battling the *differend* by disguising as someone else is a bad idea but a hilariously funny one, as the novel discloses. Some of *Mission London*'s characters, Kate, alias Katya, a young woman pretending to be a student but actually an exotic dancer, and the Bulgarian Ambassador to London are directly involved in a game of roleplaying. The desperate desire to belong to the world's cultural elite, pushed to its limits, makes the representative of the Bulgarian political high circles disguise not only their own personas, but the entire country's identity. Mrs. Pezantova, the wife of a prominent Bulgarian politician, comes to London in order to promote the new sophisticated image of Bulgaria while actually hiding and ignoring the country's urgent economic and social needs. Not surprisingly, her laborious grand-scale makeover attempts are mostly ineffective.[29]

The main reasons behind the novel's characters' excruciating and exaggerated desire to belong to their new cultural environment, and as a consequence, to ignore the calls of the *differend*, are fear and ambition.[30] Most of the characters share the common fear of having to return to their country of origin, Bulgaria. This fear is not noble in essence; it is not a fear of prosecution or of a totalitarian political regime. "Going back" equals a complete humiliation and loss of face. Popov points out with irony bordering on sarcasm that the administrative workers at the Bulgarian embassy live in constant paralyzing fear of the inevitable:

[29] Popov describes Mrs Pezantova's attitude toward the ordinary people across Europe and to the ones involved in the organization of her massive cultural promotion events abroad as follows: "*The misery of the masses at large was a good reason for the fine people from all over Europe to gather together, listen to some music, and eat some canapes. Proceeding in the light of that noble logic, she started with great élan to organise charitable events in all those European capitals which sprouted Bulgarian embassies. This was a heavy task for the mission concerned. The lady was rigorous and was not prepared to acknowledge the limited social effects of her humanitarian activity. She saw treachery, sabotage and conspiracy everywhere. The diplomats were not up to the job and did not take her work at heart; they wanted, more or less, to get the whole thing out of the way and withdraw once more into the swamp of their pitiful existence*." (*Mission London*, 27-28)

[30] I strongly believe that there is nothing wrong with the attempts to fit into new cultural or social surroundings. However, there are different ways of doing this. The manner Alek Popov's characters have chosen is not the most noble, ethical or productive one.

> *The ghost of going back! This ghost was a constant, inexorable presence around them. It sniggered maliciously in every corner and poisoned their lives with the memory of the finely scented black earth of their birthplace, from the very first to the very last day of their mandates. The subject of 'going back' was a taboo, shrouded in painful silence. To ask somebody when he thought he might make the return journey (a blatant euphemism) was considered an act of bad taste, base manners and even hostility. Nobody talked about going back, nobody dared to say it out loud for fear of catching the attention of the evil powers that that slumbered somewhere deep in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*[31]

For the diplomatic workers, the superstitious fear of the return is as strong as the fear of death. Needless to say, their compatriots, who dwell in the far less privileged realm outside the embassy, share the same strong negative emotion. For Tolomanov, to return home means to admit defeat and his own humiliating inability to be successful in the land of success and plenty—the West, in general, and England, in particular. There is no worse punishment for the former actor than having to go back with a bowed head and with his tail between his legs. In Popov's words, Tolomanov:

> *… was aware of his gradual descent, but was too afraid to go back to his country, where, he guessed, only venom and spite awaited him. His compatriots, like typical Eastern Europeans, were inclined to forgive the people who were leaving the country, but not the people who were coming back, because they tarnished the image of The West – the last hope of those desperate souls, who had inherited the debris that was the post-communist era.*[32]

The fear can explain even better the characters' shared tendency not only to neglect, but to actively silence and uproot the *differend*, as every evident link to their birthplace might justify an eventual "going back" event.

The second contributing factor to the comical and out-of-proportion cosmopolitism of the novel's characters is the wish not only to belong but to be exceedingly successful while belonging. The nearly delusional dreams of Chavdar Tolomanov and Mrs. Pezantova for fame and recognition cannot be achieved on the somewhat limiting and narrow home stage. These dreams need the scope and spaciousness of the most prestigious world podiums. Both Chavdar and Mrs. Pezantova feel cheated by fate for being born in such an insignificant place, which does not provide opportunities for world recognition. Hence, they both intend to beat the world at its own game and rise in its social ranks. Tolomanov considers his popularity back home to be rather a misfortune than an asset:

> *… this popularity (specifically popularity, not fame!) was too little for him compared to the dazzling summit of greatness, being reached by such stars as De Nero, Kevin Costner, Michael Douglas and even that bed-wetter, Brad Pitt. Chavdar, naturally, was not going to lose out to them; the problem was that some several thousand miles*

[31] Alek Popov, *Mission London*, 22.
[32] Ibid., 16.

> *away from the place where the stars were growing, cruel destiny had dumped him in an entirely different climate in which only shapeless potatoes grew. For this reason he had decided that he must act to correct this entirely unfair situation, by moving to a more favourable place. Afterwards, having been denied an American visa for no apparent reason, he found himself in London …*[33]

Devorina Pezantova's dissatisfaction with her humble origins and her insufficiently active and rewarding role of being only a Bulgarian politician's wife is described as follows:

> *She could not possibly accept the secondary role handed to her by history and hungered for her own aura as a woman of social significance. As often happens with such simple folk, lifted suddenly by some twist of fate to the very peak of the social hierarchy, her head was a murky vortex of boundless ambition and grandiose plans. Mrs. Pezantova frantically aimed to join the exclusive club of the world elite, without sparing resources – above all state resources. She dreamed of seeing herself amongst the shiny entourage of celebrities, who filled the chronicles of those fat western publications.* [34]

Alek Popov's use of "hunger" as a verb makes one associate Mrs. Pezantova's ambition with appetite, eating, swallowing and digestion.[35] The first name of the character, Devorina, from "devour," refers to an enormous appetite and to the desire to consume more and more of the world.[36] At the same time, Devorina Pezantova is devoured by ambition and eats through the already thin state budget in order to achieve her dreams for fame and glory. Metaphorically speaking, both the fear and ambition of the characters devour and annihilate the *differend*. The latter does not stand a chance when confronted with Tolomanov's and Pezantova's overwhelming and all-threatening hunger for success. They are even ready to swallow parts of themselves, their uniqueness, in order to get where their ambition

---

[33] Ibid., 35.

[34] Ibid., 27.

[35] The character of Bai Ganyo has left strong traces in Bulgarian literature throughout the decades and it is not a coincidence that there are several literary books describing the adventures of Bai Ganyo's so-called "grandchildren." This powerful feeling of continuity that carries Ganyo's unfortunate character features and his rough energy from one generations of Bulgarians to another is also present in Alek Popov's book. One of the characters that can be seen, metaphorically speaking, as a "grandchild" of Bai Ganyo, due to her inexhaustible drive to conquer and "swallow" the world, is Devorina Pezantova. On the books portraying Bai Ganyo's "grandchildren" see Nia Stefanova, "Vnucite na Bai Ganyo," http://liternet.bg/publish30/nia-stefanova/vnucite.htm.

[36] In its turn, the family name of Pezantova is directly connected to her personal qualities and behaviour. She is a peasant, a snob, so her surname is "Pezantova." The English "Pezantova" is a translation of the Bulgarian word for peasant, '*selianin*.' Consequently, in the Bulgarian text the character's surname is "Selianova." In the original Bulgarian version of the text, Alek Popov uses the same name "Devorina." See Alek Popov, "*Misia London,*" (Sofia: Izdatelstvo "Zvezdan", 2001).

commands. The characters eat through cultural differences, multiplicity and the *differend* alike so as to make and keep the world univocal so that their potential success is absolute and cannot be questioned in any alternative worlds. For some of *Mission London*'s personages, ambition is aligned with or reduced to the simple yet powerful drive to survive. This appetite for life, this need to keep on going no matter what, could be another explanation for the characters' laughter-provoking choice not to claim the rights of the *differend* as to avoid complications. This cowardice, in spite of an assertive and economical attitude, defeats in a funny and ironic way Lyotard's dignified and serious call for justice and bearing witness to the *differend*.[37] Overall, Alek Popov's humor mocks the seriousness of the *differend*, while questioning its very purpose, reliability and cultural adequacy.

Alek Popov's ironically disturbed upside-down world bears resemblance to the universe inhabited by another, much older Bulgarian character, Bai Ganyo.

Bai Ganyo, the Differend and the Victim

Aleko Konstantinov's book consists of independent short stories about Bai Ganyo, told by eyewitnesses. The narrators are representatives of the Bulgarian intelligentsia and have studied and met Bai Ganyo abroad. Ganyo is judged by them and the reader sees him through their eyes. The author's voice joins the group of narrating friends and on rare occasions makes itself heard as an autonomous narrator. This framing of the stories creates a complex dynamic when it comes to two things: establishing who is actually laughing at Bai Ganyo and who are the judges that have to pass on the verdict in the case of Ganyo's *differend*. Is the laughing and judging audience mainly Bulgarian or generally European? That is to say, whose genre of discourse puts Bai Ganyo in the position of a silenced victim: that of the group of narrators or that of the spectators in the foreign European countries Ganyo visits?

The other elements that define the text's link to the *differend* are the book's general division and the changed features of the main character. The book has two parts: in the first one Ganyo is funny, awkward and entertaining; in the second part, the character returns to Bulgaria and his public actions there are neither laughable nor could be taken lightly. Abroad, Bai Ganyo's shortcomings, his lack of manners and education, contrast with the far more refined behaviour and cultural habits of his hosts. The clash of attitudes and the cultural misinterpretations from both sides create the comical effect in the first part.[38]

---

[37] On another point, the affiliation of the features of laughter in the novel with both, mimicry and the functions of the human body, as hunger and devouring, makes one think about Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on the culture of laughter and its closeness to the life of the body's lower stratum. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Hélène Iswolsky, trans., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

[38] In her article on Aleko Konstantinov's book, the Bulgarian literary critic Iliana Krasteva points out that the comical in the book's first part is mainly the result of the very apparent gap between Bai Ganyo's loud self-esteem and showing off and the norm-observing behavior of the others around him. The Bulgarian quote is: '*Комизмът на ситуациите в повечето случаи е предизвикан от драстичното разминаване между Бай-Ганьовото самочувствие и показно перчене и поведението на останалите, което е в рамките на*

Overall, in the other European countries, Ganyo's difference, his foreignness, is loud, uncultured, and bullish, but energetic, amusing and overall still harmless for the spectators. After his arrival in Bulgaria, the laughter is still there, but it becomes more and more bitter. At home, Bai Ganyo is a cruel and corrupt journalist and politician, ready to abuse the rights of his less wealthy and less fortunate compatriots**,** to manipulate their votes and opinions, and to use extreme violence when he thinks necessary. This drastic change in perspective testifies to Bai Ganyo's general position on the ethical requirements of the *differend*. While still abroad, Ganyo is a potential victim, whose authenticity does not yet have an adequate idiom that words it and puts it on the European cultural map. In Bulgaria, the same Bai Ganyo is the author of an extremely brutal political genre of discourse, which has pretences for all-engulfing universality. At home, the character creates many victims and shows aggressive ignorance to the *differend*'s calls for justice and multiplicity of languages of public expression.

I argue that what has changed in the second part is not so much the character himself, but the balance of power and his set of goals. That means that Bai Ganyo's frame of mind in relation to the *differend* remains unchanged throughout the book. Ganyo is simply not capable of being a victim. Even in the book's first part, the character lacks any sensitivity to difference; hence, it is impossible to victimize him, as he would be blissfully unaware of any such attempts and would dismiss them as mere nonsense. While abroad, in an unfamiliar and somewhat hostile context, Ganyo manages not only to escape a victim's faith and sadness of a possible inflicted injustice, but to take an upper hand and to severely criticize all foreigners for their lack of intelligence, culture, hospitality and healthy common sense. This behavior of the main character abroad, which is inadequate to the balance of power, is what is hilariously funny and triggers the laughter in the book's first part. To put it differently, Bai Ganyo, without giving the situation a second thought, imposes his universalizing idiom on the spectators and events that are already governed by another, and most likely also universal in essence, genre of discourse. Abroad, the score of the clash between the idiom of the judge and that of Bai Ganyo's cultural attitudes delivers no winner. Additionally, while travelling in Europe, Ganyo's goals are not political or educative in nature; he has the single economic objective to sell his rose oil and to make a big as possible profit. After his return, Bai Ganyo reassesses his goals and sets his eye on much more solvent activities such as politics and journalism. In Bulgaria, the balance of political and economic

---

общоприетите регламентации на „етикета". Със своите приумици колоритният българин често „взривява" тези регламентации и скандализира европейците („...Бай Ганьо я оскърбил с действие, похванал я и не само я похванал, ами си извъртял и ръката със стиснати зъби. Тя искаше да вика полицейския. Скандал!"), а своите спътници - българските студенти - кара да се червят от срам. Героят обаче няма съзнание за конфузността на ситуациите, в които изпада. Напротив - смята, че е покорил със своето ориенталско обаяние европейците и гордо се бие в гърдите: „- Булгар! Булга-а-р!" See Iliana Krasteva, "Struktura i smisal na Bai Ganyo ot Aleko Konstantinov", (http://liternet.bg/publish7/ikrysteva/aleko.htm).

power is changed in favour of Bai Ganyo and he can show the full range of his ferocious methods of governing the country.[39]

While concentrating on the book's first part, I argue that Bai Ganyo's actions and judgements defy Lyotard's call for expressing the *differend* in a still laughter-provoking manner, but opposing that of Alek Popov's. Instead of hiding and disguising as a plaintiff, instead of trying to blend in and belong to his new cultural environments, Bai Ganyo introduces his own code for the shaping of reality and demonstrates its workings with readiness and unnerving determination in front of his horrified or amused—depending on the turn of events—European public. As a result, when Bai Ganyo claims upon his arrival abroad: "I am a merchant, selling rose oil in Vienna, while trying to make profit from everything and out of everyone," the phrase has a reality that is immediately effective. Aleko Konstantinov's character does not need to undergo the procedure of phrase linking, agonizing in its randomness and uncertain outcome. The only valid genre of discourse, the phrases Bai Ganyo utters can be linked to, is the one built around his own ideas and beliefs. He then links "phrases from different regimens to a single finality," a finality defined by his own cultural and political interests.[40] By default, Bai Ganyo can never be a victim or bear witness to the *differend* as he, by the sheer specificities of his behavior, neutralizes the possible addressor, addressee, sense and referent of the phrases worded in any distinct way from his own genres of discourse.[41] Ganyo's actions turn others into victims (he neutralizes the credibility of their idiom by linking all possible uttered and exchanged phrases into his own idiom), then denies recognizing their position of a victim (refuses to acknowledge the wrong he has inflicted by neglecting the heterogeneity of the other idiom) and, finally, ends up treating the victims of his universalizing genre of discourse as mere plaintiffs (refuses to bear witness to, or to word, the *differend*). Using Lyotard's terminology, one can say that when it comes to expressing cultural difference, Bai Ganyo employs a genre of discourse that has fixed "rules for linkage, and it suffices to observe them to avoid differends".[42]

Bai Ganyo's lack of cultural flexibility and ethical sensitivity to difference is pointed out on many occasions in the first part of Aleko Konstantinov's book. Bai Ganyo, although otherwise observant[43], is apparently and completely blind to cultural difference. For

---

[39] This extremely violent and cruel side of Bai Ganyo, which depicted in the second part of Aleko Konstantinov's book, is analysed in Victor Friedman's article on the Bulgarian character. See Victor A. Friedman, "Violence in *Bai Ganyo*: From Balkan to Universal". *Ulbandus. The Slavic Review of Columbia University* 13, (2010): 52-63.

[40] For this quote see Lyotard, *The Differend*, 29.

[41] Lyotard uses the described above process of neutralization of the addressor, addressee and the sense to illustrate the mechanism that results in the creation of a victim (*The Differend*, 3). I use the description to refer to Bai Ganyo's analogous actions of turning his conversation partners, hosts, compatriots, foreign cultures, etc., into casualties of his own domineering language game.

[42] Lyotard, *The Diefferend*, 29.

[43] Aleko Konstantinov mentions Bai Ganyo's excellent observation skills as one of the character's few positive personal characteristics through the words of one of the narrators in the book's first part. Ganyo is defined as "observant – especially observant" (*Bai Ganyo*, 81). The full quote is used further in this article.

example, he is not at the least curious about the artistic, intellectual or architectural landmarks in the countries he visits. His reply to an invitation to go and see Vienna is: *"What's to see in Vienna? A city is a city: people, houses, fancy stuff. And whenever you go, everybody goes gut morgin and everybody wants money. Why should I give our money to the Germans? We've got people at home to take it from us."*[44] This observation, wise on the surface, hides Ganyo's deep suspicion of everything foreign. When on a new Bulgarian train, travelling to the Prague Exhibition, Bai Ganyo is very quick to blame the lack of light in the compartments not on the Bulgarian organizers but on the foreigners—on any foreigners who might have been involved in the provision of lamps for the trip.[45] Ganyo loudly complains: "I just know that it's not our fault. It's those foreigners again, damn them! They've done this on purpose to make fools of us! That's because they're jealous! They're all like that!" [46] After passionately delivering his outburst, Bai Ganyo finds a suitable victim, one of the foreigners in his compartment, and stares angrily at him until the seriously frightened man leaves the premises.[47] Needless to say, the list of Bai Ganyo's deeds can continue.[48] The character's undermining attitude toward foreigners, regardless of their country of origin, occupation, and character, is closely associated with his false but loud and aggressive patriotism and his desire to return home. This is yet another of the significant dissimilarities between Alek Popov's characters and Bai Ganyo. The former are genuinely and intensely afraid of "going back," while the latter despises the foreign habits and culture and is more than ready to go back to the place where people know when to hammer a nail in the wall, eat delicious, spicy food and can non-problematically tell the difference between an accessible and well-respected woman.[49] Anyhow, Bai Ganyo carries his habits everywhere he goes. Aleko Konstantinov summarizes Ganyo's resistance to change and cultural blindness as follows:

---

[44] Aleko Konstantinov, *Bai Ganyo*, 20.

[45] Aleko Konstantinov has in mind the Prague Exhibition of 1891.

[46] *Bai Ganyo*, 34.

[47] See *Bai Ganyo*, 35.

[48] For example, during the same visit to the Prague Exhibition, Bai Ganyo signs readily and a little bit too quickly a petition he thinks will exclude him from any further sightseeing trips in Prague. Actually, Bai Ganyo signs the guest book placed in the house of one of the Czech wealthy and generous hosts, Mr. Naprstek. See *Bai Ganyo*, 46.

[49] In "Bai Ganyo at the Baths", the main character bitterly complains about the intellectual inaptitude of the Germans, who fail to pound into the baths' walls a single nail so that people can hang their precious possession in full visibility while bathing. See *Bai Ganyo*, 26. Additionally, while visiting Professor Irechek's home in Prague, the soup that the hosts serve is a bit bland for Bai Ganyo's tastes and he crushes a hot chili pepper into his bowl. See *Bai Ganyo*, 53. One possible example of Bai Ganyo's confusion and lack of manners when it comes to impressing women can be found in the story "Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting", where he confesses to his companion, the student Bodkov, that: "*You can't figure who's a maid and who's a mistress here; they're all so shiny, all dressed in clean clothes. One will plant herself in front of you, simper at you sweet as pie; you think she's a maid, you catch hold of her, and you've gotten yourself in trouble*." (*Bai Ganyo*, 60).

> *… after all there must be some sort of difference between the West and our homeland. Bai Ganyo, however, didn't perceive this difference, and how could he? Wherever he goes, he brings with him his own atmosphere, his own manners and customs; he looks for lodging according to his own tastes, he meets with his own kind of people, those he's accustomed to and in whom, of course, he sees nothing new. If he goes to Vienna, he'll stay at the Hotel London. It's just as stuffy there, it has the same smells of cooking and hydrogen sulphide, as at home; he meets with the same Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, and Albanians that he's used to meeting every day; he won't go to the café Hapsburg, since he's afraid that they'll fleece him. Instead, he'll go to the Greek coffeehouse, where it's just as dirty and stuffy from eternal smoke as in our own coffeehouses. If he's travelling on business, he'll go to the Bulgarian merchants, and because they are his intermediaries, he doesn't even realize that he's coming into contact with Europeans. And that it is precisely outside of this circumscribed sphere that European life begins is something that neither knows nor even cares to know. The upbringing, the moral world of the European, his domestic situation, the fruits of centuries of tradition and the gradual refinement of intellectual movements, social struggles, and manners and customs, the museums, the libraries, the philanthropic institutions, the fine arts, the thousands of displays of progress do not burden Bai Ganyo's attention*.[50]

Bai Ganyo is wrapped in his world and uses it as a protective harness against any kind of heterogeneity. While dwelling mostly within the familiar, Ganyo cannot be in many situations which involve dealing with a *differend*. At the same time, the known faces, heavy smells, scenes veiled in tobacco smoke and routine business transactions shelter Bai Ganyo from finding himself in the position of a victim and from falling into the gap of silence carved in the no man's land between heterogeneous genres of discourse and clashing cultural habits. However, the goal of the author is precisely to shake Bai Ganyo's world and to push him out of his cultural comfort zone into the unknown realm of the evolved European life. One cannot but notice that in the core of each story told in the first part lies the motive of Bai Ganyo venturing right into the cultural heart of the so-called "world of the European". Ganyo, as the titles of the stories also show, goes to European homes, to opera performance and exhibitions, to the baths and to European cafes and everywhere he is forced into a comical brush with the novel, for him for the most part inferior, European customs.[51] Bai Ganyo's travels in the first part of the book are not so much trips to one or another foreign European country, as they are journeys outside his own confined and enclosed universe.

---

[50] *Bai Ganyo*, 64-65.

[51] Some of the titles in the book's first part are: "Bai Ganyo at the Opera" (*Bai Ganyo*, 21); "Bai Ganyo at the Baths" (Ibid., 24); "Bai Ganyo at the Prague Exhibition" (Ibid., 34); "Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting" (Ibid., 55), etc. That is to say, almost all titles in the first part refer to some cultural public or private location representative of the European countries Bai Ganyo visits. While in public spaces, at the opera, baths, museums, on the street and in cafes, Ganyo encounters the foreign official institutionalised culture. When invited or self-invited to private homes, Bai Ganyo sees the everyday customs of the Europeans: their table manners, food and cuisine, their attitude to the kitchen and house help, etc.

The narrators of the stories mostly accompany Ganyo on his trips to the world outside. In other words, Bai Ganyo is compelled by his author, Aleko Konstantinov, to face and live within cultural difference. In this sense, Konstantinov makes the character's contact with the *differend* inevitable. While narrating his gesture of purposively throwing Bai Ganyo in the midst of European cultural diversity, Konstantinov is not exceedingly kind to his character and does not spare him from any ridicule or humiliation. Additionally, Konstantinov's use of "European" in the passage quoted above seems to suggest at least two things. First, "European" is different from Bulgarian, Greek, Albanian, Turkish, Armenian and Serbian cultures, as "European life" starts where the small shady world inhabited by Bai Ganyo ends. Second, the "European" culture is much more advanced than the cultural environment customary to Bai Ganyo, as the former is the result of a centuries-long, refined tradition. Consequently, Bai Ganyo needs to open his eyes to positive difference, venture into the unknown, better world outside his confinement, and learn how to be truly cultured, morally enlightened and refined himself. In this way, Konstantinov could be accused of being guilty of both "balkanization" and "self-colonizing".[52] As for the former, he describes the

[52] In her article "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention", the historian Maria Todorova refers to the term "*balkanization*". She writes: "*By the beginning of the twentieth century Europe had added to its repertoire of* ***Schimpfworter****, or disparagements, a new one which turned out to be more persistent than others with centuries old tradition. Balkanization not only had come to denote the parselization of large and viable political units but also has become a synonym for the reversal to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian."* See Maria Todorova, "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention", *Slavic Review* 53, No. 2 (Summer, 1994): 453. Aleko Konstantinov's portrayal of Bai Ganyo could be read along the lines of "*balkanization*", as the character's many negative features depict him as basic, savage-like and inferior to the representatives of the other (non-Balkan) European cultures. In the same article, Maria Todorova mentions yet another term, "*balkanism"***.** In general, the term "*balkanism*" (or "*nesting balkanism*") describes the existing and persistently negative discourse which is used when it comes to analysing political, historical and economic events that take place in the European region of the Balkans. On "*balkanism*" see also: Maria Todorova**,** *Imagining the Balkans***,** (New York, 2009).
In his article "The Self-Colonizing Metaphor*"*, the Bulgarian literary critic and academic Alexander Kiossev defines the concept of "*self-colonizing*" as follows: "*The concept of self-colonizing can be used for cultures having succumbed to the cultural power of Europe and the west without having been invaded and turned into colonies in actual fact. Historical circumstances transformed them into an extra colonial "periphery," lateral viewers who have not been directly affected either by important colonial conflicts or by the techniques of colonial rule. The same circumstances however put them in a situation where they had to recognize self-evidently foreign cultural supremacy and voluntarily absorb the basic values and categories of colonial Europe. The result might be named "hegemony without domination."* See Alexander Kiossev, "The Self-Colonizing Metaphor", (http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/s/self-colonization/the-self-colonizing-metaphor-alexander-kiossev.html) Aleko Konstantinov can be seen as describing Bulgarian culture as peripheral and consequently, as attempting, through the manner he contrasts Bai Ganyo's ethical norms and behaviour with those of the more developed Europeans, to voluntarily

Balkans in a traditionally negative light and in the case of the latter, he voluntary accepts external cultural models that are considered more advanced and in doing so hinder one's own unique path of cultural growth. As far as the tense relation of Bai Ganyo to the *differend* is concerned, it looks as if Konstantinov is pushing his character to accept the position of a victim in relation to the stronger and superior European culture, while Bai Ganyo himself is stubbornly resisting surrendering to such arrangements. It also seems that the voices of the narrators in the book's first part side with the author in severely judging and criticizing Bai Ganyo's many shortcomings, which are made especially visible by Ganyo's clash with the foreign European context. One can say, that while Konstantinov is doing his best to silence the *differend* that Ganyo embodies, the character himself is bravely fighting to keep his cultural authenticity and uniqueness. All of a sudden, the tables turn on Konstantinov, as Bai Ganyo appears to be the carrier of positive cultural characteristics and ideas. Luckily, one may think that Bai Ganyo, as has already been pointed out, is extremely resilient and not only cannot be easily victimized, but goes a step further and behaves as if he in turn can exploit and dominate the foreign European cultures. This outlandish struggle between the author and his main character is also an important element of the funny and laughable in the book's first part.

The further analysis of the complex nature of the laughter in *Bai Ganyo*'s first part, I argue, can bring to light even more unsuspected turns hidden in the text. In the book, Bai Ganyo is laughed at constantly; everywhere he appears, he does something that goes against the established habits and good manners of the local European inhabitants and they end up amused, shocked, or scared by Ganyo's daring deeds, often incomprehensible words, and energetic body language. However, the collective and at times loud laughter of the Europeans is sifted through and conveyed by the perception and words of the narrators of the stories told. That means that the rest of Europe laughs at Bai Ganyo in an indirect and hearsay way. The ones who are actually and directly laughing are the author's well-educated and cultured Bulgarian friends. That is to say, the potentially enormous European audience witnessing and laughing at Bai Ganyo's antics is reduced to the cozy symposium-like space of an anecdote-telling session among long-time friends. Within this intimate space, the grand-scale European laughter is reduced to a critical echo.

A closer look at the structural relationship between the narrators and Bai Ganyo reveals an interesting dynamic**.** The storytelling friends are passive, while their common subject, Bai Ganyo is extremely active: travelling across Europe, eating, drinking, running after trains, chasing women, worrying about his precious rose oil, meeting people, bathing. The passive narrators are the viewers of Bai Ganyo's European drama, or farce, as it unfolds. The friends reminisce about past encounters with Ganyo and comical or awkward situations they have experienced. In other words, the friends are reflecting on and sharing thoughts about their own past as well. They all remember being shocked, ashamed, or angered by Bai Ganyo's actions. In other words, they feel responsible for Bai Ganyo's deeds and words in

impose on himself and his compatriots "*the basic values and categories*" of the considered supreme European culture.

front of the spectators from other European cultures.[53] Their contemplations, then, contain a strong element of self-reflection. Furthermore, in their self-reflection, Bai Ganyo plays an important role as the element opposing and highlighting the ideas and cultural attitudes they hold significant. On another point, there are some characteristics that the narrators and the subject of their irony have in common. Bai Ganyo's physical appearance—he is dark-eyed and dark-haired—is very similar to that of the Bulgarian students abroad, a group to which the most of the narrators used to belong, who are also dark-eyed and dark-haired.[54] Despite their telling differences, Bai Ganyo, the narrators, and the author belong to one and the same home culture.

The critical laughter of the author and the narrators seemingly compensates for Bai Ganyo's complete lack of self-criticism. The novel's frame, provided by the storytellers' judgments, functions as a reflective mirror in which Ganyo can see himself clearly for what he really is and eventually correct his ways. However, the criticism of Bai Ganyo could be

[53] For instant, at the funeral of Bai Ganyo's sister in Dresden ("Bai Ganyo in Dresden"), the narrator and the other Bulgarian students, who have been invited to the burial of their early deceased compatriot, are painfully ashamed of Ganyo's behavior. They try to cover for him, blaming his rough looks and lack of visible grief on the shock he is still in. Finally, Bai Ganyo noisily blows his nose using not a handkerchief but his thumb. The students cannot find any plausible explanation for this action. The narrator describes their defeat: "*It would have been possible to excuse even that, you might say, owing to the haste of his departure; in his haste and confusion the unfortunate man must have forgotten to take even a handkerchief, you might say. But no! No because immediately after this procedure Bay Ganyo unwrapped the yellow paper package and pulled out – what do you think? – a whole dozen handkerchiefs and began passing them out to those present …*" (*Bai Ganyo*, 32-33) Bai Ganyo gives almost everybody present a handkerchief, so that his sister's soul can rest in peace, as one does on such occasions, following the Bulgarian tradition.

[54] The physical description of Bai Ganyo is given in the third story of the first part of the book, "*Bai Ganyo at the Baths*". See *Bai Ganyo*, 24. In addition, in "Bai *Ganyo Goes Visiting*", Konstantinov describes how Ganyo has no difficulties recognizing the group of Bulgarian students in one of the Prague cafes due to their distinct looks. Konstantinov writes: '*Bai Ganyo turned and recognised his own dark-eyed, dark-haired compatriots clustered together*.' (*Bai Ganyo*, 55) In her article on Bai Ganyo, the Bulgarian academic and literary critic Milena Kirova already stresses the importance of Bai Ganyo's gaze of recognition that he points at the Bulgarian students gathered in a Prague café. Her analysis, however, is based on the psychoanalytical tradition in reading literary texts, while in this article I connect *Bai Ganyo*'s text to the contemporary continental French philosophy (J-F. Lyotard) and Russian philosophy and literary theory (Mikhail Bakhtin). See Milena Kirova, "Bai Ganyo – poglastastiat chovek", (http://liternet.bg/publish2/mkirova/baj-ganio.htm#1a).

seen as a form of self-criticism, I argue.[55] The very dynamics of the interdependence between Ganyo and the narrators strongly resembles a typical philosophical structure of self-reflection.[56] In order to become more self-aware and efficient, the human mind and human rational faculties critically reflect on their own workings, shortcomings and misconceptions. In this way, critique and self-critique, one of the most important intellectual tools of the Enlightenment, aim to improve the human condition altogether. Lyotard's requirement for approaching the linking of each new phrase as problematic and to word the *differend* is part of the same tradition of thought's self-reflection. One has to critically examine the correctness of each linkage in order not to silence the event of the *differend*.

---

[55] My use of the notion of the notion of "self-reflection" can be compared to the mirroring metaphors used in the articles of Mary Neuburger and Roumen Daskalov which analyze Konstantinov's *Bai Ganyo*. In her article "To Chicago and Back: Aleko Konstantinov, Rose Oil, and the Smell of Modernity", Neuburger points out that in his writings Aleko Konstantinov makes himself and his compatriots see themselves through the eyes of western Europe. This mirroring, I argue, can be interpreted as a form of self-reflection. In his turn, Daskalov speaks of the different interpretations of Bai Ganyo's identity and the way in which they mirror the different stages in the Bulgarian process of modernization and cultural development. I argue, however, that the opposition in Aleko Konstantinov's book is not "European" versus "Bulgarian", but rather "Bulgarian" versus another form or state of the same "Bulgarian". The mirror held in front of Bai Ganyo is not Europe, but Bulgaria as part of Europe. Instead of mirroring, *Bai Ganyo* is above all a book about direct self-reflection. See Mary Neuburger, "To Chicago and Back: Aleko Konstantinov, Rose Oil, and the Smell of Modernity", *Slavic Review* 65, No. 3 (Autumn 2006): 427-445, and Roumen Daskalov, "Modern Bulgarian Society and Culture through the Mirror of Bai Ganio", *Slavic Review* 60, No. 3 (Autumn 2001): 530-549.

[56] For example, in his "Critique of the Power of Judgement" (1790), the German idealist and enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant develops his theory about the judgement about the sublime. The structure of this judgement contains a mechanism for self-reflection that allows pure human reason to become better aware of its own architecture (Kant's term for this is *architectonics*) and to discover the existence of ideas. This mechanism for self-reflection is universally valid, as for Kant reason and reason's categories and concepts are universally valid for and applicable to all of humanity. In view of this Kantian universalism, if we accept that Aleko Konstantinov uses a similar mechanism for self-reflection, in which one part of the Bulgarian culture (the narrators, i.e. the Bulgarian intelligentsia) reflects on the body of the whole culture and discovers the malfunctioning parts (some, not all, of Bai Ganyo's attitudes) and also the way to remedy those malfunctions (by acting according to better moral, political and cultural principles), then we can assume that Aleko Konstantinov attempts to impose universal norms on the unique Bulgarian culture. This could mean that the accusations of "self-colonizing", i.e. of voluntarily accepting superior idealized cultural values, are true. However, there is an essential difference between the universality of self-reflection and the gesture of "self-colonizing". The former uses abstract rational concepts and speaks of abstract ideal universality, while the latter refers to very concrete categories and values typical for colonial Europe. See *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Eric Matthews, trans., Paul Guyer, ed. and trans., (Cambridge, 2002), CJ 260-267.

In this sense, the narrators in Aleko Konstantinov's book examine their own cultural heritage while exposing and exploring its deepest and well-hidden sides, represented by Bai Ganyo's actions and attitudes. Aleko Konstantinov's gesture of forcing Bai Ganyo to leave his familiar murky habitat and to resurface into far less familiar cultural realms is analogous to an intellectual act of self-critique. The laughter at Bai Ganyo is a laughter directed at one's own failures and inadequacies. Consequently, it seems that Konstantinov was trying not to silence Bai Ganyo's audacity but to word his own, Konstantinov's cultural *differend*, which materializes when some aspects of this culture are placed in the bigger European context. The character of Bai Ganyo is part of the moulding into words and images of this *differend*.[57] Then, maybe, Aleko Konstantinov is guilty not so much of balkanization or self-colonizing, as rather of extreme, open, and sarcastic self-critique. The upshot of this self-reflection is Bai Ganyo, with his many negative and still some positive cultural features.[58] The laughter of the author and his circle of close friends, with this laughter's bitter and ironic undertone, expresses predominantly Bai Ganyo's many flaws. However, there is another kind of laughter in the book's first part as well.

This other, much lighter and spontaneous laughter is not an expression of any deep self-reflection or worries about the cultural faith of the *differend*. It is a laughter of sheer acknowledgment of a *differend*'s presence. The concrete incident of this laughter can be traced back to take place at the Viennese opera, where in the middle of a fascinating ballet performance, in the words of the narrator:

> *… hysterical laughter split the air. I turned to my left and saw that everyone in the rows behind me is giggling and pointing at something on my right. I was seized by a terrible foreboding. I turned toward Bai Ganyo … Oh my God! What do I see? Bai Ganyo has stripped to his shirtsleeves and unbuttoned his vest, which was constricting the wide sash wound tight around his waist, where he had stuffed – for safekeeping – all his* ***muskali****. One of the ushers had him by the sleeve with two fingers, gesturing unambiguously with his head for him to leave. Bai Ganyo stared back at him and answered with gestures of his own: 'What? Who are you trying to scare?' It was his blustering bravado that had made a young girl sitting behind us burst into hysterical laughter, and her laughter infected the entire theatre.*[59]

[57] If one assumes that Bai Ganyo is the embodiment of Aleko Konstantinov's own culture's *differend*, than Konstantinov's intentions towards this *differend* are very similar to those of the characters in Alek Popov's *Mission London* toward their unwanted *differends*. However, Aleko Konstantinov is not trying to hide or eradicate Bai Ganyo (i.e. Konstantinov's own *differend*), he is attempting to expose and reform him. Additionally, the analysis presented in this article is focused on Bai Ganyo's, not Aleko Konstantinov's relation to Lyotard's concept of the *differend*.

[58] In the last story of the first part, "Bai Ganyo in Russia", one of the narrators, Vasil, surprisingly announces that at certain point he felt genuinely sorry for Bai Ganyo and listed some of the character's main positive personal characteristics as observance, potential spiritual strength and energy. See *'Bai Ganyo'*, 81.

[59] Aleko Konstantinov, *Bai Ganyo*, 22.

This laugh signals the recognition of Bai Ganyo's overwhelming and somewhat oddly disturbing visibility in the heart of Europe. This is the laughter of the universally joined European public, to which Aleko Konstantinov and his friends belong as well, when letting go of ethical and cultural concerns about the seriousness of Bai Ganyo's countless drawbacks. The young girl's contagious laughter is a linking phrase of a special kind. It is ambiguous in essence and seemingly postpones the actual linkage of the event (Bai Ganyo's presence at the opera/in Europe) to a well-defined genre of discourse. The girl's sudden unplanned laughter as a link lacks the decisiveness of Aleko Konstantinov's reflective irony, which connects Bai Ganyo and all of his actions to the idiom of cultural self-critique. The giggle at the opera mocks the seriousness of the *differend* in its own way, by opposing to Lyotard's strive toward multiplicity the frivolous and optimistic universality of a world turned upside-down. A world in which strict manners are not observed and people laugh not at the stage performance but at what is taking place in the audience hall. This is a world in which the distinction between stage and auditorium, between performance and spectators is swept away. Finally, this laughter is an echo of the assertive optimism and brave claims for universal validity of the carnival's culture, as Mikhail Bakhtin describes it.

It seems that in *Bai Ganyo*'s first part the claims for universality are put forward under several guises. One of them is Bai Ganyo's neglect for the *differend* and his strong inclination to link every event under the fixed rules of his own cultural idiom. The other is Konstantinov's self-critique, which aims to improve the workings of his home culture by bringing it up to standards that are universal and applicable to any culture, or to culture in general. Finally, there is the universality of laughter itself, which suggests that, in an opaque world, the places of a victim and plaintiff, or of a judge and victim, could be reversed anyway. Overall, while Lyotard's philosophy of the *differend* is relentlessly trying to supress universality, the two literary texts' characters, those of *Bai Ganyo* and those of *Mission London*, are tirelessly aiming at the suspension of this very same *differend*. Literature then, one can say, ridicules philosophy's seriousness and plays with its concerns.

Conclusion

Bai Ganyo and *Mission London* mock the seriousness of the concepts in *The Differend*. Lyotard stresses among other things the urgency of the linking of phrases, by insisting that the linkage should happen "now". The pressure to create a new idiom, that is to say, to word the *differend,* is always immanent. Laughter, in its turn, toys with and procrastinates the linkage. Laughter in its ambiguity keeps the event suspended between regimens. Furthermore, laughter questions the very need for the wording of an event, of a *differend*. Laughter in its own right is already a sufficient enough testimony to the fact that the event is present. Hence, the wording after the laughter is rendered redundant. When it comes to culture, it seems that laughter doubts the ability of words to adequately express all the complex nuances of cultural difference. Within fictional literary discourses like *Bai Ganyo* and *Mission London*, laughter has better control over the language and games with it, while reordering and re-examining the well-known and taken as normative culture and cultural habits. Laughter is not a typical element of theoretical and philosophical discourses, so it derides and challenges their assumptions from afar, by indirectly exposing their hidden shortcomings and logical deficiencies.

In *Bai Ganyo*, laughter shapes the language of Ganyo and the narrators in such a way as to reveal the intricate anatomy of cultural difference by showing that being a victim of discrimination is a question of choice and certain moral sensitivity. As a result, Bai Ganyo's own cultural prejudices shield him from situations in which he can become the victim of a similar unfair treatment. In addition, Aleko Konstantinov's text discloses that one and the same cultural persona could be both a victim and a victimizer. In its turn, *Mission London* displays the ambivalence of language heterogeneity itself. The novel's characters attempt to appropriate and make their own the language idioms of the different host culture. Laughter shows that language can be used to deceive, to hide and disguise one's authentic cultural identity. That is to say, Alek Popov's *Mission London* unveils language's ability to shift and mimic. Consequently, for the characters in *Mission London*, the linking between heterogeneous phrases is unproblematic and there is no need for new idioms to be created, as the unworded *differend* willingly goes for the shortcut and assumes the language structure of the already existing, stronger regimens. Overall, the persistent metamorphosis of identities and values depicted in the novel disallows heterogeneity of regimens as they continuously flow into one another. *Mission London* points out that admitting to be the victim of a cultural wrong can put somebody in an even bigger peril than before. In other words, the text plays with the advantages of simply going with the flow and pretending to belong.

Even though the laughter in *Bai Ganyo* and *Mission London* does not negate the theoretical and ethical significance and merit of Lyotard's justice model based on the concept of the *differend*, it exposes this model's concealed universality and limitations. While fighting the stiffening universality of modern philosophical systems, by introducing a tool for combating the very possibility of the creation of universal discourses—the *differend*—Lyotard himself falls victim to the far-reaching grip of universalization. Namely, as laughter shows, every theoretical model, even the most open and democratic one, relies on certain fixed conceptual structures, which have to be followed and respected in order for the model to work. Those indispensable conceptual requirements, as Lyotard's insistence on wording and bearing witness to the *differend*, for example, constitute a form of universality. That is to say, they postulate a universally applicable frame, which shapes culture and reality in general, after a certain specific fashion. On another point, the fact that there are exceptions, as *Bai Ganyo* and *Mission London* demonstrate, to the justice model suggested by the *differend*, comes to prove this model's inability to unfailingly expose and fight universality, hence, injustice.

Finally, it may be the case that wording cultural difference is impossible and wrong altogether. Laughter and the cultural intuitions and passions it reveals are far better witnesses to cultural heterogeneity than any (philosophical) discourse.

REFERENCES

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984.

Daskalov, Roumen. "Modern Bulgarian Society and Culture through the Mirror of Bai Ganio". *Slavic Review* 60. 3 (2001): 530-549.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*. Trans. David Wills. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Friedman, Victor A. "Violence in *Bai Ganyo*: From Balkan to Universal". *Ulbandus. The Slavic Review of Columbia University* 13. (2010): 52-63.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman K. Smith. London: Macmillan, 1929.

———. *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Trans. Eric Matthews. Trans. and ed. Paul Guyer. Cambridge UP, 2002.

Kiossev, Alexander. "The Self-Colonizing Metaphor" (Article). Atlas of Transformation. 2011. Retrieved from (http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/s/self-colonization/the-self-colonizing-metaphor-alexander-kiossev.html).

Kirova, Milena. "Bai Ganyo - poglastastiat chovek" (Article). Elektronno spisanie LiterNet 11. LiterNet. November 16, 2013. Retrieved from (http://liternet.bg/publish2/mkirova/baj-ganio.htm#1a).

Konstantinov, Aleko. *Bai Ganyo/ Incredible Tales of a Modern Bulgarian*. Ed. Victor A. Friedman. Trans. Victor A. Friedman, Christina E. Kramer, Grace E. Fielder, Catherine Rudin. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.

———. *Bai Ganyo* (Book). Slovoto. 2016. Retrieved from (http://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=169&WorkID=4673&Level=1.).

Krasteva, Iliana. ''Struktura i smisal na *Bai Ganyo* ot Aleko Konstantinov'' (Article). Izdatelstvo LiterNet. LiterNet. September 15, 2002. Retrieved from (http://liternet.bg/publish7/ikrysteva/aleko.htm).

Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Differend/Phrases in Dispute.* Trans. Georges van den Abbeele. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1988.

———. "On the Strength of the Weak". *Toward the Postmodern*. Eds. Robert Harvey and Mark S. Roberts. New York: Humanity Books, 1999.

———. *Just Gaming*. Trans. Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1994.

Neuburger, Mary. "To Chicago and Back: Aleko Konstantinov, Rose Oil, and the Smell of Modernity", *Slavic Review* 65. 3 (2006): 427-445.

Neuburger, Mary C. *Balkan Smoke/Tobacco and the Making of Modern Bulgaria.* New York: Cornell UP, 2013.

Popov, Alek. *Mission London*. Trans. Daniella and Charles Gill de Mayol de Lupe. London: Istros Books, 2014.

———. *Misia London*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo "Zvezdan", 2001.

Stefanova, Nia. "Vnucite na Bai Ganyo" (Article). Elektronno spisanie LiterNet 9. LiterNet. September 10, 2014. Retrieved from (http://liternet.bg/publish30/nia-stefanova/vnucite.htm).

Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*, New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

Todorova, Maria. "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention", *Slavic Review* 53. 2 (1994): 453.

THE *LIFE AND PASSIONS OF SINFUL SOPHRONIUS* (1804): FIRST COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Anita Kasabova, Sofia University

Introduction

Sophronius of Vratsa (1739–1813), born Stoyko Vladislavov, was a Bulgarian Orthodox priest and a leading figure in the early Bulgarian National Revival. He was anointed bishop of Vratsa in 1794 and released from this office several years later but was canonized as a saint in 1964. *The Life and Passions of Sinful Sophronius* is the first Bulgarian autobiography and one of the first texts written in Modern Bulgarian (V. Karateodorov, 1940:8; V. Dimitrova, 2006:12; P. Anchev, 2009:86). It provides a first-person perspective on the Ottoman occupation of Bulgaria and the first Russo-Turkish war, and reads like a Balkan version of Don Quixote.

Sophronius breaks with the traditional genre of Old Bulgarian texts, namely the *Vita* or *Zhitie*, a hagiographic account which describes the life and deeds of a saint as an inspirational story. "Times are changing and we change with them" was written inside the cover of Sophronius' collected manuscripts (1805).[1] We may ask why he wrote his life-story. Dimitrova (2006:7) surmises that Sophronius may have wished to transmit a documentary of the times and his life, to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of subsequent generations, or even to present a fictional version of life in 19th-century Bulgaria. I agree with Dimitrova (2006: 7) and N. Randow (1979:72) that Sophronius' account does not follow the stylized form of the *Vita*, as his narrative is comprised of personal and picaresque episodes that relate his hardships in an anecdotic and humorous manner. Rather than a saint, Sophronius considers himself an anti-hero and transient who moves from one social milieu to another. He recalls episodes of his life, from his birth, childhood, and youth with a wicked stepmother, to becoming a priest, caught in the wars "between the Turk and the Muscovite" (1804: 7), and his travels through occupied Bulgaria and beyond.

In Istanbul "[t]hey found that my papers were not in order and took me to a distant park where Turks were playing music, dancing and laughing. There they locked me up in a small room next to the road. I guessed why they had locked me up there. By chance the key was on the inside, and I locked myself in at once. So many sodomites came along and begged me to open the door! They offered me gold coins through the window. I realized what was happening and began to shout. Across the street there were Jewish houses and right away some Jews came over and asked me: "Why are you shouting?" I told them the whole story. So they went to my companion and gave some money to the tax collector and rescued me from those sodomites." (1804:2).

[1] The manuscript was discovered in Russia in 1860 and first published by G. Rakovski in the literary journal "*Dunavski Lebed*" (1861).

Many anecdotes are about everyday life under Ottoman rule: "After an hour or so, they took us to the sultan's officer. He asked me first: 'Who sold these sheep?' And I replied: 'Islyam Agha sold them and Hadji Vlasia bought them.' 'So, how many did they sell?' [...] '700.' 'But didn't they sell more than that?' [...] Right away he ordered for me to be thrown down, my eyes facing the ground. Then three men sat on me and began beating me on my bare feet. May God protect us from the guards' merciless beatings! [...] I couldn't bear it any longer, my heart was tearing painfully, and I said: 'Let me go and I'll tell you. [...] [T]he chief meat supplier sold more sheep to two traders (*djelepi*), but I don't know how many sheep he sold, or for how much.' Then he shouted: "Go now, and hang this bastard!' [...] Meanwhile, some lords intervened [...] and saved me from hanging. The guards put us in iron chains together with the other prisoners – about 25 Turks, Christians and Gypsies, but most were Albanians [...]. They also beat Hadji Vlasia, but not as much. And each day they impaled some of the Albanians before our eyes. Then [...] we wheedled the lords into appealing for our release. Five days later we were free, but we had to pay a fine of 1500 groshes." (1804:10).

The Bulgarian bishop also describes how he was forced to hide in a Turkish harem in Pleven, when the town was sacked by various pashas and their mercenaries (1804:23), or how he barely escaped converting to Islam at gunpoint, after performing a wedding ceremony for a girl whom a sultan wanted as his second wife: "What was I to do? My mouth was dry from fear of death. I clammed up and merely said: "Ah, Effendi, should one change one's faith at gunpoint? But if you kill a priest, do you expect the world's praise?" He aimed his gun at me and thought for a long time. Then he asked me: "Will you divorce this bride from her husband?" I replied: "Certainly, when I get to Karnobat, I'll divorce them." "Swear it!" - he said. What was I to do; from fear of death I swore and said: "Vallahi billahi, I'll divorce them!" (1804:13).

He recounts his travels throughout the occupied Balkans, his endless financial troubles, perilous encounters with Ottoman soldiers and the constant fear of being captured, which kept him on the run. "When I saw that [Pazvantoğlu's rebels] had begun to assemble in Pleven, I was afraid that they would do me some harm. In December 1799, I left Pleven and went to Nikopol, to cross the Danube and return to Walachia. But since the Danube was frozen on both sides, we couldn't get across and so we stayed in Nikopol for six days. Then we heard that Gyavur Imam was coming to Nikopol. I was frightened and for a large amount of money I was ferried across the Danube, but I was frantic. The ice broke and a horse went down and drowned. The other horses were tied together and dragged over the ice on a plank. We nearly died of cold by the time we reached Zimnicea." (1804:26).

We learn of his slow rise in the ecclesiastic institution. "As I could read a little, the other priests hated me, for at that time all of them were peasants. And since they were so simple and illiterate, I did not want to defer to them, for I was young and unreasonable. And then they told lies about me to the bishop who hated me and often punished me by suspending me from my duties! The bishop had an assistant, an uneducated and illiterate Greek who really hated me, but that was only natural: for an educated man loves someone who is educated, a simple man – a fool, and a drunkard – a drunk." (1804:4).

Sophronius uses a direct style with numerous conjunctions such as 'and' or 'but,' and loosely connected clauses that are reminiscent of spoken Bulgarian. He relates his life and sufferings in a first-person narrative in the historical present tense, with many exclamations resembling oral speech in the form of rhetorical questions, such as: 'Now, what to say?',

'What to do?', 'Where was I to go?', or 'Where should I flee to?'. To use narratologist G. Genette's (1999:35) phrase, Sophronius' account is "literary by *diction* rather than by *fiction*," and thus exemplifies autobiography, a genre "halfway between fiction and diction" (ibid).

His concern was to write in a language which would communicate knowledge and guidance to Bulgarians in a way they would understand, a living language rather than Old Bulgarian or Old Church Slavonic. (J. Feuillet, 1981:29). Sophronius concludes his autobiography thus: "That is why I now work day and night, to write some books in our Bulgarian language, so that my countrymen might receive some useful guidance from me, the sinful one, as I am unable to preach to them by word of mouth. May they read and heed my writings. May they pray to God for me, the unworthy one, to amend my ignorance and to grant me forgiveness, so that I, too, might receive a place at His right hand on Judgment Day. Amen!" (1804:30).

In these lines, we find a reply to the question of why he wrote his life-story: his motive was redemption and rehabilitation, by successfully transmitting his lessons to Bulgarians "in our Bulgarian language." Effectiveness is a necessary condition for successful communication: to be effective, Sophronius' plea must be taken up by the readers, through whom he can be rehabilitated. Since his works have reached us, Sophronius may have achieved his goal of restoring his social status, as well as his transition from 'sinner' to 'blessed' by the Church, when he was finally canonized.

Although Sophronius' autobiography has been translated into French, German and Polish, it has not been translated into English, except for a short excerpt by H. Cooper (2007). Taking a leaf out of N. Randow's German translation, I have rendered the Bulgarian text in contemporary English, which is closer to Sophronius' direct style, rather than attempting to archaize it, like T. Dabek-Wirgowa's (1983) Polish translation. My translation is based on *Slovo.bg*'s electronic edition of the manuscript; N. Oreshkov's (1914) edition; N.M. Dilevsky & A.N. Robinson's (1976) edition; V. Karateodorov's (1940) adapted edition, and the contemporary adaptation published by D. Yakov (2006). I have checked it against Henry Cooper's (2007) partial English translation; Norbert Randow's (1979) outstanding German translation: *Leben und Leiden des sündigen Sofroni*; Jack Feuillet's (1981) French translation: *Vie et tribulations du pêcheur Sofroni*; Teresa Dabek-Wirgowa's (1983) Polish translation: *Zywot i meka grzesznego Sofroniusza*, and Wojciech Galazka's (1982) partial Polish translation. My thanks go to Aneta Dimitrova for critical notes and corrections, Mira Kovacheva for critical comments, Ivan Mladenov for detailed discussions, and Malgorzata Skowronek for expert feedback.

Sources

Врачански, Софроний. Житие и Страдания Грешнаго Софрония (1861). Slovo.bg. <http://slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=167&WorkID=4641 &Level=1>, accessed 31/12/2016.

Врачански, Софроний. Житие и Страдания Грешнаго Софрония (1861). Oreshkov, N. ed. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1914.

Врачански, Софроний. Житие и Страдания Грешнаго Софрония (1861). Dilevsky, N.M. & Robinson, A.N., eds. (1976), republished in: Granitsky I. & Anchev, P. Sofia: Zachary Stoyanov publishers, 2009.

Врачански, Софроний. Житие и Страдания (1861). Karateodorov, ed. Sofia: Knigoizdatelstvo Ignatov, 1940.

Врачански, Софроний. Житие и Страдания на Грешния Софроний (1861). Sofia: D. Yakov publishers, 2006.

Secondary Texts

Agoston, G. & Masters, B., eds. *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*. New York: Facts on File publishers, 2009.

Anchev, P. "*Poslesov.'Sofronij Vrachanskij*", in: Sofia, Zachary Stoyanov publishers, 2009: 84-90.

Cooper, H.R. *The Life and Sufferings of Sinful Sofronij* (partial translation) in: *Anthology of Bulgarian Literature*, Cooper, H.R & Mladenov, I., eds, Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2007: 36-37.

Dabek-Wirgowa, T. *Zywot i meka grzesznego Sofroniusza*. Państwowy instytut wydawniczy: Warszawa, 1983.

Dimitrova, V. "*Predgovor. 'Zhitie i stradania na greshnia Sofronij'*" in: Sofia: D. Yakov publishers, 2006: 5-12.

Feuillet, J. *Vie et tribulations du pêcheur Sofroni*. Sofia: Sofia-Press, 1981.

Galazka, W. *Zywot i meka grzesznego Sofroniusza*. (partial translation), Katowice: Slask publishers, 1982: 21-29.

Genette, G. (1999). Des genres et des oeuvres. Paris: Seuil, 2012.

Karateodorov, V. "*Predgovor. Sofronij Vrachanski, Zhitie i stradania*" in: Sofia: Knigoizdatelstvo Ignatov, 1940: 4-8.

Randow, N. *Leben und Leiden des sündigen Sofroni*. Leipzig: Insel, 1979.

***Life and Passions of Sinful Sophronius* (1804)**

I was born a sinful man, in the village of Kotel. My father was Vladislav and my mother was Maria, and they gave me my first name, which is Stoyko. When I was three years old, my mother passed away and my father took another wife, who was bad-tempered and envious, and she bore him a son. But she cared only for her own child and kept rejecting me.

When I was nine years old, I was sent to learn to read and write. Before that, I couldn't go to school, because I was often ill and feeble. I proved to be hardworking and smart in my studies, and soon learnt to read. Since there was no higher education in the Slav tongue in Bulgaria, I began to study in Greek, and learnt the [octoechos][2] by heart.

As I started learning the Psalms, news came that my father had died of the plague in Tsarigrad in 1750.[3] So, at eleven years old, I was left without a father and a mother. Then my uncle adopted me, for he was childless, and sent me to learn a trade. When I was seventeen, my uncle and aunt also passed away, one soon after the other.

My uncle died in Tsarigrad, as did my father; both had been cattle traders (*djelepi*). Because I was his heir, his debtors and partners made me come to Tsarigrad to collect the money he was owed from the butchers (*kasapi*), as was customary for a cattle trader.

Since the butchers were scattered across Tsarigrad and the Anatolian shore, one of my uncle's partners and I decided one day to cross over to the Anatolian side. So we went to the pier [*skelyata*][4] to cross [the Bosphorus] by boat. We saw boats near the Tsar's palaces.[5] We were simple folk, and because these boats were moored straight across from Scutari, we wanted to use them to cross over to Scutari.[6] On our way there, at one place we saw a large crowd of people gathered around two fighting wrestlers. Behind them were tall palaces and, for all I knew, the Tsar himself could have been there. When the wrestlers had stopped fighting, the whole crowd swept towards the Tsar's palaces. We went along with them and stopped between the Tsar's gate and Jali-Kiosk,[7] where the Tsar's boats were tied down. While we were standing there, wondering where to go, one of the guards [*bostancii*] appeared and said:

---

[2] "Eight-voice" – Hymn book in eight parts used in Orthodox liturgy, named for the eight tones on which sacral music is based.

[3] Tsarigrad = Constantinople = Istanbul.

[4] *Скелята*. Karateodorov (1940, 12) and Yakov's edition (2006, 16) use *пристанище*, *пристана*, which denotes *harbor* or *pier*.

[5] Sophronius refers to the Ottoman Sultan as '*Tsar*'. The Ottoman Sultan at that time was Mustafa III (1717-1757), who attempted administrative and military reforms to halt the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and who declared war on Russia, which resulted in a defeat after his death. Sophronius refers to this war below. Mustafa III was succeeded by his son, Selim III (1761-1808), who undertook a series of westernizing reforms, which evoked mutinies from various conservative factions, such as the Janissaries and local notables in the Ottoman Empire.

[6] *Scutari* (*Скутари*) is a large district of Istanbul now called *Üsküdar*, on the Anatolian shore of the Bosphorus.

[7] Jali-Kiosk or Pearl Kiosk is an octagonal edifice at the foot of the seraglio, where the sultan held audiences. The kiosk was built by Sinan Pasha, a favorite of Sultan Selim III.

"What are you doing here? Get out of here fast, before I cut off your heads!"

We apologized, saying that we were foreigners and simple folk. But on our way back, the Janissaries, who were keeping watch there, caught us. They wanted to kill us, they said, because they hadn't seen us passing by with the crowd. After we got away from them, we went to the main harbor and crossed over to Scutari.

Then I was just a teen, young and handsome of face, and the local Turks were sodomites. When they saw me, they caught me and asked me about my tax papers [*harachijska hartija*].[8] They found that my papers were not in order and took me to a distant park where Turks were playing music, dancing, and laughing. There they locked me up in a small room next to the road. I guessed why they had locked me up there. By chance the key was on the inside, and I locked myself in at once. So many sodomites came along and begged me to open the door! They offered me gold coins through the window. I realized what was happening and began to shout. Across the street there were Jewish houses and right away some Jews came over and asked me: "Why are you shouting?"

I told them the whole story. So they went to my companion and gave some money to the tax collector and rescued me from those sodomites.

We collected as much money as we could and returned to our village safe and sound. When it was counted, it turned out that my uncle still owed 400 groshes.[9] And they charged me with that debt, so that I'd have to settle it. But while I was in Tsarigrad, my relatives had plundered the household and hidden most of the goods. And when my uncle's creditors came with the Turkish judge to record the household goods, they found only a little and thought I had hidden them. The judge ordered to have me beaten with a *falàga*,[10] but the mayor[11] did not allow it; he knew I was innocent. But they still put me in iron chains and kept me in jail for three days, until my relatives forked out a small sum. Then they released me. But afterwards they issued a church order against me, because it occurred to them that I may have hidden something.[12] So I went to the bishop in Shumen to put things straight. On the way we were nearly killed by rebels [*haidouti*].[13]

Even before those creditors had convened to request their money, my relatives had forced me to marry, because there was no one to look after me. I was eighteen years old, young and stupid, and knew nothing about my uncle's debts, or that I would be saddled with

---

[8] *Харачийска хартия*. Karateodorov (1940, 12) translates *пътен лист* which denotes *travel document*, whereas Yakov's edition (2006, 17) uses *книжата за данък*, which denotes *tax papers*.

[9] In Bulgaria, the *grosh* was used as a currency before the *lev*.

[10] A *falàga* is a wooden instrument for holding someone's legs up and beating their feet with a stick. It was used as punishment in 19th Century Bulgaria. <http://rechnik.chitanka.info/ w/фалага>

[11] *Selskiat knez* (*селският кнез*). Karateodorov (1940, 13) and Yakov's edition (2006, 18) use *кмет*, which denotes *mayor*.

[12] *Aforèsmo* signifies removal or exclusion of someone by order of the church. (Български тълковен речник)

[13] *Haidouk – ti* (*хайдутин - и*) is a Balkan term for outlaws, rebels, bandits, guerillas or freedom fighters in 17th-19th C. Southeastern Europe. *Haidouti* fought against the Ottoman rule, but also attacked merchants and travelers.

all of them. Having bought my uncle's house while he was still alive, I still had some money. I spent it when I got married, but I was counting on my trade. Then, when the court charged me with those debts, I did not have a penny left in cash.[14] What misery I had to go through till I paid off that debt![15] My life was marked by poverty, worry, and sorrow! I endured much blame from my wife, who was a bit of a snob!

I thought about leaving my home and wife and going down to the villages to work and earn my living [*kevernisam*].[16] Some of the top bosses [*chorbadjiy*][17] heard that I wanted to leave and they called me and said:

"Don't go anywhere, stay here! Soon our bishop will come [from Shumen] and we'll ask him to make you a priest."

The bishop[18] (*archi-iereos*) arrived three days later. They petitioned for me and he agreed at once to anoint me on Sunday. They then gave him seventy groshes. This payment was made on Wednesday and I prepared what was needed for Sunday. On Friday evening the churchwarden came, returned the money and said:

"You should know that the bishop won't make you a priest. Somebody else came and gave him a hundred and fifty groshes, so the bishop will anoint him."

Grief and regret took hold of me then, for I had confessed to the priest, brought my diploma and had prepared what was necessary. But whom should I tell about my grief? I hurried to these people who had petitioned for me and given their money, so they went to the bishop and gave him another thirty groshes. And I was anointed on 1st September 1762.

As I could read a little, the other priests hated me, for at that time all of them were peasants [*orachi*].[19] And since they were so simple and illiterate, I did not want to defer to them, for I was young and unreasonable.[20] And then they told lies about me to the bishop, who hated me and often punished me by suspending me from my duties! The bishop had an

---

[14] The Old Bulgarian noun *сирмя* is rendered as *капитал* in contemporary Bulgarian, but I use *cash* because the expression is *готова сирмя – ready money*. In addition, *capital* has acquired different connotations since Sophronius' time.

[15] *Сиромашия* – poverty, misery, penury. I use '*misery*', which covers both material poverty and sorrow. Also, I use '*poverty*' for rendering *нужда* – literally*:* '*need*'.

[16] *Кевернисам*. Karateodorov (1940, 14) uses *да се поменувам*, which denotes *to be mindful of myself* and Yakov's edition (2006, 19) uses *да се поотърся*, which denotes *to find myself*.

[17] *Чорбаджиа - и* from the Turkish *çorbacı* denotes a military rank in the corps of the Janissaries, and in old Turkic it refers to the head of a military unit (*korbashi*). *Chorbadjia* literally means '*soup-cook*', from '*chorba*' – soup. In Christian regions in the Ottoman empire *chorbadjia* was used for the Christian head of a local elite, such as the head of a village, as well as for tax collectors and other administrative positions. In colloquial Bulgarian it means '*boss*'.

[18] '*Prelate*', literally '*High-priest*' from the Greek *ἀρχι* — chief + *ἱερεύς* — priest.

[19] *Орач-и* means *ploughman.*

[20] "*Bezumnaya mladost moya*" (*безумная младост моя*) denotes "*my heedless youth*". Karateodorov (1940, 14) follows the original, while Yakov's edition (2006, 20) uses "*безразсъдната си младост*" which denotes "*my reckless youth*".

assistant [*protosinghel*],[21] an uneducated and illiterate Greek who really hated me, but that was only natural: for an educated man loves someone who is educated, a simple man – a fool, and a drunkard – a drunk.

So I had an unquiet life for several years.

In 1768, war began between the Turk and the Muscovite.[22] What to say? When those cruel and savage Muslims [*agaryani*][23] attacked us, they did great harm to Christians. They did whatever crossed their minds, and massacred so many people! Our village was at the crossroads of four roads and my house was quite far from the church. But because of my ministry, I had to be at church every day for vespers and matins. I had many roads to wander on my long journeys to church and back home. They caught me and beat me many times! They punched me on the head and tried to kill me, but God protected me.

Then the pashas[24] started marching through and made me write registration permits [*teskera*][25] for their quarters, because I could write fast. But then they did not like their quarters and came back again. They repeatedly pulled their guns on me, in order to kill me! Once one of them threw his spear at me, but did not hit me. Finally the famous Algerian [*Dzhezaerli*][26] Hassan Pasha marched through on his way to Ruse [*Ruschuk*].[27] I was handing out registration permits as usual. Then one of his people took me by the beard, almost tearing it out.

When everyone was accommodated, the pasha called four village elders to him and I was one of them. Then came the Turkish sergeant [*chaoush*],[28] who lived in the village, for the vezir had sent him to protect the village from the army. We went with him to the pasha's front door [*porta*], and he said:

"You stay here, and I'll go up to see why the pasha called you."

---

[21] In orthodox Christianity, a protosinghel (протосингел, πρωτοσύγκελλος) is a bishop's principal assistant.

[22] Sophronius refers to the first Russo-Turkish war (1768-74), which ended with the Treaty of Küçük-Kaynarca, following the defeat of the Ottomans at the battle of Kozludzha. Karateodorov (1940, 15) refers to it as the first war of Catherine the Great.

[23] *Агаряни* denotes *descendents of Agar and Ismael*, designating followers of Islam. <http://bible.netbg.com/bible/dic/w.php?53>

[24] *Pasha* (Turkish: *paşa*, derived from Persian: *pādšā*) was a higher rank in the Ottoman Empire's political and military system, usually granted to officers and dignitaries. Cf. Yakov's edition (2006, 21).

[25] *Teskera* (*тескера*) from the Turkish *teskere*, derived from the Arabic *taskira* (*reminder*), denotes a *written document, letter, or certificate*. Karateodorov (1940, 15, 46) and Yakov's edition (2006, 21, 58) use *permit* (*позволително*).

[26] *Dzhezaerli* (*джезаерли*) denotes *Algerian*. See Karateodorov (1940, 16).

[27] Ruschuk (Русчук, Rusçuk) is the Turkish name of Ruse (Русе), an important river port and city in northeastern Bulgaria, situated on the right bank of the Danube, on the border with Romania. Prior to Ottoman Bulgaria, Ruse was called Rusi. Etymologically, the name denotes "*red*" (= "*rous*"). Ruse is an old city with a history dating back to the Romans, Thracians, and the Neolithic age.

[28] *Chaoush* (*чауш*) is a Turkish word for an armed guard or a sergeant. See Karateodorov (1940, 16) and Yakov's edition (2006, 21).

After he'd gone upstairs, the pasha yelled at him and had him thrown in jail. So we took to our heels as best we could. I ran past the pasha's house, unaware that the pasha was sitting up there in the corner and could see me. When he saw me, he shouted:

"Hey! Why are you running away? Catch him and bring him here!"

Immediately four of his people caught me and brought me to the pasha. I was so afraid! Then he asked me:

"So, why are you running away? Who's chasing you?"

I replied:

"Effendi,[29] we are rayas;[30] we're always as scared as rabbits. When you arrested the sergeant, we were frightened and ran away."

But he replied:

"What does that have to do with you? I summoned you to ask you for directions."

He was a terrible pasha! He then went to Ruse and stayed there.

In summer, 1775, the Muscovite defeated the Turk and crossed the Danube to besiege Shumen, where vezir[31] Muyusunoğlu was standing with the Turkish army. The Muscovite then laid siege to Rouschouk, Silistra[32] and Varna.[33] At that time an Albanian [*Arnaoudian*] pasha was stationed in our village to guard the ravine, so that the Turkish army wouldn't flee, as they usually did. The judge [*kadia*],[34] the sergeant, and the tax collector [*subashit*][35] also happened to be there. When they heard that the Muscovite had besieged the vezir, they all fled to Sliven.[36] We were really afraid they would loot us before they fled! The Christians kept watch day and night. The siege lasted for 22 days. Then they signed a peace treaty and the Muscovites withdrew, leaving Turkey and Walachia.[37]

Soon after that I went to Mount Athos (*Sveta Gora*)[38] and stayed there for six months. When I returned from there, I taught children to read and write, and had a good

---

[29] *Effendi* (*ефенди*, from the Greek, *authentes* – lord, master) is a Turkish title of respect or courtesy.

[30] *Raya* (*рая*, from the Turkish, derived from the Arabic *ra`aya* – flock) denotes a non-Muslim or infidel in Ottoman society.

[31] A *vezir* or *vizier* (derived from the Arabic *wazir* – *viceroy*) is a high-ranking counselor, official or minister in the Ottoman Empire.

[32] Silistra (Силистра) is a port town in northeastern Bulgaria, on the southern bank of the Danube.

[33] Varna (Варна) is a city on Bulgaria's northern Black Sea coast.

[34] *Kadia* (*кадия*) is a Turkish word for judge (*съдия*). See Karateodorov (1940, 17) and Yakov's edition (2006, 22).

[35] *Subashit* (*субашит*) is a Turkish word for *tax collector*. Karateodorov (1940, 17) translates *селският главатар, турчин* which roughly denotes *Turkish village chief*. Yakov's edition (2006, 23) uses *бирникът*.

[36] Sliven (Сливен) is a city in southeastern Bulgaria, near Yambol and Nova Zagora.

[37] In Sophronius' day, Walachia (Vlashko, Влашко), now Romania, was under Ottoman suzerainty, with brief periods of Russian occupation between 1768 and 1854.

[38] Mount Athos (Sveta Gora, Света Гора), also known as the "Holy Mountain" (Ἅγιον Ὄρος), is a mountain and peninsula in northern Greece and an autonomous monastic state within

life. But the devil, who always envies the good, prompted the bishop to make me his churchwarden's treasurer.[39] That was the end of my pious life. In order to indulge the bishop, I began to impose fines on people, as was the Greek custom: I became a judge for intermarriage and other offenses; but rather for money, not even for myself, but to indulge the bishop. And the Holy God rewarded me justly for my deeds. I will recount this later.

It was not long before the lords (*aghi*) of Omurtag [*Osman pazar*][40] quarreled about who should become regional governor [*ayanin*].[41] The sultan[42] of Verbisha[43] appointed a regional governor, but the district governor [*valia*][44] didn't want him. So they sent Bekir, the pasha of Silistra, to deal with them. When he arrived, he killed the sultan's governor. Ten people from our village had to go to Omurtag. They negotiated the tax for our village, which was fixed at 10 kesia (*500 groshes*). The pasha locked up three of us, including me. He sent the others to our village to collect the tax money and gave them three days to bring it to him.

Meanwhile we sat there, in jail. Three or four days passed, but no one came. We heard that they had gone to Varbitsa (*Verbisha*), to complain about the pasha to the sultan. My companions in jail began to weep bitterly:

"Ah, we poor devils [*siromakhi*],[45] the pasha will have us beheaded!"

In less than an hour an envoy came from the pasha and said:

"Come, priest [*papaz*],[46] the pasha has summoned you!"

With a heavy heart I went to the pasha! Secretly I prayed to God to forgive me my sins, because I had lost hope. When I came to the pasha, he said:

"Where are your people who should bring the money, eh?"

And I replied:

"Effendi, they only left three days ago. When should they have collected so much money and brought it here?"

And he answered:

"Infidel [*gyavur*],[47] go now and write to them that they shouldn't collect the money from infidels [*raya*],[48] but rather take it from some trader; because if they don't return within three days, I shall behead you all, and will take the double amount from them!"

---

the Hellenic Republic. Its orthodox monastic traditions date back to the Byzantine period, and its 20 monasteries are subordinated to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

[39] *Epitrop* (*епитроп*) denotes a person who manages the church's finances.

[40] Osman pazar *(Осман пазар*), now Omurtag (*Омуртаг*) is a town in Targovishte Province in northeastern Bulgaria, located north of the Stara Planina mountain.

[41] An *ayanin* was a regional governor and local notable in the Ottoman Empire.

[42] According to Karateodorov (1940, 18) and Yakov's edition (2006, 23) '*sultan*' here denotes the title of a Tatar landowner.

[43] Verbisha (Вербиша), now Varbitsa (Върбица), is a town in eastern Bulgaria, in the Shumen province. *Varbitsa* denotes *willow*.

[44] Valia (*валия*) denotes an Ottoman district governor. See Karateodorov (1940, 18) and Yakov's edition (2006, 24).

[45] *Siromakh* (*сиромах*) denotes a beggar, poor man, or poor devil (idiom).

[46] Papaz (папаз, поп, from the Greek *pappos*) denotes priest, or grandfather.

[47] *Gyavur*, *giaor*, or *gavur* in Turkish, denotes a non-Muslim or infidel.

[48] *Raya* denotes the non-Muslim population of the regions under Ottoman rule.

I wrote that down and we sent a messenger. Three days passed but they didn't come, and we looked like sheep waiting for slaughter. On the third day, the pasha summoned me again. When I went to him, I was really desperate, and because I was afraid, I was unable to reply to what the pasha was saying. As I was standing before him and he saw that I couldn't answer, he asked me gently:

"Didn't your people come?"

I replied:

"Effendi, you are merciful. Be a little more patient; whatever happens, they'll be here tonight!"

But he didn't want to wait and immediately sent an envoy to request another 1000 groshes. I had to endure a lot in jail! Since then I've been suffering from an intestinal disease called haemorrhoids[49] which I caught back then from the disgusting food. When I wanted to go outside, they wouldn't let me and insulted me. Also, due to fear and illness, all my hair had fallen out.

After that I didn't stay idle. I bought two small houses near the church and renovated them completely, spending what money I had. After some time, I fell ill. It was not an illness to confine me to bed, but a tension in my chest. I couldn't stay in one place till someone counted to ten. I walked like a madman near the water and wept. I felt as though my heart would jump out of my mouth. God had sent me this punishment for my foolish madness because I had become self-important as treasurer and had fined innocent people. We had no doctors, only some old women who cast spells and treated me, but to no avail! I went to look for doctors in Sliven and Yambol,[50] and finally I went to Tsarigrad. I spent so much money that I accumulated quite a few debts.

Then the Turk started war with the Muscovite and the German.[51] At that time the vezir pasha Yusuf spent the winter in Ruschuk. My son went to Walachia to buy some pigs but, for some reason, he lost 1400 groshes. When he saw that we were debt-ridden, he went to the army camp and became scribe to the chief meat supplier.

Some days later my wife also fell ill. She was bedridden for 6 months, and then she died. We had other expenses, as well. On one side, armed forces were marching through and we had to accommodate them, and on the other side, the creditors did not leave us in peace. They wanted their money and they wanted to put me in jail. When my health had improved a little, my superior forbade me to celebrate mass for three years, because of the spells I had asked the old women to cast on my illness. When these three years had passed, my superior gave me permission to celebrate mass, but the bishop forbade it because my son still owed him interest on his money – but no capital – in an amount of 84 groshes.

---

[49] Haemorrhoids seems a mischaracterization of his condition, yet Sophronius renders the notion both in old Bulgarian and Turkish: "Имам недуг почечуйний, сиреч маясил. Тогива от противное ястие беше мя хватил". "Недуг почечуйний" denotes "a problem with the rectum" and "mayasıl" is a Turkish word for haemorrhoids. Karateodorov (1940: 25) and Yakov (2006: 25) use „чревна болест, сиреч маясил"; the German, Polish and French translators use "haemorrhoids".

[50] Yambol is a city in southeastern Bulgaria, on both banks of the Tundzha river.

[51] Sophronius refers to the Austro-Turkish war of 1787-1791 and the Russo-Turkish war of 1787-1792.

"Give me," he told me, "this money, and I will give you permission to celebrate mass."

In this way he kept me from celebrating mass for another three years. I really endured a lot from the priests! They insulted me and sneered at me, and they did not pay me my due. Even when they did give me something, they would tell me:

"Look, we're feeding you as if you were some blind man."

And those were my students! For six years I suffered such shame and abuse.

When the vezir's army[52] was in Machin,[53] the chief meat supplier sent my son and one of his men to collect sheep from the Plovdiv [*Philipine*] area. They collected them and that lord [*agha*] sent my son with 20,000 sheep to the army in Adrianopolis [*Odrin*].[54] However, my son left 700 choice muttons for our village, so that he could sell them when his lord marched through here. When he came, my son sold the muttons to Haji[55] Vlasia and Matei. And they handed them over to a man who was supposed to go to Adrianopolis to sell them at the Turkish Feast of the Sacrifice [*Kurban Bayram*].[56] When the shepherds came to Fandaklii,[57] they got into a fight with each other and one of them was killed. The local sultan caught them and put them in jail, and confiscated the sheep.

In these days one of the sultan's officers [*bostancibaşı*] [58] had come from Adrianopolis to guard the ravines, to stop the Turks from deserting the army, and the local sultan delivered the prisoners to that officer. We, however, did not know anything about this. One day 20 guards arrived at our village and asked who had sold those sheep. Our elders replied:

"These sheep were sold at the priest's house, you should ask him. We don't know who sold them and who bought them, but he knows."

They summoned me and turned me over to the henchmen. They took the three of us to the sultan's officer at Sliven. But he was about to leave for Kazanlak[59] and therefore turned us over to the master sergeant [*ortachaoush*]. Then we cut across the field to

---

[52] Karateodorov (1940, 21) notes that the vezir had an army of 20,000 at Machin and was preparing to attack the Russians.

[53] Machin (*Мачин*) is a town in northern Dobrudja (*Добруджа*). The Dobrudja region is situated between the lower Danube River and the Black Sea, between southeastern Romania and northeastern Bulgaria. Varna, Silistra, Dobrich are Bulgarian cities in the Dobrudja region. The Bulgarian city of Plovdiv (*Пловдив*) was then known as Philippopolis.

[54] *Adrianopolis* is today's *Edirne* (*Odrin* in Bulgarian).

[55] Haji (*hajj, hagi, хаджи*) is a honorific title given to a Muslim who has successfully completed the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. NB: it is also given to Christians who have successfully completed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and is added as a prefix to their family name.

[56] *Kurban-Bayram* is a Muslim religious holiday honoring the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son Ismail.

[57] Fandaklii is now the village of Tenevo in the Yambol region in Southern Bulgaria.

[58] An officer from the Sultan's guard (*bostancıbaşı*). Guards are *bostancii*.

[59] Kazanlak (Казанлък) is a town in the Stara Zagora province in central Bulgaria, , near the Balkan mountain range and the Rose Valley.

Koriten.[60] It was the 23rd of July and the weather was blazing hot, burning like fire. They had tied our hands behind our backs and made us go on foot.

We walked for two hours and then we couldn't go on because of the heat. We couldn't keep up with them, since they were on horseback and we were on foot. Haji Vlasia, who was older, fell unconscious to the ground. The guard sent someone to the officer, who was close behind us, to ask if he should let us mount our horses, but he said:

"Don't you have a club (*topuz*)[61] to beat them, so that they'll walk? If they can't walk, cut off their heads and leave them."

Our hearts sank when we heard that, and we were wondering what to do. We conferred and promised the guard 30 groshes, because Turks are easily persuaded by money. By then we had fallen behind and they put us on our horses. So we rode to the village of Koriten and stopped there. After an hour or so, they took us to the sultan's officer. He asked me first:

"Who sold these sheep?"

And I replied:

"Islyam Agha sold them and Haji Vlasia bought them."

"So, how many did they sell?"

And I said:

"700."

"But didn't they sell more than that?

I replied:

"I don't know. That's all I know"

"Don't you know, you bastard [*pezvenk*]?"[62]

Right away he ordered for me to be thrown down, my eyes facing the ground. Then three men sat on me and began beating me on my bare feet. May God protect us from the guards' merciless beatings! They beat me and asked me:

"Say, how many sheep did he sell?"

I couldn't bear it any longer, my heart was tearing painfully, and I said:

"Let me go and I'll tell you."

They let me go.

"Tell us!"

"I know," I said, "that the chief meat supplier sold more sheep to two traders (*djelepi*), but I don't know how many sheep he sold, or for how much."

Then he shouted:

"Go now, and hang this bastard!"

The guards dragged me off to hang me. I pulled back towards their boss but they pulled me outside and tore my clothes. I forgot both beatings and pain! Meanwhile, some lords [*aghi*] intervened, who happened to be with him, and saved me from hanging. The guards put us in iron chains together with the other prisoners – about 25 Turks, Christians,

[60] *Koriten* or *Korten* is a village in the Stara Zagora region in southern Bulgaria.

[61] A *topuz* is a club with a metal ball at the top, used by the Ottomans for law enforcement.

[62] *Pezvenk* (*пезвенк*). Karateodorov (1940, 22) uses *сводник* (*pimp*), while I follow Yakov's edition (2006, 29), who uses *мръстник* (*bastard*).

and Gypsies, but most were Albanians [*arnaouti*] who had deserted the army after the Muscovite defeated it at Machin.

They also beat Haji Vlasia, but not as much. And each day they impaled some of the Albanians before our eyes. Then the guards came and threatened to impale us, too. So we wheedled the lords [*aghi*] into appealing for our release. Five days later we were free, but we had to pay a fine of 1500 groshes. The officer let us go, but he did not release the shepherds. He said:

"I'll release them when I'll go to Edirne [*Adrianopolis*]."

Before he left for Edirne, however, they fired him, and so the shepherds, who were our countrymen, stayed in jail.

We had to endure a lot from their women! Once, when a pasha passed through our village, these women set out to file a complaint about us. What could I do? This was yet another misfortune. So, when I heard about it, I fled to the forest and stayed there for two days until the pasha had left. The shepherds stayed in jail for three months. Then the meat supplier obtained a decree [*ferman*][63] from the vezir to release them and he also got back the sheep from the sultan. And the dismissed officer had to return half the fine, namely 750 groshes. This officer was from Karnobat[64] and his name was Mehmet Serbezoğlu.[65]

Once all this was over, I passed the winter at home. However, the bishop did not allow me to celebrate mass and the priests insulted me every day. The elders had turned me over to the sultan's officer, even though I was innocent and had helped a lot with village affairs: I had often gone to the vezir's council in order to help the village. For twenty years I had taught their children to read and write, and I'd held mass on every Sunday and on every holiday.[66] And now, after all my efforts and work, after all the good I had done them in body and soul, in the end they turned me over to the sultan's officer to be killed! This was just too much!

On top of this sorrow, there were the priests' insults – that they had to keep me, as though I were a blind man. In my distress I went to the Anchialic bishopric [*episcopacy*].[67] The bishop welcomed me gladly and gave me a parish with 20 villages, including Karnobat.

I knew that Serbezoğlu was there, the one who had fined us and from whom they then reclaimed the money by means of a decree [*ferman*]. But I also knew I'd done nothing wrong because I had neither sold nor bought these sheep, even though they were bought and sold in my hut.

---

[63] A *ferman* or *firman* (*ферман*) is a sultan's decree or royal mandate. The Turkish word comes from the Persian *farmân*, denoting *decree* or *order*.

[64] Karnobat is a town in the Burgas province in Southeastern Bulgaria.

[65] *Serbezoğlu* (*Сербезоглу*) is a Turkish surname denoting "*son of a courageous man*". J. Feuillet (1981) provides detailed notes on Turkish names and Turkish words in the French translation of Sophronius' autobiography.

[66] "*книжное учение*"

[67] *Anchialo* (*Αγχίαλος*) is today's *Pomorie*, a seaside town in southeastern Bulgaria.

The Christians were very happy when I arrived there to serve as priest. From March to Whitsunday [*Sveta Troitsa*],[68] my life was peaceful. On that day, a decree arrived, reinstating Serbezoğlu. Right away he sent servants, who seized me and threw me into a dreadful jail. He kept me there for four days. He didn't mistreat me; there was a trade fair in Karnobat on these days. Also, a sultan was staying at his house as a guest, so it was impossible for him to harm me. Four of us were tied together on a short chain, and there was no way we could lie down at the same time. When two of us were lying down, the other two were standing. Guards came to me, swore at me and said:

"As soon as the sultan leaves, we'll impale you and beat you up, so you'll understand what it means to reclaim a fine from an officer of the sultan's guard."

They did not let any Christians approach us. I looked like a sheep about to be led to slaughter. On the fifth day the sultan left, and as soon as he had stepped out the doorway, the guard arrived and asked me:

"What's your name? Tell me the truth!"

I told him my name. The officer wanted to get a court order to kill me. When the Christians heard this, they got ready to appeal for me in town and in the villages – they had all come to the trade fair. The men appealed to one of the officer's friends, and the women appealed to his mother. And his mother begged him to give me to her, so as not to offend the Christians by killing me. Due to so many pleas, I was released from that terrible death. But since he had sworn to kill me, instead of me, he impaled one of the shepherds that day, who was a killer. And then he once again imposed that fine on me which had been reclaimed from him.

Soon after that, another misfortune befell me, which was even more awful and terrible. In my parish there was a village called Shikhlari.[69] And there lived a sultan called Akhmet Geryay, whose wife was the daughter of a khan.[70] This sultan fell in love with a Christian girl, the daughter of some big shot [*chorbadji*] Ivan, surnamed Kovandjioğlu.[71] The sultan wanted to take her as his second wife. But the khan's daughter did not allow him to take a second wife. So he kept that poor girl 4 or 5 years – neither marrying her, nor allowing her to marry.

One day they summoned me to Karnobat to perform a wedding ceremony and I asked where the girl was from, and they told me:

"This is the girl whom the sultan wanted to take as a second wife, and now he has given her permission to marry, so we brought her here."

I believed them and married them. Three days later I learned that the sultan was going after her father in order to kill him, but the father had escaped. So then the sultan had

[68] The Christian *Sveta Troitsa* holiday (*Света Троица*), also known as *Whitsunday* or *Pentecost* (Greek: Πεντηκοστή, Bulgarian: *Петдесетница,*), is celebrated on the 50th day after Easter (Christ's ascension).

[69] Shikhlari (*Шихлари*), now called Raklitsa, is a village near Karnobat, in the Burgas region, in southeastern Bulgaria.

[70] *Khan, han* (*хан*) is a Mongolian, Turkish (*kağan*) and Ottoman (*han*) title for a sovereign or military ruler.

[71] *Kovandjioğlu* (Turkish) denotes *Beekeeper's son*.

caught her brother and given him a heavy beating and fined him. I was horrified and scared to death.

I then went to a village called Kosten[72] – the only place with a church in the entire Karnobat district [*kadiluk*][73] – to celebrate mass on the day of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. Some guy called Milosh came to call on me about an urgent matter. In the afternoon I was ready, and Milosh and I set off. At a place not far from the road, we saw men and women harvesting the fields, and nearby, there were a couple of Turks on horseback. They summoned us, as we passed them. When we came closer, Milosh said:

"That's the sultan."

I ran up to kiss the hem of his coat and he asked me:

"Are you the priest of these villages?"

I replied:

"Yes, I am your servant."

Then he asked me:

"Did you perform the wedding ceremony for Kovandjioğlu's daughter in Karnobat?

I replied:

"I'm a foreigner; I've only recently come here and I don't know who Kovandjioğlu's daughter is.

Right away he lifted his gun and twice clubbed me on the shoulders with the stock. Then he pulled his gun on me. Since I was close to him, I grabbed the gun, and he called to his attendant:

"Quick, give me a rope to hang this bastard [*pezvenk*]!"

The man went to my horse, took its double reins and threw them around my neck. Nearby there was a willow tree, which he climbed right away and pulled me up by the rope. As my hands weren't bound, I held onto the reins and pulled them down. I begged the sultan to have mercy on me. But he was sitting on his horse and furiously called out to Milosh:

"Hey! Come and hang this bastard!"

Then Milosh began to appeal to him for my sake, but the sultan hit him in the face with the shotgun's club and smashed his jawbone. The sultan then turned to face the willow-tree and pointed his gun at his attendant, and yelled:

"Why don't you pull on the rope, eh? Now I'll haul you down from the willow."

The man pulled the rope up while I was pulling it down, since my hands weren't tied. And while the sultan was watching us, Milosh, my companion, ran away and there was no one left to pull me up. Then the sultan told his attendant:

"Come down and we'll go to the village to hang him there, so that everyone will see him!"

They gave me my horse's reins so that I could lead him, and the attendant dragged me along by the rope around my neck, while the sultan was walking behind me. Swearing at me, he told me:

---

[72] Kosten (Костен) is a village in the Burgas province, in southeastern Bulgaria.

[73] Sophronius uses the Turkish word *kadiluk* (*кадилик*), which denotes an administrative subdivision of the Ottoman Empire.

"If I don't kill you, who else shall I kill? You wed my wife to an infidel [*gyaur*]….".[74]

I was silent, because I had despaired of life. But when he led me through the fields, the grass and weeds came up to my knees and I could hardly walk. I fell down many times, but the servant pulled on the rope and nearly choked me. The sultan, who was following behind me and cursing me, clicked his gun but didn't fire. Then he clicked it again and fired, but he either didn't aim it at me, or he didn't hit me because he was drunk. When we were back on the road he told his attendant:

"Stop!"

We stopped. Then he aimed his gun at me close up and told me:

"Infidel [*gyaur*], be quick about joining our faith, for you are leaving this world right now!"

What was I to do? My mouth was dry from fear of death. I clammed up and merely said:

"Ah, Effendi, should one change one's faith at gunpoint? But if you kill a priest, do you expect the world's praise?"

He aimed his gun at me and thought for a long time. Then he asked me:

"Will you divorce this bride from her husband?"

I replied:

"Certainly, when I get to Karnobat, I'll divorce them."

"Swear it!" – he said.

What was I to do; from fear of death I swore and said:

"Vallahi billahi,[75] I'll divorce them!"

His attendant then came to my aid and said:

"Effendi, why does he have to divorce them? If he simply curses them, she will run away from him by herself."

He then told his attendant:

"If that's how it is, let him go on his way!"

I got on my horse, and in a quarter of an hour I reached the village of Sigmen, which is two hours away from there.[76] At Sigmen I quickly drank three or four glasses of strong grape brandy. As I was sitting there, I was overcome by fear and started to tremble, almost as from fever. Milosh arrived about an hour later and, when he saw me, he was shocked and amazed. He gripped his injured face and said:

"Oh, father, are you alive? As I fled," he said, "I kept looking back at the willow from afar, to see whether they had hanged you, but you weren't there. Yet when the shot rang out I said: "There, poor priest Stoyko is gone from this world."

Well, such woes and deathly fears passed over my head. And I suffered all that for other people's sake.

---

[74] *Gyaur (гяур)* or *gyavur* (*гявур*) is a Muslim denomination for infidels ("not of islamic faith").

[75] Sophronius uses the Turkish expression: "*vallahi billahi*" (*upon my oath I swear it*). It seems that his swearing on Allah renders his oath invalid for Christians. See Yakov's edition's note (2006, 37).

[76] Sigmen (Сигмен) is a village in South-Eastern Bulgaria, in the Karnobat municipality, situated in the Burgas province.

When I had completed my year there, I went to Karabunar.[77] I spent a year there, too, but it was peaceful. When I left, the Christians wept at our parting. They wanted me to remain for another year, but I couldn't stay, because my children had left Kotel and had moved to Arbanasi.[78] I had to go to them.

I set off and went to Arbanasi on March 13th. I had no work until July and stayed at a monastery for nearly two months.[79] Kyrios Seraphim, the bishop of Vratsa,[80] arrived at the time. He was ill, and after a few days he went to meet his Maker. A few days later, I went to see Kyrios Grigorios, the bishop's assistant [*protosinghel*] in Tarnovo,[81] to ask his advice on a matter concerning the monastery. And he told me:

"You should leave the monastery, because we want to make you bishop of Vratsa."

I refused, saying that I was not worthy of such a title: first, I was too old, 54 years old, and second, I had heard that this bishopric extended over many small villages, so there would be a lot of masses to celebrate. But he said:

"But we absolutely want to make you bishop."

These talks went on for about 15 days. On the day of the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross,[82] the first deacon, Kyrios Theodosius, came to my home and told me:

"Look, father, many days have passed since we invited you to be our bishop, but you don't want to. And now the lord Archbishop [*mitropolit*][83] (his name was Matei), has sent me. There are also four other bishops who advise him and I can tell you that all of them consider you worthy to become bishop of Vratsa. See, you should give me an answer: do you want to be bishop or not? That's why I have come here. Listen, father!" he continued:

"We have served for twenty years, yet we are not considered worthy of the bishopric, and others pay money or send petitioners, while you have been offered this gift without having served for a long time, without a pay-off and without petitioners."

While I was thinking about which answer to give, my children started to persuade me:

---

[77] Karabunar (Карабунар) is a town now called Sredets (Средец), in the Burgas province.

[78] Arbanasi (Арбанаси) is a village in central northern Bulgaria, in the Veliko Tarnovo municipality.

[79] Yakov's edition (2006, 39) notes that priest Stoyko Vladislavov took his vows under the name of Seraphim when he joined the Kapinovo Monastery.

[80] Vratsa (Враца) is a city in northwestern Bulgaria, situated at the foothills of the Balkan mountains, also called the Vrachanski Balkan. Sophronius became bishop of Vratsa on 17 September 1794.

[81] Veliko Tarnovo (Велико Търново) is an historical capital of Bulgaria, located in north central Bulgaria.

[82] The feast of the "Elevation of the Honored and Life-Giving Cross" (*Ὕψωσις τοῦ Τιμίου καὶ Ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ*, in Latin *Exaltatio Sanctae Crucis*) takes place on September 14th, commemorating the finding of the True Cross in 326 and its recovery from the Persians in 628, and is one of the great feasts of the church year.

[83] *Metropolitan bishop* or *Mitropolit* (*Митрополит*), Greek: *μητροπολίτης*, or *archbishop*, is the oldest and highest episcopal rank in Orthodox Christianity. A metropolitan bishop presides over synods (councils) of bishops.

"Father, don't you want to consent, since they are pleading with you? We'd like our father to be bishop!"

I gave in to their wheedling and accepted. The first deacon kissed my hand and left.

Then they summoned me to the archbishopric, where I met the other bishops and kissed their hands. That was on Thursday. The archbishop told me:

"On Sunday you should be ready to be ordained as bishop."

As it happened, they had ordained me as priest on Sunday, September 1st , 1762, and then they ordained me as bishop in 1794, again in September, on the 13th, which was also a Sunday. And when they ordained me as bishop, they dressed me in the vestment worn by the former bishop, Kyrios Gedeon, in Kotel, when they had ordained me as priest.

On the day I became bishop, there was great joy in the archbishopric, and there was a lavish banquet at our house. I stayed on in Arbanasi for three more months, until I was ready, and until the decree and summons arrived from Tsarigrad.

On December 13th I set out for my bishopric. It was bitterly cold, and snow had fallen. I intended to arrive at my bishopric for Christmas. When I arrived in Pleven,[84] the Christians there were amazed that I had dared to travel to Vratsa in such weather.

Then the first disturbing news arrived. I asked: "What is this unrest near Vratsa?" The people of Pleven told me that Pazvantoğlu[85] had quarreled with Lord Gench and Hamamcioğlu, whom he had banished from Vidin; and they had gathered an army of Turks and Albanians to combat against Pazvantoğlu. But since they couldn't reach the Vidin district [*kadiluk*] because of Pazvantoğlu's army, they were camped in the villages around Vratsa.

How should we then get to Vratsa? I stayed three days in Pleven, but on the fourth day I left for Vratsa. I sent villagers ahead to scout out if the army was in the villages and to return to warn me, so that we could go back to Pleven.

And that's how we reached the village Koynlare,[86] which is halfway between Pleven and Vratsa. The villagers came in the middle of the night and told us that 400 of

[84] Pleven (Плевен) is a city in northern Bulgaria, situated in the Danubian plain.

[85] Osman Pazvantoğlu (1758 – 1807) was governor of the Vidin district after 1794 and a rebel against Ottoman Sultan Selim III, resisting the latter's westernizing reforms. He managed to gather a large army and fought the Ottomans for several years, extending his rule to the Black Sea. In the end he was made pasha of Vidin, a port town on the southern bank of the Danube in northwestern Bulgaria, strategically close to Serbian and Romanian borders, as well as at the opening of the road to Nis, Sofia, and Edirne /Adrianopolis / (Одрин), the administrative center of the Eyalet of Edirne. According to the *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (G. Agoston & B. Masters, 2009: 448), Pazvantoğlu had a special policy regarding Christians, particularly merchants and high clergy, who participated in his administration and whom he used as spies, advisors, and agents in his diplomatic relations.

[86] Today Koynlare is a town called Koynare. It lies in northern Bulgaria, on the bank of the river Iskar, and is part of the Pleven province. Koynare was part of the Ottoman Empire since 1516, and part of the Nikopol (*Niğbolu*) district. In 1878 it became part of the modern Bulgarian state.

Pazvantoğlu's *pandours*[87] had arrived at the village Branitsa, which is an hour away from Koynlare. As we didn't know what the word "*pandours*" meant, we were filled with fear and didn't know where to go. I sent people to find escorts for me, but nobody wanted to go because it was so cold, and because they were afraid. It was noon. The people had not returned and I was afraid the *pandours* would come and ransack us. At last we managed to find a Turk and then we left the village. As we approached Vratsa, we saw many troops coming out of the town toward us. But we didn't know whose troops they were. So we were really frightened, until we realized that they were citizens of Vratsa who were pursuing the troops that had destroyed and plundered the surrounding villages.

At last I arrived at my bishopric, which was no better than jail. It didn't matter![88] The Christians welcomed me joyfully. On Sundays and on holidays I went to the churches and delivered sermons in our Bulgarian tongue. These Christians, who until then had not heard any other bishop deliver such sermons in our language, thought I was a philosopher. I went to the villages to collect the church tax[89] as was the custom, but the alms I received were very little, because there was a great famine that year, throughout Bulgaria. One *oka* of flour cost twenty coins.[90] They promised me more in the future, if God gave plenty.

After I finished traveling around the Vratsa district,[91] I wanted to go to Pleven in June, to also collect the church tax there. As we approached Pleven, I sent people ahead to announce our arrival. Several priests came to meet us and said:

"Bishop, now it is not possible for you to come to Pleven, because Topuzoğlu and Nalbantoğlu are fighting in town, over who should become regional governor [*ayanin*]. No Christian leaves his home, and we have come out secretly at night."

As we passed by Pleven, we heard gunshots. We were terrified until we had left the town behind. We then went to Arbanasi.

After I left the bishopric, it was God's will that a plague suddenly struck that summer, afflicting the whole bishopric, in towns and villages. Not a single village was spared, for the sake of our sins. On account of this deadly terror I stayed four months in Arbanasi and spent all the money I had collected from the Vratsa district.

Pleven citizens came to fetch me in October. They said:

---

[87] *Pandours* (*пандури*) is an 18th C. term for military frontier guards, more specifically denoting a Croatian frontier soldiers in the Habsburg army, who had a reputation for cruelty and plundering (cf. Merriam-Webster's dictionary). According to J. Feuillet (1981, 182, note 120), the French translator of Sophronius' *Vita*, the first Bulgarian usage of the word *pandour* is attested by this text.

[88] "*Нека буде*" (*нека бъде*) literally denotes: "*let it be*", with a spiritual connotation of "*let God's will be done.*" Yakov's edition (2006, 42) renders this expression as "*както и да е*" – "*be that as it may*" or "*whatever.*"

[89] Ecclesiastical or church tax = *мирия* in the text. Karateodorov (1940) uses *мирия*, with a note referring to the tax as *владичнина*. The 2006 adaptation into contemporary Bulgarian uses *владичнина*.

[90] *Oka* (ока, -и) is an old Turkish weighing unit, used in Bulgaria until the 1920s. One *oka* is about 1220 grams.

[91] *Kadilik* (кадилик); see notes 30 and 38.

"The plague is still there, but it is worse for the Turks than for the Christians, where it has abated somewhat."

I went with them to Pleven. A priest came to kiss my hand. I looked at him and saw that his face was burning with fever. As he was leaving, I heard another priest say to him:

"Why did you kiss the priest's hand? Don't you see that you have caught the plague?"

It was true, because he died that night. In the morning they asked me for priests, to bury him.

"If you don't send us priests," they said "we'll go to the chief [*ağa*][92] and we'll take them by force, so that they'll bury him. So far, priests have buried all those stricken by the plague. Why shouldn't they also bury this priest?"

What was I to do? I sent them priests and they buried him. In the morning they all came to me and I realized that I was amidst them. I decided to celebrate mass and to receive the holy sacrament. Then may God's will be done. After that we went through Pleven and the villages and blessed the water everywhere, and God kept me safe.

Thus these two years passed. The money I collected just about covered my taxes and their interest. Although I funded my living expenses, I was unable to reduce my debt.

In the summer of 1796, Pazvantoğlu's rebels [*haidouci*] attacked and occupied all towns and villages. Since I could no longer go anywhere, I sent the priests to collect the church tax, but they had trouble even taking half of what was needed. This year the Rumelian governor [*Urumeli vasili*][93] Mustafa pasha deployed an army of 40,000 and besieged Vidin for a long time, but they couldn't do anything against Pazvantoğlu. When Mustafa pasha left, Pazvantoğlu's rebels once more occupied my entire bishopric.

In 1797, brigands [*Kardzhalis*][94] joined Pazvantoğlu's people and arrived at Vratsa. They laid siege [*maysere*][95] to the town for 8 days, and although they fought, they couldn't enter. I had fled at night two days earlier, to go to Rakhovo,[96] and from there to cross to

---

[92] *Ağa* (ara) is a honorific title of a civilian or military functionary in the Ottoman Empire and denotes *chief* or *lord*.

[93] The governor (*vasili, vali*, валия) of Rumelia Eyalet, a major province of the Ottoman Empire. Rumelia (= *land of the Romans*) originally referred to Anatolia, but after 1453 denoted the Balkan regions of the Ottoman Empire populated by Orthodox Christians. Haji Mustafa pasha was appointed "commander of commanders" *(Beglerbeg[i])* of Rumelia Eyalet in 1797, by Sultan Selim III.

[94] The name *Kardzhali* (*Кърджали*) appears to be derived from the legendary 18th C. Turkish brigand Kırca Ali. Perhaps for this reason *Kardzhali*[-*s*] denotes *brigands*, namely military gangs that ravaged parts of Bulgaria at the turn of the 18th century. See on this J. Feuillet (1981: 188, note 131), who also notes the Turkish origin of the word *kardzhali* as *inhabitants of lowlands*. In addition, *Kardzhali* is a town in the Eastern Rhodopes in Southern Bulgaria which, in Sophronius' day, was used as a base by Pazvantoğlu Osman Pasha, who ruled the area till 1807. Pazvantoğlu is a dominant figure in Sophronius' *Vita*.

[95] Majsere (майсере). Karateodorov (1940, 35) and Yakov's edition (2006, 45) use *обсада*, which denotes *siege*.

[96] Rakhovo (Рахово) is a town today called Oryakhovo (Оряхово) in northwestern Bulgaria, in the Vratsa province. It is a port town at the river Danube and located at the border between Bulgaria and Romania, the former Walachia (Влашко).

Walachia. That night, our horse broke loose with our baggage and made off with my belongings, worth 200 groshes. God alone knows how much fear we endured until we had crossed the Danube! Then I went to Arbanasi, where I stayed for a while, until the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] had left my bishopric. In autumn I again returned to Vratsa.

In 1798 another great army of the Tsar marched against Pazvantoğlu, because he had occupied the area from Ruschuk[97] to Varna. The captain-pasha[98] of Tsarigrad arrived with many troops and cannons, and also the famous Karaosmanoğlu of Anatolia, along with twenty-four other pashas and all regional governors (*ayani*) of Rumelia. It was said that an army of 300,000 had been deployed against Vidin. Vidin was besieged and fought over for six months, but they couldn't win against Pazvantoğlu.[99]

As for me, I fled to wherever I could. During January I lived in a sheep pen for twenty days until the first troops had moved on. One night, when the road was a bit safer, I left for Teteven.[100] The branches nearly knocked my eyes out. I stayed in Teteven for two months. When the first troops had nearly reached Vidin, I left Teteven to get to Vratsa for Easter. On the way some Turks nearly killed me on account of someone else's fault.

Around that time silikhtar[101] Husein pasha burned Gabrovo[102] on his return from Vidin, and the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] who accompanied him plundered Arbanasi. Our house was looted completely; not a spoon or bowl remained for us. They took my clothes and books and everything I had, and the entire house was ransacked.[103] My children fled to Kotel[104] and from there they went to Svishtov.[105]

As for me, since I was unable to leave my bishopric because of the troops, I accompanied the Tarnovian bishop's assistant [*protosinghel*] to collect the church tax in the Tarnovo bishopric. Then I went to Svishtov and found my children naked and destitute. They were sitting on a straw mat and I had no money to buy them clothes. My grief was great!

In August I returned to my bishopric. The entire army was fighting at Vidin, to conquer the town. I was terrified as I went around the villages to collect the church tax! Retreating mercenaries – deserters from the Turkish army – plundered the villages. They

---

[97] Ruschuk (Русчук, Rusçuk) is the Turkish name of Rousse (see note 26).

[98] Captain-pasha (капитан-паша) may be Sophronius' transliteration of *Kapudan-pasha* or *Kaptan-ı derya* ("*admiral-pasha*"), the title of the commander of the navy in the Ottoman Empire.

[99] Karateodorov (1940, 36) notes that the number 300,000 was an exaggeration, and that Vidin was armed with 220 cannons.

[100] Teteven (Тетевен, Тетювен) is a town in central northern Bulgaria, at the foot of Stara Planina mountain, in the Lovech province.

[101] Silikhtar (Силихтар) is the title of a dignitary in the Ottoman Empire.

[102] Gabrovo (Габрово) is a city in central northern Bulgaria, at the foot of the central Balkan mountain.

[103] Karateodorov (1940, 36) notes that they probably tore down Sophronius' house to search for buried money.

[104] Kotel (Котел) is a town in central Bulgaria, part of the Sliven province. "*Kotel*" means *cauldron*.

[105] Svishtov (Свищов) is a town in northern Bulgaria, in the Veliko Tarnovo province, on the right bank of the Danube.

even fleeced the Turkish tax collectors [*soubashi*].[106] But I continued going around the villages.

When Pazvantoğlu had at last defeated and dispersed the Tsar's army on St. Demetrius' Day,[107] I was still out and about my bishopric. Turks came pouring in from Vidin and fled to the villages. I suffered much misery and fear until I at last returned to Vratsa! I had made my way through countless woods and hills and valleys. And I had been in Vratsa for a few days when news arrived that Ali Pasha was coming from Vidin with an army of fifteen thousand strong. His seneschals arrived at night, and when I heard this, I prepared to flee from Vratsa on that night, around eight o'clock.[108] The night was dark, the weather was rainy, and the mountain was high and steep. On the way I slipped and fell many times, until I reached the Cherepish monastery![109]

When we arrived at the monastery, we did not find anybody – the monks had fled. The monastery was closed and we did not know where they were. At long last a village priest came along. He knew that they had fled to a cave and he took us there. I stayed in that cave with them for 24 days. I had caught a bad cold and fell ill, and kept my bed there four days. Then I felt warmer and slowly recovered.

I then set out for another monastery which was in the Sofia bishopric.[110] But the mountains there were so high that one could not ride, yet my feet were hurting so badly that I couldn't walk. The way over the mountains usually takes two hours, but by the time I had climbed up and back down, I was truly in tears about my life. I stayed at that monastery for 14 days.

There I received a letter from Vratsa, saying that the captain-pasha had killed Ali pasha in Rakhovo and that the latter's army had dispersed. Another one had arrived in Vratsa, to stay there over the winter – Yusuf pasha[111]. They wrote that: "the bishopric is empty and Yusuf pasha is a good person. Come back soon to the bishopric." But the snow was deep and the winter was severe. Although Vratsa is ten hours away, it took us three days to get there.

---

[106] The name *soubashis* (субашите) denotes police officers and tax collectors in smaller towns and villages in the Ottoman Empire. Karateodorov (1940, 37) uses *delii* (делии), explaining that these were brave Turkish soldiers who were returning after being dismissed from the army and acting like brigands.

[107] St. Demetrius' Day (Димитровден) is a popular and Christian Orthodox Christian holiday celebrated on October 26th in commemoration of the Christian martyr St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki (Ἅγιος Δημήτριος τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης).

[108] Karateodorov (1940, 37) explains in a note that 8 p.m. Turkish time corresponds to 2 a.m. Bulgarian time.

[109] The Cherepish monastery (Черепишкият манастир) is one of the biggest Orthodox monasteries in Bulgaria. It is located in the Balkan mountains in northern Bulgaria, and belongs to the Vratsa diocese.

[110] Yakov's edition (2006, 48) notes that Sophronius refers to the Seven Altars Monastery (манастирът "Седемте престола"), situated in Sofia province, in the Western Balkan mountains, on the border between Sofia province and Vratsa province.

[111] Koca Yusuf Pasha (1730-1800), who was grand vizier under Sultan Selim III.

I had about 10 peaceful days in Vratsa. Then ten Albanian ensigns (*bayratsi arnauti*)[112] arrived and, as there were no empty houses available to accommodate the troops, around 15 people came to the bishopric. They settled in there and I was supposed to feed them. But there was only one room, for the Turks had destroyed the other room. It was winter time and very cold, because initially the house had not been a bishopric but a monastic dependency [*metochion*] where only monks had stayed. I had to tell a lot of lies until I had an opportunity to flee from them.

But to which house could I go, when they were all full of Turks? I fled to the chief of couriers [tatar-ağasi].[113] Since I was wearing a green fur cap [*kalpak*],[114] they asked me:

"Who are you?"

I didn't dare tell them that I was a bishop and so I replied:

"I am a doctor."

They asked me about remedies and I answered as well as I could. Then, at nightfall, I went to a Christian who took me into his home. There were no empty houses anywhere. My servants were outside – I saw that they nearly died from the cold.

I wanted to leave Vratsa, but the pasha's Albanians were guarding the gates and controlled who was going out and who was coming in. Well, what was I to do? I sent ahead a draught horse with two local Turks, wrapped a scarf around my head, took a whip in my hand and spurred on a stable-groom.[115] Disguised as chief of couriers [tatar-ağasi], I quickly passed through the gates, and they didn't recognize me for who I was.

I returned to the Cherepish monastery. Meanwhile the Albanians in the bishopric were using all the bed linen and the crockery. They consumed and wasted the corn, the barley, and the wine. However, we couldn't stay in this monastery. So I set out for another one, which was farther away from Vratsa. Late one evening we arrived at a village from which everyone had fled – no one had remained and we found neither bread nor wood. It was bitterly cold, and the December night was long. We nearly died of the cold. In the morning we got up early. The snow was so deep that the road was gone. The four-hour journey to the Karloukovski monastery[116] took us nearly two days. I stayed there for five or six days, and we celebrated Christmas. But Turkish troops soon began to arrive, because the army had withdrawn from Vidin. Pashas settled in all the neighboring towns. These pashas' men marched through the villages, mostly to look for food and to loot them. So it was not possible for me to remain at that monastery any longer, and I went back to Teteven. I stayed there for 40 days.

---

[112] *Bayrak* (*байрак*, from Old-Turkic *batrak*, *badruk*) denotes "*flag*" or "*banner*". Karateodorov (1940, 38) and Yakov's edition (2006, 48) note that in this context the term refers to armed forces assembled under one banner (*bayrak*).

[113] Master of Tatar-Ağasi (Татар-араси) denotes the master of the couriers (Karateodorov 1940, 38).

[114] A *kalpak* (*калпак*) is a high-crowned cap made of felt or sheepskin, worn by men in Turkey, the Balkans and the Caucasus.

[115] "*Seysin*" (*сеизин*) denotes *groom*. Karateodorov (1940, 39) and Yakov's edition (2006, 49) use *konyar* (*коняр*).

[116] The Karlukovski monastery (Карлуковски манастир) is situated near the Iskar river and the town Lukovit in the Lovech province in northern Bulgaria.

In February, some people came and said that the captain-pasha's mercenaries – around 2000 men – had withdrawn from Pleven, where they had been spending the winter. I was delighted and went to Pleven. But it did not occur to me that Yusuf pasha was in Vratsa, and Gyurdzhi pasha was in Lom, and across from Lom, there was silikhtar Husein pasha, in Walachia. These three were the worst thugs.[117] What if they were to pass through Pleven, where should I flee to? It was not that I had to flee because I had done something wrong, but because my position was dangerous: I was a *bishop*. If the marauding pashas had caught me, ten purses [*kesia*] would not have sufficed to set me free. And I did not even have a hundred groshes on me!

We arrived at Pleven on Saturday, All Souls Day, and there I remained undisturbed till the first Friday of Lent.[118] On that day, late at night, Gyurdzhi pasha's mercenaries arrived. They broke down the gates and twelve riders also came with their horses to our house. We had neither bread nor barley, chaff or hay, and thus we resorted to pleading. We gave them money, and after that they went to another house. They also told us that Gyurdzhi pasha would arrive on the next day, with an army of 4000 men. So where was I to flee to? Out there was nowhere to go, and it was impossible to remain in a Christian house. So I fled and hid in a Turkish harem. I thought Gyurdzhi pasha would stay for a day or two and leave. But that's not what happened, since he stayed for ten days. On the day he left, Husein pasha arrived with an army of 6000 men, and they spared neither Christian nor Turkish houses. Turkish wives [*kadinskij*][119] raised hue and cry, but no one listened to them. They also came to our house, but they didn't like it because there was no place for the horses. While they were rummaging the house, I fled in terror to the Turkish woman. As is their custom, she turned her face away from me, so that I could not look at her.

This pasha stayed for 15 days, so that I remained 26 days in the Turkish harem. This was the Great Fast,[120] and the Turks had no food in the house. The market[121] was closed, and all Christians had Turks in their homes. Who would have thought about bringing me some dinner? The local people were not used to honoring their bishop. Never mind dinner. For many days I even remained without bread, because this Turk was very poor. At his place they mainly ate corn bread, a little cabbage soup and nothing else. I was afraid that someone would come and betray me because then I would surely have been killed, for they would have asked me for a lot of money but I had none.

When the troops had departed, I left the harem and went to the house of my churchwarden. Less than three days had passed when a great tumult broke out in town. When we asked what was happening, we were told:

---

[117] "*Zulumdzhii*" (*зулумджии*, *золумджии*) denote *evil-doers* or *tormentors* (*злосторници*), as Karateodorov (1940, 40) notes. Yakov's edition (2006, 50) uses *violators* (*насилници*).

[118] Сирни Заговезни – the holiday of forgiveness, 7 weeks before Easter.

[119] *Kadın* (*кадин*) is a Turkish word for *woman*. In Bulgarian *kadina* (*кадъна*) denotes *Muslim woman* and *Turkish woman*.

[120] The Great Fast or Great Lent (Велики пости) is a 40 days' fasting season in the Orthodox Christianity, preceding Easter.

[121] *Charshiya* (*чаршия*) is derived from the Turkish *Çarşı*, denoting *market*, or a central commercial street

"Brigands [*Kardzhalis*] have come to the outskirts of the town and want to enter the town by any means."

We saw how Turkish and Christian women seized their valuable belongings and fled crying towards the fortified Turkish quarter. Right away the churchwarden and his wife set out as well. They took a few things with them and abandoned their home. But where was I to flee to? Some people advised me to go to an inn that had solid stonewalls. Since many Turks were also staying there, the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] would be unable to loot it. So I went to that inn and stayed there for 15 days until the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] had left for Tarnovo.

Then came Saint Lazarus' Day.[122] On this day I left the inn and went to the cloister [*metochion*] of the Holy Tomb.[123] There we quietly spent the Holy Week.[124] I celebrated mass at Easter, and we were happy. We went to vespers at the ninth hour.[125] When we began to say: "Christ is risen!"[126] and were about to kiss each other, as was the custom, we heard how the town was shaking. A general uproar arose and loud cries. All the people in the church rushed outside. I alone stayed in the church, wearing my bishop's vestment. I heard shouts and cries from outside, but I didn't know what the great tumult was about and I didn't dare to go out or even take a look. For the church's walls were very low, so I would have been visible from all sides. At that moment, hail pellets as large as walnuts began to fall, but the hail did not go on for long and soon passed. Then a priest came to the church and told me that Pazvantoğlu's bandits [*haidouti*] had come, about 2000 men. They had smashed the gates and doors and had settled down in our convent, and they had stolen all my things.

So, where should I go to? My head was swimming. The tax collector[127] Kyrios Konstantin was in town at that time, together with his servants, guards, and about 60 tradesmen and shepherds. They had come to take sheep as tax, which was the custom. I sent this priest to him. His people then came and took me from the church and escorted me to his place. There I stayed for 19 days. Pazvantoğlu's people were also billeted there and they were drunk and committed atrocities. For that reason, [Kyrios Konstantin][128] took two people from their master [*agha*],[129] whose name was Goshanitsali Khalil,[130] to stay with us, and we shared our bread with them. Brigands [*Kardzhalis*] also came in from outside, and I

---

[122] In Orthodox Christianity, Lazarus Saturday (Свети Лазар, Лазаровден) is the day before Palm Sunday.

[123] Божигробският метох.

[124] Страстната седмица.

[125] Karateodorov (1940, 41) notes that Sophronius refers to 9 p.m. Turkish time, which corresponds to 3 o'clock. Probably he means midnight, the traditional hour of vespers at Easter. Yakov's edition (2006, 53) translates "midnight."

[126] The paschal greeting in Orthodox Christianity is "*Christ is (a-)risen!*" (*Христос воскресе*), and the response is "*Truly, he is risen!*" (*Воистину воскресе*).

[127] *Бегликчия*. *Beglik* (*беглик*) was a tax on sheep and goats in Bulgaria under Ottoman rule and after its liberation.

[128] I follow Karateodorov (1940, 42) and Yakov's edition (2006, 54) in adding "*Kyrios Konstantin*" in order to form a complete sentence.

[129] *Agha* (*ага*) denotes *chief*, *lord* or *master*.

[130] Karateodorov (1940, 42) notes that Gushanitsali Khalil (Гушаницали Халил) was one of Pazvantoğlu's important officers.

was sitting among them with a Walachian fur cap on my head. They called me scribe[131] Stoyan but I could neither read something, nor say a prayer.

One day, the boss [*chorbadji*] Konstantin told me:

"We," he said, "are going through Walachia to Tarnovo. We can't risk going there directly, because of the brigands [*Kardzhalis*]."

I was beginning to wonder what to do. I couldn't stay alone with the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] in Pleven, and I shouldn't risk going to Vratsa; but if I went with them to Walachia, what was I going to do there? I really wanted to return to Vratsa, but I didn't dare take a Turk as bodyguard, for he might tell someone. So I took a Christian, one of boss Konstantin's men. We left at night, but nights are short in May. There were four of us; we went through woods and flat land, cutting across country and avoiding the road. We came to the river Iskar,[132] but it was not possible to cross that river without a boat.

On the other side of the river was the village of Koynlare.[133] We shouted, but no one heard us because of the noise from the river. No one showed up. Night fell and it began to rain. We did not dare fire a gun, in case some of Pazvantoğlu's bandits [*haidouti*] were there. What to do? We were clueless. At last we saw a cowherd. He recognized us and went to the village to let them know. Before long, people arrived with a boat, but the boat was a deadly barrel. It held three or four people and the horses had to swim across on their own. When we pushed the horses into the river so that they would swim across, one of them bolted back into the woods. My God, what were we going to do? It was getting dark. All the horses had swum over to other side, and only one of them had run into the woods. Should we take care of the other horses or catch this one? And how should we cross the deadly river at night? We would all drown! But by God's grace[134] the horse had not gone far; it came back and followed the other horses. Once we had crossed the river I felt a bit better, because on the way to Vratsa there was less danger from the brigands [*Kardzhalis*].

That was how we got to Vratsa. I remained there over the summer until St. Demetrius' Day. I did not dare to leave the town. On St. Demetrius' Day I set out for Pleven. Pazvantoğlu's rebels [*haidouti*] were there, too. I stayed there until St. Nicholas' Day,[135] while the priests collected the church tax.

When I saw that [Pazvantoğlu's rebels] had begun to assemble in Pleven, I was afraid that they would do me some harm. In December, 1799, I left Pleven and went to Nikopol,[136] to cross the Danube and return to Walachia. But since the Danube was frozen on both sides, we couldn't get across, and so we stayed in Nikopol for six days. Then we heard that Gyavur

---

[131] Both Karateodorov (1940, 42) and Yakov's edition (2006, 54) render *yazadzhi* (*язаджи*) as *pisar* (*nucap*), which literally denotes *scribe*.

[132] The river Iskar (Искър) is a tributary of the Danube and the longest river in Bulgaria, which runs through the provinces of Sofia, Pernik, Vratsa, Pleven, and Lovech.

[133] See note 41 on Koynlare / Koynare.

[134] "Ала (по-)даде Бог"

[135] St. Nicholas Day (Свети Никола, Никулден) is a popular and Christian Orthodox holiday celebrated on 6th December in commemoration of St. Nicholas of Myra, also called St. Nicholas the miracle-worker (Νικόλαος ὁ Θαυματουργός).

[136] Nikopol (Никопол, Turkish: *Niğbolu*, Greek: Νικόπολις,) is a town in northern Bulgaria, part of the Pleven province, on the right bank of the Danube.

Imam[137] was coming to Nikopol. I was frightened, and for a large amount of money I was ferried across the Danube, but I was frantic. The ice broke and a horse went down and drowned. The other horses were tied together and dragged over the ice on a plank. We nearly died of cold by the time we reached Zimnicea.[138] The Walachian land was bare. The way and the location were beyond recognition. [Zimnicea] is six hours away, but it took us nearly three days to get there.

In summer 1800, the Tsar's army once again marched against Pazvantoğlu. The Bucarestian Mourouz-bey[139] advanced from Walachia and the pashas came from the Turkish side. Let me tell you the reason: in the village of Varbitsa[140] there was a sultan who was famous for having defeated the Austrians[141] at Giurgu [*Giurgevo*].[142] He had therefore become arrogant and did not want to submit to the vezir when the latter was in Shumen with the Turkish army. So the vezir ordered to have his palaces destroyed. The sultan fled to Muscovia[143] and stayed there for six years. Then he came to Tsarigrad with Muscovite support and the tsar let him set up his palaces again. But when he came to Varbitsa, he gathered an army of Turks and Christians and came to Vidin. I don't know what he'd discussed with Pazvantoğlu, but rumor had it that they had agreed that the sultan would become tsar and that Pazvantoğlu would become vezir. Anyhow, for whatever reason an army was again mobilized against Vidin.[144]

What was I to do? I had no money [*harashlik*][145] left for my own expenses, but I was requested to pay the church tax: the two alternatives were equally unpleasant. First, I had to get a written permission [*byuruntia*][146] from the Vidin pasha in order to collect the church

---

[137] Dyavur-Imam or Gyavur Imam (Диавур-Имам, Гявур-Имам), is described by Karateodorov (1940, 44) as one of Pazvantoğlu's chief officers, whereas Yakov's edition (2006, 56) describes him as a Muslim clergyman. Maybe he was both.

[138] Zimnicea, in Bulgarian: Zimnich, Zimnica, of old Demnicikos (Зимнич, Зимница, Демницикос). Zimnicea is a town in Walachia (today Romania), on the left bank of the Danube, across from the Bulgarian town Svishtov (Свищов).

[139] Karateodorov (1940, 44) notes that *Mourouz-bey* denotes Prince Morozi. Alexandros Mourousis (1750-1816), a Greek ruler of Walachia (1798-1801), appointed by the Ottomans. He had to deal with Pazvantoğlu's rebellious troops in Oltenia and, in the end he asked to be dismissed from his office. "*Bey*" denotes a Turkish and Altaic title for tribal leaders, as well as rulers of provinces.

[140] Varbitsa (Върбица, Вербица) is a town in northeastern Bulgaria, in the Shumen province. In addition, the noun denotes *little willow* (from върба – willow).

[141] Sophronius writes "*the Germans*" (*nemcite, немците*). Karateodorov (1940, 45) follows the original, but Yakov's edition (2006, 56) adapts the text to "*the Austrians*".

[142] Giurgu, Bulgarian: *Giuergevo* (*Гюргево*), Turkish: *Yerköy*, *Yergöğü* is situated in Romania, on the left bank of the Danube, across from Rousse.

[143] Russia

[144] Karateodorov (1940, 45) notes that Pazvantoğlu intended to take the sultan's throne.

[145] *Harashlik*, *harchlik* (*харашлик*, *харчлък*) denotes *a little money for spending,* or *pocket money*.

[146] *Byuruntia, бюрунтия* denotes *permission*. Karateodorov (1940, 45) uses *permission* (*позволение*), whereas Yakov's edition (2006, 57) uses *order* (*заповед*).

tax. But I had neither an archdiocese nor a bishopric, so I could not get this permission. In Walachia there once was a monk called Kalinik, who had been the abbot of the Markoutsa monastery.[147] He was a tenacious man who did not bow his head to anyone, least of all to the Hungarian-Walachian bishop, who then had him thrown in jail on some lawsuit. Out of spite, Kalinik sent a messenger to Vidin and promised Pazvantoğlu forty purses of money if he would make him bishop of Vidin. For some reason, Pazvantoğlu hated the bishop of Vidin and was furious with him. That monk Kalinik knew this, which is why he went to Vidin with a ploy. Pazvantoğlu kicked out the old bishop and took all his belongings and sent Kalinik to the bishopric to serve there in the bishop's stead, until he'd obtained the patriarch's permission to make him bishop of Vidin.

Since I had known this Kalinik for a long time, I sent him a letter, imploring him that if he had access to Pazvantoğlu, to procure a permit [*teskera*][148] from the pasha or the overseer (*kekhaya*),[149] so that I could go and collect the church tax. He wrote to me:

"You should go to Vratsa and send a messenger to get you the permit."

Unaware of his ploy, I set out for Vratsa. A few days passed. Before I had sent my messenger to Vidin, he sent me Pazvantoğlu's permit with an envoy [*mubashir*][150] who was supposed to take me to Vidin.

So I went to Vidin. For two or three months I officiated in the churches. That's what it said in the pasha's permit, namely that I should stay with the Christians for a little while, to celebrate mass for them and then return to my bishopric. When I began to ask for permission to return, one of the pasha's men came to me and told me:

"You cannot go anywhere until Kalinik has become bishop!"

So what was I to do? I was a wretch [*siromakh*] who had unluckily let himself be tied down. I stayed in Vidin for three years. I had to put up with a lot from that monk Kalinik! For him I was like a common servant. He did not acknowledge me as a person, let alone as bishop. He was in league with the Turks, with Pazvantoğlu's bandits [*hajdouti*], and I did not dare to breathe a word about anything. He did not let me go anywhere except to church, and only if I was accompanied by a priest. And even if he had let me go, my legs were hurting, so I couldn't walk and always used a cart to get to church.

This siege [*maysere*][151] went on for two and a half years. I was terrified and endured much grief and sorrow. Then the third siege of Vidin began. But the besiegers were encamped far away. Plyasa pasha encamped in Pleven with 15 thousand Albanians [*arnaouti*], Gyurdzhi pasha encamped in Berkovica with an army just as strong, and Mourouz-bey came from Walachia with Ibrail Nazari and Aydin pasha, with an equally large number of troops.

---

[147] Karateodorov (1940, 45) notes that Sophronius refers to St. Marko's monastery but does not specify its location, which Sophronius places in Walachia (Romania).

[148] *Teskera* (*тескера*) see note 24.

[149] *Kekhaya* (*кехая*) is a Turkish name for overseer or supervisor (Yakov's edition, 2006, 58). According to Karateodorov (1940, 46) *kekhaya* denotes a municipal officer elected by the people.

[150] *Mubashir* (*мубашир*) is an Islamic word denoting *bringer of glad tidings*. Karateodorov (1940, 46) and Yakov's edition (2006, 58) use *messenger* or *envoy* (*пратеник*).

[151] *Майсере*. Karateodorov (1940, 47) and Yakov's edition (2006, 59) both use *обсада*, which denotes *siege*. See note 91.

Pazvantoğlu had the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] with him, in three companies.[152] With 2 thousand brigands [Kardzhalis], Manaf Ibrahim defeated Plyasa pasha and took all his arms and brought them to Vidin. Plyasa pasha took to his heels. A thousand men from his army were taken to Vidin as prisoners. Pazvantoğlu gave each of them a loaf of bread and let them go. Another Kardzhali citizen, Kara Mustafa from Plovdiv [Philippopolis], attacked Gyurdzhi pasha during the night, took all his arms, and brought them to Vidin. The commander[153] of the third company of brigands was Gușaniç Ali Khalil.

Even more of Pazvantoğlu's rebels [*hajdouti*] fought tenaciously against the tsar's army and did not let them approach Vidin. At last, with Pazvantoğlu's permission, the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] crossed over into Walachia and burned Craiova[154] and the surrounding villages, killing many people. Then the local bey, Michael Voda,[155] along with the Hungarian-Walachian bishops, as well as all Walachian lords (*boyars*)[156] and bishops, fled to Brașov[157] for fear of the brigands [*Kardzhalis*]. That is how they made peace with Pazvantoğlu.

Then Pazvantoğlu sent Kalinik with fifty Turks to Ypsilanti-bey[158] in Bucharest, and with the bey's permission they ordained him as bishop of Vidin. A month after he had returned to Vidin, I also asked for permission to finally return to my bishopric, after three years. But since brigands [*Kardzhali*] were still prowling about my bishopric, it was not possible for me to go there. I thought of going to Craiova and stay there, because I was sick and tired of Vidin. I thought about getting away[159] from there as soon as possible.

I stayed in Craiova for 20 days and Kostaki Karadzha, the district governor [*kaymakaminu*],[160] held me in great esteem. While I was in Craiova, one day we heard that the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] were approaching the town. That night the district governor fled Craiova, as did lords, tradesmen, monks and priests. I alone remained in the bishopric. I wanted to flee, too, but I couldn't find a car. And once again I was terrified. But they didn't come and everyone returned to their homes.

---

[152] *Byuloka* (*бюлока*) (Turkish). Karateodorov (1940, 47) uses *отделение*, which denotes *detachment* (army). Yakov's edition (2006, 59) uses *рота*, which denotes *company*.

[153] *Byulok-bashia* (бюлок-башия) denotes the commander of a company.

[154] Craiova (Крайова) is a city in the county of Oltenia (formerly Lesser Walachia), in Western Romania.

[155] *Voda* (*Вода*) is a Slavic title, probably a derivative of *voivoda*, denoting commander, ruler or governor. Karateodorov (1940, 47) uses *voivoda* or *voivode* (*войвода*), which literally denotes *warlord* in Old Bulgarian. In the Ottoman Empire, *voivoda* denoted the ruler of a Vlach community. Yakov's edition (2006, 60) uses *Voda*.

[156] *Boyar* (*боляр*) denotes the highest feudal rank in medieval Bulgaria, Russia, Walachia and Moldavia.

[157] Brașov (Брашов) is a city in central Romania, in the Transylvania region.

[158] Sophronius refers to Constantine Ypsilantis (1760–1816), a Greek ruler of Walachia (1802-1806), appointed by the Ottomans.

[159] "*Kourtoulisam se*" (*куртулисам са*). Karateodorov (1940, 48) uses "*се измъкна*", and Yakov's edition (2006, 60) uses "*се махна*".

[160] *Каймаканът* is a Turkish word for *district governor*, which is how Karateodorov (1940, 48) and Yakov's edition (2006, 60) translate the term.

When I saw that the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] didn't leaving my bishopric, I left Craiova and went to Bucharest to my children, who were studying[161] at the bey's academy.[162] I went and paid my respects to the holy Hungarian-Walachian bishop. He was called Dositheos, an old man and a scholar blessed with wisdom. He received me kindly and took me to the bey, the Lord Constantine Ypsilantis,[163] and also to some lords. He told them how I had stayed in Vidin for three years and that I had endured a lot of sorrow and misery.

Dositheos summoned me to the bishopric and gave me a cell to stay there with him, and each day I was a guest at his table. I told him all my miseries: how they had lied to me from the beginning and had charged my bishopric with an expensive tax[164] of fifty-five purses; and that I had not been to my bishopric for four years. I told him that I had not taken any money and had not paid any taxes or interest,[165] so that the accumulated debt now exceeded 80 purses. And that the bishopric was laid waste, that there were no villages left, since the brigands [*Kardzhalis*] and Pazvantoğlu's bandits [*hajdouti*] had burned them down and people had fled to Walachia and other countries. I told him that the Holy Synod did not believe any of it, and demanded the entire amount, for it was impossible for me to deal with this bishopric and with that debt.

[Dositheos][166] took pity on me and asked the bey to obtain my notice of dismissal [*paretis*] from the Synod, so that I would be released from this bishopric. The bey, may God grant him a long life, listened to him, wrote to the Synod and obtained my notice of dismissal. So I was released from those fears and those daily miseries. Yet I have a grievance, and I fear God and His judgment for taking that flock on my shoulders and then abandoning it. Still, I hope for God's everlasting mercy, because I did not abandon them to take a rest, but due to great misery and to the large debt they had imposed on me; and because they did not believe me[167] that the world was in ruins, especially around Vidin, which had become an abode of barbarians and bandits.[168]

That is why I now work day and night, to write some books in our Bulgarian language, so that my countrymen might receive some useful guidance from me, the sinful one, as I am unable to preach to them by word of mouth. May they read and heed my writings. May they pray to God for me, the unworthy one, to amend my ignorance and to grant me forgiveness, so that I, too, might receive a place at His right hand on Judgment Day. Amen!

---

[161] *Epistimia* (*епистимия*).

[162] Yakov's edition (2006, 61) notes that the Bey's Academy refers to the oldest university institution in Bucharest, called the Royal Academy of Saint Sava, founded in 1694.

[163] See note 116, above.

[164] I follow Yakov's edition (2006, 61) who adds [tax (*данък*)] before "*55 purses*".

[165] *Fayda* (*файда*).

[166] I follow Karateodorov (1940, 49), who replaces the pronoun, unlike Yakov's edition (2006, 62), who uses "*he*" (*той*).

[167] "*deto ne vyarvat*" ("*дето не вярват*"). I follow Yakov's edition (2006, 62), which translates "*без да ми вярват*" ("*without believing me*").

[168] *Hajdoutskoe* (*хайдутское*), adj. of *hajdouti*, primarily denotes rebels, but in this phrase the connotation *bandit* (*razbojnik*, *разбойник*) is a more appropriate translation. Hence Yakov's edition (2006, 62) uses *razbojnichesko* (*разбойническо*) – "*bandit-like.*"

I wish you the same from my heart! May you be indulgent towards the long-suffering one! I greet you!

Bucharest, 1804.

THE LESSON AND *THE GOOD POSTMAN*: CONTEMPORARY BULGARIAN CINEMA AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION FROM THE MARGINS

Dorotea Lechkova, Washington University in St. Louis

Introduction

In 2009, with well-meaning intentions and the naïve excitement of a young emigrant returning home for the summer, I dragged a reluctant friend to see the newest Bulgarian film, *A Farewell to Hemmingway*. The film was screening at the old socialist-era theater Geo Milev in Plovdiv on a portable projection screen so small that only a seat on the third row guaranteed a full view. As we entered the theater, my friend said, "I don't usually watch Bulgarian films. Why would I spend 5 BGN / 2.56 EUR to see a Bulgarian film when I can spend 11 BGN / 5.63 EUR and enjoy the excitement of Hollywood's special effects?" She then enthusiastically described experiencing *Ice Age 3* in 3D. I was perplexed and ashamed of the choice to spend hard-earned money on a film that was at best mediocre, and I hid the inner excitement of watching a Bulgarian film—perhaps for the first time in my life—on what was, after all, a real theater screen.

In recent years, there has been a wave of scholarship theorizing redefinitions and remappings of European cinema after the collapse of the East / West Divide.[1] Even within the field, however, studies focusing specifically on developments in Bulgarian cinema are significantly rare.[2] The present article in part examines the experience of movie-going in Bulgaria in lieu of the shifts in the production and consumption of films during the transition to democracy. I begin with an overview of the primary characteristics of the post-1989 film industry and an analysis of the viewership of domestic films in comparison to that of

1. See, for example: Luisa Rivi, *European Cinema After 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), Leen Engelen and Kris Van Heuckelom, eds., *European Cinema After The Wall: Screening East-West Mobility* (USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), Catherine Portuges and Peter Hames, eds., *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), Anikó Imre, ed., *East European Cinemas* (New York: Routledge, 2005), Anikó Imre, ed., *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), Rosalind Galt, *The New European Cinema: Redrawing the Map* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2006), and Michael Gott and Todd Herzog, eds., *East, West, and Centre: Reframing Post-1989 European Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)

2. With some notable exceptions from scholars such as Dina Iordanova, Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva, Nikolina Dobreva, Maya Nedyalkova, and Temenuga Trifonova, among others.

Hollywood productions. Then, I argue that two recent Bulgarian films—*The Lesson* (Tonislav Hristov, 2015) and *The Good Postman* (Kristina Grozeva and Petar Valchanov, 2017) demonstrate a shift in domestic filmmaking toward projects critical of contemporary social and economic realities such as, institutional corruption, the refugee crisis, and the pervasive sense of ineluctable precarity and instability.

Changing Cinematographic Landscapes: Post-1989 Cinema in Bulgaria

The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War fundamentally transformed the ways in which films are produced and consumed in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. In Bulgaria, the politically turbulent and crisis-ridden decade of the 1990's made film production extremely difficult. Since the early 2000's, however, the film industry has witnessed various changes and both foreign and domestic films have had a slow, but steady increase in viewership and box office earnings.[3] The emergence and current prevalence of multiplexes (venues with 6 or more screens) has also altered the way audiences experience films. The presence of multiplexes in the country mushroomed from just one in 2003 to sixteen in 2018. The National Film Center's most recent report indicates that out of a total of 215 screens in the country, 158 are in multiplexes. Ninety-one of these screens are located in recently constructed shopping malls in Sofia, reflecting the broader economic and social transformations in Bulgarian society. Due to excessive centralization and high ticket prices, films are simply inaccessible to lower-class and rural populations.[4] Many small towns and villages have no access to movie theaters and average ticket prices have jumped from 4.32 BGN in 2002 to 9.10 BGN in 2017.[5] These developments have prompted innovative initiatives, such as the "Travelling Summer Cinema with BNT1", a program that sponsors screenings of recent Bulgarian films in towns without theaters. The state of Bulgarian cinema today is perhaps best described by Dina Iordanova as that of "optimism in moderation" as overall industry trends indicate an increase in both national film production and film attendance from the early 2000s to the present.[6]

Audiences, however, are much quicker to embrace Hollywood films. In fact, there were only two Bulgarian films to crack the "Top 20 theatrical releases in Bulgaria" in 2017: *Heights* and *Broken Road*. *Heights*—a film about national hero Vasil Levski and the liberation of the country from the Ottoman Empire—achieved considerable success, bringing in 131, 039 viewers and 1, 072, 903 BGN / 548, 519.30 EUR at the box office. *Broken Road*—an action-adventure film centered around a racecar driver—came in 18th place with

3. Most foreign films are Hollywood productions.

4. These trends in production and consumption of films have been observed on a global level, see Ignacio Sánchez Prado's study *Screening Neoliberalism: Transforming Mexican Cinema 1988-2012* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014)

5. Bulgarian National Film Center, *Bulgarian Cinema—Facts / Figures / Trends—Brochure 2018*, 2018, <https://www.nfc.bg/media/documents/3d22125140bae44762795158 5e7683a3ff671fe4/Bulgarian_Cinema_2018%20online%202.pdf.>

6. Dina Iordanova, "Bulgarian Cinema: Optimism in Moderation," in *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989*, eds. Catherine Portuges and Peter Hames (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013)

an attendance of 98,862 viewers. Both films trailed behind Hollywood productions, such as *The Fate of the Furious*, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pirates of the Caribbean 5: Salazar's Revenge*, and *Despicable Me 3*, which claimed the top five spots. *The Fate of the Furious* was the top grossing film of 2017, bringing in 2,494,562 BGN / 1,275,339.33 EUR at the box office with a viewership of 273,110.[7] It appears that films that stir up strong national sentiments or imitate Hollywood productions are more easily able to captivate mainstream moviegoers.[8]

There is a palpable preoccupation in current Bulgarian film scholarship with the loss of national identity and the failure of filmmakers to forge new identities during the transitions to democracy. The lack of strong articulations of national identity—which I don't interpret as a necessarily negative development—is in part connected to the conditions of film production.[9] As public funding for cinematographic projects has drastically decreased in Bulgaria, multinational co-productions sponsored by European film funds, such as MEDIA, Creative Europe MEDIA, and EURIMAGES have become commonplace.[10] Film scholar Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva underlines the role of EURIMAGES in promoting the so-called "European *non-national film*" and bolstering "the role co-productions were expected to play in the formation of a unified European cultural space" (351).[11] Paradoxically, it is perhaps for this reason that films like *The Lesson* (Bulgaria / Greece) and *The Good Postman* (Finland / Bulgaria) are successful at articulating pressing social anxieties that have surfaced in distinct regions throughout the European Union: economic precarity, political instability, depopulation, and the refugee crisis.[12]

7. Bulgarian National Film Center. *Bulgarian* Cinema—*Facts* / *Figures* / *Trends*— *Brochure 2017*, 2017, <https://www.nfc.bg/media/documents/64738e27dc960ebdc22143dd8ea4b16b74029c8a/Bulgarian_Cinema_2017.pdf>

8. Historical epics have a long tradition in Bulgarian cinema, see Nikolina Dobreva, "Eastern European Historical Epics: Genre and the Visualization of a Heroic National Past," in *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas*, ed. Anikó Imre (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 344-365.

9. For a detailed analysis of international co-productions in Europe, see Manuel Palacio and Jörg Türschmann, eds, *Transnational Cinema in Europe* (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2013)

10. Public funding for 2017, on the other hand, totaled 6,538,600 BGN / 3, 342, 844.86 EUR for feature films and 1,262,300 BGN / 645, 348.10 EUR for documentaries, the two genres discussed in this article. (Bulgarian National Film Center)

11. Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva, *Bulgarian Cinema from "Kalin the Eagle" to "Mission London"*, trans. Silvia Mavrikova (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences: Institute of Art Studies, 2013), 351.

12. *The Lesson*, although not commercially released in Bulgaria, was introduced to Bulgarian audience through the "Travelling Summer Cinema with BNT1" and made rounds at national film festivals, such as the Golden Rose Festival of Bulgarian Feature Films in Varna. Both films are available through Amazon's streaming platform, Amazon Prime, and have had a considerable exposure at international film festivals. (Bulgarian National Film Center)

Confinement and Ruin in *The Lesson*

In the present section, I argue that *The Lesson* portrays raw, Kafkaesque experiences of social and financial precarity—intensified through a constant sense of confinement and ruin—symptomatic of the transition to democracy. It is a slow film that tells the story of Nadia, a middle school English teacher and freelance translator, who lives a modest life in a village on the outskirts of Blagoevgrad. Her husband, Mladen—an unemployed, recovering alcoholic—defaults on mortgage payments and squanders the family's savings to fix and sell an old camper without success. The local bank gives the family three days to pay the 8,000 BGN / 4,091.55 EUR loan and threatens to repossess the house. Meanwhile, the translation firm where Nadia does freelance work files for bankruptcy and is unable to repay months of back wages. Left with .56 BGN / .29 EUR in a bank account and without further recourses, Nadia is cornered into the predatory services of a moneylender who ultimately requests sexual favors, for himself and his business partners, in exchange for loan extensions. Unable to accept these conditions, Nadia robs a bank with a toy gun, returns the money, and continues an otherwise uneventful day of teaching English grammar.

The Lesson exposes the thin line between the precarious existence of a lower-middle class and the life of crime, prostitution, and homelessness that hides behind the threat of financial ruin. Indeed, the film pushes against notions of prosperity and mobility that formed part of discourses surrounding the transition and paints, as Dina Iordanova puts it, "…an unsettlingly violent reality, fertile soil for raging violent crime and overall moral and cultural decline" (25).[13] The narrative's circularity intensifies the already pervasive sense of confinement which is articulated through the marginalization of village life, unsurmountable economic hardships, limited professional opportunities, and a stagnant personal life exacerbated by difficult family relationships. The film's structure is also circular. It begins with the diegetic sound of writing, of chalk on a blackboard. Before the first scene comes into view, the audience can identify the space of the classroom, wrought with conflicting connotations of both hope and precarity. The grossly underpaid positions of teachers, in the Bulgarian case, has been notorious since the communist period. The transitions into the first scene and out of the last scene are marked with a J-cut and an L-cut, underlining the circularity of the narrative and conveying the unescapable sense of continuous failures. In this way, the film demonstrates that the race to the bottom has no definitive end. At the end, audiences are left with an increasingly urgent question: What is to be done when there is no way out?

The film offers glaring criticisms of contemporary socio-economic realities in Bulgaria by underscoring the failures of private and public institutions, specifically the banking sector and law enforcement, and the unfettered emergence and success of pseudo-criminal groups, such as loan sharks. It depicts Nadia's interactions with institutions as an endless bureaucratic labyrinth where hidden contract conditions, fines, fees, and explicit threats lurk around each corner. An unescapable sense of coercion and confinement is transmitted through slow narrative development, lack of non-diegetic sound, and multiple

13. Dina Iordanova, "Bulgarian Cinema: Optimism in Moderation," in *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989*, eds. Catherine Portuges and Peter Hames (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 10-39.

close-up shots focusing on the tenacious expressions on Nadia's face. Thus, the film's neo-realist aesthetic suggests that depicting grim, miniscule details of everyday struggles supplants the need for enhanced dramatic effects.

Ultimately, the narrative implies that there is no significant difference between the impersonal treatment, hidden contract fees and conditions from the bank and the explicit threats of sexual and physical violence from the loan sharks. Both leave individuals in a state of extreme vulnerability. The local bank is depicted as a detached, generic representative of global financial institutions. In a particularly telling scene, Nadia and Mladen attempt to plead their case to a bank representative, shocked by the fact that the bank has raised the interest rate without warning. As the representative coldly explains that nothing can be done since the terms of the contract stipulate the right to raise interest rates without notification, promotional loan posters are visible the background. Sharp men and women in suits adorn these posters, captioned by the ironic text "We lend you a hand". In this way, the film emphasizes the deceitful nature of financial transactions as a fundamental experience of the transition.

This vision of Bulgarian society contrasts starkly with the ideals of "prosperity, mobility, and security" that powered the transition to democracy and the country's accession into the European Union (Rivi 140).[14] In this context, Lucian Georgescu's observations about the Romanian New Wave are highly relevant to the Bulgarian case:

> The productions of New Romanian Cinema reflect in their neo-realist style the social and moral changes of the post-communist era to a greater extent than scientific research could. Contemporary Romanian cinema is nurtured by a major disillusion in the wake of the collapse of the dreams of the generation of the 1989 revolution: the films of these young auteurs portray the drama of a nation that lost its compass on the way towards the West. (158)[15]

The Lesson articulates precisely the unnamed tension between the desire for modernity and the realities on its margins. The film's morbid claim is that the individual is completely alone and forced into poverty due to the lack of support from government and private institutions and the disintegration of family networks. Furthermore, these sectors, engulfed in or adversely effected by a climate of crisis and criminality are actively eroding possibilities of building a civil society. While leaving the audience relieved, the film's Hollywood—esque ending breaks with the neo-realist tone and underlines the very impossibility of narrative resolution. The only way out of a destitute situation is to commit the impossible crime: rob a bank at gunpoint and escape unscathed back to normality.

---

14. Luisa Rivi. "Toward a Global European Cinema," in *European Cinema After 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 139-144.

15. Lucian Georgescu, "The Point of No Return: From Great Expectations to Great Desperation in New Romanian Cinema," in *East, West, and Centre: Reframing Post-1989 European Cinema*, eds. Michael Gott and Todd Herzog (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 158.

The Good Postman: Solidarity from the Forgotten Margins of Europe

I argue that the documentary *The Good Postman* is a call for solidarity that poses a direct challenge to growing nationalist sentiments in Bulgaria in the midst of the Syrian refugee crisis. The film confronts dominant discourses about migration, ethnicity, and national identity while engaging transnational audiences. *The Good Postman* opens with the non-diegetic whistling of "Ergen deda", an upbeat folk song composed by Petar Lyondev that has achieved considerable international popularity. Thus, an immediate connection is forged between local conditions—in this case, the specificity of local culture—and the possibility of significant interventions on a global scale. The use of "Ergen deda" reflects and reinforces the main narrative of the film: the essential role of a seemingly insignificant border village in a massive international crisis.

The Good Postman tells the story of Great Dervent, a village of 38 inhabitants on the Turkish border decimated by poverty. The postman, Ivan, is a local volunteer for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and makes early morning rounds searching for refugees crossing the border. At first, he performs this task dutifully and notifies authorities at each sighting. The first scene begins with an extreme wide shot depicting a barbed wire fence on the Turkish / Bulgarian border, which appears insignificant in comparison to the sprawling mountainous landscape in the background. Through this juxtaposition, the film underscores the impermanent and even absurd nature of the border fence. Eventually, Ivan decides to run for mayor on a platform to revive the village by offering abandoned houses to Syrian families and begins to pitch the idea to friends and neighbors. With a few vocal exceptions, the villagers—senior citizens struggling to pay bills and purchase food— embrace the initiative as the prospect of reviving jobs, reopening the local school, hearing children's laughter, and bringing life back to the abandoned village is cause for enthusiasm and optimism.

However, the proposal to repopulate Great Dervent with Syrian refugees also fuels a series of events that expose the underbelly of Bulgarian politics: rampant corruption, hollow nationalism, and a lack of viable political alternatives. The film paints a bleak, cynical picture of the current political landscape. The three candidates running for mayor in Great Dervent are the postman, Ivan, a candidate for the center-right Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), Veselina, the incumbent mayor from the same party, and Ivan, a candidate for the Socialist Party and staunchly committed to reviving communism. Therefore, the film implies that in spite of the presence of genuine, innovative ideas, political participation ultimately requires affiliation with either GERB or the Socialist Party, both of which have been plagued by corruption and have lost all legitimate claims to power. The most powerful and haunting scene of the film depicts Ivan, the candidate from the Socialist Party, staging a political rally in the center of the village. A keyboard player, hired to entertain, plays a monotonous electronic tune as the six people in attendance wait patiently for their turn at a free kebob. With his back turned to the audience, Ivan speaks into the void of the surrounding mountains, "Comrades, I want internet for all! Like in Putin's Russia! I want to see this here in Bulgaria. I don't want refugees in my village. I don't want this!" He concludes in traditional campaign fashion: by inviting all of his supporters to enjoy a beer and a kebob. This scene, loaded with irony, exposes a toxic mix of post-communist nostalgia

and fervent nationalism that has fueled anti-migrant sentiments in the country.[16] Beyond this parodic scene, the film genuinely documents the sense of profound loss and lack of political and economic choices villagers faced during the transition. It also suggests, however, that alternative courses of action are possible, namely through local challenges to violent nationalist rhetoric directed against refugees. The narrative looks beyond both the past and the present in order to open political possibilities grounded in empathy. Therefore, I maintain that the film's most important intervention is the affirmation of hope from the marginalized space of Great Dervent, submerged in economic, political, and moral decay.

The Good Postman makes possible the connection between groups of people that have experienced forms of systemic marginalization and —in different ways and under different circumstances— have struggled for survival. Therefore, Ivan's seemingly radical idea to open up abandoned village houses to Syrian refugees crossing the border is an expression of survival that mirrors global political reconfigurations. Several scholars, including Leen Engelen and Kris Van Heuckelom, claim that the Cold War era East / West Divide is being replaced by a new North / South Divide:

> …in these times of enduring economic crisis—a crisis which seems to render the project of a common Europe increasingly uncertain—one could risk to claim that the notorious East—West axis which has helped Europe to define itself as a beacon of progress and civilization will soon give way to the emergence of another split, dividing the Continent in a "northern A-Zone" and a "southern B-Zone" and creating new geopolitical hierarchies and cultural alignments.[17]

These splits and new cultural alignments, to borrow Engelen and Van Heuckelom's terms, are the central focus of *The Good Postman*. In the last scene, Ivan sets off to perform his routine sightings along the border fence where he spots a new group of women and children. After the failed mayoral race and subsequent realization that efforts to change the system from within are futile, he resorts to the only possible meaningful act and calls the Border Police with the following statement, "There are no refugees today. I haven't seen any. That's all." In other words, he does nothing. This final act echoes Slavoj Žižek's assertion that it is "Better to do nothing than to engage in localized acts whose ultimate function is to make the system run more smoothly" (199).[18] It leaves audiences with a sense of renewed hope that comes, paradoxically, precisely from the refusal to participate in the system. The film ends with a wide shot of Ivan standing in front of the border fence, bringing the narrative full circle. The barbed wire border fence is barely visible, engulfed by the uninterrupted mountain range that recognizes no national boundaries.

16. For more on this topic see, Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, ed., *Post-communist Nostalgia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012)

17. Leen Engelen and Kris Van Heuckelom, ed., "Introduction," in *European Cinema After The Wall: Screening East-West Mobility* (USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), vii-xxii.

18. Slavoj Žižek, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* (London: Melville House, 2014), 199.

Conclusions

A wave of films dealing with the difficult legacies of communism dominated the Bulgarian film scene in the 1990s and early 2000s (Iordanova).[19] After an exhaustion of this topic, Dina Iordanova identifies a shift in filmmaking toward what she terms "drabness films" and the "gloomy Bulgarian film", preoccupied with the dreary socioeconomic reality of the country and related existential anxieties that accompanied the transition (26). Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva claims that Bulgarian films express a series of identity crises from 1968 until the present day. Most recently, they register the change in identity paradigms from communism to globalization (5).[20] She argues that recent films, produced in the 2000s, are engaged mostly in observing, "The films of young Bulgarian directors are not explanatory. They do not comment—they either simply observe, concentrating on everyday life, or make genre films" (352).[21] The two films analyzed in this article, I argue, go one step further. Perhaps for the first time, contemporary Bulgarian films like *The Lesson* and *The Good Postman* offer a critical perspective of the present social reality and capture a sense of disillusionment and geographic confinement. They criticize notions of modernity, prosperity, and mobility that followed the fall of communism without delegitimizing the ideal of democracy.

The Lesson and *The Good Postman* form part of a wave of Bulgarian cinema that reflect the challenges of the transition to democracy. In my opinion, both films expose the fault lines in contemporary political discourses: the legacy of communism, economic instability, and the flawed construction of democracy. *The Lesson* indicates that an escape from current socio-economic realities would require an event as unlikely as the ending of a Hollywood action film. *The Good Postman*, in contrast, makes a compelling case for solidarity at a time when much of post-Soviet Eastern Europe is submerged by a wave of right-wing populism. Nonetheless, an overall sense of inescapable desperation and precarity drives both narratives, leaving audiences to consider one critical question: What are the viable paths forward?

19. For more on trends in Bulgarian film during the transition to democracy see Dina Iordanova, "Bulgarian Cinema: Optimism in Moderation," in *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989*, ed. Anikó Imre (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 10-39.

20. Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva, "Българското игрално кино от началото на XXI век / "Bulgarian feature cinema in the beginning of the 21st century," *Art Studies Quarterly* no. 3, (2012): 3-8.

21. Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva, *Bulgarian Cinema from "Kalin the Eagle" to "Mission 'London'"*, trans. Silvia Mavrikova (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences: Institute of Art Studies, 2013), 352.

Bibliography

Bratoeva-Daraktchieva, Ingeborg. *Bulgarian Cinema from "Kalin the Eagle" to "Mission 'London'"*. Translated by Silvia Mavrikova. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences: Institute of Art Studies, 2013.

——— "Българското игрално кино от началото на XXI век." / "Bulgarian feature cinema in the beginning of the 21st century." *Art Studies Quarterly* no. 3, (2012): 3-8. <http://artstudies.bg/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/BROI_3_content_summaries.pdf >.

Bulgarian National Film Center, *Bulgarian Cinema—Facts / Figures / Trends—Brochure 2018*, 2018, <https://www.nfc.bg/media/documents/3d22125140bae4476279515 85e7683a3ff671fe4/Bulgarian_Cinema_2018%20online%202.pdf>.

——— *Bulgarian Cinema—Facts / Figures / Trends— Brochure 2017*, 2017, <https://www.nfc.bg/media/documents/64738e27dc960ebdc22143dd8ea4b16b74029c8a/Bulgarian_Cinema_2017.pdf>.

Dobreva, Nikolina. "Eastern European Historical Epics: Genre Cinema and the Visualization of a Heroic National Past." In *A Companion to Eastern European* Cinemas, edited by Anikó Imre, 344-365. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Engelen, Leen, and Kris Van Heuckelom, eds. *European Cinema After The Wall: Screening East-West Mobility*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

——— "Introduction," *European Cinema After The Wall: Screening East-West Mobility*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Galt, Rosalind, *The New European Cinema: Redrawing the Map*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2006.

——— "Towards a Theory of European Space." In *The New European Cinema: Redrawing the Map*, 230-239. New York, Columbia University Press, 2006.

Georgescu, Lucian. "The Point of No Return: From Great Expectations to Great Desperation in New Romanian Cinema." In *East, West, and Centre: Reframing Post-1989 European Cinema*, edited by Michael Gott and Todd Herzog, 147-158. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Gott, Michael, and Todd Herzog, eds. *East, West, and Centre: Reframing Post-1989 European Cinema* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Grozeva, Kristina, and Petar Valchanov, dir. *The Lesson*. 2015, on Amazon Prime Video. <https://www.amazon.com/Lesson-Margita-Gosheva/dp/B00VQTO1H2/ref=sr_1_1?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1529088872&sr=1-1&keywords=the+lesson>.

Hristov, Tonislav, dir. *The Good Postman*. 2017, on Amazon Prime Video. <https://www.amazon.com/Good-Postman-Tonislav-Hristov/dp/B075GZLQ2V/ref=sr_1_1?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1529089061&sr=1-1&keywords=the+good+postman>.

Imre, Anikó, ed. *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Imre, Anikó, ed. *East European Cinemas*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Iordanova, Dina. "Bulgarian Cinema: Optimism in Moderation." In *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989*, edited by Catherine Portuges and Peter Hames, 10- 39. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.

——— "Foreword." In *A Companion to Eastern European* Cinemas, edited by Anikó Imre, xv-xvii. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Palacio, Manuel, and Jörg Türschmann, eds. *Transnational Cinema in Europe*. Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2013.

Portuges, Catherine, and Peter Hames, eds. *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.

Rivi, Luisa. *European Cinema After 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

——— "Toward a Global European Cinema." In *European Cinema After 1989: Cultural Identity and Transnational Production*, 139-144. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Sánchez Prado, Ignacio. *Screening Neoliberalism: Transforming Mexican Cinema 1988-2012*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014.

Todorova, Maria, and Zsuzsa Gille, eds. *Post-communist Nostalgia*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism*. London: Melville House, 2014.

BULGARIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND WORLD WAR I

Eleonora Naxidou, Democritus University of Thrace

I. Introduction

How does historiography contribute to the creation of the official narrative? What is the relationship between historical study and nation building? How does historical writing affect collective memory? How do historians deal with events that fit uncomfortably into the official narrative? This paper addresses such issues focusing on Bulgarian historiography and the paradigm of World War I (WWI). Almost one hundred years after its end, WWI is still not a popular topic in Bulgaria despite its serious impact on the country's political, socio-economic, and ideological developments. It has attracted little scholarly attention over time, being thus understudied. In contrast to World War II (WWII), there is no separate entry on WWI in the old library catalogue cabinet of the St Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia, which is still in use, although it is gradually being replaced by an electronic catalogue. In addition, there are only a few relevant publications displayed in Bulgarian bookshops, which include translations of foreign books dealing with various international aspects of the First World War rather than Bulgaria's involvement. The remark made by Richard Crampton in 2007 that "The first world war remains the area of modern Bulgarian history most in need of further research and analysis" (468) still holds to a great extent. In this context, the aim of my paper is twofold: on the one hand, to shed light on the ideological factors that have made WWI an overlooked issue, and on the other, to show how this war is represented and interpreted by the historians who wrote about it.

II. Historiography and Memory

In postmodern thinking, it is widely accepted that "…history is an art of memory because it mediates the encounter between two moments of memory: repetition and recollection. Repetition concerns the presence of the past… Recollection concerns our present efforts to evoke the past… It is the opening between these two moments that makes historical thinking possible," as Patrick Hutton showed in his seminal book (1993:xx-xxi). Moreover, "History extends and enriches, confirms and corrects memory through records and relics" (Lowenthal 2015:334).[1] History is thus an intellectual reconstruction of the past undertaken by historians. They "have the capacity for selectivity, simultaneity, and the shifting of scale: they can select from the cacophony of events what they think is really important; they can be in several times and places at once; and they can

[1] To what extent history can rely on memory and under what limitations and which circumstances is a problem that has attracted scholarly attention and has been discussed recently (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Levy 2011).

zoom in and out between macroscopic and microscopic levels of analysis" (Gaddis 2002:22). Or as David Lowenthal puts it, "to 'explain' the past, they are bound to go beyond the actual record, couching it in contemporary modes of thought and speech" (2015:338). Historians choose to recall or emphasize certain events while they deliberately forget or downplay others through a selection process that follows three diverse paths. The first singles out one or more among several would-be *lieux de mémoires*,[2] the second highlights certain aspects of a specific *lieu de mémoire,* and the third has to do with temporality, i.e. the way the same events come to the fore or fall into oblivion at different periods of time (Péporté 2011:14). This conscious selection process has also been described as a twofold strategy involving *performative inclusion* of the past into the present and *performative exclusion* (Lorenz 2010: 66). In this way, silences or "family secrets" are inherent in the historical writing of every state, nation, community, institution, etc. (Ferro 1855:52; Trouillot 2015:49). But how do historians decide what to include and what to exclude? There is no single answer to such an intricate question. Selectivity depends on the interplay of multiple ideological, political and socio-economic factors each time. In the case of Bulgarian historiography, this is mostly related to national ideology and the consolidation of national identity, as will be shown below.

Another issue concerns the interrelation between history and collective memory defined as the *social framework for memory*.[3] Eric Hobsbawm noted that historians "compile and constitute the collective memory of the past" (2011:25). However, historiography is by no means the only way to recollect the past (Todorova 2009:6), given that history is also produced outside of academic institutions to a greater or lesser extent (Trouillot 2015:18-20). Moreover, it has been argued that, despite its recognized significance, professional historical writing is not the main contributor to the molding of public views. Rather, it influences the attitudes of the ruling elites to whom many professional historians usually belong or are in some way associated with (Passmore, Berger and Donovan 1999:282-283). In this way, while historiography is one of the "tools" employed to produce mainly the official version of the story each time, collective memory also draws on tradition and countermemory (Todorova 2010:394). Given the broadness and complexity of the topic, my paper focuses on the historiography-memory nexus. It examines how a specific *lieu de mémoire,* namely WWI, is remembered and narrated by Bulgarian historiography over time[4] adopting what Maria Todorova would term a *functionalist approach*.[5]

---

[2] A famous notion introduced by Pierre Nora meaning realms or sites of memory. (Paris 1997).

[3] Although revisited and reinterpreted by modern scholars, the term "collective memory" was introduced and given theoretical status by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in his book *Social Frameworks of Memory (Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire)* in 1925. Halbwachs argued that "it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize memories… It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory'"(Halbwachs, 1992: 38).

[4] Another important aspect concerns monuments and commemoration, also an understudied topic. However, some significant studies have been published lately, most of

III. Bulgarian Historiography and WWI

"Historical writing has been connected to the process of nation-building across Europe ever since the concept of the modern nation was first formulated in the American and French Revolutions of the late-eighteenth century" (Berger, Donovan and Passmore 1999:3) was the main thesis of the collective volume *Writing National Histories. Western Europe since 1800,* which was the outcome of a conference held in Cardiff, Wales in 1996. This assumption was also demonstrated and broadly endorsed by recent historiographical literature (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Levy 2011:24). The Bulgarian case makes no exception to this relation between historiography and national ideals, as Ivan Elenkov and Daniela Koleva have shown (2007:409).

Bulgarian historiography developed as a scientific field after the emergence of the autonomous nation-state in 1878.[6] It was based on earlier, nationally oriented representations of the past which had already been under construction by national intellectuals and activists during the period of the Revival.[7] From its very inception, it was placed in the service of national policies. Promoting the creation of a master narrative inspired by national ideology, it contributed decisively to the dissemination and consolidation of national feelings among Bulgarians (Naxidou 2015:151-167). This was an important task to accomplish because it was through the political principle of nationalism that the newly born Bulgarian Principality claimed legitimacy.[8] Therefore, history writing, together with institutions such as the church, the military, the judiciary etc., were among the main "mechanisms" that the political and intellectual elites utilized in order to cultivate and bolster the national identity of all citizens, justifying in this way the right to self-government (Todorova 1995:77-78).[9] In this way, political and national agendas coincided at least during the period of the Tirnovo Constitution (1879-1944). At the same time, apart from "nationalizing" nationalism, which sought homogenization of the entire population into a core nation, another form of nationalism was also prevalent: this was

---

them by foreign academics. (See: Dimitrova, 2002:15-34; 2005:175-194; Lory 2007:37-49; Schulz 2014:42-51; Vlasidis 2015:242-255).

[5] Todorova distinguishes between a functional approach, which refers mostly to the official historical narrative, and the unofficial version of memory, based on tradition, oral history etc. (Todorova 2010:394).

[6] The Bulgarian nation-state was granted autonomy with the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 and declared independent in 1908.

[7] The term *Bulgarian Revival* (*Bălgarskoto Văzrazhdane*) refers to both the "nationalizing" process and the period of Bulgarian history during which it occurred, i.e. roughly the last 100 years of Ottoman rule (Daskalov 2004:11 ff.).

[8] The political principle of nationalism dictated the concurrence of political and national entity (Anderson 1991:6; Gellner 1994:1).

[9] For the creation of national institutions in the Balkans see also Kitromilides 1994:159 ff.

transborder or "external national homelands' nationalism,"[10] which had a twofold aim. On the one hand, it promoted the cultural identity and interests of the ethno-national kin living in the Ottoman Empire; on the other, it triggered irredentism.[11]

Within this ideological framework, national historiography was engaged in emphasizing the glorious and heroic moments in the history of the nation in order to exalt national pride and self-confidence. For the same reason, it paid lesser attention to unfortunate events such as defeats on the battlefields, territorial losses, etc., which might evoke feelings of shame and embarrassment.[12] WWI was among the episodes that fell into the latter category.

III.1. The Interwar Period (1919-1944)

For the Bulgarians, WWI was a prolongation of a period of warfare which had begun with the Balkan Wars in 1912-13. Bulgarian involvement in all three military operations was motivated by transborder nationalism. In other words, it was the longing for territorial enlargement, in order to include within the state borders the co-nationals who were still under Ottoman rule,[13] that is, the entire alleged nation. It was the plan for the Great Bulgaria of San Stefano (1878) which had remained on paper that both political elites and public opinion envisioned. However, due to the poor gains obtained by the Treaty of Bucharest (1913) at the end of the Balkan Wars, the Bulgarians placed all their hopes on the outcome of WWI for the accomplishment of national unification. With such expectations, they chose the side of the Central Powers which compelled them to enter into an alliance with their traditional enemy, the Ottoman Empire, and to fight against Russia, the Great Power to which they owed their national liberation. The consequences were disastrous. It was not only that Bulgaria had to confront the bitter and painful

[10] I use the terms "nationalizing" and "transborder" or "external national homelands" nationalism according to Brubaker, who refers to a triadic nexus of three distinct and mutually antagonistic nationalisms, the third being minorities nationalism (2009:4 ff.)

[11] Both ventures were initially met with success. It was the Bulgarian Church (Exarchate) established in 1870 that assumed the role of the protector of the ethno-national kin in the Ottoman Empire. Having retained its see in Constantinople, it soon extended its authority and influence over the Slavic populations in Macedonia and Thrace. As for irredentism, unification with the Ottoman province of Eastern Rumelia was proclaimed in 1885. Eventually, transborder nationalism brought Bulgaria into sharp conflict with Serbia and Greece over the future possession of the contested territories of Macedonia and Thrace, which culminated in the Balkan Wars (1912-13). For an overview of Bulgarian history during this period in English see Crampton 2007.

[12] For example, most historical contributions during the period of the Tirnovo constitution dealt with the Middle Ages and the Revival, whereas little interest was shown in the Ottoman past, which was perceived as the period of the Ottoman "yoke" (Naxidou 2015:157).

[13] Irredentism was fueled by the perception of Ottoman rule in the Bulgarian lands as a period of enslavement, which was initiated by the intellectuals of the Revival. For the notion of the Ottoman "yoke" see Neuburger 2004:24-25.

consequences of having sided with the defeated camp and having made disagreeable compromises into the bargain; worse than that was the failure to achieve the irredentist goal. The dominant political and national program had suffered a heavy blow since aspirations for expansion in Macedonia, Thrace and Dobrudja were nullified. On top of this, both the economy and political system collapsed. Even then, however, the Bulgarians refused to abandon their revisionary plans. Transborder nationalism remained at the top of Bulgarian policies for the following decades, playing a determining role in the country's stance in WWII.

More specifically, in 1919, the country came out of the Great War deeply wounded and disoriented. The quest for the imputation of liabilities and/or scapegoats led to trials and convictions, sharp conflict between the old and the new political and military elites, division of the nation, and attempts by the protagonists to defend themselves by narrating their version of the story, whether orally or through the writing of memoirs and in the press (Dimitrova 2002:23). Political turmoil culminated in the overthrow of the agrarian government of Alexander Stamboliiski by a coup d' état in 1923 and the granting of amnesty the following year (Lory 2007:44).

Under such circumstances, there was no ground for scholarly research or unbiased narration and analysis of the events relating to Bulgarian involvement in WWI. Therefore, before the abolishment of the constitutional regime in 1944, historiographical production mostly concerned the Bulgarian military contribution to WWI.[14] Numerous books and articles were devoted to the operations of the army and various regiments, most of which were written by officers and soldiers in the form of memoirs.[15] Many such publications were hosted by the journals *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* (*Military-Historical Digest*), *Voennen zhurnal* (*Military Journal*), *Nashata kavaleriya* (*Our Cavalry*) etc. (Minkov 2014).[16] The most significant among them appeared on the eve of and during WWII under the title *'Bălgarskata armiya v Svetovnata voina 1915-1918' (The Bulgarian Army in the World War 1915-1918)* in nine volumes. It was released by the Ministry of War between 1936 and 1946.

Under the influence of the above-mentioned works, the idea of WWI as a justified patriotic fight predominated in public discourse. This perception, however, was filled with regret, because defeat had not been foreseen due to the military and economic strength that Bulgarians believed they possessed (Dimitrova 2002:23). Furthermore, the courage and self-sacrifice of the soldiers who did their patriotic duty were contrasted with the faults and incompetence of the political authorities who were held responsible for the catastrophe (Schulz 2014: 44-45).

At the same time, no scholarly studies addressed any matters other than those relating to the military, such as the motives for the Bulgarian alliance with the Central Powers, political and socioeconomic parameters, consequences of the defeat and the peace

[14] This can be observed in the entry "*Părva svetovna voina*" (WWI) in the online catalogue of the St. Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia.

[15] This is evident in the bibliographies on Bulgarian military history (*Voenna Istoriya* 1977:218 ff.; 1987:189 ff.; *Uchastieto na Bălgariya v Părvata svetovna voina* 1994; *Bălgarskata Armiya* 1994:16 ff.)

[16] I transliterate the Cyrillic alphabet as follows: ъ-*ă*, ш-*sh*, щ-*sht*, ц-*c*, я-*ya*, ж-*zh*, ч-*ch*, ю-*iu*, й-*i*.

treaty, etc. Due to this deliberate "silence," the documents concerning Bulgaria's entry into the war, published as early as 1921, did not receive any scholarly attention (*Diplomaticheski dokumenti* 1920-21). Moreover, the memoirs of Premier Vasil Radoslavov (1914-1919) (Radoslavov 1923), which, apart from being an attempt to justify the author's decisions and constituted the unique account of domestic policies, was also ignored. In this way, neither an official narration nor any counter versions of the events developed.

III.2. The Period of the Communist Regime (1944-1989)

National ideology did not decline after the communists assumed power in 1944. "In general, state socialism was much more national than many contemporary observers in West and East imagined during the Cold War," as Hannes Grandits and Ulf Brunnbauer observed (2013:19). The ruling Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) adopted Marxist nationalism, a combination of Marxist principles and national ideals, which was the new doctrine already endorsed by the Comintern and promoted by the USSR (Sygkelos 2011:5-6). This approach aimed to employ national tradition in order to establish continuity between the new and the old political order and to win popularity for the communist policies among Bulgarians who had been brought up with national ideals. By introducing themselves as the genuine defenders of national interests, communist leaders sought to strengthen and maintain their rule (Grandits, Brunnbauer 2013:19-20). National discourse became even more pronounced in the 1960s after the ideological rectification resulting from the de-Stalinization process, and especially more so in the 1970s, when the BCP declared the resolution of the class struggle, initiating the creation of a classless society of national character (Naxidou 2015:161-162). For this reason, ethnic minorities were subdued to assimilative practices which culminated in the 1980s in the "Revival Process" enforced upon Turks and Muslims (Bell 1999:237-268).

Being one of the vehicles for the propagation of official ideology, history writing was state controlled. From the very beginning, historians were advised to revise the fascist and chauvinistic bourgeois narrative, applying historical materialism. In addition, they were urged to focus on previously ignored socioeconomic phenomena and topics related to the rise of the communists to power, such as the formation of a working class in Bulgaria; the national liberation struggle against the inter-war fascist and monarcho-fascist authorities; the revolution of September 9, 1944; etc. (Mutafchieva, Chichovska 1995: 280-281). These general directions were in effect until the collapse of the regime, although they were adapted to fit the changes in the ideological profile of the BCP after the death of Stalin: namely, the gradual abandonment in the 1960s of reading the past based on class stratification, and stressing the dual character of historical events along the lines of bourgeoisie and proletariat conflicts (Elenkov 2009:633).

In this context ,WWI was an unpleasant theme to engage in, not only because of the defeat and concomitant thwarting of national goals, but for three additional reasons. First, it did not fall within the politically correct communist repertoire; second, it was related to the anti-popular policies of a chauvinistic bourgeois government;[17] and last,

[17] As professor and academic Hristo Hristov noted in 1984, after WWII, there was no interest among historians in the period between 1913-1918, because the Second Balkan War

because the Bulgarians fought against Russia, their traditional ally who had contributed decisively to the spread of communism in Bulgaria and protected the country in the international forum after the end of WWII in order to prevent further loss of territories (*Istoriya na Bălgariya* 1964:508, 518; Bozhinov 1965:510). Therefore, most publications focused on the reactions against the war, mostly the soldiers' discontent, unrest, and desertions, which culminated in the Radomir Rebellion of 1918 and the activities of the left wing of the Socialist Party—the "Narrows" as they were nicknamed by their contemporaries—which was later to become the BCP (*Voenna Istoriya* 1977:242-245; *Voenna Istoriya* 1987:220-227; Lory 2007:46-47).

A gradual relaxation of the restrictions did occur in the decades of the 1970s and 80s. It was facilitated by the intellectual and artistic circles that were influenced by Liudmila, Zhivkov's daughter, who was not overtly committed to communism (Elenkov 2008:307), and then by *perestroika*. This resulted in the publication of several memoirs referring to military operations during WWI, as well as books and articles about Bulgarian relations with the Central Powers, the USA, peace negotiations, the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919, etc.[18]

At the same time, an official account of what had happened during WWI was developed in the collective *History of Bulgaria*, which initially appeared in two volumes in 1954 and 1955, and was revised into three volumes from 1961 to 1964.[19] According to the first version of this account, the Cabinet of the Radoslavov liberal coalition was opposed to any collaboration with the Entente and the other Balkan countries, which was in line with the view among the bourgeoisie that the unique possibility for Bulgaria to accomplish national unification was an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. This stance evolved following the failure of the policy pursued during the Balkan Wars. Having relied on the aid of the Entente and, under Russian patronage, the governing Russophile parties had failed to attain unification (*Istoriya na Bălgariya v dva toma*, v. II 1955:296). In this way, the initial neutrality was only a pretext in order to win time to recover from the wounds of the earlier conflicts and reorganize the armed forces in preparation for the coming war (ibid.:300-301). It was also claimed that the bourgeoisie was unanimous in its determination to participate in the imperialistic World War, with the aim of establishing its hegemony in the Balkan Peninsula. The only difference of opinion, at least initially, concerned the choice of camp (Ibidem:301). The Radoslavov government and Tsar Ferdinand made their pro-German inclinations evident by obtaining a loan from a German banker. In contrast, the parties of the opposition were in favor of signing the agreement

---

and WWI were related to two national disasters. In this way, Bulgarians were estranged from these issues, ignoring at the same time the heroism, hardships and self-sacrifice of the soldiers who fought these anti-popular, imperialistic and opportunistic wars. See the preface of the book (Tonchev 1984:11-12).

[18] For example: (Pantev & Petkov 1983; Lalkov 1983; Tonchev, 1984; Hristov 1984; Damyanov 1986).

[19] In 1965, the task of writing a ten-volume Bulgarian history was initiated, after Todor Zhivkov had resumed full control of the BCP leadership. After several revisions of the initial plan, 14 volumes were scheduled, of which only 8 had been published by 1989 (Koleva and Elenkov 2004:121-122).

proposed more than once by the Entente, the terms of which foresaw territorial gains in Macedonia and Thrace (ibid.:302-305). They changed their mind, however, and sided with Radoslavov's decision to join the Central Powers soon after Bulgaria's entry in the war. The first victories on the Serbian front and the occupation of the Serbian part of Macedonia whetted the appetite for expansionism of the entire bourgeoisie (ibid.:316). Subsequently, the opposition criticized the government merely on the administration of its domestic policies during the sessions of the National Assembly at the end of 1915 (ibid.:317).

As far as the Bulgarian people were concerned, the communist narrative placed great emphasis on their objection to the participation in the war (ibid.:303) and, in particular, to their opposition to the alliance with Germany, which would alienate the country from the Russians, who were their traditional friends and allies (ibid.:296). In order to prevent public backlash, the government enforced military law. At the same time, anti-Russian and pro-German propaganda were launched through the liberal press, though to no avail (ibid.:303-304). The call for national mobilization augmented general discontent and, in some cases, this turned into open resistance, with sections of the army rioting, which was dealt with by the military courts (ibid.:312). Such incidents occurred throughout the war coupled with the rising frustration of the masses due to severe food shortages (ibid.:319 ff.). In this setting, the Narrows were the sole political party that continuously fought decisively against Bulgarian involvement in a war that they considered to be the outcome of imperialistic state antagonism and especially between Germany and England. Undertaking various anti-war initiatives, such as the organization of meetings, demonstrations, and rallies, the Narrows attempted to oppose Bulgarian imperialistic plans for national unification. In its place, they put forward the counterproposal of the creation of a democratic federation of the Balkan peoples (ibid.:309-310).

In the revised edition of the *History of Bulgaria*, there are a few differences in the representation of WWI, the most important of which concern the motivations of the bourgeoisie. It was emphasized that this class was driven by purely egoistic and self-seeking class aims. Concealing its warlike, hegemonic, revanchist and anti-popular policy under the banner of aspiration for national liberation and unification, which was a just and progressive goal, it endeavored to expand the domestic market in the quest for new sources of profit. In this way ,it was claimed that the relations of the bourgeoisie with foreign capital determined the preference of allies: those dependent on German and Austro-Hungarian capital favored the Central Powers, whereas those financially associated with England, France and Russia opted for the Entente (*Istoriya na Bălgariya v tri toma*, v. II 1962:293).

Even though the revised narrative on WWI was still in keeping with the communist interpretation of the alleged dichotomy between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the nationalistic shift is evident. The assertion that the aim at national unification was justified is indicative of the gradual "nationalizing" of historiography.

III.3. The period following the Restoration of Democracy in 1989

After the fall of the communist regime and the establishment of a democratic system of governance in 1989, national ideology continues to predominate in the historical

narrative. It lies at the core of both the new historical representations[20] and the political agenda, because the state is still considered as the political organization of the one nation (Naxidou 2012:100). This time, nationalistic discourse is mainly addressed against minorities, especially those having a kin state (Turks), who are seen as a potential threat to national integrity (ibid.:89-90).

Within the democratic environment, which allows complete freedom of expression by not imposing any restrictions on historiography, WWI is still absent from the list of popular topics, although it must be noted that relevant production has increased considerably.[21] Most editions tend to deal with the Bulgarian military involvement in the Great War. These include many articles hosted by the journal *Voennoistoricheski sbornik*[22] and the publication of war memoirs, some of which had initially appeared during the interwar period.[23] The most significant contribution is the collective volume entitled *Bălgarskata armiya v Părvata svetovna voina 1915-1918* (*The Bulgarian Army in the First World War, 1915-1918*), which provides a comprehensive overview of Bulgarian military operations during WWI (2015). Memoirs of political protagonists have also been issued or reissued with commentaries (Radoslavov 1993a; Maleev 1993; Radoslavov 1993b). Several studies focus on specific issues, such as Bulgarian relations with Turkey, Germany, the Entente, the peace talks at Brest-Litovsk etc. (Kalchev 2011; Ivanov 2002; Ilchev 1990; Aleksandrov 2009; Markov 2006). In addition, some collections of documents have been released (*Bălgariya v Părvata svetovna voina* 2002; *Bălgaro-turski voenni otnosheniya* 2004; *Bălgariya na mirnite pregovori* 2007), as well as the proceedings of three academic conferences: two international conferences in 2005 and 2014, and a students' conference in 2009 (*Părvata svetovna voina na Balkanite* 2006; Georgieva 2014; *Goliamata Voina 1914-1918*, 2009). A bibliography was also published as early as 1994 covering only the first years of the post-1989 period (Yanakieva and Harizanova 1994). Lately, for the 100th anniversary of WWI, some editions, mostly by non-academic historians[24] along with Bulgarian translations of relevant books by foreign authors, made their appearance on bookshop shelves. Furthermore, chapters on WWI have also been included in the *History of Bulgaria* by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and other collective historical works. However, there

[20] An indication is that the Institutes for Historical Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences form part of the thematic field Cultural-Historical Legacy and National Identity. See *Godishen otchet* 2011:26; Todorova 1992:1117; Elenkov & Koleva 2007:441-445).

[21] An indicative example is the case of the international conference 'The Romanian Campaign 1916/17-Experience and Memory' 26-28 September 2016 held at St. Cyril and Methodius University in Veliko Tarnovo. However, only 4 out of the 28 presenters were academics working in Bulgarian universities.

[22] See some recent article titles: Petkov 2012:47-52; Liubenova 2012:83-96; Dinev 2013:81-92; Nenkov 2014:101-118; Yanchev 2016:37-44; Sazdov 2016:55-70.

[23] See indicatively: Nedev & Biliarski 2009; Toshev 2007).

[24] For example, Kremenarov 2015. Among them was the revised edition of a book on Bulgaria and WWI written by the academic Georgi Markov (Markov 2016a; 2016b). In this enlarged, deluxe publication in two volumes, the author added new material obtained from German and Russian archives as well as the personal archive of Tsar Ferdinand, failing, nonetheless, to offer any new insights into the topic.

are still no comprehensive studies that examine the multiple domestic facets of the war overall. Studies that include the political, diplomatic, military, socio-economic, and ideological facets with regard to the international (European and Balkan) setting, in conjunction with the impact that the war had on the country's future developments, do not as yet exist.

The notion of Bulgaria's engagement in WWI as serving the national cause and descriptions of Bulgarian military heroism are still prevalent in public discourse. This mindset is encapsulated in the following lines on the cover of the above-mentioned publication *Bălgarskata armiya v Părvata svetovna voina 1915-1918*:

> *"Bălgarskata Armiya v Părvata Svetovna Voina 1915-1918" is the most thorough scientific publication in Bulgaria dedicated to this titanic battle. For our army and people, this was a serial war for national unification, for assembling Bulgarians into one state. With regard to the greatness of the self-sacrifice and its tragic consequences, nothing can compare to this war in our modern history. Little Bulgaria mobilized more than one million souls. Although the First World War is very often vilified and doomed to oblivion, nobody can deny that in this war the children of Mother Bulgaria showed exceptional heroism, stood up against numerous attacks by the elite of the enemy armies, and defeated the armed forces of bigger states than Bulgaria. This book is for the thousands of the beloved victims who left their bones on the battlefields. It is for honor and virtue, for the love of the motherland, for the glory of the Bulgarian arms.*

By examining the sum of the above-mentioned publications on WWI, some significant observations can be made. Firstly, the two most prestigious academic institutions in Bulgaria, namely the Academy of Sciences and the State University of Kliment Ohridski in Sofia, have made a very small contribution in this particular area.[25] This is also evident from the contents of *Istoricheski pregled*, the Academy's journal, where only three articles concerning specific aspects of WWI have been published during the period 2005-2012. In contrast, most of the publications have been launched either by military establishments[26] or by private, little-known publishers, several of whom have their offices in provincial towns, usually publishing works on battles fought in their localities.[27] Moreover, WWI is likewise not among the popular topics being revisited by historians who are associated with the newly founded private universities and research centers that challenge the traditional precedence of the state academic organizations.[28]

[25] For example: Koneva 1995.

[26] Voennoistoricheska komisiya (Military-Historical Committee) which has published the journal *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* since 1927—with a pause between 1999-2004—stands out.

[27] For example: Kazandzhiev et al. 2006; Boichev 2010.

[28] Some of these research centers are associated with NGOs such as the Institute for the Study of the Recent Past and the Centre for Advanced Studies. The most popular research topic within these circles is the period of communist rule. See: Elenkov and Koleva 2007:457-458.

Despite the fact that there is divergence regarding the interpretation and evaluation of various aspects of WWI, the main assumptions about the war in these newer representations—whose degree of impartiality also varies—actually converge.[29] The focal points of this post-1989 narrative, which is still in the making, are the following: Bulgarian participation in the war was considered by the political elites of that time as the best way to realize national unification through revision of the territorial arrangements of the Treaty of Bucharest, which was a national disaster. This was the view held by the governing coalition which most parties in the opposition gradually adopted with the exception of the Narrows, staunch proponents of peace and the creation of a Balkan federation. The initial declaration of neutrality, therefore, aimed on the one hand at gaining time to get it into people's minds and prepare them and the army for war, and on the other, at assessing the situation in order to enter into the alliance that best served national interests. Choosing sides was the most crucial dilemma which agitated political circles and instigated sharp confrontations both in Parliament and in the press in the summer of 1915. While the monarch and the government were favorable toward the Central Powers, most parties in the opposition preferred an agreement with the Entente and were strongly opposed to the formers' pro-German initiatives, such as the conclusion of a loan with a German bank. However, after the final decision and the concomitant territorial expansion in Macedonia, the pro-Entente tendencies were quelled. The final choice of who to side with is attributed less to the pro-German disposition of both the tsar and his prime minister, which is always mentioned, though with differing emphasis, and more to two other, major factors. Firstly, the terms of agreement proposed by the Entente were vague; neither was it specified when Bulgaria was to obtain the promised territorial "rewards," nor were there any guarantees of it happening. Moreover, the Entente did not have the approval of either Serbia, already a member of the alliance, or Greece, a potential ally, which both categorically refused to consent to any territorial concessions in favor of Bulgaria. In contrast, the offer of the Central Powers was more concrete in the sense that it allowed for the occupation of Serbian Macedonia immediately after Bulgarian entry into the war. Another plus was that the Ottoman Empire, which was already fighting on the side of the Germans, had been convinced to sign a treaty with Bulgaria handing over part of Eastern Thrace. Secondly, due to their victories on almost all the battlefields in the course of 1915, the Central Powers gave the impression that they were going to win the war. As concerns the unrest of the people and the soldiers, and the Radomir Rebellion, little attention is paid to either, while the influence of the Soviet revolution in 1917 on Bulgaria's stance in the war is downplayed too. Overall, WWI is considered as a second national catastrophe. Besides the failure of irredentism, it is maintained that Bulgaria was reduced to a second-rate country in the Balkans, being punished too harshly for the decisions made by its political leadership, which proved to have been gravely mistaken in its choices.

[29] Besides the studies already mentioned, the following collective histories have also been taken into account in order to present an overview of the post-1989 narrative on WWI: *Istoriya na Bălgariya* 1999; Sazdov, Lalkov, Popov & Migev 1995; Bozhilov, Mutafchieva, Kosev, Pantev & Grancharov 1998; Statelova & Grancharov 1999.

IV. Conclusions

Perceived in context as a continuation of the military endeavor for national unification which had started with the Balkan Wars, WWI is treated as one of Bulgaria's national disasters. Given that history writing is still imbued with national ideals, it has remained on the margins of Bulgarian historiographical pursuits. Remembering the outcome of WWI neither boosts national morale nor arouses national self-esteem, since the Peace Treaty of Neuilly in 1919 brought irreversible consequences to Bulgaria's national claims, which made the deeply desired unification unattainable. Only memoirs and studies relating to military campaigns were produced during the interwar period, as these were the sole heroic moments of this significant but frustrating and painful event in the country's history. During the period of communist rule, WWI was charged with heavier negative connotations of an imperialistic conflict that served the profits of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the people, which made it an even less enticing topic. Emphasis was given mostly to the reactions of the masses against the country's participation in the war, focusing on the anti-war activities of the Narrows, as well as the anti-war demonstrations and riots of both the people and the soldiers. Nevertheless, the general assumption was that Bulgaria fought the war for the right cause, in the wrong way. After 1989, with the establishment of democratic rule, there was a new approach to certain facets of WWI. However, this post-1989 reading of WWI is in keeping with the national context of both the interwar and communist representations: Bulgaria joined this war on the side of the Central Powers with the goal of national unification through territorial expansion. Moreover, a comprehensive narrative and interpretation of domestic policies at the time is still lacking.

All in all, the paradigm of WWI shows clearly how historiography has contributed to the formation of the Bulgarian master narrative over time. At the same time, it demonstrates how professional historical writing, being under the strong influence of national ideology, promotes the national cause. As regards the interplay between historiography and memory, there are clearly discernable divergences in the WWI narrative through the course of time, with the most prominent being the communist and democratic representations. As for selectivity, the process follows the three distinct paths which were described in the introductory section. In the first, WWI, although under-studied, is included among the *lieux de mémoire*, in the second, certain, mostly military aspects of this *lieu de mémoire* are highlighted, while in the third, this very same *lieu de mémoire* is at various points in time remembered and forgotten to a greater or lesser extent. In this way, *performative inclusion/exclusion* keeps pace with national priorities; in other words, silences always serve national ideals and policies.

In terms of temporality and spatiality, WWI does not constitute a discontinuity or an empty space in Bulgarian historiography, since certain aspects are recalled and analyzed over time. I would argue, therefore, that it is more a space that is half-empty, or to put it in terms of the inclusion/exclusion categorization, it would come under half-exclusion, which is not affected by temporality but stands in time. On the whole, it is apparent that for Bulgaria, WWI is an event of major significance to be ignored or forgotten. It is thus a *lieu de mémoire* whose different "areas" are visited at different—perhaps only opportune—times.

References

Aleksandrov, Valentin, *Brest-Litovskiyat miren dogovor 1918 g.: Voennostrategicheski prichini i mezhdunarodnopravni posledici* (Sofia: Voennen izdatelstvo, 2009).

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

Bălgariya na Mirnite pregovori v Brest-Litovsk (1917-1918). Sbornik dokumenti (V. Tirnovo: Astarta, 2007).

Bălgariya v Părvata svetovna voina. Germanski diplomaticheski dokumenti 1913-1916, 2 Vol. (Sofia: Glav. upravl. na arhivi pri Ministerski savet, 2002).

Bălgaro-turski voenni otnosheniya prez Părvata svetovna voina 1914-1918. Sbornik ot dokumenti (Sofia: Gutenberg, 2004).

Bălgarskata armiia v Svetovnata voina 1915-1918. T. I-IX (Sofia: Ministerstvo na voinata, 1936-1946).

Bălgarskata armiya 1877-1944. Bibliografiya. Tom II 1918-1944. Chast II (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Ministerstvoto na otbranata 'Sv. Georgi Pobedonosec', 1994).

Bălgarskata armiya v Părvata svetovna voina 1915-1918 (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo, 2015).

Bell, John, 'The Revival Process': The Turkish and Pomak Minorities in Bulgarian Politics', in Thanasis Sfikas and Christopher Williams, eds., *Ethnicity and Nationalism in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 237-268.

Berger, Stefan, Donovan, Mark and Passmore, Kevin, 'Apologias for the Nation-State in Western Europe since 1800', in Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore, eds., *Writing National Histories. Western Europe since 1800* (London and NY: Routledge, 1999), 3-14.

Boichev, Petar, *Tutranskata epopeya* (Silistra: Kobachev, 2010).

Bozhinov, Voin, 'L' Entrainement de la Bulgarie dans la Seconde Guerre Mondiale et ses Consequences', *Etudes Historiques*, 2(1965).

Bozhilov, Ivan, Mutafchieva, Vera, Kosev, Konstantin, Pantev, Antrei, and Grancharov Stoicho, *Istoriya na Bălgariya* (Sofia: Abagar, 1998).

Brubaker, Rogers, *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Crampton, Richard J., *Bulgaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Damyanov, Simeon, *Bălgariya i balkanskite strani po vreme na voinite (1912-1918)* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Instituta na voenna istoriya, 1986).

Daskalov, Rumen, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans. Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival* (Budapest and NY: CEU Press, 2004).

Dimitrova, Snezhana, '"Taming the Death": the Culture of Death (1915-18) and its remembering and commemorating through First World War Soldier Monuments in Bulgaria (1917-44)', *Social History* 30 2(2005), 175-194.

Dimitrova, Snezhana, '"My War is Not Your War": the Bulgarian Debate on the Great War', *Rethinking History* 6 1(2002), 15-34.

Dinev, Angel, 'Uchastieto na 12-ti pehoten balkanski polk v Moravskata nastăpatelna operaciya (1915g.)', *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* 4(2013), 81-92.

Diplomaticheski dokumenti po namesata na Bălgariya v Evropeiskata voina. T. I-II (Sofia: Ministerstvo na vănshnite raboti i na izpovedaniyata, 1920-21).

Elenkov, Ivan, and Koleva, Daniela, 'Historical Studies in Post-Communist Bulgaria: Between Academic Standards and Political Agendas', in Sorin Antohi, Balazs Trencsenyi and Peter Apor, eds., *Narratives Unbound. Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (Budapest and NY: CEU Press, 2007), 409-486.

Elenkov, Ivan, 'Istoricheskata nauka v Bălgariya prez epohata na komunizma: institucionalna organizaciya i funkcii', in Ivailo Znepolski, ed., *Istoriya na Narodna Republika Bălgariya* (Sofia: Siela, 2009), 617-645.

Elenkov, Ivan, *Kulturniyat front* (Sofia: Siela, 2008).

Ferro, Marc, *L' Histoire sous surveillance. Science et conscience de l' histoire* (Calmann-Lévy 1985).

Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Landscape of History. How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism* (Blackwell, 1994).

Georgieva, Cvetana, ed., *Părvata svetovna voina: pamet na pokoleniyata: sbornik* (Sofia: An-Di, 2014).

Godishen otchet 2011: <http://www.bas.bg/> (last visited 30 May 2018).

Goliamata voina 1914-1918: studenska konferenciya 2009 (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2009).

Grandits, Hannes, and Brunnbauer, Ulf, 'The Ambiguous Nation. Socialist and Post-Socialist Nation-Building in Southeastern Europe in Perspective', in Ulf Brunnbauer and Hannes Grandits, eds., *The Ambiguous Nation. Case Studies from Southeastern Europe in the 20th Century* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013), 9-42.

Halbwachs, Maurice, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and transl. by Lewis Coser (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Hobsbawm, Eric, *On History* (Hachette UK, 2011).

Hristov, Hristo, *Bălgariya, balkanite i mirăt 1919* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1984).

Hutton, Patrick H., *History as an art of memory* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993).

Ilchev, Ivan, *Bălgariya i Antantata prez Părvata svetovna voina* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1990).

Istoriya na Bălgariya v dva toma. Tom II (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1955).

Istoriya na Bălgariya v tri toma. Tom II (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1962).

Istoriya na Bălgariya, tom treti (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1964).

Istoriya na Bălgariya. Tom osmi. Bălgariya 1903-1918. Kulturno razvitie 1878-1918 (Sofia: BAN-Institut po istoriya: Izdatelstvo Gal-Iko, 1999).

Ivanov, Stefan, *Germaniya i Bălgariya 1914-1915* (V. Tirnovo: Vital, 2002).

Kalchev, Kalcho, *Bălgaro-turski voennopoliticheski otnosheniya*: 1915-1918 (V. Tirnovo: Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodii, 2011).

Kazandzhiev, Georgi et al., *Dobrichkata epopeya 5-7 sept. 1916 g*. (Dobrich: Matador 74, 2006).

Kitromilides, Paschalis, '"Imagined Communities" and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans', in *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy* (Ashgate Variorum, 1994), XI 149-192.

Koleva, Daniela, and Elenkov, Ivan, 'Did 'the Change' Happen? Post-Socialist Historiography in Bulgaria', in Ulf Brunnbauer, ed., (Re) *Writing History. Historiography in Southeastern Europe after Socialism* (Berlin: LIT, 2004), 94-127.

Koneva, Rumiyana, *Golyamata sreshta na bălgarskiya narod. Kulturata i predizvikatelstvata na voinite 1912-1918* (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo 'Prof. Marin Drinov', 1995).

Kremenarov, Georgi, *Bălgariya v Părvata svetovna voina* (Sofia: 'Iztok-Zapad', 2015).

Lalkov, Milcho, *Balkanskata politika na Avstro-Ungariya 1914-1917: Avstro-ungarskata diplomaciya v borba za săiuznici prez Părvata svetovna voina* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1983).

Liubenova, Tonia, 'Socialno-ikonomicheski aspekti na voinite za nacionalno obedinenie (1912-1918) v Tărgovishte i regiona', *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* 4(2012), 83-96.

Lorenz, Chris, 'Double Trouble: A Comparison of Politics of National History in Germany and Quebec', in Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, eds., *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe* (London and NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 49-70.

Lory, Bernard, 'Une Guerre Invisible? La mémoire de la première guerre mondiale en Bulgarie' *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 2007/4 - no 228, 37-49, available at <http://www.cairn.info/revue-guerres-mondiales-et-conflits-contemporains-2007-4- page-37.htm (last visited 30 May 2018)

Lowenthal, David, *The Past is a Foreign Country-Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Maleev, Luka, *Shestte mi sreshti s Kaizer Vilhelm II. Spomeni* (ed. by Valentin Aleksandrov and Vasilka Stoinova) (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 1993).

Markov, Georgi, *Golyamata voina i bălgarskata strazha mezhdu Sredna Evropa i Orienta 1916-1919* (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo Prof. Marin Drinov, 2006).

Markov, Georgi, *Golyamata voina i bălgarskiyat mech nad Balkanskiya văzel 1914-1919. Kn. 1, Zaplitaneto* (Sofia: Zaharii Stoianov 2016a).

Markov Georgi, *Golyamata voina i bălgarskiyat mech nad Balkanskiya văzel 1914-1919. Kn.2 Razsichaneto* (Sofia: Zaharii Stoianov 2016b).

Minkov, Stefan Marinov, 'Historiography 1918-Today: Bulgaria (South East Europe)' in Ute Daniel et al., eds., *International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (Berlin: Freie

Universität, 2014), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10429> (last visited 30 May 2018).

Mutafchieva, Vera, and Chichovska, Vesela, *Sădăt nad istoricite. Bălgarskata istoricheska nauka. Dokumenti i diskusii 1944-1950. Tom I* (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo prof. Marin Drinov, 1995).

Naxidou, Eleonora, 'Nationalism versus Multiculturalism: the Minority Issue in Twenty-First-Century Bulgaria', *Nationalities Papers*, 40, 1(2012), 85-105.

Naxidou, Eleonora, 'Scientific Institutions and State Ideology: The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, in Florian Bieber and Harald Heppner, eds., *Universities and Elite Formation in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe* (Wien: LIT, 2015), 151-167.

Nedev, Nikola and Biliarski, Cocho, *Doiranskata Epopeya 1915-1918* (Sofia: Aniko, 2009 3rd edition- first publ. in 1921).

Nenkov, Petar, 'Deistviyata na Părva konna diviziya v Dobrudzha prez 1916 g. v Părvata svetovna voina', *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* 2(2014), 101-118.

Neuburger, Mary, *The Orient Within. Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004).

Nora, Pierre, *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris: Quatro, Gallimard, 1997).

Olick, Jeffrey K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, Verd and Levy, Daniel eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Olick, Jeffrey K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, Vered and Levy, Daniel, 'Introduction' in Jeffrey K. Olick, Verd Vinitzky-Seroussi, Daniel Levy eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-62.

Pantev, Andrei and Petkov, Petko, *SASHT i Bălgariya po vreme na Părvata svetovna voina* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1983).

Părvata svetovna voina na Balkanite: sbornik (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo, 2006).

Passmore, Kevin, Berger, Stefan, and Donovan, Mark, 'Historians and the Nation-State: Some Conclusions', in Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore, eds., *Writing National Histories. Western Europe since 1800* (London and NY: Routledge, 1999), 281-304.

Péporté, Pit, *Constructing the Middle Ages. Historiography, Collective Memory and Nation-Building in Luxemburg* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011).

Petkov, Ivan, 'Năoiskiyat dogovor i bălgarskite voennoplennici', *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* 4(2012), 47-52.

Radoslavov, Vasil Dr, *Bălgariya i svetovnata kriza* (Sofia: BAN, 1993b, second edition).

Radoslavov, Vasil Dr, *Balgariya i svetovnata kriza* (Sofia: Knigoizdatelstvo Sava Todorov, 1923).

Radoslavov, Vasil, *Dnevni belezhki 1914-1916* (ed. and comment by Ivan Ilchev) (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 1993a).

Sazdov, Dimitar, 'Finalăt na misiyata na Car Ferdinand Saks-Koburg-Gotski v Bălgariya (1915 g.), *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* 1(2016), 55-70.

Sazdov, Dimitar, Lalkov, Milcho, Popov, Radoslav and Migev, Vladimir, *Istoriya na Bălgariya (681-1960g.). Tom 2* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo 'Arges', 1995).

Schulz, Oliver, 'Commémorer une guerre oubliée? Mémoires de la Première Guerre Mondiale en Bulgarie', *Matériaux pour l' histoire de notre temps*, No 113-114 (2014), 42-51.

Statelova, Elena, Grancharov, Stoicho, *Tom III: Istoriya na nova Bălgariya 1878-1944* (Sofia: Anubis 1999).

Sygkelos, Yannis, *Nationalism from the Left. The Bulgarian Communist Party during the Second World War and the Early Post-War Years* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011).

Todorova, Maria, 'Blowing Up the Past: The Mausoleum of Georgi Dimitrov as Lieu de Memoire', in Maria Todorova, ed., *Remembering Communism. Genres of Representation* (NY: Social Science Research Council, 2010), 391-443.

Todorova, Maria, 'Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Bulgaria', *American Historical Review*, 92, 4(1992), 1105-1117.

Todorova, Maria, 'The Course of Discourses of Bulgarian Nationalism', in Peter Sugar, ed., *East European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: The American University Press, 1995), 55-102.

Todorova, Maria, *Bones of Contention. The Living Archive of Vasil Levski and the Making of Bulgaria's National Hero* (Budapest and NY: CEU Press, 2009).

Tonchev, Tenio, *Svetovniyat pozhar i Bălgariya* (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo, 1984).

Toshev, Stefan, *Deistviyata na III armiia prez 1916 godina* (Sofia: Zaharii Stoianov, 2007, first publ. in 1921).

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph, *Silencing the Past. Power and Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press 2015).

Uchastieto na Bălgariya v Părvata svetovna voina 1915-1918 godina. Bibliografiya (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Ministerstvoto na otbranata 'Sv. Georgi Pobedonosec', 1994).

Vlasidis, Vlasis, 'The Great War and the Balkans: The Use of Memory in Bulgaria and Greece', *Etudes Balkaniques* LI 1(2015), 242-255.

Voenna istoriya na Bălgariya 681-1945. Bibliografiya, Tom I (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo, 1977).

Voenna istoriya na Bălgariya 681-1945. Bibliografiya, Tom II (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo, 1987).

Yanakieva, Cenka and Harizanova, Rumiana, eds., *Uchastieto na Bălgariya v Părvata svetovna voina 1915-1918 godina: Bibliografiya* (Sofia: Sv. Georgi Pobedonosec, 1994).

Yanchev, Veselin, 'Obiyavyavaneto na voenno polozhenie v Bălgariya prez 1914 g', *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* 1(2016), 37-44.